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Book Review. - Literatur

Victor Bartling

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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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.

DAS ZIEL ALLER DINGE. DAS LETZTE WORT DES ERHOECHTEN AN SEINE ANGEFOCHTENE GEMEINDE. BIBELSTUNDEN UEBER DIE OFFENBARUNG JOHANNIS. By Hellmuth Frey. Calwer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1951. 256 Seiten. DM 11.80.

This popular exposition of the Apocalypse is from the pen of a Lutheran Old Testament scholar who has written a number of expositions of Old Testament books that are being widely read in German circles. The present book is the ripe fruit of the author's work on the Apocalypse in his Bible classes and pulpits, in the ministry to comrades at the war-front and in prison camp, in the catastrophic period from 1930—1950. Both he and his auditors were victims of the demonic forces graphically described in the pages before us and were sustained by the promises given by the Ascended Victor to His harassed people. No reader of this exposition can miss the warmth and earnestness of true pastoral concern as the writer seeks to draw lessons of admonition and comfort from the revelations given to John with the aim to assure the Church that Christ is the Lord of history, who leads all events to the goal of the New Creation.

While the author is a mild pre-millennialist, this feature is not prominent and does not impair the general usefulness of this book for the reader who does not share the pre-millennial position. As to the structure of the Apocalypse, the author follows, in the main, the "recapitulatory" theory, which sees in the seven groups of visions the same interadventual period illuminated from different points of view. Many readers of this journal will be familiar with this principle of interpretation from Lenski's *Exposition of Revelation*, or from the very valuable book of W. Hendriksen, *More Than Conquerors* (Baker: Grand Rapids). With Frey's book and these two American expositions as aids, our pastors, I feel, would be quite well equipped to present this difficult book in an effective way to their people.

The author writes in a clear, vigorous style. The language should not prove too difficult for our younger pastors who still command a fairly good reading knowledge of German. The reviewer was particularly impressed by the powerful treatment of chapters 12—14; 20:11-15; 21:4-6; 21:9-27 and was happy to note throughout that the writer is not concerned about finding final fulfillment of the prophetic symbols in events of already recorded history, but seeks to uncover the background of his-

torical events in the forces of darkness that wage a losing fight against Christus Victor, in whose hands His people always rest secure, even in persecution and martyrdom, and who triumphantly brings history to God's intended goal.

V. BARTLING

TWO TREATISES ON THE MEANS OF GRACE. By Dr. M. Reu. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. Brochure. 120 pages, 9 by 6. \$1 net.

This volume offers reprints of two essays by the sainted Dr. M. Reu which are as timely today as when they first were written. In the first, Dr. Reu treats the subject *What is Scripture and How Can We Become Certain of Its Origin?* As in his well-known monograph *Luther and the Scriptures*, so also here the author defends verbal inspiration, though not a mechanical dictation inspiration, so that the Word of God in Scripture is the objective authoritative truth. Of this the believer becomes subjectively sure through the testimony of the Holy Ghost operating in and through the divine Word. In the second essay, *Can We Still Hold to the Lutheran Doctrine of the Lord's Supper?* Dr. Reu defends the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence against modern errorists in his usual scholarly way. Since there has been a constant demand for these two treatises, it was well for Augsburg Publishing House to supply them anew in clear and convenient reprints. The volume contains an explanatory "Foreword" by Dr. E. W. Matzner, Wartburg Seminary, and a most helpful bibliography for the study of the two doctrines.

J. T. MUELLER

PRAYER. By Karl Barth. Translated by Mrs. Sara F. Terrien. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 78 pages, 7×5. \$1.50.

From 1947 to 1949 Dr. Karl Barth delivered a series of lectures in French on prayer as conceived by the Reformers Luther and Calvin, and as we must regard it today in the light of the evangelical Reformation. The lectures were taken down in shorthand by some of his seminar students and are now offered to English-speaking readers in a very facile translation by Mrs. Terrien, wife of Dr. S. L. Terrien, associate professor of Old Testament, Union Theological Seminary, New York. We recommend these talks on prayer, which concern themselves chiefly with an exposition of the Lord's Prayer "according to the Catechisms of the Reformation." Barth, however, reserves the right to inject into the teachings of the Reformers his own ideas, though he usually assimilates thoughts from Luther, Calvin, and especially the Heidelberg Catechism. At times there are emphases which fail to do justice to Luther, as, for example, when he quotes the Wittenberg Reformer as holding the rigid, almost military idea that God commands prayer and so man must obey. This entirely neglects Luther's evangelical approach to prayer. Barth invariably quotes the two chief parts of the Biblical doctrine thus: "the Gospel and the Law," and this not by

