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Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

J. T. Mueller

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Theological Observer

MacArthur's Christmas Message.— *The Sunday School Times* (January 15, 1944) reports under this heading a Christian Christmas message which on last Christmas Eve General Douglas MacArthur sent to the men and women of the armed forces in the Southwest Pacific, commenting on it editorially as follows: "Christ's humiliation and exaltation are inextricably linked together. During the Christmas season, millions gave Him a passing thought once again as the Babe of Bethlehem, but ignored the fact that a day is coming when 'at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.' It is heartening to find a recognition of Him as Lord in an official proclamation issued by one of the world's greatest leaders. On Christmas Eve, from his Advanced Allied Headquarters, New Guinea, General Douglas MacArthur sent this message to the men and women of the armed forces in the Southwest Pacific (reported by the United Press): 'To the fighting forces of the Southwest Pacific: On this Christmas Day anniversary of the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ, I pray that merciful God may preserve and bless each one of you.' This is in contrast to many official proclamations, which, while they render lip service to God, studiously ignore His Son. General MacArthur's Christmas greeting to his troops was worthy of a Christian General, for 'no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost' (1 Cor. 12:3). It is because the Lord Jesus 'made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man . . . and became obedient unto death,' that 'God also hath highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name' (Phil. 2:7-9)."

We quote this in view of the fact that recently alarming reports appeared in some church papers as to non-Christian attitudes shown by men in our armed forces. No doubt, there is some truth in these reports, for let us not forget that thousands and tens of thousands of our servicemen come from homes in which they have never heard a word about the Christian religion. At the same time it is true that large numbers in our armed forces respond to the message of salvation proclaimed to them, and to all who are interested in the spiritual welfare of those fighting our battles it is most heartening that messages like General MacArthur's confirm the Christian witness to the truth which otherwise they hear or read.

J. T. M.

Jesus in a Philosopher's Christmas.— Under this heading Carl F. H. Henry, professor of Philosophy of Religion at the Northern Baptist Seminary, Chicago, Ill., has published in *The Calvin Forum* (January, 1944) an article the closing paragraphs of which must appeal to every Christian theologian who values the Biblical doctrine of the person and work of Christ. He writes: "For twenty-five years most American writers have avoided the person and work of Christ in their treatises. But now, we read, the theological moratorium on this subject has ended. The list of books on Christology is growing. Still, on Christmas Day, one becomes impressed that, one after another, these writers steal from the

circles of Jesus' followers, and betray Him with a Judas' kiss into the hands of His enemies; or that they make their way quietly into that meeting of the Sanhedrin, offering themselves as witnesses that 'He hath spoken blasphemy.' Take, for example, Horton's volume on *Our Eternal Contemporary*. He writes that a 'truly Christian religious consciousness' prevailed at Nicaea and Chalcedon; yet he comments on 'the Christmas myths,' adds an epilogue for non-Christians, assuring them that he does not seek to 'disparage the faith of Jews in their Torah, the faith of Buddhists in their Dharma,' and in general denies the essential deity of Christ by the modern device of reinterpretation. All of which places him with the Sanhedrin rather than in the Upper Room. So, too, John Baillie, who reveals how much reduced is the place of Jesus Christ in modern Christianity. We now believe the doctrine of the two natures to have been mistaken, he affirms, because God's nature and man's nature are not different in kind. This thesis the Sanhedrin would have attacked, on the ground both of the divine transcendence and holiness; but in the denial that Jesus was different in kind from other men it would have concurred. But whereas most moderns who deny the deity of Christ insist that He is superior to most, if not to all, men in degree, the Sanhedrin would have questioned the logic of ascribing religious superiority to one who misrepresented himself at the vital point of deity. If he set up a false God and led multitudes of his followers into the idolatry of creature worship, why laud him? That again is the Christmas dilemma—how to avoid sham and deceit on the calendar's most sacred day without asserting the full deity of Jesus Christ. Or, take Reinhold Niebuhr's Gifford Lectures on *The Nature and Destiny of Man*. Specifically he repudiates the doctrine of the two natures: 'All definitions of Christ which affirm both His divinity and humanity in the sense that they ascribe both finite and historically conditioned and eternal and unconditioned qualities to His nature must verge on logical nonsense. It is not possible for any person to be historical and unconditioned at the same time.' Outside, the church bells are tolling. The radio hums Christmas carols loved in England, Germany, Russia. Tonight, in a million homes, the last bedtime thoughts will be of the Stranger of Galilee. Among the multitudes, if one looks more closely, he can discern an innumerable Sanhedrin, muttering that Christ is guilty of death. Then there are others, who have seen the tomb emptied and have experienced Pentecost. For these, the doctrine of the two natures is the only basis for a consistent Christmas. In that thought structure alone a reverent philosopher can escape a strange unrest on Christmas Day."

