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Theological Observer

Dr. Morrison and Luther's Attitude Toward the Scriptures.— Writing on the subject "Protestant Misuse of the Bible," in his notable series of articles having the general topic "Can Protestantism Win America?" Dr. Charles Clayton Morrison, editor of the *Christian Century*, devotes a great deal of space to Luther's position on the Scriptures. Since he by no means is the only one who holds the view on Luther's position which is set forth in this article, we reprint his remarks with a few comments. Here are the words of Dr. Morrison:

"At its outset, the Reformation intended to make, and believed it was making, Christ the true and only authority in the Church. And contemporary Protestantism will readily affirm on its own behalf that its supreme loyalty is given to Him. But this profession has a hollow ring when it is tested by the actual behavior of both historical and contemporary Protestantism. For the truth is that Protestantism has divided its loyalty between Christ and the Bible, and has given the major weight of its loyalty to the authority of the Bible at the expense of its loyalty to Christ. It has misused the Bible in such a manner that the Book has come between Christian faith and the Author and Perfecter of the faith. It has not beheld Him face to face with consistent perception, attention, imagination and devotion. Its vision of Him has been obscured by its variegated interpretations of the Bible.

"In this respect Protestantism has taken the same line as Roman Catholicism. Like Rome, it has insisted that Christ needs an official and authoritative interpreter. For this function, the Roman Church sets up the pope, and Protestantism sets up the Bible. Each, respectively, regards its interpreter as the 'vice-regent of Christ on earth,' though Protestantism has not been candid enough to use the repugnant words of this Roman Catholic appellation.

"It is not generally recognized that the Reformation, in its initial emergence, was vividly conscious of the tension between the authority of the Bible and the authority of Christ. Martin Luther clung tenaciously to the authority of Christ and was profoundly apprehensive lest a misuse of the Bible would derogate from Christ's authority. He held a conception of the Bible that protected him personally from this danger. For Luther, Christ Himself was the Word of God, disclosed, to be sure, in the Scriptures, but never to be supplanted by the Scriptures.

"However, the clamor for a visible authority to which the divers and divergent opinions arising in the newborn Protestant movement could be referred and judged, overcame his scruples and his thought fell into the Biblical pattern already set by the 'radicals' who attached themselves to his reformation, and by the

more thoroughgoing Biblicism which characterized the Swiss reformation. But at the beginning, Luther felt no need of any other authority to preserve the unity of the Reformation than the authority of Christ. He would have been content, as the late Professor A. C. McGiffert has shown, 'to do without any definite authority beyond his doctrine of the forgiving love of God in Christ. That seemed to him adequate for every emergency. But gradually, under the pressure of the radicals on the one side and of the conservatives on the other, he was led to identify his Gospel of the forgiving love of God in Christ, which he had always called the Word of God, with the Scriptures, and to find in them the ultimate authority for Christian truth.'

"Nevertheless, Luther tried manfully to maintain some sort of balance between the authority of the Scriptures and the authority of Christ. And he always weighted the balance on the side of Christ. Engaged in endless disputation with 'adversaries' in his own camp, he struggled with this issue as no Protestant leader since his day has struggled with it. In 1535, he wrote: 'When our opponents urge the Scriptures against Christ, we urge Christ against the Scriptures.' He affirmed that 'Scripture must not be understood *against* Christ, but *for* Christ. Therefore, the Scripture must be referred to Christ [that is, for His judgment or approval] or one cannot claim it as true Scripture.'

"In a magnificent dictum, summing it all up, Luther declared, 'I urge [insist upon] Christ, the Lord, who is Lord [rex] also of the Scriptures.' The freedom of the Christian man from any slavish bibliolatry was evidenced in the view he held of the Epistle of James, which he called an 'epistle of straw' because it seemed to him—mistakenly, as is generally admitted—to support the Roman Catholic doctrine of 'works of merit' in opposition to the rest of the New Testament.

"We shall not understand Luther's position on the question of the authority of the Bible versus the authority of Christ, a position which he never forsook, unless we clearly grasp his conception of Christ Himself as *the Word of God*. The Word of God was not the letter of the Scripture, nor even the Scripture itself, but that supreme Person whom the Scripture unveils to the devout reader of its pages. And Christ, then, in turn, becomes the Judge of the Scripture. This conception Luther once expressed in a quaint but apt metaphor by saying that the Bible is 'the cradle of Christ,' meaning that it contains Him, unveils Him, and, at the same time, releases Him into His own sovereign, self-authenticating supremacy over the heart of man, over the Church and over the Bible itself.