accident, but as the reader may judge even from this simple, devotional work, because the Basel professor fails to see the clear and sharp distinction which Luther made between Law and Gospel. Frequently Barth, too, interprets the theology of the Reformers in the light of his own neo-orthodox thought, as when he says that it was the chief question of the Reformers how to have an encounter with God. Luther's great question before his "tower experience" was rather how he might obtain the grace of God and His forgiveness of sins. Sometimes Barth says rather startling things, as when he claims that in the word "Our Father" we pray not merely with the communion of saints, but also with those who do not pray (p. 34). We pray *with* all believers, but *for* unbelievers. Time and again the reader is prompted to ask what Barth really means, as when he says that God is our Father by virtue of this new birth realized at Christmas, on Good Friday, at Easter, and fulfilled at the moment of our Baptism (p. 35). To the reader it appears that Barth in expounding the Second Petition understands by "kingdom" not Christ's Kingdom of Grace, but merely His Kingdom of Glory. Or has he in mind perhaps a sort of Ritschlian kingdom of perfection? Unlike Luther, Barth does not understand by "bread" merely our many earthly needs, but also the spiritual blessings which bread in Scripture signifies; in short, "bread both earthly and celestial" (p. 62). Barth writes: "Far from me be the idea of preaching the devil to you" (p. 73); yet he preaches the devil as a very real and hideous reality. Occasionally one finds real French wit in the book, as when Barth says that the Reformers had no respect for the devil, since he is not very respectable (p. 73). Discriminating Lutheran readers will find Barth's exposition of the Lord's Prayer both interesting and instructive, though they will question many statements. J. T. MUELLER

BEKENNENDE KIRCHE. *Martin Niemoeller zum 60. Geburtstag*. Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen. 327 pages, 10x7. Bound. M. 13.50.

When German theologians of prominence reach the age of 60 years, their friends usually honor them with a *Festschrift* or dedicatory volume. Martin Niemoeller was one of the Germans who bade defiance to Hitler and one of the framers of the Barmen Confession. Those who are interested in this most important development of religious events in Central Europe will find in this book much that is worth studying. There are essays by Karl Barth, one of the leaders of the defiance group, Eivind Berggrav (Norway), Pierre Maury (France), Ewart E. Turner (America), George K. A. Bell (England), and so forth, not to speak of the many German theologians who are represented here. As one reads these various essays, of greater and lesser length and worth, one realizes that Barmen really represented a confession against the paganism which Hitlerism spread; but one understands, too, why the Lutheran groups, represented in the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, found this confession

inadequate and emphasized over against it Lutheran thought and theology. The volume is most valuable for college and seminary libraries, as also for the private libraries of pastors who have the money to buy it and the time to peruse its contents. As the title of the book indicates, the essays concern themselves not so much with Niemoeller and his work as rather with the duty of the Church to confess over against infidelity and tyranny.

J. T. MUELLER

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD IN CALVIN'S THEOLOGY. By Edward A. Dowey, Jr. Columbia University Press, New York. 1952. 207 pages, 5½×8. \$3.75.

The main purpose of this book is to present a critical exposition of Calvin's theological epistemology, with specific attention to the basic significance of the *duplex cognitio Domini*. In presenting the twofold knowledge of God, the author follows the order in the *Institutes*, first considering God as the Creator and secondly as the Redeemer in the Person of Christ. In a concluding chapter he shows the relation between this twofold knowledge. As the most recent contribution to a critical and interpretive examination of Calvin's theology this small volume merits the favorable attention of theological students.

L. W. SPITZ

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD. By G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952. 294 pages, 5½×8½. \$3.50.

This is the second of Professor Berkouwer's nineteen-volume series on Christian theology to be done into English. It may, according to his own definition of the term, be regarded as his theodicy, or justification, of God's providential rule. Defining theodicy as an attempt to defend God against all complaints or accusations by demonstrating the meaningfulness and purposefulness of God's activity in the world and in human life, he endeavors to prove that in spite of all enigmas and all criticisms God's governing of the world is holy, good, and just. The reader will find, however, that the author, like other dogmatists before him, still leaves a number of enigmas for him to ponder.

