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Denifle Redivivus

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Wahrheit. Klopstock hatte im „Messias“ die üble Angewohnheit, großartige, aber konkrete Dinge durch langatmige Beispiele aus der abstrakten Welt „klarer“ zu machen. Und dann wundert sich die „Hochkirche“ darüber, daß man der Vereinigung Überspannung des Mystischen vorwirft!

Es ist also nicht gerade das einfachste Ding der Welt, sich von den Gedankenwegen Heilers, Schorlemmers und der ganzen Vereinigung ein scharf umrissenes Bild zu machen. In den „Grundsätzen der Hochkirchlichen Vereinigung“, 1919, Nr. 1, wird erklärt, daß starkes Gewicht auf die volle Selbständigkeit der evangelischen Kirchen in kirchlichen Dingen gelegt wird, wozu die Durchführung der bischöflichen Verfassung nötig sei. Das Bewußtsein, zur „Gesamtkirche Christi“ zu gehören, soll geweckt und gestärkt werden. Viel Aufmerksamkeit wurde anfangs der Ausgestaltung der Gottesdienste gewidmet. Als Ersatz wünscht man „ein maßvolles Zurücktreten der Predigt, eine stärkere Betonung der Bedeutung der Sakramente und ihres objektiven Charakters“ (übrigens auch eine Vermehrung der Zahl der Sakramente). Unerläßliche Vorausbedingung für diese Stärkung der Bedeutung sei ihr Vollzug nach den kirchlichen Ordnungen. Beicht- und Abendmahlspraxis muß geändert werden, die fakultative Privatbeichte wird für wünschenswert gehalten. „Fromme Übungen (Kirchenbesuch, Gebetsstunden, evangelisch-klösterliches Leben) sollen mehr gewürdigt werden.“ Von einem Unterschied zwischen sichtbarer und unsichtbarer Kirche will man nichts wissen, sondern die Kirche ist „die von Christus und den Aposteln gegründete sichtbare Heilsanstalt“. Sie soll einen ihrer Bedeutung entsprechenden größeren Einfluß auf das Volksleben erhalten. In dem Ausruf zur Gründung der Vereinigung war der „objektive Charakter“ der Sakramente als eine Wirkung ex opere operato erklärt, was aber abgelehnt wurde. Im Jahre 1924 wurde die Aufnahme der Augustana in ihr Programm beschlossen. Es wird zu untersuchen sein, welche Begriffe mit den einzelnen Programmteilen verbunden sind, wie sich die erkannten Programmaussagen zur Gottesoffenbarung verhalten und wie weit die Bestrebungen ein Zeichen pulsierenden Lebens oder innerer Lode sind. Das geschehe in einer späteren Nummer.

(Fortsetzung folgt.) R. W. Heinke.

Denifle Redivivus.

Romanists like to create the impression that the great “Protestant revolt” of the sixteenth century did not, after all, harm the “Church” much, that they can well afford to look down upon the Protestants with calm disdain and assume the attitude of “Let the dogs bark at the moon.” But sometimes the tension becomes too great, and somebody cracks under the strain, and then the world may

see that the wound is there, deep and sore. Such an outburst of hatred and fury was Denifle's work, 1904, on *Luther und Luthertum*, according to his own statement in the introduction. We had instances of this in 1917 when the four-hundredth anniversary of the Reformation was celebrated by the Protestant world. Evidences are appearing that 1933 has been a year of stress for the Romans, and cries of suffering are heard.

One of our Lutheran pastors in St. Louis chose for his Reformation sermon the topic "Back to Luther!" The daily paper gave almost a complete column of the Monday edition to the sermon; and it evidently hit a sore spot, to judge by the reaction; the cry it evoked was loud and long. The Rev. Sylvester Cassidy responded in the *Sunday Watchman* of November 5 in a way that is 1) quite encouraging to us; the old Germans had a proverb which is still true: *Wer schimpft, hat verloren*; Romans are evidently on the defensive, and they know it. 2) It is enlightening to those who still doubt the truth of that boast that "Rome never changes." 3) It is deplorable, showing what kind of food is presented to millions of Americans by their shepherds. It may interest our readers to hear a modern Roman Catholic speak on Luther and the Reformation. Here are a few excerpts from that editorial, with notes.