"Outside of Lutheranism, this conception of the Bible has not taken hold of Protestant intelligence. And Lutheranism historically fell into the very literalism and legalism which Luther feared would result from the failure to distinguish between the

Word of God and the Scriptures. The distinction is difficult to formulate, and more difficult to communicate, but it is of profound importance. It is one of those fine distinctions which, to the casual observer, seem academic and barren, but, nevertheless, have far-reaching consequences. A Church that looks to the Scriptures as the Word of God will be one kind of Church. A Church that looks to Christ alone as the Word of God will be another and a very different kind of Church.

"American Protestantism is quite unfamiliar with this distinction. It is the heir of the stiff, textual, literalistic and legalistic Biblicism of John Calvin, who, so far as I know, never felt the tension between these two authorities as Luther felt it. Calvin was originally a lawyer, and he interpreted the Bible as if it were a book of law, of divine law, infallibly and equally authoritative in all its parts and in every word. For him, the Bible was itself the divine revelation, it was the Word of God. It was Calvin's type of Biblicism that was carried from Geneva to western Europe, to England and Scotland, and to North America. American Protestantism has reflected in its sectarianism the Calvinistic view of the Bible, as Continental sectarianism has reflected the lapse of Lutheranism from the high, spiritual christological ground on which, at the beginning, Luther sought to establish the Reformation.

"Luther's compromise at this crucial point had tragic consequences for Protestantism. His compromise and Calvin's outright literalistic Biblicism have caused Protestantism to be afflicted with a divided mind in respect to its primary allegiance. It has been the victim of a kind of theological schizophrenia which caused it to vibrate between two authorities. Professing loyalty to Christ, it has been tethered and hamstrung by its literalistic conception of the Scriptures as authoritative. Protestantism has, therefore, not been able to move out into the liberty wherewith Christ has made His Church free."

The question that chiefly concerns us here is whether Dr. Morrison is right in his judgment on Luther's stand toward the Bible and Christ. It is our conviction that what he states is only partly correct, that in Luther there was no antithesis between the Scriptures and Christ and that whatever utterances of his may be adduced as supporting such a view are merely strong statements in which he brings out that it is through Christ alone that we are saved and not through any formal adherence to the authority of the Scriptures. The cry "Christ versus the Scriptures" does not at all reflect Luther's attitude. The position holding that one has to follow either Christ or the Scriptures would have seemed utterly false to the great Reformer. His battle cry was "Christ and the Scriptures," or "The Scriptures with Christ at the center." We hope that at some time a full discussion of the various phases of this important subject can be submitted in our journal. A.

Concerning the De-Nazification Attempts of the Allies.—*Religious News Service* submits this report on the subject mentioned:

"De-Nazification policies of the Allied military governments were sharply criticized in a declaration released here by the governing Council of the Evangelical Church of Germany.

"The Council's statement, issued after submission to the Allied Control Council, declared that the Church's attempt to achieve a purge of the Nazi spirit among Germans 'is rendered difficult' by Allied policies.

"Despair and obduracy are already growing everywhere because of the disillusioned hope of our people for a new beginning,' the Council warned. 'Prohibiting study for youth who held unimportant Nazi posts or chose a military career, often to escape Nazi party membership, creates a youth without hope, without aim, a youth which threatens to succumb to radical slogans, because the way to a new future is cut off.

"The punishment of members of Nazi organizations ought to be carried out in each case only after it has been proved that they personally gave impetus to the crimes of Nazism, and were therefore collaborators or promoters. This is a fundamental principle of justice.

"The procedure now followed for punishment of all these people is not by any means conducive to really just results. Above all, people ought not to be punished for their outward formal membership, or by reason of their supposed disposition of mind.'

"Regarding a purge of clergy ranks, the Council said the churches alone should decide who is fit to exercise the functions of church office, and who should be dismissed.

"The Council requested church leaders not to accept membership on state de-Nazification committees or courts of justice. But it instructed church officials to appear in court when summoned, 'even if treated with injustice,' and be prepared to justify themselves when civil authorities demand it."

The New Constitution of Southern Baptists.—With interest one reads this news item in *R. N. S.* on Southern Baptists.

"After much discussion and some amendments, the 101-year-old Southern Baptist Convention adopted a new constitution in its annual session here.

"Most criticism of the new constitution came from some who thought the convention's description as 'a general organization for Baptists in the United States and its territories' might be antagonistic to Northern Baptists. Until a few years ago the two conventions were divided on geographical lines, and the admission of California churches to the Southern Convention in 1942 aroused considerable discussion.