The denial of the *Zwei-Naturen-Lehre* has passed from Germany to England and America, where it has been strongly supported by Modernists. But Dr. Henry is right when he affirms that no one can really celebrate Christmas who does not fully accept the Biblical doctrine that the Child of Bethlehem is both true God and true man. J. T. M.

How They Teach the Old Testament at Andover-Newton Seminary. In the *Sunday School Times* (Dec. 18, 1943) Dr. Ernest Gordon writes: "The *Seminary Bulletin* for February, 1943, prints an address by Prof. James P. Berkeley. He says: 'We know definitely that the general pic-

ture given in the Book of Joshua is not historical. That can be asserted positively. . . . Israel did not enter the land as a united people under Joshua. Israel did not conquer the land in three short miraculous, theocratic campaigns. . . . The famous Joshua stories told with such dramatic force belong to a late source dating from the eighth century and are far removed from the period of the invasion itself. . . . The long process of the invasion is condensed into a few pages, scened, and highly idealized for pedagogical purposes. The characters are pageant characters moved about by stage manipulation. Whole armies are destroyed as toy soldiers are mowed down. . . . This dramatic method was employed to picture the desperate need of purging all the Canaanite influences out of Israel.' Then he goes on to deal with prophetic Scripture. The 53d chapter of Isaiah is 'an idealization of the nation, the Suffering Servant.' In other words, the chapter refers to Jewry, not to Jesus or to a personal Messiah. This was a late theory adopted by Jewry after the revelation of Jesus as the Suffering Servant. So 'one like the Son of man' is, in Professor Berkeley's opinion, also 'a nation like unto a Son of Man, a nation which fulfills the ideal of man created in the image of God, mankind redeemed from the bestial and become truly human.' I judge he refers to humanity as a whole, certainly not to Christ."

In a recent discussion with an orthodox Jewish Rabbi the writer heard this Jewish teacher defend with great emphasis the theory that the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 was Jeremiah, and he stated that the Goyim ascribe Isaiah 53 to Christ, because they do not understand the Scriptures. We rightly pity the Jewish errorists on this decisive point of doctrine. But what shall we say of "Christian" scholars who like Professor Berkeley misinterpret the Old Testament Scriptures and thus confirm the blinded Jews in their unbelief? And this is done in a seminary where men are trained for the Christian ministry! J. T. M.

"My Dum-Dum Day."—Under this heading the *Christian Century* (December 15, 1943) offers an article by a former Romanist, who now, as a Protestant minister, deeply regrets the common aimlessness and shiftlessness of Protestant student and clerical life. The article contains much food for thought. Beginning with the strict Roman Catholic seminary regimen, in particular, its 5:30 A.M.: *surgendum*; 6:00 A.M.: *meditandum*, and so forth, he lets the reader himself explain the "dum-dum" of the heading, the endings of the Latin gerundive, prescribing duty after duty throughout the day and making Catholic seminary student and clerical life a perpetual "must-must." The writer for some time was a student at a Roman Catholic seminary and then attended a Protestant seminary, from which in due time he graduated. Fortunately, not all Protestant seminaries are as lax and careless about the student's daily routine as the one he learned to know, but he could never reconcile himself to the Protestant seminary's lack of discipline, especially since this lack of discipline afterwards showed itself in an unregimented life among the Protestant clergy with which he became acquainted. His opinion is that while Roman Catholic clergy life is too severely regimented, Protestant clergy life is much too free. For him-

