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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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## Theological Observer

**The Lutheran Stream.**—For some time the *Moody Monthly* has described to its readers the various denominational "streams" that have flooded our country and the world. In the May issue of this year it takes up the "Lutheran Stream." The writer evidently studied, carefully and comprehensively, such works as might enable him to understand the "Lutheran stream" properly, and he shows a fine grasp of the historical development of Lutheranism and of its doctrinal position. Among the laudatory things which he says of Lutheranism are such as these: "Lutheranism is not a sect; it is a deep stream of Protestant thought. Its adherents believe firmly that Martin Luther rediscovered the doctrine of the supreme and absolute authority of the Word of God, and that on the basis of the Scriptures he proclaimed to a world steeped in ecclesiasticism and traditionalism the everlasting Gospel of the forgiving love of God in Christ." Again: "The cardinal teaching of Lutheranism is the doctrine of justification by faith apart from the deeds of the Law. This doctrine is the key to an intelligent appreciation of the position of Luther and his companions. The Roman Catholic Church had so added to, camouflaged, and twisted the teaching of salvation that it was no longer recognizable. Luther brought it out once more into the open light of day." Or: "By 'Justification by faith' he meant the gracious promise of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake, and man's affirmative response to that promise [sic?]. This is the Gospel. When a true Lutheran refers to the Gospel, he has in mind principally the saving mediatorial work of Christ upon Calvary. He admits that Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount, in which He enunciated the Law of the Christian love. But he has a horror lest men regard Christ primarily as Lawgiver rather than as Savior." And: "To him [the true Lutheran] the preaching of the Law is the 'strange' work of Christ; the preaching of the Gospel is the 'real' work of Christ. He feels that the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches err in this particular." Or: "He [Luther] was interested in instituting a reform of the Church, not in introducing a revolution from the Church." But while these and other statements well portray what Lutheranism teaches in its central area, there are other passages which do not correctly represent the Lutheran doctrine, though in some instances the *Moody Monthly* cannot be blamed for the misrepresentation. When, for example, the author writes: "A Book of the Bible is of value only as it relates to Christ," he is perhaps not aware of the fact that Luther fully accepted the Biblical truth that "to Him all the Prophets give witness" (Acts 10:43) and that, therefore, all the canonical books of the Bible are divinely inspired. The writer here repeats the widely spread half-truth that Luther regarded merely those books to be inspired which urge Christ, though, as a matter of fact, Luther accepted both the verbal and the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Again, on Baptism the



article says: "Lutherans lay great stress on the Sacrament of Baptism. To the question, 'What gifts or benefits does Baptism confer?' the Catechism replies: 'It worketh forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and confers everlasting salvation on all who believe, as the Word and promise of God declare.' A later section of the Catechism explains that 'it is not the water indeed that produces these effects, but the Word of God which accompanies and is connected with the water, and our faith which relies on the Word of God, connected with the water. For the water without the Word of God is simply water and no Baptism.' But in spite of this declaration many feel that the Lutherans regard Baptism as more than a means, or channel, of grace. It would almost appear, although many of our Lutheran friends would hasten to deny it, that the Catechism teaches Baptismal regeneration." We do not know why the writer is so very hesitant to say that the Catechism teaches Baptismal regeneration. The statement: "It would almost appear, although many of our Lutheran friends would hasten to deny it," should be deleted and in its place the words be put: "From this it appears that the Catechism teaches Baptismal regeneration." And when it does teach Baptismal regeneration, it teaches no more and no less than do John 3:5; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 5:26, and other passages of Scripture. And why should this be so strange a doctrine that the writer is almost afraid to put it in cold print? If the Gospel regenerates sinners in general (1 Pet. 1:23), why should it not regenerate them also in Holy Baptism? In another place the writer says: "Many feel that the Lutherans are too sacramentarian, that is, that they put too much emphasis on the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper." But we are sure that a little more study of the Lutheran Confessions will convince the writer that the Lutherans put no greater emphasis on the Sacraments than does Scripture. J. T. M.

**Reprinting Religious Books.**—*Theology Today* (April, 1948) offers the following report, which no doubt will interest theologians also in our Church: "The February 14th issue of *Publishers' Weekly*, the trade journal of the American publishing business, is a 'Religious Book Number.' This has a certain appropriateness with the growing popularity of Lenten reading lists. Most of the books advertised in this issue are of a religious character, and the brief articles and news items are also devoted to religious publishing. This is an indication of the importance of religious literature in our so-called secular society and also an indication that religious publishing is a big business. Among the interesting previews offered here is the announcement, on the front cover, that the Abingdon-Cokesbury Award has been granted to John W. Bowman's *The Religion of Maturity* and to Georgia Harkness's *Prayer and the Common Life*. Each is to receive \$7,500. The Westminster Press takes three pages to tell of the forthcoming *Study Edition* of the Bible, which is to be 'a self-explaining Study Edition of the Scriptures, incorporating the discoveries of a modern



