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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo.

An Outline of Biblical Theology. By Millar Burrows. Philadelphia, The Westminster Press. 1946. 380 pages. \$3.50.

Professor Burrows, distinguished Biblical archaeologist and president of the American Schools of Oriental Research, teaches Biblical theology in the Divinity School at Yale University. His book is not intended to be, as he himself indicates, "a complete, logically articulated system of doctrine derived from the Bible" (p. 4). It is rather an attempt to present what the author believes to be the most important topics dealt with in the Bible, "each considered in its chronological development and with reference to the historical background" (p. 6). These topics, each of which is discussed under subheads, are: authority and revelation; God; Christ; the universe; man; the people of God; the divine requirement; sin; judgment and salvation; eschatology and the future life; the way to salvation; the Christian life; special offices and functions; public worship; Christian service; moral and social ideals. In the conclusion the author discusses the nature of Biblical religion. The book includes a brief bibliography, an index of Scriptural references (29 pages, 3 columns to a page), and an index of names and subjects. The volume is the outgrowth of the author's classroom experience.

The book is in many respects an amazing piece of work. The author has packed into 328 pages an astonishing mass of archaeological, historical, and exegetical findings which even the trained theologian cannot read hurriedly but which require careful study and detailed critical evaluation. This reviewer cannot possibly call attention to all the merits and disadvantages of the book: I shall, however, quote a number of statements which I trust will indicate the general temper of Professor Burrows' erudite mind.

One is happy to note such statements as these: "For Christian faith the focus and principle of unity appears in Christ, who is himself the Word made flesh, the Truth, and the Life. With full recognition of the differences within the Bible, biblical theology may, therefore, judge everything by its relation to the truth as it is in him" (p. 5). "To the much discussed question whether justification means imputed or imparted righteousness the answer is that it means the former" (p. 181). "Nowhere in the New Testament is there anything approaching the idea of transubstantiation or the repeated sacrifice of the mass" (p. 271). "There is thus no question that the first responsibility of the church toward the rest of the world is evangelism, including what is now called foreign missions" (p. 283). "Jesus . . . was not a social reformer or revolutionist. The use of his idea of the kingdom of God by exponents of the social gospel is now known to be based on false exegesis . . . and the kingdom is not a Christianized social order to be progressively achieved on earth. . . . The New Testament records no effort or concern for social reform, to say nothing of revolution" (p. 284). "No pattern for the organization of a Christian state can be derived from the Bible. The efforts of the Puritans to use the laws of Moses as a model for the con-

stitution of a modern state undoubtedly contributed much of permanent value to American law and government, but they were vitiated by the fundamental fallacy of any legalistic use of the Bible" (p. 306).

On the other hand, there are many statements in this book which the Biblical theologian must disavow. The author has, to put it mildly, strange views regarding Inspiration and rejects the inerrancy of Scripture. He says: "That which is divinely inspired must be true, and anything that is not true cannot be divinely inspired. Yet the Bible is full of things that to intelligent, educated persons of today are either quite incredible or at best highly questionable. . . . The historical narratives are full of difficulties and even contradictions" (p. 9). "Some of them [the Apocrypha] are actually as valuable and as truly inspired as some of the books that were retained, or more so" (p. 19). "Comparison of parallel passages should be enough of itself to show the impossibility of maintaining a theory of verbal inspiration" (p. 24). "By and large it is not the wording of the final record but the original vision of the prophets, the wisdom of the sages and lawgivers and apostles, the insight of the historians and evangelists, and the clear insight of Jesus into the mind of God that should be attributed to inspiration. Not the books, not the words, but the men were inspired. It is in this sense that the Scriptures were inspired by God" (p. 25). "Much ink has been wasted also, and is still wasted, in the effort to prove the detailed historical accuracy of the biblical narratives. Actually they abound in errors, including many contradictory statements" (p. 44). "There is thus no escaping the necessity of 'picking and choosing' in our use of the Bible" (p. 49).

Other statements with which a believer in the very words of Scripture cannot agree are: "The 'Trinitarian formula' of Matt. 28:19f. is not authentic" (p. 80). "The flood story is not history but myth" (p. 118). "The idea of total depravity, in the sense of such a complete corruption of human nature that no man can either will or do what is right without redemption by divine grace, is thus unsupported by the Bible" (p. 170).

