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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.

Believing the Bible. By A. D. Norris. Pickering and Inglis Ltd., London, 1947. 5×7½, 139 pages. \$2.00.

This book, as the preface states, is the middle volume of a trilogy. The first of the series, *On Reading the Bible*, took the line: "Let us be fair to this book. Let us see what it says so that we may judge for ourselves." The second sets before the reader good reasons for believing that it is the authoritative Word of God. The third will present an appreciation of the message of the Bible by one who rejoices to have learned it from the source itself.

In other words, this second volume belongs into the area of apologetics. It defends the reliability of the Bible on the basis of logic and reason rather than on the conviction of truth emanating from faith. This is in no way a disparagement of the writer's effort. There is a place for a book (especially in a popular form, as this is) to fortify the believer with material to "convince the gainsayer" and scoffer, and as a prop for his own faith. It should also be said that the writer's personal faith shines from every page of the book. "The good reasons for believing" the Bible are drawn mainly from the attestations of history, ancient and down to the present. The resurrection of Jesus is made (and rightly so) the fact of history with which Christian faith stands or falls. Three chapters in the heart of the book present the evidence for the historicity of the events of Easter morning. The first sentence reads: "Let the issue be plain from the start: all that we believe is staked upon the truth of this" (p. 25).

Chapter VII deals with "The Little Things" or "Scriptural Coincidences." "It sets about the task of showing . . . that in matters of detail the Scriptures show . . . all the marks of divine artistry in their little things" (p. 87f.). The next chapter deals again with history, indicating the truth of the Scriptural account from secular history and archaeology. The supposed conflict between science and the Bible is the subject of the final chapter, which is followed by a few pages on "Consequences."

In the reviewer's estimate, the best part of the book is the section dealing with the resurrection. The Lutheran reader will put a question mark on the margin of a few pages. The author's view of the restoration of Israel is askew. In trying to uphold the six days of Creation he develops this bizarre interpretation: "The days are certainly literal days, but they are days, not in which the events themselves occurred, but in which the record of them, no doubt in vision, was revealed to Moses" (p. 132). In some instances archaeological evidence is pressed beyond warrant, for example, the Flood line at Kish (p. 115). WALTER R. ROEHR

Notes on the Parables of Our Lord. By Richard Chenevix Trench. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 5½×8. 211 pages. \$2.50.

This is a popular edition of Dean Trench's widely known and scholarly *Notes on the Parables*. All notes in ancient and foreign languages which appeared in the original version have been translated into English, and various polemic and debatable points of

the original have been deleted. While the present edition is intended particularly for the average Bible student who has only the English language at his command, pastors, too, will find the volume useful, especially for the preparation of sermons based on the parables of our Lord. Those, however, who are better equipped linguistically will likely derive greater satisfaction from the original version of this thought-provoking opus.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

Let God be God! By Philip S. Watson, M. A. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 1948. 5½ × 8½. \$2.50.

This book may be credited as a partial payment on the debt which Methodism owes Luther, and which the author readily acknowledges. The author, a Methodist, is tutor in systematic theology and philosophy of religion at Handsworth College, Birmingham, England.

Let God be God! is an interpretation of the theology of Luther. The striking title is to emphasize in the strongest manner the theocentric nature of Luther's theology, particularly also his theocentric Christology. Comparing Luther's theological discovery and conversion to the Copernican revolution, the author declares: "For just as Copernicus started with a geocentric, but reached a heliocentric conception of the physical world, Luther began with an anthropocentric or egocentric conception of religion, but came to a theocentric conception. In this sense, Luther is a Copernicus in the realm of religion," page 34. Anyone who in any area of religion moves God out of His central position does not, according to the author, let God be God.

Watson gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to the Scandinavian students of Luther, Aulen, Billing, and others. He translated Part II of Nygren's *Agape and Eros*. But he is not a mere imitator. He has read Luther extensively and carefully. His book reflects the reward of diligent study, and the fine sense of selectivity in the quotations from Luther's works which it reveals demonstrates the author's familiarity with them.

Under the heading "The General Character of Luther's Theology" in Part One of his book, Watson discusses Luther as a theologian and the motif of Luther's thought. In Part Two he presents the major themes of Luther's theology: the revelation of God, the theology of the Cross, and the doctrine of the Word.

