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The Laughter of God.

W. H. T. DAU, St. Louis, Mo.

"He that sitteth in the heavens shall *laugh*; the Lord shall *have them in derision*." Ps. 2, 4.

"The Lord shall *laugh* at him; for He seeth that his day is coming." Ps. 37, 13.

"But Thou, O Lord, shalt *laugh* at them; thou shalt *have* all the heathen *in derision*." Ps. 59, 8.

"I also will *laugh* at your calamity; I will *mock* when your fear cometh." Prov. 1, 26.

Vision a Tom Paine or a Bob Ingersoll with an audience of kindred spirits before these texts and try to forecast the effect. "There you have your Christian God! A fiend, a ghou, an ogre, to whom the sorrows of men serve as occasions of merriment and their sufferings as exquisite sport; who answers the groans of the afflicted with guffaws of heartless glee and the cries of the distressed with peals of mirth. While you cringe before Him in abject misery and pour out your bruised heart in supplications that would melt a stone, He sits on His sapphire throne and splits with laughter"; etc., etc. Yes, to the infidel mind *sans* grace, *sans* fairness, and *sans* common sense, to the scornful tongue, trained to jibes and sneers and blasphemies, these texts have ever been a most valuable asset, a cherished revelation, because they seemed to confirm the blackest imaginings of godless hearts concerning Him whose existence they deny and in whom they are nevertheless intensely interested. Even the regenerate stumble at these texts, for the old *ego* still remaining in them is essentially skeptic, agnostic, and prone to lend a willing ear to the whisperings of the Father of Lies. A staunch heart of faith and a reverent and meek mind are required for a profitable study of these texts, or the idea that lies plain on their surface will prove shocking, repellent.

The language of these texts is so bold that it seems highly improbable that a mere human mind would have conceived the

BOOK REVIEW.

Popular Commentary of the Bible. *The Old Testament.* Volume II: The Poetical and the Prophetical Books. *Paul E. Kretzmann, Ph. D., D. D.* 736 pages. \$5.00, postpaid. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

The first volume of the *Popular Commentary* appeared in November, 1921. The four volumes, covering the entire Bible, each $7 \times 10\frac{1}{2}$ and averaging over 700 pages a volume, are now complete. The fact that *one* man in a *few* years has written a popular commentary on the entire Bible is a monumental task. The Lord be praised for having given us the man, and through him the *Commentary!* From the very outset the purpose was not to issue a learned critical commentary for preachers, but a popular commentary for the laity. This *Commentary*, however, presents in simple language and in brief form the results of a careful study of the original Hebrew and Greek texts and also a careful study of the thorough exegetical work done by great scholars of the Bible, both of former and of modern times. The *Popular Commentary*, therefore, presents to the layman a trust-

worthy exposition of the text of Holy Writ; and for all ordinary purposes also the preacher and the teacher can use it as a handy reference work. The special price offered by the publishers for a limited time ought to induce not only all pastors and all teachers in day-schools and in Sunday-schools, but also a very large number of Christian homes, to purchase and to use it. May God bless its use for the purpose for which it has been issued, namely, *a more thorough study and a better appreciation of the Bible itself!*

The publishers' announcement calls attention to the following special offer: "As a special inducement we are offering for a limited period, *viz.*, until June 30, 1924, the entire set, if ordered at one time, to be sent to one address, for \$16.60, carriage prepaid, to any address in the United States. This special offer applies also, and particularly, to owners of the three previous volumes. To them we will sell this present volume, namely, Volume II of the Old Testament, at the special price of \$4.35, carriage prepaid, to any address in the United States. This offer does not apply to any of the previous volumes, except in cases where the whole set is taken as described above. Cash must, of course, accompany all orders."

FRITZ.

The Baptism, or Gift, of the Holy Ghost. By *P. E. Kretzmann, Ph. D., D. D.* 19 pages, 6×9. 12 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

This essay was read before the Western District convention of our Synod in 1922. Repeated requests for its publication have prompted our Publishing House to get it out in printed form. The essayist treats the subject on the basis of three theses, the second of which treats of the *special* baptism of the Holy Ghost in the apostolic period. Many, no doubt, will be pleased to study the subject, which has also been discussed in the current volume of the THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, page 65. FRITZ.

Cantate! A Song Service in Commemoration of the Quadricentennial of the First Lutheran Hymnal. 1524—1924. *Chorales* with English and German text. Arranged by *P. E. K.* 30 pages, 6×9. Music edition, 20 cts.; a copy. Text edition, 30 cts. per dozen, \$2.25 per hundred copies. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

We take it that our congregations will celebrate the quadricentennial of the first Lutheran hymnal, and that therefore they will be pleased to purchase from our Publishing House a printed program for a song service. The fact should not be overlooked that a music edition and a text edition can be had.

