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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.

PASSOVER, ITS HISTORY AND TRADITIONS. By Theodor Herzl Gaster. New York: Henry Schuman, c. 1949. 102 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$2.50.

PURIM AND HANUKKAH IN CUSTOM AND TRADITION. By Theodor Herzl Gaster. New York: Henry Schuman, c. 1950. 134 pages, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 8\frac{3}{4}$. \$2.50.

THE WISDOM OF THE TALMUD. By Ben Zion Bokser. New York: Philosophical Library, c. 1951. xx plus 180 pages, $5\frac{1}{2} \times 8$. \$3.75.

These three popularly written volumes give insight into Jewish customs and thought. The first of them sets out to explain the origin of Passover "not only in terms of accepted tradition but also against the background of modern knowledge," which means that the Passover, devoid of any divine origin, developed from "a crude and primitive ceremony designed to free men, from year to year, from the hurt and hazard of life and the mischief of Nature." In spite of this view, so contrary to our own convictions, the book gives some good insights into the historical background as related by the Scriptures and into the customs connected with the observance of Passover. Too many Christians are unfamiliar with Jewish rites, and the book should prove helpful for a better understanding of the ways of our Jewish neighbors. The same may be said of the volume referred to in the next paragraph.

The second volume deals with two Jewish festivals characterized by joy and mirth. Purim commemorates the deliverance of the Jews through Esther's intervention from the murderous plot which the notorious Haman had set afoot in the fifth century before Christ. Hanukkah is the festival which celebrates the rededication (*Hanukkah*) of the Temple in Jerusalem in 165 B.C. after the sanctuary's defilement by the Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes. From the custom of kindling lamps in connection with the festival it is popularly known also as the Feast of Lights. Its observance falls into the month of December, often very close to the Western Christian Christmas. Again the author presents them as developments from primitive festivals, but gives also the traditional background, along with a description of the customs observed in modern times in connection with the two festivals.

The third volume may be regarded as a sort of popular introduction to the Talmud. In the first three chapters the writer presents the Talmud as literature, discusses the forerunners of the Talmud and the Talmud in its historical setting. The next four deal with the theological elements,

the social ethics, the personal morality, and the jurisprudence of the Talmud. The final chapter acquaints the reader with human wisdom in the Talmud.

GEORGE V. SCHICK

PROTESTANT BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION. By Bernard Ramm. Boston: W. A. Wilde Company. 188 pages plus an index of names and another index of Scripture references. \$1.50.

At the moment this is the text being used at the Seminary for classes in Hermeneutics. It is being used as a text chiefly because it presents the historical schools of interpretation in a very adequate light.

It has been said of Luther's Reformation that it was hermeneutical in origin. There is a great deal of truth in that statement; for Luther's principles that the sense of Scripture is one and that Scripture must interpret itself were revolutionary at the time of his activities. Those two principles were not accepted by the Roman Church at that time; and they are not subscribed to at the present moment.

This present volume is very wholesome in that it is a reminder of the fact that before interpretation can be discussed, there must be some agreement as to the principles to be employed. The author of the book discusses the various principles employed by different schools of interpretation throughout the history of the Church. He pays particular attention to the School at Alexandria, with its allegorical methods of interpretation, and to the School of Antioch, led by that "prince of exegetes," Theodore of Mopsuestia. He seeks a kinship in spirit between this latter school and the principles employed by the Lutheran Reformation. In that view he is correct.

For anyone who is interested in the general problems of Hermeneutics this volume is to be recommended. Its chief defect is an overemphasis on typology, in chapter nine. A Lutheran interpreter would have considerable difficulty in following the author in this particular chapter. However, the rest of the book more than compensates for this section.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

LEXICAL AIDS FOR STUDENTS OF NEW TESTAMENT GREEK. By Bruce M. Metzger. Available from author, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, N. J. \$1.00.

This book, now in its fifth printing, has been used by us with classes since its first appearance (1946). We warmly recommend it for use not only by beginners but also by such as feel the need of greater mastery of the basic vocabulary of the New Testament. The latter would greatly profit from a systematic study of the material here offered alongside a program of rapid reading of the Greek New Testament. The first part of the book groups the 1,051 words occurring ten times or more in numerous classes arranged in descending order of their frequency. English meanings and, frequently, mnemonic aids are added. A second part arranges these words, plus about 250 more, according to their roots. For

example, the first root *ag* is represented by twenty derivatives, again with their English equivalents. Introductions to each part and three appendices offer additional helps. Only one who has attempted a similar job realizes what a terrific amount of labor Professor Metzger has put into this book of 110 pages. It is work that had to be done by someone. The author deserves the thanks of every teacher and student of New Testament Greek.

VICTOR BARTLING

EXISTENTIALISM AND THE MODERN PREDICAMENT. By F. H. Heinemann. Harper & Brothers, New York. 1953. 211 pages. \$3.50.

