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## The Creed of Jesus.

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**Creed or Deed?** — In a recent issue of the *Presbyterian* (July 31, 1924) the editor, under the heading, "Doctrines as Tests," touches upon a subject of vital present-day interest. He writes: —

"It is popular to decry doctrines as tests — whether the question, What is Christianity? or the question, *What is a Christian?* is under consideration. When a reason is given, it is usually to the effect that *doctrines are not essential to Christianity*. Some allege that Christianity consists of its facts rather than its doctrines, while others affirm that it is *life, not doctrines*. If either of these allegations is sound, it is evident that doctrines belong to that which is secondary rather than that which is primary to the Christian religion. If such is the case, the rejection of doctrinal tests merits universal approval. Unless doctrines enter into the very substance of Christianity, both as a system of thought and as a way of life, it is evident, to say the least, that doctrinal tests are inadequate.

"It is frequently said that Christianity consists of *its facts rather than its doctrines*. It is impossible, however, to have *the facts of Christianity* apart from its doctrines. Give up the doctrines, and at the same time we give up the facts. There is no sieve discoverable that will strain out the doctrines and save the facts. . . .

"It is frequently said that *Christianity is life, not doctrine*. What is meant is that doctrines are secondary in Christianity, that they are but the intellectual expression of the life that precedes them. From this point of view, doctrines are the products, rather than the producers, of the Christian life. As such they possess only a relative significance, and one set of doctrines may be as good as another. At any rate, the life is the one thing of vital importance, and as long as it flourishes, the doctrines may be allowed to take care of themselves."

## BOOK REVIEW.

**Synodical Reports of the Missouri Synod:** *Northern Illinois District.* Eleventh Report. 88 pages; 42 cts. — *Michigan District.* Fifty-fourth Report. 88 pages; 42 cts. (Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.)

The report of the Northern Illinois District contains a German essay by Pastor H. Heise on "Christ's Kingdom of Glory" and a German essay by Pastor Arthur H. C. Both on "Cooperation of Sunday-school and Parochial School for the Upbuilding of the Church of God." The report of the Michigan District contains the continuation of a German essay by Pastor J. Schinnerer on "The Church in the Field of this World." Both reports contain the usual statistical matter, the report of the mission board, the treasurer's report, etc. The proceedings of the Michigan District also contain a report of its School Defense Committee.

FRTZ.

**A Manual of Church History.** By *Albert Henry Newman, D. D., LL. D.* Vol. I; XIII and 639 pages. \$2.00 net. Vol. II; XI and 724 pages. \$2.00 net. (The American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia.)

The apparent diligence in compiling from many sources the contents of 1,300 pages, the splendid arrangement of the material, and the clear presentation of the subject-matter, together with a good typographical make-up and an attractive binding, are features which, if there were no other considerations, would commend as a splendid text Newman's *Manual of Church History*. The most important factor, however, in writing church history is that history be recorded with painstaking accuracy, in order that the reader or the student may get the *facts*, even though the author himself or the student may disagree with the matter presented. The value of subjective church history must, however, be appraised in accordance with the theological convictions of the church historian. Experience proves that a Roman Catholic, a Lutheran, a Baptist, a modern liberalist, writing on the same subject, will produce "history" which is not the same.

From the outset we would not expect that Newman, a Baptist, would so write a text-book on church history that we Lutherans could agree with him *in his judgments*. But we do expect that any Protestant would so write of Luther and the Reformation that a true picture is presented to the reader or to the student. By common consent Protestants have recognized the great value of Luther's Reformation. Even Newman says: "Whatever opinion may be held regarding the soundness and value of his reformatory work, Martin Luther is by common consent the central figure in the Protestant Revolution.... Luther was a man of profound religious

nature, who had been led by overwhelming conviction of sin and experience of divine grace, through the study of the Scriptures, of the writings of Augustine, and of the great German mystics of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and through the influence of the revival of learning, to repudiate all efforts to secure salvation by outward observances and to regard salvation as entirely a matter of grace and the human means of attaining to justification as faith in Jesus Christ. He had become noted for his piety and learning long before 1517 and was already beginning to be widely known and honored for his writings." (Vol. II, pp. 41. 52.)

