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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.

**The Eternal Why.** By L. Fuerbringer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 1947. 104 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ . \$1.50.

The reviewer read this exposition of the Book of Habakkuk with mixed feelings. He remembers the time when he as a student heard the author lecture — as only Dr. Fuerbringer could — on the messages of the Minor Prophets. It is indeed a loss that students of Scripture can hear him no more. But the more grateful are we that this manuscript could be prepared by him so that his stilled voice might continue to speak to us from the printed page.

And you do not have to read very long before Dr. Fuerbringer steps before your mind's eye and again seems to be lecturing. There is the same energy and aggressiveness moving in the phrases before you. There is the same spirit of awe for the divine message coming over you from the writing that he instilled in his oral presentation. In print the words breathe the same implicit faith that could be heard in the very inflection of his voice.

The book has the subtitle: *The Prophet Habakkuk Answers a Timeless Question*. As a third heading we find these words: *Habakkuk — Prophet of Judgment and Prophet of Hope*.

After a short introductory section on the person of the Prophet and his Book in general there follows a verse-by-verse interpretation of Habakkuk's words. Although based on the original, a knowledge of Hebrew is not required to understand the exegesis that is offered. Hence the book can also be recommended for Bible classes and lay readers.

Since the question "why" is "eternal" and since the international conditions today are turbulent as in the days of the seventh century B. C., the words of Habakkuk are appropriate today. And Dr. Fuerbringer does not fail to give an application to modern times.

WALTER R. ROEHRS

**God Goes to Golgotha.** By W. A. Poehler and W. F. Bruening. Published by Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 126 pages,  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 5$ . \$1.75, net.

A new book of Lenten sermons is herewith presented by two authors. The one author presents "Little People of the Passion Story," such as *The Man Who Lost an Ear*, *The Woman Who Dreamed About Jesus*, and *The Man Who Saw Jesus Die*; the other author presents "Pictures of the Passion," such as *The Arrest in the Garden*, *Christ on the Cross*, and *Good Friday Signs and Wonders*. The old story is retold in these Lenten sermons. One of the preachers, we may say, sums up his Lenten message thus: "When Jesus in our Gospel appears before us wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, let us with surrendering faith behold the Man as our Savior who suffered and died in our stead, who wore the crown of thorns and suffered ridicule and mockery in our place, who went to the Cross to die for our sins. Let us also behold Him as our King and Lord, to whom we yield our



lives and in whose service we stand ready to do His bidding." (P.101.) The other preacher, it may be said, emphasizes the need of the old story to be retold when he says: "Let us note why Jesus places this question before the Pharisees and the scribes. Why does He ask of them: What think ye of Christ? It is more than an academic question. It is more than idle curiosity. It is a question of life and death. 'If ye believe not that I am He,' says Jesus, 'ye shall die in your sins.' Oh, that the world would occupy itself, not with thoughts of inventing new atomic bombs, not with thoughts of producing airplanes that will go five, six, seven hundred, a thousand miles an hour through the air, but much rather with the answer to the question: 'What think ye of Christ, whose Son is He?' in order that men might learn that in Him and through Him and by Him alone there is hope and life and an outlook for the future and salvation. Last night the statement was made over the radio and in the press that there is in process of being discovered an atomic bomb which is much more horrible in its destructive power than the one that fell on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This atomic bomb will do the destructive work of one million pounds of TNT. The imagination is staggered at the ruin and destruction that can be hurled upon the world by the hand of men through the engine of destruction which his brain has conceived. However, that destruction is as nothing compared with the final inexorable fate that awaits those who refuse to accept Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Son of Man, who came to earth to save all men from their sins. As the threat of tramping, marching feet begins all over again in this sin-sick and sin-cursed world, let us, who are assembled here today, learn to our great joy and for our eternal happiness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Son of Man, who has redeemed us from our sins. He alone holds the hope of the future and the key to our personal happiness as well as the happiness of the world. In the confusion that reigns round about us let us place the feet of our faith firmly upon this unmovable Rock and say: 'On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand, All other ground is sinking sand.'" (P. 59 f.) A preacher should never hesitate to retell the old story of Jesus and His love, for that is man's one thing needful in order to enjoy both temporal and eternal bliss and happiness. J. H. C. FRITZ

**What Jesus Said and Did. A Study of Luke — Acts.** By George F. Hall. Augustana Press, Rock Island, Ill. 192 pages. \$2.00.

