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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE JEWISH CONCEPTION OF "EBED JHWH"

In the *Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* (Sept. 1, 1957) Professor Martin Wittenberg of Neuendettelsau discusses the various shades of motivation which Jewish teachers find in the expression "the Servant of the Lord." Beginning with the thought that we can understand the O. T. only in the light of the N. T. he shows how Jewish and Christian interpretation needs must differ radically, especially also on the central passages supporting the Christian faith. All Jewish interpreters refer the expression עֶבֶד יְהוָה to the people of Israel (cf. Is. 42:1 ff.; 49:5 ff.; etc.). They vary, however, in their motivation of Israel's service as the Lord's servant. The liberal English Jew Leo Baeck (d. Nov. 2, 1956) regards Israel as the Lord's servant inasmuch as His chosen people is a covenant and a light of the Gentiles (42:6). Martin Buber, who on Feb. 8, 1958, will be 80 years old, apparently distinguishes between the עֶבֶד and Israel, though also Israel is the Lord's servant. The prophet himself is the prototype (*Vorgestalt*) of the acting messiah, or servant. The servant is the core (*Kern*) of faithless Israel. This core remains true to God. Through this core Israel in the appointed hour returns to the Lord and becomes the people of God. Another Jewish teacher, Friedrich Thieberger, refers the expression עֶבֶד יְהוָה to the exiled "sons of prophets" who regarded themselves as servants of the Lord, bore their sufferings willingly, and so became redeemers of Israel. In a subsequent article Professor Wittenberg promises to discuss the meaning of עֶבֶד יְהוָה as understood by Christ, His apostles, and the early Christian Church. To those who reject Christ and His divine interpretation the O. T. certainly remains an obscure and, in many ways, meaningless book.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

IN MEMORIAM: MONSIGNOR RONALD A. KNOX

The *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (October 1957), under this heading, reports the death of R. A. Knox (August 24, 1957), who has become known throughout the world by his new translation of the Vulgate into modern English. He was born on February 17, 1888, as the fourth son of the Anglican bishop of Manchester, Dr. E. A. Knox. Having studied at Eton and Balliol College, Oxford, he, in 1912, took orders in the Church of England. Five years later he joined the Roman

Catholic Church and in 1939 began his translation of the Bible at the request of the English hierarchy. He finished the translation of the New Testament in 1945 and that of the Old Testament in 1949. The writer of the memorial, Robert A. Dyson, S. J., professor of O. T. exegesis, Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, comments in praise of his version: "His translations were widely hailed as the clearest and most modern made in English." But he adds also criticism; for example: "His work, however, is not without defects. He overplays inversion. Occasionally he handled the text with unnecessary freedom and laid himself open to the charge of having produced not a genuine translation, but a good paraphrase. . . . One will be slow to admit the same competency in his work of translating the O. T. He did not bring to this task that profound knowledge of Hebrew philology, textual criticism, archeology, and Semitic psychology that is demanded. . . . He says . . . I have translated from the Vulgate, with constant reference to the 'Masoretic text,' but a perusal of the translation leads to the conclusion that the M. T. served very little purpose. It is scarcely reflected in the rendering itself. . . . Even the treatment of the Vulgate itself is uncritical to a certain extent. Consequently, one would be reluctant to use Msgr. Knox's translation in the theological lecture room or on the public platform with non-Catholic scholars. But . . . the main purpose of his task has been well-achieved; his translations will reach more people and influence more lives than anything else he did."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

A JESUIT CONVOCATION

A convocation of Jesuits, summoned by the Vatican, is always news not only because this is a rare event but because it involves so many trained specialists of the Roman Church. Some few months ago Jesuits from all over the world assembled in Rome to hear themselves severely criticized on a number of points by no less an authority than Pope Pius XII. While no one except the delegates themselves can know fully what went on in the various sessions, there is enough information in the public releases from Rome to suggest what major issues were discussed.

For one thing, the Pope's strong insistence on the monarchical structure of the order most certainly implies that there has been a great deal of agitation within the order for democratizing the organization of the Society of Jesus. This movement must have been spearheaded by the American members of the order, who constitute the largest segment of the society, with no less than 9,000 individual Jesuits in contrast to the 3,400 that Italy has provided.

Some vigorous dissatisfaction with the political ineffectiveness of the Vatican in Italy must also have been expressed by members of the order. For a sizable portion of the news releases dealt with this issue. The political weakness of the Church of Rome in its own native land must certainly be a cause of grave concern at the Vatican, for even the Christian Democratic Party, supported as it has been by the Pope, has on a number of occasions acted independently—and obviously with enthusiasm! Moreover, Italy has become a wide-open opportunity for Protestant church work; no more than 2 per cent of the population professes any interest in the Roman Church. To the vast majority of Italians Rome represents a feudalistic kind of oppression and exploitation that should have been swept away by the Industrial Revolution almost 200 years ago.

Possibly with this in mind Pope Pius appointed a "socius," a strong executive officer, to assist the ailing 67-year-old General Jansen in the administration of the society. The latter has been ill for many years, and the papal appointment of an assistant to the general may have been a move to underline the order's own responsibility for many of the political and ecclesiastical losses that have been sustained by the Church of Rome.

It is not unlikely that members of the society also openly criticized the lack of administrative vigor in the Vatican itself. The present pope has consistently refused to appoint a secretary of state for the Vatican. His failure to make this appointment may be due in part to the fact that he himself has been a diplomat for much of his public life. Furthermore, the chief candidate for the office of secretary of state has always been Cardinal Spellman of New York; and the Italian hierarchy is determined, as long as it can, to prevent an American from occupying such high office.

