

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. IX.

JULY, 1929.

No. 7.

Good Works.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Rechtfertigung*, Part IX.

THE REV. JUL. A. FRIEDRICH, Iowa City, Iowa.

(Continued.)

In the light of this simple description of the procedure at the Last Judgment we also understand Luke 16, 9, where Christ says: "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail (*ὅταν ἐκλείπητε*), they may receive you into everlasting habitations." Luther says: "When I come before God's Judgment, a poor man to whom I have done good will stand in heaven and say: 'He washed my feet; he gave me meat, drink, clothing.' That man will certainly be my friend and a witness for my faith, whatever words he may use to express his testimony. At that time a beggar will be of more use to me than St. Peter." (St. Louis Ed., XI, 1951.) Aegidius Hunnius writes to the same effect: "On the Last Day the poor will receive their benefactors with the testimony which the Son of God will bear in their stead and in their name in favor of the godly persons who were wealthy. By this testimony He will show publicly that their faith was not hypocritical, but abounded in good works and therefore was a genuine and living faith. For this fact there will be as many witnesses as there are persons who were succored by them in this life." ¹⁾

This public justification does, however, take place not only on the Last Day, but very often also before that day. For did not the Lord publicly absolve the great sinner in the presence of the Pharisee and his company? (Luther. St. Louis Ed., VII, 1456 to 1461.) And always according to the works. Christ said to the

1) In novissimo die recipient benefactores suos egeni suo testimonio, quod illorum vice atque nomine Filius Dei perhibebit piis divitibus, publice testificaturus, fidem eorum non inanem, sed bonis operibus gravidam atque sic vivam veram et non simulatam fuisse; cujus tot habebunt vivos testes, quot ex pauperum grege beneficentiam eorum in hoc mundo sunt experti. (Aegidius Hunnius, *De Justificatione*, 231.)

BOOK REVIEW.

Word-Pictures of Bible Events. Nos. 4 and 5 (First and Second Samuel; First Chronicles; Psalms). By *Wm. Moenkemoeller*, Department of Bible History and Greek, Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn. 70 cts.; cloth-bound, \$1.25. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

Professor Moenkemoeller here continues his masterly exposition of the Holy Scriptures, a work for which he, thanks to his long career as minister and as instructor in Bible History, is very well equipped. The reader finds here narrative, interpretation, and application. The historical allu-

sions are explained, and difficulties are cleared up. To cite an example for the latter category, the author, in speaking of the lists of the Cherethites and Pelethites, as incorporated in 2 Sam. and 1 Chron., says: "That a few names are different in the two accounts may be due to the fact that the lists were made up at different periods, while changes through death or otherwise had occurred in the mean time." This is a simple and plausible explanation, for which a devout Bible reader will be thankful. To aid those who use his *Word-Pictures*, Professor Moenkemoeller has compiled a topical index, which sells at 25 cts., and *Guide-lines for Study*, which cost 6 cts. each for the first three numbers and 10 cts. for Nos. 4 and 5.

A.

Pruefet die Geister, oder: Was ist der Unterschied zwischen "Missouri" und "Rio grande"? 32 pages.

This bold little pamphlet created quite a stir among the pastors of the Rio grande Synod in Brazil, who voiced their protest against the fearless witness of the truth even in German periodicals. Their indignation is understood when one considers its contents. Without animosity, but nevertheless with great earnestness and candor, it discusses the vital difference between confessional Lutheranism and the flabby, indifferentistic, and syncretistic doctrinal position of the "Evangelicals" in South America. At the same time it is a brilliant defense of confessional Lutheranism as represented by our Missouri Synod brethren, whose fine work the Lord is blessing bountifully. The pamphlet is intended for distribution among the German immigrants in South America. Its chapters are: *Geschichtliches, Gemeindegruendung, Bekenntnis, Tatsaechliche Lehrstellung, Einzelne Lehren, Praxis*. Besides these chapters the pamphlet contains also an introductory statement, which explains the reason why the pamphlet is placed in the hands of the reader, and a conclusion, in which an appeal is made to the conscience of the Christian to decide for truth against error. We recommend the pamphlet to our pastors for distribution among their members.

MUELLER.

What Ought I to Believe? A Moral Test. By *John A. W. Haas*, president of Muhlenberg College. 1929. 75 cts. (The United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, Pa.)

