

LENTENTIDE SERMONETTES. By Joseph A. Seiss, D.D., LL.D. Pages 198. Evang. Luth. Church Pub. Board, 1522 Arch St., Philadelphia, 1901.

As the name indicates, this is a volume of sermonettes by Dr. Seiss, pastor of the Church of the Holy Communion, Phila. Being the work of one who is engaged in the active work of the pastorate, it is to be expected that such a volume as this would be practical and homiletical, rather than exegetical or theological.

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In this expectation, the reader of these sermonettes will not be disappointed. Anyone of these sermons could be preached with profit to a Christian congregation, and one is safe in saying that it would be listened to with pleasure. Dealing, as they do, with practical questions, one will find in these sermonettes not only food for thought, but also hope for the hopeless, bread for the hungry, and comfort for the weary.

The author, in his preface, calls attention to the growing and widely extending attention that is given to Lent and Passiontide and the propriety of a proper observance of this season of the Church year. To this latter end he submits this volume of sermons to the Christian public. This reveals the purpose of the book. However, it might be said that these sermonettes of Dr. Seiss are adapted not only to the Lenten season, but to all the seasons of the year. For example, the sermon on "Faith the Measure of Success," based on Matt. 9, 29, may be preached as profitably during the Trinity season as during the season of Lent. The same may be said of nearly every one of the other twenty-five sermons in the book. Therefore, those who are in search of homiletical material or mental stimulus need not wait until Lent to read this book, but a careful perusal of it will afford them much help even now.

The style of these sermonettes is particularly clear and lucid. One is never at a loss to understand the author's meaning. In this respect they form a model that may well be imitated. Nor is there a long and involved introduction to be waded through before coming to the body of the sermon. Of course, the nature of a sermonette necessarily demands compactness, and if the preacher devotes five or ten minutes to the introduction, no time will be left for the body proper. Dr. Seiss does *not* sin in this respect for he immediately comes to the point without much ado. Herein lies another point worthy of imitation.

One of the tests of perspicuity is the ease with which a sermon may be analyzed. A single example will show the perspicuity and the manner of treatment in these sermonettes by Dr. Seiss: Subject, "The Treacherous Ailment;" text, John 5, 42, "I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you." I. Genuine love versus hypocrisy. II. Grounds for the fear that the text applies to to-day; 1, worldliness; 2, neglect of the means of grace (*a*, Bible, *b*, prayer, *c*, worship, *d*, the sacraments); 3, defections of Christians. III. What is to be done? 1, Be honest with yourself; 2, confess it to God; 3, repent; 4, remember the judgment; 5, and finally, despair not, Jesus saves.

A proper use of these sermonettes, not a slavish imitation of them nor a wholesale "cribbing" from them, will cause this little volume to redound to the good of many a congregation, and thus to the glory of His service.

H. H. R.