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ARTICLE X.

NOTES.

STATUS OF FOREIGN THEOLOGY.

It seems as if the predominance of the history of philosophy and the treatment of theology almost wholly as an historical study are to be followed by a revival of philosophy itself and a systematic treatment of theology again. It is significant that the December, 1906, number of the Lutheran *Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift* announces the publication by its managers of a quarterly entitled *Die Theologie der Gegenwart*, which is to confine itself to current discussions in theology, and give "a comprehensive synopsis of the important and characteristic writings" in the field of theology, pointing out wherein they show progress of investigation and make real contributions to the subject.

A similar announcement is made in the December, 1906, number of the Ritschlian magazine the *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche*, which informs its readers that a new series of its publication is to begin in 1907, making it "an organ for fundamental and systematic theology." The editors, referring to this change, say: "Many indications make it plain that not a few men are desirous of leaving present one-sided, historico-critical work for the study of the great connecting principles and ideas" which underlie all religious thinking. "We seek to meet this demand for a thorough estimate of the whole condition of our religious knowledge and for a rigorous appreciation for faith and life of all that historical studies have gained for us." The cry *Cui bono?* respecting theology in the church, should not lead men astray, it is added, "for theology must serve the church, and on the other hand lives from the service of the church." It certainly looks as if *Dogmatik*, so neglected for twenty years, were about to come to its own again.

How wild the statements of some scientists respecting religion may be, is shown by repeated references to Haeckel's "Riddle of the Universe." The theologian Loofs, the philosopher Paulsen, and the physicist Chwolson have all given proof.

It is of the last we here speak. He is an authority in science, and the *Monatsschrift f. Mathematik u. Physik* calls his work on physics one of the best of the great text-books on the subject, if not the best ever written upon it. In a recent work called "Hegel, Haeckel, Kossuth, and the Twelfth Commandment," just translated from Russian into German (Braunschweig, Vieweg & Sohn, 1906), he shows the natural and necessary relations of philosophy and natural science; and how, about fifteen years ago, both began to see how much they had in common. But an estrangement soon followed, which he says is due to violation of the Twelfth Commandment. He writes: "Gentlemen, before a man takes pen to write upon a subject far removed from his own special field, he should study that subject with great diligence and most conscientiously. Otherwise you have forgotten the Twelfth Commandment, which is, Thou shalt not write about a thing which thou dost not understand." From this point of view he castigates Haeckel. He finds that his own specialty, physical science, forms a main element in the work of Haeckel, a biologist; and from Haeckel's treatment of that he infers the value of his statements respecting historical, social, religious, philosophical, and other subjects not connected with biology. What, then, does he think of the physical attainments of Haeckel, who finds in physics the "sure guiding star" which leads his philosophy "through the vast labyrinth of the riddle of the universe to its solution?" The result of the study, Chwolson declares, "is shocking, one may indeed say perfectly astounding. Everything that Haeckel says about questions of physics, all his explanations and assertions, are wrong: they rest upon misunderstandings or show an almost incredible ignorance of elementary questions. Even of the law which he terms his 'guiding star' he does not possess the most elementary schoolboy's knowledge. And, equipped with such

total ignorance, he thinks it possible to declare the foundation of modern physics, the kinetic theory of substance, 'untenable,' and to assert that perhaps the greatest attainment of the human mind, the law of entropy, or the second great principle of thermodynamics, must 'be given up.'" He says Haeckel's work is typical of those works whose authors despise the Twelfth Commandment. It is such writings that have estranged again the students of philosophy and science; for fully one half the blame of such bitterness must be ascribed to "scientists who in their writings skip about among sciences with which they are not acquainted in the unscientific way that Haeckel does in his famous 'Riddle of the Universe.'" No wonder that philosophers and theologians, he adds, are often inclined to despise the generalizations of naturalists. The Kossuth he refers to is a professor who supports Haeckel by also breaking the Twelfth Commandment.

Theological parties in Germany have changed perspective and outlook in the past thirty years. The three earlier schools—confessional, rationalistic, and mediating—were largely broken up by the appearance of Ritschl, and reaction from his teachings. A recent writer distinguishes now four parties,—the confessional orthodox, modified somewhat by recent biblical criticism and neo-Kantian views; the school of Ritschl; the rationalists, who, after declining till the *Protestantenverein* was dissolved, have rallied again and revived that union; and the *religions-geschichtliche* school, which is breaking away from Ritschlianism to lay stress upon comparative religion and the intellectual side of Christianity. Tröltzsch, Bousset, Weinell, Wrede, Johann Weiss, and others represent this tendency.

