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## “De Imitatione Christi.”

A Review of “The Imitation of Christ,” by Thomas à Kempis,\* with an Historical Introduction on Scholasticism, Mysticism, and the Brethren of the Common Life.

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Of the book *The Imitation of Christ*, by Thomas à Kempis, Kurtz, the church historian, says: “With the exception of the Bible perhaps no other work has so frequently been reprinted or translated into so many languages, nor has any other been perused by so many persons of all ranks and creeds.” Up to the year 1900 three thousand editions had been printed. The printing of a new edition a few months ago by the Macmillan Company — this edition bearing the *nihil obstat* and the *imprimatur* of Roman Catholic censorship — has given the incentive to this article. It seems strange that a religious book having the approval of the Roman Catholic Church has been widely circulated among, and studiously read also by, a large number of Protestants.

Thomas à Kempis was a member of the Brethren of the Common Life. As soon as we know the relation of this order to Mysticism and the relation of Mysticism to Scholasticism, we shall know the reason why Thomas à Kempis wrote his book *De Imitatione Christi* and shall understand the religious element in it which has merited the approval of the Roman Catholic Church and which also, from a somewhat different viewpoint, has appealed to a large number of Protestants. A few introductory historical notes will therefore help us in our judgment.

Scholasticism was an attempt made during the Middle Ages, from Anselm to Aquinas, to rationalize Christianity or, in other words, to justify the existing church doctrines by reason, especially by the reasoning process of Aristotelian philosophy. The method

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\* *The Imitation of Christ*. By Thomas à Kempis. Edited with introduction and notes by Brother Leo, F. C. S., Professor of English Literature in St. Mary's College, Oakland, Cal. 353 pages. \$1.00. (The Macmillan Company, New York, N. Y.)

## BOOK REVIEW.

**Noonday Sermons.** By *J. W. Behnken*. 100 pages, 5½×7¼. \$1.00.  
(Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

For the past eight years noonday services, from 12.25 to 12.50, have been successfully conducted in the down-town section by our St. Louis churches, daily, Saturdays and Sundays excepted, during the entire six weeks of Lent. Pastor Alfred Doerfler calls attention to this in his preface to the new book of *Noonday Sermons*. Pastor J. W. Behnken, of Houston, Tex., has for six consecutive years been one of the preachers at these services. Upon repeated requests his addresses are now published in book form. In these addresses the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion are treated, such as the inspiration of the Scriptures, the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement, justification, Christ's resurrection, etc. Pastor Behnken is known as a preacher who presents the subject-matter of the Bible in clear, simple language, and in such a manner that the hearer cannot fail to know the important truth which is confessed. We believe that not only many pastors, but also many laymen will be glad to buy and read Pastor Behnken's *Noonday Sermons*. — Since the St. Louis churches eight years ago began the holding of noonday services during Lent, an increasing number of our churches in various cities has been doing likewise. Until now, however, the St. Louis churches are the only ones which hold these services during the entire period of Lent. FRITZ.

**Synodical Reports:** *North Dakota and Montana District*. Tenth report. 28 pages; 15 cts. — *Central Illinois District*. Eleventh report. 71 pages; 34 cts. — *Iowa District*. Thirtieth report. 116 pages; 55 cts. — *Minnesota District*. Twenty-ninth report. 70 pages; 34 cts.  
(Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

The first of these reports contains only the thesis of the doctrinal paper on "Free Will, or Human Powers," in accordance with Article II of the Formula of Concord. — The second report contains an English doctrinal paper by the Rev. C. A. Weiss on "The Lord's Supper" and a German doctrinal paper by Prof. F. Wenger on "Confession." — The report of the Iowa District contains two doctrinal essays, one (German) on "Violations of the Doctrine Concerning the Ministerial Call," by Pastor Th. Stephan, and an-

other (English) on "The Bible—the Word of God," by Pastor A. H. Semmann.—The report of the Minnesota District contains a German doctrinal essay on "Soul-destroying Aberrations of Our Time in Reference to the Doctrine of Christ, Our Savior" (continued), by Pastor A. Kuntz.

FRTZ.

