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Recent Foreign Theology.

Life and Work Conference.

No representative of the Evangelical Church of Germany was present at Oxford owing to the action of the Government. But there had been preparation for the Conference, the subject of which is of so vital interest to that country—Church, Community, and State. This volume of essays is the result.¹ The Introduction is by Bishop Theodor Heckel, the head of what may be described as the officially recognized Church's department for œcumenic affairs. The volume does not contain anything critical of the Government, and a good deal laudatory of it. Some articles may be described as neutral in the Church dispute, but many of them are, more or less openly, propaganda for National Socialism. Lutheran theology offers a basis for the apology, Church and State are sharply separated; the authority of the State is asserted. The Nazi revolution is welcomed as a deliverance from the humiliation, exasperation, and desperation to which the nation had been provoked by the Peace Treaty, and the subsequent treatment by the victorious allies. It is prized as a recovery of the German soul from enslavement to ideas foreign to it. Not only Communism but even Liberalism are denounced. It is even indicated that only by the rigid discipline of the Totalitarian State and the subordination of the individual to the community could such an emancipation be effected. The dark shadows are ignored; Germany appears in the sunshine of security, prosperity, and progress. Anglo-American theory and practice come in for severe depreciation. We must assume that all the writers are expressing their sincere convictions and are not writing to order. If so, the outlook for international and inter-church mutual understanding and conciliation is dark indeed. The German nationalism, which is so threatening to the peace of Europe, is here confidently justified by what to the writers appears incontrovertible reasoning, but to many a reader will seem rather 'rationalization.' One paragraph in the last article dealing with the *Innere Mission* may be quoted as typical. 'A new, powerful government, conscious of its might as of its responsibility has, aware of its aim, entered into the conflict against the needs of the people. A people (*Volk*), awakened to new life, has won a fully new form,

¹ *Kirche, Volk und Staat*, herausgegeben von Lic. Eugen Gerstenmaier (Furche Verlag, Berlin, 1937).

has placed itself in all regions of life on a new foundation, has given to all living relations a new ground and a new aim. Germany through Adolf Hitler has experienced, not only a change of its circumstances, but a fully new character' (p. 309).

This collection of essays on one of the most (if not the most) critical issues of the hour, the relation of Church and State, was issued by the Universal Council of Christian Life and Work, the continuation of the Stockholm Conference, in preparation for the Oxford Conference, the subject of which was the Church, Community, and State.² While the title *Totalitarian State and Christian Freedom*, suggests a restriction of interest, yet inevitably the general reference cannot be excluded. Although the whole volume is in German, there are English, French, and Russian contributors. The first essay, by Alexejev, deals with 'Society, State, and Church,' and the eighth, by W. Paton, treats the special subject from the standpoint of the mission field. While there is variation in the titles of the other essays, they all handle the same issue though from varying standpoints—Reformed, Lutheran, Anglican, and Orthodox. Detailed discussion cannot be attempted, but some general impressions may be offered.

The Totalitarian State, though in theory it claims authority over the *total* thought and life of the subjects of the State may not in practice assert that authority, but leave a restricted freedom in certain spheres; it claims to be the sole judge of any temporary or permanent restrictions which in its own interest it may impose. Again the Totalitarian State bases its claim on its being the expression of the life of the people (*Volk*): it can execute the national will more effectively than the democratic system could. These qualifications of an adverse judgment some of the German writers make. As regards liberty a distinction is made between Christian liberty and Church liberty on the one hand and personal liberty on the other. No man can take away Christian liberty, the freedom where-with Christ makes free from sin, law, and death; here no dungeon can make a prison. The Church's liberty to fulfil its mission and deliver its message and thus the Christian's exercise of that liberty, in outward witness or work, may, however, be prevented, or punished, and thus restricted.

² *Totaler Staat und christliche Freiheit*, 1937. Forschungsabteilung des Oekumenischen Rates für Praktisches Christentum (Geneva, 41 Avenue de Champel).

