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The Means of Grace.

With Special Reference to Modernism.

By PROF. P. E. KRETZMANN, PH. D., D. D.

Introduction.

"The true treasure of the Church is the holy Gospel of the glory and grace of God." That is the statement made by Luther in Thesis 62 of the Ninety-five Theses. It shows that the great Reformer, as early as 1517, had reached a clear and definite conviction concerning the most important treasure which God gave to His Church on earth. It is not in subjective and mystical experiences of an individual that the strength of the Church lies nor in similar conceptions held by a group of individuals, but in the objective acceptance of the gift of redemption wrought by the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ. No amount of contemplation will give a person the possession of the reconciliation effected by Christ, and all the excessive religiousness of our days will not take the place of the simple belief in the truth of Scriptures which is demanded by the Lord as the first step in the proper relationship to Him. It was our Lord Jesus Himself who began His public ministry with the call: "Repent ye and believe the Gospel." Mark 1, 15. And the same call goes forth throughout the Scriptures, as when Paul in Rom. 10, 16 and 2 Thess. 1, 8 demands obedience to the Gospel, just as he writes, Eph. 1, 13: "In whom [Christ] ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise."

For that reason the topic which is to be treated in the present essay and in its discussion is of vital, of fundamental importance in the life and work of the Church. When the Ephraimites had been defeated by the Gileadites under the command of Jephthah, as we read in Judges 12, the Gileadites took the passages, that is, the fords of Jordan, before the Ephraimites, challenging every man who wanted to pass over to pronounce the word *Shibboleth*. Since

BOOK REVIEW.

Statistical Year-Book for 1928. 206 pages. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

The *Statistical Year-book* for 1928 recently left the press. Why so late? The statistician answers this question in his preface: "To place the *Statistical Year-book* on the market at an earlier date in the year seems to be an impossibility. On March 14, 194 reports were still missing. Besides, the compilation of these figures in so short a time is such an enormous task that it overtaxes the strength of one man. And it stands to reason that the printing of a book of this size containing almost nothing but figures requires much more time than what printers call 'straight matter.'" Besides the extensive parochial reports, the *Year-book* gives the statistics of all our missions and of our educational and charitable institutions, financial reports, the percentage of German and English used in our churches, etc. Much painstaking labor has been put into this book of over 200 pages. The selling price of one dollar does not pay for the printing. J. H. C. F.

The Life-Work of Johann Sebastian Bach. By *Paul Sauer*. 15 pages. 10 cts.; doz., 96 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

In the interest of good church music we highly recommend the reading of this tract. J. H. C. F.

KFUO Tracts. No. 9: *Thou Shalt Not Kill with the Tongue*; No. 10: *Dangerous Tendencies in Modern Marriages*; No. 11: *Wanted: Better Homes*; No. 12: *Hurdling Life's Barriers*. By *Dr. Walter A. Maier*. Single copy, 5 cts. each; 100, \$1.25; 1,000, \$11.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

These tracts were originally written as addresses and delivered by *Dr. Walter A. Maier* over Radio Station KFUO. J. H. C. F.

Rally Day. Order of Service for Lutheran Sunday-schools. By *Theo. Kuehnert*. 7 pages, 5×7½. Single copy, 5 cts.; dozen, 25 cts.; 100, \$2.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

We shall let the author explain his new program. He says: "This order of service differs from the usual Rally Day orders of service in this, that it includes a short introductory service to be held in the Sunday-school

prior to the church service. The Sunday-school exercises take special notice of the new pupils enrolled on that Sunday. The main feature of a Rally Day order of service ought to be the church service proper. This should be less in the form of exercises in which the children are primarily active, as is the case in our customary children's Christmas orders of service, but its outstanding characteristic should be worship. Rally Day gives the pastor a special opportunity to deliver an important message to children and parents. A central thought is followed throughout this order of service. Its arrangement is based on the theme 'Jesus, the Good Shepherd,' or, from the child's point of view, 'I Am a Lamb in Jesus' Flock.'" When introducing into our Lutheran Church the observance of such days as Rally Day, we must be careful to avoid what is improper and out of place and make the program of the day in strict accordance with the true nature and dignity of the Christian church service. Professor Kuehnert's *Rally Day* does this.

J. H. C. F.

Religion for Primary Grades of Learning. By *W. O. Kraeft*. 90 pages, 5×7¼. 80 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

"The continued success of the Lutheran school as an institution is largely determined by the effectiveness with which religion is taught," so says Professor Kraeft in his new book. He warns against religion studied merely as a matter of routine or only mechanically taught or taught without a definite aim. After an introductory chapter on "The Status of Method in Religion" the author gives an outline for the teaching of a number of Bible-stories from the Old and the New Testament. A list of Bible-texts, prayers, and hymns is added. Professor Schmieding has written a lengthy introduction on "the unit-mastery method of teaching and learning."

