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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### THOUGHTS FOR INDEPENDENCE DAY

The Fourth of July is for Americans a holiday of supreme significance. It marks the occasion when the colonists in 1776 dissolved the political ties which had bound them to England and became an independent people in the family of nations. On this day, Christians of our land will however also thank God for one of the greatest blessings He bestowed on our land, the blessing of religious liberty. We easily take this blessing for granted. We find it difficult to understand why this privilege is being withheld from the people of other countries. Yet the plain fact is that there are many countries in which this freedom, which we have rightly come to regard as basic, is not known and where the tyranny that denies it to men is imposed with the full force of the law. What is happening in such countries is vividly brought to our attention in an article titled "Religious Freedom" and published in *The Australian Lutheran* (March 7). The author of this article, Dr. J. Darsow, writes as follows:

"Under the heading, 'What Protestants Cannot Do in Spain,' a religious journal recently stated: They cannot lawfully do anything that would be regarded as the public practice of their religion or its promulgation and extension. They cannot have a church building that looks like a church or has any recognizable external symbols to suggest that it is a church. They cannot have a church anywhere except on a narrow side street. Protestant churches are not allowed to make any public announcement of their services. No bulletin board is permitted. Neither the name of the church nor even the bare word, 'Church,' can appear externally on the building.

"They cannot really publish anything—that is, print it and offer it for general circulation outside their own circle. During 1950 they petitioned Franco for permission to 'print Bibles, hymn books and devotional and other theological literature restricted to use in their churches.' Such permission was not granted.

"They cannot open a new church, or reopen an old one that has been closed, or hold services in a private house, without first securing specific permission from the authorities. Churches closed in the early stages of the Franco regime are still closed. There is a list of twenty congregations still waiting for permission to hold services in private houses. Local authorities which are completely under the control of the Roman bishops are the most difficult of all to agree to such permissions.



"They cannot conduct schools even for their own children. For Protestant children the only choice is between Catholic schools and public schools in which Catholic religious instruction is part of the compulsory course. They compel Protestants who had received Roman Catholic baptism in infancy (i. e., converts or the children of converts) to come under the Roman jurisdiction for marriage. They cannot go through a civil marriage without permission of the local priest, who almost invariably refuses.

"The authorities refuse to grant them any of the benefits from 'public social assistance' except upon conditions impossible for them to meet conscientiously. Protestants are not permitted to bury their dead with religious services in civil cemeteries with any assurance of security from interruption and desecration.

"Then consider the following item: 'At the Khyber Pass, on the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, matters of religious as well as of political significance claim attention. No Christian worker is permitted to cross the border into the land of the Afghans. Save for a service from the Book of Common Prayer read by the British ambassador for Western residents in Kabul, the capital city, no expression of Christianity is allowed in Afghanistan. A few colporteurs, posing as business men, have gained entrance in the past, but as soon as their real purpose was discovered they were expelled.'

"It will be seen that in the one case it is a so-called Catholic country that will not tolerate any other faith, and in the other a Mohammedan. The attitude of these two countries is typical of others of the same religious persuasion. But it should be noted that Afghanistan is in very fact a Mohammedan country, whereas Spain is not actually a Catholic country. A Roman Catholic news service quotes the Archbishop of Valencia, in Spain, as having said in the course of a statement in *Ecclesia*, the official organ of Spanish Catholic Action: 'The immense majority of the workers are not with the Church; they do not love the Church; they even hate the Church.' As most of the Spanish people are workers, this statement shows how the Church stands with the masses of that nation. It follows that the intolerant Spanish laws referred to above are being enforced in the interest of a minority—the Roman Church."

We join in the petition with which Rev. Darsow concludes his article, "Lord, preserve to us the freedom of conscience, of religion, and of the exercise of religion that is ours!" But we add, "Lord, grant also to the people in Spain, Afghanistan, and other countries the priceless boon of religious liberty."

P. M. B.



**EUROPEAN FREE CONFERENCES IN 1951**

Free conferences will again be held between theologians of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod and European theologians. According to present plans the American theologians will meet with Lutheran theologians in England, with representatives of the Alsatian Free Church at Strassbourg, and with pastors and theologians of the German Lutheran churches. Two such conferences are to be held at Bad Boll in Southwestern Germany and one conference with the theologians of the Russian Zone in Berlin. The following program was prepared by American theologians and approved by the representatives of the participating German theologians.