FRITZ.

Paths in the Wilderness. By *Rev. C. E. Sparks.* Illustrated. 171 pages. (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia.)

On a substantial basis of authentic facts of history the story of the planting of the colony of Salzburgers at Ebenezer, Ga., under Governor Oglethorpe is here told in the form of a novel. The conversion of John Wesley, which has been woven into the story, has been used very aptly to set forth some of the fundamental differences between the Lutheran, the Episcopalian, and the Methodist Churches. Some of the conversations in this book are practical popular discourses on theology. It is a very good juvenile.

DAU.

My Church. An Illustrated Lutheran Manual. Vol. IX. By *Ira O. Nothstein*. 128 pages. (Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.)

It is always a pleasure to turn the pages of this well-edited annual, which serves primarily the Swedish Lutheran Church. Events and scenes from Swedish church-life in the European homeland and in the Augustana Synod of our country form the contents also of the present volume, which offers an index for all the volumes that have appeared so far. DAU.

Jesus. Wer er war — was er wollte. Von *H. Offermann*. 32 pages. (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia.)

This brochure reproduces two lectures which the author delivered at Zion Lutheran Church in Philadelphia during Holy Week 1923. It is a brief exhibition of the human and the divine side of the person of Jesus and of His mediatorial work. DAU.

Daily Meditations upon the Epistle-Lessons of the Church-Year. By *Rev. F. Hammarsten*. Translated from the Swedish. 685 pages. (Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.)

These one- to two-page meditations — a companion volume to the author's *Meditations on the Gospel-Lessons* — dwell with the peculiar gentle fervor that is characteristic of the author on one or several verses of the Epistle-lessons. The *Meditations* are not dated, as in the former volumes, but follow the order of the church-year as observed in the Lutheran Church, beginning with the first week in Advent and taking in the twenty-sixth week after Trinity, with seven additional meditations for Candlemas, St. Michael's Day, and All Saints' Day. The texts treated are not all from the Epistle-lessons; as a rule, the Epistle-lessons furnish the texts only for the beginning of the week, and for the rest of the week the author has adapted a free choice of collateral texts. As to the edifying quality of Hammarsten's work, there is no question about that, likewise as to the Lutheran flavor which the late Swedish court-chaplain injected into all his literary productions. DAU.

Nineteenth Century Evolution and After. By *Rev. Marshall Dawson*. 145 pages. Cloth. \$1.50. (The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y.)

The purpose of this book is to prove the supposed harmony between Christianity and up-to-date science, especially the twentieth century evolution. The author holds that nineteenth century evolution was indeed hostile to Christianity, but that twentieth century evolution is decidedly friendly; indeed, that both are substantially at one in their views of human nature and correlated doctrines. He says: "If science and religion can come to an agreement upon the nature of man and the motive-springs of his development, all other disagreements between them will receive mutual indulgence as private idiosyncrasy." (p. 38.) In order to show that science and religion can really come to an agreement, both science and the Bible, especially the doctrines pertaining to human nature, must be restudied. Twentieth century evolution, he maintains, acknowledges, in accord with the Bible, not only "progress" of the human race, but also "retrogression," as is seen in every-day life, and thus confirms Scripture.

However, the author neither adequately describes twentieth century evolution nor Christianity. It is manifest that the two can blend only if their distinctive teachings are moderated. This is exactly what the author does. His doctrines of sin and salvation do not comport with the Bible. With regard to original sin he says: "It becomes readily apparent why the child must suffer for Adam's sin. The reason he suffers for Adam's sin is that he repeats it." (p. 90.) This certainly does not agree with the statements of Scripture, which clearly teach that the guilt of Adam is imputed to man even before Adam's sin has been repeated by the individual. Rom. 5, 12, 18. This same inadequacy of representing true Scriptural thought becomes apparent in the author's treatment of conversion and sanctification. In short, the reviewer does not approve the author's thesis that "up-to-date modern science and Christianity are essentially at one in their view of human nature." Though striking and interesting, the book will hardly satisfy either the twentieth century evolutionist or the believing Christian.

MUELLER.

Down through the Ages. The Story of the King James Bible. By *Frank E. Gaebelain, A. M.* 106 pages, 5¼×7¼. \$1.00. (The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y.)

