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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

PROTESTANTISM AND THE BIBLE

Under this heading Dr. E. G. Homrighausen in *Interpretation* (July 1959) discusses with remarkable acumen the various attitudes of Protestantism, in the past and at present, toward the Scriptures as the source and rule of faith and life. Greatly influenced by neo-orthodoxy, the writer deprecates both Fundamentalism and the extreme liberalism as it was developed in Modernism. In repudiation of the latter he writes:

T. W. Manson, writing in C. W. Dugmore's symposium, *The Interpretation of the Bible*, presents a devastating chapter on "The Failure of Liberalism to Interpret the Bible as the Word of God." Liberalism accepted uncritically the assumptions of natural law from science and thus ruled out miracles as impossible. The science of history ruled out any thought of special revelation; so the Bible could not contain anything more than general religious truths. The unity of the Bible was no longer tenable in the light of its record of religious development and the various religions it described. The Gospels and the Epistles were severed; the religion "of" Jesus was different from the religion "about" Jesus. The Old Testament was separated from the New. The accepted truths of natural science must force theology to change even its basic truths. God's revelation is interpreted as a part of man's religious quest. All this was done with the best of intentions, according to Manson, and in the firm conviction that this development was in "the wave of the future." The truth of the matter, as we now see it, is that Christianity was being "gently and gradually transformed into humanism." "We have to avoid, like a plague," continues Manson, "the fault of liberalism, which, by using the distinction between passing and permanent, or kernel and husk, succeeded in watering down the plain meaning until all the characteristic flavour of the Biblical teaching had disappeared." And, he has added, "we must also avoid reading into the plain words of Scripture, by forced or artificial methods, meanings that do not belong to the Word, and, in all probability, could never have crossed the mind of the prophet or apostle with whom we may be dealing."

Toward the close of his article the writer puts to his readers a number of searching questions, which deserve consideration, though there is none that is oriented to the church's traditional doctrine that the Bible is the Word of God.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE

Rock Island, Ill.—A suggestion that the Evangelical Covenant Church of America "return to the Lutheran fold" was made in an editorial in the *Lutheran Companion*, weekly of the Augustana Lutheran Church, published here. It was prompted by a statement of Dr. Theodore W. Anderson, retiring Covenant Church president, at its recent convention in Rockford, Ill. He called on the Covenant Church to "seek better contact and possibly an ultimate merger with churches similar to our own in convictions and activities."

Dr. E. E. Ryden, editor of the *Lutheran Companion*, took note of Dr. Anderson's recommendation and commented:

"It has long been our conviction that steps should have been taken many years ago to effect a reconciliation between Augustana and the Covenant Church. The Covenant movement grew out of the Church of Sweden, as did the Augustana Lutheran Church, and a large number of Covenant pastors and people have always been avowed Lutherans. In fact, some Covenant congregations call themselves Lutheran churches.

"The schism which resulted from the unfortunate doctrinal controversy of the last century could probably have been avoided had there been a bit more Christian love and understanding exercised on both sides. Perhaps there was a greater measure of agreement than either side was willing to admit.

"In any event, what would be more natural than a return of the Covenant folks to the Lutheran fold? Where else do they belong? Most certainly they would be welcomed with great joy and thanksgiving."

St. Louis, Mo.—More than 875,000 feet of 35 millimeter film were used to copy some 11 million pages of handwritten manuscript at the Vatican Library for deposit in the Pius XII Memorial Library at Saint Louis University here.

This was disclosed by the Rev. Lowrie J. Daly, S. J., an instructor at the university who directed the great microfilming project. The Jesuit said that 15 technicians of the Vatican photographic laboratory, using American-made cameras and films, recorded 30,400 codexes.

A codex is a bound book of handwritten material containing as few as one or two works or as many as 20 separate treatises in Latin, German, Greek, and modern languages.

The problem of selection was complicated because there is no single complete index to the Vatican Library, Father Daly added.

Microfilmed were writings of such noted figures as St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Petrarch, Martin Luther, Melancthon, Henry VIII, Palestrina, Hippocrates, Galen, and the Venerable Bede. The project was sponsored by the university and the Knights of Columbus Vatican Microfilm Foundation.

Buffalo, N. Y.—Laymen deserve much credit for the rapid growth of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, Dr. John W. Behnken of St. Louis, Mo., president of the 2,350,000-member denomination, declared here. Addressing the 42d annual meeting of the Synod's Lutheran Laymen's League, he said that they "have carried the message of the church at large to the grass roots and have interested other laymen in home and foreign missions."

"Originally our laymen concentrated on the financial needs of the church," he said. "Now they have branched out in many fields, following the motto 'To aid the Church in word and deed.'"

A. W. Herrmann of New Orleans, La., league president, reported to the 1,000 delegates that membership in the Synod's lay agency now stands at 109,000. In 14 years the league increased by 80,000 members, he said.

Dr. Behnken noted that the Synod's Women's Missionary League also is one of the denomination's strong arms, with some 175,000 members. Although Missouri Synod women do not serve as pastors or elders, he said, they hold many important positions teaching religion.