

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

VOL. XIV.

JANUARY, 1910.

1073A
02511
No. 1.

THE OLD LUTHERAN VIEW OF WHAT CONSTITUTES THEOLOGY.

Beginning with Luther and extending to about the middle of the eighteenth century, Lutheran writers on the nature of theology are careful to segregate theology from philosophy, jurisprudence, and medicine, thus destroying the ancient academic *quadriga* of the universities. They assert that theology must be placed in a class by itself. The later dogmaticians discuss this matter in the Prolegomena of their works on systematic theology, usually in the first chapter, *de natura et constitutione theologiae*, or some kindred phrase. The earlier dogmaticians, before Hutter, have not felt the necessity of entering into an elaborate argument on what constitutes theology, but they express their mind on this question in connection with the various heads of doctrine which they present. Luther wrote no *Dogmatik*, yet Luther has more than any other writer of the Lutheran Church made plain the essential and characteristic features of theology. In the "Locis," "Systems," and "Compendis" of the later period we find merely in logical and precise form what Luther had expressed more or less casually.

The old Lutheran view insists, first of all, that theology is something in the theologian, "in the soul of the human being whom we call a theologian," and that the theologian earns his title to that name by possessing theology.¹⁾ This is a basic point in the old Lutheran view, and it deserves to be exhibited

1) Calov, *Isagoge ad ss. theol.*, I. 2., p. 201.

MISCELLANY.

Pan-Americanism, Cardinal Gibbons, and President Taft.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral, Washington, D. C., a divine service was conducted on the morning of the national Day of Thanksgiving, November 25, which was heralded in the evening of the same day by *The Washington Times* as one of the leading events of the day. The compositor and the photographer had cooperated in giving all possible prominence, on the front page, to the paper's account of the affair. Here is the account:

All of America's republics, with impressive religious fervor, and in the presence of probably one of the most distinguished assemblages — exclusively and entirely representative of every independent nation on the Western Hemisphere — assisted at the celebration of high pontifical mass

at St. Patrick's Church this morning. Headed by the President of the United States, the representatives of the nations of Central and South America gathered amid a crowded and eminent congregation at the church, the dignity and pomp of the occasion being enhanced through the leading officership in the celebration by the presence of His Eminence James Cardinal Gibbons. The celebration was known officially as a solemn high-mass of Thanksgiving, Pan-American Thanksgiving Day. . . . Rev. Dr. William T. Russell, pastor of St. Patrick's, preached the sermon. . . . In addition to that, a Pan-American prayer, especially prepared for the occasion, was offered, in which the welfare of the various nations was given blessing and in which everlasting peace was invoked. . . . President Taft, accompanied by his military aide, Captain Butt, was given the place of honor in front of the celebrant. Behind him were ranged in special pews the members of the Diplomatic Corps. The celebration of the mass was begun promptly at 11 o'clock, when the procession for the high pontifical mass, including all the celebrants, acolytes, and others participating, marched from the parsonage to the main entrance to the church, with Cardinal Gibbons in the rear. . . .

As a text for his sermon, Dr. Russell took the appropriate quotation from the 132d Psalm, "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." He said in part: "The Thanksgiving Day appointed by the President of the United States takes on a new significance when the representatives of the American republics assemble in peace and friendship before the altar of Almighty God. We are celebrating the first Pan-American Feast Day, and it is most appropriate that it be a thanksgiving festival. . . . We citizens of the United States have reason to thank God that our nation is a God-fearing, a God-trusting nation. There is, indeed, no union of church and state. 'This,' to quote the words of our President on a recent occasion, 'has been sometimes understood by those who did not know our institutions as an indication that there was something hostile on the part of our Government toward, or some lack of sympathy with, the Church of God. This is as far as possible from the truth; and I have always sought in assisting on interesting occasions like this to testify by my presence that there is nothing which the people and country of the United States so depend upon for progress and advancement of their ideals as the influence and power of religion.' We have reason to thank God, the Giver of every perfect gift, who rules from end to end mightily and disposes all things sweetly, both for what this celebration signifies and for what it promises. Time was, and we have not to look back many generations, when personal and family grievances were blotted out with blood. Thank God, the duel has passed to the realm of the ludicrous, and the clan feud is relegated to the backwoods. Let us hope that the day is not far distant when national duels and racial feuds will appear not less foolhardy, and when those who clamor for war and bloodshed will be regarded as the remnants of a semi-civilization relegated to the domain of the curious student of ancient history. May the spirit of amity among the American republics, to which your presence here to-day testifies, knit together our respective sovereign nations in peace and good-will. May the foundations be duly laid and the powers wisely extended of an international Supreme Court of final appeal. While each nation preserves its honorable customs, traditions, and autonomy, let us be as members of a united family, each maintaining his own domestic establishment, but acknowledging and respecting the ties of a brotherhood under our Father in heaven. In which faith I beg you all to rise, and, for the first time in the history of our Western world, unite in a prayer to the God of nations in behalf of our respective countries."

President Taft may go to church wherever he pleases. It is no one's affair but his own. At church he is simply Mr. Taft, a sinful mortal whom the Redeemer has saved and whom the Savior's Gospel welcomes. It may appear inconsistent to us when we hear of him attending now his Unitarian church, next a Jewish synagogue, next a Roman cathedral, for his official duties do not require this of him, and for a private gentleman such indiscriminate worship is syncretistic. But even that is Mr. Taft's own affair. When the President goes to church as President, is received as such, and listens to a discourse which has a strong bearing on the foreign policy of his administration, though the subject is presented veiled by sacred oratory, the matter becomes different. We believe that it is not always possible for a person in high station to escape special distinctions when he appears at church. He may be a great sufferer because of those distinctions extended to him at such an hour and place. However innocent the President may have been in the execution of this politico-religious spectacle, there can be little doubt that on the part of the Roman hierarchy there was design both in the planning of this "service" and in its fulsome publication after the execution. It was a great day for Cardinal Gibbons and a sorry one for the President. If he participated in this holy show with singleness of heart, he has our sympathy; if otherwise, we do not hesitate to say that he blundered. Rome is building up power and prestige out of just such events. Rome has begun to play a powerful role in American diplomacy since we acquired the Philippine Islands and Porto Rico. Shall there be more "American dependencies" in which Roman influence is dominant? Is the crumbling power of Rome in Central and South America to be supported by the strong arm of the North American Republic, and by Rome's influence in our government? There is not a single church in our country whose members, as Christians, can have any interest in the Pan-American idea of the Romanists. But Rome has. Videant consules!