"The Convention has never shut its doors against any group of Baptists in this country who for doctrinal and other reasons could not co-operate with conventions of the territory in which they are located,' declared Dr. L. E. Barton of Alabama, chair-

man of the constitution revision committee. "The manner of observing the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper cannot be dictated by any lines of geography."

"Dr. J. T. Watts of Maryland led the opposition to the phrase with the assertion it would put 'in jeopardy the harmony of the convention especially as far as seven eastern seaboard States are concerned.'"

"Dr. Barton pointed out that geographical division had been only a matter of custom and that no such provision was made in the convention's constitution or bylaws any time in the past."

"The new constitution also provides for rotation of membership in denominational boards, limiting the members to two three-year terms consecutively. The number of messengers from any church to the convention will be determined by membership of the church rather than the amount of gifts to the convention's co-operative work, according to another change. Additional changes were for purposes of clarity and to avoid conflicts in amendments added from time to time during the 100-year life of the old constitution, Dr. Barton explained."

Canadian Protestants and Representation at the Vatican.—Establishment of diplomatic relations with the Vatican would be rejected by the majority of the Canadian people, in the opinion of the Board of Evangelism and Social Service of the United Church of Canada, which passed a resolution urging the Government to turn down any such proposal.

"The stand was taken at the final sessions of a two-day meeting and was brought forward by Rev. H. G. Tuttle, chairman of the Montreal Presbytery."

"The resolution stated that the majority of Canadian people stand 'firmly on the principles of the separation of the Church and State, and against the granting of special status, privilege, and facilities to any one religious denomination.'"

"A recent report by representatives of the Jesuit Order said that the Canadian Government would shortly be urged to name an ambassador or personal representative to the Vatican."—*Religious News Service.*

The Eighth Annual Luther Academy.—From July 9 to 18 the eighth annual Luther Academy was held at Wartburg Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. This is the program that had been published:

"The Mind of Missouri," E. Theodore Bachmann, Chicago Lutheran Seminary; two lectures on preaching, Jacob A. Dell, Capital University Seminary; "The Church According to the Pastoral Epistles," Paul Leo, pastor, Fredericksburg, Texas; "Theology in the Life of the Church," Otto H. Pannkoek, writer and educator; "Studies in Luther," H. A. Preus, Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul; "The Teaching Function of the Pulpit," John Schmidt, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Columbia, S. C.; "Social Welfare," Henry J. Whiting, consultant, Division of

Welfare, National Lutheran Council, Chicago; "Old Testament Theology," C. Umhau Wolf, Chicago Lutheran Seminary; "Visual Aids," Wartburg Film Service.

The morning devotions were to be conducted by two members of the Dubuque faculty, Dr. John C. Mattes and Dr. Emil W. Matzner.

Baptist Fundamentalists Are Not Successful.—When the Northern Baptists held their annual convention in Grand Rapids, Mich., the latter part of May, it was found that the gathering was the largest Northern Baptist Convention within decades. According to a report of Harold E. Fey, associate editor of the *Christian Century*, more than 4,400 registered delegates were in attendance. Of this number over 1,700 had declared that they were Fundamentalists. When it came to voting, the Fundamentalist group disintegrated. According to Mr. Fey there were five points on which the adherents of this group were defeated. In the first place, the attempt was made by the Fundamentalists to keep salaried officers of the convention from voting on convention issues. On this point they lost, the vote being 2,013 against 430. The second issue pertained to the virgin birth of Christ, His resurrection, and His miracles. The motion was made that the convention should forbid members to employ secretaries or missionaries who refuse to affirm "as true and trustworthy the record of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ as stated in Matthew 1 and Luke 1 and 2, the record of the resurrection of Jesus Christ as stated in Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24, and John 20 and 21, and the record of the miracles of Jesus as given in the Gospels." It was moved likewise that secretaries and missionaries should be required to affirm "that the New Testament is inspired of God in all its contents and that the acceptance of its historical facts, revelations, teachings, and doctrines is obligatory in Christian faith and practice." The men who opposed this motion stated that they were not in favor of committing the denomination to what they termed "creedalism." By arrangement between the two opposing groups six men on each side discussed the motion. When the vote was taken, the resolution was rejected. In its place the following resolution was adopted, "We reaffirm our faith in the New Testament as the divinely inspired record and therefore a trustworthy, authoritative, and all-sufficient rule of faith and practice. We rededicate ourselves to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior and call our entire denomination to the common task of sharing the whole Gospel with the whole world." Many fundamentalists voted for this resolution, holding that it represents the position for which they contend. How Modernists could wholeheartedly accept it is an enigma, but they voted for it and maintained that it states their position. The third issue pertained to membership in the Federal Council and the World Council of Churches. The motion was made to withhold appropriations for the work of the two organizations mentioned. The vote was lost.

