

# THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

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## Confessionalism of the Missouri Synod.

### 1. INTRODUCTORY.

From the history of those conflicts our descendants will have to form their conviction as to which side had a right to shout, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!"

PRESIDENT P. BRAND, in *Opening Address at Brooklyn, N. Y., May 4, 1898.*<sup>1)</sup>

A current definition of confessionalism runs: "Confessionalism is a strict adherence to the confessions of some particular church or sect; it is the conforming in teaching and preaching with scrupulous fidelity to the letter and spirit of the confessional writings of some particular division of the Christian Church. Lutheran confessionalism is the strict adherence to the Lutheran confessions in letter and spirit."<sup>2)</sup> But for the omission of "and practise" after "teaching and preaching" the definition would be altogether satisfactory. This omission accounts for an illogical division of the subject of "confessionalism," or rather of "confessionalists," to which we shall refer later.

Men of judgment and extensive observation outside of the Missouri Synod, when asked to name the one feature which distinguishes this Synod from others, will invariably name the peculiar type of confessionalism that controls the activities of this body. Not infrequently the statement about the Missouri Synod's confessionalism is qualified by some such phrase as "hyper-" or "extreme." There are situations which few Missourians, if any, are spared, when it is anything rather than a joy and delight to be a Missourian. For to be a Missourian often means to be declared an ecclesiastical and social misfit, to be forced into isolation, and — insult being added to injury — to be told that the isolation was

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1) Eastern Dist. Rep., Mo. Syn., 1898, p. 14.

2) Dr. J. Nicum, in *Luth. Cyclop.*, p. 129.

## BOOK REVIEW.

*Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.:—*

1. **John Wiclif.** *William Dallmann.* 79 pages. Illustrated. 50 cts.

What the world knows about "the Morning Star of the Reformation" is here submitted for the third time in a lively narrative, compacted out of thousands of facts gathered with great labor, and constructed into a harmonious whole with great skill and good judgment.

2. **Proceedings of the Thirty-First National Convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States.** 93 pages. 75 cts.

This *résumé* of the acts of the Sixteenth Delegate Synod, assembled at Detroit in June, 1920, exhibits the features which made the late convention epochal.

3. **Lutheran Annual, 1921.** 106 pages. 15 cts.

4. **Amerikanischer Kalender fuer deutsche Lutheraner auf das Jahr 1921.** 106 pages. 15 cts.

Harmonious as regards contents and make-up, these twin publications offer themselves as congenial companions to Missouri Lutherans on their pilgrimage during 1921.

5. **Catalog.** *Concordia Publishing House.* 1920-21. 516 pages.

This is a fine evidence of genuine publicity work which the Missouri Synod is doing by means of its own printing presses, bindery, and bookshop; also of the variety of interests which it is endeavoring to serve; and last, but not least, of the abundant blessing which Heaven is continuing to pour out on this enterprise.

6. **The Concordia Sunday-school Pin.** Celluloid enrolment pin, 1½ cts.; gold-plated pin, 75 cts., plus war tax; service disk, 10 cts., plus war tax.

A simplified and economical system of rewards for Sunday-school pupils is here offered, which deserves to be adopted by all Sunday-school officers who wish to save time and money without sacrificing an essential feature of a sane system of rewards.

The following useful and timely tracts are announced:—

1. **Can the Secular State Teach Religion?** *W. H. T. Dau.* 16 pages. 6 cts. and 4 cts. (American Luther League, Fort Wayne, Ind.)
2. **The Glories of the Lutheran Church.** *Arthur Brunn.* 6 pages.
3. **This Do! How Often?** A Communion Tract. 6 pages.
4. **Am I Converted?** *Theo. Graebner.* 6 pages.
5. **What Is This Evolution?** 6 pages.
6. **Baptism.** *Theo. Kuehn.* 6 pages.

Most of these tracts are offered free of charge while the supply lasts; for those not free a nominal price is charged. (American Publicity Bureau, 22-26 E. 17th St., New York City.)

