

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. IX.

NOVEMBER, 1929.

No. 11.

The Means of Grace.

With Special Reference to Modernism.

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(Continued.)

3.

Closely connected with the doctrine of the essence of the means of grace is that of their outward form and use. The essential difference in the viewpoint will readily appear if we remember that the Word of God (specifically the Gospel), Baptism, and the Lord's Supper are, according to Scriptural testimony, actually the bearers of God's grace; they offer, they convey, they seal, to the believer the benefit of Christ's vicarious atonement.

Some strange notions have appeared from time to time, even where there is no evidence of Modernism in the full sense of the word. Thus a recent writer says of the effect of the Reformation: "With the passage of time and the waning of the first enthusiasm the same thing happened to the Bible which had happened to the Sacrament. It became separated from the life of faith. Protestants came to think of the Bible just as the Roman Catholics had thought of the Sacrament, as something wholly mysterious and exceptional." (Brown, *Beliefs that Matter*, 216.) What he refers to is the same thing that has often been included in the accusation made against Protestants, and particularly Lutherans, that they were making the Bible a "paper pope," looking upon it in a perfectly blind and mechanical manner. It is the same charge which has been brought along similar lines when men have accused the Lutheran Church of teaching a "mechanical theory" of inspiration. But this is not the case, as well they know, and we resent and reject the insinuation as a deliberate misrepresentation. We hold what the Bible teaches, also with regard to the external form of the Bible as a means of grace.

For that reason we defend the validity of *the Gospel as a means of grace* in every form of presentation. It is true of the Gospel proclamation. The Lord tells His disciples: "Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be

BOOK REVIEW.

Luther's Large Catechism. By *John Theodor Mueller, Ph. D., Th. D.*
195 pages, 5¼×7½. \$1.35. Order from Concordia Publishing House,
St. Louis, Mo.

We are this year celebrating the four-hundredth anniversary of the writing of Luther's two Catechisms. Most attention is given to Luther's Small Catechism and very little to Luther's Large Catechism. The Large Catechism, however, is a book that is worth while, not only for the pastor and the teacher, but also for the layman, and we ought therefore not to fail to call attention to the fact that Dr. Mueller has prepared a separate edition with chapter-heads. Dr. Kretzmann, who wrote the foreword, says: "The fact that the text has been offered in convenient paragraph form, with headings, which serve as guides to the understanding of the text, will be welcomed by all those who will make use of this wonderful material for private study, for devotional use, and for wider doctrinal instruction."

J. H. C. F.

Is the Bible Reliable? Vital Questions Answered by Scientists, Christian Believers, and the Bible. By *Bjug A. Harstad*, Parkland, Wash. Bound, \$1; in paper cover, 75 cts. Order from Rev. Adolph Harstad, Thornton, Iowa.

If you have never met the author, whose picture, by the way, is used as frontispiece, you will, by perusing this book, learn what kind of man he is—a sturdy, whole-souled pioneer pastor and missionary, unalterably opposed to compromise in the sphere of revealed truth, well indoctrinated in the teachings of the Bible and the Lutheran Church, and not afraid of measuring swords with any enemies of the Savior. You would be inclined to guess that he studied theology under Dr. Walther, and this guess would turn out correct. In the book before us, as the title indicates, Pastor Harstad is defending the Holy Scriptures against attacks made on it by infidels and unbelievers. After having, in Part 1, brought evidence from the outside that the reliability and divineness of the Bible must not be questioned, he sets forth in Part 2 what the holy Book itself has to say on its origin and defends especially the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Part 3 discusses difficulties which people have found in the Scriptures, apparent contradictions, and the like, and the author shows that they are without foundation. Part 4 contains information taken from prominent authorities on some of the so-called "holy books" of the Orient and the religious systems based on them. Finally various appendices are added, giving information on the chronology of the Bible, Hebrew times and festivals, Jewish money, Roman money, and the approximate height of sacred localities. A welcome array of reproductions of photographs acquainting the reader with most of the fellow-ministers of the author in the Norwegian Synod concludes the book. We can but be thankful for the firmness with which our venerable brother confesses the truth and wish for his book a wide circle of readers. Here and there we cannot agree with his exegesis, but that does not keep us one minute from giving his book our hearty endorsement.

A.

The Sumerians. A Civilization in 3500 B. C. By *C. Leonard Woolley*. 98 pages. 29 illustrations. \$2.00. (Oxford University Press, New York.)