The modern attacks on the doctrine of God's providence sufficiently justify the appearance of this volume. Frequent references to other present-day theologians, such as Barth and Brunner, add to its relevancy for contemporary readers. The theological scholar will be interested in discovering to what extent, if at all, the author has been influenced by the men whom he quotes.

Professor Berkouwer does not pretend to supply the reader with a complete logical pattern of the doctrine of Providence. Aware of the enigmas involved, he insists that no logical scheme must ever be allowed to cut short the actual speech of Scripture, not even a scheme deduced from the

eternal decree of God. Granted; but fidelity to the exact words of Scripture need not be incompatible with dogmatical formulations. Of this the author, too, is aware. His own books are the most convincing proof. It is for another reason that he, for instance, rejects so-called "mixed articles" in favor of "pure articles" of faith. On this point many of his fellow dogmaticians disagree with him. In the area of Providence some things, according to Scripture, can be known of God besides the things God has revealed about Himself in His Word (Rom. 1:19-21).

Professor Berkouwer puts a significant question mark after the doctrine of divine concurrence. He disallows the distinction between form and matter according to Bavinck's formulation. The latter explains that man speaks, acts, believes, and it is God alone who lends the sinner all the life and energy that he needs to commit sin; yet, the subject and author of the sin is man, and not God. It is obvious from Scripture that God moves the atom, but He is not the cause of sin. Professor Berkouwer ultimately consigns this entire matter to faith. He says: "Our 'problem' is resolved in our listening to God's revelation." With that every Bible student will agree. But the question still remains: "What has God revealed with regard to His providence and the sinner's sin?"

The publishers are to be commended for making this useful series available to the American reader.

L. W. SPITZ

FAITH AND SANCTIFICATION. By G. C. Berkouwer. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Mich. 1952. 193 pages, 5½ by 8½. \$3.00.

This is the first of Dr. Berkouwer's nineteen-volume series in Christian theology to be translated into English. The author occupies the Chair of Systematic Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam. His theology is Reformed. He is a faithful disciple of John Calvin and thoroughly at home in the Reformed confessions, but he desires above all to be regarded as a Biblical scholar. This purpose makes his work of particular value in its criticism of modern less Biblical theologians. Noteworthy is the author's concern for the proper relation between justification and sanctification. "Genuine sanctification," he repeats, "stands or falls with this continued orientation toward justification and the remission of sins." This same interest induces him to describe the progress of sanctification as something vastly different, as it certainly is, from mere moralistic improvement. Not equally successful is his presentation of the Lutheran doctrine regarding the significance of the Law for believers. Just what, for instance, does he mean when he makes Lutherans say: "Faith and love are independent sources of spontaneous activity"? It is the difference between the Reformed and the Lutheran interpretation of Scripture which should keep the reader alert to critical analysis. Dr. Berkouwer's works can be recommended for such a fruitful theological exercise.

L. W. SPITZ

LUTHER'S PROGRESS TO THE DIET OF WORMS, 1521. By Gordon Rupp. A Cloister Press Book. Wilcox & Follett Co., Chicago. 109 pages. No. 17-1059. \$2.00.