After a few compliments to the "reverend gentleman," who "was simply rechewing old straws — hence the braying," since "the Luther question has been so finally answered that it seems preposterous for a minister to revive it, especially in this high noontide of twentieth-century enlightenment," the Rev. Mr. Cassidy proceeds to a vitriolic attack on Luther. Since, of course, a gentleman does not chew straw nor bray, we suspect the writer of sarcasm, of a rather labored kind; we are no longer in doubt who his teacher is when we read: —

"The explanation of licentious Luther lies in his futile and furious attempt at self-justification. His religious vows irked him. The colorless routine of monastic regularity bored him. He had vowed obedience, he longed for power; he had vowed virginal chastity, he panted for the freedom of unleashed lust; he had vowed austere poverty, he craved the ease of creature comforts he so solemnly renounced. To his bed he took an unfrocked nun to share his shameful compromise. And this monster a trumpeter of God! This the REFORMER for whom God should wait for fifteen hundred years to single out to improve upon the work of His own divine Son!"

Denifle's theory and Denifle's method! One is tempted to say with Dr. W. Walther: "How can even talented and learned Catholics be so backward?" Denifle has been out of date for, lo, these twenty years. When Hartmann Grisar, S. J., published his *Luther* in 1911, he introduced it with a preface that is a marvel of diplomacy: There had been biographies of Luther so insulting that Erasmus properly

said of them: "*Si scribit adversus Lutherum, qui subinde vocat illum asinum, stipitem, bestiam, cacodaemonem, antichristum, nihil erat facilius quam in illum scribere*"; "*Sollte es wirklich einem katholischen Historiker nicht moeglich sein, Luther mit Objektivitaet zu zeichnen und ihn auftreten zu lassen, wie er ist, ohne den berechtigten Gefuehlen der Protestanten in irgendeiner Weise zu nahe zu treten? Ich halte dies ohne uebertriebenen Optimismus fuer sehr wohl moeglich.*" The purpose was to displace Denifle with something, Catholic indeed, but not so crude and unscientific as to arouse general opposition, Catholic as well as Protestant. He could not of course directly say that; but he does say that he has preserved his independent judgment over against both Denifle and Koestlin.

But Mr. Cassidy prefers the Dominican; notwithstanding, the advice he gives: "Every unprejudiced student of history—which Mr. — is NOT—can find the Luther subject thoroughly threshed out in that exhaustive and monumental work entitled *Luther* by Grisar. Those who care to view the subject within a narrower range should read *How the Reformation Happened*, by Belloc, or Stoddard's pages in *Rebuilding a Lost Faith*." Unprejudiced, who is? Grisar? Did Father Cassidy read Grisar? He (Grisar) says in the introduction: "*Das Unvernuenftige und Unmoegliche der Forderung, eine von jeder persoenlichen Ueberzeugung absehende Geschichtsdarstellung zu liefern, ist von allen kompetenten Stimmen anerkannt; es liegt namentlich auf einem Gebiete, wie das hier zu behandelnde, sonnenklar zutage.*" Grisar is a vast improvement on Denifle; but unprejudiced? It is to laugh! The wily Jesuit merely knew how to avoid the crudeness of the Dominican, whose very writing smells of smoking faggots; he cannot but regretfully remember the old days of the *Domini canes*. But one can be prejudiced and yet honest.