He, however, who learns his "church history" from Newman's *Manual* will receive an altogether wrong impression of Luther and his work and, as a result, of the Lutheran Church of our day. In his preface, Newman tells us that "he has conscientiously striven to record the facts as he has found them, without distorting them in the slightest degree in favor of any particular view of history or any peculiar tenets of his denomination." (Vol. I, p. VII.) The fact is that Newman has not succeeded in doing what he has promised to do.

We shall give a few samples of Newman's utterances and, without much comment, leave it to the reader to judge for himself. "Luther," says Newman, "was influenced by, and partially embodied in his reformatory scheme, all of the various reformatory forces that had been developed during the medieval time. It was impracticable, with such a combination of influences and purposes, for the highest ideal to be reached, *viz.*, the restoration of Christianity to its primitive purity and simplicity. The politico-ecclesiastical movement known as Lutheranism involved in itself many inconsistencies. It failed to produce among the people the high standard of Christian living that the leaders themselves considered desirable; it speedily became as openly intolerant and as atrocious in its persecuting measures as the Roman Catholic Church which it sought to supplant; and the principles and methods adopted at the beginning rendered inevitable the religious wars that so fearfully devastated Europe from 1545 to 1648." (Vol. II, p. 41.) "The violence of his [Luther's] polemical language is almost without parallel. When aroused by opposition, he lost all regard for decency and sometimes, apparently, even for truth. Those who opposed him, and in him the cause of God, were *ipso facto* shown to be utterly reprobate and capable of all sorts of iniquity. We can best understand Luther's work by regarding him as filled with the idea that he had a great mission to perform as an apostle of God, and that all opposition to his work was prompted by the devil. It seems probable that at the beginning of his reformatory career, Luther's motives were pure, but that his character was seriously damaged by his experiences as a politico-ecclesiastical leader. Toward the close of his life he became almost intolerable, even to his friends, so great was his bitterness and his intolerance of the least opposition. He spent his life in trying to tear down papal authority; but he certainly tried to arrogate to himself almost equal supremacy — not for his sake, perhaps, but because he regarded himself as the great representative of God's cause on earth." (pp. 52. 53.)

Newman is not satisfied with such a general characterization of Luther's character, but he devotes a special chapter of almost seven pages to "Some Demoralizing Elements in Luther's Teachings and Life." In this chapter two accusations against Luther, coming from a Protestant church

historian, are particularly surprising. Newman writes: "It was natural, perhaps, that in controversy with papists, who put undue emphasis on works in relation to salvation, Luther should have decried good works. He was not content, however, with holding up to contempt the ceremonial observances, pilgrimages, fastings, and other ascetical practises of the papists, but he constantly expressed just as strongly his disapproval of the scrupulous efforts of mystics and Anabaptists to imitate Christ and to carry out in their lives the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. Of course, his writings abound in passages in which good living is recognized as a necessary fruit of the regenerate life; but some specimens of utterances that tended to produce carelessness regarding conduct will be in place here. In his *Church Postilla* he writes: 'Would to God I had a voice like a thunderclap, that I might shout to all the world and might pluck the little word "good works" out of all men's hearts, mouths, ears, and books.' 'God speaks through the Law: "This do, this leave undone, this will I have from thee." But the Gospel preaches not what we are to do or to leave undone, requires nothing of us,' etc. In 1523 he wrote: 'Oh, it is much more necessary now to preach against the subtle, sanctimonious, plausible perversion of the world through the shorn people [monks] than to preach against public sinners, heathen, and Turks, against robbers and murderers, thieves and adulterers.' In his *Commentary on Genesis* he wrote: 'The life is far less important than the doctrine, so that, even if the life be not so pure, the doctrine may yet well remain pure and the life may be borne with.... It is a high grace to be able to separate the life from the doctrine.' 'Faith which does not include love justifies. Unless faith is without any, even the least, works, it does not justify, nay, is not faith.' 'This faith, without any antecedent love, justifies.' 'For if love is a form of faith, I am at once compelled to think that love itself is the principal and greatest part of the Christian religion.' 'Whatsoever sins I, thou, and all of us have committed or shall commit in the future are just as much Christ's own as if He Himself had committed them.' Luther insisted that the Christian should believe himself holy and glory in his holiness, however sinful his life might be. For a sinning Christian to say, 'He is a poor sinner, is the same as to say: I do not believe that Christ has died for me, and that I have been baptized, and that the blood of Christ has cleansed me.' Pangs of conscience for sins committed by a Christian he regarded as the temptation of Satan. 'The true saints of Christ must be good, strong sinners,' etc. The following is perhaps one of the most ethically dangerous of Luther's utterances: 'Thou owest God nothing save to believe and confess. In all things else He gives thee absolute freedom to do as thou wilt without any peril of conscience, so that He on his part does not even make any inquiry as to whether you put away your wife, run away from your master, and violate your covenant.' But he qualifies this statement by saying that since others are involved in such proceedings, we are under obligation to do them no wrong. 'God gives thee this freedom only in what is thine own, not in what is thy neighbor's.... Before God it is a matter of indifference that a man should forsake his wife; for the body is not bound to God, but is made free by him with respect to all things external and is only inwardly God's own through faith; but before men the obligation holds.' It would seem to be implied in this passage that husbands and wives might freely separate by