CHRISTIANITY AND EXISTENTIALISM. By J. M. Spier. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by David Hugh Freeman. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Philadelphia. 1953. 140 pages. \$3.00.

Both books are significant contributions to the vast literature on existentialism. Professor Heinemann, who teaches at Oxford, became famous in 1929 through the publication of his *Neue Wege der Philosophie* (Leipzig), in which he critically surveyed the movement now known as existential philosophy. He also gets credit for coining the term *Existenzphilosophie*. Since that time he has remained in close personal touch with leading German and French existentialists. He has also investigated the source materials of existentialism, and from time to time, as staff reviewer of the *Hibbert Journal*, he has expressed his views regarding controversial features of the movement and published articles intended to prepare the way for a constructive evaluation of existentialism. His most recent book, with its invaluable bibliography, reflects his wide and thorough acquaintance with existential thought and his astounding ability to make reasonably concrete what appears in much of the writings of existentialists to be deliriously abstract and mysterious.

Mr. Heinemann analyzes the thought of Kierkegaard ("The Existential Theologian"); Husserl ("The Loneliness of the Transcendental Ego"); Jaspers ("The Philosophy of Detachment"); Sartre ("The Philosophy of Commitment"); Marcel ("The Mysterious Empiricist"); Berdyaev ("The Mystical Anarchist").

In introductory chapters the author traces and seeks to define the fundamental problem of existential philosophy in terms of its historical and sociological background. He concludes that existentialism, like Hegelianism and Marxism, proposes to overcome the alienation of man, that is, to liberate man from his self-estrangement. His thesis is that existentialism is a reaction to the all-embracing powerful influence of modern technology. "How can we free ourselves from the bondage of technology which East and West suffer?" is, so the author concludes, the basic concern of all existentialists.

Mr. Heinemann believes that existentialists have so far not solved this problem, and he convincingly develops the reasons why they have not

done so. His conclusion is that the fall or end of current existential systems is impending. Whether his prognostication will come true or not, no one knows. In 1940 German philosophers believed that existentialism had run its course. But World War II with all its horrors taught them and the French otherwise. Another world catastrophe may well give further impetus to existential thinking on an intercontinental scale.

In a final intriguing chapter, titled "*Respondeo, ergo sum*," the author ventures his own solution of the problem of existence. Granting that his approach merits serious consideration, we nevertheless ask whether his formulation, unless it is extended beyond its immediate implications, is able to carry the freight which burdened the souls of Kierkegaard and his disciples. Still Mr. Heinemann's book is stimulating and delightful reading—though it cannot be read in one breath! It scintillates with observations and reflections which make the reader pause, turn inward, and which, if the expression be permitted, make him momentarily an "existentialist."

Mr. Spier is a native of Holland. He studied theology and philosophy at the Free University in Amsterdam and is a member of a school of philosophy known under the name "Philosophy of the Idea of Law." His study reveals some deep insights into the fundamental concerns of the exponents of existential thought. Because the translation of his work by Mr. Freeman is eminently readable, the unusually large number of spelling inaccuracies in the book are forgiven provided they will be corrected in a second edition.

Mr. Spier analyzes the thought of Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, Marcel, Lavelle, Sartre, and Arnoldus Ewout Loen, a contemporary Dutch philosopher. He develops his critique in three impressive chapters: the character of existentialism, moments of truth in existentialist philosophy, and reasons for rejecting existentialist philosophy. Though the author grants that existentialism reveals "moments of truth" (it rejects the postulate of neutrality of philosophy and recognizes that philosophy is based on supertheoretical prejudices; it seeks to arrive at an ontology in contrast to philosophies which reduce philosophy entirely to epistemology; it gives much thought to anthropology), he nevertheless rejects it on the grounds that it proposes a false concept of existence, that it exaggerates the function of philosophy, that it rigidly insists on antithesis, that it lacks a unified vision of the entire created reality, that it secularizes the Christian idea of creation and freedom, that it has a one-sided interpretation of the concept of time, and that it destroys the meaning of life because of its apostasy from God and His Word.

The author proceeds on the premise that every form of thought presupposes a supertheoretical commitment. Therefore the Christian, so the author believes, is altogether justified when he approaches philosophic speculation with presuppositions grounded in the Word. Basic to a Christian philosophy is the Bible's concept of being. "Every philosophy

which rightly can be called Biblical must include in its ontology the Being of God and the Being of Creation and must also reserve a place for the Being of the Law, to which God has subjected all His creatures" (p. 131). It heartens one to know that Mr. Spier's book is now available in English translation.