**The Living Christ.** A Book of Sermons by *T. E. Schmauk, D. D., LL. D.*  
215 pages. (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia.)

The 24 sermons in this book were compiled and edited by A. Chas. R. Keiter, pastor of Salem Church, Lebanon, Pa., where many of the sermons were preached. The editor has condensed some of the sermons, which were exceedingly lengthy, and elaborated, with considerable freedom, others which were rather incomplete. Some of these sermons were known to the public, at least by report and in excerpts, *viz.*, the sermons preached at the biennial conventions of the General Council from 1909 to 1917. These sermons are in a class by themselves. There are five of them, from the following texts: Luke 10, 23—37: "The Eye that Sees, and the Love that Loves"; 1 Cor. 12, 27: "The Living Body"; John 14, 6: "The Way, the Truth, and the Life"; Luke 18, 31; 19, 10. 41—43. 45—47: "The Lord and His Church"; Isaiah, chaps. 33 and 35: "Our Crisis and Our Conqueror." The following sermons were prepared for special Sundays or occasions: a confirmation sermon, from John 19, 14, on the subject "Our King"; a sermon for Quinquagesima Sunday, from Luke 18, 31, on "The Great Commoner"; a sermon from John 2, 1, 2, for the Second Sunday after Epiphany, on "A Social Arbiter"; a sermon for the Fourteenth Sunday after Trinity, from Col. 3, 3, on "Hidden with Christ"; a sermon for the Eighteenth Sunday after Trinity, from Matt. 22, 34—36, on "The Wrong Way and the Right Way"; a sermon for the consecration of a church, from 1 Cor. 13, 13, on "The Three Pillars"; and an Epiphany missionary sermon, from Hab. 2, 14, on "The Triumph of the Gospel." The twelve sermons remaining treat the following texts and themes: Ps. 51, 10: "Who Is This?" John 6, 27: "The Sealed of God"; Is. 32, 2: "The Man from Heaven"; Rev. 21, 5: "Who Maketh All Things New"; 2 Cor. 5, 20: "A Heavenly Ambassador"; John 6, 68: "There Is no Substitute"; John 18, 38: "Why the Skeptic?" Matt. 15, 23: "The Silences of God"; Matt. 8, 29: "What Have We to Do with Thee?" Mark 14, 3: "The Alabaster Box"; Acts 3, 19: "The Conversion of a Soul"; and 1 Cor. 16, 13: "The Secret of Strength." The earmarks of the ordinary homiletic rules for sermon-building are conspicuously absent from only some of these sermons, the progression of thought being indicated by simple numeration. The majority of the sermons plainly exhibit the author's division, and in some they are recapitulated in the exordium. There is a vigorous advance in the development of the central thought. The spice and tang of scholarship is much in evidence. The editor numbers Dr. Schmauk with the greatest pulpit orators of his day and says that "his utterances ever stirred and edified the souls of those who heard him." This may well be so; for even in these printed sermons one feels the grip of strong thinking. Moreover, Dr. Schmauk seems to have had the good sense of adapting himself to particular audiences. I do not believe that every sermon in this collection could have been preached everywhere. Quite a number of these sermons could be taken apart and built into several sermons. For instance, the

very first sermon in the collection, which was preached at the convention of the General Council at Toledo, in 1913, contains material for a series of sermons. It would even gain by such treatment; for in places the thought is rather abstruse, and the generalizations in the opening paragraph are so sweeping that one wonders how the preacher is going to make his audience see all that was in his mind. The author's skill and power of illustration is exhibited very strikingly in the sermon on conversion. Just in this sermon, however, the critical point of this soteriological act, the acceptance of Jesus and His atoning sacrifice, should have been made more prominent. That is what blots out sin in the individual, because it has blotted out all sins of all men.

DAU.

**Introduction to the Epistles and Gospels of the Church-Year.** By *Henry Offermann*. 142 pages. \$1.00, postpaid. (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia.)

