

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. I.

MAY, 1921.

No. 5.

The Endeavor after a Philosophical Faith.*

PROF. JOHN H. C. FRITZ, St. Louis, Mo.

Not human reason, but divine revelation is the source of faith. It is the very nature of faith to accept what God has revealed. The object of saving faith is Jesus, the Lord, the Savior.

“Abraham against hope believed in hope that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah’s womb; he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” Rom. 4, 18—25.

Abraham’s faith is set forth in the Scriptures as an example for our faith. The source of Abraham’s faith was *not his own reason*. His reason told him that he and Sarah must remain childless. But God said, “So shall thy seed be.” That was a wonderful revelation to Abraham. Abraham believed what God had *revealed* to him; he “against hope believed in hope.” “He was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that what He had promised He was able also to perform.” God’s promise was that of the Woman’s Seed, the Savior. This promise Abraham believed. The *promised Messiah* was the object of his faith. “This was not written for his sake alone, but for us also.”

* A Review of *Die Grundwahrheiten der christlichen Religion*, by Reinhold Seeberg. Seventh edition, 1921. Deichertsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Leipzig and Erlangen. 182 pages, 5¼×8½.

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

Million Dollar Fund.

The sixth report on the million-dollar offering for the Ohio Synod's Capital University runs the total gift from 235 congregations up to \$454,552.68, and reports one special gift for Divinity Hall of \$100,000. D.

Membership and Apportionment.

The apportionment system for raising funds for the Synod has caused a shrinkage of the membership in the Norwegian Lutheran Church. A report in the *Lutheran Church Herald* (March 15) states:—

"Most ministers did not need much time to realize that their own figures as reported to the synodical secretary and published in the annual report were used as a basis for the apportionment made. The next thought was the importance of having a membership list that should be accurate. In many church registers there were names of confirmed members whom the pastor had never seen. In one church there were names of people who had not been inside the church for twenty years; others had joined some other denomination, 'on account of the lack of English'; others had moved away. Well, conditions were not the same in all church registers,—it would be very, very far from the truth to say that. Some ministers had always considered it an important duty to have the printed reports tell the truth, even though it meant lots of work.

"Without wanting to dwell on this, the fact is that many pastors reduced the number of confirmed members in their church or churches, and in some cases very considerably."

The report also speaks of losses in membership through persons who move away from their home church, retaining their membership in the same, and declining to join the church nearest to their new location. "This practise has lost us and is still losing us thousands of members." Similar statements might be made of conditions existing in other synods. D.

"Our Colleges and the Religious Life."

Under the heading given above the *Northwestern Christian Advocate* has the following:—

"In the recent report of the Educational Association of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the following significant expression was recorded:—

"The Church will be happy to know that the association showed an intense interest in the religious functions of our schools. There is no doubt that the religious ideal always has been dominant in them, that the spirit of service has pervaded them, and that Christian character has readily been nurtured within them. But in recent

years, when the struggle for material resources has been so severe and the demands for academic standards so exacting, it has been more difficult to give the needed attention to religious work. The settled purpose that our schools shall be centers of religious power was evident to an unusual degree in this meeting of the association.'

"The question might well be raised following this quotation, Why is a Methodist college? A Methodist college exists not to teach mathematics or chemistry. There is no Methodist mathematics. And yet we are going to our people with calls for millions of dollars to support chairs of science and history and economics. The admission (we are tempted to denominate it a confession) quoted above should give us pause and lead us to inquire how nearly are we making our colleges 'centers of religious power.' So far as the mere impartation of knowledge is involved, the cultivation of intellect or sharpening of wits, the state can do that business fully as well, and in not a few instances better than the more humble church-school.

"There is absolutely no excuse for the existence as a church-school of an institution that does not maintain as its chief aim the spiritual culture of its students."

"Centers of religious power!" Stating it more definitely: Centers of *Christian* influence and power! That is what *our* colleges should be. Of this we may well be reminded. Not only the indifferentism and materialism of our time is seeking to thwart Christian influence and power, but also some of the branches that are taught in the college curriculum have in them an element of danger in this same direction. History tells us that the *Renaissance* — the rebirth of classical culture — brought with it pagan conceptions and pagan morals. We are influenced by what we read and study. The pagan ideas of Greek and Roman mythology and of the classical Greek and Latin literature must be corrected if they are not to work harm. Secular history must be taught from the subjective view-point of the Christian scholar, lest the student fail to see that God overrules the desires and works of the wicked for the fulfilment of His ultimate purpose: the salvation of man. The sciences must not be given a value *per se*, but only inasmuch as they are valuable for that service which the Christian man gives unto his God.

