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WALTHER THE LUTHERAN.

(Continued.)

When one surveys the work of Walther's first year as editor, one is constrained to say that the promises made before *Der Lutheraner* made its appearance were faithfully kept. Koesterling¹⁾ relates that before publishing his church-paper Walther had submitted the following prospectus to a few pastors with whom he was acquainted:--

The aim of this paper shall be, 1. to acquaint men with the doctrine, treasures, and history of the Lutheran Church; 2. to prove that the Lutheran Church is not a sect, but the true Church of Christ; 3. to arouse love for the Lutheran Church; 4. to warn against, uncover, and refute false doctrine, to reveal those who falsely employ the Lutheran name for the purpose of spreading unbelief, misbelief, and enthusiastic notions, to repel attacks upon Lutheran doctrine, and to remove existing prejudices against our Church; 5. to unite the isolated members of our Church, to bring back into our Church those who have fallen away from it, and to prove that our Church is not extinct, yea, that it never can become extinct; 6. to put into the hands of Lutheran ministers a means for making plain to their congregations certain issues which can be thoroughly explained and urgently presented to them in no other way; 7. to counteract separatistic tendencies, to comfort and strengthen those who are in doubt and saddened because of the ruin of the Church, and to show them that there is nothing to compel them to fly into the arms of the sects which seem to prosper so greatly; 8. to rebuke dead orthodoxism, every sinful and ruinous movement with which we are being threatened, especially avarice, worldliness, misapplication of liberty, etc.; 9. to offer information regarding the present condition of the Lutheran

1) *Auswanderung der sächsischen Lutheraner*, etc., p. 113 f.

BOOK REVIEW.

THE LIFE AND LETTERS OF MARTIN LUTHER, by *Preserved Smith*, Ph. D. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston. 1911.
\$3.50 net. XVI and 490 pages.

This biography of Luther is introduced by the publishers as "the most humanly interesting, as well as the latest and most authoritative." This statement is borne out by every chapter and page of Dr. Smith's most fascinating account of the Reformer's eventful life. First, his delineation of Luther is "most humanly interesting." He studies the man Luther, and his keen eye has observed a wealth of detail that exhibits the truly human, the intensely human, manner and fashion of Luther's actions. Luther is to the author always a great man, and his work epochal. To the last he keeps up his admiration for him: when the dead Luther is lowered into the tomb in the Castle Church at Wittenberg, the author still remembers that this is the place whence the words went forth that shook the world. But the actions of this man were just such as one would expect of such a man. What Dr. Smith says of Brother Augustine at the monastery of the Augustinian Hermits at Erfurt applies to Luther at every other stage of his life. He says: "Of course Luther's development was not completed at once. Even after the master-key had been found, the long struggle continued, and other factors entered in to modify and enrich his character. He entered the monastery to save his soul, and the struggle for peace took twelve long years before the monk was ripe for the great deeds he was called on to perform. No one can get even an idea of what the struggle cost him, save by reading after him the folios and quartos he perused, and trying to follow him in all that tangled labyrinth. And yet his development was perfectly normal and even. That his health suffered somewhat from asceticism

is undoubtedly true, but there were no morbid symptoms in his conversion. Comparing it to that of other famous Christians, there were no visions such as Loyola saw, and no moral breakdown such as that of Augustine. In those years of hardship, meditation, study, and thought he laid the foundation of that adamant character which stood unshaken amidst a tempest that rocked Europe to its base." This "adamantine character" in its "normal development" is throughout the subject of Dr. Smith's exhaustive study. The plan which he has adopted to make men see the truly human Luther is the happiest imaginable. He makes Luther tell his own life. In no extant biography of Luther—Michelet not excepted—is the vast correspondence of Luther used so extensively, and with such excellent critical acumen, as in this work of Dr. Smith. There is nothing labored and intricate in this Life of Luther. We have no doubt that it will become the favorite biography for the intelligent and cultured Christian layman. Dr. Smith, indeed, knows Luther also as an intensely religious man, a man of prayer, and faith, and full of works of righteousness. He knows him also as a great theologian. But this last feature is the least prominent in his account, and his estimate of Luther in this respect is subject to discount. For instance, Luther's attitude in the controversy with Erasmus has not been understood, especially his remarks on the sovereignty of the divine will in its dealings with men. The tendency of Luther's remarks on the canon of Scripture has been overdrawn, possibly under the unconscious influence of Twentieth Century Biblical criticism. Nor is the lasting worth of Luther's activity—what Lutherans call the evermore enduring element—properly appreciated. Nevertheless, Dr. Smith is so fair and unbiased in his general narrative and frequently defends Luther so ably against calumnies, that it is a continuous pleasure to follow him in his account. While his book will not supersede the works of Koestlin or Kolde, it possesses a merit distinctly its own, which will insure it an abiding place alongside of the books of these German scholars.—As to the other feature of Dr. Smith's work, which the publishers mention, there is no doubt that Dr. Smith's Life of Luther is "the latest and most authoritative." The bibliography appended at the end of the book covers 38 pages, and reveals the author's wide reading. Besides this he has searched the Berlin Royal Library, the Bodleian Library at Oxford, the British Museum, and other storehouses for valuable documentary evidence, and has enjoyed the immense privilege of conferring personally with leading scholars at home and abroad who are regarded as authorities on the history of Luther and his work.—In an Epilogue the author relates "The Last Years and Death of Luther's Wife."