To the reviewer this book is, first of all, a study in suggestion, its method, its power, and its responsibility. The subject to which it is here applied promptly arrests the attention of every preacher who has to deliver a sermon on the old pericopes. There is a word here on every one of them, both the Epistles and the Gospels of the Sundays and the principal festivals of the church-year. To give the reader an idea of what the author aims to do, here is his "introduction" to the Epistle and the Gospel for Easter Sunday: "*Epistle: 1 Cor. 5, 6—8*. Paul is writing in a rather severe tone. And he had reasons for it. The Christians in Corinth boasted of their superior knowledge. But there were serious defects in the church, even with regard to the moral life. The fifth chapter of First Corinthians deals with a flagrant case of immorality, to which the church was wholly indifferent. Paul calls upon the Corinthians as a church to take action with regard to that case. He wrote his letter in Ephesus, and he expects that the letter will be delivered to the Corinthians about the time of the Jewish Passover. The references of the apostle to the Jewish Passover are responsible for the selection of this lesson. If the lesson is used as text for an Easter sermon, the emphasis must be laid upon verses 7 and 8, in which the statement is made that 'our Passover also has been sacrificed, even Christ.' This theme will justify the division: Therefore let us keep the feast (a) in Easter joy, (b) in Easter service (with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth). — *Gospel: Mark 16, 1—8*. Each of the great festivals of the church-year has its own message. Easter is the royal festival; it is 'the day of the Lord' in a special sense. And therefore it has a message that is fundamental. This message is expressed in the words: 'Christ is risen.' Whatever text may be chosen, the resurrection of our Lord must be the center and heart of the sermon. There are reasons to believe that our Easter Gospel is the oldest account of the Lord's resurrection. It is therefore a most appropriate text, and it is written in that simple, but charming style which characterizes the story of Jesus in the Gospel of St. Mark. Mark's story of our Lord's resurrection may be divided into two parts. Verses 1—4 picture to us the faithful women on their way to the sepulcher: their undying love for the Lord; the sadness of their hearts; their anxiety about the stone. Verses 5—8 have their center in the message of the angel: 'Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen.' Here we have the Easter-message, which must be made promi-

ment in the sermon. The significance of this message can be explained if the story of our Gospel is used to show: (a) What we would miss if Christ had not risen: His death would be the end of His life; He would not be our Savior; we would have no hope; (b) what the Easter-message really means: Christ lives; He is our Savior; our faith in Him rests upon a sure foundation; we can serve Him in newness of life."

In this manner the Epistles and Gospels for sixty-seven Sundays and festival days are treated. The author's method, then, is: "A word to the wise," etc. His intention has been "to build a bridge that leads from the text to the sermon; but it was not his aim to build a . . . *pons asinorum*." Every user of his book will enjoy the implied compliment. Rightly the author holds: "The study of commentaries is far less important than the study of Scripture itself. And unless the student learns for himself, by constant study, meditation, and prayer, to search the Scriptures and to walk and move with perfect freedom in this beautiful garden of God, commentaries will be of little service to him; they will be crutches rather than guides. The best help in the interpretation of a Scripture-lesson, it seems to the writer, is an introduction that will lead the student into the heart of his text and will show him how to apply the matter of his text to himself and to others. That is substantially what Bengel meant by his advice to the student of the New Testament: *'Te totum applica ad textum; rem totam applica ad te.'* It also expresses the writer's first aim in publishing this little book."

As regards homiletical commentaries which offer practical suggestions, the author says, again correctly: "There is very often no real inner connection between the exegesis of the text and those practical suggestions." Nevertheless, exegetical study must remain what it always has been in the true Christian Church: an essential and fundamental exercise of the preacher. The author says: "Homiletics, the theory of preaching, teaches him how to build his sermon. But the very first requirement is a thorough study of the text itself. It is one of the weaknesses of the modern sermon that the text is too often used only as a motto or as a starting-point for all sorts of rhetorical flights. Consequently, much of our preaching to-day lacks positiveness; it lacks that note of certainty which enables the preacher to say with regard to his sermon: *Hæc dixit Dominus*. A sermon may be brilliant and thoughtful; it may fairly bristle with quotations from modern writers; but unless it sets forth in clear language the message which the text conveys to the readers, it falls short of its mark. The congregation is always at the mercy of the preacher: it may be stimulated to momentary thought and action; but it will not be built up in a faith that is deeply rooted in the Scriptures. The result is that not a few of our people fall easy victims to all sorts of modern heresies, while many others are utterly helpless in the face of modern false prophets with their claims to Scriptural teachings. It is well and good to point out in books and pamphlets the errors of modern religious movements. But something more is needed: our entire preaching must be more Biblical, more evangelical. In other words, what we would advocate is more expository preaching. The writer's own experience has taught him that a congregation is always attentive and appreciative if the sermon endeavors to bring out the pure gold of the text."

