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Book Review. - Literatur

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Book Review. — Literatur.

The New Testament. A Study by *Herbert C. Alleman*. Prepared under the auspices of the Parish- and Church-school Board of the United Lutheran Church of America. The United Lutheran Publication House, Philadelphia, Pa. 151 pages, 5½×8.

This is the companion volume of the work the errors and dangerous tendencies of which were pointed out in the April issue of this journal by our colleague Dr. W. A. Maier. The author, it must be remembered, is a professor at the Lutheran seminary at Gettysburg, belonging to the United Lutheran Church of America. What lends additional importance to this volume is that it is not intended for a few cloistered scholars, but for the laity of the Church, who are to be trained as leaders. Since the book does not come as a private venture, but was prepared under the auspices of the Parish- and Church-school Board of the U. L. C., it has an official character and can demand the careful examination of all who are interested in the Lutheran Church of America. The book intends "to set forth clearly, and as accurately as present knowledge allows, the historical development of the writings of the New Testament, together with a brief sketch of the content of each book" (p. 6). The students whom the author has in mind are those whose needs demand "a more advanced series" of texts (p. 5). While this leads one to expect that the scholarship exhibited will be found to be of a high type, the work contains many statements which from the point of view of history are erroneous. When, p. 15, the kingdom of Herod is said to have been divided "among his three surviving sons," the author overlooks that more sons survived than the three mentioned on the opening pages of our gospels. On p. 20 we are told that both the Rabbis and the scribes belonged to a religious party called the Pharisees — a strange overstatement, since there were scribes who had not identified themselves with the Pharisees. (Cf. Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, p. 335, 1925 edition.) Furthermore, is it correct to say that according to the synoptic gospels Jesus hid His Messiahship even from His chosen disciples till a few weeks before the end of His earthly career (p. 31)? From St. Luke's gospel, at any rate, one does not get the impression that Peter's great confession and the accompanying statements of Jesus about Himself, reported in chap. 9, were made only a few weeks before our Lord's death. Again, one wonders how the author, having listed the so-called "we" sections in the Book of Acts, can say: "A careful study of St. Paul's traveling companions shows that only Luke and Titus were with him at all the points mentioned in these passages" (p. 77). As far as we are aware, there is no proof that Titus was with St. Paul during the latter's second missionary journey. Another strange statement (p. 88) is to the effect that St. Paul told the story of his conversion "to the mob which later threatened his life in Jerusalem (Acts 22, 4—16)." Why later? Did the attempt to lynch the apostle not occur before the delivery of the speech? Or what shall we make of this assertion (p. 89): "Luke is omitting a period to which Paul refers in Gal. 1, 17, where he says that he spent some time in Arabia and worked out his Christian theology." It is a bold way of making

St. Paul himself the authority for what everybody recognizes as a mere conjecture of scholars that in Arabia he worked out his Christian theology. Of the opposite kind is the error on the same page, where the author says that we "know nothing of St. Paul's sojourn in Tarsus (Acts 9, 26—30)." The fact is that we have very definite information from St. Paul himself on that period of his life, given Gal. 1, 21—23. We shall not continue enumerating historical inaccuracies and errors, although our list is not exhausted. What we have mentioned will show that books with modernistic leanings like the present one, listing in the bibliographies at the end of the various chapters largely works by well-known Modernists, are not necessarily impeccable in their scholarship.