Theme: "*The Living Word of Christ and the Response of the Congregation*"

(*Der redende Christus und die hoerende Gemeinde*)

Topic for the First Day: *God's Activity as Revelation.*

First Essay: Topics in the realm of natural revelation, such as God's activity in nature and in history; God's judgments and visitations; creation, conservation, government. In this activity God reveals Himself as the *Deus absconditus*.

Second Essay: God's Revelation in the history and institutions of Israel.

This is a progressive unfolding of the *Heilsgeschichte* as seen in the Abrahamic promise, the history of the covenant people, the sacrificial cultus. In His activity in the *Heilsgeschichte* God is the *Deus revelatus*.

Topic for the Second Day: *Christ and the Scriptures.*

First Essay: The Old Testament is Christ's witness concerning His person and work.

Second Essay: The incarnate Jesus Christ is the *Word* of God and God's final revelation to man.

Topic for the Third Day: *Christ Addresses His Congregation in His Threefold Office.*

First Essay: Christ's prophetic office.

Second Essay: Christ's sacerdotal office.

Third Essay: Christ's royal office.

Topic for the Fourth Day: *The Word of God and the Holy Scriptures, the Doctrine of Inspiration.*

First Essay: A definition of Inspiration; the revelation is necessarily laid down in the Scriptures; Inspiration is not an *a priori*



doctrinal formulation, but an article of faith; Christ's attitude toward the Scriptures.

Second Essay: How does Scripture manifest itself as the Word of God? It does this in its perspicuity, authority, sufficiency, infallibility, objectivity, and in its collative and effective power, since Christ is there speaking and acting.

Topic for Fifth Day: *Scripture as a Living Witness.*

First Essay: The Holy Scriptures as *viva vox evangelii*.

Second Essay: Historical criticism, de-mythologizing theory.

Topics for Sixth Day: *The Living Word of Christ and Contemporary Proclamation.*

First Essay: In what way does Christ speak through the ministry today?

Second Essay: In what way does Christ speak through the Church today?

The general theme and the individual topics were selected in the light of the tensions which came to the surface in previous free conferences. It becomes evident that the two partners in the conferences approached the term "the Word of God" differently. The theological situation in America compelled the theologians of the Missouri Synod to emphasize the inerrancy of Scripture. This emphasis may have created the impression as though the Missouri theologians approached a theory of Inspiration which is similar to the Roman Catholic and the Calvinistic theory and which is apt to view the Scriptures merely as a series of independent dogmatical statements. Due to the influence of dialectical theology, the German theologians had emphasized the dynamic character of the Scriptures. This divergent orientation may at times have resulted in a tension, at least in the danger that the representatives "spoke past each other." The committee felt, furthermore, that in distinction from Reformed theology the Lutheran concept of the Word will undoubtedly play a role not only in American Lutheranism, but in world Lutheranism. It is in this area where Lutheranism must make a distinct contribution to theological thinking on the ecumenical level.

It is evident from the program that there is one leading thought running through the entire program, namely, the Christological basis for all theological discussion. All discussions are to center about Christ and His relation to the *ecclesia*. The committee is of the conviction that the program for 1951 is extremely rich and meaningful. We sincerely trust that all participants in the proposed free conference will be enriched and strengthened in their faith.



Dr. Behnken has asked the following to serve as "the Bad Boll commissioners"; Dr. H. Harms is to serve as chairman; Professors P. M. Bretscher, M. J. Naumann, and Walter Roehrs as the theological discussion leaders; Dr. A. H. Grumm will serve as lecturer on pastoral and congregational methods; Professor Walter Buszin, whom Concordia Publishing House has asked to contact the significant musical publishers, will also participate in the discussions. F. E. M.

#### LET NOT THE CHURCH BE CHARGED

Under this heading Dr. H. Hamann, in the *Australasian Theological Review* (Vol. XXI, No. 4, December, 1950) discusses the question how much the Church owes to students who prepare themselves for the pastoral or teaching ministry.\* The writer is not opposed to any support given to needy students. Nor does he object to the principle of keeping the charges for board and other services as low as possible. But he believes that it is not in keeping with the best interests of the Church to transfer the "welfare state" idea to the student body at its colleges. In particular, he is at variance with a proposal with which recently the Toowoomba Convention of the Australian Church had to deal. According to this memorial there was to be returned to theological students, upon graduation, all money paid by them (or their parents) for board during the years of preparation. He adds a word of praise for such parents as "count themselves happy in supplying workers for their Church at some sacrifice to themselves" and

