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## “GRACE AND FREE-WILL.”

An article in the *Lutheran Quarterly* by Prof. Vollert, Ph. D., as an object lesson to our adversaries.

It seems that in recent times this question becomes mooted more and more in every quarter of the Lutheran church. Even the theologians of the General Synod, who usually boast that it never has concerned them, being only a squabble between the Missouri and Ohio synods, have, as time passes on, joined with the Ohioans and Iowaans in the controversy against Missouri, and try to defend that position. At least they want to show that with joyful eyes they look on the war the Ohioans are waging on Lutheran doctrines as confessed by us. They do this mainly by translating articles from German sources, and seem to think that they have established the point when this or that “theologian of the fatherland” also coincides with them. They show, at any rate, that they hold certain doctrines because they are held by others—as all the world is wont to do.

We do not know whether our adversaries are rejoiced to find such able allies or not. Certainly they ought to become suspicious of the correctness of their position in regard to all the questions that have arisen between them and us and the scripturalness of their doctrines, if all the world hastens to the rescue. History teaches that the fight for the Truth of God has ever found few supporters, while its enemies found the whole host of half-Christians and all the

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## MISCELLANY.

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On Agnosticism, which denies the natural knowledge of God, W. H. Hodge writes in *Intuitive Perception*:<sup>1)</sup> "The affirmation of Agnosticism is that God is unknown and unknowable. We do not know that He is, and if He be, we can have no knowledge of Him. Both these propositions are untrue. We know assuredly that beyond the finite world

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1) *Intuitive Perception Presented by a New Philosophy of Natural Realism in Accord with Universally Accepted Truths by William Henry Hodge.* The Wickersham Press, Lancaster, Pa. Price, \$1.50. — The purpose of this book is to establish Realism over against Materialism and Idealism. The author endeavors to prove that by intuitive perception we immediately cognize the realities of the spiritual and the material world. This laudable attempt, however, is marred by numerous concessions to modern anti-biblical scientific theories.

there is the 'not-finite' from which it comes as from an efficient cause. This is the testimony of Consciousness universally recognized. Thus knowing that there is a 'First Cause,' we know that it must be of such a nature, or have such a character, or such attributes as to be competent to bring into being the material Cosmos, all forms of organic life, and intelligent free agents such as we are. All this in some true sense and degree must be in it. It is true that we can have no knowledge of God *as* infinite, *as* absolute, but it is also true that we may know Him, as He has made Himself known in His works.—Our knowledge of things is in a large measure a knowledge of that which they do, or have the power of doing. Because of his work, we say of one man that he is a carpenter; we say of another because of his work, that he is an author; of another, that he is a poet; of another, because of his buildings of marvelous architecture, that he is an architect. We may know nothing more about these, but we know thus much concerning them. We know their works, and that these men are such, that they can produce them. I may show you a small piece of something. You do not know what it is. I place it at a great distance. In a few minutes, by reason of a blow, or a spark of fire, it explodes with destructive force and deafening detonation. You do not know what it is made of, nor how it is manufactured; you can have no conception of how, or why it exerts that terrific force. But you have some knowledge of its nature and character; you name it 'dynamite,' and handle and use it accordingly. Your knowledge is true, and practical. I place before you a small box concerning which you are altogether ignorant. I touch it; you hear coming from it music, the tune of which is familiar to you; six or seven tunes are heard, one after another. You may have no idea of the mechanism which produces the music, but you know what it can do; you call it a 'music-box,' and at your pleasure you touch it, and it sends forth its sweet sounds. Your knowledge, though so limited,

is true and practical. I may place you blindfolded in a room in which there is a man. He calls you by name; he speaks to you in English, in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Greek, Latin, Hebrew, you know that he is a linguist. He narrates ancient and modern history to you, you say that he is an historian, with a wonderful memory. He repeats long passages, gathered from the great authors of English, French, and German literature. He speaks with fluency of the discoveries made in Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Chaldaea. He discourses of statesmanship, science, philosophy; of morality and religion; and in thus speaking the tones and intonations of his voice are those of earnestness, conviction, deep emotion. All this is what he can do, and what he does. In knowing this you know him. The above is the definition, the description, the character which you give of the man. The woman of Samaria expressed her knowledge of Christ by saying, 'Come, see a man that told me all that ever I did.' So in the supposed instance your knowledge of the man is of that which you heard him speak. You are totally ignorant of all else about him. You have no conception of how the human voice frames itself and expresses the thoughts and emotions of the soul;—of how the brain acts in thought, memory, and speech;—of how different forms of language, history, literature, antiquities, statesmanship, science, philosophy, religion are grouped, arranged, and fashioned into forms of speech by the mind;—you do not know what the invisible, intangible soul is, nor how it is in vital union with the body;—all is veiled in impenetrable mystery, but you know the man because you know what he can do; you know his powers, the attributes with which he is clothed; your knowledge of him is true, definite, practical. *These are true illustrations of our knowledge of God.* He is as invisible and intangible as the human soul, deeper mystery envelops Him than rests upon it. But we know Him in His works, just as we know the soul and things material."

F. B.