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Book Review. - Literatur

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BOOK REVIEW

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THE BIBLE IN PASTORAL CARE. By Wayne E. Oates. Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Pa. 127 pages, 7 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 5. \$2.50.

There is much in this book to stimulate a pastor and aid him in ministering to sick and wounded souls on a Scriptural basis. The author is also insistent that the Bible be used properly, that is, pastorally, neither literalistically nor legalistically. That is correct. We are to persuade men, not cow nor coerce them, least of all when they are in great mental or spiritual distress. However, the author is on false ground when he tones down and softens the blow of statements from the lips of Jesus which were meant to reveal to man the unvarnished truth about sin. In his desire to calm troubled consciences he asserts that evil lust and anger in the heart are not indeed and truly sin as Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. If people are troubled over their sins and imagine to have committed the unpardonable sin, the pastor's procedure is not to deny the reality of inward sin, but to point penitent hearts to the full and all-embracing atonement of Christ, as, e.g., John 3:16; Rom. 8:1; and 1 John 1:9.

The author also brings suggestions on the application of Scripture to specific situations and on the use of the Bible as an aid to prayer.—The price seems a bit high for a book of this size.

OTTO E. SOHN

PREACHING ON CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. By Harold A. Bosley. Harper & Brothers, New York, c. 1953. 221 pages, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ × 8 $\frac{3}{8}$. \$3.00.

Ernest Fremont Tittle's successor at Evanston herewith publishes a series of sermons in keeping with the title of the book, which is itself the title of the first sermon. Among some of the special issues discussed in these sermons are: War or Peace; Universal Military Training; Freedom of Religion; An Ambassador at the Vatican; Drinking as a Religious Problem; The Christian Faith and Economic Problems; Communism. An initial series of sermons develops the theme "A Faith for Revolutionary Times" and belongs to what Dr. Bosley calls "the indirect or general approach to problems." The remaining sermons take up special issues. The author points out that the nineteen sermons here published constitute part of a total preaching program of nearly one hundred sermons over a two-year period. Dr. Bosley proposes to preach from a faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and to communicate the power of the Cross. Doubtless wide difference of opinion exists whether he satisfactorily sets forth Christ and His redemption or whether he validly attaches the power of the Cross

to his preaching goals. The reader will, however, be impressed with the tremendous care and detail as well as the pervading earnestness of these sermons. Here is no rhetorical polish without substance, no loss of witness under a facility with quotation.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

HERALDS OF THE GOSPEL. By H. T. Lehmann. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, c. 1953. xi and 76 pages, 5¼×7¾. \$1.25.

Dr. Lehmann, president of Waterloo College and of the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Canada at Waterloo, Ontario, offers a brief interpretation of Christian preaching as "proclamation," *keryssein*. The actual content of this proclamation is not defined with precision except to stress that it concerns the event which is still going on. Jesus Christ was the "Pioneer of this new age," and as the "Word of God" He is the Basis of its content. But the Gospel also proclaims the victory of Christ asserting itself in the struggle between flesh and spirit, unbelief and faith, the Christian and the world. Chapters on practical implications of this theory stress the preacher's obligation to be moved by his text, form of the sermon adapted to the text (the author prefers the "homily" or series of reflections upon the text itself), and suggestions for preaching with reference to Baptism, Holy Communion, and Christian burial. A later expanding of this material could give more account to preaching as the proclaiming of reconciliation because of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

A FAITH TO PROCLAIM. By James S. Stewart. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1953. 160 pages, 5¼×7¾. \$2.50.

Stewart of Edinburgh has made many friends in America through his splendid lectures and sermons (*A Man in Christ, The Gates of the New Life, The Strong Name*) and through his book on the technique of preaching, *Heralds of God*. With this volume Stewart enters the illustrious roll of the "Yale lecturers" on preaching. In the whole sequence of the Lyman Beecher Lectures this unit may well rate as one of the most theological in content. Edgar De Witt Jones accounts only four as treating "theology at length" (*The Royalty of the Pulpit*, Harpers, 1951, p. 403). Herewith Dr. Stewart, who is now Professor of New Testament at the University of Edinburgh, develops a theology of the content of preaching. His five chapters are entitled: "Proclaiming the Incarnation," "Proclaiming Forgiveness," "Proclaiming the Cross," "Proclaiming the Resurrection," and "Proclaiming Christ." He does not speak the theological language familiar to many continental Lutherans, yet he has a complete theology of the Word. Interesting is his aphorism borrowed from Bullinger: *Praedicatio verbi divini est verbum divinum*. Unusually ample for this tradition of theology is the accent on the forgiveness of sins. Dr. Stewart chooses to stress the victorious significance of the cross rather than the propitiatory. This accounts for the remarkable accent,

noteworthy also in his sermons, on the resurrection as the heart of the Christian message. The style is vigorous and rhythmic, and every Christian preacher should be heartened by this volume to an even more intense concentration upon the message of the redemption of Jesus Christ as the core of his preaching.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

A CRITICAL STUDY OF CALVIN'S CONCEPT OF FAITH. By Walter E. Stuermann. Tulsa, Okla., 1952. xv plus 397 pages, 9x6. \$4.00.