The acuteness of these theological differences comes to light when men educated by such teachers are brought face to face with the creeds of the church on their call to the ministry. Here arise cases of heresy, decisions of church authorities, and a war of debate in lectures and newspapers. A recent

trial of this sort led to the rejection of Pastor Cesar, a non-Prussian, when called to a pastorate in Dortmund. He was rejected because he did not believe (1) in the resurrection of Christ; (2) for not accepting the incarnation of the Son of God, but holding that he "was born as all other men," "with the heredity of humanity," and even "an inclination to sin"; and (3) because the death of Christ had for him no fundamental significance of pardon of sin as taught in the New Testament and in the confession of the church. The liberals demand that the divinity of Christ, the Trinity, and similar doctrines be open questions, and all views be tolerated in the church. Krüger, in a recent book on "The Dogma of the Trinity and the God-man" (1905), thinks that by a historic study of the origin of these doctrines and a psychological use of them, we may still get benefit from them religiously, while setting them aside theologically. We must strip off the ancient philosophy, piety, and religious motives which formed them, and leave them behind, if we are to be free. When all is done, we have left faith in God as Father, Jesus Christ a man full of the love of God, and God as Spirit, usually called the Holy Ghost.

It is not easy, however, to create the faith of Reformers and Puritans upon so slender a creed. A Scotch theologian recently remarked how conservative a doctrine of sin Dr. Harnack seems to hold; and a student from his seminar reports that, when asked his view of sin, Harnack replied: "I am an Augustinian about sin. That is the view I find in my own experience, and that is the view I see the lives of men illustrate." Such a conception cannot long remain satisfied with a Unitarian view of Christ. If sin be so terrible, Christ as forgiver and deliverer from it must be the Divine Redeemer whose praises fill the church. Hence, in a recent number of the *Christliche Welt*, Dr. Rade, its editor, a pronounced Ritschlian, declared he would pray to Jesus Christ; his soul needed such a devotional relation to him; and whatever historical and anti-metaphysical considerations made Christ

only a man, his faith and love and longing for peace embraced Jesus as Lord and God.

The conservative theologians in Germany are writing much these days of "a modern positive theology of the old faith" (see *Theol. Literaturblatt*, 1906, Nos. 44-45). They recognize that materialism is still strong, though waning among thinking men. The question now is, whether positivism or the turn towards metaphysics is the most marked feature of current thinking. Ueberweg's "Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie (IV. Th., 1906) says, "Philosophical research no longer turns away from metaphysics or even from the elaboration of systems, as was formerly the case." The wide influence of Von Hartmann and the underlying principles of the writings of Nietzsche, becoming more and more metaphysical in character, illustrate the drift again towards metaphysics. The alternative of "evolution or revelation" is discussed much in this modern orthodoxy, and it is held that no explanation of a world-process of evolution can leave out the theistic, supernatural factor. Within the field of theology proper, Dunkmann says, that the "fundamental religious mistake" of modern orthodox theology consists in "regarding the forgiveness of sins as something merely negative, and consequently feeling driven to set beside it positive teachings of a new Ego," etc. He thinks the justification doctrine of Luther, forgiveness through faith in Christ, and assurance of faith is not given the central place to which it is entitled. Grütz-macher warns against following Kant too far in separating moral and intellectual relations to God. He says, "If we cease to relate history and nature to God in teleological and causal connection, then the very foundation of our belief in creation, preservation, government, and providence is lost."

In like manner, Gallwitz, criticising Otto's "Naturalistische u. relig. Weltansicht" (Mohr, 1904), in which he maintains the full and free independence of religion from the world of experience, says, "The separation on principle of devotion from the organized external world of space and time must lead

to a fruitless mysticism, because then the soul could no longer be fertilized by contact with the world without" (Chr. Welt. 1906, No. 37).

Similar dualism between religion and metaphysics, faith and the historical, is more and more condemned in such theologians as Hermann. Tröltzsch does so in his article "Wesen der Religion," in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1906, Thl. I. Abt. IV. pp. 467 f.), and Grützmacher says of Hermann's contribution to the same volume on "Protest. Dogmatik," "His whole treatise shows everywhere the one-sided and strongly isolated type of theology which he represents"; a theology "which appears ever and again to us as not only the most radical setting aside of the whole body of systematic theology hitherto held, but also of all objective historical Christianity" (Theol. Lit. Blatt, 1906, No. 39).

On the other hand, the large sale of the "Religionsgeschichtlichen Volksbücher," short popular works on liberal views of the Bible and theology, some of which, e. g. that on Jesus by Bousset, have been translated into English, is declared to be proof of the rapid growth of the new teachings. To sell 147,869 copies in less than two years is a striking fact; but *Der alte Glaube* (1906, Sept. 7) doubts the conclusion drawn from it, and says, "The decision cannot be reached until the crop has appeared from the sowing of dragons' teeth, which has taken place through these manuals for the people."