One is tempted to say: Another book on Luther. But it is not just another book on Luther. The author is an Englishman, a minister in the Methodist Church, professor of Church History at Richmond College, a Methodist school of divinity in the University of London. There are many treatises on Luther's life and work of German and Scandinavian, that is, Lutheran origin; others are few in number. It is interesting and valuable to hear the story related by a man of different background and environment. Outstanding is the author's acquaintance with Luther's own writings; most of the pages have numerous footnotes referring to the Weimar Edition of Luther's works, usually citing Luther's own words. There is much evidence of the writer's thorough knowledge of late German and Scandinavian studies. Not that the book offers much that is new to a Luther student; but it is written for English laymen who are not so well versed in the Luther literature of the last 30 to 40 years; and it is written in bold, plain language anyone can understand, a welcome change from much that is offered today. It is true, it is written for the English reader and therefore contains numerous references to English history and literature. — Altogether it is fascinating and stimulating reading. The chapters on Luther's 95 Theses (The Hubbub) and on the Leipzig Debate (Great Argument) are classic and cause a regretful wish in the reader's heart that the other chapters were longer and more detailed. — That is perhaps the only criticism that can be expressed: the brevity of the discussion because of the desire (or necessity?) of condensing the material into 108 pages. The result is that some sections are too brief to be fully appreciated by readers who have not made the story of Luther and the Reformation the object of deeper study. When, e. g., he speaks of the reason why Luther was called back from Wittenberg to Erfurt in 1509 as "an affair of ruffled academic dignity," I'm afraid a good many readers will have to consult Schwiebert *et al* for explanation. Because of this striving for brevity (I do not think that the author deliberately sidesteps the question!) the book makes it appear as though that inner soul struggle for assurance of his salvation began with Luther's entrance into the monastery, when, in fact, it began much earlier and was really the reason for his joining the Augustinians. One would like to quote at length. Dr. Rupp calls attention to the fact that neither historical investigation nor study of Luther's theological development alone will enable us to understand Luther; both are necessary. He has no hope that once for all time he will stop the circulation of "elderly and grubby" libels "that have often been met in the past," though "sooner or later even polemical publicists will tire of rehashing Denifle and Grisar." (I hope he is right!) — At times the nationality of the author shines through. "There could be (in Germany)

no such alliance between royalty and gentry as in England would produce a Reformation Parliament, or between the gentry and the boroughs as could achieve the Elizabethan House of Commons." Poor Germany! But it seems to me the Church fared better in Germany than in the English Reformation! The very first sentence in the book points to a commendable characteristic; Luther is quoted: "I was born at Eisleben and baptized in St. Peter's there. I do not remember this, but I believe my parents and fellow countrymen." The author gives considerable latitude to Luther's humor.—Dr. Rupp thinks that "perhaps too much has been read into Luther's so-called 'Tower Experience' (*Turmerlebnis*—from the room in the monastery at Wittenberg in which, according to the *Table Talk* Luther came to a new understanding of Rom. 1:17)." If he means that the *Turmerlebnis* was not a sort of vision in which in a miraculous way Luther in a moment turned from all-wrong to all-right, we agree. Luther's development was a gradual growth. But somewhere, at some time, there had to come the moment when for the first time the thought came to him to compare the two sections of Rom. 1:17 and so reach the conclusion that the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel is not His "active" righteousness, but the righteousness "which avails before God" (*die Gerechtigkeit, die vor Gott gilt*), the perfect righteousness of Christ, which comes to us by faith (*per fidem*, Luther says); and that was the *Turmerlebnis*.—And now the oft-repeated regretful criticism. Our author says (p. 41); "It is important to guard against misunderstanding at this point, for some of the wisest scholars have warned us against supposing we are here confronted with some abstract doctrine of the imputation of the merits of Christ like that of some forms of later Lutheran orthodoxy." Do authors think it an insult to Luther to charge him with teaching the vicarious substitutional work of Christ? To delete this blessed doctrine from Luther's works would certainly mean reducing the volume of his writings considerably. Take only one passage, one which Rupp himself cites—if he had only quoted the full context! It reads:

"Cor enim credentis in Christum, si reprehenderit eum et accusaverit eum contra eum testificans de malo opere, mox avertit se et ad Christum convertit dicitque: Hic autem satisfecit, hic iustus est, hic mea defensio, hic pro me mortuus est, hic suam iustitiam meam fecit et meum peccatum suum fecit. Quod si peccatum meum suum fecit, iam ego illud non habeo et sum liber. Si autem iustitiam suam meam fecit, iam iustus ego sum eadem iustitia qua ille. Peccatum autem meum illum non potest absorbere, sed absorbetur in abisso iustitiae eius infinita, cum sit ipse Deus benedictus in saecula." (From Luther's Lectures on Romans, W. Ed. 56, 204.)

Dr. Rupp's little book merits better proofreading; there are a number of printer's errors, only one, however, of any importance, on p. 81; to charge Spalatin with "temerity" would have given Luther an opportunity for one of his good-natured quips!

THEO. HOYER

THE CHURCH IN COMMUNITY ACTION. By Harvey Seifert. Abingdon-Cokesbury, Nashville, 1952. 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 8, 240 pages. \$2.75.