\* *The Australian Lutheran* (March 7, 1951) reports that on March 7, 1951, Professor Hamann celebrated his silver jubilee as professor at Concordia College, Adelaide, S. A. Together with Rev. G. Kuechle he was installed by President Janzow in the Flinders Street Lutheran Church on March 7, 1926. While Dr. Hamann was called as the fifth professor at Concordia College, Pastor Kuechle was to serve as city missionary for the Port Adelaide and coastal districts. In January, 1928, Pastor Kuechle, now serving a congregation in Cleveland, Ohio, returned to the United States. Professor Hamann, however, continued his teaching ministry with signal success. Since 1939 he has been principal, or headmaster, of the school. His profound, scholarly articles in the *Australasian Theological Review* have extended his influence also beyond Australia. In Australia Dr. Hamann has done much to clarify doctrinal issues, and he has performed most valuable work on his Church's Commission on Doctrinal Unity. At his induction as professor President Janzow preached on the text: "The blessing of the Lord be upon you; we bless you in the name of the Lord" (Ps. 129:8). As the *Australian Lutheran* greeted the esteemed professor with this solemn benediction, so shall this be our greeting and benediction as we rejoice with him and his friends at the blessings which God bestowed upon his long and rich ministry of forty-four years (1907—1951). May the Lord of the Church extend his service for many more years to His glory.



stresses the thought that whenever students or their parents are able to provide for the expenditure at college, the Church should not offer assistance that is not needed.

He draws this conclusion especially from 1 Tim. 5:3-16, where St. Paul makes provision of congregational support for such widows only as are destitute or in need. Some commentators hold that the official position of these widows was analogous to that of the elders; but whether this is true or not, the Apostle's advice is clearly set forth in v. 16, where he writes: "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." Dr. Hamann adds: "These widows, too, the congregation should not be expected to support while there were relatives upon whom that duty naturally devolved."

To the question "What has the support of widows to do with the training of church workers?" Dr. Hamann replies: "More than appears on the surface; for a careful study of St. Paul's words in vv. 4, 8, and 16 will probably convince most theologians that he is not merely formulating a principle for the occasion in hand, but is applying to that occasion a principle of much wider and more general validity. It is this, put very briefly: Christians should not expect the Church to do for them—and this includes members of their family—what they can well do themselves. This is, of course, also an axiom rooted in the normal Christian's sense of equity and responsibility; that is, in the last analysis, in the law of Christian love. The Church is not to be 'charged' or 'burdened' to save the pocketbooks of those to whom God has given ample means."

The principle here set forth is one of the greatest importance also for us in America, where socialized views of free and ready help by some higher power are imperceptibly being absorbed by workers of all kinds, including church workers. It is true, college courses for the pastoral or teaching ministry today demand much more by way of expenditure than they did many years ago when "things were still cheap," but the student who ruggedly works his way through college and parents who take pride in seeing their sons through college without church help, will derive from their self-sacrificing devotion lasting benefits in self-reliance and self-respect which they will never regret. To help persons who need no help is certainly as harmful (if not more so) as not to help those who need help. As a rule, too, it is not the student or parent in the higher bracket that too readily sues for assistance.

J. T. MUELLER



**PROBLEMS OF A TRANSLATOR**

*The Ecumenical Review* (April) contains an English translation of Professor Peter Brunner's penetrating German article on the Toronto declaration regarding the nature of the Church. What interests us, at this moment, is not the article itself, though we sincerely commend the Heidelberg professor's article for careful reading, but the difficulties which the translator of the article encountered and which he describes in the preface of his translation. We are submitting his analysis for two reasons: 1. it demonstrates how difficult it is for one not thoroughly trained in the German language to interpret it correctly; 2. it sheds light on problems encountered by the serious translator of the Holy Scriptures. The significant paragraphs in the preface are the following:

"The title of the article by Dr. Brunner is *Pneumatischer Realismus*, which we have translated 'The Realism of the Holy Spirit.'

"German theology has the advantage that it is able to make use of words derived from the Greek *pneuma*, from the Teutonic *Geist*, and from the Latin *spiritus*. Contemporary English is content to use only derivatives from the Latin; these have to cover a very wide range of meaning, and often the precise sense is given only by the context. This does not cause difficulty to the English reader, but may perplex others, who are perhaps not sure of the exact difference between 'spiritual' and 'spirituous.'

"In this article, Prof. Brunner makes use of all three sets of terms. *Spiritualistisch* is used in a somewhat pejorative sense; 'spiritual' is not infrequently used in modern English to indicate the higher faculties in man, without any specifically religious reference. *Geistlich* or *geistig* refers to the inner spiritual experiences of men, which may be, and often truly are, an experience of the working of God, inwardly felt and realized. *Pneumatisch* occurs where there is direct reference to the operation of the Holy Spirit. How are these distinctions to be represented in English, without either the creation of an intolerable ecumenical jargon, or the wearisomeness of lengthy paraphrase?