Therefore the chief study at our colleges must be that of the Christian religion and its doctrines. The Bible must be *the* book of instruction during the entire course of study. Parts of the *Greek* New Testament might well be read in the last year. And we see no good reason why, after the Catechism has been studied for four or more years in the vernacular, the student should not in his last two years read and study such a book as Dietrich's *Institutiones Catecheticae* in the Latin original. In doing so he would not only be given the benefit of its doctrinal contents, but also of its Latin. We believe that in this way the college student would not only with increased interest study his Catechism, but would also be better prepared in more than one way to pursue his studies later in the theological seminary.

It goes without saying that much ought to be made of the morning and evening chapel services at the colleges. By a careful selection of Scripture-readings and prayers and occasional chapel-talks by a member of the faculty, the student can be made to feel that these things do not belong merely to the routine of his college life, but supply a real need.

The six years which our students spend at our preparatory schools, or colleges, during the very formative, and, therefore, dangerous period of their life, present great opportunities for exercising Christian influence and power, and, in the same measure, place upon those in charge great responsibilities which they dare not shirk. FRITZ.

April 18 Observed in Other Churches.

"The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ makes an appropriate suggestion that Sunday, April 17, be utilized by the Protestant ministers of America to give recognition of results which have flowed from Luther's fearless words before Charles V and his council, and to emphasize afresh some of the great truths which came from the Reformation—justification by faith, the duty of obedience to Jesus Christ, the freedom and responsibility of the individual soul, the right of every man to the Bible in his own tongue, the obligation of loyalty to the living God, our only King."

After thus calling attention to the suggestion of the Federal Council of the Churches, the *Northwestern Christian Advocate*, in its issue of April 6, said:—

"This is a most excellent proposal, and, it is sincerely hoped, will be followed up by the great majority of our Methodist pastors. We are talking to-day about reconstruction. We fear there is more talk than action. There is no real and permanent reconstruction except through the truths which the Reformation proclaimed, and which must dominate the life of the world if it is to become a fit place for the habitation of God.

"If the entire time of the sermon cannot be devoted to this important theme, there should at least be given a few minutes for a definite statement of the fact of the anniversary and expression of gratitude that there was given to the world Martin Luther, the great liberator."

Status of German Missions.

Out of the chaos of international politics and post-war confusion the status of German mission-work in Asia and Africa gradually begins to take on lineaments that permit more accurate judgments. We summarize, in the following, the reports before us.

In East Africa the expulsion of German missionaries (Moravian and Leipzig) was completed last November. The English mission branch of the Moravians has, however, been informed that a resumption of labors in this field is not out of the question. In East Africa the native evangelists are continuing the work without salary. The

English officials now administering German East Africa were impressed by the character and loyalty of the German missionaries, and requested urgently that these men might be permitted to remain, but in vain.

In Southwest Africa the notorious paragraph 438 of the Peace Treaty does not apply. August 31 of last year, General Smuts accepted a declaration of loyalty from the Rhenish missionaries and declared that there would be no interference with their work.

In Hongkong much missionary property was sold at auction, and it is reported that the church edifice of the Rhenish mission there will be given to the Catholics.

On New Guinea the Rhenish and Neucundtelsau missionaries were permitted to work without interruption throughout the war. Now (1921) the Australians have made a regulation that no departing missionary may return, and that no new German missionaries may enter.

From the *Harvest Field* (Mysore, India, 1921) we gather the following data concerning the situation in India:—

The question of the return of German missionaries to the fields from which they had been excluded through the war has been brought to the notice of the religious public by the conference of persons interested in missions held in June last near Geneva, Switzerland. The findings of that conference were sent to the National Council of India for its consideration. A committee of the Council gave much time to the serious examination of the proposals, and the following resolution was unanimously agreed to: "With regard to the return of German missionaries the Council has not departed from the position taken up in 1915, when it expressed the earnest hope that after the war conditions would be such as to make possible the resumption of the former happy cooperation in the task of extending Christ's kingdom. The Council accordingly hopes that the time for the modification of the restrictions placed on the efforts of German Christians to take their share in the evangelization of the world may soon come. The Council, however, does not consider that any good purpose would be served by pressing at present for the reduction of the time limit imposed by His Majesty's Government on the admission of Germans into India. It will, however, watch the situation with a view to taking action when the time seems ripe."

