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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 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri

THE CHRIST OF ALL NATIONS. By Paul Gunness. Association Press, New York. 1950. 285 pages, 5½×8½. \$2.75.

This book is chiefly a harmony of the four Gospels printed as one consecutive narrative. The author says that when he was in a prison camp in Germany in 1943, while all other books had been taken away, he still had his New Testament. Originally the account was written "in pencil on torn scraps of paper." These words of the Foreword should be quoted: "I endeavored not merely to create a 'harmony of the Gospels' in which a paragraph is taken from one Gospel and a parallel passage from another, but rather to attempt to re-construct every sentence of dialogue, to weave into a single sequence every detail of description, and to reemphasize the march of time as the story moves toward its dramatic climax." The English text used is that of the Authorized Version. Here and there in special units prophecies of the Old Testament are inserted. In an Appendix the so-called synopsis is given in which the various events of the life of Christ are enumerated, and in parallel columns the references from the four Gospels are printed. Here and there the Bible student will feel disposed to arrange matters in a different order, but even in such instances it is of value to see how the author, working under difficult conditions and equipped with nothing but the Bible account itself, visualized the sequence of the various episodes.

W. F. ARNDT

GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD. By Elizabeth Goudge. Coward-McCann, Inc., New York. 311 pages, 6×9. \$3.50.

Another Life of Christ! It is gratifying to see that the book is not only charmingly written, as might indeed be expected because Miss Goudge has won fame as an authoress, but that the vital teachings of the Christian faith, especially the doctrines of the deity of Christ and His all-sufficient atonement, are adhered to and stated with warmth. Miss Goudge is an English lady whose father was a Canon of Ely Cathedral and later Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. I do not think that the work is intended to bring us new insights or to introduce novel theories. Its *raison d'être* is simply the wish of a gifted writer to tell in her own words the sweetest story ever told, describing the old and yet ever new Gospel episodes as she with her lively and trained imagination visualizes them. The Palestinian countryside and the life in the towns and villages are painted with delightful vividness. The book must not be thought of as

a Life of Christ like that of Dean Farrar, where the historical background is furnished and questions of exegesis and harmonization are considered. It is rather an artist's account of what Christ did and said during the short years when He "tabernacled" among men. In fact, it is one of the faults of the book that at times supplementary information furnished in one of the Gospels for the narrative in the others is not used. To give an example, the meeting between John the Baptist and Jesus prior to our Lord's baptism is reported as related in Matthew 3; but what John 1 says about it is not woven into the narrative. Here and there the authoress apparently does not take the Gospel account at face value. Thus the appearance of the angelic host over the fields of Bethlehem at the time of the birth of Christ is rationalized: "It seemed to the happy shepherds that the very stars were singing, each star an angel of the heavenly host. As the glory of heaven streamed out to the four corners of the earth it seemed that the light was the music and the music was the light" (p. 26). As to Christ's descent into hell, spoken of 1 Pet. 3:19, the writer says of our Lord: "He went among the ignorant souls who longed for God and taught them and saved them in that world just as He had done in this" (p. 294). There are other passages where objections have to be raised on doctrinal grounds. On p. 32 a disconcerting typographical error has slipped in: in the thirteenth line from the bottom "almost" should be changed to "also."

W. F. ARNDT

THE GOSPEL MESSAGE OF ST. MARK. By R. H. Lightfoot. Oxford at the Clarendon Press. 1950. 117 pages, 5½×9. \$2.75.