"'Pneumatic' or any such form is automatically excluded, since to the ordinary intelligent reader it suggests nothing but motor-tires or workmen's drills. Again, it is unfortunate that modern English has been impoverished by the loss of an excellent and classical word. In the sixteenth century, no one would have had any doubts as to the meaning of the phrases 'ghostly counsel,' 'our ghostly enemy.' But we have felt that to translate the title of this article 'Ghostly Realism' might have seemed strange even in these days of the efflorescence of the Christian paradox.



"We have found it best to fall back upon a simple typographical device. In most contexts, 'spiritual' has been used to represent *geistlich*. Where the author has written *pneumatisch*, we have rendered this 'of the Spirit' or 'in the Spirit,' sometimes with and sometimes without the adjective 'Holy.' Where this has seemed clumsy, we have used 'Spiritual,' the use of the capital indicating that the reference is directly to the work of the Holy Spirit, and not to the results of His work as inwardly experienced by men. It is hoped that this approximate method may be found both fair to the writer and intelligible to the readers of the article."

The translation which follows the preface does full justice to Professor Brunner's article, and we cannot help complimenting the translator for a difficult job well done. In fact, the translator has, without of course intending to do so, further persuaded us that a bit of the ingenuity displayed by the translator of Professor Brunner's article might prove eminently useful to those engaged in the difficult task of translating the Holy Scriptures. In this notion we are even further confirmed by the splendid articles in the April issue of *The Bible Translator* (published by The United Bible Societies, London), in which we read with much interest those titled "Lexical Problems in Shipibo Mark," "The Semitic Background of the New Testament," and "Psochee in the New Testament." There is no last word in any translation of the Bible. Therefore the job of the lexicographer and interpreter must continue to the end of time. Therefore, also, no student of the Holy Scriptures will ever be able to express in his language the full meaning of the sacred text. It is rather said of him, "His delight *is* in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law *doth* he meditate day and night." But doing this, he has the promise, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

P. M. B.

#### HAS THE CHURCH FAILED?

The "Information Service of the Lutheran World Federation" (published at No. 17, route de Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland) of March 12, 1951, publishes a letter by a layman in which this apparently very intelligent and conscientious Christian replies to the charge, so frequently made in our day, that "the churches have failed." What he writes is worth considering by all earnest and honest church members. Quoted in part, he says:

When you say: "The Church has failed," you mean that the churchmen, the clergy, including the top leaders, have failed. But the Church



does not only consist of the clergy. Should not you lawyers and sociologists be the first people to know that the clergy are no more than the officials of a community? They can no more exist without the community than the latter can exist without them. What is "the Church"? We are the Church, and we have no right to criticize it without criticizing ourselves as well. We complain when churches become clericalized and dead, and we are right. But whose fault is it? Is it the pastors' fault? They suffer more than others from developments such as these. Is it the laymen's fault, because we have not done all that we should? The answer is very simple and has been given many times: every church, as every community, has the officials it deserves. Because this simple truth is being ignored, democracy is dying, and totalitarianism is growing and menacing to strangle humanity. Those who blame everything on the officials prepare the way for this process. The officials have failed because citizens and laymen fled from their responsibility. . . .

Insofar as churches are human communities, there can, of course, be no doubt that they have failed and that they will always fail. All that is human always fails, whether it be a totalitarian state or a church body that trusts only in human organization. All things that are based only on men show up the frailty of man. . . . But a lawyer like you should know that churches are more than simply human organizations and that, though "churches" may fail, this does not mean that the Church has failed. The Church does not fail or succeed, for it is not an institution which succeeds and fails according to the abilities of its officials. The Church of which the Third Article of the Creed speaks, can neither fail nor conquer the world by human power. It is something radically different from the "churches" and yet connected with them on a level which your criticism does not reach. . . . It is not the "churches" that have failed, even less the "Church," nor the officials or representatives, but every single one of us, every layman and every pastor and — last but not least — every critic.