By way of conclusion this reviewer takes the liberty to call attention to two books on existentialism which he has, for some years, found exceptionally helpful in his theological evaluation of existentialism. The first is *Der Existenzbegriff und das existenzielle Denken in der neueren Philosophie und Theologie* by Wilhelm Andersen, a Lutheran theologian in Germany (Guetersloh, 1940). Andersen gets at the problem from the theological, better still, from the Lutheran point of view. In his analysis and criticism he takes note, therefore, also of widely known theologians, such as Rudolf Bultmann, Emil Brunner, Karl Heim, Friedrich Gogarten, and Karl Barth, and thus enables the reader to appreciate what German theologians mean when they freely use the term *existentiell*. The other book is a cautious and meticulous delineation of existential philosophy by O. F. Bollnow (*Existenzphilosophie*, Stuttgart, 1949). This is still, in this reviewer's opinion, the most successful effort to define what Kierkegaard and some of his disciples have in mind when they speak of *Existenz* and what they do *not* mean. Furthermore, Bollnow succeeds in making transparent Heidegger's abstruse, if not opaque, thought. Truly, anyone who can understand Heidegger and transpose him into intelligible speech deserves, at the minimum, honorable mention. PAUL M. BRETSCHER

MIRACLES: YESTERDAY AND TODAY, REAL AND COUNTERFEIT. By Benjamin B. Warfield. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich. 327 pages, 6×9. \$3.50.

This volume is a re-issue of Dr. B. B. Warfield's interesting and instructive study of the multifarious claims to miraculous power within and without the Christian Church. Originally it was published under the title *Counterfeit Miracles*. On 230 pages the learned author, who was professor of systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1887 to 1921, discusses the following subjects: "The Cessation of the Charismata," "Patristic and Mediaeval Marvels," "Roman Catholic Miracles." "Irvingite Gifts," "Faith-Healing," and "Mind-Cure." To these chapters are added 94 pages of scholarly notes on the various topics which the writer presents; these, to a great extent, are of the greatest importance. Dr. Warfield holds that the charismata, or Pentecostal gifts, ceased with the Apostolic age. He quotes approvingly on this point William Whiston, who sets the date of their cessation at about A.D. 381, which marks the triumph of Athanasianism. The "miracles," or "marvels," in sub- and post-Apostolic times, especially in the medieval Church and in modern Romanism, he does not reject absolutely as being altogether without some amazing supernatural phenomena, but he holds that these inexplicable factors are no

more startling than are those found also in pagan and other "miracle-workers." This reviewer believes that the author is right when he says: "If Catholics took advantage of the tendency to superstition abroad in the world to conquer the unbeliever, it was but natural that 'heretics often took advantage of this thirst for the marvelous to dupe the Catholics'" (p. 67). What Dr. Warfield writes on "faith-healing" and "mind-cure" is sober and sane and deserves study even today. In fact, the whole book presents an absorbing study of a subject which needs constant attention by Christians. For group study and discussion as well as for private reading it should be placed into school and church libraries. The author is usually very serious, but now and then a bit of humor finds its way into his paragraphs, as when he closes his study of Mrs. Eddy's supposed "mind-cure" with the words: "Let us be thankful that she at least had a dentist" (p. 230).

J. T. MUELLER

THE APOCRYPHA (King James Version), with an introduction by Robert Pfeifer. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953. 334 pages. \$2.00.

This is a new edition of the Old Testament Apocrypha of the King James Version. The print is in clear black type. The text is provided with diacritical marks for the many strange and difficult names. But the most distinctive value of this edition is the excellent and very comprehensive introduction to the Apocrypha in general and to the individual books in particular by Robert H. Pfeifer, Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages at Harvard University and Professor of Old Testament History at Boston University. In 1949 Professor Pfeifer published a monumental work on the history of *New Testament Times with Introduction to the Apocrypha*. This is without a doubt the most exhaustive and scholarly work that has appeared on that subject during the last half century. The 39 pages of introduction to this edition of the Apocrypha reflect the results of this scholarship.

The Apocrypha are the most important noncanonical literature of the Jews of the Old Testament period. Luther says of them that though they are not to be regarded as equal with the Holy Scriptures, yet they are good and profitable to read. A study of the Apocrypha is valuable for a better understanding of the religion, culture, character, aspiration, and, to some extent also of the history, of the Jews during the intertestamentary period and of the time of Christ and the Apostles.

A. M. REHWINKEL

UNIFORM LESSON COMMENTARY, 1954. William M. Horn, ed. Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1953. vi + 320 pages, 5½ × 8½. \$2.75.

This volume may prove to be a "find" for many adult Bible teachers who wish to improve their teaching techniques, stimulate their pupils to independent and direct Bible study, provoke thinking about the lesson, and encourage profitable discussion of practical questions growing out of the passage studied. Using it as a resource book, the instructor should

experience little difficulty in making his own lesson plan for effective teaching and in preparing assignments which are geared to the needs, interests, and abilities of his class members.