Since all Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness, all Biblical truths being productive of godliness; since therefore no teaching can be true which is productive of immorality, an apologetic which contrasts the unethical implications of false teachings and the godly results of Christianity serves a good purpose. It is to the point when our author, pointing out the ethical worth of the truths of the Bible, for example, declares: "The substitutional theory of atonement is set aside as being morally defective. But . . . if the result of His redemption had the effect of making men morally lax, the opposition to His sacrifice for us might be sustained; but His sacrifice for sin imparts to us the inspiration of a new, righteous life," etc. "If our wrongs are forgiven, will we not easily sin again, knowing that forgiveness has been established and is always readily available? . . . The result of forgiveness is also a forgiving attitude toward our fellow-men. . . . It is the Christ-life in the believers that moves them to live at their best, inspired by the fact He loved them

and gave Himself for them." It is to the point when, discussing various philosophical systems, with which he is thoroughly familiar, the author declares: "Such ideas of God [as held by the Absolutists] are subversive of ethical principles in the individual and common life." Or this: "There is no better psychology than that of the story of the first sin in Genesis, chap. 3. It leaves no room for the materialistic, behavioristic psychology of to-day, which animalizes man." And this: "No real moral progress is secured through legalism." But while apologetics serves a good purpose, the material it offers can never be made the basis of our faith. To believe a thing, not because it is revealed in Scripture, but because of its excellent moral effect and its agreement with the demand of one's moral nature, is a form of rationalizing. Compare in this connection the following statements: "If we conceive of God as our Father in this sense, we ought to believe in Him; for He is our highest moral asset." What is true, creation or evolution, or creation through evolution? Dr. Haas does not ask Scripture, but arrives at his faith in this wise: "When we ask what these alternatives imply for the ethical demand, we may suggest the solution of creation through evolution, which we must carefully define and limit, so that we may not lose the moral import of creation." Again: "A sane morality has cast aside this immoral idea [of the Calvinistic predestination and reprobation] and given us a better God [italics our own] and a real Christ, who actually, and not pretensively, dies to save all men." Or this: "The only real promise [of future hope] lies in the claim of our total personality to its fullest right and largest unfoldment." Another thing: If the moral test is to take the place of the plain declaration of Scripture, theology will be handed over to the erratic rule of subjectivism. According to what standards will the conflict between the moral sense of the contraveners of the vicarious satisfaction and that of its advocates be decided? Scripture being ruled out as the final judge, to what will both parties appeal? Finally, he who sets up his moral sense as his infallible guide is bound to depart, more or less, from the doctrines of Scripture. Dr. Haas indignantly rejects the doctrine of verbal inspiration. "The early position of Protestant doctrine put an infallible Bible over against an infallible organization. It is supposed that the original manuscripts of the books of the Bible were without error in every detail. No one ever saw or can prove such an infallible set of books; but their existence is made an article of faith. . . . The claims of a mechanically infallible Bible, verbally perfect, do not hold in the light of the facts. . . . What the theologian calls the Word of God, namely, the spiritual content of the Bible, is an authority of freedom. It is not dependent upon a prior acceptance of an infallible record or any doctrine of inspiration." On the so-called moral test which he applies he feels that the doctrine of verbal inspiration must be discarded. He says: "The claims of a mechanically infallible Bible, verbally perfect, do not hold in the light of the facts. But facts cannot be set aside without injury to truth and damage to moral sincerity when they are clearly recognized. . . . Infallibility is not a prior, formal endorsement that comes with a compulsion, but a deduction which we draw out of the fulness of experience in our individual life and in the history of the Church. With this approach to infallibility in the authority of divine truth we do no injury to our moral freedom. We come to sense such infallible authority

as free beings and feel the claim of divine truth, however humanly mediated, as an obligation that has not been thrust upon us, but which we have grown to accept." Again, why does the author, while "it is necessary to allow this personal, ethical God to be the real Originator of the universe and man," still "find it necessary to make evolution the method of creation below man"? For this reason: "In an almost mechanical manner God is supposed [by the absolute creationists] to have carried on His creative work. He is a constantly interfering God. Is this estimate worthy of God? Does it really exalt Him ethically? Is He not made after the image of a human artificer? Truth requires that we should rather observe how God operates in nature than to conjecture how, from our idea of His might, He ought to create. We shall not serve the best religious interest by any such procedure." What becomes of Scripture here? — The following statements, among others, are also out of place in a Lutheran publication: "The whole difficulty lies in the question of divine self-limitation of which a personal God is capable. If God controls His own nature and being through His own power, incarnation is not impossible." "The deity of Jesus was not a possession thrown into the scale of suffering and sacrifice to give them value." (*Luther*: "We Christians must know that, if God is not also in the balance and gives the weight, we sink to the bottom with our scale." *Trigl.*, p. 1029.)

E.