Deploring the fact that Troeltsch's *Soziallehren*, which, he says, displays a singular lack of insight in its treatment of Luther, should have found a translator (twenty years after its original publication), whereas we still have no English version of Holl's *Gesammelte Aufsätze*, which contains some penetrating criticisms of Troeltsch and is based on a far greater knowledge of the sources, Watson declares that Holl did not say the last word on the subject and modestly adds, nor has it yet been said. With these words he invites the critical analysis of his work by the reader; but he does more than that—he challenges the reader to improve on, and to advance beyond, what he has done. With regard to the critical analysis, the reader may sometimes wonder whether the author is reflecting the thoughts of Luther or of John Wesley. But the most critical reader will be ready to admit that Watson has produced a stimulating study of the great Reformer's theology.

L. W. SPITZ

Farrar's Life of Christ. Condensed and Edited by Theodore W. Egstrom, Editor-in-Chief, *Christian Digest*. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 236 pages, 5½×8. \$2.50.

This is a condensation of the well-known work of Frederick W. Farrar, Dean of Westminster. It is not necessary for us to characterize *Farrar's Life of Christ*. It has some faults, but it is a very beautiful and useful work, especially in the editions that contain Farrar's footnotes and appendices. The present condensation is described thus by the editor: "It must be recognized that this condensation contains only the high lights of Farrar's biography. Of necessity entire chapters were omitted and other chapters were considerably condensed. All of the extensive footnotes have been deleted. Yet withal it has been the desire of the editor to retain the singular high points in what has proved to me to be a tremendously challenging and soul-stirring production." For those who are unable to obtain the unabridged work, this condensation may well serve as a substitute.

W. ARNDT

The Program of Satan. A Study of the Purpose and Method of the Adversary. By C. Theodore Schwarze, Professor emeritus, New York University; Fellow, American Association for the Advancement of Science; and Fellow, American Geographical Society. Published by Good News Publishers, 411 S. Wells St., Chicago 7, Ill. 220 pages, 5×7½. \$2.50.

There is no surplus of books on the evil angels or on angels in general. Hence it cannot be charged that the author enters an overcrowded field. The present work tries to bring together the information and judgment found in the Scriptures on Satan and his cohorts. The method is to follow the Biblical narrative from Genesis forward and to submit a discussion of the historical narrative from the point of view suggested by the title of the book. The author writes as a devout Christian who fully believes in the authority of the Scriptures. The book is not free from errors; thus premillennialism is sponsored in it (cf. p. 76). It should be added that a good deal of learning pertaining to the ancient civilizations is here spread out before the reader and utilized to throw light on Scripture passages and situations.

W. ARNDT

Kirchenagende I, 1. Herausgegeben von Joachim Beckmann, Peter Brunner, Hans Ludwig Kulp und Walter Reindell. Agende I, Band 1: Ordnung des Gottesdienstes an Sonn- und Feiertagen. 1949. 235 Seiten. Zweifarbendruck. In Ganzleinen geb., DM 15.

We are happy to bring the attention of our readers to this first volume of the *Kirchenagende* for the Rhineland and Westphalia. The external features of the volume are excellent. It is printed in black with the rubrics in red and is beautifully illuminated throughout with fitting symbols from the large field of church symbolism. There are two orders of service at the beginning, followed by the propers of the church year. Then comes an order for a preaching service and an order for a confessional service, the latter including the litany. The necessary musical settings are given throughout.

The first order of worship, and presumably the preferred form, follows quite strictly the order of the Holy Communion as we have

it in our *Hymnal*. In the canon of the mass the words of institution precede the Lord's Prayer. The words of distribution are simply: "The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve you to eternal life. The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve you to eternal life." The post-Communion prayer is the same as ours and the closing benediction is that of Aaron. Instead of the Nicene Creed after the Gospel, Luther's versified form is used, with the Apostolic or Nicene Creed as alternates. In the second order of service the Nicene Creed is given the preferred place. In this second order the General Prayer after the sermon is the Bidding Prayer. There is no prayer of consecration, in the old liturgical sense, in either of these orders.

