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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.

Immensity. God's Greatness Seen in Creation. By Clarence H. Benson, Litt. D., Author and Christian Educator. Van Kampen Press. 140 pages, 5½×8. \$2.00.

The writer of this book is not a novice as a writer in the field of religious literature. For fifteen years he was associate editor of the *Moody Monthly*, serving at the same time as director of the Department of Christian Education of Moody Bible Institute. He has a number of books to his credit, among them one that is related in its contents to what is offered in the volume before us, *The Earth, the Theater of the Universe*. His other books are devoted chiefly to the subject of education; here are some of the titles: *An Introduction to Child Study*, *The Sunday School in Action*, *A Popular History of Education*.

The present volume is well characterized by its name "Immensity." Proceeding from Bible passages in which the greatness of God is exalted, the writer describes the various immensities that confront us when we study astronomy. After a chapter of an introductory nature, having as its caption "Creation — the Majesty and Might of God," the subjects discussed are: Immeasurable distance, incomprehensible spheres, incomparable speeds, inconceivable power, incalculable numbers, inimitable precision. Dr. Benson is up to date in his astronomical reading; he, for instance, introduces us to the giant 200-inch reflector which soon will be used at Palomar in Southern California and which recent magazine articles have described. The person who has never before read books dealing with astronomy will be overwhelmed with a mass of most interesting information; and those who have read works pertaining to this field will be delighted to see a difficult subject treated in a simple, lucid manner. The author shows by what means the astronomers arrive at the staggering figures which they submit as to the size, distance, and movements of the planets and stars; and while naturally the vast majority of those who are not professionally trained cannot fathom the mathematical processes on which the calculations are based, all can obtain an inkling of the ingenious methods which are employed in the pursuit of "the queen of the sciences." The language is not highly technical. A number of illustrations aid the reader in understanding the text.

It is the author's aim to remain loyal to the Scriptures. This is particularly manifest in one of the closing chapters, entitled "The Creator Greater Than Creation." On the question which, strange to say, still is of real significance today, "Do the stars influence human lives?" (astrology) he furnishes the right answer. The last chapter speaks of "The Star of All Stars," the Star of Bethlehem. In his view this star was caused by collision of two heavenly bodies, each one by itself invisible to the naked eye, but both together in their clash producing a striking though short-lived luminary. This is pious though very fascinating speculation. The author's grounds for his assumption must be read in the book itself. Whatever view one may hold as to the nature of this star, everybody will have to admit that the chapter is worth careful perusal.

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Proceedings of the Lutheran World Federation Assembly. Published by United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia. 1948. 190 pages, 9×6, paper cover.

The *Proceedings*, compiled by Dr. Michelfelder, contain the minutes of the convention, the new constitution of the Lutheran World Federation, and the report of the three sections which studied the theme: "The Lutheran Church in the World Today." In Part Two of the *Proceedings* the sermons and addresses are reported. Our pastors will be interested in a study of both the constitution of the Lutheran World Federation and the statements concerning the doctrinal position of the Lutheran Church on the Word, the Sacraments, and the Church, concerning the mission program of Lutheranism in a devastated world, and the amended statement of the position of the Lutheran Church toward such problems as materialism, race relations, and the displaced persons. Only a limited number of copies was printed, and the volume is not for sale.

F. E. MAYER

Die protestantische Theologie im 19. Jahrhundert. Ihre Vorgeschichte und ihre Geschichte. By Karl Barth. Evangelischer Verlag Ag. Zollikon/Zuerich, 1947. 611 pages, 9¼×6¼.

This volume contains the lectures given by Karl Barth at Basel in 1932—33. In the preface the author states that since these lectures were circulating in manuscript form, he wished to present them to the Church in printed form. Better than one half of the volume is devoted to a discussion of the philosophical movements of the eighteenth century as of vital importance for a correct understanding of the rise of Schleiermacher and his school. There is value in this, since Schleiermacher dominated the theological thinking for almost a century, and, as Barth states in his evaluation of Ritschl, Schleiermacher was more influential in 1910 than in 1830. The theology of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century may be characterized from its attitude toward Schleiermacher. Students interested in this field will find Barth's contribution a valuable companion volume to the works of Kattenbusch, Seeberg, Horst Stephan, and particularly to H. R. Mackintosh, *Types of Modern Theology*.

F. E. MAYER

Science Finding God. Personally Conducted by God. The Pearly Gates of Heaven a la Mode. By David A. Murray. Wetzel Publishing Co., Inc., Los Angeles, Calif. 1947. 146 pages. \$1.00.