While this book is not written in the easy, sprightly style which characterizes the works of Dr. Edgar J. Goodspeed and the late Prof. A. T. Robertson, the student who is not afraid of real concentrated mental effort will here find an ample reward. The contents of the little work can best be indicated by the chapter headings: 1. The reception of St. Mark's Gospel in the Church and a survey of its contents; 2. The first chapter of St. Mark's Gospel; 3. The Lord's Messiahship in St. Mark's Gospel; 4. The connection of chapter thirteen with the Passion Narrative; 5. The cleansing of the Temple in St. Mark's Gospel; 6. The cleansing of the Temple in St. John's Gospel; 7. St. Mark's Gospel—complete or incomplete? 8. Form criticism and the study of the Gospels. In an appendix the question pertaining to the ending of Mark's Gospel is given some further consideration. Not all the doctrinal and critical statements are acceptable to the editors and readers of the C. T. M., but the tone of the book is conservative and helpful to the scholar who is concerned about his own relationship to the Savior. The author takes the view that Mark's Gospel ended at 16:8—a position which this reviewer finds unacceptable, not on doctrinal, but critical grounds. In my opinion, the ending as given in the Textus Receptus and laid before us in the Authorized Version is genuine, though not inconsiderable difficulties have to be faced as one takes

that view, and even thoroughly conservative scholars like Prof. Stonehouse of Philadelphia have arrived at a different conclusion. The chapter on form criticism is probably as favorable an account as a conservative scholar can give of this new method of studying Christian teaching as it was carried on before the Gospels were written. On the three reports of the cleansing of the Temple, Dr. Lightfoot passes by the easy explanation which simply follows the Evangelists and assumes that Jesus cleansed the temple twice, at the beginning and at the end of His ministry. Dr. Lightfoot holds there was but one occasion of this kind, and he inclines to the view that it occurred during Holy Week, a few days before the Crucifixion. It will be seen then that when I call the author conservative, the term is employed in a very relative sense. Dr. Lightfoot is Dean Ireland Professor of Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Oxford, England.

W. F. ARNDT

A HARMONY AND COMMENTARY ON THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL ACCORDING TO THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES AND THE PAULINE EPISTLES.

By Rev. Frank J. Goodwin, D.D. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 1951. 240 pages, 5½ × 8. \$2.50.

Here is an old valuable work in a new dress. We welcome it. Students of the life of St. Paul who were acquainted with the pertinent literature have often, I am sure, gone to this Harmony in order to see how certain problems were treated. The idea of the book may have been suggested by the harmonies of the Gospels, which are fairly numerous. The introduction says, "Luke's history of the Apostle's life is taken as a basis and is printed entire, and to it are added such passages from Paul's letters, written at different times and with various purposes, as are parallel or supplementary to the Acts." To give an example, every one of us recalls the account of the stoning of Paul in Lystra related Acts 14:6-13. The same matter is reported on 2 Cor. 11:24-25, and this passage is quoted in full. In this way the various notices of the New Testament having reference to certain events in the life of Paul are brought together. As a result the book is a very convenient means of obtaining full New Testament information on any point belonging to Paul's career. It must be remembered, of course, that we are here dealing with an old work and that the scholarship that is represented is that which obtained quite generally about seventy years ago. In spite of this, however, the work retains great value, and the appendices, seventeen in number, in which special points or problems are given closer examination, can still be read with profit, even though on some chronological aspects our opinion today may be different.

W. F. ARNDT

THE CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE. By Edward T. Ramsdall. Nashville: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1950. 218 pages, 5½ × 8¼. \$2.50.

The author, Professor of Systematic Theology in the School of Religion, Vanderbilt University, makes a sincere attempt to find a synthesis between

faith and reason. He points out that philosophy has not found the true meaning of life, which according to our author is found only in the Christian faith in God's *agape*. He states that Jesus, "the incarnation of God's love," is the Word of God for our day and the key to understand our basic problem. The author is oriented in Personalism, the "theology" of the Methodist Bostonians Borden P. Bowne, A. C. Knudson, and Edgar S. Brightman. This school believes that our main problem is the frustration of our essential personality and that the answer to this problem lies solely in the divine power to unify our personality. This is definitely a form of moralism. Our author states: "Christ both reveals the perfect image of God and mediates its restoration and fulfillment in the life of man" (p. 95).

