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Editorial

EVANGELICAL SCHOLARSHIP

THE present number of *THE CHURCHMAN* is the first to be issued under the direction of the recently appointed Editorial Advisory Board. For this reason it will, no doubt, be received and examined with particular interest. We would express the hope that with its more cheerful cover and its carefully planned contents, it will meet with a sympathetic welcome and do something to justify whatever hopes were raised as a result of the announcement in the previous issue.

The names of the members of the Editorial Board are printed on the inside cover. In the same place will be found the names of the "Correspondents" (so far appointed) who, as previously intimated, have promised to help in a consultative capacity. We would emphasize that this list is not yet complete and additions are to be made. The names that so far appear, however, represent a wide field of evangelical thought. Each of the Correspondents possesses specialized knowledge in one direction or another, and their collaboration on the editorial side will be of the utmost value.

Paper supplies now enable us to increase the circulation of *THE CHURCHMAN*, and new orders will be gladly received. In this connection we would enlist the co-operation of our regular readers by asking them to recommend the journal when opportunity arises and perhaps by lending or passing on their copies to friends.

We are desirous that *THE CHURCHMAN* shall be brought to the notice of all who are interested in evangelical scholarship—and in particular to the notice of those who may be ignorant that such a thing as evangelical scholarship exists! We should be glad to number among our readers not only those who share our own distinctive outlook, but those of other schools of thought in our Church who are genuinely concerned to know what Evangelicals are thinking and are prepared to acknowledge that they have a serious and positive contribution to make in the realm of theological thought.

It must be admitted that the amount of theological literature put out by evangelical scholars is, at present, relatively small, so that those who display such dismal ignorance on the matter are not without excuse. Nevertheless the balance of scholarship in the Anglican Church is not so one-sided as might superficially appear, and the position is steadily improving from the evangelical point of view: so

much so that we make bold to claim that the time is past when evangelical theology can be ignored as virtually non-existent or contemptuously dismissed as mere Protestant obscurantism.

Evangelicals of to-day are keenly alive to the importance of theological study. Not only so, but the modern trend in the direction of a Bible-centred faith and the renewed emphasis upon the doctrine of the Church provides a theological atmosphere in which Evangelicals can breathe and move with the utmost freedom. With their recognition of the supreme authority of the holy Scriptures, their unashamed devotion to the Church of their baptism, and their unambiguous loyalty to the Church's doctrinal standards as expressed in her Prayer Book and Articles, they occupy a position of peculiar strength and may rightly claim a hearing in the ecclesiastical world of our day.

We have written the above in view of the fact that this issue of *THE CHURCHMAN* pursues the subject of the study of theology. It is our intention that in future each issue shall, as far as possible, be marked by some such distinctive emphasis. The June number is being planned around the subject of religious education.

Our theme in the present number is introduced by a short devotional article by Dr. G. W. Bromiley, who is Vice-Principal of the Bible Churchmen's College, Bristol, and a member of the Editorial Board. His purpose is to draw attention to the real connection between the intellectual and the spiritual in the Christian life. Faith is not opposed to knowledge any more than knowledge is to faith. Indeed, as he remarks, "faith divorced from knowledge can very easily become credulity." Study in all its varied aspects—embracing as it does, from the Christian point of view, theology, apologetics, ethics, worship, history, and, above all, the study of the Scriptures—is essential to the maintenance of spiritual health and activity.

The theme is continued and expanded in the article which follows, entitled "The Place of Theology," by the Rev. A. M. Stibbs. His argument, in brief, is that "Christianity is essentially and undeniably doctrinal." He stresses, in consequence, the necessary connection between theology and life, belief and practice. The study of Christian doctrine—and, in particular, of Christian doctrine as a complete and balanced whole—is indispensable if the Church of our day is to make its vital contribution to the life of the world. "The only adequate equipment with which to face, and to seek to solve, the vast problems of our day and generation, is not simply faith, however zealous, in one or two truths of Christianity, but nothing less than a thorough knowledge and an obedient devotion to the whole Truth of the Christian Gospel—the Truth as it is in Jesus." Mr. Stibbs is Vice-Principal of Oak Hill College, and is one of our Correspondents.

The next article is written by Dr. F. W. Dillistone, who is also serving as a Correspondent. He is Lecturer in Theology at the London College of Divinity and is one of the Associate Editors of the American journal, *Theology To-day*. His experience equips him well to write on the subject of "Recent Trends in American Theology."

In this article he traces recent movements in theological thought in the U.S.A. After indicating the influence of British and Continental theology he surveys some of the foremost names in the American field and some of the contributions they have made to recent theological literature. In this way he brings before our notice such outstanding figures as Reinhold Niebuhr, K. S. Latourette, John A. Mackay, Richard Niebuhr, W. F. Albright and Frederick C. Grant. Of particular interest at this time is Dr. Dillistone's account of the movement in the Protestant Episcopal Church of the U.S.A. in the direction of reunion with the Presbyterian Church. While progress has been slow and the present position is far from certain, it is reassuring to be told that "the Evangelical leaders in the Episcopal Church will not cease in their efforts to stand for a positive and constructive Anglicanism, while seeking, in every way possible, to foster good relations with the other Protestant communions in the U.S.A."

As a counterpart to this article there follows one dealing with "British Theology To-day." This is written by the Rev. G. H. G. Hewitt, Religious Book Editor of the Lutterworth Press. In seeking to gauge the "climate" of thought in contemporary British theology, he points out that there is a certain agreement among our foremost scholars as to the central issues of the Faith, accompanied by a repudiation of the presuppositions of philosophic liberalism on the one hand and a return to a Bible-centred theology on the other. The result is seen in a number of directions in the theological field; *e.g.* in a new emphasis on the divine transcendence and on revelation as the *acted* Word; a rediscovery of the doctrine of the Church and of the eschatological significance of history; and a new understanding of Christian faith and Christian ethics. Mr. Hewitt concludes with a brief survey of current theological literature and supplements this with an appended book list.

A new feature is introduced with this issue of THE CHURCHMAN, entitled "Contemporary Commentary." This will take the form of a quarterly review of current Church affairs and theological trends, written by the Rev. F. J. Taylor, Vicar of Christ Church, Cloughton, Birkenhead. In the present issue he deals first with the pressing problem of Church relations, more especially in the light of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Cambridge sermon. From this he passes to the kindred subject of the South India Church Scheme and the Report of the Archbishop's Committee on the theological implications of the Scheme. Under the heading of "Christianity in Defeat" the German Church situation is brought under survey, and this is followed by a review of the Church of Scotland's Report on Evangelism, *Into All the World*. Mr. Taylor is a member of the Editorial Board, and in undertaking to contribute this quarterly review he is rendering THE CHURCHMAN a particularly valuable service.

The usual book reviews complete the present number.

FRANK COLQUHOUN.