Concordia Theological Monthly

Volume 16 Article 61

9-1-1945

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

Two Corrigenda Concerning Our Remarks on the Suomi Synod (p. 414). — A friendly letter of Professor U. Saarnivaara, whose article on Inspiration we commented on, draws attention to two errors which ignorantly we had made. We gratefully publish his remarks, "There were two small mistakes in your introductory notes: the paper was the *Lutheran Counsellor,* and secondly, Suomi Synod is an independent church body, *not* affiliated with the U. L. C. A. It belongs to the National Lutheran Council, but that does not mean affiliation with the U. L. C. A." We had stated that Professor Saarnivaara's article had appeared in the *Gospel Messenger* and that the Suomi Synod belongs to the U. L. C. A.

A.

On "der andere Geist" of the Reformed Churches. — On the famous words of Luther spoken at Marburg, in which he with deep insight emphasized the existence of a definite cleavage between Zwingli's and his own position, Prof. Merle William Boyer, a member of the faculty of Carthage College, Carthage, Ill. (U. L. C. A.), has contributed an important article in *Christendom,* in the issue of summer 1945. The precise caption is, "Lutheran *Geist* and Protestant World View." It is Dr. Boyer's view that Lutheranism still possesses the *Geist,* the peculiar outlook and tendency which differentiated it from the Reformed churches in 1529. In this opinion we readily join him. Here and there we are inclined to question a statement which he makes. His criticisms of the Synodical Conference position we do not consider valid. Let those who are interested read his article.

To state briefly our own position on *der andere Geist* of Reformed theology, we wish to say, first, that the fundamental difference between Lutheran and Reformed theology is not found, as some people seem to think, in this, that the Lutherans regard the Bible as God's inspired, infallible Word while the Reformed do not. The Reformed, where they have remained true to their confessions, are just as emphatic in proclaiming the inspiration and the inerrancy of the Scriptures as are confessional Lutherans. *Der andere Geist* of the Reformed manifests itself, above everything else, in their letting human reason become the final arbiter in the interpretation of the Scriptures. They do not shrink from rejecting a certain teaching on account of its being contrary to what is acceptable to our own intellect. God does not expect us to believe unreasonable things, is their position.

Furthermore, they have a different spirit from Lutherans because with them the Bible is essentially a book of laws, of regulations and directives concerning our faith and life, while with Lutherans it is a book of good news, bringing them the message of what God in Christ Jesus has done and is still doing for them.

Again, *der andere Geist* of the Reformed becomes evident in their making religion a matter of subjectivity, of feeling, while Lutheranism stresses the objectivity of what is central in religion — God's grace and

the atonement of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Lutheran endeavors to adhere to the promises of God regardless of the state of his feelings. The gulf is far deeper than many people imagine. The Reformed rely on their pious thoughts and words and deeds to furnish them the assurance that they are God's own, while Lutheran theologians lead their parishioners and catechumens to base their conviction that they are God's children on the Word, the Word of promise given by God Himself. As a result, Reformed religious thinking insists on action and is characterized by what theologians call activism.

Lutherans, contrariwise, meditate on the Word and find in it their comfort and solace. With the Reformed, in spite of the vigorous war which Fundamentalists wage against the false doctrine of Modernism, the Christian life is the main thing, which must be jealously watched over so it conforms to the holy Scriptures. The Lutherans, though not denying the importance of making our lives follow the Bible standards, insist that above everything else our doctrine must be kept pure and unadulterated, exactly as God has given it to us in the divine Scriptures.

Other points might be mentioned, but we find that in these few words the main differences separating the Reformed position from the Lutheran have been brought out. It will be seen that on the basis of these differences the divergence of specific Reformed doctrines from those of Lutherans, for instance, those of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, becomes at once intelligible. According to their principles the Reformed must be expected to reject the doctrines of the sin-forgiving power of Baptism and of the real presence in the Lord's Supper: not only do these matters transcend human reason, but they are examples of that objectivity of divine grace which Lutheranism professes and the Reformed reject. A.

