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The Old Testament at Gettysburg

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wehren, daß Melanchthon die Abschwächungen im Interesse eines Kompromisses gemacht hat?[16]

Es ist also nicht Eifersucht, auch nicht pharisäischer Argwohn, der in der Variata synergistische und romanisierende Tendenzen findet.[17]

Wir schätzen Melanchthon hoch. Er hat der Kirche mit unermüdlichem Eifer gedient und in diesem Dienste seine Gesundheit untergraben. (Luthers Briefe, De Wette, III, 470.) Was er auf dem Gebiete der theologischen Wissenschaften erreicht hat, ist staunenswert. Wir verdanken ihm das Kleinod der Apologie, die jeder Pastor fleißig studieren sollte. Aber auch die Lehrschwankungen Melanchthons hat Gott zum besten gelenkt. Ohne diese hätte es keinen „dreißigjährigen" Krieg in der lutherischen Kirche gegeben (1546—1577) und daher auch keine Konkordienformel, die als norma normata ganz einzigartig dasteht.

Springfield, Ill. F. E. Mayer.

The Old Testament at Gettysburg.

In Paragraph VI of the resolutions adopted by the United Lutheran Church at its last convention, at Savannah, Georgia, and designed to bring that Church into closer relationships with other Lutheran bodies, we find a splendid appeal for a united front against Modernism and unbelief in Christian groups. The indictment against the tendency "to abbreviate or dilute the Christian message in the effort to make it acceptable to the modern age and adapt it to modern thought" is clear and emphatic. We in the Missouri Synod gratefully recognize every resolution or action designed to protest against infidelity in Protestant circles, to help create or deepen the Lutheran consciousness, and to promote a consistent Lutheran practise. We earnestly pray for the continuance of this sober spirit.

On the other hand there is in the United Lutheran Church an equally unmistakable trend toward Liberalism, compromise with un-Lutheran attitudes, and concession to Modernism, which has caused concern to many, both within and without this church-body. Unfortunately the most radical departures originate in divinity schools

16) Trauriger noch ist Melanchthons Benehmen während des Leipziger Interims (1548) und sein Verhalten den tridentinischen Vätern gegenüber (1552), wo man ihm vormachte, daß er sich das Lob verdienen könne: Unus homo nobis dicendo restituit rem.

17) Im *Lutheran Quarterly* (1900, p. 190) findet sich in englischer Übertragung das Loblied Matheſius':

A honeyed flower (mel-anthos) from blackest earth (melan-chthon)
Lies withered here in quiet rest,
By the fierce heat of life oppressed.
The grateful bees have carried home
Honey from thence to fill their comb.
Many a spider crept along it,
Many a poisonous worm has stung it.
Yet scatheless in this shrine it lies;
Its work is such that never dies.

of this Church and are the more pernicious because they augur ill for the theological attitude of to-morrow.

An instructive example of this wide drift from the Lutheran moorings is found in one of the latest publications issued by the United Lutheran Publication House, *The Old Testament — a Study*, by Herbert C. Alleman, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament Literature and Theology in the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania (205 pages; price, 75 cts.). This is not only a publication of the United Lutheran Church, written by an author who has taught for twenty years at one of its recognized theological seminaries, and printed by its official publishing house, but it is endorsed by the Parish and Church School Board of the United Lutheran Church, under whose auspices it was prepared. Moreover, it is particularly designed for "the Lutheran leadership courses," that is, for the advance instruction which this Church has prepared for its laity. Besides, the volume is enthusiastically reviewed in the periodicals of this Church. The *Lutheran*, of February 7, 1935, declares: "The study of this book cannot fail to lead to a better understanding of the Old Testament on the part of both the teacher and those who are taught." It commends the editor as "an expert and excellent surveyor" and pronounces the volume "an authentic manual and guide to the understanding of the thirty-nine books which form the Old Testament and of the religion of the Book."