Parallel with controversy between liberal and conservative Protestants run studies respecting the relations of Catholics and Protestants in Germany and elsewhere. One serious fact is the steady growth of Catholics in Germany, especially in Prussia. In 1900 there were in Prussia 21,817,577 Protestants and 12,113,670 Catholics; while in 1905 the census gave the Protestants as 23,341,502 and the Catholics 13,352,444. That is, the percentage of Protestants sank from 63.29 to 62.59, while that of the Catholics grew from 35.14 to 35.80,—the greatest increase in any five years since 1867. German

Catholics sympathize in a measure with their French brethren who are restive under the new papal policy. Some of them agree with Archbishop Ireland, that it is royalist plottings in France, supported by departure from the policy of Leo XIII., that form the root of the troubles there.

Dr. Funk, who writes the article "Catholic Christianity" in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, says: "Though the papal state in other days, after falling in ruins, was able to lift itself up again, it found, in the circumstances amid which it finally fell a victim, things so fundamentally different from all that went before, and the political condition of Europe and the temper and tendency of men's minds so transformed, that, so far as we can see, a restoration of the temporal power is no longer to be looked for. The papacy must therefore give up the policy which it has heretofore followed respecting the temporal power; and the sooner it suits itself to circumstances, so much the better it will be for itself and the church. The miracles of Providence upon which Pius IX. relied before the church state reached its complete end, have now, as then, not come to pass, and it will be a long, long time before they will take place." That is plain speech from a German Catholic professor.

The disestablishment of the church in France, both Catholic and Protestant, has thrown each upon its own resources, and made party lines appear in sharper outlines. There are 550 congregations in the Reformed Church of France, of which about 450 are orthodox. The remaining one hundred are divided into radicals and those of a mediating tendency. In October a conference of these one hundred churches met in Jarnac, in a certain opposition to the evangelical majority. The creed adopted runs: "I believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, the Saviour, who perfectly redeems believers by his life, his teachings, his death on the cross, his resurrection, and his ever-living activity." One of the delegates asked what was meant by this confession. Whereupon Pastor Wagner, so well known in America, stopped him with a glowing address, after which, like good Frenchmen, they kissed one

another, tears came to many eyes, and great enthusiasm prevailed. This Conference separated from the Orthodox body, and organized as the *Union des Églises réformées*. Free churches of any belief are expressly admitted to the Union without changing their views. There are now, therefore, three bodies of French Protestants: (1) the orthodox Synod, of 450 churches, strictly Presbyterian in policy; (2) the liberal Union, of some sixty churches; and (3) this recently formed Union in which all classes may come together, but at which only radicals and the small group known as "mediating" attended. The weakness of the "middle party" is an interesting feature of the movement.

The conflict of the church against the new theology has reached Sweden also. The Lutheran Church there is somewhat formal and traditional. The bishops have taken steps to keep rationalistic teachers out of the schools, and now "the Evangelical Society of the Fatherland," at its fiftieth anniversary, petitioned the King against dangerous teachings. The petition says: "Examples occur, among teachers, of open rejection of the fundamental truths of Christianity. The accounts of the coming of Jesus into the world and of his infancy are declared mythical, and put upon the same ground with unhistorical legends about Christ. In like manner the Gospel accounts of Christ's resurrection are pronounced myths of no more historical value than the Romish legends of Peter and Paul. We can well believe that much more erroneous teaching is held than is openly proclaimed; and where it is publicly taught in one school we must fear that it is privately taught in many. It is a common practice to teach this strange Christianity of the modern theology by using familiar religious terms with a new meaning, and thus presenting something for Christianity which is not the Christianity of the New Testament. A direct denial of the truths of the gospel would be preferable to this supposed progress which is in reality a corruption of Christianity. Against open denial our youth can be defended more easily than against these so-called pro-

gressive methods. For it is indescribable how paralyzing this double use of language works in instruction upon the minds of the young, open to truth and uprightness." The Society asks that sharper supervision of teachers and religious text-books be exercised, "that our children upon this holy ground be not handed over to a free thought and subjectivity which will ruin the religious and intellectual development of their character." The petition was unanimously adopted, as a similar address to the King was voted last year by the "Swedish Mission Conference" of the free churches of Sweden, and presented to the King by a delegation led by Dr. Waldenström.

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HUGH M. SCOTT.

THE CORRECTIVE OF THEOLOGY.

VITAL theology is not a philosophy of doctrine, but an interpretation of life. The Bible has to do, not with the theory of religion, but with its practice. It is, from beginning to end, biographical. It deals with persons, with living men and women, with souls, with character, with spiritual conditions and experience. Literally defined, "theology" is science of God, that is, Knowledge of a Person. It includes man in his relation to God, and thus has to do with life on its practical side, rather than with truth on its metaphysical side.