The European Theological Scene. — Dr. Visser 't Hooft in his report on the religious situation in Continental Europe, as analyzed by the *Christian Century*, July 18, calls attention to two significant trends. In the first place, he points out that the Continental churches of Europe seemingly are now inclined toward a Christianity which might be called an activistic Christianity. The Continental churches have always deprecated the American "social gospel," while they have inclined toward a quietistic theology. Dr. 't Hooft believes that there is sufficient evidence to assume that the Protestant countries are turning away from a theology which *passively* accepts the sovereign authority of the State and are ready to accept a theology which insists upon the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over the whole range of secular society, including the State. This trend would indicate a rapprochement of European theology to American theology.

The second development in European theology is a genuine return to the Bible. And the significant point is that in this renewed interest in the Bible the European theologians are rejecting the theories of the higher critics and are accepting the Bible as the Word of God. While the first trend in European theology seems to bridge the gulf between the churches on either side of the Atlantic, the second trend will widen

this gulf. The advocates of ecumenical Christianity as represented by the *Christian Century*, at least, feel that the European "back-to-the-Bible" movement may result in the same irreconcilable differences as exist between Modernism and Fundamentalism, and deplore the nature of this return to the Bible. If it is true that there is a real return to the Bible as the source of religious truth in Europe, then Christians everywhere must rejoice over the turn of events in Europe. Our hope is that the contrast between Modernism and so-called Fundamentalism may be brought into sharp relief. The salvation of Europe and of the world lies not in the modernistic attitude toward the Bible, but in the acceptance of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. F. E. M.

The Times Call for Theology. — *Theology Today* is well edited by John A. Mackay, who is backed up by an editorial council of learned and well-known writers (*e. g.*, Emile Cailliet, Nels F. S. Ferré, H. S. Gehman, H. T. Kerr, J. E. Kuizenga, Walter Lowrie, H. Richard Niebuhr, O. A. Piper, R. E. Speer, and others, teaching at Princeton Seminary and other schools). It is widely read, and its influence apparently is considerable. Appearing four times a year (January, April, July, October), it always offers the reader a number of well-written, profound, and deeply interesting articles adapted to the needs of the day. Its theology is Reformed-Barthian with a strong background of Kierkegaardian speculation. Though constructive and conservative, it is nevertheless as misleading as it is ingratiating. Read by someone who does not know what it is all about, it may be analyzed by him as very orthodox. And yet it is not orthodox, neither in the historical Reformed nor in the historical Lutheran sense, though it uses the ancient Christian terminology and professes to proclaim the ancient Christian fundamentals. The issue of April, 1945, for example, contains two editorials, "The Times Call for Theology" and "Concerning Christ and the Church," which say many fine things, apparently sound in doctrine. We read, for instance: "The theological statement to which the Church Universal must look forward in the years ahead must be no doctrinal syncretism or theological dilution. . . . Never must the Church sponsor a blanched, eviscerated, spineless statement of confessional theology" (p. 5). This indeed sounds like substantial Christian theology. But when the reader really analyzes what the author means to say, scrutinizing the concepts of "revelation," the "Word of God," and other theological fundamentals, then he will become convinced that here is a theological quarterly which speaks the language of John Calvin, but does not set forth his theology. And the chief point of difference, the very source of the difference, in fact, is its attitude toward Holy Scripture, which to Calvin was God's inspired and inerrant Word, but which to the editors of this periodical is something entirely different. There is one article especially in which this difference appears, an article which in many respects has much to tell the reader, we mean the article "Let the Preacher Preach the Word." This article has perplexed a number of Lutheran readers who, as they wrote, did not know what to make of it. Perhaps no one will know what to make of it unless he has read Barth's *Credo*, and better yet, Barth's *Dogmatik*. Personally we would

like to ask the editors of *Theology Today* to publish in one of the coming numbers its theological creed in clear, definite, unmistakable terms, showing in particular in what respects they differ from the Reformed Fundamentalists. Such an article, we believe, would be very illuminating and very helpful, and also very welcome to many of those who now are reading this dynamic quarterly with much interest, but also with much questioning. By the way, that *Credo* would also be the *Credo* of present-day Princeton Seminary. J. T. M.