On the strength of this endorsement one would be entitled to expect a noteworthy contribution for the defense of the Old Testament, a scholarly presentation which would utilize the best of modern research, indict the critical extravagances, and altogether offer a deeper and more reverent appreciation of these ancient sacred writings.

A "True Guide"?

Now, we are not primarily concerned about the scholarship of the book; for a publication of this sort must first of all be reverent, Scriptural, and consistent with Lutheran attitudes. But since the scholarship of the volume has been emphasized in the preface, the reviews, and the advertisements, we may be pardoned if, in passing, we mention a number of instances which, after a casual perusal of some chapters, appear to demand correction.

Thus, the Babylonian creation story is called the Gilgamesh Epic (page 19), which, of course, is the title of the twelve-tablet Deluge story. The so-called Babylonian creation record is "Enuma Elish."

Gen. 6, 3 is misinterpreted (page 120); for this passage does not state that man's life after the Fall is to be 120 years, but it does state that there will be a gracious period of respite of 120 years before the Deluge will inundate the world.

The introduction of the Christian pronunciation of the Tetra-

grammaton, Jehovah, is ascribed to Galatinus, confessor of Leo X, and dated about 1520 (page 27); but the late George Foote Moore of Harvard University has shown that the pronunciation of Jehovah was of earlier and medieval origin.

The statement is made that "of all the patriarchs he [Isaac] alone stood aloof from polygamy" (page 23). Yet nine lines later the author discusses the patriarch Joseph, who certainly lived in monogamous marriage.

The Tel el-Amarna tablets are falsely limited to 290 in number (page 176). A glance at Knudtzon's monumental work shows the total number of tablets as 361 at the time his study was published.

The historical material for Hammurabi is definitely limited to two sources, his letters and his code. This overlooks entirely the important royal inscription which has been published and translated in Leonard W. King's *The Letters and Inscriptions of Khammurabi.*

The collapse of the first Babylonian empire is dated "after Hammurabi." Babylonian records, of course, show that the great lawgiver was succeeded by five other kings, who ruled for more than a century and a half. It would be just as correct to say that the World War came after George Washington as to write: "After the death of Hammurabi the country weakened and was overrun by the Hittites and the Cassites" (page 122).

The bland statement is made that "the first conflict between the Hebrews and the Philistines occurred during the high-priesthood of Eli" (page 137). There were, of course, earlier conflicts which the author has overlooked, for example, that recorded in Judg. 3, 31, a fact which the author himself has previously recognized (page 39), but forgotten a hundred pages later.

An unusual picture of Ashurbanipal is drawn in the description which calls him "the grim warrior" (page 127). For the true portrait of this dilettante monarch we suggest the lines drawn by Olmstead in *The History of Assyria,* (pages 579. 580); and *Assyrian Historiography,* University of Missouri Studies (page 80), where the lily-livered Ashurbanipal is pictured as an absentee warrior, "a frightened degenerate, who had not the stamina to take his place in the field with the general whose victories he usurped."

In the chapter on Egypt (page 112) the popular error is repeated that Amenophis IV "gave himself up to the cultivation of the worship of the sun-disc, Aten, as the only god." It should be recognized (Concordia Theological Monthly, April, 1933, p. 269) that Amenophis did not destroy the names of all other gods; that his inscription at Karnak is evidence of the fact that he worshiped other gods besides Aten; that he retained for himself the title "favorite of the two goddesses."

The author not only follows Breasted in acknowledging the

monotheistic efforts of Amenophis, but repeatedly does he accept Breasted's nomenclature when he refers to "the Fertile Crescent." We recall that it was one of the distinctions of a former Old Testament professor in the United Lutheran Church to call attention to the fact that Dr. Breasted's "Fertile Crescent" ("approximately a semicircle, with the open side toward the south, having the west end at the southeast corner of the Mediterranean, the center directly north of Arabia, and the east end at the north side of the Persian Gulf") is neither "fertile" nor a "crescent" and that the term is both misapplied and misleading. See H. Clay, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 44, No. 3, September, 1924. Clay declares: "The 'Fertile Crescent,' 'the shores of the desert bay' for ancient times, in short, is an incorrect and misleading term. It is due to a lack of knowledge of the physical and historical geography of Syria and Mesopotamia. This lack of knowledge is responsible also in a large measure for certain baseless theories being widely accepted, such as . . . dismissing to the realm of myth the traditions handed down by the Hebrews concerning their ancestral home."