But is the work really guilty of espousing views which somewhat vaguely are comprehended in the term Modernism? Let the reader judge for himself. Page 18 we are told: "Like their forefathers of the Old Testament period, the Jews of Jesus' day believed in one God. But a doctrine of angels and demons had developed different from, and in addition to, that which is found in the Old Testament. The angels were numberless and formed the 'heavenly host.' Side by side with them are found demons, whose number is also very great. These demons were believed to live in desert regions and in places which were unclean." Note well, a doctrine of angels and demons "had developed." As to the angels, the inference seems inevitable that when, for instance, St. Luke speaks of the heavenly host, Luke 2, 13, this expression, according to Dr. Alleman, is to be regarded as embodying a later Jewish idea. Page 21: "Though they [*i. e.*, the Essenes] were fairly numerous, they are not mentioned in the New Testament; but the work of John the Baptist reflects their influence." This in spite of the specific divine pronouncement found in Luke 1, 15, which shows that it was God's direct command, and not Essene influence, which was responsible for the peculiar mode of life followed by John. Page 29: "But why are there four gospels? This question naturally suggests itself. The number is not without significance, though this came to be seen only gradually, for they were selected out of a number of so-called gospels which were in circulation in the second century. . . . Why, then, if there were many 'gospels' in circulation, were the four now found in the New Testament selected and the others allowed to perish? The answer is to be found in the contents of the gospels and in the Spirit's leading of the Church's missionary work. Matthew had its claims to a place among the sacred writings of the Church because it had been used in the training of Jewish Christians. Since it was impregnated with the Old Testament, it was naturally put first." What a perversion of the true course of events! Our gospels were not selected, but were acknowledged to be what they actually were, inspired books bringing the message of the apostles and of Christ. Page 41: "Then [*i. e.*, in Matthew's gospel] follow the works of Jesus as Lawgiver, Prophet, and King. Jesus the Lawgiver wins His disciples and then in the Sermon on the Mount gives them the 'better law.'" One cannot suppress the question whether it is a Lutheran or a Reformed theologian who is writing that sentence. Page 57 (the reference is to John's gospel): "Only six days of His [Jesus'] life remain, but they are momentous days, and nearly one half of the gospel is devoted to their events. They are marked by a growing faith on the part of the people, but also by a deepening hatred

on the part of their leaders. Jesus therefore decides to offer Himself to the nation as the Messiah, thus bringing matters to the issue which He knows will result in His crucifixion (John 12)." What will the young people think when they read this sentence with its remark about the decision of Jesus and then recall that, for instance, in Mark 10, 45 He declares He came (into the world) for the very purpose of giving His life as a ransom for many? Page 66 (footnote): "Jesus' miracles were predominantly miracles of healing. Dr. Klausner has shown how the terrible history of Palestine in that period of almost continuous war which had just preceded would have produced an inordinate amount of misery and disease, particularly mental disorders. All this Jesus associated with the hostile power of Satan, the enemy." That is exactly what the Modernists say — Jesus "associated" these afflictions with the hostile power of Satan. There is not one of them that will object to this statement. But from a person sitting at the feet of Jesus and believing in Him as the eternal Son of God one expects a statement of a different ring. Page 70: "The one book that He [Jesus] knew was the Scriptures of His people. Jesus quoted nothing beyond it; He quoted it as His authority; but in His use of it He transformed and spiritualized it. The idea of God was not a book-truth with Him. He had an inner experience of God, and it was that which was the source of His life and teaching." Did Jesus transform and spiritualize the Old Testament? we ask. The words have a dangerous sound. Page 70: "Old Testament prophecy had come to an end, leaving the ideal of God's kingdom an unfulfilled hope. Jesus took up the message of the prophets where they had left off, but He interpreted the Kingdom ethically. To Jesus the Kingdom is the rule of God's beneficent will in the hearts and lives of men." Can the conclusion be avoided that according to Dr. Alleman's view the prophets did not interpret the Kingdom ethically? Page 72: "Jesus thus transformed the popular idea of the Messiah by linking it — and therefore Himself — with the idea of the suffering Servant of Is. 53. The Jews never connected these two, — the suffering Servant and the Messiah, — and even to the Twelve this idea proved a stumbling-block. But with Jesus it was central. 'The influence of this great passage of Scripture [Is. 53] upon the mind of Jesus,' says Canon Box, 'can hardly be measured.'" Canon Box's words, saying, in effect, that "Isaiah" inspired Jesus to become the Messiah (instead of acknowledging that our Lord inspired Isaiah) are quoted without reproof. Page 73: "The Old Testament stressed sacrifice as necessary for redemption, and this necessity had led to a system of animal and vegetable offerings." Very acceptable to every Modernist!

Thus we could continue quoting statements that are objectionable to a conservative Lutheran. Whoever feels that our charge of Modernism against this book is not substantiated by the above may write us, and we shall submit further evidence. It must have become apparent that Dr. Alleman's conception of the Bible is quite different from that which the Lutheran Church, generally speaking, has cherished until now; and not only is he diverging from Lutheran teaching in his view concerning Holy Scripture, but likewise in what he says about our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is true that the introduction says, p. 6: "Throughout this volume therefore it is assumed that the student has an appreciation of the New Testa-

ment as an inspired record of divine revelation and as a book of divine truth, which possesses spiritual power to bring God's salvation in Jesus Christ, His Son, to the souls of men." If these words mean what conservative Lutherans naturally understand them to mean, the contents of the book at various points contradict them. We have in the foregoing not alluded to some useful features of the book, the insertion of questions, bibliographies, directions and topics for study at the end of the various chapters. The doctrinal point of view of the author was what our interest was focused on; and we believe its direct or indirect doctrinal pronouncements will open the eyes of many people outside the United Lutheran Church of America to the hold which Modernism has on influential sections of that Lutheran body.