self he has drawn up the following "rule of life," which, with interruptions, of course, he has followed (as he says) for many years: 5:30 A.M.: Rise. Half-hour's meditation. Morning Prayer. Bible study till 7. Then shave, dress, breakfast, morning paper.—8:30: In the study. One hour of scholastic philosophy, so that two branches of philosophy are studied each year. In 1943: epistemology and ontology.—9:30: Parish work in the study. Telephoning, correspondence, preparing sermons and addresses, till 12 o'clock.—Noon: Lunch, followed by a rest; if possible, by sleep; reading church papers and religious books till 3 P.M.—From 3—5: Parish calls.—5—6: Reading: books, magazines, evening paper.—6: Supper. Then evening calls, meetings, receiving callers. Occasionally a symphony, movie, or just staying at home.—9 or 9:30: Bed. The writer of the article admits that such a regime cannot be carried out strictly, but he adds: "Nevertheless, the minister who works without a plan should try one." We believe that this suggestion is well worth considering. In the main, our pastors may be divided into three classes: Such as have very large churches and who therefore cannot strictly adhere to a "rule of life"; such as have smaller churches but teach school, and must therefore arrange their daily work accordingly; and lastly, such as have smaller churches with relatively very little work. But we believe that in every case there should be at least some systematic study each day, apart from that devoted to the preparation of sermons. Reasons for this need not be given. The pastor's own spiritual life depends on his constant study of Scripture. If he fails in this, he will soon become a ministerial misfit, since his spiritual wells will run dry; and the harm he will do to his congregation and to the Church at large is incalculable. We do not recommend two hours each day for the study of epistemology and ontology; but we do recommend very urgently that each pastor give two hours to the study of Christian doctrine and exegesis.

J. T. M.

Significant Trends in Evolution.—William H. Chisholm, M. D., F.A.C.S., discusses under this heading in a detailed review a "remarkable book" by Richard Goldschmidt, professor of zoology, University of California, "The Material Basis of Evolution," which recently was published by the Yale University Press [Yale University Press, New Haven, Conn. Price, \$5.00]. The approach to the subject is scientific and perhaps too technical for the average reader. But the results of Professor Goldschmidt's investigation, himself an evolutionist, are extremely simple and for the Christian student, who on the basis of Scripture rejects evolution as untenable, very gratifying. Dr. Chisholm sums up his review as follows: "He [Dr. Goldschmidt] has been forced scientifically to give up the theories of natural selection and evolution by gene mutation. Being convinced that species are separated by unbridged gaps, and not being a believer in special creation, he postulates the theory that evolution from species to species may have occurred by means of sudden steps, that 'macroevolution may proceed by large and rather sudden steps which accomplish at once [*italics in original*] what small accumulations cannot perfect in eons' (p.244). He admits that 'the proposition now put forward will presumably go without actual demonstration by verified fact' (p.212), because, as he says, 'the chance of seeing such

a mutation occur is practically nil' (p.211). His supposition thus cannot be proved or tested, and it would seem that we should be at liberty to discard his positive conclusions since they are admittedly unproved and unprovable. At least it is refreshing to read his declaration that all evolutionary theories so far advanced are contradicted by the facts. Are not the simple statements of reproduction found in such phrases as 'after his kind' and 'after their kind' in Genesis 1 the most scientific statements available?" Well, what does it all mean? Dr. Goldschmidt (in simple language) says two things: 1. Evolution from species to species may have occurred by means of sudden steps. In other words, by a sudden step the *Eohippus* may all at once have become a big horse. But, Dr. Goldschmidt admits, that cannot be proved. 2. Neo-Darwinian evolution is based on gene mutations; in other words, small mutations (micromutations) have led to different species. But, Dr. Goldschmidt admits, "this basis slowly is slipping from under our feet" (p.210). So evolution has no scientific foundation at all. Of Darwin's theory of natural selection Dr. Goldschmidt says: "Darwin's theory of natural selection has never had any proof except from *a priori* consideration, yet it has been universally accepted" (p.211). The following paragraph in Dr. Chisholm's review may be of importance to such as are interested in evolution. He writes: "In regard to the type of evolution now taught in the colleges of this country, Dr. Goldschmidt refers to it as Neo-Darwinism and says: 'The statement of the problem already indicates that I cannot agree with the viewpoint of the textbooks that the problem of evolution has been solved as far as the genetic basis is concerned. This viewpoint considers it as granted that the process of mutation of the units of heredity, the genes, is the starting point for evolution, and that the accumulation of gene mutations, the isolation and selection of the new variants which afterward continue to repeat the same process over again, account for all evolutionary diversifications. This viewpoint, to which we shall allude henceforth as the Neo-Darwinian thesis, must take it for granted that somehow new genes are formed'. . ." (p.6). Dr. Chisholm explains this paragraph thus: "The new view to which he alludes is that as we observe changes, for example, from one breed of dogs to another by the reshuffling of the genes or hereditary carrying factors, new species may be formed by the continuation of the process. This view, which is now widely taught as an advance over Darwinism, he also denies."