7. **Weihnachtsklaenge.** Ein Beitrag zur Weihnachtsfeier in Kirche, Schule und Haus. Von *J. M. Goesswein.* With a musical supplement. 23 pages. 10 cts. (Success Printing Co., St. Louis, Mo.)

8. **My Reasons for Opposing the Norwegian Lutheran Church.** *B. M. Holt.* 29 pages. 5 cts.; less in quantities.
9. **Is Dancing a Sin?** *B. M. Holt.* 8 pages. 3 cts.; less in quantities. (Order from author, 111 Eighth St., Fargo, N. Dak.)

*Rev. A. M. W. Wahl*, pastor of Epiphany Ev. Luth. Church of Eau Claire, Wis., has published a historical sketch of his congregation in commemoration of its twenty-fifth anniversary.

*Johannes Herrmann, Zwickau, Saxony*, has published *Margareta Lenk's Des Pfarrers Kinder* in a fifth edition (\$1.50), and four beautiful little stories in tract form for children (*Die kleinen Meistersaenger, Marg. Lenk; Man bittet, stark zu klingeln! Marg. Lenk; Dummerchen, Bertha Mercator; Das stille Kind, Bertha Mercator*).—The late Frau Lenk is destined to remain the favorite story-teller of the Lutheran Church for many years to come, and her companion, Bertha Mercator, will likewise command an increasing circle of readers. German children can hardly be given a more useful souvenir than these publications.

**The Priesthood of Believers.** *Rev. G. H. Gerberding, D. D.* 41 pages. (The Inner Mission Board of the United Lutheran Church in America.)

The anniversary of the publication of Luther's *Liberty of a Christian Man* has called forth this appeal to the laymen in particular to show at their homes, in their congregations, in the world at large, that they recognize their spiritual dignity as believers in the priestly reconciling work of the Redeemer, and points out to them ways of making themselves useful to the Church. But all this usefulness is independent of the L. B. A. (Lutheran Brotherhood of America); it existed before the Brotherhood, is now in evidence without affiliation with it, and will outlast it. There is an equivocation in chap. 6 of this brochure between "brotherhood" written with a small b (= the local congregation) and "Brotherhood" written with a capital B (= the national organization).

*Augustana Book Concern, Rock Island, Ill.:*—

1. **Faith and Certainty.** *C. Skovgaard-Petersen.* Translated from the Danish by *A. W. Kjellstrand.* 61 pages.

Starting with a spirited attack upon the doubting skeptic, who regards assurance of faith as an impossibility, and upon the listless, sleeping Christian, who does not feel the necessity of assurance, the author meets the charge that Scripture itself denies believers assurance by its description of the surprise of those at the Lord's right hand in the day of judgment. So far his argument is in the main pertinent. But, next, he takes up the subject of certainty itself, and insists that it can be properly discussed only when three main stages or degrees in Christian certainty are admitted:—

"Certainty based on the 'Word' alone;

"Certainty based on the Word and partially confirmed by experience;

"Certainty based on the Word and actualized by complete fulfilment."

(p. 13.)

Although the author repeatedly deprecates basing certainty on one's feelings, he nevertheless asserts that the certainty based on the Word must in the actual life of a believer, especially in afflictions, be reinforced by "the compulsion of conscience in relation to the Word." (p. 48.) "Consequently, under normal conditions, the certainty of faith has a twofold foundation and source. It is upborne both by the Word and by experience; but not always to the same degree by both. . . . But in either case the certainty of faith rests upon the same firm foundation; for in both cases the certainty is upborne by the same divine power of truth. The Word is this power in the bud; *it* operates on the conscience. Experience is this power in bloom and fruition; *it* embraces the entire personality." (p. 51.) This is an artificial view of Christian assurance that is foreign to the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions, which know of only one basis for the assurance of faith, the Word of grace in Christ Jesus.

2. **The Faith of a Child**, and other stories for children. *Runa*. 144 pages. 30 cts.

3. **The Lord Is My Light**. Stories and Poems for Children. *J. M. Anderson*. 64 pages. 30 cts.

