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GRACE.

(Concluded.)

We have, as it were, taken a distant view and a general survey of the holy mountains, where lie our foundations,¹⁾ and whence comes our help.²⁾ We have picked out, for our bearings, the most prominent peaks of the range. We shall now penetrate the range and study at close quarters its heights and depths. It cannot but enhance the value of saving grace to us, if we follow the pointed finger of the Holy Spirit from page to page of the Scriptures, and note how He speaks of grace, of whom He predicates grace, what He ascribes to grace; and if we study, in particular, the operations of grace, as they are revealed.

Grace is presented to our view in a great many and varying aspects. There is a "manifold grace,"³⁾ due, not indeed to differences in its quality, or to a variable attitude of the divine will, but to the various acts which the divine favor considered necessary for man's salvation, and to its application to the many needs of the human race and to individuals. The manner in which the term "grace" is predicated may cause *us* to understand it in a wide or narrow sense, and to assume for it a general or a special meaning. In itself, however, and as to its essence, grace must always be understood to be the free inclination and spontaneous

1) Ps. 87, 1.

2) Ps. 121, 1.

3) 1 Pet. 4, 10: *ποικίλης χάριτος θεοῦ.*

BOOK NOTICE.

In Memoriam. Dreissig Leichenreden, dargeboten von Pastor C. Gross sen. St. Louis, Mo., Concordia Publishing House. Small 8vo. VI and 160 pp. Price, 75 cts., postage prepaid.

Effective preaching at funerals is high art. The funeral orator is a spiritual specialist: he deals with a particular case and with particular people. If he fails to point the special lesson suggested by each instance, he has missed his mark, even if the Scripture truths concerning life and death, heaven and hell, sin and grace have been correctly, and even eloquently, stated. He must also consider that the minds of his hearers are already strongly agitated *before* he begins to address them, and it becomes his duty, not so much to rouse, as rather to soothe the feelings of his audience and to give them a healthy turn. It is shockingly bad taste and a sorry waste of time, to say the least, if the funeral orator in his remarks concerning the deceased anticipates the proverbial tombstone and indulges a maudlin sentimentality. The occasion is fraught with too great spiritual potentialities to afford time for what are, after all, trivial matters. The responsibilities of the human soul in this time of grace, a true estimate in accord with the divine standard, above all, trustful resignation and cheerful submission to the fatherly guidance of God, — these are among the features that should tone the effectual funeral oration and give it individual character.

The handy volume before us contains thirty funeral orations, brief, pointed, earnest, and tender, according as the occasion required, and covering a wide range of ordinary and extraordinary cases. They were, all of them, actually preached during a long pastorate. They are, one might say, true to life; they suggest to the pastor who peruses them many instances in his own ministry when he would have been very thankful for the very suggestions which they afford. Some cases, for instance, No. 28, a deathbed repentance, are managed with consummate skill. The chief merits of these orations are two: 1. the text is always, not a motto, but the very marrow and backbone of the discourse; 2. the application is very direct and individualizing. For each sermon there is an appropriate opening prayer.

In view of the constant calls upon our pastors for funeral discourses, and their often extremely limited time for preparation, we are convinced that the present volume places the church under obligation to the author. We could wish that these discourses were put forth also in English garb.