Four major subjects find treatment in this volume for the Sundays of the four quarters of the year; 16 lessons on the Gospel of John; 13 on the Northern Kingdom and its Prophets; 13 on Growth in Christian Living; and 13 on Wisdom and Worship in the Old Testament Literature (Job, Proverbs, Psalms, and Ecclesiastes). The authors of the four sections are clergymen and Bible scholars of the United Lutheran Church, and the lesson material is based on the *International Sunday School Lessons* for 1954, commonly known as the *Uniform Lessons*. The Bible text is that of the Revised Standard Version. The material for each lesson is offered in a uniform framework, namely: background or approach, comments on the text, the gist of the passage, lesson sidelights (interesting related items or illustrations), digging deeper (a further probing of the subject), something to talk about (provocative questions for thought and class discussion), and daily Bible readings which prepare for the next Sunday's lesson.

A. G. MERKENS

TWENTY FUNERAL SERMONS. By Pastors of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, c.1952. 202 pages, 5 $\frac{3}{8}$ × 8. \$3.00.

This is another volume in the ambitious series published by Augsburg and including not only elaborate cycles of sermons for the church year but also volumes of occasional sermons of various kinds. This volume provides sermons under the headings: "Death in General," "Sudden Death," "After a Prolonged Illness," "Death of Parents," "Death of the Mature and Aged," "Death in Youth," "Death of Children," "Doubtful Cases," and "Memorial Service for a Soldier." The sermons vary in textual character and evangelical emphasis. The concluding pages carry a reprint of texts for funerals from *Biblical Texts* by Paul W. Nesper.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

THE ROMANCE OF DOORBELLS. By Eugene Dinsmore Dolloff. Chicago: The Judson Press. 197 pages, 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 8. \$2.50.

We enjoyed reading this guide to effective pastoral calling. It sets forth and heavily underscores the supreme importance and value of systematic parish visitation on the part of the pastor. The author demonstrates that the pastor who thinks himself justified in refraining from pastoral calling because of the press of pulpit and organizational duties makes a serious blunder. He forever remains a stranger to his flock in whom they will not confide and to whom they are not drawn because he keeps himself aloof. Many a church, the author contends, goes downhill because of this failure on a pastor's part. There are many helpful suggestions on time, manner, and technique of making such calls. It is a good book.

O. E. SOHN

LIFE IS COMMITMENT. By J. H. Oldham. Harper and Brothers, n. d., New York, N. Y. 140 pages, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$. \$2.50.

J. H. Oldham is a veteran writer, editor, and ecumenical Christian worker. This book is a reworking of lectures delivered in 1952 on "The Meaning of Christianity Today." The book has a strong apologetic motive, addressing itself to the children of contemporary Western civilization to make "a decision for God." He believes that this decision must be made completely "outside the objective world" and therefore is in an area or "half circle" of life beyond the domain of science. The author directs himself against the false antithesis between individualism and collectivism by stressing Martin Buber's concept of encounter, life as meeting. Likewise Mr. Oldham has thoughtful things to say on the nature of God as being thoroughly beyond man and hence that some atheism rejects a picture of God which the Christian, too, must reject. He seeks to apply a similar technique to the concept of Jesus Christ. His accent is on Christ as the revelation of God. What that revelation is is not clear, and the course is portrayed suspiciously as a pattern rather than a redemption. True to his primary passion, Mr. Oldham asserts that the reunion of the Church with life is essential if it should carry out its task. Mr. Oldham displays a familiarity with contemporary thought and an engaging readiness to recognize as well as win his opponent.—George Orwell's 1948 seems to be a misprint, p. 35.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

THE TREATMENT OF THE YOUNG DELINQUENT. By J. Arthur Hoyles. New York: Philosophical Library. 274 pages, $8\frac{1}{2} \times 5\frac{1}{2}$. \$4.75.

The author characterizes this book as a careful examination of the lessons of history and the findings of modern science with respect to youth delinquencies in the light of Christian principles. If we have understood him aright, the bulk of the blame for this appalling situation rests upon parents and society for causing or permitting the conditions which breed it; little mention is made of, or importance attached to, the deceitful and desperately wicked heart of children. There is quite an extensive report on pedopenology as practiced in the author's native England, revealing shocking instances of the treatment of delinquent children. The main objective of this book is to plead for treatment from which fear and coercion are entirely removed. This end is to be attained by substituting "the probation officer for the hangman, the reform school for the prison, and psychotherapy for corporal punishment." With many of the author's findings we readily agree; but, as in most books of this type, the sanctifying Word of God is ignored, and hence the treatment can result only in civil righteousness, which leaves the main area of need untouched. Perhaps neglect of the soul is to be expected in a State institution, but the fact remains that without the Gospel of Christ there can be neither a true reclamation nor a God-pleasing life.

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