The power of suggestion is wonderful. Plant a live seed-thought suc-

cessfully in a fertile mind, and you set the person's intellect, will, and affections to work. Any sermonic product thus achieved gives to the author the satisfaction that it is his own work. He enjoys it, and his audience likewise enjoys it, as somehow they get the impression that what they are listening to is coming to them straight from their preacher's heart. The suggestion which the preacher received is transmitted to hundreds of others and continues germinating. That, however, shows the responsibility which the suggester assumes. If he is not a God-fearing man, filled with reverence for the Word of the Lord, he can work untold ruin. Our author is a conscientious man, and what he offers is good, even though one may dissent from his special exegesis or his view of the particular scope of the text which he treats.

DAU.

**Our Church.** An Official Study Book. The first of a series of "Key Books" to the origin, principles, and activities of the Church, prepared under the general editorship of the *Rev. F. H. Knubel, D. D., LL. D.*, and the *Rev. M. G. G. Scherer, D. D.* 170 pages. (United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia.)

What this book endeavors to do for the people whom the United Lutheran Church reaches is something that every one of the large Lutheran bodies of our country, I think, will be compelled to do: offering in a handy, attractive form brief, readable accounts, crammed full of facts, of the principal events in the body's past history, a clear statement of its doctrinal basis and church polity, and an exhibit of its activities, methods of work, and finances. The avowed purpose of the authors of the present volume, the precursor of others that are to follow, has been to "stimulate our people to further study of the Church's life and activity and to fuller consecration of themselves and of their means to the service of Christ." It is one of the sanest pieces of intelligent and dignified propaganda work that has come to my notice recently. The chapter headings of the book are: 1. How It (the present United Lutheran Church) Came to Be; 2. How It Governs Itself; 3. What It Stands For; 4. How It is Organized for Its Work; 5. What Its Work Is; 6. How Its Work is Done; 7. The Sources of Its Efficiency; Constitution; List of Boards and Elective Committees. At the end of each chapter there is offered a brief questionnaire by which the reader is enabled to test himself and see whether he has mastered the contents of the chapter.—The book is written from a Merger viewpoint and for the further realization of Merger ideals. Not all its judgments will meet with universal approval; *e. g.*, it is necessary to qualify "the beneficent influence" which the organization of the General Synod had "on the history and development of the Lutheran Church in America." Nor is the disruption which occurred in the General Synod in 1866 greatly to be deplored: it was one of the best things that could have happened to it, although the necessity for it was sad enough, and the scope of the movement then begun leaves some things to be desired as regards true union in the Lutheran Church of America.—I confess to a surprise in noting the statement that the start of the present Merger was given by laymen.—In the chapter on the self-government of the Church there is a lack of clearness: the ministry which the Christ about to ascend in His farewell discourse commits to the disciples seems to be forthwith identified with the work of the called minister of the Gospel, which I do not think was

the intention. Overgreat brevity?—The view that “a synod is simply an expansion of the congregational idea, . . . so that whatever authority pertains to a congregation in a narrower, pertains to a synod in a wider, sense,” I cannot endorse. Ultimately this view must produce a super-church with power, delegated indeed, but nevertheless sovereign power over the various congregations equal to that of the individual congregation over its own members. I should never accord the Missouri Synod any such power over myself or my congregation if I were a pastor.—The suggestion that constitutions for congregations should be made very brief I consider very good. The fewer regulations and the more reliance placed on ordinary Christian intelligence, the better the efficiency of the congregation. It is easy to lay down rules, but it is a far greater and, in the long run, a far more effective measure to raise the intelligence and rouse and direct the intelligent zeal of the members of the congregation on any issue that may arise.—The contents of the book are so various and so interesting that one is at a loss where to stop in calling attention to particular features. I could wish that both the President of our General Body and the presidents of our Districts, as well as the directors and managers of our larger synodical affairs could look into the contents of this book.