When Bishop Otto Dibelius visited the Seminary last fall, he observed that whereas Americans customarily express themselves in superlatives, the German remarks casually after having heard an exceptionally good sermon: "Die Predigt hat mir gefallen." Lest I, in this review of Professor Hall's book, indulge in terms like "excellent," "magnificent," "epoch-making," etc., I'll merely say: "I like this book."

Before telling why I like this book, a few introductory remarks are in order. Professor Hall teaches at Gustavus Adolphus College, a Lutheran college at St. Peter, Minn. His book "is the first in what is hoped will be a long line of useful books and studies for college students to be known as the *Gustavus Series*." "It is small enough so that a student may be expected to master



its materials in a two hour one semester or one hour two semester course." The bibliography is at a minimum, limited to the necessary general reference tools for independent study on the college level (no reference to Zahn's exhaustive studies; six titles by E. J. Goodspeed seems a slight overdose). Part One deals with literary and historical matters, such as the sources of our knowledge of Jesus, how the Gospel took form, and the writing and publishing of the third Gospel and the Book of Acts. Parts Two and Three deal, respectively, with what Jesus said and did, and what the Apostles said and did. A general index and a Scripture index are added.

This book is perhaps the first text of its kind published by an American Lutheran professor for Lutheran college students. It is not a commentary, but a presentation of the basic content of Luke and Acts, with due attention, however, where this seemed desirable, to exegetical detail and historical perspective. The chapters are brief, each broken down into paragraphs headed by suitable subtitles. The book reflects on every page the author's wide research in early Christian history and his thorough knowledge of Luke and Acts. Professor Hall possesses the rare ability to synthesize related materials without, however, disregarding niceties of detail. Throughout the book there is evident a clear confession of Jesus as the Savior, the Messiah, and of His human-divine nature. The author's clear-cut statement of the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper (pp. 97-98) makes one especially happy. Augustana Press did a superb printing job.

The author will not take it amiss, however, if this reviewer expresses a few concerns. Professor Hall is not in sympathy with efforts to reconstruct Jesus' life by combining the four Gospels. Even "the three [synoptists] cannot be combined without irreparable damage any more than the quartet could. All four must stand independently as literary entities. Comparisons can and should be made, but with the clear understanding that not one of the Gospels shall be interpreted in the light of another, but that each one has its own inimitable story of Jesus to tell" (p. 17). It is true, irreparable damage has been done to the Gospels by some harmonists, but surely not by all. There are harmonies which do not violate the peculiar character of each of the four Gospels. Conflicts and apparent contradictions arising from a comparison of passages in the four Gospels can be resolved even though such resolutions may be, in the nature of the case, only approximations to objective truth. Finally, the quest for a unified life of Jesus based on the four Gospels is so natural and so thoroughly legitimate that a student of the New Testament may not evade it.

The position shared by Professor Hall that Luke and Acts came into existence as late as ca. 85 A. D. and that Ephesus was the center of publication of New Testament books rests on too slender evidence. The author holds to the view that the oral tradition of Jesus was handed down much in the manner as modern *Formgeschichte* has pictured it. But, surely, one must bear in mind that as much as nothing is known about the "how" of the oral tradition. The writer says: "Paul was cautious about giving women equal rights in the church (1 Timothy 2:12), but Luke indicates no such hesitation on the part of the Holy Spirit" (p. 53).



This is an overstatement. Cf. Gal. 3:28. To say, "This revolutionary movement [the incidents at Sepphoris], which occurred when Jesus was between five and ten years of age, left an indelible impression upon Him about the futility of trying to revolt against the Romans" (p. 62) suggests the question: "How do we know? Not one of the Gospels nor any other source gives us information whether and to what, if any, extent Jesus was affected by what happened at Sepphoris."

In the author's discussion of the Baptism of Jesus one misses the reference to the answer supplied by Jesus Himself in the Gospel of Matthew: "Thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matt. 3:15). On p. 75 we read: "He said that He must preach the good news to other towns also, thus directing His steps southward to Judea" (Luke 4:43). But doesn't the account in Luke make it clear that Jesus continued His activities in Galilee for some time? The Transfiguration experience suggests more than that "the disciples were shown that Christ transcends the Old Testament characters who pointed to Him, namely, Moses and Elijah . . . and that they understood that He was the suffering servant of the Lord" (p. 80). It suggests first of all that Jesus was, in truth, the Son of the living God, as Peter had confessed Him only a short time before. The statement "Luke's explanation of his [Judas'] action is demon possession" (p. 84) is not accurate. Luke distinguishes between demoniac possession and complete surrender to Satan, implied Luke 22:3. The statement "In the raising of Jairus' daughter, Jesus maintained that the little girl was only sleeping and that she would get well if they had faith" (p. 114) does not adequately stress the miraculous element involved. To suggest that the Jews present at the healing of the paralytic were offended at the statement of Jesus "Thy sins be forgiven thee" because "Jesus was not a priest. Forgiveness could be granted only in the Temple precincts at Jerusalem after the appropriate sacrifice had been delivered" (p. 118) introduces an extraneous factor not suggested by the context. These Jews were offended because Jesus did something which in their opinion only God could do. In addition to the above concerns one wishes that the author had here and there been more positive and forthright in his statements.