The order of a preaching service is very simple. It opens with a hymn and the Trinitarian Invocation and the Apostolic Benediction, followed by a prayer before the sermon, the sermon itself, a prayer after the sermon, and the votum. Then a hymn is sung, followed by the confession and absolution, the confession of faith, the intercessions, the Lord's Prayer, the *Benedicamus*, the Benediction, and a closing hymn.

All in all, these orders follow the best Lutheran traditions. Those brethren who desire a good German text for services of this kind will find the volume very usable. W. G. POLACK

Getting the Right Pitch. Sixteen Timely Messages by Peter E. Eldersveld. Published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 149 pages, 5½×8. \$2.00.

This book presents sixteen messages written for the radio and delivered by the Rev. Peter H. Eldersveld, Radio Minister of the Back to God Hour, Radio Voice of the Christian Reformed Church. In simple yet direct language these sermons present Christ as the only Savior and lead people living in a troubled world to the cross for comfort and encouragement. Such subjects are treated as: "The Rediscovered Bible," "The Unavoidable Christ," "Let's Confess," "When Jesus Comes Again," "Unity, Not Uniformity." If there were much more such preaching throughout our land, we could with greater cheerfulness speak of our country as a Christian country. J. H. C. FRITZ

A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life. By William Law. Introduction by J. V. Moldenhawer. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia 7, Pa. 353 pages. 5×7¾. \$2.00.

William Law refused, while still a young man, to take the oath of allegiance to the English Crown because he rejected the idea that the State has authority over the Church. His position destroyed his long-cherished hope of serving the Church of England. The purpose of his *A Serious Call* was to rouse Christian folk from their lethargic religiosity and to incite them to live as worthy Christian people. His book has now served this purpose among English speaking people for more than 200 years and has become a classic in the field of religious literature. One cannot help admiring the author's sincerity and earnestness; every mature Christian can read *A Serious Call* with profit. There are times when Mr. Law's utter seriousness as well as his insistence upon rigid abstemiousness depress one and tend to produce negative rather than positive results. A more cheerful and evangelical approach

to the problem under discussion would have added to the value of the book. Christian abstinence has its place in the Christian's life, but it should be based not on negative or rationalistic legalism, but on the positive, constructive, and "foolish" Gospel of Christ Jesus. While, as a result of the author's approach and also because of much needless repetition, one is often tempted to cease reading the volume, its most constructive and enjoyable portions are to be found in its second half. The author is at his best when speaking of prayer and praise. To publish a new edition of this volume in days like the present is indeed fitting and timely. Mr. Law has much to say to our generation that is thought-provoking and worth while.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

Sermon Illustrations from the Bible. By Keith L. Brooks. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 121 pages, 5½×8. \$1.50.

In his Foreword the author rightly insists that "there are no better sermon illustrations than those found in the Bible itself. This work is intended to aid the preacher and Bible teacher in locating the best of these, for whatever topic he may seek to illumine." That his book is truly helpful may best be proved from its contents. Under the caption "Affliction—Blessing of" (John 4:46-54) we read: "Blessed are the trials that drive us to the Lord. The sickness of a son blesses a home" (p. 7). Another illustration: "Christ—His Triumph over Satan" (1 Samuel 17): "David's victory over Goliath a type of triumph of Christ over Satan" (p. 16).

WALTER E. BUSZIN

The Earth, the Theater of the Universe. By Clarence H. Benson. Moody Press, Chicago. 141 pages, 5×7½. \$1.75.

This small volume attempts to present a scientific and Scriptural study of the earth's place and purpose in the divine program. The writer regards Genesis as the foundation book of all Scripture and science as one of the strongest witnesses to the facts of God's Word. He adduces some interesting facts from folklore and archaeology in support of his theories, but weakens his case by a curious blending of his scientific data with a literalistic interpretation of Scripture. He believes that a glorious earth, ruled by angels, preceded our present one, and he is now looking forward to a millennium and a post-millennial earth, which he expects to be the capital of the universe. He would do well to re-examine his use of prophecy and learn the lesson which, for instance, a comparison of Joel 2:28-32 with Acts 2:17-21 teaches.