Now, it would be possible to continue the enumeration of such misstatements; but we refrain from this as well as from calling attention to typographical errors (with which we may designate such slips as the double spelling "Necho" and "Nechoh," etc.); for we are more directly concerned about the evidence of the tragic deflection from Lutheran and Christian principles which this volume undeniably furnishes.

The Attack on Inspiration.

In spite of the official attitude of the United Lutheran Church toward the Holy Scriptures and the emphatic avowal of its inerrancy and inspiration presented by its pastors, the author has no recognition of the Old Testament as the sacred oracles written by the holy men of God who spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. He never quotes the standard texts to show the divine nature of the Old Testament, but he does relieve himself of open and veiled statements which unequivocally attack the plain teachings of these passages.

Definitely does the author insist: "It is impossible to be dogmatic about Bible dates. The chronology of the Bible is not a matter of divine revelation" (page 21). Again, when the Biblical numbers are involved, for instance, in the census of the returning exiles, he lists contradictory opinions which either accept or reject the figures of Ezra and Nehemiah; and without making a decision for the accuracy of the Biblical figures (which even critics have acknowledged), he proceeds with a non-committal "at all events" (page 99).

When the Israelite authors began to write, — not at the time of Moses, Joshua, or Samuel, but in the age of the established monarchy, — where did they find the sources for their histories and records?

The author stubbornly refuses to concede a place for inspiration, but answers with one word: "tradition." And that he means a faulty and fallacious compilation of folk-lore and folk recollections is seen by his formal question, under "Topics for Further Study": "What is meant by 'the Hebrew tradition'?" and the answer: "Consult M. Jastrow, Jr., *Hebrew and Babylonian Tradition*, 1912 (page 151)." As unbelievable as it may seem, the reader is thus referred to a Jewish critic of pronouncedly anti-Scriptural principles and theories. Jastrow repeatedly declares, in effect, that Biblical tradition is nothing more than an adapted form of specifically Babylonian folk-lore and tradition. To substantiate this statement, one need but read excerpts from Jastrow's work like the following: —

The episodes of Genesis 3, "all are pictures that belong to the naivest folk-lore period of primitive culture" (page 40).

"Primitive tales are thus retained and transformed [in the Old Testament]. They are given a new interpretation in the light of the teachings of the prophets" (page 41).

"We . . . have established the thesis here maintained that Hebrew and Babylonian traditions — using tradition in the larger sense, as embracing views and beliefs handed down as precious heirlooms from one generation to the other — tend to diverge until finally, through the totally different direction taken by religious thought and ethical ideals among the Hebrews, we find these traditions so altered and recast as to show merely, through incidental 'survivals,' the path that leads us to Babylonia and Assyria as the center from which they started out" (pages 61. 62).

"We have encountered plenty of traces of the existence among the Hebrews of the same nature-myth as is revealed in the various Babylonian versions" (page 122).

We have, then, come to this debacle, that in the United Lutheran Church a theological teacher can deny the inspiration of parts of the Old Testament, contradict statements of Christ Himself, and declare that in our early Old Testament stories we have nothing but the vague and vapid Hebrew tradition which, in turn, ultimately owes its origin to kindred Semitic tradition.

