

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. VI.

SEPTEMBER, 1926.

No. 9.

The Sesquicentennial of Our Independence.

W. ARNDT, St. Louis, Mo.

The readers of this article, I have no doubt, are agreed that our nation has abundant reason to thank God for the freedom which was achieved through the struggle inaugurated by the famous Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. While the history which began on that day is partly written in blood, some of it the blood of brothers who fought each other in the Civil War; while it is marred here and there by accounts of injustice and corruption; while party strife has dominated our political life frequently instead of true patriotism; while our judiciary at times has failed to function for the protection of the citizens, for instance, at the time of the World War, when innocent men were set upon by fanatical, bloodthirsty mobs; while the American Indian, once the owner of the land we now call ours, has a tale of woe to tell with respect to the treatment he received all too generally; nevertheless, viewed as a whole, that venture undertaken 150 years ago has been markedly successful and has brought in its wake a constitution and a government for which we cannot be too thankful. Dean Inge, a number of years ago, remarked that we cannot escape human limitations and imperfections when setting up a government. If we establish an autocracy, we shall, *ceteris paribus*, have a government that will be honest, just, and efficient, but it will be at the expense of personal and political liberty. (Witness Italy these days under Mussolini.) If we choose a democracy, we shall have freedom, but it will be at the expense of efficiency; there will be corruption, bad, ill-advised legislation, and party rancor. You have to choose between two evils, such was the conclusion the reader had to draw from the remarks of the prominent Anglican scholar, and can you be sure which will be the lesser one? The pessimism of the "gloomy Dean" is shared by few, if any, of my readers, I am sure, even if there is some justification for it. On the contrary, to us the liberty which we enjoy here is a priceless boon, and we

BOOK REVIEW.

Studies in the Psalter. By O. W. Wismar. 144 pages, 5×7½. \$1.25. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

Our Synod has produced much good literature in the German language. In accordance with a resolution of Synod, the Literature Board is making some of this material available in the English language; not, however, by way of a mere translation, but by a reproduction of the thoughts in good idiomatic English. The publisher's announcement contains the following remarks: "Wismar's book derives its material principally from two excellent German essays, one by Dr. P. E. Kretzmann (Ps. 46), the other by Dr. W. H. T. Dau (Ps. 119), both of which were delivered before the synodical convention of the North Wisconsin District, in 1921 and in 1919, respectively. Prefacing his text, the author says: "The fact that the New Testament contains 59 quotations from the psalms ought to suffice to arouse a special interest among all Christians in the Psalter. The further fact that of the 548 proof-texts in our Catechism 62 are taken from the psalms ought to make every Lutheran communicant desirous and eager to study the Psalter. Again, the large number of hymns based directly or indirectly upon the psalms ought to invite the lover of sacred songs to a more intimate and thorough acquaintance with the Old Testament song-book of Israel." The introductory chapter of Wismar's book treats of the Book of Psalms as such. This book should be placed into the hands of our lay people; it may also profitably be used by Bible classes. FRITZ.

Confessional Addresses by Lutheran Pastors. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

Concordia Publishing House not so long ago issued excellent confessional addresses written by the sainted Dr. C. C. Schmidt. Since they were in the German language, it is quite proper that this little collection of confessional addresses, which are in the English language, is offered to the clergy. Twenty-nine brief, good, helpful addresses are submitted here, the authors being pastors or professors of our Synod. Considering the multitude of duties and obligations which is engulfing the modern pastor, such a collection of addresses, furnishing him ideas and illustrations for his own sermon work, will be appreciated. Prof. M. Sommer, chairman of the Literature Board of Synod, which is responsible for the issuance of this volume, has written an excellent preface, which is worth repeated perusal.

A.

Bible History References. Explanatory Notes on the Lessons Embodied in the *Comprehensive Bible History for Lutheran Schools*. Vol. I: Old Testament Stories. With Maps and Illustrations. By F. Rupprecht. 356 pages. \$1.75. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

This book is offered in a second, revised and enlarged edition. It contains much valuable explanatory material. Its purpose is to give to our children and young people a better knowledge and understanding of the Old Testament. It will, however, not only serve this good purpose in the hands of teachers and parents, but the information which it gives can

also be used by preachers for a series of sermons on Old Testament texts. The Old Testament deserves to be given much more attention than it receives. A volume of notes on New Testament stories is to follow.

FRTZ.