Both these juveniles are illustrated; their contents are pure; however, in the publication named first the "Knights of the White Christ," and still more so "On the Sea," are hardly for children.

4. **The Prince of Peace**. Christmas Program for Sunday-schools. 28 pages. 10 cts.

5. **Fridsfursten**. Julprogram för Söndagsskolan. Both publications edited by *Rev. S. M. Hill*. 16 pages. 10 cts.

Contain catechetical matter, songs with music, and recitations.

*Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O.:*—

1. **A Guide in Church Finance**. *Samuel A. Stein, D. D.*, Lutheran pastor. 36 pages. 50 cts. Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

It will do any pastor, theological student, synodical or congregational officer, in fact, every member of a congregation and Synod, good to read this brochure, which advocates as requisites for the financial reliability and stability of a church the dissemination of general and particular knowledge regarding the current and extraordinary needs of the church, suggests as an efficient means for meeting these needs the introduction of the duplex envelope system for collections, and shows the way how to introduce the system, and how to answer those who oppose it.

2. **Sweet Fields of Bethlehem**. A Christmas Service for Sunday-schools. 27 pages. 6 cts.

**Froehliche Weihnacht!** Weihnachtsliturgie fuer christliche Gemeinde- und Sonntagschulen. 29 pages. 6 cts.

Both publications contain a complete order of service for children to be used at the Christmas celebration: liturgy, hymns and songs with music, and catechetical material.

*George H. Doran Co., New York:—*

1. **A Guide to the Study of Church History.** (Third edition.) *W. J. McGloslin, Ph. D., D. D.* 359 pages.

The distinguishing feature of this students' manual is the sane method pursued by the author in arranging the vast and varied materials with which the church historian has to deal. The text consists of grammatically unconnected jottings, such as a student would hurriedly write down while listening to a lecture,—only the average student would frequently miss the thought-connection and -progression which make each paragraph in this book a store-house of information and an incentive to detailed study, and each chapter a clear and distinct sketch of an era in history. For compactness, correct division, and lucid arrangement of subjects the book is a marvel. Most of his judgments, too, are sound. It is the best aid to a rapid, comprehensive, and withal adequate study of church history that has appeared lately.

2. **The Argonauts of Faith.** *The Adventures of the Mayflower Pilgrims.* *Basil Matthews.* (Foreword by *Viscount Bryce* and illustrations by *Ernest Prater.*) 185 pages.

In nine chapters, which are literary gems and are skilfully subdivided to set off the progress of the dramatic action in each, the story of the Pilgrims is here told with much ideal coloring and dialog, yet along essentially historical lines. Of the many books that have commemorated the landing of the Pilgrims, Matthew's is undoubtedly the one most fascinating. The Prolog connects that event poetically with Greek mythology (the legend of the Golden Fleece) and the Epilog is a patriotic reverie on the Golden Fleece of American freedom. These two flights are beyond the reach of the historical *nexus causalis*.  
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3. **Training the Devotional Life.** By *Luther Allen Weigle* and *Henry H. Tweedy.* 96 pp., 5×7½. Price, 75 cts.

The very fact that a book on training the child "in the art of devotion" is regarded as necessary is a reproach to the Christianity of our day. Why should one write a book on "Teaching Children to Pray in the Home," "Teaching Children to Pray in the [Sunday] School," and "Memorization of Worship Materials"? And will those who neglect so elementary a duty be sufficiently interested in the subject to hear what two Yale professors have to say about it? And will those who read and digest this particular book be brought close to the heart of the problem? Throughout the slight volume we find occasion for queries in the margin. What of references, for collateral reading, to such liberals as Fosdick, Athearn, and Cope? What of the author's objections to "the dogmatic imprisonment of the child's mind" implied by memorizing the Creed? And do we not know what is meant when the caution is uttered, not to permit "dogmatic presuppositions" in the child when it approaches the Bible, and that the child must be prepared "to study the record in the light of *all truth*"; that, to speak plainly, our children must be "trained in the light of the results of our ripest and most reverent Christian scholarship"? Those acquainted with New Theology

English know what this means. On presuppositions such as these, why train a child to pray at all? There is less harm done by a Free-thought tract than by such encouragements to devotion as this new Doran book. G.