The custom of reproducing doctoral dissertations for general distribution has unfortunately disappeared in American academic life because of the prohibitive costs involved. But we have thereby lost access to much invaluable material that is simply not available in any other way.

Stuermann's analysis of Calvin is a case in point. Many obvious marks of a dissertation are present—mixture of significant and insignificant observations, argument with other interpreters, sometimes apparently for its own sake. One misses also a correlation between Calvin's view of faith and that which marked his Scholastic predecessors and evangelical contemporaries. But as the author himself points out, such a correlation presupposes an understanding of Calvin himself.

This is what Stuermann gives. In the first part of the thesis he analyzes faith as a *cognitive* action; in the second, faith as a *saving* action. The first part enables him to analyze Calvin's general epistemology, his concept of Scripture, and his interpretation of the relation between faith and knowledge. In this connection he seems at times to manifest influences other than Calvin's and then to find them supported in the reformer. When he writes of the "hesitancy of Calvin to speak of the Absolute in absolute terms" (p. 34) and of "Calvin's recognition of the relativity of all human knowledge" (p. 36), the reader wonders whether Calvin himself was as tentative as all that. It would require more than Stuermann's passing reference to document such a claim as this about the *Biblicism of Calvin*:

The Word took written form under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, but not by means of a mechanical, impersonal inscription (as some interpreters of Calvin would have it). Thus in his *Commentaries* Calvin feels free to engage in a textual criticism of certain passages of Scripture, and he displays an admirable freedom from a literalistic spirit in reading all parts of Scripture in the light of the clearer and more distinct understanding of God given in Christ. . . . The important Word is not the written word, but the divinely spoken one! (pp. 144—45).

Such a conclusion does not necessarily follow from the evidence that the author cites.

The second part of the dissertation is, in the opinion of this reviewer, the more satisfying. For it relates Calvin's concept of faith to justification and to the Christian life in a manner that previous interpreters have

usually missed. Calvin is at his best not as the proponent of theological epistemology, but as a preacher and practical thinker. Of particular value is Stuermann's analysis of faith in its relation to prayer and to the tensions in the Christian life. He shows, as few of his predecessors have done, the role that courage plays in Calvin's ethic. He highlights Calvin's concept of the Law as a norm for the Christian life. In this way Stuermann shows that for Calvin faith centered strongly in obedience—not, indeed, moralistic obedience, but the obedience that despairs of self and relies on God.

Despite its title, the study is not particularly critical. The author does suggest that "Calvin has been too greatly concerned to defend himself on several sides without inquiring carefully as to whether what he says to defend himself on one side harmonizes with what he says to defend himself on several other sides" (p. 385). But, more often, Stuermann seems to do what many interpreters of the reformers tend to do—he adjusts himself to Calvin in some places and adjusts Calvin to himself in others and thus produces more a cordial than a critical study.

There are several annoying typographical errors, especially in the French and Latin quotations, like *verbum scripta* (p. 151). Having analyzed Calvin's view of faith, perhaps Stuermann can go on now to relate it to Luther, Scholasticism, and later Reformed orthodoxy.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

JESUS THROUGH THE CENTURIES. HIS FIGURE AND TEACHINGS AS REFLECTED IN THE MINDS OF MANY MEN. By Manuel Komroff. William Sloane Associates, Publishers, New York, 1953. 607 pages, 5½×8½. \$6.00.

This anthology presents portions of the writings of more than a hundred famous men and women who lived and wrote during the past nineteen centuries and in some way paid tribute to Jesus. The reader will be delighted with some, saddened by others. In the introduction the editor states: "I have made no attempt to sustain any sectarian view nor favor any special theories. I have made room for saints and mystics as well as for men of letters, historians, and philosophers." It seems obvious, however, that his sympathies are with men like Joseph Ernest Renan rather than with St. Augustine and Martin Luther. In an anthology featuring Christ an entire chapter on the problem of Judas seems somewhat out of proportion, particularly in view of the fact that the authors quoted relied more on their own imagination than on Scripture.

L. W. SPITZ

DOES GOD HEAL TODAY? By William W. Orr. Van Kampen Press, Inc., Wheaton, Ill. 32 pages, 5¼×7½. Paper cover. 25 cents.

This booklet ably answers a question which is troubling many people today. So-called faith healers of various cults and kinds claim to possess the power of healing which Christ gave to His first disciples. Others

deny the very fact of sickness and temporal death. Still others make therapeutic claims for certain shrines and relics. The author shows what Scripture has to say about sickness and divine help for the sick. His references to 1 Corinthians 11 (pages 18 and 27) unfortunately reflect the Calvinistic doctrine of Holy Communion.