mutual consent. Other disastrous applications of the principle will readily suggest themselves." (pp. 87—89.)

The student of Luther's writings at once recognizes what has happened. Luther insists that a Christian *must* do good works as *an evidence of his faith*. Newman even quotes Luther to this effect. He speaks very highly of Luther's tract *Concerning Christian Liberty* and then quotes the following words from Luther: "Good works do not make a good man, but a good man does good works. Bad works do not make a bad man, but a bad man does bad works. Thus it is always necessary that the substance, or person, should be good before any good works can be done, and that good works should follow and proceed from a good person. . . . We do not, then, reject good works; nay, we embrace them and teach them in the highest degree. It is not on their own account that we condemn them, but on account of this impious addition to them and the perverse notion of seeking justification by them." (p. 61.) When Luther, however, in these words and in his other writings, insists that *in reference to man's salvation* good works cannot have any place, but alone the grace of God, Newman does not seem to understand Luther at all, but actually makes him "decry good works"; yes, he even goes so far as to draw the conclusion that Luther gave the Christian a license to sin if he only believed.

The other accusation against Luther, in the chapter to which we refer above, reads as follows: "Luther indulged without restraint in wine- and beer-drinking and trusted that the Lord God would excuse him for occasional excesses on the ground that for twenty years he had crucified and macerated his body. He is determined that when he lies in his coffin, the worms shall have a good fat doctor to eat. In 1529 he, in company with Amsdorf, drank Malvasian wine so excessively as to bring on a catarrh that came near proving fatal. The next year he attributed an affection of the throat either to the violence of the wine, the return of old troubles, or the buffeting of Satan. His conviviality and his frequent frivolity were scandalous to many of his friends and were constantly urged against him and his movement by Catholics, Mystics, and Anabaptists. No doubt, much of Luther's intemperate language was due to his drinking habit." (p. 90.) If Luther had been the low character which Newman makes him out to be, we Lutherans could hardly feel proud of him or of the Church which is named after him; but by the common consent of historians Luther's *character* is unimpeachable.

A few additional quotations will help to convince our readers that Newman in his *Manual* grossly misrepresents what *Lutheranism* stands for. He says: "Let us take *Lutheranism* as the most influential element in the Protestant Revolution and as fairly representative of the entire politico-ecclesiastical movement and test it by the categories that have been laid down. Did Lutheranism employ, to the best advantage, the pure elements of opposition to the hierarchy that had come down from the past, rejecting the vitiating elements? Did Lutheranism secure the ends whose accomplishment was indispensable to a pure reformation—the abolition of sacerdotalism, the abolition of the unhallowed union of Church and State, the reinstatement of the Scriptures as the guide of faith and practise?" "We find in the character, the actions, and the writings of Luther—his writings furnish an almost perfect index to his character—all sorts of inconsistencies. Luther could be Biblical when it suited his purpose.