*The Macmillan Company, New York:—*

**An Introduction to the Old Testament, Chronologically Arranged.**

*Harlan Creelman, Ph. D., D. D.* (Foreword by *Frank Knight Sanders, Ph. D., D. D.*) 383 pages.

Among the isagogical compends for the study of the Old Testament this book must be classified with those belonging to the school of historical criticism, which arrives at its interpretation of the Hebrew Bible and at its value-judgments of its varied contents by way of the historical conditions under which the writings of the Old Testament were produced, collected, and "edited." The divine origin of the Scriptures is not an *a priori* fact with the representatives of this school, nor does it frequently come out as an *a posteriori* fact from their scientific labors, no matter how much of the spirit of religion, reverence, and devotion these scholars endeavor to inject into their learned research work. Dr. Creelman's work differs from that of his predecessors in two respects: 1. as regards method. "The customary method followed in 'Introductions of the Old Testament' has been to deal with the different books, following either the order in which they occur in our English versions (*e. g.*, Bennett), or according to their arrangement in the Hebrew Canon (*e. g.*, Driver), or grouping them together in such convenient literary divisions as history, prophecy, and poetry, etc. (*e. g.*, Cornill). In distinction from such plans and methods this *Introduction* discusses and classifies the Old Testament literature from the standpoint of history and chronology, *i. e.*, the different books, or sections, or chapters, or verses [!], as the case may be, are taken up in chronological sequence as they relate to definite periods of Hebrew history, either as the Old Testament furnishes the history of those periods, or as its literature had its origin in them." In a chronological index (pp. 353—358) the manner in which this plan works out in detail is exhibited with regard to every chapter and verse of the Old Testament. The author's effort represents the last analysis of "historical criticism" as applied to the Old Testament.—2. A distinct aim of the author is to codify the findings of scholars who have worked in this field before him. His list of reference literature embraces more than 300 titles, and among the names of authors it will not be easy to find a scholar of note that has been omitted; if any have been, they are Germans. He has embodied in his text 180 quotations of primary importance from 60 authors, not including "references either to passages where the substance of a writer's opinion is given or to different scholars' positions on critical questions," which are frequently referred to throughout the book. Thus this book becomes, at the same time, an introduction to the literature of historical criticism of the Old Testament, and any one looking for information on this subject will hardly find a compend that furnishes that information more readily and comprehensively.

*Thomas Y. Crowell Co., New York:—*

**A History of France.** *Victor Duruy.* Translated by *M. Cary.* With an Introduction and Continuation by *J. Franklin Jameson, Ph. D.* New edition, revised and continued to 1919 by *Mabell S. C. Smith, A. B., A. M.* 791 pages.

Few that have had occasion to make a study of the history of France will disagree from the opinion of the late Andrew D. White that "of all the short summaries of French History this is the best." Frenchmen are good narrators, and Duruy's style and skill in exhibiting the *newus* in historical events are thoroughly French. If there is any bias in his presentation of the rich and stirring scenes with which French history is replete, it is that of the patriot. Duruy loves France, and he writes the story of *his* country, but he is faithful to the facts of history, and has a marvelous grasp of them. The Reformation is almost a negligible quantity in French history, except in one brief period, and the treatment of it in this compend is therefore limited to a small space. The appendix, which brings the story down to the late World War till the armistice, is likely to prove premature. Excellent maps (13) are inserted in the book. Paper, printing, and binding are very good.

*The American Bible Society*, in commemoration of the Pilgrims' Landing at Plymouth, has issued a beautiful souvenir folder, **In the Name of God, Amen!** for *Mayflower* Universal Bible Sunday, November 28, 1920, a little tract, **A Little Journey to Plymouth When the "Mayflower" Landed**, and a libretto for "a dramatic service of the Bible designed to be used in the churches," entitled, **The Pilgrim and the Book**, by *Percy Mackaye*.

