

PREFACE

The state of historical scholarship on the Protestant clergy in Germany does not now allow one to state reliably what the lasting results of the Reformation were for the social and political role of the pastorate. While generalities on this score abound, detailed investigation of this theme for the Old Régime has been limited.¹

The present study has been undertaken in hope of providing a small contribution to the understanding of this matter. Though this investigation deals with the eighteenth century, it is designed to assist in a reassessment of the social, political, and professional status of the Lutheran clergy in Germany before the rise of modern nationalism—not simply to help in evaluating the Enlightenment clergy alone. In this connection I would refer to Prof. Dr. Bernd Moeller, who points out that—contrary to expectation—the urban Reformation of the sixteenth century by no means brought about a complete assimilation of the Protestant clergy to the more secular order represented by the post-Reformation civic community.² Similarly, no less an authority on the German Reformation than Hajo Holborn warned against any facile conclusion that the Lutheran tradition prior to the nineteenth century led directly to the consolidation of a temporal government novel in its devotion to power politics.³

In a sense, then, in the pages below I am simply following out the suggestions made by these two writers—though sustaining their thesis has required the investigation of a time subsequent to that of Luther himself. How such a study can shed light on the working out of the Reformation will be best appreciated by those who share with me the conviction of Ernst Troeltsch that much is to be gained by considering the Reformation's institutional results as a prolongation of medieval forms of life swept away only by Enlightenment and subsequent revolution. (That I do not share Troeltsch's view of Lutheranism itself should be obvious).⁴

¹ Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York, 1966), 1:543; Rudolf Vierhaus, "Deutschland im 18. Jahrhundert", in *Aufklärung, Absolutismus und Bürgertum in Deutschland*, ed. Franklin Kopitzsch (Munich, 1976), p. 181.

² Bernd Moeller, *Pfarrer als Bürger* (Göttingen, 1972), p. 16.

³ Hajo Holborn, "Machtpolitik und lutherische Sozialethik", *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 57 (1966): 23-32.

⁴ Hermann Fischer, "Luther und seine Reformation in der Sicht Ernst Troeltschs", *Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* 5 (1963): 132-72; Dietrich Gerhard, "Periodization in European History", *The American Historical Review* 61 (1955-56): 900-13; Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, trans. Olive Wyon (London, 1931, 1949), 2; Troeltsch, *Protestantism and Progress*, trans. W. Montgomery (1912; reprint ed., Boston, Mass., 1958).

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In the pages below I rely heavily on the term "utilitarianism" to signify an approach to education and ministry stressing instruction in new techniques for promoting this-worldly welfare (e.g., agronomy, technology). While this approach was developed in close connection with the theories of cameralism and physiocracy advocated by supporters of enlightened centralism, a suitable term for the approach is lacking. I have chosen for it the familiar word "utilitarianism", explicitly disavowing any intent to evoke Bentham. The only alternative would be "eudaemonism", a term so philosophical in its overtones and so unfamiliar to the English reader that I have rejected it. Here it may be recalled that the translator of Schleiermacher's *Reden* did not hesitate to render "das Extrem des nützlichen" as "the extreme of utilitarianism", thereby setting a precedent for English reference to the temporal version of ministry in an absolutist framework rejected by Schleiermacher and others before him.⁵

Were this study to be expanded, two areas would require treatment. On the one hand, it would be necessary to take account of the relations between church and state throughout Europe so as to set this regional story of differing German Lutheran views on the purpose of the ministry in better perspective. On the other hand, it would also be good to take the account well into the nineteenth century so as to show how the material here analyzed adds a new dimension to how we view the post-Napoleonic period's renewed interest in ministerial authority and confessional identity.

For the present it will suffice to note that what needs to be said will be obvious to any reader who already has some familiarity with these matters in the nineteenth century. For thin air did not by itself produce figures such as Theodor Kliefoth (1810-1895) and August Vilmar (1800-1868), with their views of the ministerial office as a "Gnadenmitelamt" or "ein Institut, an dessen Vorhandensein und Wirksamkeit ...

⁵ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Sämmtliche Werke*, 1. Abtheilung (Berlin, 1843), 1:298; Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, trans. John Oman (New York, 1958), p. 131. Cf. p. 82, n. 1 below.

die Seligkeit der Welt gebunden ist.’’⁶ As Karl Barth observes with regard to Vilmar, here one must not overlook the influence of Schleiermacher in inaugurating what was to become a return to a positive evaluation of historic Christianity.⁷ As for Schleiermacher himself, the prelude to that revival, in view of what follows he must now appear as in part a continuator of discussions about the proper function of the church which had been in progress for decades before he published the *Reden*.

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⁶ Emanuel Hirsch, *Geschichte der neuern evangelischen Theologie* (Gütersloh, 1954), 5:194, with reference first to Kliefoth, then to Vilmar.

⁷ Karl Barth, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (Valley Forge, 1973), pp. 627, 633.