The March Back to Conservatism. — According to Ernest Gordon, writing in the *Sunday School Times* (June 9, 1945), "the retreat of criticism from the view of the last generation is outlined by Mr. F. F. Bruce of the University of Leeds. Thus Oesterley's Commentary on the Psalms is a far cry from Peake's Commentary. Dr. A. M. Hunter's 'The Unity of the New Testament' makes clear that, while the New Testament may show marked diversities, there is a dominant unity in its main purpose, the unfolding of the world's redemption. This point of view is also supported for the Old Testament in Wilhelm Moeller's 'Biblical Theology of the Old Testament in the Unfolding of the Story of Redemption.' From Basel has come the work of Prof. Wilhelm Vischer on 'The Witness to Christ in the Old Testament.' Then the new 'Theological Dictionary to the New Testament,' a massive work edited by G. Kittel, is distinctly conservative. Of the Old Testament Dr. Cecil Roth remarks in his 'Short History of the Jewish People'— and Dr. Roth is a competent scholar—, 'The author has made what must nowadays be considered as the innovation of adhering in general outline to the traditional account. . . . Higher Criticism has thus far failed to provide any alternate account which commands universal acceptance. . . . Egyptian and allied studies have shown that the Biblical narrative is at least consistent with contemporary conditions; and above all archaeological opinion, on the whole, favors the traditional story in at least its broad outline. President Hutchins of the University of Chicago, at a joint session of affiliated theological schools, also struck a note new for that place of unbelief. He said: 'Theology goes beyond all other disciplines. Theology exceeds all other disciplines, because God reveals what the wisest man does not know and can never learn, or at best can see but dimly and remotely — God's being and man's destiny. . . . The existence and nature of God, His character and the destiny of the human soul, and the salvation of man, are problems which remain obscure in the light of natural reason. Theology, which adds faith to reason, illuminates them. . . . Men, simply because they are men, are unlikely to find with themselves the power that can bring the good life and the good state to pass.' Revelation, salvation — new words from this quarter! Dr. Hutchins is a son of a Congregationalist minister." Indeed very encouraging to the Christian minister who adheres to Scripture as the inspired, inerrant Word of God! J. T. M.

Is the Church to Speak on the Peacetime Conscription Issue? — The question whether all of our young men that are physically fit are to be subjected to a system of military training when the war has been concluded is now before the country, and in many sections is eagerly de-

bated. That the churches should not concern themselves with it as far as it is a political issue will, we believe, at once be conceded by all Lutherans. But it may be asked whether there are any moral and spiritual sides of the question which the Church cannot afford to ignore. A number of church bodies, among them Augustana Synod Lutherans and Methodist Conferences, have come out as protesting against this innovation in our American life. Evidently these church bodies and individuals view the proposed measure as having definite moral and spiritual implications.

To us it seems (1) that in the absence of a clear word of God for or against the measure the Church cannot presume to speak with authority on the issue or expect all of its members to be of one mind concerning it; (2) that those who view the proposal with alarm and see in it grave dangers for our youth and for our whole nation should not be faulted if they take the issue before the religious forum and condemn it on account of the moral and spiritual perils which in their opinion it contains. Whoever believes that here we are dealing not merely with a grave political departure from our national tradition, but with an innovation which will hurt rather than benefit our youth morally and spiritually, is justified in speaking against the measure on religious grounds. The writer of these lines frankly admits that he belongs to the people just described. What he has read and heard of militarism as most European countries have had and cultivated it for a number of years, has created in him the opinion that if one looks at the proposed course from the point of view of the Church, it would be unwise to introduce it in our country. But since we are here speaking of dangers, the whole discussion takes one somewhat into the territory of the so-called intangibles, where a difference of opinion is unavoidable and where those who hold opposite views must be willing to bear one with the other. A.