L. W. SPITZ

Be Glad You're a Protestant. By Harry C. Munro. The Bethany Press, St. Louis. 1948. 138 pages, 5½×8. \$1.50.

The author intends to show the fundamental distinctions between Protestants and Roman Catholics. What makes the task hard for him is the fact that he seems to have difficulty to decide what is fundamental in Protestantism. He embraces in his definition of Protestantism all shades of Conservatism and Liberalism. Our Protestant future he seeks in a United Church of America, similar to the federal relationship which E. Stanley Jones has been proposing. Luther and Calvin would not have read this book with much pleasure, and the searching soul will look for something more positive today than it has to offer.

L. W. SPITZ

How to Speak the Written Word. A guide to Effective Public Reading. By Nedra Newkirk Lamar. Fleming H. Revell Company, New York, 1949. 5½×8, 175 pages. \$2.50.

The author is a teacher of speech with a background in the classics. She is by disposition a teacher, and this book is an unusually successful effort to capsule her teaching practice and experience in print. This reviewer is downright enthusiastic about the practical and detailed, nevertheless common sense and constructive nature of its materials. Five chapters deal with essentials of oral interpretation, with particular emphasis on inflections and phrasing. The material on echo is unusually apt. The sixth chapter presents an extended discussion on reading the Bible, specifically the King James Version. The chief lack of the book is material on the interpretation of mood and emotion. The author compensates for it by a continuous stress that the reader must first have the meaning of the selection strike him before he can interpret it to others. The book is crowded with exercise materials and detailed suggestions and should prove stimulating to everyone who reads in public, especially pastors who prepare the lessons for worship.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

The Age and You. By Alvin N. Rogness. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., 1949. 5½×8, 211 pages. \$2.00.

This fine book presents thirty-seven brief addresses delivered from Station KGLO, Mason City, Iowa, 1947—48. They are adjusted to the Christian church year and make no effort to hide the Lutheran background of the preacher. Pastor Rogness manages a clean and direct style, packed with new penetrations and adorned with unusually careful analogies, quotations, and illustrations. He is somewhat daring in the expectations which he sets up concerning his audience; he is unsparing in the breadth of his allusions and applications. Preachers will profit by reading this volume not merely for radio speaking but for all pulpit statement and for basic theology. The addresses are unflinching Christian in emphasis and sound the great Lutheran motifs of sin and grace, of Christ's lordship and victory.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

The Hour Has Come. By G. Ray Jordan. Abingdon—Cokesbury Press. New York—Nashville. 5¼×7¾. 152 pages. \$1.75.

The author of this volume of sermons is Professor of Homiletics and Chapel Preacher at Chandler School of Theology, Emory University. He has written several volumes of sermons and has served as literary editor of *The Pulpit Digest*. The thirteen sermons of the present volume, all of which are based on Jesus' high-priestly prayer (John 17), clearly reveal Professor Jordan's outstanding ability as a preacher and as a homiletician. His sermons are rich in content; in fact, some have so much to say that many good Christian folk will find it difficult to assimilate their content. The same applies also because the sermons have been written topically and often manifest the weaknesses of the topical sermon. At times the thoughts expressed, though good in themselves, are not related to the text of the sermon as closely as they should be. We cannot agree with Mr. Jordan when he says of the author of Ecclesiastes: "His cynicism has depressed the minds and sickened the soul of multitudes. It still disturbs and even alarms us" (p. 132).

His statements: "Something thoroughly unchristian happens when people assert that theirs is the one correct interpretation of Christianity" (p. 121) and "a superiority of life to creed is always encouraging" (p. 123) are, of course, typical expressions of the non-confessional unionistic spirit of our age. Although the author preaches Christ Crucified with fervor and conviction, we regret that he is too often philanthropic when he should be evangelical instead. Nevertheless, Professor Jordan's sermons are above the average and contain much food for thought.

WALTER E. BUSZIN

Proceedings of the Sixty-Eighth Convention of the Central District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Assembled at Fort Wayne, Ind., June 21—25, 1948. 126 pages. 80 cents. Order from the Secretary of the District, the Rev. W. F. Docter, 539 E. Wheeling St., Lancaster, Ohio.