The Epistles of John. Their Meaning and Message. By *Walter T. Conner, A. M., Th. D., D. D.* \$1.75. (Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.) Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

This practical exposition of the epistles of St. John by Dr. Conner, professor of Systematic Theology at the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, has many points to commend it. The writer is a conservative theologian, who loves the Savior and has found refuge in the vicarious atonement. In simple, chaste language the grand ideas found in John's epistles are dwelt on, made outstanding, emphatic, and their significance for us is brought out. Here and there a Lutheran reader will withhold approval or find the presentation inadequate. The difficult passage 1 John 5, 16 the writer explains thus: (p. 185): "In case we are convinced that he (that is, the Christian brother) is sinning a sin unto death, we cannot pray with definite assurance. The apostle may mean to leave us the option of praying for such a brother, but we cannot have any definite assurance that our petition will be granted." I myself prefer to understand St. John as saying that, when a brother sins unconsciously, involuntarily, we may simply pray to God to cover up this sin; but when the brother sins consciously, the case is different. Such a sin is a sin unto death, destroying faith. When such a sin is committed, our prayer should not be that God will simply cover up this sin, but that He will lead the erring brother to repentance. — As a sample of the style and theology of Dr. Conner I quote a passage from p. 52 f., dealing with 1 John 2, 1. 2: "John evidently writes on the assumption that something more than misconception on man's part blocks man's way to God. Fundamentally the difficulty is moral. It lies in the relation of man as a sinner to God as holy. God is Love; that is evidenced in His sending His Son to save man. He is a Father; that is evidenced by His willingness to forgive. But He is a holy Father, and

this creates a moral difficulty that must be taken care of before God can forgive and save. This difficulty is taken care of in His atoning work. Taking care of this difficulty is the thing that constitutes Christ the Propitiation for our sins." A.

We Believe in Immortality. Affirmations by One Hundred Men and Women. Edited by *Sydney Strong*. 1929. \$1.50. (Coward-McCann, New York.)

The list of contributors to this symposium on the immortality of the soul is made up of theologians and philosophers, scientists and poets, statesmen and educators, Christians and Jews. It contains the names of P. Ainslie, C. F. Aked, Roger W. Babson, S. P. Cadman, Arthur Capper, H. E. Fosdick, John Grier Hibben, N. D. Hillis, D. S. Jordan, Helen Keller, Rachel Lindsay, Edwin Markham, R. A. Millikan, D. A. Poling, C. M. Sheldon, Stephen S. Wise, etc. The matter offered is mostly of an apologetic nature, dealing with the metaphysical, ethical, religious arguments, quoting the testimony of Socrates, Plato, etc., and pointing out the confirmation given by science. Some few contributors stress the Scriptural proof, as when J. Stanley Durkee states: "6. The arguments of St. Paul. Those great words of his in his letter to the Corinthian church will ever abide like Gibralters of truth. 7. The word of Jesus Christ, our Friend and Master; He said: 'I am the Resurrection and the Life'; 'Let not your heart be troubled'; 'I go to prepare a place for you.' I believe in my personal immortality as truly as I believe in my present existence. There are some things I know through experience [?], that I cannot know through logic." But even these contributors fail to point to the real basis of the Christian faith in immortality, to the expiatory work of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. The dominant note is the Jewish opinion of self-righteousness. It is fitting that in this connection Julian Morgenstern, of the Hebrew Union College, should be quoted: "There must be a divine reward for those who have fulfilled life's purpose." Some believe in it on evolutionistic grounds; some attempt to prove it by Swedenborg and present-day Spiritualism. The resurrection of the body is mentioned in only a few instances. There is a pretty general agreement that "we cannot demonstrate immortality" (Fosdick), and George W. Coleman "admits that honest reasoning is able to draw quite contrary conclusions." We will admit this much, that, if the discussion is carried on along philosophical lines, neither side will convince the other. However, like all apologetics, this book can serve a good purpose. It will give the blatant materialists and pseudoscientists who insist that science and philosophy leave no room for personal immortality a moment's pause. But they will not hold silence for long. Clarence Darrow will have an answer ready when Elbert Russell of Duke University argues thus: "My real reason for believing in personal immortality is that it meets a need in my own life which nothing else can meet. The needs of this life require the expectation of another after death." Darrow will insist, whether his reasoning be honest or not, that his own personal needs do not require the expectation of another life, as little as the needs of the beast require it. So, after all, the discussion has reached a satisfactory conclusion—the materialist has put himself where he belongs. E.

The Letters to the Seven Churches. By *Rev. J. Gibson Inkster, B. A., D. D.*, Toronto, Can. 75 cts. (The Christian Alliance Publishing Co., 260 W. 44th St., New York.)