In Part I of this book the author presents a rational argument for the existence of God and of some of His attributes. As a voluntarist, the author believes desire, push, impulse, to be a reality at least as real as matter and energy. This desire is not, however, as in Schopenhauer's system, a blind, capricious force, but a power which operates purposefully and with freedom. It is the "final cause" of the universe and makes possible the world in which we live. Though there is nothing new in the author's analysis, his simple presentation will appeal to many readers. In addition, Part I contains a number of refreshing remarks which indicate that current materialism has by no means disposed of forms of idealism.

In Part II the author goes to great lengths to ascribe a wholly

symbolical meaning to the great facts recorded in chapters one to eleven of Genesis. It is an ingenious effort but rests wholly on an oversimplification warranted neither by the sacred text of Genesis nor by the rest of Scripture. Part III is an allegory of heaven culminating in a sublimation of self-effacing service.

It makes one sad to note that a Doctor of Divinity who wrote this book nowhere refers to the one grand purpose of Scripture and to the one way which leads into the pearly gates. Apologetics has its place, but it can never be more than a humble handmaid in the implementation of divine truth. PAUL M. BRETSCHER

A Church is Born. By Dwight L. Shelhart. Muehlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 176 pages, 7½×5. \$2.00.

A sane, practical, and well-nigh complete handbook on the establishment and organization of new congregations, written by a synodical missionary who called numerous congregations into existence. With a few exceptions (e. g., power to be vested in church councils, procedure in calling a pastor, minimum length of adult class instruction, no suggestions regarding the confessional standard of the new church) we recommend the book to missionaries young and old as a handy guide. A later edition might profitably contain a sample constitution. O. E. SOHN

BOOKS RECEIVED

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

Home Life in Bible Times. By Arthur W. Klinck. 142 pages, 5×7½, 60 cents.

Bible History References. Vol. I. By F. Rupprecht, 468 pages, 5×7½, \$2.75.

Concordia Bible Teacher. Studies in the Book of Acts. Part II, Vol. IX, Number 3, April—June, 1948. Edited by Rev. J. M. Weiden-schilling, S. T. D. Under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. \$1.00 per annum.

Concordia Bible Student. Studies in the Book of Acts, Part II, Vol. XXXVII, Number 3, April—June, 1948. Edited, etc., same as above. 60 cents per annum.

Portals of Prayer. The Abundant Life. Daily Devotions from March 29 to May 16, 1948. By Rev. Henry F. Wind of Buffalo, N. Y. Single copies, 10 cents postpaid, subscription for 7 numbers, 50 cents; 14 numbers, \$1.00, postpaid; bulk price: 60 cents per dozen, postpaid; \$4.50 per hundred, postpaid.

Gemeinschaft mit Gott. Andachten ueber Sprueche aus der ersten Epistel St. Johannis fuer die Zeit vom 29. Maerz bis zum 16. Mai 1948. By Rev. H. J. Bouman, D. D., of Minneapolis, Minn. Price same as above.

Christian Adult Education. A Workshop Report. Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Ill. Under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, Ev. Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States. July 7—11, 1947. 51 pages, 8¼×10¾. 60 cents.

From the College Bookstore of Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebr.:

Christian Adult Education. A Workshop Report. Concordia Teachers College, Seward, Nebr. June 23—27, 1947. 50 pages, 8¼×10¾. 50 cents.

From Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York:

Sermon Stories of Faith and Hope. By William L. Stidger. 154 pages. 5¼×7½. \$1.50.

Finding God Through Christ. By Charles Edward Forlines. 207 pages, 5¼×7¾. \$2.00.

From Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn.:

My Soul More Bent. By Allen Lee, as Told to Melva Rorem. 111 pages, 5½×8. \$1.25.

From Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

The Spirit-Filled Life. A Word to Those Who Desire to Live a Victorious Life. By Stanley Howard Frodsham. 88 pages, 5½×8. \$1.00.

"And Jesus in the Midst. . ." A Series of Sermons on the Passion of Our Lord. By Prof. Herman Hoeksema. 118 pages, 5½×8. \$1.50.

From Fleming H. Revell Company, New York:

Is God in There? An Inquiry Concerning the Church in This New Age. By Charles Tudor Leber. 205 pages, 5¼×7½. \$2.50.

First Steps in Prayer. By Kermit R. Olsen. 118 pages, 5×7½. \$1.25.

From Pickering and Inglis, Ltd., London:

Palestine. The Land of My Adoption. By J. W. Clapham, Jerusalem. Four full-colour illustrations and 20 plates in photo brown. 191 pages, 5¾×8¾. 12/6 net.

From Van Kampen Press, Chicago, Ill.:

The Incomparable Book. By Newman Watts. American Tract Society. 251 pages, 5½×8. \$2.50.

His Side Versus Our Side. Galatians. God's Great Antithesis. By Norman B. Harrison. 128 pages, 5×7½. 75 cents, paper binding; \$1.25, cloth binding.

Manna in Music. Compiled by Paul Hutchens. 81 songs, 6×9. 60 cents.