Guided by this evolutionary theory of traditional and folk-lore origin, the author does not hesitate to alter the Masoretic text to suit his theories and conjectures. Thus, the Tetragrammaton, which in Ex. 3, 15 is explained by God Himself as meaning "I Am That I Am," is altered to "I will do what I will do," evidently changing the original reading to conform with critical theories (page 27). The decimation of the Bible practised by the literary critics is defended in the following: "Many scholars deny that the last eight verses of the book come from Amos. . . . But those who take this position, *while well within the canons of literary criticism* [our emphasis], do not interpret the divine mind" (page 73).

Old Testament Introduction Modernistic.

With this evident rejection of the Scriptural authority, we can understand that the book gives copious evidence of a pronouncedly higher-critical attitude in regard to the question of Old Testament introduction. The Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch is rejected, for "it was not until the Israelites were established in the land and had their native kings that they were moved to write the account of their experiences as a people" (page 18). In other words, the date for the origin of the Pentateuch, Joshua, and Judges is placed about the same time that conservative higher criticism has dated the older strands in these books. The author unhesitatingly adopts the technical phraseology of the Documentary Hypothesis. He speaks of the Priestly Code, the Deuteronomic Code (page 192). Together with other critics, he finds in Gen. 2, 4 ff. a second story of Creation (page 19), which is fundamentally different from the first. Ignoring Green's evidence on the unity of the Book of Genesis, he tells the laity of the United Lutheran Church that our Bible starts with two radically different accounts of Creation, although a cool analysis of the second chapter will reveal that by its own declaration and intent, by its contents and context, it cannot be a second creation account.

Christ knew only one Isaiah, the author of the entire book; but in this Gettysburg interpretation of the Old Testament we have not only the Second Isaiah, the author of Chapters 40—55 (pages 159. 160), that phantom creation of higher criticism, but we even meet Duhm's Trito-Isaiah; for we read: "The supplement to Isaiah (Is. 56—66) probably belongs to this period," the early post-exile period.

Parts of the Book of Proverbs, it is claimed in complete harmony with some critical theorization, "may be as late as the third century" (page 169).

The Song of Solomon may be a late anthology of love lyrics, beyond the possibility of allegorical interpretation, or an epithalamium for the celebration of a seven-day marriage festival (page 172).

The titles to the psalms of course, these brief paragraphs on Old Testament introduction inform us, were not a part of the original text, and we cannot determine authorship from them (page 166). Consequently David did not write some of the psalms that are ascribed to him, even if the New Testament says that he did. To the Bible-reader he may be the sweet singer of Israel and the psalmist and liturgist whose memory and accomplishments are praised in the books subsequent to this time, but for the author of this "text of real merit" (preface, page 6) he passes into critical discard, his name being mentioned only once and then followed immediately by a statement which questions his authorship.

Old Testament Origins Discredited.

Subtly, therefore, as the very arrangement of the discussion on Old Testament literature shows, this book accepts and disseminates the Wellhausen theory of Israelite development. We are confronted in all seriousness with the fiction of critical unbelief that posits generations (not merely forty years) of wandering in the desert. Israel originally was a nomad people with a nomad religion. This era was followed by an agricultural civilization and the syncretism which led to Baalism. In the eighth century a prophetic rebellion arose against this idolatry and its inhumanity; but this in turn gave way, particularly after the Exile, to the age of legalism, which produced the Priestly Code of the Pentateuch and which in turn was followed by the piety of the Psalter and the wisdom literature.

With this contradiction of the Biblical outline of Old Testament history the author exhibits an inordinate appreciation for the religions of neighboring peoples. He declares that the primitive stories which came from Babylonia "are very similar to the Biblical stories" (page 18), while the Babylonian creation story, to which he refers, has been labeled even by critical interpreters as fundamentally different from the Biblical record.

The Adapa Myth is called, we may inferentially believe, an "approach to the study of the Fall" (page 19), while every unbiased student who reads the translation of the Adapa Myth will search in vain for any suggestion of the Fall.

Prophecy is no unique gift of God according to this Gettysburg authority; for the Egyptians, we read, "also had prophets" (page 115). In this he agrees with J. P. M. Smith, whom he frequently quotes, and other radical interpreters who hold that prophecy is an institution featured and shared by many peoples and not a unique bestowal of God upon the chosen race.