W. ARNDT.

Exploring the Deeps. Studies in Theology. By *Archibald E. Dritz, D. D.*, Professor of Systematic Theology, Hartwick Theological Seminary, Brooklyn, N. Y. Fleming H. Revell Co., New York. 121 pages, 5¼ × 7¾. Price, \$1.25.

The "Studies in Theology" which this volume presents are based largely on lectures, delivered by the author before the theological students attending Hartwick Lutheran Theological Seminary (U. L. C.). Practically they cover the whole field of dogmatic theology: "God and Man"; "The Origin of Sin"; "Man's Position and Powers"; "The Consequences of Sin"; "Predestination"; "The Person of Christ"; "The Atonement"; "The Acceptance of Christ"; "Justification and Regeneration"; "The Work of the Holy Spirit"; "The Union of the Soul with Christ"; "The Place and Function of Prayer"; "The Christian Life"; "The Ultimate Goal of Redemption." All of these are subjects on which the Biblical theologian to-day must take issue with modernistic denial and perversion of Scriptural truth. The book therefore is timely, and its clear and simple, yet forceful and winsome, style makes its perusal a genuine pleasure. In his study of the book the reviewer was chiefly interested in the question as to how closely it approaches the doctrinal position of our Lutheran Confessions. That question is of tremendous importance to-day in view of the fact that various Lutheran synods in our country are now contemplating a pan-Lutheran movement in the interest of more effectively combating the destructive teachings of modernistic church leaders. The essays in general are marked by a happy conservatism, which proves that also in the United Lutheran Church there is a strong positive wing that seeks its doctrinal orientation in Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Nevertheless the volume contains a number of manifest departures from the doctrines of our Confessions, and honesty impels us to point these out. Perhaps the author has been misled by his apologetic tendency to defend and render plausible to reason the mysteries of faith. In attempting this, he has allowed himself to go beyond Scripture and to substitute for Scriptural doctrine speculations of reason. The title of the book, *Exploring the Deeps*, does not mean merely that the writer wishes to enter deeply into the doctrinal content of the Gospel mysteries as these are set forth in God's Word. It rather means that he purposed to bring into agreement with one another seemingly contradictory doctrines, so that the inquiring critical mind of man may approve of them. This is true especially of his presentation of the doctrines of election and conversion, which we

shall consider later. Lesser defects shall engage our attention first. In describing God, our orthodox Lutheran dogmaticians commonly presented the Bible facts about God on the basis of the *dicta probantia*. The author, however, employs a different method. From the fact that man has been created in the image of God he argues from man's being to the divine Being, though he admits the essential differences that exist between the finite creature and the infinite Creator. While the conclusions at which he ultimately arrives are in accord with Scripture, the method itself is neither Lutheran nor free from serious dangers. Again, in endeavoring to show how sin could originate in creatures, originally created positively and absolutely good, the writer argues from the present nature and mode of *temptation*. He concedes that "there is an element of speculation in all this; yet it helps us to see how sin *must have* [?] originated" (p. 23). In reality the problem remains unsolved, since after the Fall temptation approaches *corrupt* creatures, whereas originally sin occurred in creatures that were perfectly holy and righteous. Yet also here, in his final deductions, the author is in agreement with Scripture, though there should have been more emphasis on the positive teaching of Holy Scripture. Just as serious, however, as the writer's method of developing truths from certain premises or principles are certain expressions and phrases which he employs. It certainly is improper for a Lutheran theologian to apply to the *satisfactio vicaria* the epithet *theory*. For a Christian the Biblical truth of Christ's vicarious atonement is not a *theory*, but a *doctrine*. Cf. p. 63. Again, on the same page the writer speaks of the atonement, "not only in behalf of men, but *in some sense* in the place of men." The phrase "in some sense" is certainly misleading. Christ suffered and died for us, not merely in *some sense*, but in every sense. The *satisfactio vicaria* presupposes *substitution* in the full meaning of the term; for we have redemption just because the incarnate Son of God *took our place* and became *our Substitute*. (Cf. Is. 53; 2 Cor. 5, 21.) In the *locus* "The Person of Christ" the author seeks to explain the fact how both knowledge and ignorance could dwell at the same time in the God-man. Our dogmaticians hitherto explained this Scriptural truth by teaching in agreement with the Bible that Christ according to His human nature did not always and fully employ the divine majesty imparted to Him as the Son of Man. *Exploring the Depths* explains it by saying that Christ's "conscious knowledge was limited, while underneath, in the realm of the subconscious, there were infinite depths of wisdom and knowledge" (p. 55). This distinction agrees neither with Scripture nor with reason. In the Bible there is no shred of evidence to show that Christ's ignorance and knowledge must be considered from the viewpoint of His conscious and His subconscious mind. Reason, again, objects to the explanation because for all practical purposes knowledge in the subconscious is absolutely inapplicable, whereas Christ *freely used* His imparted divine knowledge when and where it pleased Him. Hence all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which He possessed (cf. Col. 2, 3. 9) were not in His subconscious, but in His conscious mind, subject to His divine, omnipotent will. To ascribe ignorance to Christ's conscious mind and to restrict His infinite knowledge to His subconscious self is a figment, which certainly does *not* explain how Christ could at the same time know and not know. — However, the chief difference between the writer's expositions and the doctrine of our Confessions is found