When he would refute the claims of the hierarchy, no man could urge the supreme authority of Scripture more vigorously than he. But does he always so urge it? Let us see. When James is quoted against his favorite doctrine of justification by faith alone, with marvelous audacity he turns upon the luckless writing and denounces it as a 'right strawy epistle.' So, also, he contrasted the Gospel according to John with the other gospels, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter. So, also, the Book of Revelation was not of such a character as divine inspiration would have given. Other books of Scripture fared no better. Again, when he came into controversy with rigid adherents of the Biblical principle, he no longer held that in ecclesiastical practise that only is allowable which is sanctioned by Scripture, but that it is sufficient if prevalent practises are not distinctly forbidden by Scripture. His Roman Catholic opponents were not slow to see Luther's inconsistencies, and they made vigorous use of them in their polemics. Again, Luther apprehended the great Biblical doctrine of the priesthood of believers and the consequent right of every Christian to interpret the Scriptures according to his own judgment, enlightened by the Spirit. Yet, practically, he made his own interpretation the only admissible one and did not hesitate to revile and persecute those who arrived at results different from his own. Again, Luther apprehended that most important Biblical doctrine, justification by faith. He saw in the failure to recognize this doctrine the ground of all papal corruptions. Instead of tempering this doctrine by the complementary teachings of the Scriptures, he really made it the supreme criterion of truth. Whatever Scripture could not be made to teach justification by faith alone was for Luther no Scripture at all. So, also, while professing to give the first place to Scripture, he practically put Augustine in the first place, interpreting Scripture by Augustinian dogma rather than Augustinian dogma by Scripture. It is evident, therefore, that Luther did not hold to the Biblical principle purely and consistently." (pp. 116. 117.) "There is no sufficient reason for calling in question the fact that he was a man of profoundly spiritual life. But it is certain that the mystical element was almost entirely lost to his followers. The general effect of his preaching, so far as we can judge from his own statements and those of his most intimate friends, compared with those of his opponents, was not in the direction of personal religious experience, but rather of a dead faith and a blind assurance. The preaching and writings of Luther were destructive rather than constructive. He could, by his denunciations, undermine papal authority and bring the doctrine of salvation by works into utmost contempt; but he failed signally to develop an apostolical in the place of a monkish piety in his followers. It may safely be affirmed that the mystical element among the reformatory forces was not made the most of by Luther and his followers — certainly little of it appeared among his followers. It was almost supplanted by the doctrine of justification by faith alone, apprehended by many in a semianinomian way." (pp. 117. 118.) "The maintenance of the union of Church and State was the most vicious point in Luther's system. As the uniting of Church and State had done more than all other influences combined to corrupt the Church, and as this union always furnished the most unyielding obstacle to reform, so its retention by Luther made it absolutely impossible that any thorough reformation of the Church should find place." (p. 119.)

In a chapter on the "Characteristics of the Calvinistic Reformation," Newman writes: "Calvinism had the following advantages over Lutheranism and Zwinglianism: a. As compared with Lutheranism. (a) It was more thoroughly evangelical, being hampered by no ecclesiastical realism. (b) It was far more consistent in its theology and its church polity. (c) Christian life was emphasized more, and the hundreds of young men that went forth from Calvin's training were filled with a spirit of self-sacrifice and evangelical zeal unknown among Wittenberg students. (d) Calvinism was less national and more catholic in spirit than Lutheranism. (e) Calvinism respected and utilized, while Lutheranism and Zwinglianism drove forth, in the form of Anabaptism, etc., most of the intense religious zeal developed through its influence. b. As compared with Zwinglianism. (a) It had an incomparably greater leader. (b) Whereas Zwinglianism put itself into a polemical attitude toward Lutheranism, Calvinism was irenic in its tendency. (c) The religious earnestness and moral rigor of Calvinism shine forth as conspicuously in comparison with Zwinglianism as in comparison with Lutheranism. (d) Calvinism carried out thoroughly what was only feebly attempted by Zwinglianism and not at all by Lutheranism — church discipline." (p. 202.)