The National Council received a report of its German Missions Committee, which showed that "all the arrangements for carrying on the work of the German mission had worked well." These missions were organized under a special constitution, the institutions were continued, likewise the medical work, and "the theological training classes had been reopened, both the preparatory class and the regular course of three years, under the care of two of the men of the Lutheran Church."

Of transfers of missionary forces we note the following: Basle and the Rhenish mission are cooperating on Sumatra, the Bethel

mission has undertaken work in Java, and Breklum has transferred its activities to the province of Canton, China.

Concerning the status of Catholic missions we find the following in the *New World* (Roman Catholic, Chicago): "For the time being an accommodation has been arranged between the Holy See and the British Empire that within a year, at most, German and Austrian missionaries may return to their former fields of labor. The conditions laid down are not ideal, neither are they impossible of accomplishment. Bishops, prefects-apostolic, and vicars-apostolic cannot return to their missions. In their stead the mission will be presided over by an American citizen or a British subject, together with a treasurer of one or either nationality. The Holy See is to assign an English ecclesiastic, and also a representative of the American hierarchy to deal directly with the British Empire, under appointment by the Holy See. German or Austrian missionaries who are to return to the colonies must reside at least six months in British territory or in the United States. The returning missionaries must be vouched for by one or the other of the two competent authorities. These are the uttermost concessions that can be granted just now. Patience and a large measure of toleration must characterize those who feel they are aggrieved and discriminated against merely because they are Germans or Austrians." GRAEBNER.

Liberalism Invading the Mission-Fields.

Dr. W. H. Griffith-Thomas, a noted Anglican clergyman of the evangelical school, now laboring in this country and residing in Philadelphia, has stirred up much discussion in Presbyterian circles by his report on the liberalism which he observed during a recent visit to the China mission-fields. On his return to this country, Dr. Griffith-Thomas delivered a number of lectures in which he gave instances illustrating the extent to which liberalism, by which is meant the new theology, which is another term for unbelief, has invaded the ranks of the missionary workers. A large percentage of the missionaries, he declared, entertain the higher critical view of the Bible. For the preaching of the Gospel they substitute social service and institutional work. Of 284 missionaries resident at Shanghai, only four are doing evangelistic work (preaching). Of twenty-six graduates from a "Christian" university in China, it was disclosed that twenty-five had gone back to "full heathen Chinese life." Missionaries who still believe in the inspiration of the Bible have formed a Bible Union which now has a membership of 500, and the resolutions of this Bible Union fully bear out the charges made by Dr. Griffith-Thomas.

The statements of the Anglican, however, have not passed without challenge. Dr. A. J. Brown, a writer on missionary subjects and secretary of the Board of Foreign Missions, has asked him to name the Presbyterian workers who are propagating the new theology in China. However, in a recent issue of the *Presbyterian*, Dr. John Fox of New York quotes damaging statements from one of Dr. Brown's

own books, pointing to a change in the attitude of Chinese converts to specifically Christian teaching. The early converts, says Dr. Brown, believed in the existence of a personal devil and accepted as actual facts the story of the Fall, the virgin birth, and our Lord's resurrection, the implication being that these teachings are not so regarded by Dr. Brown nor are believed by the converts of recent years. Dr. Fox continues:

"The Orient is menaced by the flood tides of rationalistic infidelity, and the new-born churches are in danger of being poisoned or strangled in the cradle or the nursery by unsound missionaries and weak-kneed secretaries, and by the propaganda carried on through books, magazines, and the press in general. How far are our own missionaries affected? or their churches? That rationalism does prevail in China, probably more in Japan, and possibly less in Korea, admits of no doubt. What winds of doctrine are apt to fan its baleful fires into a blaze, what Babcock fire extinguisher can we employ to put them out? This is a question not only for the Foreign Board and the General Assembly, but for the Church at large."