in the *locus* "Predestination." The author rejects Calvinism and correctly presents the teaching of Article XI of the Formula of Concord, according to which (to use the *ipsissima verba* of *Exploring the Depths*) "there is an unsolvable mystery in both predestination and conversion and that it is quite impossible for us to determine . . . why some men actually believe and are saved while others are not" (p. 44). We here omitted some words because they express a false antithesis, which our Formula of Concord does not admit, *viz.*, "either why God elects some men to salvation and *passes others by.*" Our Formula of Concord never speaks of God as *having passed by some*, but repudiates this thought as a Calvinistic fallacy.—But to return to our major discussion. The author writes: "This postulating of a double [?] mystery relieves the theologian of the effort to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable elements in the problem. *Still the inquiring mind wistfully seeks for some other answer and wonders if it is a fact that this is the end of the investigation, if it is actually impossible to go further*" (p. 45). After that he propounds the old synergistic view in explaining why some are saved and others are not saved. He declares: "First, He [the Holy Spirit] is in various ways enabling the man to do that which otherwise would be impossible, as, for example, to see the truth, to see facts as they are, and to appreciate and feel their significance in his heart, and to act accordingly. The second thing the Spirit does in the heart of the man is to urge him on to do the things which the Spirit is enabling him to do. This means that the Spirit seeks to persuade the man, strives earnestly with him, and tries to get him to look at his sin and to look at the Savior and actually to come to Him" (p. 46).—That, however, is synergism; for the still unconverted person must cooperate with the Holy Spirit in effecting his conversion, using for this purpose the spiritual powers which he has received. It is the same kind of synergism which Latermann and his followers defended. Of course, the writer rejects the gross synergism of Melancthon, *viz.*, that a person can convert himself by means of his natural powers. He says: "If the question is raised in the case of a believer, How much did he contribute toward his conversion by his own natural power or ability? the answer is, Nothing, absolutely nothing. . . . *The work of the Spirit described above is absolutely indispensable*" (pp. 48, 49). That means that man by his natural powers cannot convert himself or assist in his conversion; but man can do this by means of spiritual powers imparted to him by the Holy Ghost. The writer thus assumes a *status medius*, when a person not yet converted, but already endowed with spiritual powers must decide either for or against divine grace. We read: "When such a state of affairs exists as is here described, *there are at all times two courses of action open to the man—he may resist the drawing and urging of the Spirit and refuse to take the next forward step, whatever it may be, or, enabled and drawn by the Spirit, he may take that step. This choice is open at every point in the process of conversion*" (p. 48 f.). (Italics always our own.) In the last analysis this is the same synergism which Strigel and Pfeffinger taught and which Article II of our Formula of Concord so strongly rejects. To make his meaning clear beyond misunderstanding, the author proceeds: "If, now, at any point in the movement the man resists the drawing of the Spirit, then the whole movement stops right there, and the man remains, for the time being at least, an unbeliever. On

the other hand, if the man energized and drawn by the Spirit does not resist, he will take the successive steps involved and will be led to the Savior and will come to faith in Him. Thus the difference in result in the case of two men, one of whom finally believes while the other does not, is due to the difference in the choice or decision which they make. It is not a case of the Spirit working in the one man's heart and not in the other's, nor is it a case of the Spirit working with sufficient power upon the one, but not upon the other. His work was amply sufficient to accomplish the result in both cases. But the one man finally did that which the Spirit qualified and urged him to do, while the other resisted. Thus it may be said that all who do not resist God's work of grace in their hearts come to faith in Christ and are saved, while all who do finally resist are lost" (p. 47). It was this very synergistic doctrine that our fathers opposed and rejected during the last half century. This "each decides for himself" (p. 48) is the essence of the most pernicious kind of synergism.

