

Concordia Theological Monthly



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BOOK REVIEW

All books reviewed in this periodical may be procured from or through Concordia Publishing House, 3558 South Jefferson Avenue, St. Louis 18, Missouri.

FAITH AND HISTORY. By Reinhold Niebuhr. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949. 257 pages, 5½×8. \$3.50.

Dr. Niebuhr needs no introduction. This is not the first book which has come from his able and busy pen. *Faith and History* presents a comparison of Christian and modern views of history as developed by non-Christian thinkers. Dr. Niebuhr takes issue with the modern idea of redemption through progress and shows that it is no more tenable than the classical idea of historical cycles or that of the spirals of advance in Renaissance historiography. He shows where these ideas break down. On the positive side, his object is to demonstrate that man's life and history can be understood only within the framework of a larger realm of mystery and meaning discerned by faith.

Hans Juergen Baden speaks rather disparagingly of philosophies of history in his *Der Sinn der Geschichte*. He says: "Ich weiss nicht, welchen Gewinn man sich davon verspricht, dass man mit dergleichen geschichtsphilosophischen Fiktionen arbeitet und Menschen dafuer zu gewinnen sucht" (p. 314). Dr. Niebuhr has at least a partial answer for that. In his review of Karl Loewith's *Meaning in History* he says: "The catastrophes of modern history have created a new interest in the interpretation of history, for contemporary experiences prove that the 'settled' convictions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries about the meaning of history have less than the 'eternal' validity which our culture, in its heyday, ascribed to them" (*Journal of Religion*, Vol. XXIX, No. 4, p. 302).

Regarding Troeltsch's unsuccessful attempt to escape relativism while still holding to a valuational element in historical judgments, Maurice Mandelbaum declares: "Thus the attempt to construct philosophical interpretations of history which go under the name of 'the philosophy of history' can lead only to error" (*The Problem of Historical Knowledge*, p. 323). Not necessarily. Hans Juergen Baden shows another possibility. He says: "Fuer den glaeubigen Menschen kann also der Sinn der Geschichte nur mit und durch die Erscheinung Christi gegeben sein" (*op. cit.*, p. 344). To what extent Mandelbaum's criticism applies to *Faith and History* depends on Dr. Niebuhr's interpretation of Christ's place in history as the only Savior of the fallen human race. On this decisive point he should have spoken with greater clarity.

L. W. SPITZ

EXPOSITION OF DANIEL. By H. C. Leupold. The Wartburg Press, Columbus, Ohio, 1949. 549 pages, 6×9. \$5.00, net.

A commentary on Daniel is news in theological literature. A good commentary is cause for rejoicing. Dr. H. C. Leupold's book is such a commentary.

Like its counterpart in the New Testament, The Revelation of St. John, the prophecy of Daniel is admittedly a difficult book and requires more than usual exegetical ability. Dr. Leupold, professor of Old Testament at Capital Seminary since 1922, shows that he is equipped for the task by long experience and thorough scholarship. Those who know his *Exposition of Genesis* will expect in his *Exposition of Daniel* a work of similar high caliber, and they will not be disappointed.

How many problems arise in an exegetical treatment of Daniel can be exemplified by referring, for example, to Chapter 9, which treats of the "seventy weeks" and "the desolations." Much has been said about it. A monograph of 279 pages appeared in a revised edition in 1944 on this one topic: *The Seventy Weeks and the Great Tribulation*, by Philip Mauro. A glance into the history of the Lutheran interpretation of this passage reveals a wide divergence of opinion. Stoekhardt (*Lebre und Wehre*, XXXI, p. 230 ff.) disagrees with Luther. In the next volume of *Lebre und Wehre*, H. Kanold takes issue with Stoekhardt and supports Luther. Fuerbringer (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, 1938) agrees with Stoekhardt. A writer signing his name "G—r, P." in Volume XVI, *Lebre und Wehre*, p. 74 ff., upholds Kanold. Dr. Leupold agrees with Stoekhardt and Fuerbringer in the general thesis that the seventy weeks are an "idealized time" ("eine ideale Zeit") and embrace the activity of the Anti-Christ.