In Chapter I, "Faith and Reason," the author points out that both the philosopher's and the Christian's "faith" is determined by what each considers significant. The two arrive at contrary opinions because their "perspective differs." From the Christian's perspective, God is not simply "a logical postulation of practical reason," but a "dynamic condition of goodness" (p. 41). From the Christian perspective the most important question is "What must I do to understand my essential humanity and to realize the potential goodness of life?" (P. 43.)

Chapter II shows that, for the Christian, paradox is an important tool of finding and describing the truth. The author finds the heart of the Christian faith in the paradox of God's infinite love revealed in Creation and of man's finite self-love, or in other words, man's potentiality is realized only as he is redeemed from himself and as God is seen as the Creator and the Goal of life (p. 57 f.).

Chapter III is intended to set forth the content of Revelation as "the dynamic of the goodness of God" (p. 79). According to the philosophical perspective, *man* finds God. According to the Christian perspective, *God* seeks and finds man in the Word, i. e., God's creative activity to make men purposeful personalities. Here the pitfalls of personalistic moralism come to the surface, particularly the idea of man's inherent potentiality for goodness (p. 83); man's responsibility for living a moral life (85); divine judgment as a trying and testing of man (87); and redemptive love as the divine deliverance from the bondage of sin and the divine initiative for the "community of love" (93).

In Chapter IV the author sets forth his reason for his belief in the Incarnation. It is refreshing to note that he disagrees with Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, to whom the earthly life of Jesus is unimportant on the false premise that faith deals only with the exalted Christ. However, from the orientation of his personalism he sees the Incarnation as the medium to bring to man the absolute and eternal goodness of God and to help him to understand divine goodness in relation to his personality (114 f.). "The incarnation speaks of the possibility of the good that is latent in every man as a child of God. . . . It bids us believe in the primacy of the personal. It illuminates the good as concern for others" (116 f.). In spite

of the many fine references to Christ's Person, the moralistic element so overshadows everything that the Christian no longer sees Christ in His redemptive work, but only as "incarnate love," exhibiting in the life and death of Jesus "God's goodness among men."

In the chapter on Man and Sin the author leans toward Brunner (*Man in Revolt*) and Niebuhr (*The Nature of Man*), who describe sin as pride manifested in the attempt of the finite to be infinite. This section contains many excellent statements, but in describing sin primarily as social damage it fails to see sin's true nature, namely, rebellion against God. Accordingly the author believes that our greatest need is deliverance from the power of our self-seeking (p. 165), whereas, according to the Scriptures, it is freedom from the wrath of God.

In the concluding chapter he discusses the meaning of the Cross in the light of the preceding premises. In several instances the author speaks of the vicarious atonement in terms which sound remarkably orthodox. Then again his personalistic philosophy with a tinge of the moral-influence theory comes to the surface. "In the Cross God's love breaks through our self-love to reveal its pervasive and potential tragedy. . . . The humility of God becomes the means of our humility" (p. 174). "Here is the understanding that in suffering love alone is our guilt finally overcome. Not that the suffering of any individual is sufficient to make amends for his sin, but that the suffering of God's Servant (whether of Israel as a nation or of the promised Messiah) is sufficient" (p. 182).

The book seems of value to us as showing that, with all its emphasis on the reality of sin, Neo-Orthodoxy is not ready to see sin in its true nature and therefore has not found the solution to man's basic problem, the Scriptural doctrine of the vicarious atonement. F. E. MAYER

MARTIN LUTHER, SEELE UND SENDUNG. Hans Preuss, C. Bertelsmann Verlag, Guetersloh.

MARTIN LUTHER, DOKTOR DER HEILIGEN SCHRIFT, REFORMATOR DER KIRCHE. Willem Jan Kooiman, Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, 1949.

LUTHER, ANBRUCH UND KRISE DER NEUZEIT. Hanns Lilje, Laetare Verlag, Nuernberg, 1948.

