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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.

ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT. Edited by David Wesley Soper. Wilcox and Follett Company, Chicago, c. 1951. 126 pages, 5¾×8½. \$2.00.

Professor Soper of Beloit College, editor of *These Found the Way*, an anthology of expressions by converts to Protestant Christianity, herewith presents articles by four critics within Protestantism and a concluding article by himself on the unity of the Church. Interesting in his article is his stress on Luther's principle of the Church as an antidote to secularism and particularism in the Church. Chad Walsh writes on "The Reform of Protestant Worship." Nels F. S. Ferré writes on "Post-Critical Protestantism," impressing that tomorrow's Protestantism must preach the primacy of God as Creator, Christ Jesus as the Revelation of God in the flesh, the Holy Spirit as God's Sanctifier and Comforter, and the Church as the body of Christ and organ of God to the world. His article has an interesting other-worldly facet. Robert Earl Cushman of the Divinity School of Duke University writes on "New Testament Faith and the Mind of the Church Today." He defends the view of Christ which is by faith and gives a summary of the Christian message based on Acts and following C. H. Dodd. Mr. Cushman warns that "Modern Protestant Christianity is clearly on trial. . . . It is in danger of dying from sheer boredom with itself." (P. 95.) David Johnston Maitland writes on "Christianity and Work." He is a Congregational-Christian minister to students at the University of Wisconsin. His article concerns the problem of the Church to relate its message to the vocations and to the laboring classes.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

LUTHER DISCOVERS THE GOSPEL. *New Light upon Luther's Way from Medieval Catholicism to Evangelical Faith.* By Uuras Saarnivaara, Ph. D., Th. D. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis. XV and 146 pages. \$1.95 net.

This book is entitled to more than a brief review in these columns. A longer discussion of the book will follow when time and space permits. Object of this notice is to recommend it to all our readers. It should really be a "must" for every Lutheran pastor and required reading for everyone who is not well informed—and has the desire to be better informed—as to the essence of the Gospel, which Luther learned from St. Paul and proclaimed to the world.

THEO. HOYER

WHAT AMERICANS BELIEVE AND HOW THEY WORSHIP. By J. Paul Williams. Harper and Brothers, Publisher, New York 16, N.Y., June 4, 1952. X+400 pages, 5½×8½. \$5.00.

This textbook in the field of Comparative Symbolics is written by a liberal theologian for students who seek an alleged least common denominator in all forms of beliefs and worship. The title indicates that the author does not restrict himself to the faith and practice of the various church bodies. His interest is to establish the basic "religious" motivations of the "un-churched" as well as the "churched" Americans. Lack of space compelled him to concentrate on only four non-ecclesiastical movements, astrology, hedonism, humanism, and nationalism. The adherents of these and many similar movements are said to have a vital faith and to be a potent factor in American life. The same is said to be true of Mormonism, Judaism, Christian Science. As the author takes the term "believe" in a very broad sense, so also the term "worship" denotes for him any "religious" devotion which may find expression in a person's absolute committal to his convictions and which need not be associated with a specific form of ritual or liturgy. By and large the book contains much factual information, interestingly presented in a somewhat journalistic style. The author covers the following topics:

- The Roman Catholic Church — defender of a revelation
- Protestantism (in general) — which reaffirms the faith
- Lutheran Churches — guardians of orthodoxy
- The Protestant Episcopal Church — which emphasizes ritual
- Presbyterian Churches — at the theological center
- Congregationalists and Unitarians — theologically liberal
- Baptists and Disciples — defenders of religious freedom
- Quakers — practicing mystics
- The Methodist Church — evangelical organization
- Judaism — the mother institution
- Some Recent Religious Innovations — experimentalists
- Some Non-ecclesiastical Spiritual Movements — which deny kinship
- The Role of Religion in Shaping American Destiny

It is of the essence of liberal theology to be extremely tolerant of every form of religion so long as its adherents refrain from every type of authoritarianism. Liberal theologians are therefore in no position to interpret justly the beliefs and worships of church bodies which accept the authority of God's Word. This is very evident in the author's attempt to interpret Lutheran theology and cultus. He does not understand the Lutheran doctrine of the *Una Sancta* and therefore completely misses the sense and spirit of the Lutheran Confessions. He actually seems to think that what Lutherans ascribe to the *Una Sancta* is to be applied to Lutheranism. To prove his point the author (p. 152) quotes Dr. Dau's fine statement on the unique character of Christianity, but makes it appear

that Dr. Dau is speaking of Lutheranism. Such an error is inexcusable, since Dr. Dau in the immediate context quotes Max Mueller, Thomas Arnold, and Mark Hopkins for the absolute uniqueness—not of Lutheranism—but of Christianity. A little checking might have revealed that the late Dr. Michelfelder—whose official position brought him very close to many W. C. C. leaders—and not a Missouri Synod editor coined the term "ecumaniacs." To us it seems to be in bad taste to charge the Missouri Synod with an intransigent spirit by an anecdotal reference to the protest against the ritual of the American Legion on the part of a group of Wisconsin Synod Lutherans.