DAU.

**The Coming of the Cross.** An Epic of the North. By *George Swenson*. 107 pages.

**The Book of Amos.** Notes by *C. J. Soedergren*. 101 pages.

**In the Hands of Bandits and Yet in the Hands of God.** By *Anton Lundeen*. Illustrated. 144 pages. (Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.)

How the Vikings and their people were made Christians is told by a gifted poet in the first publication. The academy may condemn the author for discarding the heroic meter for his epic and varying his meter with nearly every canto, but his readers will thank him for it, and we trust there will be many, for his book makes delightful reading.—Soedergren's study of Amos is just what the Bible student who does not work with the Hebrew original would desire. It is a marvel in comprehensiveness and condensation, clear, plain, and pointed. It is written in a reverent spirit and in its brief explanatory notes emphasizes with fine practical piety the doctrinal value of the prophet's statements. The study was presented to a class of a summer school, The Lutheran Bible Institute at Lake Independence, Maple Plain, Minn., in 1923. An exquisite method for spending a brief summer vacation!—Lundeen's little treatise is a contribution to Lutheran martyrology in pagan lands. It takes the reader into the political disturbances which are agitating China just now. The story of what the Lutheran missionaries of the Augustana Synod at Juchow, Honan, who were carried off by brigands, had to undergo is very well told.

DAU.

**Harvest Thanksgiving Sermons.** By Some Leading Preachers. 189 pp., 5¼×7¾. \$1.60, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

This volume is a contribution to sermon literature on a subject with regard to which sermonic material is still rather scarce. The book contains twelve harvest thanksgiving sermons contributed by leading divines

of England and Scotland, such as Dr. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham; Canon Carnegie, Subdean of Westminster Abbey; Dr. Hutton of Westminster Chapel, etc. The addresses are carefully elaborated and are composed in simple, but choice language. The tenor and tone is solemn and earnest. In most of them, however, we miss the proper attention to the greatest of all divine blessings, the Word of God, compared with which all temporal gifts are insignificant. Also faith, as the source of all true Christian thankfulness, is not sufficiently emphasized. The sermons were written for audiences different from those which Lutheran pastors face on Thanksgiving Day; nevertheless they may serve even them as a fruitful source of inspiration. Some of the subjects are: Not by Bread Alone; The Witness to God in the Gifts of Nature; Daily Bread; The Challenge of the Harvest; God's Disapproval of a Grudging Spirit. MUELLER.

**The Christ of the Bible.** By *Rev. R. A. Torrey, D. D.* 285 pp., 5¼×7¾. \$1.50, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

Dr. Torrey is a staunch Fundamentalist and has written a number of books in defense of the basic evangelical truths. This book is his latest contribution, and there is much in it to recommend it to the Christian public. Dr. Torrey is manifestly sincere in his belief and frankly outspoken in his criticism of modern unbelievers — Liberalists, Russellites, Christian Scientists, Seventh-day Adventists, Mormons, etc., who deny the inspiration of the Bible, the deity of Christ, and the vicarious atonement. However, even so this book requires careful reading. The errors of Calvinism concerning the *unio personalis*, the *communio naturarum*, and the *communicatio idiomatum* are all represented and restated in the chapters before us. These errors account for the lack of distinctness in all doctrines that pertain to the Savior's person — His incarnation, resurrection, ascension, etc. Moreover, Dr. Torrey is a subordinationist. He says: "To sum up all, we have seen in this chapter concerning the Christ presented to us in the Bible: Jesus Christ is, and eternally shall be, subordinate to God the Father." (p. 53.) Then, too, the author is a millennialist. The book contains such sentences as the following: "The appalling atrocities of the Kaiser and his hordes in Belgium, in the most awful days of the last war, will be nothing to what shall come upon this earth when the devil's own Kaiser takes the reins of government." MUELLER.

