

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.

THE INTERPRETER'S BIBLE. The Holy Scriptures in the King James and Revised Versions with General Remarks and Introduction, Exegesis, Exposition for Each Book of the Bible. In Twelve Volumes, Volume VII. Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, New York and Nashville. 917 pages, 7×10½. \$8.50.

A new major work here makes its initial bow, number seven of a commentary on the whole Bible which is to consist of twelve volumes. It will be a highly composite work; the number of contributors is 125. Among these men one finds those who today are best known in the English-speaking world as Biblical scholars, e. g., E. J. Goodspeed, E. F. Scott, John Knox, F. C. Grant, H. J. Cadbury. The undertaking when finished will undoubtedly be impressive in size. We have an indication in the present volume whose number of pages has been mentioned above. The total number of words which it will contain has been estimated at about eight million. The theology which one finds here is of many kinds, ranging from the ultra-modernistic position of Dr. Robert H. Pfeiffer of Harvard and Boston Universities to the conservative one of Floyd V. Filson of McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago. I find the following Lutherans among the contributors: Oscar F. Blackwelder, pastor in Washington, D. C.; Jacob M. Meyers of Gettysburg Seminary (OT); Paul Scherer, Union Seminary, New York; Raymond T. Stamm, Gettysburg Seminary (NT). The Editorial Board consists of George A. Buttrick, pastor of Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, who is called the Commentary Editor, Walter Russell Bowie of the Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary in Virginia, who is Associate Editor of Exposition; Paul Scherer, Associate Editor of Exposition; John Knox of Union Seminary, New York, Associate Editor of New Testament Introduction and Exegesis; Samuel Terrien of Union Theological Seminary, New York, Associate Editor of Old Testament Introduction and Exegesis; and Nolan B. Harmon of the Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, who is called the Editor.

As one opens the volume, one comes first upon general articles and then introduction, exegesis, and exposition of the separate Biblical books. There is a differentiation made between exegesis and exposition, the former referring to the meaning of the text, the second pertaining more to practical discussion and application.

In the commentary section we find at the top of the page, in parallel columns, the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version of

the respective passage, below these the exegetical remarks "printed across the page, with the key-phrase struck off in bolder type. Below these is the exposition, printed in two columns." The first volume contains three excellent maps. Undoubtedly this feature will be found in succeeding volumes too. Since we are here dealing with a very ambitious venture with which every theologian would like to become acquainted, I shall list the table of contents of Volume VII, which will well illustrate the plan of the work. "General Articles on the New Testament: The Gospel in the New Testament, by R. H. Strachan; The New Testament and Early Christian Literature, by Henry J. Cadbury; The Language of the New Testament, by Bruce M. Metzger; The Growth of the Gospels, by Alfred M. Perry; New Testament Times: I. The Greco-Roman World, by S. Vernon McCasland; II. Palestine, by Morton S. Enslin; The Life and Ministry of Jesus, by Vincent Taylor; The Teaching of Jesus: I. The Proclamation of the Kingdom, by Clarence Tucker Craig; II. The Sermon on the Mount, by Amos N. Wilder; III. The Parables, by Walter Russell Bowie; The History of the Early Church: I. The Beginnings, by Ernest F. Scott; II. The Life of Paul, by William H. P. Hatch; III. Paul the Apostle, by Paul S. Minear, IV. The Post-Apostolic Age, by Massey H. Shepherd, Jr. — The Gospel According to St. Matthew: Introduction, by Sherman E. Johnson; Exegesis, by Sherman E. Johnson; Exposition, by George A. Buttrick; Text. — The Gospel According to St. Mark: Introduction, by Frederick C. Grant; Text; Exegesis, by Frederick C. Grant; Exposition, by Halford E. Luccock. — Maps: Jerusalem in New Testament Times; Palestine: The Synoptic Gospels; Galilee and Samaria in New Testament Times.