L. W. SPITZ

HENRY DRUMMOND: AN ANTHOLOGY. Edited, and with the story of his life by James W. Kennedy. Harper and Brothers, New York, 1953. 254 pages, 8¼×5¼. \$3.00.

Many a young Christian, when first troubled about the relation between science and faith, has found Henry Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World* a source of comforting, albeit temporary, reassurance. The selections in this slim volume from *Natural Law* as well as from Drummond's other writings explain both the comforting and the temporary nature of his thought. The editor's attempts in the preface to each selection to show the modern relevance to Drummond's ideas are not always convincing, for in both theology and science—and therefore in the conversation between them—the points at issue have changed so radically since the days of Drummond and Darwin that the book has more historical than contemporary significance.

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

DER KATHOLISCHE LUTHER. By Karl August Meissinger. Leo Lehnen Verlag, Munich, 1952. 320 pages, 9×6. 19.80 marks.

The late Karl August Meissinger was the author of a study on Erasmus and of an examination of Luther's early exegesis; he was also responsible for volumes fifty-six and fifty-seven of the Weimar edition of Luther. He therefore brought to his last work extensive training and experience with the young Luther.

In addition, he brought to it a concern for closer understanding between Lutherans and Roman Catholics that has not been usual among Luther biographers on either side of the confessional conflict. Like Karl Adam from the Roman side, Meissinger was interested in the significance of Luther and of the Lutheran Reformation for both parts of the divided Western Church. And he sought to point out the lessons which, in his opinion, both need to learn from Luther.

That twofold background—detailed study of the early documents and interconfessional concern—imparts to this book a peculiar unevenness. Some of the material consists of painstaking research into the textual problems of Luther's early writings (e.g., pp. 91, 92) and into the reliability of the Weimar texts (pp. 253—58; 276—81). Alongside this almost petty preoccupation with textual criticism Meissinger manifests a capacity for synthesis that produces, as it did in great historians like Ranke and Gibbon, magnificent epigrammatic summaries of a vast field. "Bei Luther gibt es vulkanische Temperaturen, bei Erasmus eine warme ausgewogene, hoehchst liebenswerte Ethik" (p. 77). Again: "Der Zustand

der deutschen und der Gesamtzustand der abendlaendischen Kirche ueberhaupt moechte so schlimm sein wie er wollte, so war er immer noch besser vor der Spaltung als nachher" (p. 287).

There are many judgments in the book with which American Lutherans will not be prone to agree, notably those that deal with contemporary Roman Catholicism. The enlightened historical sense of men like Adam, Lortz, and Herte is rarely perceptible in *Our Sunday Visitor!* But we certainly wish the book well in its address to "der breite Durchschnitt gebildeter Katholiken" and "die verstaendigen und von dem Gewissensanruf des Dritten Artikels ergriffenen Protestanten" (pp. 92, 93).

JAROSLAV PELIKAN

WHY I AM A CHRISTIAN. By George L. Robinson. Abelard Press, New York, 1952. 128 pp., 5½×8½. \$1.95.

This small volume is offered as the creed of an octogenarian, who for over forty years taught Biblical literature. His own summary is stated in the words: "Why I am a Christian: In a word, I believe my Bible, love my church, and endeavor to practice the *agapao*-love of Christ's 'new commandment.'" He speaks with reverence of the Bible and grace, but his remarks with respect to both must be viewed in the light of his desire for a Neo-New Testament and his description of grace. He believes "that duly inspired and spiritually minded men and women should co-operate in producing new documents out of the already existing treasures of the Church, which, in time, could be codified and duly canonized as the recognized historical monuments of God's presence and workings in the world." Of grace he says: "Grace, upon entering a wicked man's soul, changes completely that man's attitude to God and makes forgiveness of him possible." Thirty-two pages are devoted to "a new theocracy of nonviolence." Nowhere is there a clear statement on justification by faith in the vicarious atonement of Christ. L. W. SPITZ

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF ABERRATIONS. Edited by Edward Podolsky, M.D. Philosophical Library, New York. 550 pages, 6½×9½. \$10.00.

This book is further described on the title page as a "psychiatric handbook." It is written not only for experts in interpersonal relationships, but also for intelligent laymen who wish to be informed on the subjects of mental and other aberrations. For easy reference the material is arranged in alphabetical sequence. The book covers all of the more common manifestations of sexual, mental, emotional and similar aberrational behavior. While the use of the book should be restricted to persons who are called to do work which requires the special knowledge that the book offers, this reviewer believes that it will serve a good purpose when used professionally. The information is clearly presented and well documented. Dr. Podolsky is connected with the Medical College of the State University of New York.

J. T. MUELLER