**Life on the Uplands.** An Interpretation of the Twenty-third Psalm. By *John D. Freeman.* 172 pages, 5¼×7¾. \$1.50, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

The first edition of this book was published in 1907/08, when it met with an enthusiastic reception in Great Britain and the United States. Since then it was allowed to go out of print, and by special request it has been issued in a revised and extended form. The book treats the Twenty-third Psalm in ten short chapters, which bear the following titles: A Life in a Love; The Morning Meal on the Meadows; The Midday Drink from the Well; The Noontide Rest in the Shade; Guidance along the Midway Spaces; Adventures in the Shadowed Glen; The Banquet on the Darkening World; Twilight at the Sheepfold Door; Night within the Gates; Foregleams of the Heavenly Dawn. This arrangement according to the



"time-notes," which the author thinks are suggested by the various verses of the psalm, appears to us as rather artificial. By way of criticism we may also say that much of what the author writes is hazy and indistinct, and what is worse, he has failed to penetrate into the depths of the psalmist's devotional song. There is something in this psalm which Dr. Freeman has not experienced himself. Is it the faith which prompted David to write it?

MUELLER.

**Sermons on New Testament Characters.** By *Rev. Clovis G. Chappell, D. D.* 189 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ . \$1.60, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

This is the third volume of sermons on Biblical characters published by Rev. Chappell, who is now pastor of the First Methodist Church of Memphis, Tenn. His first two volumes were well received, and also this volume deserves careful study by pastors who desire special sermon material for Sunday evening services or subjects for addresses to societies within the congregation. Some of the subjects treated in this book are: The Largest Giver—the Poor Widow; The Beloved Physician—Luke; A Beautiful Work—Mary of Bethany; The Drudge—The Elder Son; The Dying Fire—Timothy; The Business Woman—Lydia; The Making of a Minister—Paul, etc. In all, sixteen sermon addresses, varying greatly in value, are offered to the reader. The addresses are popular and practical, and in general they set forth lessons of importance to present-day Christians. Occasionally, however, the author lowers the dignity of his subject by lapsing into very bad slang, both in thought and expression. He evidently misunderstood the imprisoned Baptist when he sent his disciples to Jesus with the question: "Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?" This, of course, spoils the whole sermon. The Arminian views of the author appear in various places. MUELLER.

**The Significance of the Cross.** By *Rev. George H. Morrison, D. D.* 72 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ . 85 cts., net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

Dr. Morrison, in this little book of seventy-two pages, offers to the reader his notes for three of his weekly evening addresses which he is in the habit of delivering preparatory to the worship and service of the winter. These notes were taken during his summer vacation and show, briefly, but convincingly, the true meaning of the Cross of Christ. This is expounded under three heads: The Significance of the Cross for Jesus, The Significance of the Cross for God, and The Significance of the Cross for Man. It is refreshing to read this striking testimony in behalf of the *satisfactio vicaria*. The author summarizes this testimony as follows: "The Cross removes the barrier between man and God; it solves the problem created by our sin; it tells of a reconciliation made and perfected through which we can draw nigh to God; it tells us that our debt is paid: 'Jesus paid it all.' And the Gospel-news is that all this is done because Christ died in our room and stead upon the tree. It is a magnificent Gospel for a sinful world, worth preaching, worthy of high heaven." We regret that the author does not stress the *obedientia activa*.

MUELLER.

**Sermons on Books of the Bible.** By *William Wistar Hamilton, Ph. D., D. D.* 300 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ . Cloth, \$1.75, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