research in history and archaeology . . . while yet maintaining a truly Protestant and evangelical viewpoint.' The volume, which has been several years in preparation, is to be ready by September and will retail for \$10.00. Among the editorial paragraphs there is an announcement that promises some hope for the reprinting of important religious books which for one reason and another have been allowed to go out of print. The American Theological Library Association, of which we wrote a few words in our last issue, has drawn up a list of 320 such titles, which, there is reason to believe, would meet a real need and, incidentally, provide a fair financial risk. The list is being submitted to various religious publishers in the hope that they will of their own accord reprint whatever titles they may have. Scribner's is now making available Ayer's *Source Book of Ancient Church History*, Mackintosh's *Types of Modern Theology*, and several others. Harper's reprint program will probably include Dodd's *Apostolic Preaching*, Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*. Eerdmans' has had, for some time, a program for reprinting older books and has recently begun the ambitious project of re-issuing all of Calvin's commentaries on the Bible. This is all to the good, and nothing is so essential in this day of doctrinal illiteracy as the making available of the great texts of former years. The 'A. T. L. A.' could perform no greater service to theological education than by encouraging religious publishers to keep their big volumes in print. We would like to see, in addition to those mentioned, reprints of such classics as Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith*, Ritschl's *Justification and Reconciliation*, and Troeltsch's *Social Teachings*. It is on such books as these that the good faith of the commercial publisher will be really tested." What is encouraging in this report is not the fact that awards have been granted to Dr. Bowman for his *Religion of Maturity* and to Dr. Harkness for her *Prayer and the Common Life*, since both are liberal and do not convey the Christian message; nor are we much interested in Schleiermacher's *Christian Faith* and Troeltsch's *Social Teachings*. But what is encouraging is the fact that publishers are now planning to give to the public once more such works as Schaff's *Creeds of Christendom*, Mackintosh's *Types of Modern Theology*, and others, and that Eerdmans' has been reproducing for some time conservative Biblical works of superior value. And what is still more encouraging is that our own Concordia Publishing House is now gathering lists of outstanding works, especially Lutheran, which might be translated from the German and handed down to theologians in English-speaking countries in a language understood by them. We recently received from a young pastor of our Church who knows little German the request to speak on behalf of a translation into English of the famous old *Weimar Bibel*. Are we beginning to appreciate anew the values of our glorious past when the study of theology meant digging down more deeply into the gold mine of divine revelation?

J. T. M.



**Concerning the Ordination of Women.**—On this subject, which has become a much-discussed one, the News Bureau of the National Lutheran Council issued the following article, in which there appears a symposium of opinions voiced by officials of the Lutheran Synods of America on the agitated topic.

"American Lutheran leaders see no possibility whatsoever of any development that will open the way for the ordination of women by Lutheran Church bodies in this country, according to an article appearing in the *Newark* (N. J.) *Evening News*.

"Early this year, a law was enacted by the Danish Parliament permitting women to receive holy orders in the Church of Denmark, which, as in all the Scandinavian countries, is Lutheran. Women's groups in Sweden and Norway have also advanced similar proposals for ecclesiastical recognition of women.

"Presidents of all the major Lutheran groups in the U. S. were asked to express their viewpoints on women as ministers, a question that is becoming more and more of an issue in Protestant circles. Without exception, all were opposed.

"Dr. Franklin Clark Fry of New York, president of the United Lutheran Church in America, asserted he was confident that 'the Lutheran Churches in America will be as disinclined to ordain women as our sister Lutheran Church in Denmark has shown itself to be all through the recent controversy in that country.'

"'Only an arbitrary act of Parliament, without consulting the Church, has opened the doors to this innovation,' he said. 'This act has been another demonstration of the undesirability of having the State dominate the Church. Certainly a proposal to ordain women does not arise naturally out of the spirit of the Lutheran Church, which is governed wholly by the Word of God. Our understanding of the Word does not recommend this measure to us.'

"Dr. John W. Behnken of Chicago, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States, declared that, on the basis of 1 Corinthians 14:34 and 1 Timothy 2:14, 'our Church has held that women should not be ordained to the ministry.'

"'The passages of Scripture speak a clear language,' he added, 'and the Church should certainly follow the instruction given.'

"It was pointed out by the Rev. Albert Jensen of Des Moines, president of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, that the law passed by the Danish Parliament 'does not compel any of the bishops of the Church of Denmark to ordain a woman, even if she has a call from a parish church,' and that reliable sources state that only one of the nine bishops of Denmark is considering doing so.

"The two women requesting ordination are slated for rather special service to certain groups, and there seems to be only a remote possibility that women will seek to enter the regular ministry of the Church of Denmark," he said. "The entire situation seems to be conspicuous more on account of its unique or odd qualities than because of any serious change of policy, an exception



verifying the rule that the ministry of the Church will be served by men. In my opinion, no deviation from that rule is in prospect for the Lutheran Church in the United States.'