Nevertheless I like Professor Hall's book, and I bespeak for it a wide circle of readers. At this time, when our own Church is making a Synod-wide effort to promote Bible study, leaders of adult classes who are planning to give a course in Luke or Acts will derive much benefit from a study of Professor Hall's book. Our university pastors in particular will find the book very helpful.

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

**The Study of the Bible Today and Tomorrow.** Edited by Harold R. Willoughby. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill. 436 pages, 9¼ × 6¼. \$6.00.

This most timely and stimulating volume presents twenty-four scholarly investigations and discussions of Biblical problems contributed either by members of the Chicago Society for Biblical Research or by scholars working under the auspices of that so-



ciety. The Society for Biblical Research was reorganized at Chicago in 1892, under the chairmanship of President W. R. Harper, after it had functioned for some time as a section of the National Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis. The purpose of the society is stated in Article II of its Constitution as follows: "The object of this Society shall be to promote the critical investigation of the Bible: and all departments of study which bear upon the interpretation of Scripture shall be considered germane to this object" (p. X). The articles in Part I of the book represent "a development and enlargement of the program of the Society for the academic year 1945-46." Toward the end of World War II the Society resolved that "the most valuable thing it could do for biblical research would be to survey comprehensively the present position and the most promising possibilities for biblical studies." Accordingly, its executive committee "projected the program plans for the Society to cover in survey fashion the immediately past accomplishments, the current status, and the immediately future opportunities for biblical research in the main areas of study: Old Testament, Intertestamental, and New Testament" (p. XIII). "These plans were carried out in the 1945-46 sessions of the Society and the papers submitted during that period constitute Part I of the volume, entitled "General Surveys of Main Areas." It was, however, resolved "to supplement the main surveys with special investigations of crucial problems that are engaging scholarly attention at the present time. Outstanding specialists were selected and invited to make such particularized contributions" (p. XIII f.). These investigations constitute Part II of the book. No doubt, the Bible student, in a general way, will find the essays in the first part more appealing than those in the second part, though there are exceptions. Here are some of the topics treated in the first part: "Old Testament Research Between the Great Wars" (Bowman, University of Chicago); "Intertestamental Studies Since Charles's Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha" (Rylarrsdam, Chicago); "New Testament Criticism in the World-Wars Period" (Parvis, Chicago); "The Present Situation of Biblical Archaeology" (Wright, McCormick Seminary, Chicago); "Current Trends in Catholic Biblical Research" (Cobb, Kansas Wesleyan University); "The War in Europe and the Future of Biblical Studies" (W. F. Albright, Johns Hopkins, Baltimore); "Urgent Tasks for New Testament Research" (Schubert, Chicago). In the second part the following articles perhaps deserve special notice: "The Geographical Conditioning of Religious Experience in Palestine" (McCown, Pacific School of Religion, Berkeley); "The Role of the Bible in the Reformation" (Hays, McCormick Seminary, Chicago); "A Critique of the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament" (Wikgren, Chicago). While the various contributions are, on the whole, scholarly, thorough, and historically trustworthy, they represent the liberal theological views for which the Divinity School of the University of Chicago and such other schools as took part in the venture stand. Two of the contributions were made by Jewish scholars, namely: "Contemporary Trends in Jewish Bible Study" (Felix Levy, Emanuel Congregation, Chicago) and "Current Progress and Problems in Septuagint Research" (Harry Orlinsky, Jewish Institute of Religion, New York). Lack of space forbids even a superficial appraisal of the various articles. Suffice it to



say that the reviewer warmly recommends this unique study in Biblical problems to all students interested in the field of Biblical studies, not only because here are well-prepared surveys rich in scientific detail and evaluation, but also because they indicate what liberal scholarship is planning for the future in the vast and important field of Biblical research and theology.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