Dr. Leupold's commentary deserves mention also because for a long time no exhaustive exposition of Daniel has appeared to refute the higher critical point of view. These writers (e. g., James A. Montgomery in the *International Critical Commentary*) have reiterated the contention with increasing dogmatism that the book of Daniel is a pseudepigraph. It was not written, they say, by the man who lived in the sixth century B. C. but by an unknown writer of the second century B. C. Accordingly the purpose of the book was to comfort the Jews who at that time were suffering persecution by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes. Dr. Leupold does not ignore the various arguments that are advanced in favor of this late date but takes them up and refutes them with sound reason.

This commentary is conservative also in the Lutheran tradition. It is characterized by that sanity of interpretation which does not make of the Bible a book of incantation and soothsaying. It reflects that fine sense of balance which accepts the Bible literally and still takes cognizance of the fact that it uses figurative and symbolic language. The following quotation is an example of what the reader will find:

We agree that the "great horn" mentioned in these verses is the New Testament Antichrist. We also believe that in this figurative

presentation the horn is designed to include all manifestations of the Antichrist that may be expected after Christ's resurrection. We believe furthermore that, after the analogy of what preceded in the chapter where the beast represented both kingdoms and kings, the horn represents both the kingdom of the Antichrist as well as a personal Antichrist in whom all previous manifestations shall culminate. We also hold that in stating that the pope is the Antichrist the Lutheran Confessions were correct much as some men have derided and belittled that view. Such belittling grows out of forgetting how thoroughly the reformers understood the papacy. Present-day shallowness of understanding in this respect leads to shallowness of interpretation. Though the papacy may be the outstanding manifestation of the Antichrist to date, that does not exclude other possibilities of fulfillment of this passage. (P. 322 f. on Chapter 7:23 f.)

Dr. Leupold also stresses the fact that the book of Daniel has a very practical message for the present day, when the Church is encountering much opposition. Pastors will welcome this guide for the aid it will give them in their preaching from this book. Homiletical suggestions are appended to each chapter.

WALTER R. ROEHR

GESENIUS' HEBREW AND CHALDEE LEXICON TO THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES. By Samuel Prideux Tregelles, LL. D. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1949. 884 pages, 6×8½. \$7.50.

In issuing this volume Eerdmans has made available once again Tregelles' well-known English translation of Gesenius' *Lexicon Manuale Hebraicum et Chaldaicum in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Leipzig, 1833. To reproduce Tregelles' work, which originally appeared in 1857, the publisher employed a photographic process which made it possible to reduce somewhat the format of the book. Nevertheless, the type throughout is clear and sharp.

In view of the fact that the original is nearly a century old, it is not surprising that Eerdmans' reproduction retains some usages no longer followed at the present time. Thus, for example, the older designation "Chaldaic," common in Tregelles' dictionary, decades ago was already superseded by "Aramaic." As far as the listing of Hebrew and Aramaic words is concerned, modern dictionaries arrange them in two separate sections, while in Tregelles' edition the words of both languages are placed together in alphabetical sequence, the Aramaic words being identified by the abbreviation "Ch." immediately after the word. The extensive use of Latin abbreviations is also somewhat out of tune with our age, but fortunately these in many instances may quite conveniently be read as abbreviations for the equivalent English words. More serious is the fact that Tregelles' dictionary naturally was not in a position to make use of the contributions of Assyriology to the field of Hebrew lexicography. For ex-

ample, the element "*ashte*" found in one of the forms for the numeral eleven is linked with the word meaning *thought* (p. 661). The dictionary adds, however, "this is marvelously improbable, although no better reason can be given." Assyriology solved the riddle, but that was long after Tregelles' time. An etymology such as deriving "*ben*" (p. 125) from a verb meaning "to build," too, has been discarded for some time. Likewise, the direct derivation of the short form of the relative pronoun from the longer (p. 797). Space prevents discussing further details.