Who is Stoddard? "An American agnostic" he calls himself, who had lost his faith in the Congregational Church and had found it again in the Roman Church. The book is a fair type of medieval Catholic literature, so simple that in places it is silly. I cast no reflections on the good faith of the author, though it does strike the reader as strange that the book was published anonymously; no name on the title-page; library copies have the name written in; and the *Nihil obstat* and the *Imprimatur* of C. Schut, D. D., *Censor Deputatus*, and Edm. Can. Surmont, *Vicarius Generalis*, probably meant no more than that this was a good book for the consumption of a not too well educated Catholic public. Stoddard's pages on Luther are a rehash of Denifle's arguments.

The writer of our editorial has read Stoddard; witness this paragraph: "What the world needs to-day," avowed the Rev. Mr. —, "is a return to the Word of God as Luther taught." Some Gospel such as this, for instance: "I, Martin Luther, slew all the peasants in the

rebellion, for I said that they should be slain; all their blood is upon my head.' Or, on the subject of 'Liberty,' something like this perhaps: 'Whoever teaches otherwise than I [Martin Luther] teach, condemns God and must remain a child of hell. I can hear and endure nothing which is against my teaching.' Or (Luther broadcasting): 'We must put the whole Decalog entirely out of our sight and out of our hearts. If Moses scares you with his stupid Ten Commandments, say to him at once: 'Take yourself off to your Jews! To the gallows with Moses!' Such blasphemy—and coming from the founder of a Church! Luther's strongest condemnation comes from his own mouth." Stoddard is Cassidy's authority as to these citations from Luther; this is evident from the second, in which two words of Luther are merged, though they are found in two different books. As this is a typical example of the Denifle method of arguing, a few words on that.

The first quotation is taken from Luther's *Tischreden*; you will find it in our St. Louis Edition, XXII, 1219; in the Weimar Edition, *Tischreden*, Vol. 3, p. 75, from which I quote: "*Praedicatores maximi sunt homicidae, quod exhortantur magistratum ad suum officium, ut puniant sotes. Ich, Martin Luther, hab' im Aufruhr alle Bauern erschlagen; denn ich hab' sie heissen totschiagen; all ihr Blut ist auf meinem Hals. Aber ich weise es auf unsern Herrgott; der hat mir das zu reden befohlen.*" It sets the matter in a little different light, does it not? Did the Rev. Mr. Cassidy never in speech or writing exhort the government to do its duty, God-given, against racketeer murderers and kidnapers? If he did not, he failed to do his full duty; if he did, he is in the same plight as Luther was.

The first half of the second quotation occurs in Luther's German answer to the book of King Henry VIII. Luther there enumerates the fundamental doctrines of Scripture which he has discussed in his writings. Then he says: "Das sind die rechten Stuecke, die einem Christen not sind zu wissen, darin auch unsere Seligkeit liegt. Das heisse ich auch meine Lehre, wenn ich von meiner Lehre sage, davon die Hohenschulen und Kloester nie nichts Rechts gelehrt haben. Denn solch Ding ist der Heiligen Schrift Inhalt und Gottes Wort. Und bei solchen Stuecken, wie ich sie gelehrt habe, will ich ewiglich bleiben und sagen: Wer anders lehrt, denn ich hierin gelehrt habe, oder mich darin verdammt, der verdammt Gott und muss ein Kind der Hoelle bleiben. Denn ich weiss, dass diese Lehre nicht meine Lehre ist. Trotz allen Teufeln und Menschen, dass sie die umkehren!" (St. L. Ed., XIX, 242; Weimar Ed., 10, II, p. 229 f.)

The second half of this quotation appears in Luther's *Ausfuehrliche Erklarung der Epistel an die Galater*. Luther says to Gal. 3, 1: "Auch wir muessen heutzutage so reden wegen der Urheber und Lehrer der Irrtuemer und der Sekten, weil naemlich solche Leute nie wieder zur Wahrheit zurueckkehren. Zwar kehren etliche wieder um,

