

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. V.

JUNE, 1925.

No. 6.

The Influence of Calvinism on the American System of Education.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER, St. Louis, Mo.

(Read before the Western District Teachers' Conference and published
by request.)

PART I.

Introductory.

The topic assigned to me is certainly one of great importance, — in fact, so much so that justice can hardly be done to it within the allotted space of time and in an essay as brief as this must needs be. All that can be done is to suggest a bare outline of the topic, together with a few noteworthy characteristics of American education which are due to the influence of Calvinism.

Definition of Terminology.

In order thoroughly to understand the subject, it is necessary to define its component parts. In the first place, we must know what the term Calvinism implies and in what sense it is here used. As is well known, the term Calvinism is ambiguous, inasmuch as it is currently employed in two or three senses, closely related indeed, but of varying latitudes of connotation. First, Calvinism designates merely the individual teaching or teachings of John Calvin. Again, it designates, in a broader way, the *doctrinal system* confessed by that body of Protestant churches known historically, in distinction from Lutheran churches, as the "Reformed churches," or the "Calvinistic churches," because the greatest scientific exposition of their faith was given by John Calvin. Lastly, the term Calvinism designates, in a still broader sense, the entire body of conceptions — theological, ethical, philosophical, social, political — which under the influence of the master mind of John Calvin raised itself to dominance in the Protestant lands of the post-Reformation age and has left a permanent mark not

BOOK REVIEW.

An Elementary Christian Psychology. By *O. M. Norlie, Ph. D., S. T. D.*, Professor of Psychology, Luther College. 249 pp.; \$1.25. (Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn.)

To write a Christian Psychology might seem a strange undertaking to many teachers of psychology accustomed to the usual rubbish that goes by that name and is built on the evolutionist theory, which deals with the human being as with an animal or plant. Yet, after all, nothing is true psychology which is not based upon, and does not agree with, those basic facts concerning the soul which are set forth in the Bible. Since the Fall, man no longer understands himself; sin has cast a veil over his soul. God, therefore, must needs enlighten him concerning the true condition of his inmost nature and being. Dr. Norlie's *Christian Psychology* is constructed on the basis of the true soul-facts expounded in Scripture, and for this we give him due credit; for it certainly requires boldness to depart from the common path. Also, his book has other advantages that commend it. It is scholarly, clear, progressive, and quite thorough in outlining the essentials of psychology. For a text-book on psychology it enters, perhaps, too deeply into the domain of Christian doctrine. The reviewer cannot, of course, subscribe to all statements made in the book. The definitions are often faulty. For example, faith is more than "the

religious faculty of the soul, . . . the power to believe." (p. 161.) Original sin is more than "deep corruption" (p. 180); it is the total depravity of our human nature. Nor is it true that "in spite of ignorance of God, . . . in spite of enmity against God, . . . in spite of absolute inability to believe in God, . . . the natural man longs after communion with God." (p. 183.) If man is ignorant of God, hates God, and is unable to believe in God, he cannot long after communion with Him. The corpse cannot long after life. So also the definition of conversion, namely, that "conversion is the act of the Holy Ghost by which He *drives* men . . . to take refuge in Christ" (p. 191) is in accord neither with Scripture nor with the Confessions of our Church. (*Conversio voluntatis nostrae depravatae revera nihil aliud est quam eiusdem resuscitatio a spirituali morte. Trigl., 912, 87.*) There are other *naevi* that mar one's pleasure in reading this book, which, however, in spite of its faults, is worthy of close and serious study.

MUELLER.

Addresses at the 175th Anniversary of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania. Reading, Pa., June 5, 1923.

The addresses contained in this brochure are of historical value to the student of the Lutheran Church in America, as they give the reader an insight into the development and the spirit of this branch of the Lutheran Church.

MUELLER.

The Deciding Voice of the Monuments in Biblical Criticism. By *Melvin Grove Kyle, D. D., LL. D.* 340 pages of text, 24 of reference notes and subject index. Revised edition. \$2.15. (Bibliotheca Sacra Company, Oberlin, O.)

