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## Theological Observer

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### SOME EARLY PHILISTINE HISTORY

Under this heading Dr. G. A. Wainwright in *Vetus Testamentum* (January 1959) supplies additional evidence to his theory, presented in *VT* vi (1956), that Caphtor, the homeland of the Philistines, was in Western Cilicia, known also as Cilicia Tracheia, from where they poured over the Levant to be repulsed by Rameses III about the year 1162 B.C. and finally to settle in Philistia on the coast of Palestine. In the present article he endeavors to show, in particular, that the Philistines were Illyrians, related to the Dardanians, who are mentioned in the Egyptian records, since they belonged to a confederacy defeated by Rameses II at Kadesh, c. 1285 B.C. Strange to say, they may be linked with the Trojans as Allies. Maintaining that the Philistines were Indo-Europeans, he points out that Achish, the king of Gath, is written by the LXX 'Αγχιούς, and this name he connects with Anchises, the father of Aeneas. He, moreover, suggests that the "golden mice" were sacred in the Troad to Apollo Smintheus, a god who sent disease and whose name was of pre-Greek origin. Again, the Philistines fought three men in a chariot as sometimes did the Trojans. So also Goliath's challenge to single combat is reminiscent of the heroes at Troy. While these and other evidences may not be convincing, the writer's investigation is an interesting attempt at finding out who the Philistines really were. The Bible mentions them 286 times and their land 8 times. C. R. Conder in the *International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia* reaches the conclusion that all monumental notices of the Philistines agree with the O. T. statements which make them a Semitic people who had already migrated to Philistia by the time of Abraham. Supposed discrepancies are due to mistakes made by modern archaeologists.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

### THE HISTORICAL ELEMENT IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Under this heading Prof. F. C. Grant of Union Theological Seminary, in *Religion in Life* (Winter 1958—59), maintains that recent archeological discoveries do not discredit the dating and interpretation of the Fourth Gospel current a generation ago. Comparing recent standard works on the Fourth Gospel with the Qumrân Scrolls, he finds himself at variance with the modern early dating of John's Gospel and reaches the conclusion that "the Dead Sea Scrolls do not shed much light upon the Gospels—including John—or upon the life and teaching of



Jesus." Yet they are not without value, for "they help us to realize more fully not only the great varieties in outlook to be found within first-century Judaism, and its penetration by the widespread and popular dualistic Oriental syncretism of the age, but also for the fatal political situation, from which the Qumrân monks had fled but which no Jew could escape anywhere. For eventually it overtook and destroyed not only the Jewish state and the Holy City and the sacred temple but even the remote wilderness refuge at Khirbet Qumrân." Concerning the parallels between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Gospels he comments: "Nor must the parallels, few though fairly close as they are, close our eyes to the vast gulf which separates the Dead Sea Scrolls from the Gospels, chiefly in ethical outlook." Another comment reads: "One wonders if those who are waving banners for a 'revolution in New Testament study' (in consequence of the Qumrân finds) have ever worked through, page by page and reference by reference, such a commentary as Walter Bauer's in Lietzmann's *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*. If one does this, it will be evident to him that the parallels found in the Dead Sea Scrolls are only a few more among hundreds, and not very close ones at that. We already knew many which are far closer than any thus far discovered at Qumrân."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### LUTHERAN SEPARATION — THE OHIO STORY

Under this heading Dr. W. D. Allbeck, professor of historical theology at Hamma Divinity School, presents the geographical, linguistic, and doctrinal problems which Lutheranism faced in Ohio before, and especially after, 1818, when the Ev. Luth. Synod of Ohio and Neighboring States was organized. The geographical difficulties led the synod to be subdivided in 1831 into an Eastern and a Western District, of which the larger body became known as the Joint Synod of Ohio. In this church body a major tension was confessional, some pastors favoring the interconfessional position of the union church in Germany, while others strongly preferred firm adherence in doctrine and practice to what was called confessional Lutheranism. The first party separated to form the short-lived Tuscarawas Synod, while the second ultimately joined the Missouri Synod. The Joint Synod, however, continued, but was soon faced with the question: "What synods are Lutheran?" The answer was to include a condemnation of the General Synod, but this action the Joint Synod was reluctant to take. There was also a demand that the formula of administration in the Lord's Supper be amended by omitting the words: "Jesus said." The English liturgy, issued by the Joint Synod in 1830, used the words: "Take