The idea underlying these sermons is excellent. In sermons not too lengthy the author points out the main lessons of each book of the Old Testament Bible, following closely the chapters and their contents. The sermons are linked together under the general concept of God's family. Thus the main topic of Genesis is: God's desire for a family; of Exodus: The progress of the family; of Leviticus: The Father's ideals for the family; of Numbers: The family at school in the wilderness; of Deuteronomy: Review of the family history; of Joshua: Possessing the family possessions; of Judges: Making the religion of the family safe, etc. To illustrate the writer's method, the following outline of 1 Kings may serve. General subject: The Sins of Royalty against the Family. I. Treachery was always at hand. II. Ostentation was the respectable sin. III. Ungodliness and impiety recurred. IV. Apostasy begat a brood of evils. V. Heedless presumption held sway. Part I is divided into the following heads: 1. Treachery is seen at the death of David. 2. It is seen in the perfidy of Adonijah. 3. It is seen in the treachery of Joab. The writer is a Baptist preacher, and the sermons contained in this book were originally delivered to large audiences at the morning services, after a similar experiment had been made successfully with the books of the New Testament. In the Foreword the writer says: "The author's hope is that they [these sermons] may help satisfy the hunger which every Christian has for a more intimate knowledge of the Bible. . . . We long to be admitted occasionally at least into the Holy of Holies of the Word of God and there see our Master face to face and there feel and know what language cannot express of the glory of God. May the Holy Spirit so use this volume as to light the way to the Holy of Holies!" The earnest endeavor of the writer to state clearly the contents of each book of the Scriptures is manifest, and we do not hesitate to recommend his idea to our fellow-pastors.

MUELLER.

**The Supernatural Jesus.** By *Rev. George W. McDaniel, D. D., LL. D.* 206 pages,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 7\frac{3}{4}$ . Cloth, \$1.75, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

The purpose of this book, as stated in the Introduction, is "to discuss the evidence in the hope of leading inquiring minds to truth, unsettled minds to certainty, and believing minds to a fuller appreciation of the supernatural Jesus." In accord with this plan the author presents a clear and convincing vindication of the fundamental Christian truths against the attacks of unbelieving critics. Of the present-day Liberalists he says: "The denying school is called 'Modernists' by accommodation. They are not modern in the sense that they represent anything new. Long ago Renan expressed their views more attractively, Strauss more forcefully, Socinus more logically, Arius more subtly, and Celsus more originally." The first five chapters treat "The Supernatural Jesus" according to the four evangelists and St. Paul; the remaining five, "The Virgin Birth," "The Resurrection of Jesus," "The Deity of Christ," "The Mistakes of the Modernists," and "The Truth about the Bible and Science." The style is

popular and the presentation of the subject, lucid. Lutheran readers cannot subscribe to every statement made in the book. The author does not uphold the verbal and plenary inspiration of the Bible, but says: "The Christian holds that God revealed truth in the Bible." (p. 89.) Of Gen. 1, 1 he writes: "No definite time is fixed, whether six thousand years or six million years. The time is expressly indefinite and gives a place for all that geology may discover." (p. 191.) As a Baptist he does not appreciate the supreme value of the Gospel as the means of grace by which the Holy Ghost performs His regenerating and sanctifying work. Other *naevi* of a similar nature mar the pleasure of reading this book, in which, however, there is much that is good and profitable for practical use.

MUELLER.

**The Person of Christ. His Perfect Humanity a Proof of His Divinity.**

By *Philip Schaff, D. D., LL. D.* With Foreword by *Rev. Cortland Myers, D. D.* 148 pages, 5¼×7¼. Cloth, \$1.25, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

This is a revised and somewhat abbreviated edition of the work of Dr. Philip Schaff, which appeared for the first time in 1865 and again in 1883. With the consent of Prof. D. S. Schaff, of the Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa., the American Tract Society has now republished it with such minor changes as were deemed helpful to the reader. Some of the testimonies have been omitted, and the critical notes that were retained have been transferred from the end of the volume to the pages where they belong. In addition to the Foreword, Preface, and the Appendix of Impartial Testimonies (in which are quoted the opinions of men like Carlyle, Channing, Strauss, Theodore Parker, Mill, Renan, etc.), the book contains fifteen chapters which constitute a forceful apologetic of Christ's divinity. The basis of argument is that Christ's perfect humanity is a convincing proof of His divinity. In other words, the purity of Christ's life and the high dignity of His teachings substantiate His claim of being God's Son, the promised Savior of the world. Perhaps the most profitable chapter is chapter XIV, in which the author confutes the false theories concerning Christ advanced by Deists and Rationalists of the last century. While not altogether free from error, this scholarly work of Dr. Schaff certainly deserves a place in the pastor's study.