The fourth point had to do with representation at the convention. It was moved by the organization men, who are Modernists, that churches who contributed nothing or only very little to the work of the convention should not be entitled to as many delegates as those that gave full support to the projects agreed upon. To understand this matter one must bear in mind that many Fundamental Baptist churches are not supporting the missions conducted by the organization, but lend their aid to other missionary ventures which rest on a more Scriptural basis. The motion of the Modernists prevailed. Finally, there was the matter of the election of the members of the "eight boards and agencies of the denomination." Here, too, the Modernists won a complete victory. It is with sincere sorrow that one reads of the defeat suffered by people who, though in error on certain points of doctrine, nevertheless try to uphold fundamental things in our Christian faith: the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the doctrine of the virgin birth, the teaching of Christ's resurrection, and the authenticity of His miracles. A.

Brief Items.—At a meeting held in connection with the convention of the Northern Presbyterian Church, Mr. Wilbur La Roe, Jr., a well-known Washington lawyer, spoke on the theme, "If I Were a Minister." According to the *Presbyterian* this is what he said: "If I were a minister, I would make my pulpit a sounding board for applying the principles of Christianity to vital problems of this day. I could not . . . remain silent on the situation in Spain or in Argentina. There is no greater issue before the world than the issue of human freedom. . . . It is of the very essence of Christianity that the welfare of the individual is the main interest of Christianity and the main purpose of God's love. . . . We must have nothing in America that converts a man into a mere cog in a superstate machine. . . . We must not lose sight of the fundamental importance of democracy and freedom in religion and in the Church. . . . I would not remain silent about such social evils as the liquor traffic and gambling. . . . It is worth knowing that the profits of a single whiskey distilling company, namely, the Schenley Distillers Corporation, last year were almost the same in amount as the \$27,000,000 of our restoration fund. . . . I would not have it understood that I would neglect the basic problem of ministering to men's souls. The fate of this world hinges not on military weapons, not even on the atomic bomb, but on the quality of the souls of men. . . . I would pull no punches on the subject of race relations . . . the silly thing we call race prejudice." The lawyer means well. A person would have to examine these statements carefully to see whether his zeal is always according to knowledge.

The Southern Presbyterians at their recent Assembly meeting adopted a resolution that the committee working for union with the Northern Presbyterians be continued "with the expectation that its plan for reunion would be presented to the two As-

semblies (U. S. and U. S. A.) in 1947." The efforts to make this branch of the Presbyterians withdraw from the Federal Council of Churches was unsuccessful.

From Japan comes the news that the attendance at services of Protestants is steadily increasing. Native pastors are overworked in their efforts to bring the Christian message to their fellow citizens.

Bishop Hans Fuglsang-Danngaard, primate of the State Church of Denmark, has accepted an invitation to visit America next year as guest of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Danish Lutheran Church. — *Lutheran Herald*.

From *Religious News Service*. — When the American Council of Christian Churches met recently, it resolved to call upon Congress to amend the Communications Act of 1934 to guarantee religious freedom so that "religion shall not be denied the right to purchase time on the radio in the free competitive American market." It was asserted that some denominational leaders in the Federal Council of Churches have "instigated and propagated the notion that Gospel broadcasts were rackets and undesirable."

The sixtieth birthday of Karl Barth was observed by Protestants and Roman Catholics in France and Switzerland. From England, too, congratulations came. In France and Switzerland money is gathered for the publication of an anniversary book in Barth's honor. The book will be printed for public sale.

At present there are 13 Christian colleges in China. The attempt is made to consolidate them into 9 institutions. The basis of the plan seems to be thoroughly unionistic.

Thirty-six Jesuits, the largest number ever assigned to the Philippines at one time by the New York Province of Jesuits, will leave from San Francisco shortly to help rebuild and restaff missions in the Islands. Many of the group are experienced members of the Jesuit Philippine staff who were captured and interned during the war. Six are native Filipino Jesuit priests returning home after completing the last five years of their study in this country.

The Illinois Synod of the United Lutheran Church at its state convention at Quincy, Ill., voted unanimously to approve the proposed moving of the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary from Maywood, a Chicago suburb, to the campus of the University of Chicago. Although the seminary would be located on the university campus, it would retain its corporate entity and complete independence as a Lutheran church institution and continue under the control of the board of directors of the seminary.