In these sermons, written with warmth and here and there displaying eloquence, the author takes the view that the seven letters in Rev. 2 and 3 are intended to picture the various periods of church history. He says (p. 14): "These letters have also a prophetic message; *i. e.*, we have in these letters in bold and brief outline, a history of the seven periods of the Church in this age—the history of the dawn, development, and doom of Christendom." While it is true that some other theologians hold the same view, I do not find that any proof can be brought for it. The key-note of the addresses seems to be indicated in these words: "Thou hast left thy first love"—this is the sin of the saints. This is the failing of the Fundamentalists. This is the heresy of the heart, by far the worst kind of heresy." It ought to have been stated in this connection that love is the fruit of faith and that, if love is absent, this is due to the absence of faith. The author is himself a Fundamentalist, and that he by no means wishes to condone erroneous teaching is clear from this paragraph (p. 33): "The Church to-day must purge herself of false teaching. This purifying process cannot be done from the outside. The evil is inside, the sin is within the camp, and the cleansing must begin, continue, and be carried through by the Church, till all error and false teaching are put out. Creed and conduct are so closely wedded together and so vitally related that to tolerate false teaching means before long to tolerate immoral practises." To such testimony we wish a full measure of success. A.

Seeing the Future. By *Christabel Pankhurst*. 328 pages, 5×7¾. \$2.50: (Harper & Brothers, Publishers.)

Miss Christabel Pankhurst is a daughter of the famous British suffragette Emmeline Pankhurst and was herself prominently identified with the movement. Formerly a radical in religion, Miss Pankhurst was converted during the World War, if our memory serves us right. With almost virile force of style she treats the subject of Eschatology in this book. Well-schooled in argument and apparently well acquainted with modern science, the author defends the thesis that present-day events in the world of politics and invention point to the early return of Jesus Christ. Her position is that the fulfilment of the signs of the end places religion upon "visible, tangible, extrinsic evidence, as surely as any of the sciences" (p. 245). Miss Pankhurst is not a date-setter, but seems to harbor a mild form of Chiliasm. There are some good reflections on Evolution and Modernism. G.

The Rising Tide. A Novel Dealing with the Spread of Bolshevism and Atheism throughout America. By *Elizabeth Knauss*. 248 pages. \$1.75. (Christian Alliance Publishing Company, New York.)

The *rising tide*, which forms the real subject of this Christian romance, is the flood of atheism and bolshevism which is sweeping over the whole world, largely from Russia. The author writes: "The Youth Movement, the Junior Atheist Association, Modernism in the churches, and kindred

evils can all be traced to the real source, to Communism, granting, of course, that at the root of all evil is *sin*. It is very essential for every intelligent Christian to be correctly informed." In presenting the atheistic menace, the writer endeavors to be accurate and reliable, avoiding every manner of distorting the facts. "Every statement made throughout the book . . . is well founded and can be proved to be true." The book is one for thoughtful and interested people and attracts more by its subject than by its story interest. The reviewer does not subscribe to every statement made by the author.

MUELLER.

The Cosmic Ray in Literature. By *Lewis Thurber Guild*. 245 pages. \$2.00. (Cokesbury Press, Nashville, Tenn.) Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

The author has borrowed his title in part from the famous discovery of Professor Milliken called the cosmic ray, which is so powerful as to penetrate many feet of lead. The writer himself interprets what he means by cosmic ray when he says: "God's love is the eternal cosmic ray, penetrating every depth and working in creative power in every life" (p. 245). With this sublime subject in mind, he analyzes and discusses specimens of masterpieces of literature, as, for example, Jean Valjean (in Hugo's *Les Miserables*), the tragedy of a dazzling soul; Hamlet, the tragedy of inability; Macbeth, the tragedy of the short cut; Othello, the tragedy of an exploited soul; King Lear, the tragedy of parenthood; *The Raven*, the tragedy of youth and the wrong; Gomer, the tragedy of the broken home, Nos. 1 and 2. With regard to the purpose of these interpretations the author tells us that they were written "to strengthen faith and to make God real." Their nature is therefore apologetic; they should call back our erring generation from the destructive maelstrom of materialism and atheism to a realization of the love of God and the sublimity of the life with which Christ has enriched the world. They voice therefore a mighty appeal to earnest souls dissatisfied with the superficiality of present-day agnostic and evolutionistic tendencies. The reader will find the interpretations gripping and instructive, full of spiritual intensity, which often rises to the dramatic. Crime, vice, and sin are castigated with the hatred they deserve, while the virtues of love, forgiveness, honesty, and unselfishness are depicted with rare skill and charm. The masterpieces of literature are such because they are wrapped up with problems which affect the highest welfare of humanity. While thus these interpretations teach great lessons, they are not preachy, but point out the great truths of moral nobility by simple demonstration of their effectiveness in life. Serviceable as such teaching is, it can nevertheless not replace the Bible. God's Book, inspired by the Holy Ghost, shows the curse of sin, the need of redemption, and the way to blessedness in a unique manner. Its sublime Gospel-message, inculcated in all its truth and purity, is the healing balm which the world, engulfed in sin, needs first and last. For it there is no substitute.

MUELLER.