Three books which will offer much enjoyment and some information to those who have a reasonable command of the German language; the style is simple, not as involved as so much of later German literature.

The first book is the latest and the last publication of a famous Luther scholar. Dr. Preuss, professor at Erlangen since 1914, departed this life in the second week of May at the age of 75 years.

Dr. Preuss's book is well characterized in the subtitle; it stresses the inner development of Luther and his later work as a result of this development. After a very brief résumé of his life and a chapter on Luther's features (!) Luther's activity is discussed topically. It is a eulogy on Luther, with copious use of Luther's own words. Some samples of the

author's unique style may illustrate. — Was the suffering of Luther's early years pathologic (as Catholic authors claim)? Then why was it not healed in a medical way? But the medicine was the Gospel; all those big Greek-Latin words offer no explanation — no more than Onkel Braesig's "dass die Armut von der Powerté herkommt." — Luther is consciously a strong fighter; Luther's time still walked in armor; even Melanchthon, who always froze in his furs and double shirts, once shyly said: Nothing is more beautiful than a man in armor. He fights for freedom from evil conscience and the wrath of God, from all hypocrisy and cowardice; his objection to the Swiss was in part that they "mummel" — do not speak plain. The coarse forester can get very angry — like a thunderstorm which leaves the air clean and cool. "Greift man meine Person an, das kann ich wohl vertragen; greift man aber das Amt an, Wort und Sakrament, dann wuerde ich fluchen, dass der Himmel kracht, da will ich dich bei vierzig Millionen Meilen unter die Hoelle fluchen." Erasmus was a pacifist — and everything remained rotten. Luther sets all the world in uproar — to save it. "Mit Laecheln kann man wohl eine Welt verachten, aber nicht retten." — In the controversy on the Lord's Supper, Luther fought on a double front: Against Catholics, who made out of God's gift to us a gift of man to God, a sacrifice — a violent perversion of the Gospel, turning a gracious act of God into a meritorious work of man; and against the "Schwaermer," who with their vague and contradictory attempts of an explanation of God's mystery again made the way of salvation uncertain. — A final section speaks of Luther and the Reformation as standing midway between Middle Ages and Modern Times, taking in part of each and purifying both.

The second text is a very fine translation of a Dutch book written for confirmation classes (note, however, that Dutch boys and girls are customarily confirmed at the age of 17—18 years or older). It is a simple account of Luther's life, his struggles and the solution of all his problems found in the Gospel. In the end the author adds a good explanation for the fact (so much discussed in our days) that Luther does not seem greatly concerned about the relation between Church and State and that it is difficult to get a clear picture of what his opinion was on that matter.

Bishop Lilje's book was born in "Gestapo-Haft," where he and his companions lay in hourly expectation of death. That perhaps explains in part why it is not a historic investigation, but an attempt to teach his countrymen and others (who know so little about it and evidently care less) what the basic principles of the Reformation were and that on these same principles all of Europe's hope for the future must rest. The author has a remarkable gift of meeting his reader face to face — leaving the "ivory tower" of the objective historian and speaking straight to the common sense of the average Christian reader. Those terrible words of Luther that the peasants, overrunning the land in murderous revolution, must be killed like mad dogs, lose their frightfulness when we remember that he is speaking of rebels who actually were raving like mad dogs. When you

face a mad dog, the rule is: "If you do not hit him, he will hit you."— Against the ever-repeated slander that Luther in 1517 set out to disrupt the Church, he adduces multiple proof that for more than two decades no one on either side, Protestant or Catholic, thought that the Reformation meant a new Church. In my opinion the climax in the entire book is reached in the section which deals with the organization of the Church— why Luther left the "political organization" of the Reformation to the princes: simply because there was no other solution; and no one at that time regarded it in any other light. Only in one way could it have been avoided: by the establishment of a "Freiwilligkeitskirche"— a private organization of purely voluntary membership— and the very idea of such an organization does not dawn on Europe until the 18th century. It is a small book, but eminently satisfying as far as it goes, and no one will regret buying it.