The Statistical Year-Book of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States for the year 1925. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

Again our esteemed statistician, Rev. E. Eckhardt, can breathe a sigh of relief because the *Year-Book* for 1925 is launched. It is not a passenger steamer, affording one round of entertainment after the other, but a veritable freighter, and if you engage passage on it, you have to be content to stare at figures. But even so, you will not regret the voyage. Sundry thoughts and reflections will arise in you as you see the plus and minus signs. Considering that those figures look you in the face and say to you that you are one of those responsible for them, you may feel uneasy over the absence of the sign of multiplication at places where one might justly look for it. If this feeling of uneasiness develops into genuine repentance, the trip will not have been made in vain. A little more reflection will issue in the thought that even low figures are better than no figures at all, and when you see that after all there is an increase of about 13,000 communicants for our Synod entered here, a feeling of gratitude will fill your heart. The reviewer hopes that many of his readers will inspect and board the new vessel.

A.

Concordia Seminary. Its History, Architecture, and Symbolism. By *Theodore Graebner*. 128 pages, bound in special stock with silk cord. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

All connoisseurs in the book line will feel their hearts leap with joy when they see and examine this book. The author and the publishers have vied with each other in making this a handsome, stately volume. The first part presents the history of Concordia Seminary up to 1920. Next, the deliberations and resolutions which led to the erection of the new group of buildings are related; and finally, the new plant itself is described in detail, full explanations being given as to the style of the architecture and as to the names of various halls and the significance of the numerous decorative emblems. Professor Graebner, who served as secretary of the Building Committee, is eminently well qualified to give authoritative information on all the many items of interest connected with the erection of the new Seminary and on its numerous attractive features. The book is provided with a wealth of fine illustrations, which help to make it a souvenir album—the book appeared at the time of the dedication of Concordia Seminary—of surpassing interest and value.

A.

Pocket Coin. 50 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

This medal, struck in commemoration of the dedication of our new Concordia Seminary, has the size of a silver dollar and is made of bronze. One side shows the seal of the Seminary, with the legend "*anōthen to phos*" (from above comes the light); the other side pictures the two hemispheres and a dove carrying the Bible, the inscription being: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel." Altogether, the coin is very artistically conceived and executed.

A.

Memorial Miniature Tablet or Medallion. \$1.00. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

This beautiful paper weight, manufactured to commemorate the dedication of our new Seminary in St. Louis, shows in bas-relief the group of buildings as it will look when all units and the Luther Tower have been erected. The reverse side carries an inscription explaining the purpose of the medallion. A.

Good Manners for Boys and Girls. By *Amelia C. Krug*. 31 pages. 15 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

Good manners are the result of good home training. Miss Krug's booklet ought to be read, first of all, by parents and then put into the hands of children. FRITZ.

Psalm 98. Two-Part Song for Female or Children's Voices. By *C. Kunze*. Arranged by *F. Faerber*. Appropriate for Dedication and Other Festival Occasions. English and German Text. (Organ Accompaniment available, separately.) Dozen, 75 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

The song service in the Lutheran Church ought to be kept on that high standard which the reputation of the Lutheran Church has given it, and therefore our day-schools and Sunday-schools ought to welcome such musical compositions as that of *Psalm 98* by Kunze and Faerber. FRITZ.

The Christian Conviction. By *Cleland Boyd McAfee*, Professor of Theology in McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago. 211 pages, 5½×7½. \$2.00. (The Macmillan Company, New York.)

These lectures are the first-fruits of a Foundation established by the late Joseph Cook "to provide for visits of Western lecturers whose aim would be the statement and defense of the Christian faith in the principal cities of India, China, and Japan." They were delivered not only in the countries just named, but also in Syria, Egypt, Siam, and Korea, and "an earnest effort was made to present the Christian faith for audiences without a Christian background, as though it were being considered for the first time or as a system still to be discussed." They betray great earnestness of purpose, are written in a chaste and lofty style, and show the usual dignity and deep sincerity which characterize the works of Dr. McAfee. However, they betray, too, the common weaknesses of many works of an apologetic nature. The great central fact of Christianity, that Christ, the Son of God, true God and true man, died for the sins of the world and that through faith in Him alone sinful man may hope for salvation, is not stressed with that vigor with which Paul emphasized it when preaching to people "without a Christian background." Then, too, the book is full of statements that certainly are not in accordance with the truth. On page 11 it is claimed: "Christians do not come to other lands with a finished and closed faith. Its substance is fixed and assured, but the interpretations that may be put upon it are many." We believe that true Christians certainly do come to foreign lands with a "finished and closed faith," a faith very much finished and closed since Christ's death and resurrection. Again, on page 33 we are told: "Sometimes adverse attention is called to the wide differences of opinion regarding the Bible which

exist among Christian believers. Such differences are part of the freedom which the Book itself gives to its adherents." There is only one kind of "freedom" which the Bible gives to believers, namely, that of accepting it as God's inspired Word. We regret that such statements mar the pleasure of perusing this otherwise very readable book, which critical readers may study with much profit.

MUELLER.