To the readers of the THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY Dr. Kyle needs no introduction. In the field of archeology he is one of America's leading scholars, whose many articles on the important subject in which he specializes are always interesting, instructive, and, above all, trustworthy; for Dr. Kyle is not a radical, but a conservative, believing Bible student. In *The Deciding Voice of the Monuments* Dr. Kyle very ably answers the destructive attacks of negative and hostile critics and shows that the spade invariably vindicates the truth of Scripture. It is a book worth reading and in its revised form is still more useful than was the first edition, since it includes recent important discoveries and contains additional chapters on "Canons" and "Methods of Research." We cordially recommend this book especially to our college libraries.

MUELLER.

The Chronology of the Bible. By *Philip Mauro.* 120 pp.; \$1.00. (Hamilton Brothers' Scripture Truth Depot, 120 Tremont St., Boston 9, Mass.)

The purpose of this book is to show that the Bible "contains a complete and connected scheme of chronology, which has a definite starting-point (the creation of man) and pursues a definite line, to a definite objective—the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God." Those interested in the chronology of the Bible will find in it much to interest them, although they will hardly agree with all the computations and arguments of the author. The final result of his reckoning does not differ radically from the figures of Ussher. According to Mauro, Christ was born Anno Hominis (the creation of man) 4041 and was

crucified A. H. 4075, which is equivalent to 30 A. D. The present year (1925 A. D.), according to his computation, would be A. H. 5970. He places the birth of Abraham at B. C. 2038, the beginning of David's reign at B. C. 983, and the end of the Kingdom of Israel at B. C. 640. Our interest in the matter is merely academical, but we agree with the author that also the chronology of the Old Testament was to serve the great event prophesied to fallen man, namely, man's redemption by the promised Messiah.

MUELLER.

The Essentials of Christianity. By *Rev. Henry C. Sheldon, D. D.* Author of *New Testament Theology, Pantheistic Dilemmas and Other Essays in Philosophy and Religion*, etc. 307 pp.; \$1.75. (George H. Doran Company, New York.)

This book was designed "for young people sufficiently advanced to understand, without serious difficulty, discussions in religion and theology embodied in non-technical phraseology." We doubt, however, whether even the most "sufficiently advanced" are able to follow the author's discussions and understand what he means. Certain it is that they cannot learn from his book what true Christianity is. The author does not believe in the infallibility of the verbally inspired Bible. He asks: "What matters it if some errors are found in items only externally related to the purpose of the Biblical revelation?" (p. 75.) He rejects the doctrine of Christ's vicarious atonement. "Nowhere," he argues, "is it said that the sacrifice of the Son of God was a procuring cause of the love of God to sinners." (p. 105.) He doubts the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost. "In many of the Scriptural passages the Spirit . . . might be regarded as denoting God in a particular order of manifestation rather than a distinct person in the Godhead." (p. 162.) He denies the total depravity of natural man. "It would be nothing less than a veritable hyperbole of pessimistic speech to describe them [men] under the name of 'total depravity.'" (p. 204.) These quotations prove that the author himself does not understand "the essentials of Christianity."

MUELLER.

Brief Mention.

Matheteusate is the title of a pretty brochure, full of information and inspiration that has been issued by Synod's Fiscal Office with suggestions for using the brochure. It describes the missions of the Missouri Synod in the form of a trip around the world and is profusely illustrated. The credit for this publication belongs chiefly to *Rev. J. C. Baur* and *Mr. B. Taenzler*. It can be had gratis from the Financial Secretary.

The Walther League has issued a revised edition of its *Hospice Directory* for 1925, which is indispensable to some of our traveling young people. A gratis copy can be obtained from the General Offices of the Walther League, 6438 Eggleston Ave., Chicago, Ill. It has been prepared by *Rev. E. Umbach*, the secretary for the League's Welfare Work.

A group of members of Trinity Lutheran Congregation at Cape Girardeau, Mo., has issued a beautiful artistic folder to commemorate the dedication of their fine school on April 19, 1925. — From *Ivy L. Lee*, 4 E. 66th St., New York City, there has come *The Farewell Sermon of Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick to the First Presbyterian Church of New York on Sunday, March 1.*

DAU.