F. E. MAYER

THE DOCTRINE OF GOD. By Herman Bavinck. Translated by William Hendriksen. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 407 pages, 9×6. \$5.

Herman Bavinck was a Dutch theologian and political figure who lived at the close of the nineteenth century, teaching theological subjects first at the Theological School at Kampen (1883—1902) and then at the Free University of Amsterdam (1902—1921). A scholar of great erudition and literary activity, a famous pulpit orator who attracted to his services both the learned and the common people, a mold of theological, political, and cultural opinion, a simple Christian believer, who always evinced devout reverence for the divine Word, he is held in high regard wherever Calvinistic theology is cherished. His *magnum opus*, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, which between 1895 and 1918 was published in three editions, is now presented to English-speaking students by Dr. Wm. Hendriksen, professor of systematic theology at Calvin Seminary. The third edition of Dr. Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics* appeared in four large volumes, of which the first was a treatise of Fundamental Apologetics. In the second volume the author treats Theology Proper, or the Doctrine of God. It treats in particular: God's Incomprehensibility, Knowability, Names, Incommunicable Attributes, Communicable Attributes, the Holy Trinity, and God's Counsel (Predestination). The presentation of the subject-matter is not quite as lucid as is that of Hodge, but Dr. Bavinck's thoroughness, scholarliness, confutation of erring philosophies and heresies, as well as his earnest emphasis on Christian essentials, make the study of this somewhat quaint and outlandish Doctrinal Theology a profitable task.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BIBLICAL AND THEOLOGICAL STUDIES. By Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield. Edited by Samuel G. Craig; publ. by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia, Pa. 1952. \$4.50. 580 and xlviii pages.

This is the third volume in the series of Warfield's writings published by the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company. The first volume contained Warfield's articles on Inspiration and the Authority of

the Bible (cp. Book Review, C. T. M., 1950, p. 151) and the second volume his principal writings on the Person and Work of Christ (reviewed in C. T. M., 1950, p. 478). The third volume contains Warfield's principal writings on theology proper, predestination, faith, and related topics. The volume contains the following articles: Christian Supernaturalism; The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity; "God Our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ"; The Divine Messiah in the Old Testament; The Supernatural Birth of Jesus; the Foresight of Jesus; Misconception of Jesus, and Blasphemy of the Son of Man; On the Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race; Imputation; Predestination; Are They Few That be Saved?; On the Biblical Notion of "Renewal"; On Faith in Its Psychological Aspects; Faith; Mysticism and Christianity; The Prophecies of St. Paul; God's Immeasurable Love; The Prodigal Son; The Leading of the Spirit; False Religions and the True.

All articles reflect Warfield's high scholarship, but also his Calvinistic orientation. The editor, Samuel G. Craig, has indebted himself to the reader by a splendid evaluation of Warfield as a theologian. Warfield (Nov. 5, 1857—Feb. 17, 1921) occupies the front rank of the modern Calvinistic apologists. He contended, on the one hand, for supernaturalism in salvation or for the absolute sovereignty of God; on the other hand, for the freedom of human will. Warfield meets the charge of holding an irreconcilable contradiction by stating that free will does not involve a choice in two directions, but a choice in accord with man's nature. This is the typical Augustinian view. The charge of particularism which is leveled at Calvinism is explained by Warfield as follows:

"The love of God is in its exercise necessarily under the control of His righteousness: to plead that His love has suffered an eclipse because He does not do all that He has the bare power to do, is in effect to deny to Him a moral nature. The real solution to the puzzle that is raised with respect to the distribution of the divine grace is, then, not to be sought along the lines either of the denial of the omnipotence of God's grace with the Arminians, or of the denial of the reality of His reprobation with our neo-universalists, but in the affirmation of His righteousness. The old answer is after all the only sufficient one: God in His love saves as many of the guilty race as He can get the consent of His whole nature to save. Being God and all that God is, He will not permit His ineffable love to betray Him into any action which is not right."

It certainly speaks well for conservative Reformed theologians that the republication of Warfield's studies is made possible.

F. E. MAYER