aber nur solche, die von einem geringeren Zauber gefangen sind, nicht aber auch die Anfuehrer und Urheber dieser Bezauberung. Denn diese muessen den Titel behalten, den Paulus ihnen hier gibt, naemlich dass sie die Wahrheit weder hoeren noch leiden wollen, sondern vielmehr sich nur angelegen sein lassen, wie sie der Wahrheit widerstehen moechten, desgleichen, wie sie den Beweisgruenden und den Schriftstellen, welche gegen sie vorgebracht werden, entgegen koennten. Denn sie sind gefangen und ueberzeugt, dass sie die ganz gewisse Wahrheit haben und ein ganz reines Verstaendnis der Heiligen Schrift. Wer aber eine solche Ueberzeugung hat, der hoert nicht, viel weniger weicht er andern. So will auch ich nichts hoeren, was meiner Lehre zuwider ist; denn ich bin durch den Geist Christi gewiss und ueberzeugt, dass meine Lehre von der christlichen Gerechtigkeit wahr und gewiss ist." (St. L. Ed., IX, 265. W. Ed., 40, 1, 323.)

Enough of this. It characterizes a method which true historians hoped had been buried with Denifle: taking sentences out of the context and thus making Luther say things he never dreamed of. Honest people have a rather ugly name for that sort of thing, and Christian people call it a transgression of the Eighth Commandment.

One more paragraph of the *Sunday Watchman's* editorial is interesting enough to quote. This all in heavy capitals: "From the minister's designed use of the opprobrious term 'priestcraft' it would appear that he obtained his knowledge of the alleged reformation from the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, that colossal storehouse of misinformation anent things Catholic." Well, perhaps in part he did; in the opinion of most people the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (so spelled on our copy) still outranks the *Catholic Encyclopedia*. And taking down some of the volumes at random, we find that the contributor who wrote for the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* on Canon Law, Conclave, Concordat, was a professor of Canon Law at the Catholic University of Paris; on Canonization, an S. J.; on the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, Cardinal James Gibbons; on Torquemada, an S. J.; on Transubstantiation, a Roman Catholic bishop, etc. If there is that much-boasted unity of teaching in the Roman Church, these articles should be reliable. To be sure, historical discussions are not referred to Roman Catholic writers in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*; has not Father Cassidy furnished the evidence that this policy was reasonable? But perhaps *this* minister did read Grisar and there obtained such information anent things Catholic in Luther's day as this: "Die Klagen, die beredte und seeleneifrige Maenner damals und in vergangenen Jahrzehnten ueber den Rueckgang des religioesen Lebens unter den Glaebigen und ueber den Verfall kirchlicher Zucht im Klerus aussprechen, insbesondere auch in Deutschland, waren nur allzusehr am Platze." (I, 34.) "Die Bischoefe [innerhalb Deutschlands] waren zum groessten Teile un-

tauglich oder verweltlicht. Aebte, Proepste, reiche Kanoniker und Dignitaere taten es ihnen in der Abwendung von den Sitten ihres geistlichen Standes gleich oder zuvor." (I, 35.) "Das Ablasswesen, die Wallfahrten, die Bruderschaften und vielfaeltige Uebungen der Heiligenverehrung wie viele andere Seiten des Kultus wiesen beklagenswerte Ausschreitungen auf." (I, 35.) "In dem Verfall und der Untaetigkeit des Episkopats liegt eine der wichtigsten Erklarungen fuer die Erscheinung, dass nach dem Auftreten der Glaubensneuerung der Abfall von der alten Kirche so rasch um sich greifen konnte." (I, 36; quotation from Janssen-Pastor, *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*.) "Dazu kam nun in verhaengnisvoller Weise das unwuerdige Treiben unter Kurialen und manchen Kardinaelen in der paepstlichen Stadt, insbesondere in den letzten Jahrzehnten sowie das entehrende Beispiel Alexanders VI. und der Familie Borgia, nicht minder die mehr militaerische und modern-politische als kirchliche Haltung seines Nachfolgers Julius II. und der stark weltliche Geist Leos X. und seines Hofes." (I, 41.) So on for many pages. And while he rightly warns "vor zu starken Verallgemeinerungen," yet in a footnote, p. 42, he says: "Der Verfasser glaubte, in der Darstellung der allgemeinen Zeitzustaende sich grosse Beschraenkung auflegen zu muessen, um nicht von der Person Luthers zu weit abgefuehrt zu werden."