The book surveys the areas of social and political life into which the Church should extend its concern. Therewith it enters upon scores of moot questions. The reader will ask two especially: 1) In what way does the Church of Jesus Christ bring the dynamic of the Christian Gospel to bear upon men so that they will concern themselves for the welfare of their community and world? 2) Does the Christian, moved by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, make his impact upon his world through his church as an organization, or through his part in community life and government as a Christian citizen? To the first question this book gives little answer. It is chiefly concerned with sketching obstacles, describing areas, and outlining methods of action. The author does not regard the alternative of the second question binding. He regards the chief corporate activity of the church toward community relations to be the educational one. But he sketches broadly the part which Christian citizens play as such in the reach of Christianity into the world. Valuable are the bibliographies for each chapter.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

HOW TO TALK WITH PEOPLE. By Irving J. Lee. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1952. 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 7 $\frac{3}{8}$, xiv + 176 pages. \$2.50.

This little book outlines the techniques of group discussion. It reflects the analysis of hundreds of group discussions, chiefly in the field of labor and management relations, which the author, a professor of speech at Northwestern University, attended. The author is swayed by the semantic movement, and some of his analysis is helpful when understood against that background.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

MARCHING OFF THE MAP. By Halford E. Luccock. Harper & Brothers, New York, 1952. 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 8 $\frac{1}{4}$, 192 pages. \$2.50.

The noted teacher of preaching at Yale, Simeon Stylites in the *Christian Century*, herewith publishes a volume of twenty-two sermons. In the *Minister's Workshop* has been a stimulus to many preachers, and this volume likewise has its facile and suggestive moments. Dr. Luccock has a staggering facility with literary allusions and quotations. At the level which he chooses to strike he does a finished job. However, that level is strictly a non-theological one, even though the preacher quotes and even uses his texts. His one reference to redemption, on the basis of Job 19, explicitly foregoes any theology of redemption. The closest to a presentation of the Christian message is the sermon "The Christmas Rush." Frequently the content closely approaches a doctrine of humanism. Dr. Luccock is the peer of American pulpit stylists. How we might wish that his utterances carried the Gospel of the Cross with as much charm as they do lesser themes.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

OUR DAILY HOMILY. By F. B. Meyer, D. D. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich. Five volumes, $3\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{1}{4}$, cloth binding, averaging 235 pages. Per set \$4.95.

This is an extensive offering of daily meditations on choice Bible texts similar to our well-known *Portals of Prayer* devotions and covering the entire Bible from Genesis to Revelation. There are nearly 1,200 of these little homilies, by which the author seeks to reach the hearts of the sick, perplexed, and discouraged children of God. A fair sampling of these devotions leads us to state that, without vouching for every statement that is made, much spiritual good can be derived from the prayerful perusal of these little volumes.

O. E. SOHN

MISSION TO AMERICA. By Truman B. Douglass. Friendship Press, 156 Fifth avenue, New York 10, N. Y. 148 pages, $5 \times 7\frac{1}{4}$. Cloth \$2.00; paper \$1.25.

Used with proper discernment, this little volume on the stewardship of lay talent can render good service to those pastors in particular the bulk of whose work brings them into missionary contact with the un-churched rather than to deal primarily with an established congregation. Holding that the Church in America must be a missionary church or die, the author portrays many important aspects of American life, such as the vast internal migrations and their effect on our way of life; our changing town-country relations; the meaning of the community spirit; the dilemma of modern suburban life; the church meeting of yesterday, today and tomorrow; and the interlocking of Christian ethics with the principles of business enterprises. There is much in the author's presentation which we may take to heart and translate into action. His strongest emphasis is upon the need of increasing the ranks of informed and responsible churchmen, holding worth-while meetings and increasingly putting the laity to work. There is also a sizable bibliography in this field appended.

O. E. SOHN

SPRINGS OF LIVING WATER. By Carl J. Scherzer. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 93 pages, $5 \times 7\frac{1}{4}$. \$1.50.

This is a collection of choice Scripture texts, meditations, poems, and prayers for the use of patients as a complement to the bedside visits of their pastor or the hospital chaplain. The author, a hospital chaplain, discusses such items as Christian virtues as well as adverse experiences, such as apprehension, anxiety, pain, and loneliness as these affect hospital patients, offering them encouragement and strength against the ordeal. The book can be used with much profit by intelligent Christians, as it may also serve pastors by suggesting suitable material for bedside visits. Some of the meditations will have to be given a higher Christian content, however, if they are to serve their purpose properly.

O. E. SOHN