"Comments of other Lutheran churchmen follow:

"Dr. J. A. Aasgard, of Minneapolis, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church: 'The Evangelical Lutheran Church does not ordain women to the ministry.'

"Dr. Em. Poppen, of Columbus, O., president of the American Lutheran Church: 'I do not know what prompted the Parliament of Denmark to pass that authorization of the ordination of women. The Constitution and By-Laws of the American Lutheran Church do not specify that our pastors must be men, but this is taken for granted. I am sure that a proposal to authorize the ordination of women would not be accepted by the American Lutheran Church at present.'

"Dr. P. O. Bersell, of Minneapolis, president of the Lutheran Augustana Synod: 'The Lutheran Augustana Synod has never been faced with the question of the ordination of women, but I dare say that it will be unalterably opposed to such ordination, should the question ever arise. This stand will be in accordance with apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions.'

"Dr. T. O. Burntvedt, of Minneapolis, president of the Lutheran Free Church: 'The ordination of women is no problem in our Church. It has never been a problem with us and I hope it never will be. I do not favor the ordination of women. I regard it as contrary to the spirit and teachings of Holy Scriptures.'

"Dr. N. C. Carlsen, of Blair, Nebr., president of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church. 'It is inconceivable that the day should ever come when Lutherans in America will ordain women. We find no Scriptural ground for such practice.'

**Lutheran Merger Suggested.**—An article in the *Lutheran Standard* of May 22 submits the calendar of the Lutheran church bodies which have united in the American Lutheran Conference. The article states that one of these bodies, the United Evangelical Lutheran Church, a body of 30,000 members, which was formerly known as the United Danish Lutheran Church, will discuss at its forthcoming meeting the idea of a merger of the synods forming the American Lutheran Conference. A resolution will be submitted which reads as follows: "Be it *resolved* that the Church Council of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church be instructed to contact the Church Councils, or authorized officials, of the constituent bodies of the American Lutheran Conference and invite them to initiate discussions collectively by representatives of the five bodies with the view of bringing about greater co-operation and a merger of some form of the five bodies of the American Lutheran Conference." If the United Evangelical Lutheran Church adopts this resolution, then quite likely at the meeting of the American Lutheran Conference, which will be held November 10—12 at Detroit, Mich., the proposed merger will be one



of the topics of discussion. What we of the Missouri Synod desire and pray for is the progress of unadulterated Lutheranism. We hope that the synods concerned will consider the practical question under discussion from this point of view. A.

**Conditions in Palestine.**—The N. L. C. News Bureau sent out the following report: Dr. Edwin A. Moll, who has been in Palestine since December, 1946, as representative of the U. S. A. Committee for the Lutheran World Federation, plans to return to New York about the middle of May, "since transaction of business and my residence in Jerusalem are now utterly impossible," according to a cable received from him by the National Lutheran Council.

Dr. Moll said that "as far as possible, Lutherans, including released internees, are in safe places, and titles to all properties secured for Lutheran World Federation."

He reported that land and buildings at Bir Salim, comprising a farm owned by the Syrian Orphanage, had been seized by the Haganah (a Jewish agency), which is also in possession of the orphanage itself.

Dr. Moll will confer with Lutheran leaders here, after which he plans to return to some country adjacent to Palestine to await re-entry into the Holy Land when advisable.

To the above it should be added that Dr. Moll has arrived in New York and is now reporting orally on conditions in the Holy Land. A.

**Berdyaev Deceased.**—Most of our readers have at some time seen the name of this man, which quite likely they found difficult to pronounce. His full name was Nicolai Alexandrovich Berdyaev. His home was Kiev, Russia, where he was born in 1874. Quite early in life he manifested critical tendencies, and when still a young man, he was banished from his home town and sent to Northern Russia. He had committed the crime of attacking the Holy Synod of the Russian Church, which he called "a political body at the mercy of the civil power." But though he assumed this critical attitude, he never severed his connection with the Orthodox Church of Russia. When the First World War was ended and the revolution in Russia had taken place, he became professor of philosophy in the University of Moscow. Being outspoken, he was banished in 1922. First he lived in Berlin, and there served as editor in chief of the Y. M. C. A. Russian Press. In 1923 he went to Paris, where the organization which he served had in the meantime established its headquarters.

Berdyaev is rated one of the chief religious philosophers of our age. As a young man, he was a follower of Karl Marx, at least in some respects. Later on in life he vigorously assailed the positions held by atheistic Communism. He probably became best known through his widely circulated book *The Fate of Man in the Modern World*. A strange view which he held was that man co-operates with God in the continuation of creation. It is through this co-operation that the work of God goes on and the



ultimate goals of the human race are reached. This can be correctly understood, but mountains of false teaching can hide behind these words.

A.