And so one could go on and on and on in quoting statements which are at variance with Scriptural teaching. May I call attention to just one more statement which characterizes the thinking of the author. He says: "The language of the Bible . . . must be understood as poetry, not as factual description or analysis" (p. 62). If this were true and applied generally to all statements in Scripture, it would certainly be impossible for Christians to agree even on the simplest summary of Biblical teaching. And that is, we fear, the chief fault of this learned volume. Ministerial students trained in this kind of Biblical theology will, unless the Holy Spirit Himself through the Word teaches them otherwise, adopt an entirely relativistic view regarding divine truth and will present to their parishioners as divine truth only what they themselves have "picked and chosen." Though the author, like so many disciples of neo-orthodoxy, frequently manifests a far higher regard for Scripture than modern Liberalism, he nevertheless allows one to adopt or reject what even Scripture says purely on the basis of one's own religious experience. In other words, the ghost of nineteenth century rationalism has not been laid. It is plainly and painfully perceptible in the pages of this otherwise brilliant volume.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

A Century of Grace. Missouri Synod 1847—1947. By Walter A. Baepler. Centennial Series. Concordia Publishing House. 408 pages. Illustrated. Indexed. \$1.50.

This is one of the volumes produced under the auspices of the Centennial Committee which was commissioned to provide the literature essential to an intelligent observance of the Synodical Centennial by our people. As an undertaking such as this volume represents is in itself a *magnum opus* under ordinary circumstances, it stands to reason that when prepared to meet a deadline, certain weaknesses would result. The author was conscious of this and in his preface asks the reader's indulgence because "some sections . . . have become more statistical than was originally planned." Undoubtedly he will endeavor to make improvements in subsequent editions of his history of our Synod.

The volume gives abundant evidence of the fact that the author has delved into many of the primary sources of our history, and his quotations from these are well chosen. The circumstance that a hundred years of history had to be condensed into one volume made it inevitable that large parts of the book are too heavily weighted with names and dates.

At times, in the characterization of the Lutheran synods in existence in 1847, generalizations are made that should be modified. For instance, the statement that at that time the leaders of the General Synod "were avowed enemies of the Lutheran Confessions," etc. This may have been true of a few leaders, but certainly not of the majority; otherwise the "Definite Platform" would not have been rejected so overwhelmingly in 1855. Again, it is going too far to say that the Pennsylvania Ministerium shared the General Synod's "nonconfessional position and affiliated with it in 1853." The Pennsylvania Ministerium was growing progressively more confessional at the time, and its membership in the General Synod in 1853 was with definite reservations which looked for improvement in the general body's attitude toward the Lutheran Confessions. Whatever justified criticism we may make of the General Synod in the days of the fathers, the fact must not be overlooked that the organization of that body in 1820, in a time of general Lutheran disintegration in America, was a very real blessing, which the passing of time only emphasizes. This is said with due appreciation of the weaknesses inherent in the General Synod.

Another of the items that require correction is that of the beginning of the *Lutheran Witness* (p. 196). This periodical was started by the Cleveland Conference during the controversy with the Ohio Synod on Predestination and Election for the purpose of defending our Synod's position in the English language. When, in the opinion of the conference, this purpose had been served, it was resolved to discontinue the publication. It was then that C. A. Frank decided to continue the paper himself for the purpose of giving English readers in and outside our circles an orthodox Lutheran periodical.

In connection with the discussion of the Doctrinal Affirmation (p. 332) it is unfortunate that more recent developments were not added. It could have been done while the book was being made up.

It might be well to include the Constitution of Synod (not

By-Laws) in the Appendix in later editions. This would show the uninitiated reader that the Missouri Synod's doctrinal stand is on the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, and would clearly indicate that the Brief Statement, which is printed out in full, is not one of the Symbols of our Church.

The Atlantic District (p. 365) did not "branch off" from the Eastern District. On p. 112 it would be more exact to say: "The first congregation of the Missouri Synod in Virginia," etc., not "the oldest."

It would be well for the author to check carefully his conclusions on the Missouri-Iowa Colloquy of 1867 with the Davenport Theses and the Toledo Theses; also, p. 207, the definite statement that "the Missouri Synod has ever since avoided," etc.

Other more minor errata will no doubt be corrected in due time.

As to the print and make-up of the book, in general, these are good. However, at times, smaller type might have been used to advantage to set off purely statistical matter from the running story, e. g., p. 168, pp. 217—218, the listing of the District Synods; Ernst's letter to Walther, pp. 85—87, etc. When cuts of individuals are used, they ought to be uniform in size, especially when placed side by side or on pages that face each other; and cuts should not be crowded on one page when there is plenty of room on the preceding and following pages: e. g., p. 38; pp. 174—175; p. 219; pp. 234—235; etc. We look forward with keen anticipation to succeeding editions of this valuable work, in the hope that it may become the standard one-volume history of our Synod.