J. T. M.

Sections of the World Not Yet Christianized.—Using the heading "Unevangelized Areas," Rev. Herrick B. Young, secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., endeavors to set forth how many parts of the world have not yet accepted the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We quote one of his paragraphs: "It is very difficult to secure reliable statistics, but a reliable estimate made before the outbreak of World War II indicated that only one out of every ten in the world's population could be numbered even among the nominal Christians (including all variations). At that time 45 per cent of China had never been penetrated by a missionary. An equally vast section of Brazil, including much of the Upper Amazon Valley, was completely

unreached by the Gospel message. Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Thibet, parts of Africa, and scores of islands were equally untouched. But the war is doing strange things to Afghanistan, to the Upper Amazon Valley, to parts of the vast stretch of Africa south of the Sahara, and to the great islands of the Southern Pacific. . . . The Union of (11) Soviet Socialist Republics which we know as Russia, stretching from the Baltic to the Behring Sea, with a population of 170 million people, has among these millions many Protestant, Orthodox and Roman Catholic Christians, as well as multitudes of Moslems and avowedly antireligious folk. With the coming of peace, the Protestant mission agencies of North America most certainly will feel called upon to inquire what, if any, responsibilities they have with respect to the physical and spiritual needs of these people of European and Asiatic Russia, also what access, if any, may be had to them in view of whatever broadened relationships of Russia with the Western world may have developed through the struggles of World War II." Here is much room for thought. A.

Theology in the Church.—What the liberal *Christian Century* recommends frequently makes good sense even to an orthodox minister. Editor Morrison usually puts into his articles much common sense and much profound thought. In a recent article on "Theology in the Church" (Dec. 1, 1943) he has a message which, we believe, is particularly adapted to the clergy of the Lutheran Church, since this Church, because of its historical and doctrinal heritage, has a tremendously important mission to perform in our country. But today, theologically speaking, Lutheranism is in danger of becoming superficial. The study of theology is no longer being enjoyed. Church architecture, liturgical values, and other secondary matters claim too much the attention of many of our clergy. The warning of the *Christian Century* is therefore well in place. The Lutheran theologian will, of course, not agree with the definition of theology which the liberal editor gives in his article. To him "theology is nothing more or less than faith intelligent about itself." That is mere verbiage and not a true definition. It can mean a thousand different things to a thousand different persons, and it subverts the *Schriftprinzip*, the elementary theological truth that theology is the word about God as given in Scripture; in other words, that theology is the divinely revealed truth set forth in God's Word, the Holy Bible. So also some other things he says are *mera verba sine re*. But when, among other true things, Mr. Morrison writes the following paragraph, he brings to our attention something very worth while considering: "Modern Protestantism is allowing this memory [of Christ] to grow dim. It has become fascinated by the seductions of secular culture and is forgetting the story of the divine revelation, which is its unique possession. It is high time that Protestantism return from its futile search for some foundation of faith in modern culture into which Liberalism has led it. The Church will never find such a foundation in secular culture. Its supreme task is to *put it there* [italics in original]. Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." This paragraph, interpreted in the light of other statements in the article, does not champion a return to the theology of the Apostolic Church or to that of the Lutheran Reformation. The article shows a decidedly