**Self-Communion by the Pastor.**—In the *Australian Lutheran* (February 18, 1948) Dr. Clarence E. Hoopman, president of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia, publishes an opinion on "self-communion by the pastor," prepared by the faculty of Concordia College, Unley, S. A., and printed in the *Australasian Theological Review* (January—March, 1943), together with an excellent explanation and advice. He writes (quoted in part): "He [the pastor] is not satisfied to receive the Sacrament once or twice a year, whereas the members of his flock receive it more frequently; but together with his members he wishes to enjoy the full benefit to be derived from frequent participation in this holy Sacrament. He wishes to be an example to the flock in this matter also. As opportunity presents itself, a faithful pastor will, therefore, commune at pastoral conferences, at conventions, and on other occasions. He may also visit a brother minister and commune with him, or invite him to his home for the same purpose. Ministers, however, who live in isolated areas may find even this difficult. The question arises, therefore: May not pastors under certain circumstances give communion to themselves, when they are administering the Sacrament for the benefit of the flock; or may they not ask their congregation to appoint a member of the flock to give them the Sacrament on such an occasion? The matter was freely discussed in some of our pastoral conferences. Members of our faculty at Concordia College gave special consideration to the matter. Finally a report was submitted and adopted by one of our conferences and published in the *Australasian Theological Review* (January—March, 1943). This report reads as follows: '1. There is nothing in Holy Scripture to prevent the pastor from communing with his congregation; on the contrary, it is most reasonable to assume that the "elders" and "bishops" in apostolic times joined in the communion with their flock. 2. The greatest theologians of the Lutheran Church, from Luther down, have declared self-communion by the pastor to be permissible in case of necessity, i. e., when the pastor's isolated situation deprives him of the blessings of the Holy Communion except at long intervals. 3. There seems to be a desire in our circles for a more frequent communion on the part of the pastor than at the few occasions provided by pastoral conferences and synodical meetings. There are many good reasons why this should be recommended, but there is no sound reason why it should be discouraged. 4. Another way of meeting the difficulty is to let the congregation appoint one of its members (one of the deacons or elders) to administer the sacred elements to the pastor. This method must certainly be left open, if pastor and congregation prefer it. 5. If, as a result of a favorable vote by the conference . . . self-communion is introduced in our congregations, it is perhaps desirable that some degree



of uniformity is aimed at. Two ways suggest themselves: a. That the pastor takes the bread and wine *before* he dispenses them to the congregation; b. That he takes the elements *after* all other communicants have received them. In both cases no dispensing words need be used, but the pastor may well add the prayer: May the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, and His precious blood, strengthen and keep me in true faith to life everlasting. Amen. Perhaps (b) is to be preferred, because it corresponds more closely to the method now in use when two pastors officiate. 6. In congregations where self-communion, or reception of the Sacrament at the hands of an elder, has not so far been practiced, the pastor must, of course, discuss the matter with the congregation and give the necessary instruction before the innovation is introduced.'—If, therefore, a pastor practices self-communion, or requests one of his congregations to appoint a member to give him communion, this is quite in order, and thus both the pastor and the members of the flock may enjoy the blessings of the Sacrament to the same degree. It is understood, of course, that self-communion, or communion by an appointed elder, should be practiced only in exceptional cases of great need. Wherever the pastor has opportunity to go to the Lord's Table frequently or to have a fellow pastor administer to him the Holy Supper, this is preferable, since this a) is the common usage in our church and, therefore, causes less questioning and confusion; b) does not raise questions or scruples of conscience, for whatever Christians do, they must do with the full conviction that their action or conduct is right, so that they do not violate their conscience; and c) symbolizes the nature and purpose of Holy Communion, not only as a form of preaching the Gospel, but also as an absolution or a solemn declaration of pardon, which, by its very nature, suggests that it be administered by another. Communion by an elder is, therefore, to be preferred to self-communion, though, as the opinion states, there is no clear Scripture passage which forbids the pastor to commune himself. At any rate, the matter should not be treated lightly."

J. T. M.

**Walther's "Gesetz und Evangelium"—A Timely Book.**—One of the leading German theologians writes: "Among the publications which your Synod has so kindly sent us [including also our professional magazine] I consider Walther's *Law and Gospel* the most important. For me this work has become extremely important, and I consider it an event of church historical importance that in a time when in many of the Lutheran churches the distinction between Law and Gospel is no longer considered a decisive theme of theology, in your Church this has been accomplished in a theologically penetrating and spiritually impressive manner." Another theologian commented: "Walther's *Law and Gospel* is a most timely book (*"ein aktuelles Werk"*)."

F. E. MAYER

**What Will Union Do?**—Some men in the front ranks of Christian denominations in our country who are doing concen-



trated thinking on the problems facing our age, are apparently of the opinion that the chief solution of our difficulties lies in removing the divisions that now harass Christendom. E. Stanley Jones has been advocating a federal union of the church bodies, stating that according to his view such a federal union would be a mighty factor in effecting the spiritual rebuilding of our country. A slightly different opinion is voiced by Truman B. Douglass in an article recently published in the *Christian Century*. Dr. Douglass is the executive vice-president of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregational Christian Churches. He gives the article the caption "Federal Union Is Not Enough." What he argues for is a corporate union of the denominations.