In addition to the records of official business the *Proceedings* contain a doctrinal essay by the Rev. N. Sydow on the Lord's Supper. In answer to the question "What is the Lord's Supper—sacrifice, symbolism, or sacrament?" the essayist submits three propositions: (1) The Lord's Supper as a sacrifice is an invention of medieval superreason. (2) The Lord's Supper as merely symbolism is a product of unbelieving reason. (3) The Lord's Supper as a sacrament, a means of grace, is the teaching of Scripture and of the Lutheran Church.

The essay covers forty-eight pages.

L. W. SPITZ

BOOKS RECEIVED

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

Portals of Prayer. No. 91, "That Way." Daily Devotions from June 8 to July 28, 1949. By Frederick R. Webber. Single copies 10 cents, postpaid. Subscription price, 50 cents a year; two years, \$1.00. Single numbers mailed in bulk to one address, 12 copies, 60 cents, postpaid; 100 copies, \$4.50, postpaid.

Der Rat Gottes zu unserer Seligkeit. By George Naumann. Prices, same as above.

Portals of Prayer. No. 92. "Melody in the Heart"—Daily Devotions from July 29 to September 18, 1949. 10 cents each.

Andachtsbüchlein. No. 92. "Meine Zuversicht und Meine Burg." By M. Bertram. Andachten für die Zeit vom 29. Juli bis zum 18. September 1949. 10 cents each.

Concordia Bible Teacher. "Women of the Bible." Vol. X, No. 4. July—September, 1949. \$1.00 per annum.

Concordia Bible Student. "Women of the Bible." Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4. July—September, 1949. 65 cents per annum.

Edited by Rev. J. M. Weidenschilling, S. T. D., under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

From Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York:

More Hilltop Verses and Prayers. By Ralph Spaulding Cushman, and Robert Earl Cushman 4½×7. 96 pages. \$1.00.

From Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.:

Thou Art With Me. Words of Cheer for the Sick. Edited by Daniel Nystrom. 4¼×6¼. 24 pages. 15 cents.

From the Bethany Press, St. Louis, Mo.:

Toward a Christian Home. By Florence M. Sly. E. Lee Neal, Editor. 5½×8½. 32 pages. 45 cents.

From Wm. Collins Sons & Co., New York, N. Y.:

Prince of the House of David. By Rev. J. H. Ingraham, D. D. 5×7¼. 286 pages. \$1.25.

From Falmouth Publishing House, Portland, Maine:

Ruth. By Effie Lawrence Marshall. 6½×8. 195 pages. \$2.50.

From Lutheran Publishing House, Blair, Nebr.:

Alone with God. By C. Skovgaard—Petersen. Translated by C. C. Kloth. 5½×8. 16 pages. 30 cents.

From Moody Press, Chicago 10, Ill.:

Illustrations of Bible Truth. By H. A. Ironside. 5½×7¾. 121 pages. \$1.25.

Building a Minister's Library. By Elgin S. Moyer. 5×6¾. 47 pages. 35 cents.

From the Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa.:

Whatever You do. By Clarence C. Stoughton. Stewardship and the Christian Vocation. 5×7. 96 pages. 50 cents.

From Fleming H. Revell Co., New York:

Not My Own. A Christian Novel. By Ethel Matson. 5¾×8¾. 207 pages. \$2.50.

From the Warner Press, Anderson, Ind.:

Beautiful Poems on Jesus. Compiled by Basil Miller, Ph. D., S. T. D. 5¾×8¾. 324 pages. \$2.00.

From the Westminster Press, Philadelphia 7, Pa.:

The Loneliest Journey. By Frances I. Jackson. 5¼×7¼. 95 pages. \$1.50.

From the John C. Winston Co., Philadelphia, Pa.:

5500 Questions and Answers on the Sacred Scriptures, Comprising All the Books of the Old and the New Testaments. 6×8¾. 92 pages. \$1.00.

From Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

Easy-To-Get-Object Lessons. By Charles C. Ryrie. 5¼×7½. 48 pages. 50 cents.

Missionary and Geography Quizzes. By Vernon Howard. 5¼×7¾. 29 pages. 35 cents.