The amount of information gathered and the erudition displayed are simply enormous. The articles are quite exhaustive; the one treating of the Life and Ministry of Jesus, e. g., consists of 30 pages. Bibliographies are appended to make it possible for students to cultivate a certain subject more in detail. The approach of at least many of the writers, as one of my above remarks implies, is not that of the Bible Christian who sees in the Scriptures the infallible Guide graciously granted us by God; quite often Modernism speaks. The external appearance of the volume is most pleasing. One glance suffices to tell a person that here he is dealing with a superb product of the printer's art. How soon the other volumes will be on the market is not disclosed.

WILLIAM F. ARNDT

EXPLORING THE BIBLE. A Study of Background and Principles. By Frank E. Gaebelein, Litt. D., Headmaster of the Stony Brook School. Third revised edition. An Our Hope Press Book. Published by Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Ill. 150 pages, 5×8. \$2.25.

This book, published first in 1929 and now coming before us in its third edition, is written by an educator who has had a good deal of experience in teaching boys the sacred Scriptures. He says in the preface (p. XII): "The Stony Brook School has courageously given to the study

of the English Bible an honored place as a subject required for three recitations a week throughout the entire secondary course. Academic standards have not suffered. The School has met the tests of regional accrediting agencies. Graduates have entered college and have proved, by the quality of their work, the caliber of their preparation. So much for the fear, often expressed by cautious schoolmasters, that college requirements will not permit the expenditure of time for Bible study. . . . An institution such as this constitutes a working laboratory for the development of methods of Bible study. The classes of boys which I have taught in this subject have given me invaluable lessons. The present volume is an attempt to put in permanent form some of these lessons. Much of the material embodied in the following pages has either met the test of classroom use or is the outgrowth of classroom experience."

That the book treats subjects which every Bible teacher would like to discuss with his class is evident from the table of contents; the various chapters have these headings: I. Knowing the Bible; II. How We Got Our Bible; III. The Meaning of Inspiration; IV. The Structure of the Bible; V. The Bible a Spiritual Organism; VI. Seven Guiding Principles for Bible Study; VII. God's Plan for the Ages; VIII. God's Immutable Promises; IX. The Testimony of Jesus; X. Some Laws of Scripture Interpretation.

The author is an evangelical Christian, who loves the Lord and His holy Word. The chapter on inspiration is very much worth while. The charge that the plenary inspiration theory is the same as the dictation theory is examined and combated. At the same time the author unequivocally stands for the inerrancy of the Scriptures.

What a Lutheran reviewer regrets deeply as he peruses this volume (which, as he will gladly admit, contains much precious gold) is its evident "dispensationalism." After the battle of Armageddon will come the Millennium, "the time of blessing of which the prophets sang" (p. 85). What a grand period it will be! "Sickness and physical death will be the exception, not the rule" (*ibid.*). But evil will not yet be uprooted; hence, after the end of the thousand years, there will be another period of heartache and conflict, terminating in the ultimate overthrow of Satan and his cohorts.

In addition there are some things which strike this reviewer as ill-advised speculation. The chapter on "the structure of the Bible" represents a "playing" (*sit venia verbo!*) with numbers which I fear will do more harm than good. Thus (p. 48) the remarks on the number 4. "A number of further divisibility, 4 stands for the weakness found in the world and man. In common parlance we speak of 'the four corners of the earth' and 'the four points of the compass.' Important is the indirect meaning of trial, testing, and experience, derived from the fact that the earth is the scene of man's testing." How easy it would be to demolish this argumentation if one should start from the fact that 4 is the first square in

the series of numbers and travel through the Bible from the majestic fourth day of Creation to the four disciples called at the Sea of Galilee! But what would be the use of such a *jeu d'esprit*? In summary, we rejoice that the author exalts our blessed Savior and His complete redemption and that he defends the authority and inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures, but we deplore his departure from sound doctrine in the eschatological questions and his addiction to bizarre exegetical procedures.