Also Dr. Robert E. Speer, prominently identified with Presbyterian foreign mission work, denies the allegations of Dr. Griffith-Thomas. He specifically declared in the course of an address that there was no noticeable number of missionaries in China who denied the inspiration of the Bible, Christ's deity, or the resurrection of the body, but later made a significant admission when he remarked that "things were worse at home than in the missions." Commenting on Dr. Speer's reply, the *Presbyterian* remarks editorially:

"Two men of equal veracity have made absolutely contradictory statements with regard to the state of missions in China. Dr. Speer read letters from two missionaries to support him. Dr. Thomas is backed by the formal action of six hundred missionaries. No formal evidence has been produced, because there was no proper tribunal competent to receive and handle testimony. There has been nothing but counter statements. To leave the matter thus is to cause a loss to our Foreign Board of possibly hundreds of thousands of dollars. A sound, impartial commission to hear the case and defend missions or correct them is imperative. We reserve judgment until such finding can be had."

GRAEBNER.

The Creedless Union.

"G. H. T." writes the "California Letter" for *The Lutheran* of March 24. He wrestles with the question whether the city of Washington and California are really the two wickedest places in the world, as a prominent newspaper recently stated. If they are, he thinks that liberalism and faddism is the root of the evil, and some Lutherans are part of the root. He relates:—

"Recently the pastor of the leading Congregational church in Alameda declared from the pulpit that 'Protestantism is slowly dying in the West.' Then he uttered a tirade against 'the present division of the sectarian order' and exclaimed, 'Why all these jangling church-

bells and creeds that clash over forgotten isms? Several Sundays previously another minister had preached along similar lines. When people are fed on such 'stuff,' it is little wonder that conditions are bad. And right here in Berkeley is a theological seminary, the head of which is not only an ultra-rationalist, but even a blasphemer, who virtually tears the Old Testament to pieces, and even dares to call the God of the Hebrews a 'clan God.' What can you expect from preachers turned out by such an institution? Here is, in part, at least, the cause why religious fads and soul-destroying heresies flourish. The going adrift from the principles of the faith, the casting aside of the essential doctrines of the Gospel, and the advocating of work-righteousness, is leading myriads into abject unbelief. This is one of the reasons why religious fads attract greater attention than many churches.

"There are in the so-called Bay cities, San Francisco, Oakland, Alameda, and Berkeley, perhaps twenty-five so-called Christian Scientist temples, about the same number of Spiritualist societies, and a number of other semireligious sects. Then add to these the large number of Buddhist temples, and we have about one hundred semi-Christian and heathen societies. How can such conditions be changed? By a creedless union, as the Alameda pastor proposes? Thank God, there is still a remnant loyal to the truth. A negative religion has never saved a soul. A compromise with error, which is necessary when Lutherans join in such unionistic movements, will only weaken the force of the Gospel, for persons are judged by the company they keep.

"The Lutheran Church, though not so very strong on the Pacific Coast, still lives, and is beginning to let its light shine. There are also others that are beginning to see the trend of a liberal religion, and are taking a stand for positive truth. Recently, in a neighboring city, a man came to the pastor of a leading Methodist church requesting the use of his church to present a semisecular cause to his people. The pastor told him that the only evening that he could have was on a Friday. The reply was, 'I don't want Friday, but Sunday morning, when there is a good congregation, and when I can get a good collection.' The pastor replied, 'Sir, this church is for the preaching of the Gospel, and I will not allow anything to be presented from my pulpit except the pure Gospel, which I preach morning and evening.' That settled it, and the man left. This was quite in contrast with a Lutheran weakling, who, in order not to offend any one, did quite the opposite. Chancing to meet one of his members, I said, 'Well, what kind of a sermon did you have on Sunday morning?' His reply was, 'We had no sermon.' 'What! No sermon? What was the matter?' 'A man was there who talked for nearly an hour about the Boy Scout Movement, that took the place of the sermon. What do you think of that?' It is a pleasure to note that even if once in a while a pastor forgets himself, there are still some laymen who realize the impropriety and express their disapproval. But it is sad when such a thing is allowed to occur at all in a Lutheran church."

Immediately preceding this account is a report of the centenary celebration of the Protestant missions in Madagascar, at which the Norwegian Lutherans were represented by Rev. A. Gendersen, of Christiania, who joined in the celebration with the London Missionary Society, the Quakers, and the Protestant Mission Society of Paris, and has not been rebuked for his liberalism. D.