The first mass pilgrimages to Lourdes since the end of the war began with the arrival at the famous shrine center of 11,500 pilgrims from Juras, Annecy, Bayonne, and Arras. Of this num-

ber, 3,000 were persons seeking cures at the grotto where Saint Bernadette reported several apparitions of the Virgin Mary in 1858. Pilgrims from Annecy totaled 2,200, of whom 900 were men, led by Msgr. Jean Pierre Cesbron, bishop of the diocese. Arrangements for care of the visitors were supervised by Vicar General Msgr. Riauc, who has been in charge of the diocese of Lourdes and Tarbes since the recent death of Bishop Georges Choquet.

According to information from Tokyo, the Japan Biblical Seminary, interdenominational theological school, founded jointly by allied Japanese Christians, now has an enrollment of 35 Japanese men and women.

Intermarriages between Jews and Christians in Canada more than quadrupled during the past two decades, according to official figures just published. In 1926 there were 53 such marriages. 1942 there were 226. The highest proportion was in British Columbia, which had 41.8 per cent of the cases. The lowest was in Quebec, 3:5. Of the 1,706 cases of intermarriage, 1,175 were with Protestants and 449 with Roman Catholics.

Rev. Stewart Herman, American official of the World Council of Churches, states that growing tension between churchmen and Allied occupation authorities over re-education policies threatens to prevent the churches from taking leadership in establishing peaceful relations between Germany and other countries. Herman charged, following his return from the visit to Germany, that the military government "has consistently considered the German Church to be nothing more than a side issue in the matter of Germany's re-education."

From Williamsburg, Va., comes the information that Negro parishes of the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Southern Virginia will be permitted to elect their own delegates to the Diocesan Council under a new provision inserted in its constitution at the 54th annual meeting of the diocese.

The Rev. Teilhard de Chardin, French priest-scientist, whose researches into the origin of man are known throughout the world, has returned to Paris from China for the first time since the outbreak of the war. Father de Chardin was in Peking when the Japanese occupied the city but was able to continue his work despite "difficulties" with Japanese authorities. In collaboration with his assistant, Father Leroy, he prepared seventeen books of notes, which will shortly be published. Prior to the war, Father Teilhard took part in the Citroen expedition into central Asia.

The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America at its recent meeting adopted a budget of \$1,300,000 for the next fiscal year. The annual budget had been \$1,005,000.

The number of Negro college graduates studying for degrees in religion has increased 32 per cent in the last four years, according to a survey conducted by Frank Dorey, assistant pro-

fessor at the School of Religion of Howard University, Washington, D. C. The survey showed that 327 Negro college graduates from 87 different institutions were doing work in 41 schools of religion preparatory to entering the ministry. 42 per cent of Negro college graduates studying in schools of religion are enrolled in white schools. 37 per cent of them are Baptists and 20 per cent Methodists.

Speaking before the annual convention of his church body meeting in Duluth, Minn., Dr. P. O. Bersell is reported to have expressed deep satisfaction over the progress made toward the formation of the World Council of Churches. More than 90 church bodies, he reported, have now joined the World Council, of which the Augustana Synod is one. He also advocated membership in the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. Pleading for Christian unity, he urged the formation of a Lutheran Federation in America as the first step toward organic union.—We are sorry to see Dr. Bersell favoring a course which cannot but be called unionistic.

Since their seminaries in New Orleans, Louisville, and Fort Worth are filled to capacity and have to turn away students, the Southern Baptist Convention plans erection of a new seminary, probably on the campus of Wake Forest College in North Carolina.

With mingled feelings one reads the following news item coming from Chicago:

"Addressing the English Speaking Union here, Bernard Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, England, made what some Protestant churchmen present considered one of the most clear-cut statements of the Roman Catholic position on freedom of worship.

"Declaring that every man must have 'the freedom to worship God according to one's conscience,' Cardinal Griffin said this meant 'freedom from persecution.'

"We do not mean that every man is in fact free to worship God in the way in which he sees fit, for God Himself has told us how to worship Him, and we have, therefore, the obligation of worshiping God as He desires it,' the cardinal explained. 'But no man may be forced to embrace the truth against his will, and every man has the right to be protected against persecution whether it be for his religion or for his political or racial views.

"Tolerance of the religion of others must be guaranteed by every state, and all should be granted equal opportunities to follow the religion of their conscience and allowed to have their churches, their schools, and their ministers. We in England and you in America have, thank God, complete freedom of worship, but there are many countries where the citizens because they are Catholics are being persecuted for their religion.'"

A.