W. ARNDT

LIFE MATURES. By Roy L. Laurin. Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Ill. 332 pages, 8×6. \$3.00.

Dr. Laurin is pastor of a large church in Pasadena, Calif., widely known as a lecturer and radio speaker, and author of various expository works on the Bible. In *Life Matures* he represents the contents of St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians from the viewpoint of Christian holiness, around which he builds his whole exposition. His exegesis is simple and direct; his language clear and dignified; his application practical and as a rule appealing and convincing. He furnishes much illustrative material that is new and striking. The Lutheran reader must differ with him, however, on his interpretation of those passages which treat of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as also of the means of grace in general. On these points the author's Reformed Fundamentalism does not permit him to do justice to what the Apostle teaches (cf. pp. 193—215). The writer goes beyond St. Paul also in stating that it would have been a sin for a woman to be married at the time of the great persecution of the Church when marriage meant so much more suffering for mothers. St. Paul does not say that in 1 Cor. 7:25 ff. In 1 Cor. 13:13 his explanation of why love abides is hardly adequate (cf. p. 247). Much greater is the exegetical failure of the author when he forces upon 1 Cor. 15:52 the millennialistic error which the Apostle teaches neither there nor in Second Thessalonians (cf. p. 305 f.). In explaining 1 Cor. 14:34 ff. neither Dr. Laurin nor Dr. Scofield, whom he quotes on the passage, interprets St. Paul correctly. Both permit women to do what the Apostle expressly forbids. While therefore this practical exposition of First Corinthians contains much that is good and useful, it must be studied with considerable care, since it is not always a reliable guide.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE APOSTLE PAUL. HIS LIFE AND WORK. Written by Olaf Moe. Translated by A. L. Vigness. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn. 577 pages 6×9. \$4.75.

Though the books on Paul are legion, there are two reasons why I am happy that I can announce the appearance of this work: it is doctrinally conservative, and it is marked by magnificent scholarship. The author, Dr. Olaf Edvard Moe, is professor of the Independent Theological Seminary in Oslo, Norway. The book, it is true, appeared in Norwegian as

long ago as 1923 and hence cannot be said to be up to date in its bibliographical references and discussion of recent theories, but except for a technical scholar this fact will not constitute a serious drawback.

In a thorough way, using all sources available, Biblical as well as profane, the author describes the world of Paul and his life and work. Facts are marshaled and given their evaluation; there is no wasting of words, but neither is there disappointing brevity. Here one receives information on the synagog services in the diaspora, the education of the Jewish children in these areas, the theological schools of Jerusalem, the Pharisees, the different forms of heathen worship in the Roman Empire — all this as the background for the narrative of Paul's life and a sketch of the contents of his Epistles. That the work is conservative we see in the full acceptance of the Book of Acts as a reliable account and the acknowledgment of the genuineness of all thirteen Epistles bearing the name of Paul in our New Testament. The negative higher critical theories are not passed over in silence; as a rule, they are presented and then shown to be untenable. The Bible Christian in reading this book has the happy feeling that the sacred garden in which he loves to walk is not desecrated by inimical forces, but that, on the contrary, the flowers and shrubs are shown him in their divine splendor.

This judgment I am glad to express in spite of the difference existing between the author and myself on views pertaining to some historical details. He holds the Apostolic Council to have occurred before the Epistle to the Galatians was written; according to his opinion this Epistle was addressed to the Celts living in Northern Galatia and not to the congregations founded by Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey of these men; he believes the captivity letters were not written in Ephesus, but in Rome. On these matters my opinion differs, but what of it, the points enumerated do not belong to the field of doctrine, but historical criticism, and, besides, there do not seem to be enough data on which to base a compelling decision. There are a few real weaknesses in the book. The discussion of Antichrist and of the meaning of Rom. 11:26 ("all Israel") is not satisfactory (p. 311), nor do I think that the author is right in saying (p. 83 f.) that when Jesus "extended grace" to publicans and sinners, "He broke the bonds of the old covenant." But generally speaking, we have in this work a gift to the Church for which we should be profoundly grateful.