The purpose of this book is given by the author in his foreword: "Many persons who claim the most honorable of names, Christian, are unacquainted with the history of the sole authority upon which their faith is built. In a sense they know the Bible. But they are ignorant of the glorious record of its life down through the ages, and they fail to appreciate its superb beauty of expression. It is the hope of the author that, through the reading of this book, some may be stimulated to further study of the Word of God; that they may realize how unique is its historical background; that they may comprehend its literary supremacy; and that, through these things, they may reach a stepping-stone to an understanding of its spiritual content. Intended chiefly as a rapid survey, these pages aim to present as concisely as possible a large number of facts gathered from sources not generally accessible to the average reader of the Bible." The table of contents announces chapters on the following subjects: Beginnings, The Text, The Early Versions, How the Bible Came to England, John Wyclif's Translation, The Contribution of the Renaissance, William Tyndale and His Followers, The King James Bible, At the Pinnacle of Literature, Beyond the Power of Man. Mr. Gaebelain believes in the inspiration of the Bible. He says: "Moses, David, Paul, Luke, John — these men could of themselves never have written a line inspired as God inspires. But the Creator looked kindly upon them. Into their minds and into their hearts He breathed His Spirit, and thus He spoke through their pens." He also believes the doctrine of the vicarious atonement. He closes his book with the following statement: "Only *that* faith which believes on Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God slain for the sins of the world, sacrificed for you and for me, can give peace of heart and soul through revealing the true message of the Bible."

Among the interesting things in the book are quotations from early and later English translations of the Bible. It will be interesting to our readers to read the words of warning addressed by Edward Lee, almoner

of King Henry VIII and later Archbishop of Canterbury, to his sovereign against the introduction into England of Tyndale's translation of the Bible and of the influence which thereby would be exerted in favor of the Lutheran doctrine. Mr. Gaebelein quotes it on page 49: "Please it your Highnesse to undrestand that I ame certainlie enformed, as I passed in this contree that an Englishman, your subject, at the sollicitacion and instance of Luther, with whome he is, hath translated the Newe Testament in to English, and within fewe dayes entendethe to arrive with the same emprinted in England. I neede not to advertise your Grace what infection and daunger maye ensue heerbie, if it be not withstonded. This is the next way to fulfill your Realme with Lutherians. For all Luthers perverse opinions bee grounded upon bare words of Scriptur not well taken nor undrestonded, whiche your Grace hath opened in sondric places of your royall Booke. All our forfadres, governors of the Church of Englonde, hath with all diligence forbed and exhued publication of Englishe bibles; as God hath endued your Grace with Christen courage to sett forthe the standard against thies Philistees and to venquish them. . . . This realme of Fraunce hath been somewhat tooched with this sect. . . . And yet, blessed be God, your noble Realme is yet unblotted."

We have been delighted with the reading of Mr. Gaebelein's book, and by recommending it to others, we desire to pass on the pleasure and the benefit which we have derived from it. It is, as the publisher announces, "an informative, interesting book, fully within the compass of adolescent youth." At a time when volumes of worthless and distinctly harmful books are sent forth from the presses, we are always delighted whenever we find a good book among them.

FRTZ.

The Golden Bough. A Study in Magic and Religion. By *Sir James George Frazer, F. R. S., F. B. A.* One volume. Abridged edition. 752 pages, 6×8¾.

Folk-Lore in the Old Testament. Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law. By *Sir James George Frazer, F. R. S., F. B. A.* Abridged edition. 476 pages, 5¾×8¾. \$5.00. (The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y.)

The Story of the Life of Mackay of Uganda, Pioneer Missionary. By his sister. 323 pages, 5×7½. \$1.50, net. (Hodder & Stoughton, New York, N. Y.)

Mackay of Uganda, the Missionary Engineer. By *Mary Yule.* 213 pages, 5×7¾. \$1.35, net.

David Livingstone, the Master Missionary. By *Hubert F. Livingstone Wilson, M. C., M. B., Ch. B., D. T. M.* 230 pages, 5×7¾. \$1.35, net.

Chalmers of New Guinea. By *Alexander Small, B. L.* 176 pages, 5×7¾. \$1.35. (George H. Doran Company, New York, N. Y.)

The first volume of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* was published some twenty-five years ago. The author, who has been honored with many degrees from the universities for his work in the Science of Religion, completed the twelfth and last volume of his great work in 1920. The one-volume edition of *The Golden Bough*, announced above, was placed

on the market last year. In a subtitle the volume is called "A Study in Magic and Religion." It ranges over the entire field of heathen superstition and religious custom, and with its fulness of description of pagan ignorance and vice is one of the most harrowing volumes ever printed. Mr. Frazer has taken over from his larger work some details of heathen customs which in general texts on comparative religion are given only in Latin and Spanish originals. All in all, there is hardly a more powerful comment on the truthfulness of the words: "They became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened," and on this: "They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy," than Frazer's *The Golden Bough*.