J. H. C. F.

The Religion of the Child. By *Prof. P. E. Kretzmann, Ph. D., D. D.* 152 pages, 5×7½. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

"We know that the Bible itself demands that the wisdom from above be made the basis of all true education." So says Dr. Kretzmann quite correctly. The modern attitude towards religious education Dr. Kretzmann gives in the following words: "Teaching the Bible as such is declared to be an insufficient object, as is also the teaching of a set of correct beliefs. It has been said that the ultimate goal in religious education is 'to help the individual, in his own continuous reconstruction and readjustments of his experience, increasingly to understand, appreciate, and participate in, the Christian way of living fruitfully in this world.' This is nothing more nor less than a statement of the aims of the social education. There is where the naturalistic educational psychology has led its proponents and disciples." Concerning the indoctrination of adults who are to be prepared for church-membership, Dr. Kretzmann says: "No pastor can really be satisfied with just a few lessons on certain fundamental points, much less with a series of sermons, the hearing of which is taken for granted and the assent to which is taken in lieu of a confession of the heart. It is a very difficult thing to prepare even an adult for membership in a Lutheran Church in less than twenty to forty lessons. If one attempts more by doing less, the chances are that we shall soon have a membership which is not

really a membership by conviction, but only by force of circumstances. This ought to be avoided by all means." In our day we are confronted by a twofold danger: indifference toward purity of doctrine, which leads to false doctrine and unbelief, and, as a result, failure to appreciate thorough indoctrination. Dr. Kretzmann's book is, in the main, a timely discussion of this situation and an appeal for education on a sound basis.

J. H. C. F.

The Stewardship Life. By *Karl Kretzschmar*. 208 pages, 4¼ × 5¾. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

The stewardship of money has been much emphasized. Our Christians, however, should learn the lessons of the larger stewardship of the Christian life. In his preface, Pastor Kretzschmar says: "As for periodic special 'drives' for funds needed in church-work, especially if necessitated by deficits in the treasuries of the Church, these are mere makeshifts. They usually involve an admission that stewardship has failed. The more frequently they are resorted to, the less effective they are bound to become. In fact, all difficulties in financing the activities of the kingdom of God are only symptoms of an organic and often serious derangement in the 'body ecclesiastic'; they always go with delinquencies in other fields of Christian endeavor; they indicate a decline, sometimes alarming, in the temperature of Christian sanctification. This being so, the remedies resorted to must be applied, not to the symptoms, but to the source of the trouble. A treatise on stewardship, therefore, to be really worth while, must spread out over the whole field of Christian service and activity. After all, stewardship is only another term for sanctification and hence does not merely apply to giving, but to every phase of Christian living." May Pastor Kretzschmar's book find a place in the homes and the hearts of our people! The book is interestingly written. J. H. C. F.

Preludes and Postludes for the Organ. Composed by *G. C. Albert Kaepfel*. 32 pages. \$1.25. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

These musical compositions are sufficiently difficult to need careful preparation, but not beyond the ability of the average organist.

J. H. C. F.

Trinity Lutheran Church, St. Louis, Mo. A Brief History and a Souvenir, Prepared for the Ninetieth Anniversary of Its Existence by the Present Pastor, *Rudolph H. C. Meyer*.

Here we have in an exterior fully in keeping with the absorbingly interesting and important subject of the pamphlet, richly illustrated, a history of the oldest Lutheran Church of St. Louis, the church of which Dr. Walther was the pastor for many years. The history was written by Pastor Meyer as a contribution to the observance of the ninetieth anniversary of the church. The pamphlet can be purchased from the pastor for 25 cts. A.

Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher. Ausgelegt von *Dr. C. M. Zorn*. 40 cts. (Zwickau, Sachsen; Verlag des Schriftenvereins [E. Klaerner]). Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

Dr. Zorn spent the declining years of his life in a most beneficial way for the Church by writing popular expositions of various books of the

Bible. About a year after his death this little book of 55 pages is placed before us. The book is a worthy product of the gifted pen which gave us so many similar works. Here you have an explanation of the background of 1 Thess., an exposition of its prominent thoughts, brief remarks to clear up passages that might cause difficulty, and wholesome application. After you have read this little book, you will not only better understand First Thessalonians, but you will find yourself enriched and strengthened in various ways.

A.