Indeed, so enthusiastic is the admission of extra-Biblical culture and influence that the author lapses into the assertativeness of pan-Babylonianism. Stucken, Jensen, Jeremias, Winkler, and others will have to look to their laurels if the ingenuity continues which connects the 120 years of Gen. 6, 3, as two sixties, with the Sumerian sexagesimal system (page 120), or which describes our Gothic towers as survivals of Sumerian architecture (*ibid.*).

Modernized Old Testament Theology.

It need hardly be added that the particular aspects of Old Testament theology which come under the author's survey are sometimes accorded an unsympathetic treatment. In discussing the Old Testament doctrines of God, the author accepts, with explanations, but without protest, the statement that the Old Testament "God is made in the image of man" (page 183). He then proceeds to indict the

ethical teachings of the Old Testament concerning man. These, he says, "are more crude than those concerning God," and approvingly he quotes Knudson to the effect that Old Testament "anthropology lags far behind theology." In both of these statements he deliberately flies into the face of hundreds of proof-texts which present exalted pictures of both God and man.

When the discussion advances to the Old Testament law, he joins Kautzsch (whose name in spite of his intimate acquaintance is misspelled) in ripping the blinders from our eyes, so that finally, after thirty-three centuries, we can discover the original character of the Ten Commandments, which our catechisms have concealed. The modern mind, we are gravely assured, must find in the Decalog no statement of ethical standards, no commandments or prohibitions, but simply "a statement of confidence — *gentleman's agreement*" (our emphasis)! Even the abortive appeal to Hebrew syntax by which this absurd position would seek scientific umbrage is misdirected; for while the author tells the laity of the United Lutheran Church that "the negative 'not' is not the negative of the imperative, but simply of futurity" (page 192), the grammar replies to this violation of the Hebrew idiom (Gesenius, 107—0): "The imperfect with *lo* represents a more emphatic form of prohibition than the jussive . . . and corresponds to our 'Thou shalt not do it!' with the strongest expectation of obedience."

After the outlines of an artificial history of sin, drawn in critical colors, the synopsis of Old Testament theology is completed by a bland denial that there is any assurance in the Old Testament of eternal life after death (pages 188. 189). In the face of passages like Ex. 3, 6 (quoted by our Lord Himself to show the resurrection), Ps. 17, 15; Dan. 12, 2; Job 19, 25 ff. the deliberate verdict is passed: "Assurance of eternal life came only with the New Testament."

Calamitous Conclusions.

The conclusions to which this bias and negative prepossession lead are often diametrically opposed to the plain statement of Scripture. An illustrative example may be found in the brusk dismissal of Melchizedek as an idolater. In tracing the etymology of the city of Jerusalem and arriving at a derivation fundamentally at variance with the known facts, the author says that the original name Urusalem is "derived from an old god, Salem, in whom we may recognize the deity Melchizedek worshiped." But if Melchizedek was an idolater, then the sacerdotal office of our Lord and Savior is likewise condemned, because Christ is "a Priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110, 4). But what say the Scriptures? In Gen. 14, 18 Melchizedek is described as a priest of the Most High God, "El 'elyon," the very designation by which the God of Abraham is

identified. And while the remarkable seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews calls him a priest of the true God and specifically invites (v. 4): "Now, consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils," this Old Testament epitome, written by a professor at a Lutheran theological seminary, invites, in effect: "Now, consider how pagan and perverted this man Melchizedek was, who worshiped the idol Salem."

The Final Test.

But when we apply the final, decisive test and ask the attitude of this Old Testament survey toward Christ, only four of the 202 pages of this book deal with the prophetic references of the Old Testament to Christ; and the treatment is such as to betray skeptical influence. In the entire book, as far as we have been able to ascertain, there is no mention of the basic Messianic passage, the Protevangel. Is. 7, 14—16 is treated (page 85) without a reference to the Virgin Birth; and even when the author discusses it later, on page 201, he is significantly silent in regard to the parthenogenesis. To him the sign that the prophet Isaiah gives in that crisis moment of Israel's history is, partially at least, "a child born at that time."