Barthian, or let us rather say, Brunnerian, orientation; and Barthianism and Brunnerianism are essentially liberal, not traditionally Christian. So the reader may understand how Morrison can say: "Even in the lifetime of the Apostles many of the concepts with which the revelation was first apprehended were radically modified, and some were abandoned [which, of course, is not true]. No, our knowledge [he means to say, our theology] need not be a copy of their knowledge." Nevertheless, when the writer affirms that "modern Protestantism is allowing this memory to grow dim," there lies in this accusation a sting also for Lutheran theologians. The Lutheran Reformation was primarily a theological movement. Social, economic, and other movements that followed in its wake were only by-products. The great thing that Luther and his co-workers did is that they gave back to the world the Word of God, the Gospel of Christ in its full purity. Controversies during Luther's time and after his death forced Lutheran theologians to insist on that Word of God in its details both against Romanism and sectarianism in its various manifestations. This led to an introduction of scholastic forms and categories into Lutheran theology. But for all that, Lutheran theology did not become medieval, but remained thoroughly Scriptural. The scholastic modes of expression only served to bring out the divine truth of Scripture in clearer light. Never since the age of the Apostles was Scriptural theology so lucidly, distinctly, and also beautifully, let us add, set forth as in the Reformation period when theological giants like Luther and his followers diligently searched the Scriptures to discover what they really teach. But are we not becoming weary of orthodox Lutheran theology? Are we not avoiding it as something dangerous to touch and handle? With Reu's death the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, his special organ, representing learned Lutheran theology, was discontinued, and its few subscribers have been directed to the *Lutheran Outlook*, which is rather practical than theological. Other learned theological periodicals in Lutheran circles are reporting an alarmingly small circle of readers. In the meanwhile aggressive Fundamentalist Calvinists are reviving and making popular orthodox Calvinistic theology, and even in Liberal circles the pendulum is swinging back to Barthian conservatism, led by Princeton Theological Seminary, whose Homrighausen, Piper, and other professors are oriented to Barthianism. Lutheranism today has an opportunity to exhibit to a groping, questioning world the glory of its Scripture-centered theology. "Theology in the Church" is a subject on which therefore also Lutheran professors and pastors should meditate; for in the theology of the Reformation they have a contribution to offer which is ineffably valuable just because it is thoroughly Scriptural.

J. T. M.

Concerning Preaching.—The correspondent of the *Christian Century* in England, Dr. Edward Shillito of London, submits interesting remarks on discussions going on now in the religious papers of his country touching sermons. We quote: "Sermons are among the subjects now being discussed in the religious press. How many sermons can a preacher prepare, putting all his power into them? Dr. James Black of Edinburgh recorded a conversation which he had with Dr. John Short of Bourne-mouth, both men with rare gifts as preachers. They agreed that two

sermons a week of this kind are more than can be expected from a preacher. If he preached forty such sermons in a year, that was as much as he could do. Of course, there are other forms of expression, not sermons, in which a preacher may profitably speak to his people: lectures, instructions, expositions, discussions. But the sermon has a place and a value of its own. What then should the preacher do for his second service? Much he may learn from consulting his people and answering their questions; but the difficulty is not met so long as a church demands two sermons a Sunday. Leyton Richards, himself also a preacher of experience and distinction, looks at the same problem not from the pulpit, but from the pew, which for the last two years he has learned to know from within. He writes in the *Christian World*, always with charity and understanding, of the 'tyranny of the sermon.' He dwells upon the 'tyranny of length.' In former days, he points out, there were not the same competing interests. Now, to be really commendable, the sermon must be brief. He draws a distinction between the hearer of a sermon and the hearer of a speech or lecture. The sermon hearer must listen to the last gasp. There is even a more serious charge, the 'tyranny of irrelevance.' This is found particularly in the application of Christian truth to the practical affairs of the hearers. The applications to personal life are sound enough, but 'as applied to wider issues, the sermon could often be riddled by anyone with an elementary knowledge of economics or politics,' yet the hearer must endure in silence."