"Not of the World." Discourses on the Christian's Relation to the World. By *R. B. Kuiper, A. M., B. D.* 200 pages. \$1.50. (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich.)

The eight sermons contained in this volume were preached at the Lagrave Avenue Christian Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Mich., and taken down stenographically while being delivered. They grew out of the pastor's desire to explain to his flock the relation of the Christian to the world. In the "Foreword" he writes: "On every hand one hears complaints about the worldliness of church-members. I fear that the charge must be sustained. But some of the suggested remedies I cannot approve of. Easy indulgence will surely do incalculable harm. But neither can we cope with this evil by laying down 'rule upon rule, precept upon precept.' Nor does the remedy lie in the 'Touch not, taste not, handle not' policy of asceticism. Ultimately, the only cure of sin is holiness; the one successful antidote for worldliness is spirituality." In this spirit the sermons are composed. Their titles read: "Mingling with the World"; "Differing from the World"; "Enjoying the World"; "Overcoming the World"; "Hated by the World"; "Traveling through the World"; "Owning the World"; "Evanglizing the World." While each sermon shows the Reformed background on every page, the book nevertheless contains excellent suggestions, showing how the important subject of a Christian's relation to the world may be presented to Christian people in a simple and yet dignified and convincing manner.

MUELLER.

Nach Sibirien. By *Bischof Theophil Meyer.* 202 pages. Numerous pictures and one map of Siberia. \$1.00. Order from Concordia Publishing House or from the agent: Karl Meyer, Huron St., Harbor Beach, Minn.

In 1927 Bishop Meyer of the Ev. Luth. Church of Russia was authorized to visit the Lutheran churches and settlements in Siberia. The results of this highly important visitation are pictured in his most interesting and instructive book *Nach Sibirien*. The journey covered 16,208 kilometers. Pastor Meyer and his assistants visited nineteen Lutheran congregations, besides many places where smaller Lutheran groups had settled. He held forty-four services, preaching in German, Russian, and Lithuanian. He conducted ten larger meetings of church groups, baptized 212 children, confirmed 297 catechumens, who had been previously instructed by lay church leaders, solemnized forty-nine marriages, and administered Holy Communion to 2,616 communicants. How this vast work was done, where it was done, and under what conditions it was done, all these things are interestingly related in this report, together with detailed descriptions of

the people and the country of Siberia. The Lutheran Church in Siberia is supported by that of Russia and this again by the Lutheran Church Council of our country, under the supervision of Dr. Morehead. Nevertheless, the weal and woe of the Lutherans in Russia and Siberia are matters of interest to us also, and we cordially recommend this instructive account to our readers. No one can read the book without being deeply impressed by the faithfulness of thousands of Lutheran Christians under circumstances which rightly may be called frightful. MUELLER.

The Children's Hymnal and Service Book. Authorized by the United Lutheran Church in America. 298 pages. 75 cts.

This new children's hymnal, intended chiefly for Sunday-schools, contains 251 hymns and anthems, selected and arranged for children of school age. Although one misses some of the old favorites, the selection on the whole is very good and will prove a welcome addition to the music library of the school or Sunday-school. K.

The Christ Who Is All. By *Amos John Traver*. \$1.00. (United Lutheran Publication House.)

This book proved intensely interesting to the reviewer, for the author made a rather successful attempt to show that Christ ought to be a very vital factor in the every-day life of young Christians. This is done in ten chapters, whose contents are indicated, to some extent, by their headings: "The Actual Christ; The Accepted Christ; First in Affection; First in Attitudes; First in Allegiance; First in Action; First in Aspirations; The Abiding Christ; The Atoning Christ; The Adored Christ." While the reviewer should have preferred to have the book begin with the atoning Christ and was obliged to take exception to one or two statements, slight inaccuracies, the enjoyment and the benefit derived from the perusal far outweighed any such considerations. K.

Touchstones of Success. By 160 Present-day Men of Achievement. 256 pages. \$1.00. (The Vir Publishing Co.)

This book is sufficiently characterized by its title, for it offers a symposium of suggestions for success, chiefly for earthly success. Naturally, most of the contributions stress factors of this life only, and there are many statements which strongly savor of self-righteousness. There is some compensation in the fact that a number of the contributions stress the basis of true service flowing from a sanctified life. K.

The Successful Young People's Society. By *Catherine Atkinson Miller*. 201 pages. \$1.75. (Doubleday, Doran & Co.)

It is but natural that this book should present many false notions, especially such as spring from erroneous conceptions regarding church union, world peace, etc. Nevertheless the careful reader, who distinguishes and eliminates as he goes along, will find much excellent material, which makes the book worth reading. K.