Now it will be of interest to see whether any new and vigorous activity is undertaken by the Jesuits around the world. America, we may be sure, will be the first country to experience the results of such action. Paradoxically enough, it is this land, with its religious freedom, that has provided the chief source of vision and dedication for Loyola's army.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

COMMUNISM VS. CHRISTIANITY IN KERALA

Hardly had the Communist Party taken over the province of Kerala, India, when it showed its deep-seated hatred of Christianity. Almost at once, in keeping with its philosophy and practice, the party introduced an educational bill which would convert all the schools of that

province into government, that is, party, instruments. And this in an area that is from 25 per cent to 30 per cent Christian, and where 3,170 of its 5,940 schools are privately operated, mostly by Christians.

It should be noted that the communists came to power largely because the Christian churches were divided among themselves. A contributing factor was the failure of churches and individual Christians to give sufficient thought to social and economic factors in the life of the province.

And thereby hangs a tale.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

COMMUNISM VS. CHRISTIANITY IN Breslau

The September 1957 issue of *Die Gemeinde*, a Lutheran publication of Luebeck, Germany, contains a heartbreaking description of a trip through Lower Silesia. Here is a further commentary on what happens to the church under communist control.

Breslau once had many Lutheran churches. In fact, it was once the heart of the Breslau Synod, which is still in fellowship with us. Today the only place that evangelical Christians of Poland can assemble for worship is a little Reformed church in an alley behind the palace. Other evangelical Christians must be content to meet in a dark and dingy basement room behind the Polish National Church (Catholic) known as St. Magdala. In front of the entrance to this uninviting room lie some rubble heaps from the days of World War II.

The author of the article remarks that it takes a strong faith to say, under such conditions: "Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Thine honor dwelleth." In the meantime we get worried when the ushers at church are not wearing carnations.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

LUTHERANS IN ETHIOPIA

No one who attended the LWF assembly in Minneapolis failed to be stirred by the fact that Ethiopia, the land of Luke's Queen Candace, was represented. Our past Ambassador Simonson, a former pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church whom President Eisenhower appointed to serve in Addis Ababa, in a private capacity took a personal interest in strengthening Lutheran interests in that country. As a consequence, Lutheranism is now well established in that country, despite the opposition of the Coptic Church.

Just recently the LWF Executive Committee allocated some more funds for a Lutheran college at Debre Zeit, near the capital city. This is the only church-supported secondary school in all Ethiopia and was formally dedicated by Emperor Haile Selassie a few months ago. The

school is sponsored by the German Hermannsburg Mission, the Norwegian Lutheran Mission, and the Swedish Evangelical Mission.

Not so long ago the American Lutheran Church moved into Ethiopia, too, with the approval and the blessings of the LWF. It will work with the other Lutheran groups in the training of an indigenous clergy. All this raises, in a very pointed way, the whole question of closer co-operation among the Lutherans of the world, including us.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

CLASSES OF NATIONS

Early in 1957 a subcommission of the U.N. Committee on Human Rights submitted an interesting progress report on the elimination of religious discrimination in the nations of the world. The report proposed a threefold division of states: those that have an established religion (a state church or its equivalent); those that recognize several religions; and those that practice the principle of separation of the state from religion.

We submit that there are two other kinds of states to reckon with: (1) the secular nations, which work on the principle of being officially indifferent to all religions, France and Uruguay being notable examples; (2) the demonic states, which set themselves up in the place of God and displace religion with their own totalitarian philosophy. Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan belonged to this category. At present the Soviet Union is the leading demonic state.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

ITEM FROM THE NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

New York.—A proposal which would have permitted the ordination of women to the ministry of the State Lutheran Church of Sweden has been defeated by a vote of 62 to 36, it has been reported here.

The action came at the church's biennial convention held recently in Stockholm. It had the effect of automatically killing a government-sponsored bill, previously introduced in parliament, which would have permitted the ordination of women.

The convocation ruled after having turned down a number of compromise proposals. Previously a 14-man subcommittee of the convocation had overwhelmingly rejected the proposal.

It was reported the delegates in general agreed with Bishop Helge Ljungberg of Stockholm, who argued that even if there were no objections to women ministers on Biblical grounds, "the time is not ripe for this step."

Bishop Bo Giertz of Gothenburg, also speaking in support of rejection of the proposal, was quoted as saying: "If the 60 million Lutherans in the United States, Germany, and England thought that women should be ordained, they would have done it long ago."

He said that the ordination of a few women pastors by State Lutheran Churches of Denmark and Norway was a step "imposed on these churches by the state without their prior consultation."

"We pride ourselves here that the Swedish Church has the legal right to say that it differs from the government when it genuinely considers its welfare is involved," he added.

Support of the government's bill was voiced in debate earlier in parliament by Minister of Justice Ingvar Lindell.

Mr. Lindell said: "Every citizen in this country, be it man or woman, has by law equal rights and should be entitled to the equal right of ministering to the spiritual needs of their fellow citizens provided they have the proper qualifications."

"The era of an exclusively male-dominated world is over," he declared. "If the Church Convocation closes its doors to women priests, then it will undoubtedly cause a rift between the Church and the people, the Church and the State, the Church Convocation and the Riksdag (parliament)."

There are approximately 160 women candidates of theology in Sweden, according to a recent survey. Of these "only a few" were said to be directly engaged in parish work, and all this of a "non-pastoral type."