Yes, perhaps this minister read Grisar or Ludwig Pastor, who, *passim*, but chiefly in Vol. IV, 1, of his *Geschichte der Paepste*, pp. 199—246, paints the same dark picture, or perhaps Hilaire Belloc's *How the Reformation Happened*. One cannot help wondering whether Mr. Cassidy subscribes to all of that. Belloc, beginning on p. 209, tries to account for the delay in the Catholic reaction to the Reformation; "an answer to that question is imperative, for the tardiness of the reaction is perhaps the main cause of our still increasing chaos"; and among other things he says: "The first consideration is this: The official organization of the Catholic Church had been thrown suddenly into disarray. It had been caught, as they used to say of sailing ships, by a squall 'all standing.' It had no immediate case. There had been gross and universal corruption, there had further been for so long a growing skepticism and indifference, that the power of the clerical organization to reform itself was numbed and atrophied. Attack from without was therefore easy, rapid, and explosive; reform from within was apparently impossible; the complicated machinery was ill kept and incapable of rapid readjustment. Under so violent a strain the gear jammed. And the Papacy, which controlled all, was in the worst case of all. When any threatened institution is to blame and knows itself to blame, what soldiers call the 'initiative' passes to its enemies. . . . Obviously the perfect thing to do in such cases—if there were no conditions of

matter, time, and space, if most men were intelligent, pure in motive, and heroic, instead of being, as most men are, stupid, corrupt and cowardly — would be to perform what the Catholic Church herself calls penance. Obviously the attack upon the Catholic Church would have had no success if all the officials of it in the early sixteenth century had themselves come forward in a body denouncing their own guilt; the pluralities, the lay appropriations, the shame of their worldly lives, the gross scandals of impurity, the oppression of the poor, the exaggeration of mechanical aids to religion, the occasional use of fraud in it, the wide-spread use of extortion in clerical dues and rents, the chicanery of clerical courts. If the very many church officials who were guilty of evil living had beaten their breasts, repented, and turned anchorite; if the very many who were swollen with riches had abandoned them and given them to the poor; if such of the cultured *Renaissance* prelates as had come to ridicule the Mysteries had suddenly felt the wrath of God, then all would have righted. So fruitful is repentance. But men do not act thus after long habit. It is only after they have felt the consequence of wrongdoing, and often not then, that they admit reality. Repentance, which should precede chastisement, is commonly its consequence."

Repentance! It is still the only salvation for the Roman Catholic Church, Father Cassidy included. Pending that and speaking only of the history of the period, Father Cassidy and the *Sunday Watchman* should, if they want to be taken seriously, get abreast of the times and find out what the present-day attitude of Catholic scholars is toward the history of the Reformation; it has changed considerably since the days of Denifle.

THEO. HOYER.

Die große Kluft in der Lehre von der Taufe.

(Schluß.)

5.

Hodge befaßt sich in seiner Dogmatik zunächst mit Joh. 3, 5. Einleitend schreibt er über diesen Ausspruch Jesu: "Our Lord is understood in these words to teach the necessity of Baptism to salvation. . . . The principal support of this interpretation is *tradition*. It has been handed down from age to age in the Church, until its authority seems firmly established."

Hodge behauptet in seiner Polemik zunächst, daß, falls sich der Ausdruck "born of water" wirklich auf die Taufe beziehe, er gerade deshalb nicht beweise, daß die Taufe die Wiebergeburt wirke. ("If it be admitted that the words 'born of water' are to be understood of Baptism, the passage does *not* prove the doctrine of baptismal regeneration.") Er beweise nur die Notwendigkeit der Taufe. Nun beachte man