and eat, this is the body of Christ." But the German liturgy adopted in 1842, in co-operation with the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and the New York Synod, read: "Jesus said, Take and eat, this is My body." The Joint Synod rejected this demand and also passed by with no action a demand that ordinands be required to pledge themselves to all the Lutheran Confessions. While the Joint Synod had no sympathy for the General Synod, it regarded these as demands of extremists. But a few years later the Joint Synod insisted on the Lutheran rather than the Union formula for distribution on the grounds that most of its pastors were using it. In the closing paragraph the author of the well-written article says: "The Joint Synod, standing between the General Synod and the Missouri Synod, considered itself holding the middle ground between 'pseudo-Lutheran' and 'ultra-Lutheran'! . . . And though through the years both extremes have moved toward the center, there is still enough heritage of the sentiments of the past to perpetuate Lutheran separation in America."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

#### BRIEF ITEMS FROM RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

*Chicago.*—Representatives of three merging Lutheran bodies forming The American Lutheran Church voted here to request the new denomination at its constituting convention next year to declare altar and pulpit fellowship with the Lutheran Free Church, which has remained out of the union. A resolution adopted by the Joint Union Committee of the three groups said that the merging churches have had fellowship with the Free Church since 1930 and that "there is a mutual willingness and expectation that such relations will continue."

The American Lutheran Church, with a 2,000,000 membership, is being formed through the union of the American Lutheran Church, Evangelical Lutheran Church, and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. It will hold its constituting convention at Minneapolis, Minn., April 22—24, and begin functioning by Jan. 1, 1961.

Participation in the merger has twice been rejected by the Free Church by narrow margins in congregational referenda. The union question, however, is expected to be considered again by the Free Church at its annual conference in 1961.

Church bodies in agreement on all major points of doctrine who maintain altar and pulpit fellowship permit their pastors to exchange pulpits and their communicants to receive Holy Communion in one another's congregations.

*Chicago.*—A University of Chicago theology professor and Bible expert said here that the so-called Gospel of Thomas, containing 114



sayings attributed to Christ, was "compiled in antiquity" by members of a non-Christian sect called the Naassenes. Dr. Robert M. Grant said he based his contention on the similarities between the writings of the Coptic-language manuscript and those of the Naassenes, whose name is derived from the Hebrew "Naas," meaning "snake."

For instance, he said, there's a saying found in both sources that begins: "In the days when you ate the dead. . . ." This is an unlikely quotation to attribute to Jesus, he pointed out.

Discovery of the "Gospel of Thomas" was reported recently by Dr. Oscar Cullmann, visiting professor from the Sorbonne in Paris at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He said the manuscript was found in a tomb in upper Egypt in 1946 and is comparable in importance to the Dead Sea Scrolls and of great significance to students of the New Testament. Dr. Cullmann also said the document includes hitherto unknown sayings of Christ, along with "obviously Gnostic material." He did not attribute its source to the Naassenes.

In questioning the authenticity of the gospel as a "truly Christian writing," Dr. Grant said the Naassenes were a Gnostic sect which sought to include Christianity "in a speculative philosophic synthesis of religion, philosophy, ascetic ethics and various mystic rituals." He said Christianity was just one element among many others in the Gnosticism movement.

Dr. Grant said the Naassenes had a habit of borrowing what they wanted from the New Testament, mixing portions of the Scriptures to suit their purposes and adding their own ideas. "New documents are always exciting," he added, "but in the long run they are not necessarily important."

*New York.*—A committee of 10 clergymen and physicians has been appointed by the United Lutheran Church in America to study "the entire field of anointing and healing." A report on its study will probably be made by the committee at the 22d biennial convention of the church at Atlantic City, N. J., Oct. 13—20, 1960.

Selected by the church's executive board, the committee was named in response to a directive of the 1958 convention of the church at Dayton, Ohio. A resolution at that convention noted "there is widespread interest in the field of anointing and healing" and "there are many questions in the mind of the church relative to this subject."

*New York.*—The first Chinese-American pastor in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod was ordained at True Light Lutheran Church here. He is 27-year-old Dwight Ong, who was graduated last year from the denomination's Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.