For the last eight years C. Leonard Woolley, as leader of the joint expedition of the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the British Museum, has directed important excavations on the site of Ur, the famous city of the Chaldees, long buried in the desert sand of Mesopotamia. His studies in the field of archeology and his practical experiences in the country concerning whose ancient inhabitants he writes in this volume has enabled him to supply a book which represents the latest word on the history and culture of the ancient Sumerians, and which is of absorbing interest not only to students of archeology and anthropology, but also to those of the Holy Bible, the truths of which also the excavations of these recent expeditions confirm. Of course, much of what the author says with regard to the early history of the peoples inhabiting the Mesopotamian Valley is, and will perhaps remain, conjecture. Whence these immigrants came, at what time they settled in the various districts, and who they were, all these are questions which the archeologist cannot as yet answer with certainty. Nevertheless, so much information has been gained by the recent excavations that to-day we have quite an adequate conception of their culture and their cultural achievements. These form the most important chapters of Dr. Woolley's book, which proves quite conclusively that not Egypt, but Sumer, was the forerunner of the Old World civilizations — Egypt, Assyria, Asia Minor, Crete, and Greece. The book is intended primarily for students, but it is never too technical for the average intelligent reader. There are in all seven chapters, five of which concern themselves with historical matters. The two others treat "Sumerian Society" and the "Claim of Sumer," and in these the author is at his best, since he is here dealing with facts, well substantiated by proofs. However, the whole monograph is an excellent contribution to archeological literature, and that in a field which has scarcely been touched. Professor Woolley is recognized as one of the world's foremost archeologists, and also this volume testifies to his painstaking research, his careful discrimination, and his sound judgment. It is a standard work, and students interested in Sumerian civilization cannot afford to neglect studying the first-hand information which the learned author has so well condensed into a few pages.

MUELLER.

The World's Miracle and Other Observations. By *Karl Reiland*, Rector of St. George's Church, New York. \$1.75. (Henry Holt & Co., New York.)

This review may serve as a side-light on conditions in the Episcopal Church. The foreword, by Robert Norwood, rector of St. Bartholomew's Church, New York, declares: "Reiland lifts a trumpet to his lips, and every word is a ringing blast for the beauty of holiness. . . . This book is the distillation of a great preacher's heart." The book presents Modernism of an extreme type, the Modernism of the old rationalism modernized by evolutionism. It has no room for the saving doctrine, for faith in Jesus Christ, but teaches salvation through morality. "I have before me an official publication in which I read 'the Apostles' Creed is a sufficient

statement of the Christian faith.' Now, that is exactly what the creed is *not*. There is not a word in any creed, or all of them together, of the ethical and spiritual teaching of Jesus; not a suggestion of the biggest theme of the Gospel—*love of God and our fellow-men*; not a word about sacrifice, unselfishness, and service; nothing but a cold, formal statement, entirely inadequate as a statement of the 'Christian faith,' which is infinitely larger and better." The discussion of moral questions is clothed in beautiful language and, taken by itself, frequently goes to the heart of the matter. Take, for instance, the "swimming ax." "With this poor workman on the banks of the Jordan there is real embarrassment, rare in borrowers; there is sharp despair, scarce in borrowers; there is the consciousness of deep regret, unusual in borrowers." But in every case it fails to reach the real heart of the matter, denying as it does the faith in the work of Jesus. "Must I believe the creeds literally, or the miracles, or the literal historical miracle of the Virgin Birth, or that Jesus is God—in order to be a devout Christian?" I answer in the only way—in my judgment—it should be answered, with an emphatic 'No.'" And so he cannot get beyond the shallow moralizing of the old rationalists. Nor does he blush to take over the shallow subterfuges of his fathers. This is his brilliant explanation of the miracle of the swimming ax: "I am ready to believe that Elisha was clever enough to poke around with a stick until he happened to catch the eye of the head and brought it thus to the surface." There is, of course, the usual, or rather an unusual, amount of disparagement of Church, orthodoxy, and creed. Just one more quotation: "It is a satisfaction to me that there was a 'doubting Thomas.' Let him be the patron saint of all those who want the evidence of their senses and the faculty of reason to accompany their beliefs as far as possible in every experience." And this is the man a section of the Episcopal Church has constituted its leader. Says the rector of St. Bartholomew's: "America of the churches has no figure more commanding than the author of these prose sonnets which it is my privilege to commend. This book is the distillation of a great preacher's heart."—There are Episcopalians who are disgusted with the book. To the reviewer of *The Living Church*, October 5, 1929, "it sounded like a composite of Pollyanna, Dr. Fosdick, and Clarence Darrow." E.

The Faith that Wins. By Roy Talmage Brumbaugh. 125 pages. 75 cts.
(The Bible Institute Colportage Association, Chicago.)

This is a brief and popular commentary on Heb. 11, 1—12, 2. It is well written and, in the main, sound. In a passing way, however, the book teaches the Reformed doctrine of the Sacraments and also the false doctrine of the millennium. J. H. C. F.

Concordia Christmas Greeting Cards. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

These Christmas-cards are to be sold by our schools, the purchase price being 15 cents per set of ten cards and the selling price 25 cents. The pictures illustrate the early days of our Savior's life and are accompanied by little verses written by Prof. W. G. Polack. Envelopes are furnished with the cards, which, accordingly, are not post-cards. The cards are put up only in boxes of 25 packages. A.