W. G. POLACK

The Christian Heritage in America. By George Hedley. The Macmillan Company, New York. 177 pages, 7½×5½. \$2.00.

The writer of this book, born in Tientsin, China, and educated in England and America, is now Associate Professor of Economics and Sociology at Mills College, near Oakland, Calif. Asked to deliver a series of devotional addresses on the Christian Church and its ramifications into various denominations, he vividly depicted to the student body of Mills College the development of the Church from its inception in the Old Testament ("the Jewish Church") to Eastern Orthodoxy, Romanism, Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, Episcopalianism, Congregationalism, Methodism, and so forth, analyzing, frequently with excellent insight, each branch according to its doctrinal and historical background. The fifteen lectures (chapters) show that the author has well studied the history of the denominations which he describes, and his emphasis on the salient features of each is often very striking. His approach, however, is not critical, but rather appreciative. He stresses differences in order to point out the contributions which each group has made. No emphasis is placed at any time on the Christian's duty of adhering to and confessing the divine truth, for this is at variance with the author's unionist point of view. In his estimation all denominations are valuable, since all have made important contributions to the corporate body of the Church. Lutherans cannot accept the writer's unionistic guidelines, but will, nevertheless, find the book worthy of careful study, since it shows them how others regard the problem of church division in its relation to the status of the Church as a whole. There are numerous historical errors

in the book. Lutherans, no doubt, will notice them, especially as they read what the writer has to say on Luther and his work. In view of the ecumenical trend in the Church of today the book is of importance inasmuch as it motivates a practical philosophy of ecumenicity.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Mariology. By Rev. M. J. Scheeben. B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo. Two volumes, 252 and 287 pages, 8½×6. Vol. I, \$2.50; Vol. II, \$3.50.

In view of the prevailing Mariolatry in the Roman Catholic Church, which to Protestants in general is both an enigma and an offense, especially as it is carried on in Catholic areas where there is no Protestant criticism to check its excrescences, it was perhaps very wise on the part of the Herder Book Company, in behalf of the Catholic doctrine of *hyperdulia*, to publish in two separate volumes what M. J. Scheeben, about seventy years ago, wrote about "Mariology" as a part of his *Dogmatic Theology*, which, however, he never completed. "Mariology," in its dogmatical sense, is the doctrine of the person, work, and veneration of Mary, the Mother of Christ according to His human nature. In his monograph on "Mariology" Scheeben seeks to supply the doctrinal basis and justification of the titles of honor ascribed to Mary and of the *hyperdulia* accorded to her in the Catholic Church. While some Catholic theologians have regarded as the main principle of Mariology the fact that she is *Theotokos* (the Mother of God) and others have considered as the supreme principle of Mariology the divine motherhood as it was historically realized, by which Mary became the "new Eve," the mother of the spiritually living, Scheeben unites these two principles into one and speaks of her "bridal motherhood of God," or of her "maternal state as bride of God" (p. XXXI). Mary's "bridal motherhood of God" means practically that she, as the Mother of God, is also the "bridal helper of Christ," so that in Christ's entire redemptive work, as also in His glorification, she takes a most necessary and important part. "Mary, full of grace," is therefore free from original sin, can boast an immaculate conception, is immune from all sin, and exempt from the bonds of death. Mary, moreover, is for this very reason also the Mediatrix between the holy God and sinful man and as such develops a supernatural activity in the entire divine operation of redemption, in which her Son is engaged, sharing with Him in all the glory which He has received as the world's Redeemer (though, of course, not in His glory as Son of God), she being at all times the dynamic and authoritative organ of the Holy Ghost (Vol. II, p. 186). The natural reaction of this *hyperdulia* (which in practice commonly becomes a real *latria*, i. e., a supreme worship, lawfully given to God only) on Protestants is fully realized by Scheeben's translator, Father T. L. M. J. Geukers, who in his Preface remarks: "Among Protestants it has become a proverb that the Catholic Church is no longer a Church of Christ, but a Church of Mary" (Vol. I, p. 111). While he deprecates this charge, this judgment may not be so very false after all. Just how the Catholic Church motivates and defends its Mariology is the ambitious program and thesis of Scheeben's two exhaustive volumes. In the first volume he discusses (1) the "concept and sources of Mariology" (Mary in the Old and the New Testament; Mary