While the author concedes the fulfilment of Is. 53 and a group of other Messianic passages in Christ, his conception of Messianic prophecy in the Old Testament is fundamentally different from that expressed by the Old Covenant records themselves. How does he interpret the Eighth Psalm, which speaks of Him who was made to be without God for a little while, but was then crowned with glory and honor? The author finds no Messianic reference to the humiliation of Christ, for in his classification of the Psalter he recognizes no Messianic passages; and the Eighth Psalm is grouped with "psalms of praise of God's works in life and nature." The 45th Psalm and the 110th Psalm, both prophecies of the Savior's kingdom, are classed as "national psalms." The 16th Psalm, predicting the resurrection of Christ, and the 22d Psalm, which in prophetic vision reproduces the very words of the Savior on the cross "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" — these become "psalms of the religious life reflecting the personal condition, needs, or desires of the psalmist."

But even this catalog of compromise and denial, gleaned in an afternoon's paging, does not portray the subtle departure of the book from the positive Lutheran point of view. On page after page the reader beholds a clasping of hands with higher critics and radical exegetes, with historical reconstructionists and archeologists, who have permanently disavowed the final authority of the Scriptures. In this day, when the Church more than ever before needs loud and insistent voices to uphold the sanctity of the Old Testament Scriptures, which according to the New Testament are God-breathed, one

is confronted with a non-committal statement of alternate theories which contradict the Scripture; the author maintains an ominous silence and neutrality which concede that the anti-Scriptural theories may be correct. The laity of the United Lutheran Church is asked to study for further reference, material in the *International Critical Commentary*, the prodigious monument of higher criticism. They are referred to Skinner and his commentary on Genesis, which in the very first chapter drags in references to three goddesses and a host of other mythological substrata upon which this English critic claims the Genesis story is founded. Driver, Jastrow, J. P. M. Smith, MacFayden, Knudson, and other critics are quoted throughout the book as scholars and authorities to whom the good people of the United Lutheran Church eager to obtain a closer and more detailed appreciation of the Old Testament are systematically referred.

This book, we venture to suggest, may be epochal; for the sound elements in the United Lutheran Church will not accept the compromise and concession, the questioning and the denial of Scriptures, which it presents. Nor can the pastorate and laity of the American Lutheran bodies contemplate with evangelical confidence the spiritual unity with a group that can produce this long catalog of equivocations and rejections of sound interpretation. The Church at large will not take seriously any attempt to explain away the seriousness of the situation under the excuse that the United Lutheran Church is not officially bound by the pronouncements of its professors. This is a highly recommended publication issued under the auspices of the United Lutheran Church's Parish and Church School Board. We hope that this board after careful reexamination will find ways and means of removing the contradiction of the Savannah resolutions to combat Modernism. Before the United Lutheran Church joins with other bodies to accomplish this end, it should meet these objectionable tendencies within its own midst. Unless the book is repudiated, it will stand as a perpetual warning against a closer alliance with a group that tolerates academic unfaithfulness. WALTER A. MAIER.

Anklänge an Schriftlehren in griechischen und lateinischen Klassikern.

Es kann nicht unsere Absicht sein, dieses Thema hier in extenso zu behandeln, denn dazu würde der uns zur Verfügung stehende Raum kaum ausreichen; dazu ist der Gegenstand, um den es sich hier handelt, nicht von derselben Wichtigkeit für den Theologen wie Themata, die sich mit der Lehre der Kirche und einschlägigen Fragen befassen. Dennoch ist das Thema nicht ohne Interesse und Wert, wie das schon daraus hervorgeht, daß gelegentlich Anfragen über die Beziehung der