*Vandenhoeck und Rupprecht, Goettingen, Germany:—*

1. **Meister Eckhart.** Von *Walter Lehmann, Pfarrer.* 312 pages. M. 10.50, plus.
2. **Desiderius Erasmus.** Ein Lebensbild in Auszuegen aus seinen Werken. Von *Prof. D. Dr. Walther Koehler.* 239 pages. M. 7, plus.

These two publications, which, wonderful to relate, appeared amidst the nerve-racking experiences of the late World War, constitute, respectively, Nos. 14. 15 and 12. 13 of *Gustav Pfannmueller's Die Klassiker der Religion*, a serial publication, which so far embraces the following treatises: 1. *Jesus*, by Dr. Heinrich Weinel; 2. *Johann Arndt*, by Lic. Wilhelm Koepf; 3. *Der katholische Modernismus*, by Dr. Jos. Schnitzer; 4. 5. *Die Propheten*, by Lic. Gustav Pfannmueller; 6. *Ignatius von Loyola*, by Dr. Philipp Funk; 7. *Paul de Lagarde*, by Prof. Herm. Muler; 8. 9. *Kierkegaard*, by Dr. Edvard Lehmann; 10. 11. *Luther*, by Dr. W. Koehler, and the two publications noted above. The aim of the editor is to acquaint the modern reader with prominent persons in the domain of religion directly by exhibiting them through their writings. Judging from the two titles submitted, the spirit of modernism in religion dominates the series, and becomes evident in editorial footnotes and judicial remarks, with which the volumes are interspersed. German thoroughness and exactness are in evidence everywhere in these portraitures of classic personages in religion by means of their own literary products.

*Alfred Toepelmann, Giessen, Germany:—*

**Einfuehrung in das Alte Testament.** Geschichte, Literatur und Religion Israels. Von *Dr. Johannes Meinhold*. 316 pages; paper cover. M. 10.

This book was written to serve in a theological course at German universities, and for private study of such as wish to be abreast of the times as regards Bible-study by the school of historical criticism. In particular, the author wishes to help university students who went to war to regain the time lost through military service. There is, accordingly, an endeavor made in this treatise to reduce the vast material of the historico-critical school to the narrowest confines, and the author is a master in the art of literary self-restraint, of perspicuous and judicial arrangement of his topics, and a splendid and fascinating talker. Isagogical treatises often prove dry reading; not so this book; there is not a dull line in it. But, we regret, this is all that can be said in its praise, and even this praise constitutes an element of danger. For what does the author purpose to teach applicants for the ministry regarding the Bible of the Old Covenant? "Holy Writ," "oracles of God," in the sense of a divine revelation by inspired writers,—this is something which the original Hebrews did not know and did not care to have. "Holy Scripture" was produced by designing church politicians: the Decalog is a late invention, the deuteronomical law found in the days of Josiah a fraud, the entire Old Testament a congeries of documents, mutilated, reconstructed, edited and recited a number of times to suit the purposes of a religious faction or school. How students who have been trained to believe all this can preach the Old Testament as the Word of God, passes comprehension. The Lord have mercy on the people on whom these ministers are let loose!

*O. Ludwig Ungelenk, Dresden/Leipzig:—*

**Pastoralblaetter fuer Predigt, Seelsorge und kirchliche Unterweisung.** Herausgegeben von *Pastor Lic. Erich Stange* u. a. 62. Jahrg., 12. Heft. September, 1920.

This number closes Vol. 62 of a monthly for homiletics and pastoral theology that has served the better elements in the German evangelical church during two generations. Neither as regards contents or form does it meet the wants of an American Lutheran pastor, but it contains much that is suggestive and thus may prove helpful, even *per contra*, and its discussions of live issues that confront the pastor in his work afford an insight into the sorry conditions with which evangelical Germany is struggling.

In a pretty memorial *Das Rauhe Haus* of Hamburg ("the fountain room of Inner Mission") announces the death of its Director, *Dr. M. Hennig*, and pictures its almost hopeless future in impoverished Germany. ("*Deutschland ist ein armes, zertretenes Land.*")

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