The author next summarizes his doctrine of predestination as follows: "It is possible now to restate the doctrine of predestination. God determined in eternity to prepare a way of redemption for all mankind through Christ and to offer salvation to all and to make an earnest effort by His Spirit to draw all men to faith in Christ. And He determined actually to bring to faith and so to eternal life all who did not finally resist His work of grace in their hearts. And, foreseeing who these individuals would be, He predestinated precisely these individuals to the inheritance of eternal life" (p. 48). The doctrine of predestination *intuitu fidei* is thus taught in a manner that accords with the author's synergistic doctrine of conversion. On the latter he writes: "One man, for instance, thinks of the pleasures of a selfish life and is unwilling to forego them, while another thinks of the blessings of the Christian life and reaches out to attain them. Each decides for himself" (p. 48). On the latter doctrine he writes: "The statement of Acts 13, 48 'And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed' is essentially equivalent to the statement that as many as did not resist the work of God's grace believed" (p. 48). Thus, finally, the writer even twists and contorts Scripture in the interest of his synergistic doctrine on election and conversion. From his firm insistence upon the *sola fide* in the article on predestination and other places (cf.: "The believer can only think of all that [his natural corruption and his enmity against God] with a sense of shame as far as he himself is concerned and with a sense of overwhelming love and thankfulness as far as Christ is concerned. Christ, and Christ alone, has saved him" (p. 50) the reviewer is inclined to believe that the author did not mean to teach synergism. Yet his doctrine is grossly synergistic after all (Latermannism) and therefore irreconcilable with the *articulus fundamentalissimus* of our Lutheran Confessions, the *sola gratia*.

J. T. MUELLER.

Ambassadors of Christ. By Paul Lindemann. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. 161 pages, 5¼×7½. Price, \$1.00.

When reading this book, the conviction grows that the writing of it, assigned to the author by his pastoral conference, became to him a work of love, as he states in the foreword. Those "who share with him the privilege of being ambassadors of the King" will be grateful to the author for this book.

The reviewer was especially impressed by the chapter on "The Ambassador and the Individual." Pastor Lindemann warns against the danger of the pastor's being influenced by the present-day "regimentation of human forces and the prevalence of mass interest" to "lose himself in the group interests that bid for his attention and in the accumulation of movements and projects and ventures of various sorts" (p. 110). In a powerful appeal he calls upon all pastors to adopt Christ's method of evangelizing the world by dealing with the individual, closing the chapter with the stirring words: "May no earthly or official distractions divert his interests from the individual soul that God has loved with an everlasting love!"

One paragraph we should like to see omitted or rewritten in a second edition. We refer to the warning against becoming overprofessionalized, pages 58 and 59. While naturally we must guard against "heresy-smelling and dogmatic hair-splitting," yet the picture seems overdrawn. In our estimation there are not many ministers of this type to be found. Nor does it seem to us that the author means to say what these sentences imply, that dogmatic hair-splitting is due to reading only that which can be directly used in the ministerial cause and that it can be remedied by merely keeping abreast of the best thinking of the day. Both the cause and the remedy lie elsewhere.

THEO. LAETSCH.

The Certainties of the Gospel. By *W. G. Robinson*. 150 pages, 5×7½. Zondervan Press. Price, \$1.00.

Professor Robinson of the (Presbyterian) Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Ga., sets forth, with a background of solid scholarship and with eloquent force, the fundamentals of Christianity as a certainty of conviction. These sermonic lectures are based on texts from Paul's letters and treat the divine origin of the Gospel and the certainty of the resurrection, of grace, and of justification by faith. On the points mentioned the author represents the Scriptural position.

TH. GRAEBNER.

Gingegangene Literatur.

Theologie der Gegenwart. Herausgegeben von *W. Eichrodt, G. Heimann, W. v. Löwenich* und andern. Deichert, Leipzig. 29. Jahrgang, Heft 3. 8 Seiten. — *S. Preuß*: „*Neuererscheinungen auf dem Gebiet der christlichen Kunst*“ (1. Altertum; 2. Mittelalter; 3. Reformationszeit; 4. Gegenwart).

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