Nevertheless, in spite of the limitations and peculiarities of the dictionary, Eerdmans' reissue is a useful addition to the library of the Old Testament student, since it supplies all essential information needed by the beginning student. For advanced work, up-to-date lexicons will, of course, be needed. In view of the present high price of books, the cost of Eerdmans' reprint of Tregelles' dictionary is very reasonable, something which will commend this new edition to the student of Hebrew whose financial resources are limited.

GEORGE V. SCHICK

THE CHURCH IN THE WORLD. By Richard R. Caemmerer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, 1949. 110 pages, 5×8. \$1.75.

Is there a greater practical question for the Christian as he thinks of his function in the world than the one that asks how he can be an effective witness of Jesus Christ? That is the question my esteemed friend and colleague, professor of homiletics at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, had in mind when he projected and wrote this book. The little volume looks at the Church and finds it consists of Christian individuals; next it looks at the world and finds that it, too, consists of individuals, of those who, alas! are separated from God; and then it speaks of the relation between these two classes. The table of contents giving the chapter headings will convey an idea of the line of thought: "Introduction. 1. The Church of Christ; 2. The Kingdom of This World; 3. The Resistance of the World to the Church; 4. The Strategy of the Church in the World; 5. The Devices for Witness; 6. The Equipment of the Individual; 7. The Church a Resource for Witness; 8. The Church a Training Ground for Witness. Conclusion." The subject is, of course, not a new one. Dr. Caemmerer, however, endeavors to treat it in live, practical fashion so that the reader will be stimulated to do some thinking of his own on the old truths presented, and then launch into the proper activities. The great fundamentals of our holy religion, such as Christ and His Gospel and the Holy Spirit and His work, are always kept in view. The language is virile and pungent and abounds in arresting epigrams. Let me, to illustrate, quote these sentences from the Foreword: "This book proposes to re-define and apply the strategy which the New Testament suggests" (i. e., for winning the world for Christ). "The author makes no apology for advocating this ancient concept. He submits this material to point out that this strategy is sadly untried and amazingly fresh." The external equipment of print, paper, and

outside covers is such that every bibliophile must rejoice. May the book find many readers, and may it help Christians to perform their mission on earth more gladly and effectively.

WM. F. ARNDT

THE PSALMS: Translated and Interpreted in the Light of Hebrew Life and Worship. By Elmer A. Leslie. Abingdon Cokesbury Press, New York, 1949. 448 pages. \$5.00.

If, in your study of the Psalms, you have often felt they contained an untold treasure, which you have never been able to bring into your possession; if you have often wished for a readable reliable translation of the Psalter that would reproduce some of the peculiarities of Hebrew poetry; if you are looking for inspirational literature, this volume will be a welcome addition to your library.

However, its greatest worth lies in Dr. Leslie's approach to this portion of Hebrew literature. His thesis is that the Hebrews were a singing nation. They had songs and dances adapted to every portion of their life. There were work songs for the laborers in the fields. There were the harvest songs of joy and thanksgiving. There were wedding and love songs for commoner and king. They sang of their sorrows in public and private laments. Likewise they sang of their personal and national triumphs. Since Israel was a religious nation, many of these songs have a religious character. The Psalter is a collection of the best religious songs of Israel. When the life setting in worship of each Psalm is found, we have found its distinctive mark and the key to interpreting it.

Viewed thus, the Psalms become living literature for us. As we see how these songs were used in the religious life of Israel, we begin to see how we can use them most profitably in our religious experiences. As we see the Psalmist's feeling of close personal relationship with God, view his troubles and sorrows, feel his ever-present assurance of God's help, hear him voice the thankful outpouring of his soul when helped by God, we, who often lose the spirit of true worship in formality, can learn to come to God as the child comes to his father for that loving-kindness that endureth forever. We can learn better how to commune with our God.

Professor Leslie distinguishes ten worship settings into which he places all of the Psalms: I. General Hymns of Praise, II. Hymns, Songs, and Prayers for the Hebrew New Year, III. Hymns of the Revelation of God, IV. Psalm Liturgies, V. National and Congregational Laments, VI. Psalms Concerning the King, VII. Songs of Personal Thanksgiving, VIII. Prayers of the Falsely Accused, IX. Prayers of the Sick and the Penitent, X. Songs of Trust and of Wisdom.