**The Romance of the Ministry.** By Raymond Calkins. The Pilgrim Press, Boston and Chicago. 253 pages, 7¼×5. \$2.00.

This is a volume which, though it does not purport to be a treatise on the pastoral office, deals chiefly with Pastoral Theology. One reads it with mixed feelings. The author reveals a deep insight into the perplexing problems of our modern ministry and uses a fine approach in solving many of them. But, to quote just one example, we can hardly agree that a Protestant minister should consent, in the case of mixed marriages, to have his parishioners married by a Roman priest. Does he sanction the instruction by the priest and the solemn promise which must be signed before the marriage will be solemnized? On the theological side, one wonders where the author stands. So many sections of the book fairly clamor for a clear-cut statement of the Vicarious Atonement, but it is not forthcoming. Though the language is quite Scriptural, one retains an empty and disappointed feeling. And who among us would think of explaining the parable of the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45-46) as depicting Christ's quest for the sinner's salvation? or Christ's descent into hell as going down "to where you are that you might find him there under you, to lift you out of the hell of your misery into life and manhood once more"? — Used with care, the book can prove helpful in various ways as far as the practical ministry is concerned.

O. E. SOHN

**Miracles — A Preliminary Study.** By C. S. Lewis. The Macmillan Company, N. Y. 220 pages, 8¼×5½. \$2.50.

Of all works in the field of Christian apologetics which C. S. Lewis, fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, England, so far has written, this is perhaps his most logical and theological. It is perhaps also his most profound. As many other great apologists, so also C. S. Lewis is inclined to write more than is good for him, so that some of his books, especially the three novels which he has published, somewhat impair his reputation as an outstanding leader in Christian thought. Even his *Screwtape Letters* are of relatively minor value, though this book has been given much praise and had been welcomed by many readers. But books such as *Beyond Personality*, *The Case for Christianity*, *The Problem of Pain*, and others deserve far greater recognition than they have received as truly great works, which should be read time and again, and their leading thoughts should be interpreted in discussions and addresses in lay circles for the benefit of the many who need the lessons of truth and assurance which they teach. Of these more worthy literary productions of Lewis, his *Miracles* is in many ways the most helpful. It has been described as difficult reading. This it is not; only it requires slow and careful reading, as also much re-reading, to grasp the fundamentals of



logical values which the author propounds. The reader must also now and then prick himself to new attention, since the very monotony of the writer's stringent logic may lull him to semi-wakeful sleep. He must also beware of downright shortcomings. As so many other apologists, Lewis often runs far ahead of his readers in thinking out problems, and at times he even reaches beyond the domain of apologetics into the cloudland of pure philosophy. Again, Lewis is an Anglo-Catholic, and occasionally his emphases are motivated by his theological tenets. When, for example, he treats the incarnation of Christ as the central, in fact, as the only Christian miracle, apart from which all others have little significance, he leaves out of sight the truth that the crèche of Bethlehem has meaning only in view of the Cross of Calvary. Lewis does not deny that, but neither does he say that. Apart from these and other caveats, however, the book presents to the Christian student of apologetics undeniable values and is perhaps one of the most helpful popular monographs on the *prolegomena* of the doctrine of miracles ever written. Lewis himself cautions the reader that his book is only a "preliminary study" of the subject of miracles. What he purposes to do is to blaze a trail through the rank coppice of agnostic and atheistic objections to the possibility and probability of miracles. By slow, painstaking, at times almost crushing, logical processes he takes from under the argumentations of naturalists and humanists prop after prop upon which their demurrers to miracles are placed. Of the naturalist and the supernaturalist, the latter, as Lewis demonstrates, is the more logical thinker. Not the supernaturalist, but the naturalist (atheist) stultifies himself. There is logical ground for belief in a supernature. The unbeliever drags behind himself on the string of errant deductions "red herrings" of unwarranted objections to the idea of miracles. Miracles are proper, just as also they are probable, since the "grand miracle" of Christ's incarnation, which reason cannot deny, has once taken place and God has become man. Such are some of the basic thoughts with which Lewis concerns himself in this fine apologetic. They are thoughts with which every thinking Christian, above all, every thinking pastor, should concern himself.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

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

**By Thy Blood.** Daily Devotions No. 81, February 8 to March 28, 1948. By Rev. George C. Koenig, New York, N. Y. Single copy, 5 cents, postage extra; subscription for 8 consecutive numbers, 55 cents; 16 numbers, \$1.00. Bulk price: 48 cents per dozen, postage extra; \$3.50 per hundred, postage extra.

**Der Gekreuzigte unsere Weisheit.** Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 8. Februar bis zum 28. Maerz 1948. By Dr. Theo. Laetsch, St. Louis, Mo. Price same as above.