in tradition; literature about Mary); (2) the Christological foundation of Mariology (her virginal conception, virginal motherhood, perpetual virginity, divine motherhood, bridal motherhood); and (3) the basic principle of Mariology (the distinguishing mark of Mary's person; the source of Mary's dignity). To this he adds, by way of further explanation, four appendixes — on the *prot-evangelium*, the human procreation, the *actio unitiva* ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and the annunciation by the angel. After having thus prepared the way, Scheeben, in the second volume, discusses (1) the holy person of Mary ("Mary, full of grace," freedom from original sin, her immediate conception, her permanent immunity from sin, and her exemption from the bonds of death), and (2) her work proper as the Mediatrix (her supernatural activity resulting from the distinguishing mark of her person or from the grace of her motherhood, her co-operation in general in the work of redemption, her co-operation in its concrete form, and her permanent office as Mediatrix). Scheeben thus enters into every detail of Mariology and deals exhaustively with every phase of it. At the time when his dogmatical work was composed, there was still much opposition to extremes in the veneration of Mary and other saints, and so Scheeben himself speaks very guardedly and moderately. But very definitely he has laid (so far as Catholics are concerned) the foundation of Mariology and has supplied the substratum for other and more extravagant Mariologists to build upon. His work has been recognized as authoritative in the Catholic Church, and in 1935 Pope Pius XI very warmly recommended the study of his rather ponderous theological works. Protestant scholars may therefore approach his "Mariology" as a work which comes with full papal sanction. But to Protestant scholars adhering to the principle of the *solâ Scriptura*, Scheeben's work offers no convincing proof at all. For his thesis he cannot supply any substantial Scripture proof, and his reasoning — and upon this he bases his thesis for the greatest part — appears as altogether nugatory. But no Protestant scholar dare ignore Scheeben's exhaustive work, since it is an *opus magnum* written in defense of Mariology. Matthias Joseph Scheeben was born in 1835, spent several years of theological study at Rome, was made professor of Dogmatics at the Catholic Seminary of Cologne, became prominent as a voluminous writer of theological articles and books, but died already in 1888, at the early age of 53 years. His *Mariology* was translated into Flemish and from Flemish into English. The English translation, however, is idiomatic and very fluent, though the subject matter is naturally very difficult. The book, because of its intrinsic historical and dogmatical values, belongs into every theological seminary library.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

Personalities in the Christmas Story. By R. R. Belter. The Lutheran Literary Board, Burlington, Iowa. 96 pages, 6½×4¼. \$1.00.

It was indeed a happy inspiration that led Pastor Belter to write this little book describing the men, the events, the message, and the doctrine of the Christmas story as told by the Evangelists, and this in so simple, pious, and appealing a way that the little volume will no doubt be a most welcome gift in many homes, presenting to the readers both doctrinal and devotional values.

It tells of Zacharias, Elisabeth, John the Baptist, Mary, Joseph, Caesar Augustus, Cyrenius, the innkeeper, the shepherds, Herod, the Wise Men, Simeon, Anna, Archelaus, and others. Here, too, the reader will find profitable instruction on the Triune God in His relation to our salvation as manifested at Christmas, the Virgin Birth, the angel's message "Unto you," and so forth. Now and then, perhaps, the reader will find a thought or sentence that might be questioned, but, on the whole, the little book is so very true and appealing that it can be cordially recommended as a plain but valuable popular contribution to our Lutheran Christmas literature.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

My Sermon Notes on Doctrinal Themes. First Series. By the Rev. William P. Van Wyk. Baker Book House, 1019 Wealthy St. S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 183 pages, 7½×5. \$2.00.

As I opened this book and read the preface, I was pleased with three remarks: Ministers should not consider these notes "as an easy way out of the difficulty of sermonmaking"; it has been the author's aim in his own ministry to "present exegetical and expository sermons"; and, finally, the author's determination "to present messages that are drawn from and based upon the Word." As far as the last statement is concerned, the author did not succeed very well. He says, for instance: "Christ's sacrifice is sufficient to redeem the whole world. I do not say 'purposed' to redeem the whole world." (P. 43.) Again: "Universal atonement is not taught here" (p. 117). This is Calvinistic "theology." Scripture says, "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ" (2 Cor. 5:18). Who the "us" are the next verse tells us, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (v. 19.) Again the author of the *Sermon Notes* says that the human nature which the Son of God assumed was "not the unweakened human nature that Adam had before the Fall, nor as we shall have it after resurrection. It was our human nature as it has been weakened by sin" (p. 111). Scripture tells us that Christ's human nature was not that weakened by sin, but was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners" (Heb. 7:26). In the same connection the author confuses the fact of Christ's incarnation with the *mode* of incarnation. He says that the very fact of Christ's incarnation was His humiliation. The author also denies Christ's descent into hell, saying that Christ's descent into hell was "the anguish and torments of hell in life" (p. 121), while Scripture, 1 Pet. 3:19, says that Christ after His quickening and before His resurrection descended into hell to show Himself the victor over sin, death, and the devil.