In the last essay, Wendland in his title distinguishes *Christian* and *creaturely* liberty, the freedom for self-realization which man as a creature of God can claim according to the divine intention in creating. This distinction Lutheranism tends to emphasize more than do the Reformed churches, which are less marked by the dualism between Christian life and life generally. Can we, however, so separate Creation and Redemption? If man be one surely his Christian liberty is restricted if his creaturely is. Some of the writers who make the distinction do recognize that the Church should concern itself about the liberty of man as created by God, and not only its own liberty. The Confessional Synod has here shown a restriction of interest, which somewhat lessens its general appeal. Universal human as well as distinctive Christian interests are in jeopardy.

This¹ is another of the volumes, issued to provide material for the discussions at the Oxford Conference of the Life and Work Council on the subject of Church, Community, and State. This volume has a peculiar interest as representing Russian Orthodoxy. Whether the articles were all written in German, or translated, the volume has the merit of a lucidity of style, which German writings often lack; and the first five articles have an obvious relevance to the subject of the discussion at the Conference. The first article on the 'Russian People and the State,' by N. Alexejev, gives an interesting historical review of Russian views of the relation of Church and State, and shows that the theory of the necessary connexion of orthodoxy and Czardom has not been the only one, as is often assumed. G. Fedotov is equally interesting in discussing 'The Kingdom of God and History.' A. Kastaschou hampers his discussion of the relation of 'The

¹ *Kirche, Staat und Mensch. Russisch-orthodoxe Studien.* Forschungsabteilung des Oekumenischen Rates für Praktisches Christentum (Geneva, 41 Avenue de Champel).

Church to the State' by the analogy of Soul and Body, and even by applying to it the Chalcedonian formula of the two natures in the one Person of Christ. Of immediate relevance is B. Vyscheslavzev's comparison of 'Marxism, Communism, and the Totalitarian State.' A transition to the second part of the volume, which deals with Man, is A. Alexejev's 'Marxist Anthropology.' N. Berdjajev offers a contribution to a Christian anthropology, which shows some independent thinking on 'The Problem of Man.' The next writer, S. Bulgakov, extends his treatment of 'Christian Anthropology' to include some fantastic speculation about the divine and the earthly *sophia*, and a plea, based on that speculation, for what in my judgment is superstitious Mariolatry. The editor would have exercised a wise discretion in insisting on the relevance of the contents to the subject of the title. F. Lieb reproduces an article on 'The Anthropology of Dostojevskij,' intensely interesting as showing the vivid interest of a great novelist in man's sin and salvation. B. Vyscheslavzev has two articles dealing with 'The Image of God' as affected by the Fall and as belonging to the nature of man; and W. Zenkowsky covers much the same ground in treating 'The Evil in Man.' Here the orthodox doctrine is expounded and compared with the Roman Catholic and the Protestant. A more serious view of the consequences of the Fall is taken than by Roman Catholicism, but a less rigid than by traditional Protestantism. The divine image has been affected, but not destroyed. The Barthian exaggerations get some hard knocks. While agreeing generally with the conception of man and his value here presented, the insistence on man's divinity and deification does not commend itself to my monotheism; the ethical emphasis is supplanted by the ontological, and the writers seem quite unaware that their dogmatic assumptions are antiquated in modern Christian thinking.

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London.

Contributions and Comments.

A Prophet in his own Country (Jn. iv. 44).

THE explanations of St. John's application of this saying are far-fetched. Everything is made plain by a transposition of v.⁴⁶. Thus:

⁴⁸. But after the two days he went out thence into Galilee.

[⁴⁶]. He went therefore again into Cana of Galilee where he made the water wine.

⁴⁴. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet in his own country hath no honour.

⁴⁵. When therefore he went into Galilee the Galileans received him, having seen . . . feast.

⁴⁶. Now there was a certain nobleman. . . .