Catholics in Britain. — From a dwindling 60,000 at the close of the eighteenth century, the Catholics of England, Wales, and Scotland have now grown to a vigorous 3,021,000 — slightly over one in every sixteen of the population. Surprisingly, the proportion of Catholics is higher in Scotland than in England and Wales: 621,398 Catholics in a total population of 4,907,619, or about one in every eight persons. To care for this increasing body of Catholics there is a Papal Legate, six Archbishops, eighteen Bishops, 7,106 priests, 181 religious orders of women and 63 of men. In England and Wales Catholic elementary schools number 1,345, with 370,000 pupils, while there are 559 Catholic secondary schools enrolling 61,000 pupils. Government aid is given to 1,275 of the elementary schools and to 95 of the secondary schools. But in Scotland schools of all religious denominations, including Catholic schools, are financed entirely from public funds. This is but a small sampling of the many interesting items to be found in a pamphlet — *Catholics in Britain Today* — recently issued and distributed free, on request, by the British Information Services, 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20. There is a challenge on page 23 of this unusually well edited pamphlet. Three million British Catholics support four flourishing weeklies — the *Tablet*, dating from

1841, which is the most influential; the *Universe*, founded in 1860, with a circulation of 145,000; the *Catholic Herald* with 69,000; and the *Catholic Times* with 50,000 — in addition to two monthlies, the *Month* and *Blackfriars*, and two quarterlies, the *Dublin Review* and the *Downside Review*. — *America* (R. C. weekly.)

A Countermove to Roman Arrogance with Respect to Marriage Stipulations. — One wonders why the worm has not turned long ago. In the South of our country, resentment against the pretensions of Rome to pose as "the Church of the vicar of Christ here on earth" has reached the point that in the South Presbyterian Assembly a resolution was introduced to the effect that when a mixed marriage, that is, the marriage of a Protestant and a Roman Catholic (or another non-Protestant) person is contemplated and a South Presbyterian minister is approached to perform the ceremony, a paper has to be signed in which the non-Protestant promises to have the children resulting from the union baptized and educated in the faith of the Presbyterian Church. If Rome has the right to exact such promises, certainly other denominations have it, too. The resolution was not voted on in the meetings of the Assembly, but was referred to the Committee on Moral and Social Welfare. If the resolution will not do any more than draw attention to the incongruities, dangers, and heartaches of mixed marriages, it will accomplish a good purpose. The convention committee quite properly urged that pastors "give thorough instruction to their young people concerning marriage, especially on the requirements that will be made of them should they choose to be married by a Roman Catholic priest to a member of his Church." A.

State Money for Sectarian Schools. — Perennially, it seems, the people of Kentucky face and debate the question whether State taxes should be used to defray the expenses incurred by Roman Catholic school authorities through providing bus transportation for their pupils while the children who attend the public schools are furnished transportation from State funds. The subject has been, or still is, a live issue in other States, too. An editorial in the *Watchman-Examiner* (Baptist) draws attention to some of the points involved.