The mistakes and divergences of theology come from dealing with doctrine on its metaphysical, rather than on its personal and practical, side. Science of any kind becomes accurate and trustworthy only as it deals with facts. The moment the theologian separates himself from men and enters the cloister or the genial atmosphere of his literary sanctum, his reasonings lose touch with life. He finds himself in the presence of a thousand interrogation-points. Problems multiply. Beliefs lose their certainty. The mind operates, not under the correcting and enlightening influence of actual life in a world of spiritual hunger and need, but under the unconscious

influence of personal preference or prejudice or bias. In such case a man's theology becomes merely the expression of himself, the product of his own limitations and point of view. It is automatically the outcome of his spiritual experience. It is vital if his religious life is vital, and rationalistic if his soul has lost its hold on the great spiritual certainties. I am confident that if we could see the subconscious life,—the hidden springs of thought and feeling, of belief and action,—we should find a very subtle and marvelous connection between the theology of an age or generation and the religious or spiritual life of that age. The personal element in theology is supreme, and to discerning eyes marvelously if not pathetically conspicuous. The intellect is a servant, and not a master. It follows the leadings or the bias of the spiritual life. A thinker cannot divorce himself from himself, and for this reason he must find certainty in some corrective outside of himself or in coöperation with himself.

This corrective is not philosophy or metaphysics, but life at first hand. One must deal closely and intelligently with souls, in order to know psychology; and theology is only psychology lifted into the high realms of religion and spiritual experience.

The greatest need of theology in any age is the illumination which comes from the close application of redemptive truth to the lives of sinful men. Truth is personal, and can never be known out of relation to persons. For example, the atonement is not a philosophy, but a moral process. The little we can know about this mighty mystery is mastered, not by the reasonings of the intellect, but through the intuitions and discoveries of a regenerate life, and by the study of souls in the process of moral renewal. More vital and clearly defined theology can be learned in leading a sinning, self-righteous, wilful man to God than can be learned from all the text-books in the world. Sin can by no possibility be understood as a metaphysical proposition. It appears as an unquestionable and appalling fact, when a clean, intelligent, upright man, as truly as a reprobate, finds himself resisting the surrender of his will to God. It has been through soul-to-soul contact with

many such a man that the writer has found his philosophy or theory of sin squaring itself with the teaching of Christ and the theology of Paul. It takes heroism and spiritual intelligence to deal thoroughly enough with an inquiring or wayward man to find him and to enable him to *find himself*. The processes of personal religion are not superficial. They go down deeply into the very springs of one's moral being, and the trouble with much of the theology of the passing centuries is that it is not acquainted with these deeper sources and states of life.

The marvel of Christ's teaching is that he could see a Nicodemus whom no one else saw, and whom the learned rabbi himself had never seen. When we see with the depth and clarity of his vision, and ourselves witness the spiritual renewal and transformation of an occasional Nicodemus, our conception or theology of the doctrine of regeneration changes, and we lose our strange reluctance to say to an unconverted man, "Ye must be born anew."

Without close, intelligent, successful personal work, the minister of the gospel cannot know men; and unless he knows men he cannot know God, or at least God's redeeming processes with men. Personal work is the best corrective of theology, its best teacher, and the best key to the interpretation of the Bible. Without it a minister drifts unconsciously, and of necessity, into rationalism. He will lead his people into all sorts of theological wanderings or vagaries or isms. The moment he turns from theory to practice, from reasonings about truth to its personal application, all this is changed. When he gets down to business in close contact with inquiring souls, a new world dawns upon him, and a new theology as well, and his preaching at once acquires a new vitality, directness, intelligence, and personal value.

The conviction that men need redemption, and the preaching that aims at redemption, will gradually vanish if the pastor omits or neglects the personal work that secures and illustrates redemption and proves the universal need of it. The tendency to eliminate the supernatural from the modern

doctrine of Christ comes from dealing with Christianity as a problem in criticism, rather than as a practical power and process in the saving of men. The limitations of a man's mind and the perverse element in his moral being, however slight, will inevitably make him a rationalist, a naturalist, or a skeptic, if he deals with the moral problems of the universe only in the realm of theory or metaphysics. The church that ceases to do redemptive work, and the minister who loses ability or desire to lead souls into an experience of God's renewing grace, drift by an inevitable law into spiritual impotence and unconcern and ultimately into agnostic rationalism. Many a man has saved his theology and his faith in the process of saving a soul. The proof of power lies in its possession. The proof of the supernatural in Christianity lies in experience of its mighty working. The gospel will always be the power of God, and the cross the wisdom of God, to those who are saved, and to those who make them the means of salvation to others.

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