W. ARNDT

NON-CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS. A COMPARATIVE STUDY. By Ione Lowman.
Van Kampen Press, Wheaton, Ill. 123 pages, 8×6. \$1.75.

Dr. Ione Lowman is librarian of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles and has for the last twenty years taught a course in comparative religions. Out of her classroom work has grown her book on comparative religions, which, while not always profound and exhaustive, gives the reader a good overview of the leading non-Christian religions: Animism, Hinduism, Bud-

dhism, Confucianism, Shintoism, Mohammedanism, Judaism, Zoroastrianism. All these pagan religions she compares with Christianity as the "religion of faith," showing how little man-made religion can teach about God, Creation, sin, salvation, resurrection, and immortality. This is a good book to put into the hands of laymen. It may also be used by pastors who wish to present to their confirmation classes the difference between Christianity and the most popular ethnic religions, which still hold millions in the bondage of spiritual ignorance and death. For her chief sources Dr. Lowman has used the works of Dr. S. Zwemer, Dr. A. Pieters, and Dr. D. L. Jamison, though in her appended bibliography she mentions more than fifty of the best modern books on the subject.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

HOMILETIC THESAURUS ON THE GOSPELS. By Harold F. J. Ellingsen. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids 6, Mich. 351 pages, 9½×6½. \$4.50.

This is the third of a three-volume set bearing this title. It contains a wealth of homiletical material on more than two hundred texts from the Fourth Gospel from the pens of more than two hundred and fifty prominent preachers and scholars of past centuries. As is usually the case, one finds material which at once appeals and some which does not; but there is no doubt that a careful perusal of this book will prove profitable and will aid the student in acquiring a freshness of thought and presentation.

O. E. SOHN

SPURGEON'S EXPOSITORY ENCYCLOPAEDIA. SERMONS BY CHARLES H. SPURGEON. Classified and Arranged for Ready Reference. Vol. I. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich. 510 pages, 9×6. \$3.75.

While there are many editions of Spurgeon's sermons on the religious book market, this new edition of the discourses of the famous English Baptist preacher offers a new arrangement and classification. The fifty-two sermons in this volume are classified thus: Abraham 5 sermons; Adoption 5; Affliction 11; Aged 2; Angels 3; Assurance 5; Atonement 5; Backsliding 8; Beatitudes 8. This arrangement suggests the headings under which Spurgeon's sermons will appear in subsequent volumes. Spurgeon's sermons are so well known that they require no special introduction or commentary. But while they deserve diligent study, they require also critical examination by Lutheran pastors. The very first sermon in this volume "Justification by Faith—Illustrated by Abram's Righteousness," while rich in solid theological material and absorbingly interesting, rejects Baptism and the Lord's Supper as means of grace. Then also the secret of Spurgeon's success lay not merely in the message which he delivered, but largely also in his almost hypnotizing approach as preacher. We congratulate the Baker Book House on this handy edition, for Spurgeon belongs to the great pulpit orators whose fame never fades and whose Gospel message is always timely.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

FOR YOUR FELLOWSHIP IN THE GOSPEL. By Frank Clutz. Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa., 14 pages, 8×5. \$2.40 per dozen.

This little pamphlet is intended as a gift booklet to the newly confirmed and brings ten brief meditations on various Christian blessings, privileges, and obligations as well as a certificate of membership. This certificate is flexible enough to permit its use also for such as enter by profession or transfer. There are a few statements to which we would not subscribe, but that need not detract from the value of the book. O. E. SOHN

THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND THE NEGRO IN AMERICA. By Ervin E. Krebs. Board of American Missions, American Lutheran Church, Columbus, Ohio. 104 pages, 6×9. 75cents.