J. T. MUELLER

#### THE LUTHERAN FREE CHURCH AND THE UNION QUESTION

Under this heading, Rev. T. O. Burntvedt, in the *Lutheran Outlook* (April, 1951) states with pleasing frankness and adequate detail why the Lutheran Free Church does not favor organic union with other Lutheran church bodies. It is, of course, not opposed to a Lutheran church federation, nor are its resolutions on Lutheran union of 1949 unalterable. But, as the writer states, in their origin, their doctrines, their polity, and their general view of large church organizations the Lutheran Free Church people find so many things that are irreconcilable with organic church union that they cannot favor it now, though they may be called isolationists, doctrinal indifferentists, pietists, and



what not. In the past their associations with other Lutheran groups have not been happy experiences. Their church polity aims at decentralization of power and is opposed to domination of minorities by majorities. Their special emphases on evangelism, lay activity, simplicity of worship, and the like are such as would rather separate this group than unite it with others. Finally, it is the tradition of the Lutheran Free Church not to participate in doctrinal discussion with other Lutherans, since it holds that unreserved acceptance of the Lutheran Confessions constitutes a sufficient basis for fellowship and cooperation. The article closes with the words:

"Finally it should be stated that we have pastors and lay people who are not convinced that one Lutheran Church in America, organized into one organic body, is the pearl of great price which we at all cost should seek to obtain. Neither are they convinced that Christ had one such organized church body in mind when in His high-priestly prayer He prayed that they all might be one. These people point to the Church of Rome as one organized body, and they doubt that another similar organization of Lutheran Churches or Protestant Churches is desirable."

While many may not agree with everything Dr. Burntvedt says in his brief for his Church, all certainly should admire the candor with which he states and defends his views. If that candor prevails in all Lutheran churches in our country, then the chances of church union are far greater than if fear of public opinion should force individuals or church groups to hypocritical silence. In the last paragraph, which we have quoted in full, there are expressed a number of convictions which also many Lutherans outside the Lutheran Free Church share. Totalitarian Rome, with its almost uncanny organization, may well serve as a warning to Protestants who see the salvation of Protestantism merely in greater organization and more effective centralization. There can be no doubt, too, that Christ in the words recorded John 17:20-21 prayed for the realization of the *Una Sancta*, the ingathering of God's elect through faith in Christ, and not for any external, organized church body, upon which the Apostles in the New Testament never insisted. They always left intact the basic unit of congregation and pastor and inculcated only unity in doctrine and church practice.

J. T. MUELLER

#### CHURCH AND STATE IN BERLIN-BRANDENBURG

*The Ecumenical Review* (April) contains a summary report by Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin on the problem which the Evangelical Church of Germany has had to face within the last year in its relation



to the civil authorities. From his report we are submitting the following thought-provoking paragraphs:

"We all know with what force the waves of political development have broken in upon the domain of our Church. The biggest of all the political questions in recent months does, of course, affect us only very indirectly: that is, whether and to what extent the West of Germany is to come within the great arming of the western world. Our role has been limited to the pronouncements of the Council of the Evangelical Church in Germany on this question. The Council has never said anything but what the Church is in duty bound to say as a Church of Jesus Christ, namely, the most desperately serious exhortations to peace and reunion. I repeat, bound by an inner compulsion. It is not the task of the Church to assist a municipality in the posting of its police, but it is its task to help see that police action needs to be resorted to as little as possible. In the same way, it is no affair of the Church to decide whether a country needs armed forces or should allow itself to be integrated into military schemes covering the whole world, but it is the Church's duty to entreat the statesmen of the world not to let things get as far as bloodshed, and for its own part foster a spirit which will make it inconceivable for men once again to take another's lives by the million, simply because inter-State competition for dominion deems it necessary.

"The world is today falling apart into two great spheres of power. . . . We can understand that the political authorities demand of our German nation that it shall take a decision. But it is not the Church's responsibility to take political decisions. It must never forget that on both sides there are human beings, men for whom the Lord Christ died, as much for the one as for the other. It must concern itself with seeing whether the Gospel can be preached in freedom on both sides, and truth and love all over the world break and hamper the evil counsels of human self-seeking.

"That does not mean that the Church must hold its peace, let alone give its assent, to everything that is going on in the world. But it does mean that the Church must not allow itself to be constantly overtaxed by the questions of political affairs; it must live to perform the duty laid upon it and it alone by its Lord and Master. . . .

"In a Christian church, personal abuse, as constantly levelled at us, must not provoke either irritation or surprise. Where assertions are made which are simply unfounded, they must be corrected, if it is worth it. But it is also laid down for us in the Sermon on the Mount that to be reviled is part of the blessedness of Christ's disciples. And



for Christians there can be absolutely no question of injured dignity, when our Lord has said, in the fifth chapter of St. John, that we are not to concern ourselves with honor before men, but with the 'honor that cometh from God only.' We shall therefore rejoice each time that we are able to extend a hand in friendship to those who have spoken ill of us, as if nothing had happened and without laying down any conditions. We have had occasion during these last few weeks to observe this Christian duty of ours, and hope that we may have it again in the future.