As a study of the primary elements of religion the book fails utterly. The primitive man of Frazer is a purely imaginary creature, made in the study and after the image of its maker. The religion attributed to him is as imaginary as himself, for "it is put together by a method which knows no order and follows no law." Time and place, race, historical relations, degrees of development, are in the elaboration of these chapters completely ignored, religion being handled as if there were no such thing as chronology, or place, or mutual influence. The value of the book consists in the wealth of detail which it offers concerning the degrading influence of natural religion, and the proof supplied from the study of many races for the truthfulness of the picture which the first chapter in Romans reveals of the pagan world. Man's need of redemption emerges with a clarity that no longer tolerates contradiction, and man's inability to redeem himself is impressed upon the reader of Frazer's book more emphatically than by the reading of any theological essay on human depravity and original sin.

The companion volume to *The Golden Bough*, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, bears the subtitle "Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend, and Law." In its method it follows the same principles as *The Golden Bough*, with this distinction, however, that the naturalistic bias of the author is even more painfully evident. An abridgment of a three-volume edition issued in 1918, the book gathers together the various lines of argument by which it is deemed possible to seek out the traces of *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* and to coordinate Hebrew myth with the superstitions and customs of paganism. The Hebrews, it is assumed, passed through a stage of barbarism and even of savagery. Their literature is said to contain many references to beliefs and practises which bear the marks of an earlier, lower stage of culture. Analogies are produced from the history of semicivilized races of the present day as well as from the myths of many ancient peoples. The fundamental error of the method employed in *The Golden Bough* here works the most surprising results. Mr. Frazer will in the same chapter cite the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans, New Zealanders, modern Hindus, and various African tribes. To quote Dr. Fairbairn's criticism of Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, from which Mr. Frazer has received his cue: "He never distinguishes old and original from recent and foreign elements, but deals with the immensest systems as if they had no history and had known no growth, at least none save such as could be determined by 'the laws of mental evolution.'" And so we find the Mosaic story of the Flood

paralleled with legends of modern Ashantee and Togoland. The story of the Flood is not only made a derivative from the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic, — in itself really unpardonable since Dr. Clay published his Hebrew creation story in cuneiform, thus supplying most unexpected proof that the story in Genesis is the original, — but the Mosaic account is paralleled with flood stories of Borneo, Hawaii, and the Cherokee Indians. The ritual observed in God's covenant with Abraham is made parallel to certain practises of the Wachaga tribe in East Africa. Analogies of the heavenly ladder at Bethel are found in ancient Greece and modern Sumatra. And so throughout the ethnic religions are handled without regard to the origin or significance, in a manner thoroughly unhistorical and unscientific. Naturally, the author accepts *in toto* the findings of the more extreme higher critical scholars; all the writings of Wiener, Dahse, and of the authors of *Lex Mosaica* are as if they had never been. With the thesis clearly in mind on which all these comparisons of Hebrew with pagan customs are based, it is really unnecessary to proceed as far as page 133 before "dismissing the theory of revelation or inspiration as irreconcilable to the known facts."

However, the all-sufficient answer to the theory which underlies Frazer's books is contained in the four volumes which are not inaptly, we believe, grouped with them in the above. The life of A. M. Mackay, missionary in Uganda, is told in two biographies, both of some literary merit. A new biography of David Livingstone is supplied in another volume of the Master Missionary Series by Hubert F. Livingstone Wilson, the grandson of the great missionary. And to these is added the story of James Chalmers, missionary of New Guinea, who suffered martyrdom in 1901. These books, too, deal with natural man. The picture which they reveal of human depravity is as terrible as that outlined in *The Golden Bough*. But here the similarity ends. The men who are the heroes of these stories — and true heroes they were — sought out the savage races of Africa and Oceanica, and they brought to the African and the Malay a book which, if we are to believe Frazer, is only a more advanced development of those same faiths of which Mackay saw the frightful results at the court of King Mtesa and Chalmers on the coast of New Guinea. Yet through this book the story of daily murder and rapine in Uganda and the cannibalism of New Guinea were ended in less than one generation. If the spirits worshiped by the pagan world are, as we believe them to be, devils, then we have in the history of modern missions the clearest proof that Jesus has indeed come to destroy the works of the devil; nor is there a more convincing answer both to the evolutionistic view of natural religion and to a criticism which makes the Bible only a product of somewhat higher development than the chants of African savages which Mackay and Livingstone heard in their tents as the medicine-men were preparing the charms for the next day's slave-raid. The changes wrought by the Gospel in heathen lands are incontrovertible facts and are an answer to Frazer's books, which leaves no excuse for his impious handling of the most sacred records of mankind.

GRAEBNER.