"During recent years the State of Kentucky has been the scene of a legal struggle to preserve the separation of Church and State. Various laws put through the State Legislature by Roman Catholic pressure have been declared unconstitutional. The latest effort is a 1944 Kentucky law giving fiscal courts discretionary power to provide transportation for parochial and private school students. As usual, the Protestants in the State are trailing this legislative adventure. Mrs. Susan B. Henry, member of the legal department of the Lexington *Signal Depot*, has filed a test case as a citizen. The objective, of course, is to get the State Supreme Court to declare the legislation unconstitutional. Would it not be far better for Protestants in Kentucky to achieve a solidarity by which they could keep a steady watch upon the Legislature, so as to forestall ambitious attempts to bring about union of Church and State? Once it can be established that a sect may receive tax money for the development of its institutions or for the care of its

personnel, there is virtual union of Church and State, even if it be only embryonic. We know the story about the camel and the tent. There is no way possible for the segregation of public funds received from sectarian taxpayers. The tax office knows neither Protestant nor Catholic when money is received. It is therefore not a valid argument that because Roman Catholics pay public taxes they are entitled to a return of a portion of what they pay. It violates the conscience of the individual when he is compelled to contribute to the promotion of a sectarian institution without his consent. The practical feature of the present agitation in various states now facing American citizens indicates the necessity of close watch upon legislation before it is enacted. Protestant bodies are not a solidarity and therefore they have no particular personnel appointed as safeguards. Perhaps this should lead to the consideration of whether some organizational steps ought to be taken to provide them." To us it seems that what is needed is that every liberty-loving American in his sphere vigorously uphold the principle that the State must not be used to do the work of the Church and that the Church must not presume to do the work of the State. The precious principle of religious freedom cannot be guarded too jealously. A.

The "Trenton Man" a Modern Man. — Ernest Gordon, in the *Sunday School Times* (June 9, 1945) calls attention to the fact that the so-called "Trenton Man" found in a bluff overlooking the Delaware River some sixty years ago, under undisturbed glacial deposits, with tools of argillite stone, was after all only a "modern man." The find was dated by the archaeologists of the time about 50,000 B. C., but Dr. G. R. Horner, former archaeologist of the State Museum of New Jersey, writes in the *Watchman-Examiner:* "In 1940 it was this author's opportunity to help interpret the material that we excavated at the farm which Dr. Abbott made world-famous. From our twenty excavations, including one that went through the very refuse heaps of Abbott's excavation, down through sand and human layers to the six-to-nine-foot depth of the famed Trenton gravels of argillite stone, from which the Trenton Man made his hunting points, we concluded, after a very careful method of pottery reconstruction, that the Trenton Man was not geologically 'old,' but was geologically 'young,' of a very recent period, somewhere between the tenth and sixteenth centuries after the birth of Christ. This startling variance with the older dating of Abbott is based upon a correct analysis of the American geological periods . . . by the Indian pottery design types found from top to bottom of the dig. Whereas Abbott found no pottery, we found some 30,000 sherds, even picking them out of his refuse heaps. We found that this pottery had the same designs in kind and degree throughout the excavation; that is, the designs on the sherds and the technique and consistency of manufacture, were the same. What is most important, these were similar to the pottery pieces found in other excavations made in other parts of the state. In near-by Salisbury, for example, these same designs were found in direct association with English clay trade pipes which were dated to the sixteenth-seventeenth century A. D., and traced to the very

town in England where they were made. By these facts, and the modernity of the osseous remains, we were able to date this man as modern." Here, then, is another proof that scientists, carried away with their love for theories, often make deductions which cannot stand the test. The "assured results" of science are after all not so very much assured; at any rate they give us no reason to doubt the inerrancy and authority of Holy Scripture, of which Christ Himself has said: "Thy Word is truth" (John 17:17). J. T. M.

Bishop Barnes Advocates Euthanasia, etc. — Bishop E. W. Barnes of Birmingham, England, one of the leaders of the Anglican Church, has been known for a long time for his radical views. Now he has come before the public as an advocate of euthanasia and of "medically controlled sterilization." These are his remarks as quoted by the *Associated Press:* "Fairly often we hear of a child being born pitiably defective in mind or body and of the parents' relief when it dies. I am convinced that in such cases euthanasia should be permitted under proper safeguards. Equally from a Christian standpoint, as I see the matter, there is no objection to medically controlled sterilization. We in England have avoided those problems, but they are problems which, for our national welfare, we must ultimately try to solve." Summarizing his views, the *Associated Press* reporter stated concerning the bishop's remarks, "He said bad racial stock is a growing source of anxiety to thoughtful men in every country where Western civilization prevailed. In the development of cattle, he declared, herds breeding at random sooner or later developed 'scrub cattle.' Under harsh social conditions of other centuries, he added, defective children were not able to survive, but today, with human social services, problem children grow up to create problem families, and 'consequently a scrub population is appearing, and war intensifies the process.'"