Dr. Douglass is moved deeply by the disturbing conditions about us. "The Church in America is losing its contest with the secular order and is losing it at an accelerating rate." Dr. Douglass points out that not only are there more people in the United States today than ever before who have no church connection, but that alongside of them there are ever so many whom you have to call unevangelized because they have never thought of Christianity as "possessing a total claim upon the mind and heart." We are afraid Dr. Douglass is right. We should like to emphasize that the chief cause for alarm is not that there are multitudes of unchurched persons, but rather this, that worldliness has entered the churches and that often no difference can be detected between those within and those outside the fold. But is it not naive to believe that through uniting the denominations this evil can be successfully fought? If people are to be converted, the Word of God has to be preached to them. God must do the converting, and He works through the Word. Men cannot be brought into the arms of the Savior by the mere sight of large numbers that have placed their names on the church lists. What leaders like Dr. Douglass should be concerned about is the question: How can the sweet Gospel of Jesus Christ be brought to the American public more widely, more fully, more persuasively, than is being done at present? It is true that divisions in the Church may keep some people from joining a local congregation; but we believe that their number is rather negligible. The chief trouble is that repentance and forgiveness of sins are not preached and that in thousands of churches Christ, and He crucified, is not the Center of the message heard. A united Christendom is a beautiful thing to contemplate in one's thoughts; but if the preaching and the teaching in it should not be different from what is now offered in the majority of the churches, who would be benefited? That the display of mere numbers will not overcome secularism is strikingly demonstrated by the Church of the Middle Ages. There you had one body, one head, one organization, but at the same time woeful weakness because the Gospel of the Savior was largely kept under the bushel.

A.



**An Attack on Luther in Australia.** — The *Australian Lutheran* (March 3, 1948) quotes from *Catholic Missions* (August, 1947), the "National Magazine of the Pontifical Works for Australia and the Pacific," published in Sydney, N. S. W., the following insidious attack on Luther: "In Martin Luther's birthplace, Eisleben, Thuringia, now in the Russian Zone, there stands a large bronze statue of Lenin. It is set up in the town square by the side of the statue of Luther — the founder of Atheistic Communism and the founder of Protestantism thus standing together. There seems to be something symbolical in this coincidence. Men like Dawson and other historians have pointed out the logical sequence of the so-called reformation, the religious revolt in the early part of the sixteenth century. It denied the teaching authority of the Vicar of Christ; it abolished the priesthood, abandoned five of the seven sacraments, keeping only Baptism and the Lord's Supper (and that only as a memorial), started one national Church after another, became hopelessly divided by the private interpretation of the Bible, made the ruler of a country also its national 'pope,' allowed rationalism to destroy the Scriptures by insane criticism, in the end denied even the divinity of Christ, the existence of hell and the immortality of the human soul, and all these negative tendencies in a straight line have led to the violently anti-God and anti-Christ system of Nazism and Russian and world Communism." To this the *Australian Lutheran* replies: "This attack is typical of the many attacks on Luther and the repeated attempts to foist Nazism and Communism on to Luther and the Lutheran Church. These attacks have been refuted so often that one becomes somewhat nauseated with these repeated slanders. That the Russians erected a statue of Lenin at Eisleben near the statue of Luther in no way connects Communism and Lutheranism. Moreover, the author of this article charges Luther with all the aberrations and follies of Protestant and non-Protestant reformers and enthusiasts and unbelieving critics and rationalists, a charge so plainly false that the author of the article comes under the suspicion of willful perversion of the truth, or of an ignorant passing by of the difference between Lutheranism and Protestantism. . . . Rome has never forgiven and will never forgive Luther for his Reformation work. The attacks on Luther will continue. Historians will be cited for and against the one man, the hero of the Reformation. But one thing is certain also: God's Word, which Martin Luther taught, shall nevermore be brought to naught."

J. T. M.

**Some Comments of Dr. Goodspeed on the Revised Standard Version.** — Since Dr. Edgar Goodspeed was a member of the committee to which we owe the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament, what he says on this translation, explaining and defending certain aspects of it, carries great interest for all theologians. An article of his appeared in the April, 1948, issue of the *Review and Expositor*, published in Louisville, Ky., and edited by the faculty of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. This



journal in April and July, 1947, had published critical articles by Dr. George W. Paschal concerning the Revised Standard Version. It is with these articles that Dr. Goodspeed's observations concern themselves. We do not intend to reproduce all of his remarks; merely those that are of chief interest will here be submitted.