The chief purpose of this little volume is to depict the work which the Lutheran Church has done for the American Negro in the last fifty years. Quite naturally it concerns itself primarily with the record of the American Lutheran Church, though it also brings a detailed account of the work done by the Synodical Conference, including a complete roster of its personnel and stations as of 1948. Then there is a special chapter on "Rethinking Missions Co-operatively" which presents in amended form a statement of policies on the work of colored missions to be done jointly by the American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church, as well as other Lutheran bodies willing to co-operate. Finally, there is the American Lutheran Conference statement on race relations and a survey of missionary possibilities. A useful addition to our mission reference literature. O. E. SOHN

PEACE CAN BE WON. By Paul G. Hoffmann. Doubleday & Company, Inc., Garden City, N. Y., 1951. 188 pages, 5½×8. \$2.50.

Paul G. Hoffman, one-time president of the Studebaker Corporation, was administrator of the Economic Co-operation Administration, the agency in Europe which administered the Marshall Plan. He now directs the Ford Foundation in its endeavors to restore peace. This book does not speak directly to churches. It is, however, a remarkably straightforward, comprehensible, and detailed description of Mr. Hoffman's plan for winning and "waging" the peace. He discusses the problems and essentials of peace throughout the world and describes the four fronts of the process: military, economic, political, and information. In the welter of literature besieging the churches — isolationist, interventionist, pacifist, war-mongering, welfare state, *laissez faire* — Mr. Hoffman's remarks are sober, factual, and concerned with government as it must really be conducted. Interesting is his hope that the Communist regime may break up from within and his assertion that, much as it will cost, his plan for peace must be paid for by taxation promptly. "Despite all current strains and anxieties, we are living in one of history's most privileged periods" (p. 178) concludes Mr. Hoffman. RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

DEMOCRACY AND THE CHURCHES. By James Hastings Nichols. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1951. 298 pages, 6×9. \$4.50.

The impulse for this volume was given by the Committee on Religious Tolerance, but the position of the book is uniquely the author's. He is Associate Professor of the History of Christianity in the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago. Professor Nichols asserts his commitment both to the Christian Gospel and to "liberal democracy." By liberal democracy the author implies: free men living under guarantees of law by consent and with representative government, participating in discussion for mutual criticism. He finds the religious origins to be not from Roman Catholic, Lutheran, or Anglican societies, but from Puritan Protestantism, in which he includes "Congregationalists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Unitarians, Quakers, Disciples, Salvation Army, and the evangelical party within the Anglican communion" (p. 10). He points to agents of liberal Roman Catholicism in his discussion, but shows that the Church has disavowed them. The discussion takes us through origins from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, but spends most of its bulk on processes in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The author concerns himself not so much with doctrinal theories of the churches as he does with their practical approach to the problems of democracy, such as the origins of constitutional government, the repudiation of absolutism, the doctrine and practice of natural rights, the relation of the churches to the governments of their lands. The compactly written book is unsparing in its criticism of the liaison between Roman Catholicism and Fascism and views apparently more liberal American tendencies as "protective coloring." By and large, Lutheranism does not fare too well in the author's estimate of contributions to democracy and comes under his chief criticism of American Protestantism that it compartmentalizes the Christian community (p. 241). Professor Nichols points out that the denominational barriers among Protestants have postponed their more genuine contributions to society. Here is a piece of history written with a sure grasp of sources and a tough adherence to fact. Suggested readings, notes, and an index enhance its value. RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

SNAPSHOTS, by B. H. J. Habel. Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis 15, Minn. 167 pages, 8×5. \$1.25.

A collection of fifty-two informal sketches, reminiscences, and anecdotes of missionary life. We have found some very interesting, some not, and we are at a loss for a good reason to recommend its purchase to our clergy.

O. E. SOHN

BOOKS RECEIVED

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

PORTALS OF PRAYER NO. 105. "THE ENDURING WORD." By Martin Walker. Daily Devotions from June 6 to July 28. 10 cents each.