Born in New York, Mr. Ong has been a member of the True Light Congregation in Chinatown for more than 20 years. He has been assigned to Immanuel Lutheran Church, Burns, Wyo.

*Vatican City.*—Thousands of Rome motorists knelt beside their trucks and automobiles in St. Peter's Square to receive a blessing imparted on them and their vehicles by Pope John XXIII. Joined by a huge throng of pilgrims, the drivers heard a brief talk in which the pontiff called for greater "discipline on the roads" to reduce the increasing number of traffic accidents in Italy. Pope John spoke from an open window of his private study on the third floor of the Vatican Palace. The motorists had previously held a rally at the Coliseum and attended Mass at the nearby church of St. Francis of Rome, a 15th-century mystic whom many of Rome's motorists regard as their patron.

The drivers' vehicles were also blessed by Domenico Cardinal Tardini, Vatican secretary of state, at the Coliseum rally. Every year before Easter the Rome Automobile Club asks a cardinal to bless its members' cars. This year the Pope gave an additional blessing. Among the vehicles blessed were municipal fire engines which were driven in the long cortege of trucks and automobiles that drove across the city from the Coliseum to St. Peter's Square. Firemen rode atop their ladders as the sound of sirens and horns resounded through the Sunday streets.

#### BRIEF ITEMS FROM NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

*New York.*—Lutheran bishops of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden expressed their views on Pope John XXIII's call for an ecumenical council, in a recent news release received here from the Northern countries. According to the report, the pope's announcement has caused considerable attention and has been widely commented on in the Scandinavian countries.

Bishop H. Fuglsang-Damgaard, bishop of Copenhagen and primate of the Church of Denmark, was quoted as saying: "So often—and rightly—we have expressed regret that the Roman Catholic Church does not take part in the ecumenical co-operation that we cannot but feel joy at the spreading of the ecumenical idea. For this reason I consider the action of Pope John XXIII a step forward. During his short papacy he has shown a democratic and popular understanding, and this fact further supports the hope that real debates are contemplated and not just a dictate from Rome. The initiative of the Pope opens up new perspectives and may become an important step on the road toward the unity of the church."

The *Kristeligt Dagblad*, Copenhagen, described the action of the



pope as "an epoch-making step meriting attention and eager anticipation." It expressed doubt, however, that Rome will be able to yield an inch with regard to the infallibility of the pope and to the pope's being a successor to St. Peter and the 'Deputy' of Christ."

The primate of the Norwegian Lutheran National Church, Bishop Johannes Smemo, Oslo, was reported as commenting: "Certainly we must appreciate this step although it still remains to be seen what it may lead to. We all know the dogma of the infallibility of the pope. In advance it seems inconceivable either that the Orthodox Church will acknowledge this dogma or that the Roman Church will abandon it. Consequently, I am rather doubtful about a successful outcome. The Evangelical Church will never acknowledge any other highest authority than Holy Scripture."

The Christian daily paper in Oslo *Vårt Land* felt that the step taken by the pope must be regarded, among other things, in relation to the importance of the ecumenical movement in our time. However, it considers the possibility of a reunion between Roman and Orthodox Catholicism to be very slight.

Bishop Bo Giertz of Gothenburg, Sweden, who is second vice-president of the Lutheran World Federation, described the decision by the pope as a milestone in church history. "It is particularly interesting," he pointed out, "that, to all appearances, Pope John XXIII is going to reintroduce the old democratic procedure according to which participants in the council may vote about the problems dealt with without restrictions and decide on matters by ballot. If Rome should consent to ecumenical co-operation it would mean new possibilities, but it is still too early to predict what such an ecumenical council might amount to."

*Geneva.*—The fate of the Lutherans' famed Augusta Victoria Hospital on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem is hanging in the balance. Its future as the largest medical center in western Asia depends on what the United Nations decides to do for Arab refugees in the Middle East after June 1960.

The Lutheran World Federation, which currently operates the institution with a UN subsidy, disclosed here that it is making no plans for the hospital until decisions are made about United Nations relief activity in Palestine beyond the middle of next year.

The mandate of the UN Relief and Works Agency, which provides a \$250,000 annual subsidy for Augustana Victoria, expires July 1, 1960. Whether or not UNRWA is continued beyond that date in its present form, the LWF's Commission on World Service is hopeful that UN support for the hospital will not be lost.