The critic had expressed the thought that wherever the R. S. V. relies on a different text from that underlying the old versions, the supporting manuscripts should be mentioned in footnotes. The reply is obvious. Such a procedure would have annoyed and confused the overwhelming majority of readers.—The critic had spoken lightly of the Chester-Beattie papyrus of Paul's Epistles and stated his view that it in no sense was worthy to be compared with Codices Aleph and B. Dr. Goodspeed quite properly points out that this papyrus is a hundred years older than the famous codices mentioned, and that hence it deserves careful consideration. He furthermore mentions that contrary to a widespread notion the Revised Version, which appeared in 1881, did not adhere closely to the text of Westcott and Hort, although the members of the translation committee were supplied with advance sheets of the Westcott and Hort edition of the Greek New Testament.—The translation "only" for *monogenees*, John 3:16, is defended by a reference to Luke 7:12 (from the story of the young man at Nain), where the same word occurs.—The view of the critic that *idios* should always be rendered "own" is proved wrong by reference to Acts 24:24. It so happens that Drusilla, who is mentioned there as the wife of Felix, was really not the "own" wife of Felix; he had enticed her away from her rightful husband Aziz, king of Emesa. Dr. Goodspeed mentions a number of other modern translators who have not used the translation "own" in various New Testament passages.—Dr. Paschal had not been satisfied with the R. S. V. rendering of 2 Cor. 5:16, "From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard Him thus no longer." Dr. Goodspeed correctly points out that this is a much-debated passage and has been rendered in a variety of ways in the modern versions.—The critic objected to the dropping of "ye," "thee," and "thou" (except in prayer) and complains that when "you" is employed in present-day fashion, one cannot always tell whether a singular or a plural is meant. Dr. Goodspeed replies that what the critic objects to is simply characteristic of our modern English speech.—Dr. Paschal did not like the idea that New Testament Greek is called "colloquial" and is not satisfied with the "colloquial" element in the R. S. V. The reply states that the best Greek scholars whom the critic himself wishes to follow tell us that New Testament Greek is "vernacular."—An interesting point is raised by the critic when he states that *amphoterai* must always be translated "both," and should not be rendered "all" as is done in the R. S. V., Acts 19:16; 23:8. The rejoinder of Dr. Goodspeed is that the 1940 edition of the great Oxford Lexicon of Classical Greek, known as the Liddell-Scott-Jones Lexicon, acknowledges



that the word may have the meaning "all." — The general charge of the critic that the R. S. V. lacks "the prime essential of any translation, accuracy," Dr. Goodspeed naturally says, is not justified. Correct theories of translation have to be considered.

These few remarks are not intended to be an evaluation of Dr. Goodspeed's reply. They are here submitted to aid readers of this journal who are interested in delving more deeply into the question whether the R. S. V. deserves our confidence or not.

A.

**An Evaluation of Barth.** — In *Bibliotheca Sacra*, in the number for January—March, 1948, there appears beside other interesting articles a paper by Dr. Miner Brodhead Stearns on "Protestant Theology Since 1700," with the subheading "Barth and the Barthians." A note states that the author has been writing on Barthian theology and has returned to Europe and studied the subject more specifically. "He has met conservative Christian leaders who were enthusiastic about Barth and still others who consider him highly dangerous, theologically and practically. All that has been learned has only confirmed the opinion already reached for this article, namely, that Barth has been too much influenced by philosophy and by supposedly scientific theory as to the origin of the Scriptures and of man." The author tries to be fair. He endeavors to praise in Barthianism what deserves commendation. Thus he holds that we have to appreciate Barth's efforts "to formulate a theology true to the Word of God." In this connection he says that Barth's ever-growing influence in the warfare of supernaturalism against rationalism is evidence "not so much of his personal power, but rather of the power of the great truths he has proclaimed." The following sentence may sound a note which is too optimistic, "That Barth has completely overthrown, at least on the continent of Europe, the old rationalistic theology of the nineteenth century, is surely a cause for rejoicing." Then Dr. Stearns states that there are two regrettable causes which have kept Barth from reaching a truly Biblical position on important points, first, "an undue respect for the calculations of scientific men both in the field of natural science (evolutionary anthropology) and in that of Biblical criticism," and, in the second place, "the philosophical basis which we may detect underlying his theology, which reveals some of the very detrimental influence of Kant and Hegel."

On Barth's attitude toward the Bible the author quotes a passage from Barth's writings which has been given wide circulation and which we reproduce here because some of our readers may not have seen it. Barth says: "The Bible is the literary monument of an ancient racial religion and of a Hellenistic cultus religion of the Near East. A human document like any other, it can lay no *a priori* claim to special attention and consideration. This judgment, being announced by every tongue and believed in every territory, we may take for granted today. We need not



continue trying to break through an open door. And when now we turn our serious though somewhat dispassionate attention to the objective content of the Bible, we shall not do so in a way to provoke religious enthusiasm and scientific indignation to another battle against 'stark orthodoxy' and 'dead belief in the letter.' For it is too clear that intelligent and fruitful discussion of the Bible begins when the judgment as to its human, its historical and psychological character has been made and *put behind us*. Would that the teachers of our high and lower schools, and with them the progressive element among the clergy of our established churches, would forthwith resolve to have done with a battle that once had its time but has now *had it*! The special content of this human document, the remarkable *something* with which the writers of these stories and those who stood behind them were concerned, the Biblical object—this is the question that will engage and engross us today." This passage shows definitely that Barth approves of the theories of negative higher criticism which hold that the Bible contains many errors.