MUELLER.

**Over the Hills of Galilee.** By *Stephen A. Haboush.* 91 pages, 4×6. Cloth, 60 cts.; dozen, \$6.00, postpaid. (Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O.)

This little book is divided into two parts, the first telling the experiences of Stephen A. Haboush (a Syrian convert to Christianity) as "shepherd boy of Galilee," while the second applies these experiences in the interpretation of Ps. 23. Sometimes the interpretation departs from the traditional views of Christian scholars, as, for instance in v. 5, where the words: "Thou anointest my head with oil" are made to refer to the healing of wounds by means of olive oil. No new light is shed on the beautiful psalm, and frequently the reader is irritated by unworthy ideas and undignified expressions. The price is rather high. MUELLER.

Das Evangelium des Johannes. Nach dem Urtext uebersetzt und erlaeutert von *Dr. Curt Boettger*. — Der Weg zu Gott. Das Wissen von Gott. Von *Georg Casper*, fruher Priester der katholischen Kirche. — Von der Seele und von der Abgeschlossenheit. Von *Meister Eckehart*. Nach der mittelhochdeutschen Urschrift bearbeitet und mit Anmerkungen versehen von *Dr. Arthur Liebernicketel*. (Johannes Baum Verlag, Pfullingen in Wuerttemberg.)

Germany, the home of the Reformation, is now being overrun by all manner of sects and cults and has become the rendezvous of fanatics, heretics, and fakers. The above publications prove that also Yogi philosophy and Hindu theosophy are seeking converts among the descendants of those to whom Dr. Luther preached the Gospel in its purity. They announce to all "*Seelisch-Suchende und Geistig-Strebende*" a new "*philosophia occulta*" by which to find true peace with God, together with mental, moral, and physical rejuvenation. Of the three pamphlets Meister Eckehart's *Von der Seele* is the least offensive. Meister Eckehart was a Dominican monk, whose pantheistic mysticism was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church. Casper's *Weg zu Gott* is an introduction to Yogi fanaticism as represented mainly by Bô Yin Râ, while *Das Evangelium des Johannes*, by Dr. Boettger, written in the same spirit and for the same purpose, is so vile a blasphemy of the Gospel that one shudders as he reads. The three publications appear under the general title of *Evangelien der Seele*, and the theosophy which they teach is known as the *Neugeist-Lehre*. We pity all who seek God after the manner of the *Neugeist-Lehrer!*

MUELLER.

#### Brief Mention.

The First St. Paul's Church of Pittsburgh (South Side) celebrated its seventy-fifth anniversary, and its pastor, *Rev. E. F. Brand*, has commemorated the event by an illustrated brochure *Kurzes aus der Geschichte der Ersten Deutschen Ev.-Luth. Gemeinde zu East Birmingham, Penna.* — Kountze Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church of Omaha, Nebr., sends us its artistic folder for Lent, 1925. — From Immanuel Ev. Luth. Church, Michigan City, Ind. (Rev. G. M. Krach, pastor), has come the mimeographed parish-paper with printed cover, *The Friendly Visitor*, also the parish-paper *Immanuel*, and the *Walther League Appeal*, authorized by the Central District of the Missouri Synod for the Improvement Fund of the Indianapolis Lutheran Orphanage. — From the authorities at New York has come the announcement and prospectus of the *John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation*, which aims at an extension of the Rhodes Scholarship system so as to embrace more aged applicants, also professors on furlough for their sabbatical year. — From the Augustana Book Concern at Rock Island the following publications have come: *The Victorious Church*, a sacred pageant by *Hulda Kreutz*; *Two Thousand Years of Christianity*, a sacred pageant by *Mildred Waldes* and *Bskil O. Carlson*; *Easter Dawn*, an Easter service for the Sunday-school, arranged by *Rev. A. I. Hamilton*. — A pretty poster in colors announces the Thirty-third International Convention of the Walther League, which will be held July 26—30 at San Francisco.

DAU.