It is a pity that the otherwise good and usable book is marred by such errors.

J. H. C. FRITZ

A Living Church at Work. Danish Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebr. 123 pages, 5½×8¼. 50 cts.

This little book, prepared by a committee on evangelization composed of three pastors and two laymen at the direction of the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, is a delightful and effective piece of promotional literature. It reaches into every nook and corner of congregational life and work, having as its aim the instilling of greater spirituality in doing the work of the Lord.

No phase of congregational activity has, seemingly, been overlooked. We read the volume with interest and profit and believe that a general study of it by pastor and people will result in a greater participation and therefore also joy in church work. It might have been better to say (p. 40) that the Christian Church is built on Christ rather than on our faith in Christ. Likewise, since the book purports to be a true expression of the faith, life, and practice of that Church, we missed a clear-cut assertion of the Real Presence. The words of institution are indeed quoted as the basis of assurance, but the certainty of pardon flowing from the conviction that the body and blood of Christ are given us as a pledge in the Sacrament is not stated. Nor was any mention made in the chapter on organizations of that institution which among us is regarded as the chief contributor to future growth and stability, namely, the Christian day school. Aside from these things the book appears to be a most welcome addition to our practical-theology shelf, a comprehensive index to the work that needs to be done, and a means of stirring up greater interest in church work, all of which makes it desirable that it find its way also into the homes of the laity.

O. E. SOHN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

Walking with Jesus. Rally Day Service. Prepared by Arthur L. Miller. 15 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{4}$. Single copy, 7 cts., postpaid; dozen copies, 60 cts., plus postage; 100 copies, \$4.00, plus postage.

Concordia Bible Teacher, "Elijah and Elisha." By Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling, under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. Vol. IX, October, 1947, No. 1. 75 cts per annum.

Concordia Bible Student, "Elijah and Elisha." Vol. XXXVII, October, 1947, No. 1. 50 cts per annum.

In Christ, Our Lord, Daily Devotions No. 78, Sept. 7 to Oct. 27, 1947, by Prof. Otto H. Theiss. Single copies 5 cents, postage extra; subscription for eight consecutive numbers, 55 cents; sixteen numbers, \$1.00. Bulk price: 48 cents per dozen, postage extra; \$3.50 per hundred, postage extra.

Das Leben der Erzvaeter Abraham, Isaak und Jakob. Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 7. Sept. bis zum 27. Okt. 1947, by Rev. R. Herrmann. Price same as above.

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

The Message of Romans. An Exposition. By Robert C. McQuilkin, D. D. 178 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$. \$2.00.

From Hart Publishing Company, New York:

A Treasury of Play Ideas for Tiny Tots. By Caroline Horowitz. 93 pages, $6\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$1.00.

From Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich.:
Marian's Book of Bible Stories. By Marian Schoolland. 343 pages, 6¼ × 9¼. \$3.50.

Things Unshakable and Other Sermons. By Paul S. Rees, D. D. 5½ × 8. 153 pages. \$1.50.

What of the Night? By Wm. Edward Biederwolf, D. D. 5½ × 8. 94 pages. \$1.00.

Marked Men. By Wm. Ward Ayer, D. D. 5½ × 8. 137 pages. \$2.00.

From Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York, N. Y.:

The Church in Our Town. A Study of the Relationship between the Church and the Rural Community. By Rockwell C. Smith. 7½ × 5¼. 190 pages. \$1.50.

Preach the Word. By Roy L. Smith. 5¼ × 7½. 128 pages. \$1.00.

This Love of Ours. By Leslie R. Smith. 5¼ × 7½. 100 pages. \$1.00.

Cyclopedia of Bible Illustration. Compiled by Paul E. Holdcraft. 326 pages, 5¾ × 8½. \$3.00.

How to Increase Church Income. By Weldon Crossland. 159 pages 5¼ × 7¾. \$1.50.

From Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebr.:

Light at Midnight. Edited by Chr. Justesen. 6¼ × 9. 107 pages. \$1.25.

From the Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa.:

Christian Liberty. By Martin Luther, 5 × 7½. 44 pages. 30 cts.