The section on Psalms for the Hebrew New Year is especially interesting and gives a good cross-section view of the entire work. The author feels that Israel may have borrowed the custom of the New Year festival from her heathen neighbors, but she developed it into an inspiring religious experience. In this festival they celebrated (a) The annual en-

thronement of the Lord as King over His people. The Psalms which have their setting in this feature of the festival are Pss. 47, 68, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99. (b) The annual acceptance of the reigning king as the legitimate monarch of the people, who was for them the unique channel of the Lord's temporal blessings. The Psalms in this setting are 2, 21, 72, 101, 110, 132. (c) The annual Thanksgiving for the blessings of the past year. Here are placed Pss. 65, 67, 118, 124. (d) A special service invoking God's blessing for the coming year. Pss. 53, 85, 123, 126, 129 are prayers used in this service.

Added features of the book are: 1. A careful translation of each Psalm, made on the basis of Dr. Rudolf Kittel's *Biblia Hebraica*. In this translation the author does a fine job of reflecting the special color of the root meaning of the Hebrew words. 2. A title for each Psalm, which generally highlights the central theme, e. g., Psalm 1, "Life's Two Ways"; Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd and my Host"; Psalm 104, "The Creator, Controller, Provider, and Sustainer." 3. A careful arrangement of the acrostic Psalms. 4. A presentation in English of some of the scholarly studies in the Psalms published by two German scholars, Dr. Hermann Gunkel and Dr. Hans Schmidt, and the Norwegian scholar Dr. Sigmund Mowinkel.

Though there are many fine features to the book, it also has some very significant defects. The author approaches the Psalms from the naturalistic point of view and does not do justice to the fact that they are divinely inspired. He also fails to connect the Psalms in any way with the New Testament and takes no cognizance of the Messianic Psalms. In an interpretation of the Psalms it becomes necessary for the Bible student to interpret them not only in the light of Hebrew life and worship, but also, and above all, in the clear light of the New Testament.

H. H. JONES

SET APART FOR THE GOSPEL. By Clarence C. Stoughton. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia. Second printing. 89 pages, 5×7¾. \$1.00.

A fine, refreshing, stimulating volume which reminds the Christian pastor of his responsibilities as well as his opportunities for service to men, especially his own flock. The book contains a series of lectures delivered by the author, a layman recently placed into the presidency of Wittenberg College, before groups of pastors in various centers of his Church. It is very well done and will reward the reader with a new incentive to consecrate himself more fully to his noble tasks. We believe, however, that the section on a pastor's membership in secret societies could and should have had a much clearer ring. Instead of leaving the matter suspended in the air by telling the pastor to ask himself a few pertinent questions on the subjects of loyalty, exclusiveness, and stewardship of time, it might better have been stated that the false god, the false authority in religion, the false way of salvation, the false prayers, the false fellowship, and the false oaths of religious lodges make membership in them impossible for anyone who names the name of Christ, especially Christian pastors.

O. E. SOHN

EVERLASTING ARMS. By Oswald Riess. Ernst Kaufmann, Inc., New York, 1949. 205 pages, 5½×8. \$2.75.

Professor O. C. Rupprecht of Concordia College, Milwaukee, prefaces this volume with a fourteen-page judgment of Pastor Riess' sermons. This essay is in effect a fine summary of good Christian preaching in general. The reader will do well to read Pastor Riess' sermons first; otherwise he might imagine Professor Rupprecht's judgments to be a bit sanguine. They are not, but are quite realistic. Pastor Riess has achieved his stature as a preacher through a triple route. The one is the insight into the Word of God. The second is a close pastoral relation with his people. The third is an unusually painstaking devotion to good style. The end result is preaching which reads well on the page, which stimulates without drawing attention to technique. Pastor Riess has a flair for new visions in the Word and fresh expressions for what he sees. In addition to sermons for the chief festivals and occasions of the church year, the volume includes an address for a college commencement and another for a Luther Day.

RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

CHRIST'S "NO!" A Series of Lenten Sermons. By H. W. Romoser. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 77 pages, 5¼×7½. \$1.00, net.