Here we see rationalistic unbelief at work. The laws of God are not considered. The point of view is simply that of utilitarianism. What reasoning of this kind leads to, thinking people ought to be able to see in the course world events have taken the last thirty years. God was dethroned, His Word was brushed aside as outmoded, human reason was given the controlling place in the world, and the result is — absolute chaos. Does the bishop not see the handwriting on the wall? A.

E. Stanley Jones on the Situation in South America. — This famous Evangelist, who unfortunately is as unionistic in his outlook as he is famous, has toured some of the countries of South America, and his report on religious conditions as he found and observed them makes interesting reading. In a special communication to the *Protestant Voice* of July 20 he says: "Seventeen years ago, when I first visited South America, the Evangelistic Movement [a term used interchangeably with Protestantism] was out on the edges of life — confined to little churches. But in these years something has happened. The intellectual Latin-Americans had passed up religion years ago. Now they want to know what it means for them and their countries. Newspaper reporters, on this trip, asked me what the Evangelicals and the missionaries would believe on this and that; seventeen years ago they avoided the subject.

The fact is that the Evangelical Movement is becoming a public issue—people are talking about it. That is because the movement stands for freedom and liberty; it is freedom and liberty for which the intellectuals are looking. I did not anywhere have to soft-pedal the evangelical approach or teaching. . . . I think there will be a movement against clericalism in parts of South America. The Roman Catholic Church, people feel, has mapped a wrong course. It backed Mussolini and Fascism in Spain. One of the best things for evangelicals was the recent pastoral letter of the Catholic bishops warning the people against the evangelicals. It made thinking people say, 'If they (the bishops) are against you, we would like to see what you are for; we are probably with you.' A new and interesting movement in Brazil is the Brazilian Catholic Church. It is a movement centered in Christ. It does away with the saints, but it retains the sacraments of baptism, communion, and marriage. It is a movement for the regeneration of the people who have been exploited by both Church and State. It is interesting, too, that in the last census in Brazil only forty-nine per cent of the people said they were Roman Catholics, while more said they were Methodists than were on the rolls of the churches. The morale of the evangelical churches is far better today than it was seventeen years ago, and they can and will have a great place in the future development of the life of these republics."

The countries visited by Dr. Jones were Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile. There is no doubt that an awakening is in progress in the American countries south of the equator. Sad to say, skepticism, Modernism, doctrinally indifferent Protestantism, and emotional sectarianism are among the factors that rise and make a bid for influence in the new scene. In view of the change in religious thinking on the part of many millions of people in South America, the role of our own representatives with the sweet Gospel of divine love and pardon becomes incalculably important. A.

Back to Essentials! — Dr. Ernest C. Colwell, who recently has been elevated to the presidency of the University of Chicago, in a speech reported in the *Christian Century*, July 18, 1945, warned theological seminaries against the "know how" courses which, he charged, are swamping many a seminary's curriculum. "So many laymen insist that clergymen have courses in accounting, budget management, the supervision of young people's picnics, premarital counseling, and such subjects," he said, "that seminaries have added them, while minimizing theology, comparative religion, and the regular liberal arts training." If they are not careful, Dr. Colwell in effect warned, the seminaries will find themselves turning out ministers who know how to do an endless number of things without knowing why they are doing them; who know how to speak with maximum platform effectiveness without having anything of importance to say. F. E. M.