There lies before us the *Watchman-Examiner* of November 18, in which a lance is broken for what is called "expository preaching." The article, an editorial, properly warns against slipshod methods of study and states that "indifferent spirituality cannot succeed here." The editor adds: "Nothing will more cause a preacher to walk humbly before his God than to take the Bible objectively and seek to interpret it as he believes God desires him to do. But if a man does that, he will be preaching in the truest sense." The editorial likewise points a warning finger at "faddist preaching," such as book review sermons and topical preaching as opposed to textual preaching. Let our preachers ponder the matters here presented and make proper applications. A.

Why the University Student Believes in Evolution.—In the *Calvin Forum* (January, 1944) Dr. Donald H. Bouma, teaching fellow in the Sociology Department, University of Michigan, answers this question on the basis of a most interesting experiment which he has made. He took a poll of a group of 55 of his students in a course in Principles of Sociology. The students were, in the main, sophomores, though the class had a sprinkling also of freshmen, juniors, and seniors. A survey of church membership revealed that 14 denominations were represented: Jewish 11, Episcopal 7, Catholic 7, Methodist 7, Presbyterian 5, Baptist 2, and one each from Congregational, Russian Orthodox, Reformed, Greek Orthodox, Christian Reformed, Fundamental Baptist, Protestant Lutheran [?], and Christian Science. Eight were not affiliated with any church. The students represented 14 States and the Philippine Islands. Virtually all of the students revealed that they had been taught the evolutionary theory of origins in high school and college. The survey was conducted as follows: The students were asked to read, in addition

to the textbook references, the creation account of Genesis 1. The sociology textbooks presented the evolutionary account as the only explanation of origins, never mentioning even the possibility of another explanation. Students were not required to sign their names to their opinions. The results of the survey showed that 27 favored an evolutionary explanation of some kind, 23 were inclined toward the creation account, and 5 were undecided or saw no conflict between the two. Stated in percentages, 49.1 per cent favored evolution; 41.9 per cent favored creation, and 9 per cent were uncertain. The investigation was carried one step further. Two lectures were given, in which the supportive data for the evolutionary theories were evaluated. The one conclusion drawn was that far from being a rational system, the various evolutionary theories also demanded a large amount of faith—in human investigation and interpretation rather than divine revelation. It was also suggested that an additional advantage of the acceptance of the creation theory was that it offered a foundation for a philosophy of life, something that could only rashly be claimed for the evolutionary accounts.

After these two lectures the previous poll was repeated. The results now showed that the number favoring the creation theory had risen from 23 to 36 for a percentage of 65.5. Those who preferred evolutionary explanations dropped from 27 to 14 for a percentage of 25.5. Again 5 were undecided. From the results of the survey, especially from the opinions given by the students, Dr. Bouma regards himself qualified to draw a number of apparent conclusions: 1. It is obvious that some of those who formerly held to the creation account have been strengthened in that faith. 2. There has been an actual change in viewpoint of at least 13 students of the 55. 3. There was an evident weakening of the "conviction" of those who still tended to favor the evolution accounts. 4. The effect of early home, school, and social contacts on the thinking of students is evident especially in the summary of reasons given in the first poll. 5. A large amount of evolutionary belief stems from a failure of modern education to present a complete picture to the student. Today the evolutionary theories of origins are taken for granted in the large majority of textbooks and the alternative explanation is not even mentioned. This partial and partisan portrayal the writer regards as unfair for two reasons: 1. By presenting only one theory, and giving questionable supportive data for that, the student is led to believe that that is the only explanation; and since that is the only one, it must be the correct one. 2. It is unfair to the student, because it reveals a lack of objectivity. The author writes: "Presenting a complete picture, considering all theories that have not definitely been disproven, is the real test of scientific objectivity. But in their attempt to be ultrascientific, many modern writers of textbooks have fallen into the very pit they were so diligently attempting to avoid and have been unscientific in their presentation." In short, the experiment of Dr. Bouma shows that if students are shown the weakness of "proof" by which evolution is being supported and if they honestly be brought face to face with the creation story in the Bible, the Word of God has power to convince them of the truth. Students, in other words, are for the greater part "evolutionists" because they are misinformed.

J. T. M.