THEO. HOYER

THE CHRISTIAN PASTOR. By Wayne E. Oates. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia. 177 pages, 5¼×8. \$3.00.

The author is assistant of Pastoral Care and Psychology of Religion at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has arranged his book in two sections. Part I (pages 13—74) entitled "The Pastoral Task" includes discussions of: 1. The crisis ministry of the pastor, such as occasioned by the birth of a child in a family, conversion, choice of vocation, marriage, illness, bereavement, and death; 2. The symbolic role of the pastor as a representative of God, a reminder of Jesus, an instrument of the Holy Spirit, and a representative of a specific church; 3. The personal qualifications of a pastor, that he must be above reproach, not a novice, manager of his own household, sane, sensible, of a sound mind, have a firm hold on the sure Word, a healthy and apt teacher, working not by constraint but willingly; and 4. The total task of the pastor in its relation to religious education, preaching, and worship.

Part II (pages 75—150) deals with pastoral methods. The training and experience of the author in psychology and pastoral counseling has enabled him to make a good contribution to the literature in this field. He discusses 1. The unspoken influences on pastoral methods in every situation in which a pastor works, such as: The Christian equation, the nature of the approach, the social role of the pastor, the time element, social setting, age and intelligence levels, the family situation, cultural pattern, and physical and mental health; 2. The levels of pastoral care, such as friendship, comfort, confession, teaching, and pastoral counseling and psychotherapy.

In the discussion of pastoral counseling one finds the pendulum swinging to the extreme all too often in these times. This reviewer found Dr. Oates' chapters "sane and sensible." The pastor who wishes to improve his methods and techniques in this important phase of his shepherding will find these discussions helpful.

In the final chapter the author gives suggestions on referrals to community resources for helping people.

In three appendixes are found (A) a list of resources for clinical pastoral training. It is surprising that Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, is not listed. It has an accredited clinical training program since 1949. Appendix B contains suggestions on keeping records and C a listing of books for study.

L. J. SIECK

A PLANNED PROGRAM FOR THE CHURCH YEAR. By Weldon Crossland. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York. 165 pages, 5×7¼. \$2.00.

The author, who is pastor of Asbury First Methodist Church, Rochester, N. Y., emphasizes that the work of every church is of such supreme importance as to deserve the most careful long-range planning and offers some helpful suggestions on planning a church-wide program, choosing the major objectives, providing worship for all, developing lay leadership, etc.

His last chapter on "How to Co-operate with Other Churches" is unionistic. He pronounces the present unitive movement of the Protestant communions "the outstanding fact in the religious life of the United States today."

Every church year should be planned so that Christ is glorified in His members. This emphasis is forgotten in this volume.

L. J. SIECK

MINISTER'S PERSONAL RECORD. By Bernard Brunsting. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 135 pages, 7½×5. \$2.00.

This book is intended as a handy-size, reasonably priced book in which the minister may keep a permanent and continuous record of his ministry. It provides space for the recording of official acts, accessions and transfers of members, sermons and addresses, personal publications, record of churches served, together with a summary of the progress and achievement, statistics, etc. It is intended to cover a five-year period. Our opinion is that for the use of our pastors the space has not been properly allocated and that several categories that we would desire have not been included; also that it might have better been a loose-leaf volume. In small parishes it could be used to advantage. It is an excellent idea, but needs to be more adaptable to the needs of individual Lutheran parishes.

O. E. SOHN

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Philosophical Library, New York:

THE EDUCATION OF MAN. Aphorisms. By Heinrich Pestalozzi. With an Introduction by William H. Kilpatrick. 1951. 5¾×8¾. 93 pages. \$2.75.

From Pickering and Inglis, Ltd., London:

THE GLORIES OF OUR LORD. By H. C. Hewlett. Foreword by J. C. Tilyard. 5×7¼, 128 pages. 5/- net.