Irrespective of the time, whether it be in a regular Sunday service, or in a festival season of the church year, or at a special occasion in the local congregation, preaching is always serious business for the conscientious pastor. Lent, however, never fails to call forth the very best effort of the pulpit. Then in particular the preacher is very much like the Apostles in Mark 10:32. Like them, he is amazed upon beholding the determination with which Jesus went up to Jerusalem to endure indignity and shame, to suffer crucifixion and death for us. Weeks before Lent begins he surveys and studies the Gospel record of Christ's Passion and carefully plans a Lenten series through which he tries to deepen faith in the atonement and lead his people into more consistent Christian living. He strives for freshness without sentimentality, repetition of old truths without monotony. In taking his congregation from Gethsemane to Calvary, Pastor Harold W. Romoser lets his people see how Christ resisted sin with an overwhelming "No!" In each of the sermons ("No Willfulness," Matt. 26:29-44; "No Violence," John 18:10-11, 33-36; "No Insincerity," Matt. 27:13-14; "No Curiosity," Luke 23:8-9; "No Sensationalism," Luke 23:27-28; "No Self-Indulgence," Matt. 27:34; "No Hatred," Luke 23:34) the fickleness of men, the majesty of Christ, and the Savior's love for all people stand out in bold relief. These sermons satisfy. They show Christ refusing to bow before sin, overcoming and atoning for sin. They also offer abundant encouragement to every Christian to follow Christ's example and meet every sin with a decisive "No!"

The book includes a sermon for Maundy Thursday ("Your Value to

God," 1 Cor. 6:20), for Good Friday ("God's Free Way," Rom. 4:1-5), and for Easter ("An Angel Preaches Again," Matt. 28:5-7). This paper-covered booklet is a valuable addition to our Lenten sermon material.

ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT

THE LIFE THAT NEVER ENDS. Thirty Funeral Sermons. Concordia Publishing House, 168 pages, 8×5¾. \$2.00, net.

This little volume of funeral sermons, eight on Old Testament and twenty-two on New Testament texts, submitted by twenty-four of our brethren, offers much material for the most difficult preaching in the ministry. Here is an abundance of pastoral wisdom which recognizes the individuality of each case. Each sermon gives evidence of the fact that the pastor who is bringing comfort and strength from the Word of God is a close student of the Gospels, where he carefully watched Jesus deal with persons who had suffered loss through death. In the home of Jairus, at the casket of the young man of Nain, at the grave of Lazarus, Jesus spoke words suitable for each case. So it must be in every parish everywhere. No two deaths are alike in every respect. Sex, age, family relationship, station in life, position in the church, attitude to the church's work, influence in the community, and a number of other factors surrounding the deceased differ. The attitudes of the bereaved differ too. Some are wounded more deeply than others, and some are rebellious. Whatever the situation may be that confronts the pastor at the death of one of his parishioners, he is called upon to show himself as a shepherd of souls who can point his sorrowing members to the Son of God, the Conqueror of death, the Sustainer of life. The funeral sermons under review are fine examples of what seasoned pastors offered their members at the death of young people, elderly people, aged sufferers, wives, husbands, pastors and church workers, persons who repented on their deathbed, and a suicide. All our pastors, especially the younger ones, will find these sermons helpful in their ministry.

ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT

BOOKS RECEIVED

From Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:

Portals of Prayer No. 97. — "PICTURES OF HEAVEN." Daily Devotions April 17 to June 7, 1950. By Rev. W. Troeger. 10 cents.

Andachtsbuechlein Nr. 97. — "WIR WISSEN." Andachten fuer die Zeit vom 17. April bis zum 7. Juni 1950. By Rev. A. Guettler. 10 cents.

CONCORDIA BIBLE TEACHER, Vol. XI, No. 3. April—June, 1950. \$1.00 per annum. — CONCORDIA BIBLE STUDENT, Vol. XXXIX, No. 3. April—June, 1950. 65 cents per annum. — Studies in the Book of Genesis, Part II. Edited by Rev. John M. Weidenschilling, S. T. D., under the auspices of the Board for Parish Education, The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.