The Call to Prophetic Service, from Abraham to Paul. By *Henry Schaeffer, Ph. D., S. T. M.* Foreword by *Oleland B. McAfee, D. D.* \$3.25. (Fleming H. Revell Co., New York.) Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

There are books, even theological books, over which one is apt to go to sleep. One will hardly feel any inclination of this kind when reading this book. It is an attempt to evaluate the historical data pertaining to the call of some of the outstanding figures of the Bible in terms of present-day service. It is obviously difficult to avoid some measure of *Schwaermerei* in a book of this nature, for there is always danger of speculating. We believe that the author has avoided these dangers. If one dissociates this study from the doctrine of the call, as presented particularly in the New Testament, there is much stimulating material in the 459 pages. To a Lutheran author it is self-evident that the objective call is the deciding factor in the office itself. Nevertheless, an angle is here presented which is often overlooked entirely. Another reason why the book is for discriminating readers only is that in a few instances a tendency toward Modernism seems to have crept in. The author's application is sometimes daring, but never fantastic. Of particular interest is the intensive study of the social and moral conditions in Bible times. The careful introductory and exegetical material which is employed in the book alone is worth its price.

KREZTMANN.

The Case against Evolution. By *George Barry O'Toole, Ph. D., S. T. D.,* Professor of Theology and Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, St. Vincent Archabbey; professor of Animal Biology, Seton Hill College. Reissue. 408 pages, 5½×7½. \$1.75. (The Macmillan Company, New York.) Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

This book presents a powerful refutation of evolution by a Roman Catholic, who himself is a thorough scientist and who employs his tremendous philosophic, psychological, and biological knowledge to prove that there are countless known scientific facts which militate against a belief in evolution, but which have been deliberately suppressed, or at least ignored. As he marshals these suppressed evidences into an invincible phalanx, he strikes hard and without mercy, believing that "a genuinely scientific theory ought not to stand in need of indulgence, but should be able to endure the acid test of merciless criticism." Certain of the portions of the text are unavoidably technical, but there is much that the general reader will be able to follow without difficulty, while a scientific glossary is added to explain the most difficult scientific terms. Coming from the hand of a scientist, who at the same time is a Roman Catholic theologian, the book emphasizes certain aspects of the subject which are sometimes overlooked in controversial writings against evolution. The book is well worth the price.

MUELLER.

The Twelve Take Stock of Us. By *Rev. A. Boyd Scott, M. C., B. D.*, Minister of Landsdowne Church, Glasgow, Scotland. 162 pages, 5×7½. \$2.00. (Geo. H. Doran Company, New York.)

Under this somewhat peculiar title the author, a well-known preacher and author, offers to the public eighteen addresses on the apostles (on several of the men there are more than one), which he had preached to his congregation in Glasgow. The sermons endeavor "to present with fidelity the men the apostles were," to show "their spirit, their experiences, their problems, the direction they took with Christ, and to bring all lessons," derived from these studies, "to bear upon modern difficulties of discipleship." Certainly, a wonderful task, but one to which in our opinion the author has failed to do justice. For a subject so vast, the addresses are far too short and occasionally also too superficial. Often, too, the subject is treated with levity, as, for instance, when the address on Saint Andrew begins with the words: "Saint Andrew was a great 'gossip,'" which certainly puts this apostle in a wrong light. Lastly, the writer forgot that these disciples of Christ, in spite of their failings, followed Christ and listened to His Word, and that after the outpouring of the Holy Ghost they became heroes of faith. Too much stress is laid upon the weaknesses of these men, and thus the impression which the hearer or reader gets of them is only partly correct.

MUELLER.

Quiet Talks on the Crisis and After. By *S. D. Gordon.* 224 pages, 5×7½. \$1.25. (Fleming H. Revell Company, New York.)

This is a quaintly fascinating book, written in a style that charms the reader. With the subject which the book treats, the reader finds himself in sympathy. The author believes that there is a crisis heading up, a world crisis, which the experts in state craft, in European-Asiatic politics, in the fighting forces of land and sea, are agreed upon, and which is also predicted in the Book of God, terrific to the last degree. As there was a Flood Crisis, a Babel-Language Crisis, a Canaan Crisis, etc., so there will be a world crisis at the end of this age, in which the Old Order of Things is breaking down. The Crisis of which the book witnesses is the Coming of the Lord, which the signs of the times are daily predicting. So far a Lutheran reader will agree with the author, for certainly the Lord's Day, the Day of Judgment, of Wrath, and Destruction is near at hand as the Word of God testifies. But that is not what Dr. Gordon believes. He predicts the following: "Jesus, in the indescribable glory of His own person, is openly seen coming down out of the heavens to Olivet. With His coming there occurs a terrific storm. There follow certain radical changes in the surface of the earth in Palestine, . . . and then begins the New Order of Things on the old earth under the personal leadership of Jesus the King." p.217. Thus the book ends in the old millennialistic dream, and the warning it gives loses its force.

MUELLER.