Continuing, Dr. Stearns draws attention to some positions of Barth: "The Word of God for Barth is Christ, not the Bible. . . . When God speaks to a man through the Bible, then that is the Word of God to him." Evidently the objective character of the Bible as God's Word is destroyed. Barth distinguishes between reason and revelation, a point in which, of course, he has our approval. But he seems to conceive of revelation altogether "in transcendent terms." "Barthians separate so radically the hearing of the Word of God and the human capacity to apprehend that it is questionable whether it is even possible for them to speak about a human apprehension of revelation." [All this is difficult to understand. Barth's position in this respect is definitely bound up with his view denying the objective character of the Bible as God's Word. If the Bible is God's Word only in those cases when its sayings grip a person and influence him to assume a certain position, then we can understand why for Barth revelation is altogether a transcendent and subjective matter. In that case what is revelation to one will not be revelation to another. A.] Dr. Stearns holds that here Barth definitely shows the influence of Kantian epistemology and to that extent reveals himself as a liberal.

What is Barth's position toward the historical Jesus? One of Barth's friends makes the statement that you have to see how Barth uses the word "historical." This man (Mackintosh) is quoted as describing Barth's position in these words: "In the first place, Barth rightly insists that in this context the word 'historical' must be closely scrutinized. In modern usage 'history' is a radically equivocal term, and we cannot assume that it is capable, in its current meaning, of supplying the framework into which God's revelation must fit. Two ordinary and secular meanings may be distinguished. Historical, first, means that which can be vouched for by scholarly research, working on universally scientific rules.



And, secondly, historical means that which is apprehensible by a neutral observer, devoid of faith. In neither sense is Jesus Christ, in whom God's revelation comes to be described, 'historical.' For history, in this detached sense, Jesus can be no more than a problem or a myth. Faith must pierce deeper; 'though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know Him no more.' The ultimate basis for faith is behind and beyond externally perceptible history, the individual facts of which might well be got by heart yet have no revealing power of God vibrating through them; it lies rather in facts that happened, facts witnessed to by prophets and apostles, and now in my own present sent home to me by the Holy Spirit."

Asking the question whether Barth is right in this view of the meaning of "historical," Dr. Stearns correctly points out that many things pertaining to Christ were observed by contemporaries who were devoid of faith, f. i., many of his miracles. What is the use of hesitating to label the works of Jesus as historical merely because many of the people who saw them were refusing to evaluate them properly? Barth seems to be unwilling to distinguish between these two things: the happening of an event and the adequate appraisal of the event. Perhaps Barth's position will become clear when we listen to what he says on the resurrection of Christ. This resurrection must not be called historical, says he. Why not? Because what is termed "historical" is subject to human questionings, investigations, debates, doubts, and denials; you surely do not wish to see this divine event plunged into such muddy waters. To us it seems that Barth is simply using language in a very arbitrary way. When we ordinary people call the resurrection of Christ "historical," we express thereby that it actually came to pass. To him the term would mean that the resurrection may be investigated and doubted. Dr. Stearns holds that when a person interprets Barth in this manner, one is quite charitable. To give another instance, Barth seems to deny the historicity of Adam, actually saying that Adam "has no separate, positive existence." But here, too, reading Barth in the context in which the quoted words occur, one finally reaches the conclusion that he wishes to say the real significance of Adam is something that the ordinary observer cannot discern and divine revelation has to tell us; we are here dealing with something transcendent. But why torture people with such extraordinary, unique methods of expression? Should not a theologian, if he considers his message worth while, use language that everybody can understand? Dr. Stearns points to other doubtful ideas of Barth which, in the last analysis, we believe may simply be due to his peculiar use of language. Barth, it must not be forgotten, is the inexorable foe of easygoing, optimistic humanism, the position that man is the center of the universe, that our heaven is here on earth, and that man can by his own powers make this world a far better place to live in. To shatter such idolatrous conceptions of man's ability and self-sufficiency, Barth uses all the dynamite of thought and language he can muster,



points out again and again the great gulf between the Creator and the creature, and refuses to let human reason dictate our religion. With deep regret we have to say that he is inconsistent.