"That applies to our pastors, too. We do not, certainly, regard it as admissible that pastors should attack their own church leaders in the political press. That they have sufficient opportunity to do at our Synods and in our church periodicals, and the church administration has, I think, proved conclusively enough that it bears no grudge against any pastor or elder, who may make abundant and vigorous use of such an opportunity. If I have a request to make, it is only that such attacks should be directed as far as possible against myself and not against others of our governing body—only not in the political Press. That would be counter to what is written in I Corinthians 6. And the leaders of a church cannot show indulgence on that point.

"The other item is that for us who carry in our hearts a heritage from Martin Luther it is an obligation to maintain a relation of loyalty to those set in authority over us, even when the measures that they take may bear heavily upon us. It will therefore always be a satisfaction to us if we succeed in reaching agreement on any point with the Government to which we owe allegiance. And when we do not so succeed, at any rate nobody shall ever hear a disparaging or spiteful utterance concerning authority from us.

"But we cannot renounce the right to express in all frankness the things that weigh upon the Christian conscience, which those for whom we bear pastoral responsibility are not in a position to express for themselves. We believe, too, that we are thereby doing what is best for the State system. For without truthfulness and candor on both sides there can be no lasting fellowship between men."

The above carefully worded utterances by Bishop Otto Dibelius suggest that he and other church leaders in the Berlin-Brandenburg area find themselves in a very difficult position. Surely, one cannot help but breathe a prayer that the Lord of the Church might so resolve the tensions between East and West and Church and State that they will issue in peace and not in war, and that Christians in the East and in the West might lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.

P. M. B.



## THE THEOLOGY OF NEWTON

*Theology Today* (April, 1951) reviews in connection with a book recently published on this subject,\* the theology of Sir Isaac Newton. We read in the article: "It is well known that Newton wrote a number of essays on religious and Biblical subjects, but biographers have mostly ignored this side of this versatile career or taken them as the scattered musings of his old age. The editor of this latest account traces in his Introduction the history of these manuscripts, which for various reasons were not prepared for publication, and gives a brief discussion of certain emphases in Newton's theology. Selections from some of the more important of these writings are included in the volume.

"Theologically it appears that Newton was an anti-Trinitarian with leanings toward both the Arianism and Socinianism of his day. He felt that the 'homousios' controversy in Nicaea in A. D. 325 introduced a false and misleading note. Implying a negative answer, he asked: '[Did] Christ send his apostles to preach metaphysics to the unlearned common people?' The Christological dispute was not understood at Nicaea, 'nor ever since.' And, he added, 'What cannot be understood is no object of belief.'

"Newton had no use whatever for Athanasius. He regarded the defender of orthodoxy as an unprincipled conniver, an ecclesiastical politician of the worst sort. In the religious issues of his own day Newton was a Protestant as over against Romanism and a Puritan as over against the Church of England. Although it has been repeatedly suggested that Newton owed much to the mystical writings of Jacob Boehme, the editor of this work doubts the connection.

"The significance of all this is not in the intrinsic value of the various theological essays. They are not particularly interesting or suggestive in themselves. The value of such a study as this is to confirm the many-sided genius of Newton who, in the midst of his most abstract mathematical problems, turned with enthusiasm and conviction to considerations of technical theological science. As a theologian, Newton was certainly not an important thinker. Perhaps the reason was that he never succeeded in relating in his own mind his scientific and his theological studies. 'Religion and philosophy [natural philosophy, i. e., science] are,' he wrote, 'to be preserved distinct. We are not to introduce divine revelations into philosophy nor philosophical opinions into religion.'"

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\* *Newton: Theological Manuscripts.* By H. McLachlan. Beacon Press, 25 Beacon St., Boston 8, Mass. \$1.75.