Newman's History closes with the year 1903. We dare say that since that time, *not in spite of*, but *because of*, the "irenic tendency" of Calvinism — we call it indifferentism — a very deplorable situation has arisen among the non-Lutheran Protestant denominations of our country. While Lutheranism still lacks none of its original virility and its power to confess and insist on the purity of that doctrine which is taught in the verbally inspired Word of God, Calvinism has not only failed to stem the tide of increasing indifferentism, but has by its own momentum helped to develop this and has given us as one of its latest results — modern religious liberalism. The followers of "the peace-loving Melancthon" and the advocates of "Calvin's mediating position," p. 222, have failed to appreciate, but have rather denounced, Luther's strict adherence to the Scriptures and his uncompromising steadfastness to their own hurt. FRITZ.

**Syllabus for New Testament Study.** A Guide for Lessons in the Classroom. By A. T. Robertson, D. D. Cloth, 274 pages. \$2.00, net. (George H. Doran Company, New York, N. Y.)

This is the fifth revised and greatly enlarged edition of Professor Robertson's *Syllabus for New Testament Study*. Originally the book was written for the author's classes in the English New Testament and was to serve the function of a broad outline of the New Testament history with precise references to the text-books used for the daily lessons. Since the work was not designed for general use, much valuable material has been omitted which we regard as necessary for the average extramural student of the New Testament. Only the student who is in reach of a good library is able to use the book with success. The average pastor's greatest benefit would be derived from the excellent bibliographies, both general and special, which it offers. So much has been written on every phase of New Testament study that it is almost impossible for the student to find his way through the labyrinth of books unless he has a guide. As such Dr. Robertson's book may be of real service. MUELLER.

**Old Testament Law for Bible Students.** By *Roger S. Galer*. 194 pages, 5×7¼. Cloth, \$1.25. (The Macmillan Co., New York, N. Y.)

This book attempts to classify the Old Testament laws according to the general standards used in modern law. There are four great divisions: *Public Law*, with the subheads: Civil Government, Military Laws, Courts, and Legal Procedure; *Private Law*, under which are grouped Domestic Relations, Laws of Inheritance, Laws relating to Real Property, Personal Property, Usury, Debtor and Creditor, Criminal Law; *Religious Law*, and lastly *Ceremonial Law*. The effort of the author might have been of benefit, had he taken time to explain these laws in their relation to one another and perhaps also to modern law. However, he does little more than barely refer to them. Moreover, his book is all but ruined by his adoption of the code divisions of modern destructive critics. His main interest seems to have been to point out to what "code" each law belongs, whether to J, E, C, D, H, or P. He says naively: "Higher Criticism has studied this part of the Old Testament exhaustively and has reached conclusions that are fairly harmonious and generally accepted." His main guide in determining the "codes" is Driver. MUELLER.

**American Law of Charities.** By *Carl Zollmann*. 623 pages, 6¼×9¼. Leatherette, \$10.00. (The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee, Wis.) Order from Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

This valuable exposition of the American Law of Charities is worthy of serious study. Its method of presentation is clear. In addition, it is both comprehensive and reliable. The author, who, we are glad to say, is a fellow-Lutheran, has spent much time in tracing the history, development, and scope of the various laws governing charities. His research work has been exhaustive, and he has packed into the 570 pages of his book so much invaluable information on almost inaccessible material that his volume is a real contribution to American Law literature. Moreover, everything has been done to make the book practical and usable. The "Analysis of Chapters," in the forepart of the book, gives a clear and detailed account of the contents of the various chapters. The "Index" constitutes a valuable guide, and the "Table of Cases" aids the law student materially in finding what precedent has established. Below the text are found innumerable references to important court decisions which substantiate the opinions expressed by the writer. The text itself is clear and readily intelligible also to the lay reader. Evidently the author has been a close student of Blackstone, of whom his commentarial remarks reminded us as we perused the pages. But even Blackstone could not have presented the tangled doctrine of *cy-pres* more clearly and forcibly than the writer has done. This book ought to be in the hands of all our pastors who are engaged in our extended mission-work connected with charities. They will soon find that to read Zollmann's book is a delight, and that to study it is an education. We gladly recommend it to all who are interested in the American Law of Charities. Lastly, we give the author credit for emphasizing the ruinous influence of the medieval Church on the political and economic conditions of that time, and partly also of our own time; this in spite of the fact that he is a lecturer on law at Marquette University. MUELLER.