We shall not pass judgment on the last statement of the writer, for to us the last quotation from Newton seems to be correct. But the review of Newton's theological opinions is certainly worth noting. Christian apologetics often quotes Sir Isaac Newton as a scientist who was deeply religious and championed faith against unbelief. It is beyond doubt that he was not in agreement with modern materialistic nihilism, for very definitely he believed in a creative and sustaining divine Providence. But if the judgment of the writer based upon Newton's theological manuscripts is true, then also his case proves, as do so many others, that it is a matter of folly to appeal to any prominent scientist as such for verification of Christian theology. It is not his eminence as a scientist that makes true or false what he says; it is only when a scientist is a professed Christian believer that his opinions on doctrinal matters are of weight and worthy to be heard. There is no doubt that Newton was one of the most brilliant thinkers and scientists of our modern era; nevertheless, theologically he championed the shallow deism of his age and took issue with the doctrinal decisions of the Church on the flimsiest grounds. The Christian believer surely cannot respect the theological opinion of a person whose religious norm is so superficial a principle as this: "What cannot be understood is no object of belief."

J. T. MUELLER

**BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"**

In an address to a **Preaching Mission Workshop** at Hamma Divinity School, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry told his audience that Protestants have placed too much emphasis on the preacher. He said: "It is the Holy Ghost who must do the preaching, through a minister submerged, made humble. . . . We Protestants in general have placed so much emphasis on the preacher as to leave little opportunity for the Holy Spirit to work. The plain and obvious result has been a dilution of our own effort and the prolific rise of the sects that proclaim the Holy Ghost to the exclusion of all else."

The National Federation of Lutheran Clubs adopted this platform at its recent convention in Indianapolis: (1) to develop and promote Christian fellowship; (2) to bring about closer co-operation among all Lutherans; (3) to foster and support public relations programs; (4) to promote and assist youth activities and charitable objectives; (5) to support and initiate movements to bring about better government and civic conditions.

The Federation stressed its intersynodical character by choosing an outstanding member of the United Lutheran Church, Dr. Clarence C. Stoughton, president of Wittenberg College, as Lutheran of the year, and by electing a Missouri Synod Lutheran, William Schmidt of Indianapolis, as its new president.

The Southern Baptist churches east of the Mississippi launched a fifteen-day Simultaneous Evangelistic Crusade at the beginning of April. During the first ten days of the crusade an estimated 165,000 persons were added to the congregations.

The National Association of Evangelicals adopted a resolution protesting against "frivolous or carnal" television programs and commercials which "promote the use of alcoholic beverages and encourage other habits injurious to the youth." The resolution demanded laws "requiring television to present programs of education, artistic culture, and constructive entertainment and that the apparent monopoly of liquor, beer, and tobacco interests over this form of domestic entertainment be broken up."

A bill to require daily Bible reading in the California public schools was referred by the Assembly Education Committee to the State Board of Education for a two-year study. The study was proposed by the Assembly Education Committee after it had deadlocked 11-11 on the measure.



Convinced that the average clergyman has little idea of what his church members really believe, the Rev. W. Leigh Ribble sent questionnaires to the 550 communicants of Grace and Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Richmond, Va. Following each question were multiple answers from which the communicant was asked to choose the one which best expressed his own view. The answers on the 150 questionnaires which have come back ranged all the way from strict orthodoxy to atheism. The rector does not think this is a condition peculiar to his church, but that it is "fairly typical of Protestantism." He feels that the Church has been neglecting doctrine while putting great emphasis on "teaching people how to be good church members."

The Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board has raised more than \$6,000,000 during 1950. Dr. M. Theron Rankin, Executive Secretary, said that \$275,000 has been earmarked for the purpose of sending out 100 new missionary appointees this year. The greatest single area of advance has been in Japan, where there are now 74 Southern Baptist missionaries. Plans are to bring this total to 100 before the end of the year.

The University of Delaware has imposed a ban on campus sectarian religious services. The ruling of the university bars sectarian, though it places no restrictions on interdenominational, services.

Dr. Calvin Schnucker, professor of Rural Church Work at the University of Dubuque, Iowa, told a group of pastors of the Wisconsin Council of Churches who met at Madison that the rural church has an "important mission" in strengthening the family and centering its program in the family. Dr. Schnucker charged that for the past twenty-five years the rural church "has sought to destroy the family either by ignoring it or by advocating the things that destroy it." Mechanization, rapid transportation, emphasis on money and on college degrees, have all been factors in the family disintegration program, he contended.

Mr. Hughes, an atheist and an alumnus of the University of Minnesota, contends that it is illegal for the institution to permit religious organizations to use university property for their meetings. The complaint which he filed for criminal action against the university on the grounds that it is violating the separation of Church and State has been rejected by the United States Government. C. U. Landrum, United States District Attorney in St. Paul, said it is "the view of the Department of Justice that action in the matter would not be desirable and none is contemplated."



The Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church opened a general office at Modra Slovakia in the presence of Zdenek Fierlinger, Minister of Church Affairs in the Czechoslovak Communist government. Mr. Fierlinger called upon Protestant churches and clergymen to keep abreast of what is going on in the world and take their stand on the side of the "forces of progress and peace." It was announced that the Church would shortly adopt a new constitution expressing loyalty to the Prague regime.

At a conference attended by representatives of the Anglican Church and the Lutheran churches of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, a special committee was formed to promote closer relations between the Church of England and the Scandinavian Lutheran churches. Five of the twelve delegates belonged to the Anglican Church, three each to the Norwegian and Danish churches, and one to the Finnish Church. For the past ten or twelve years the Anglican Church has maintained connections with the Lutheran churches of Sweden and Finland. Among the members of the committee are Dr. Eivind Berggrav, former Primate of the Norwegian Lutheran Church; Prof. Regin Prenter of Denmark, chairman of the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran World Federation; and Prof. S. L. Greenslade of Durham, England.

The Home Mission Committee of the Methodist Church in England is alarmed at the increasing number of villages without a Methodist church. During the past five years 488 chapels were sold and a still larger number closed for services.

King George VI of England will present a silver cross and a pair of candlesticks to the Washington Cathedral as a token of gratitude on behalf of British service men and women who worshiped there during World War II. The altar plate will be dedicated at a service in St. Paul's Cathedral in London on July 4, at which time General Dwight D. Eisenhower will present a scroll to St. Paul's in memory of American servicemen buried in England. Subsequently, the altar plate will be installed at Washington Cathedral in colorful ceremonies, to which President Truman, the British Ambassador, church leaders, and other dignitaries will be invited.

Tours of Europe, Latin America, Alaska, and the southern United States for church members have been announced by several leading Protestant denominations. The tours are aimed at providing firsthand contact with missionary work, places of historic Christian interest, and



current religious, social, political, and economic conditions. The largest number of tours is the series planned in connection with the Eighth Ecumenical Methodist Conference to be held in Oxford, England, August 28 to September 7. Itineraries will include Methodist historical shrines in Great Britain and visits to various European countries. Centers of Protestant work in the southern United States, Mexico, and Caribbean countries will be visited by touring groups sponsored by agencies of the Disciples of Christ and the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Other Presbyterian tours will cover South America and Alaska.

The German Evangelical Tent Mission, which was barred by the Nazi regime, will resume its activities this summer. Three big tents—one of them a gift from American Protestants—will tour such west German centers as Wiesbaden, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Stuttgart, Wuerzburg, Osnabrueck, as well as parts of the Soviet Zone.

Celebrations to commemorate the 1900th anniversary of the introduction of Christianity in Greece by St. Paul are being observed this summer. The celebrations were originally scheduled for last year but were postponed to coincide with the Homecoming Year of the Greeks proclaimed by King Paul. This year Greeks living in all parts of the world have been invited to return for a visit to their homeland.

The Lower House and the House of Counselors in Japan has embodied legal guarantees of freedom for Christian churches in the new Religious Corporation Law. One of the most important clauses in the law deals with freedom of religious belief, worship, and propaganda. It says: "Freedom of faith guaranteed in the constitution must be respected in all phases of government. Therefore no provision in this law shall be construed as restricting any individual, group, or organization from disseminating teachings, observing ceremonies or functions, or conducting other religious acts on the basis of said guaranteed freedom."

In an address to two hundred members and guests attending the twentieth anniversary of the Catholic Poetry Society of America, the Most Rev. James H. Griffiths, auxiliary bishop of New York, urged poets and other writers to strive for intelligibility, reality, and the positive in their work. Pointing to a "descending spiral" toward godlessness in the modern world, Bishop Griffiths said he believed contemporary atheism was built upon an escape from reality.



The French Roman Catholic hierarchy has issued an urgent appeal to the French government for "immediate" State aid to church schools. The bishops maintained their appeal was especially necessary now because the rising birth rate had caused a large increase in the number of school-age children.

Dutch and Belgium Roman Catholics have donated ten motor chapels for service to displaced German Catholics. Each chapel is equipped with an altar and loud-speaker and has storage space for relief supplies to be distributed after the holding of services. The motor chapels and their missionary personnel have been sent into the dioceses of Bamberg, Fulda, Hildesheim, Mainz, Muenster, Osnabruock, Paderborn, and Rothenburg. One of the chapels will serve displaced Catholics in the Soviet Zone.

*Osservatore Romano*, Vatican newspaper, endorsed President Truman's dismissal of General Douglas MacArthur as a decision motivated by "a desire for peace," even though it "might even be against his own popularity."