In conclusion Dr. Stearns has a few things to say about Brunner. Comparing Barth and Brunner and quoting a friend of his who has closely studied the works of both, he informs us that this friend considers Barth to be closer to orthodox Protestantism than Brunner. This scholar holds that Barth makes no concession to liberal theology. Concerning Brunner's position he reports some very damaging things (like denial of the Virgin birth of Jesus), but he thinks that, after all, "Brunner's influence is of the best" and that the pastors who come from his school "preach the entire Gospel." This friend of Dr. Stearns says: "Barth's students often make trouble with statements that are too sweeping and violent. . . . Barth is very exclusive and vehement towards Brunner. Brunner is hurt by it and prays." Both of these men, we should often remind ourselves, at best represent Reformed and not Lutheran theology.

A.

**Availability of Radio for Religious Work Stressed.**—A new organization has been formed in New York, as *R. N. S.* reports, whose aim is to make religious broadcasting a mightier factor than it has been till now. Forty church executives assembled and founded the Protestant Radio Commission. Charles P. Taft, president of the Federal Council of Churches, will be chairman. Fifteen denominations and eight interdenominational agencies are represented. A survey or research study of religious radio is the first thing to be undertaken. Among the objectives are: to give counsel to State, city, and local councils of churches, to sponsor national network religious programs, to represent Protestantism on inter-faith broadcasts, to serve as liaison between the churches and the Federal Communications Commission, and to seek to develop "intelligent radio listening on the part of church people." The attempts will be made to merge all Protestant radio activities. Whether this will mean an endeavor to suppress all programs which do not represent the theology of the Federal Council is not revealed.

The move, like the Federal Council itself, with which the Protestant Radio Commission is intimately connected, is, of course, thoroughly unionistic. It is to be feared that but little of the Old Gospel will be heard on the programs which will be produced under the new auspices. But, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that the promoters are wide-awake in their recognition of the significance of the radio for religious work.

A.

**Brief Items from Religious News Service.**—Chinese Communists are aiming at the complete annihilation of the Roman Catholic Church in northern China, according to a survey made by the editors of *Jesuit Missions*, a magazine published in New York. The survey—which reveals that 49 priests and brothers have been killed—expressed fear that at the present rate of



persecution the Catholic Church would be completely destroyed in northern China by the end of 1948. In two years, the report said, 123 Catholic churches were converted into movie theaters, 166 were looted, 25 were destroyed, and 183 were converted into Communist headquarters and meeting places. The Communists also occupied 216 mission stations, looted 245, and destroyed 88. Twelve Catholic schools were burned and 1,071 were closed.

Believed to be the first of their kind, fifteen stained-glass windows installed in Blessed Sacrament Roman Catholic Church in Kansas City, Kans., present Biblical figures clad in modern clothing. Cain appears in farmer's overalls, while the bridegroom in the Cana wedding incident is dressed in a blue business suit, with white shirt and striped tie. As Jesus prepares to turn the water into wine, in the adjoining panel, a beardless man clad in blue denim shirt and trousers and heavy workshoes pours water from one jug to another. Another window, showing Peter, James, and John asleep in the garden, depicts one of the three dozing over a modern newspaper whose headline concerns strikes. In the background is a symbolic arrangement of an exploding atomic bomb, skyscrapers, factories, a searchlight, money bag, and two praying figures.

A rapid and steady growth in Wisconsin private and parochial elementary and secondary schools during recent years is being studied by the state commission on education. Figures showing the trend were collected for the commission and discussed by its members in Madison in connection with the review of Wisconsin educational problems and needs. It was shown that during the decade from 1937 to 1946, public elementary school enrollment throughout the state dropped from 350,402 to 310,012. During that same period public high school enrollment declined from 152,442 to 141,919, but private and parochial schools forged ahead in numbers of students from 11,893 to 15,913.

A New York State assemblyman, Christopher Lawrence, Bronxville, has introduced a resolution in the legislature calling for creation of a five-man joint legislative committee to investigate the subject of "voluntary euthanasia," otherwise known as "mercy killing." Exponents of mercy killing previously had been rebuffed in their attempts to find a legislator who would initiate action, but opponents of euthanasia on Capitol Hill admitted that the resolution gives a foothold to a future law empowering legalized killing of persons incurably ill.

An agreement has been reached with the British government by which the National Lutheran Council—as the United States committee for the Lutheran World Federation—will assume complete charge of Lutheran missions in Palestine. The mission property, clustered in a small area in Jerusalem and vicinity, is valued at 17 to 20 million dollars. Final disposition of the missions,



owned and operated before the war by missionary societies in Germany, will await the provisions of the peace treaty with Germany.

Dr. Henry Smith Leiper, secretary of the American Committee for the World Council, announced that only "properly accredited" press people, from both the secular and religious press, will be admitted to the first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam, Holland, August 22 to September 4. The press will be supplied with copies of the main addresses; a daily mimeographed bulletin reporting schedules of meetings, events, and other information; and a "Delegate's Digest," which will contain extracts from addresses, quotes, pictures, and interpretative material. English, French, and German will be the official languages of the assembly.

Bishop Clement D. Rockey of India has reported that since the partition of India there has been a definite swing toward Christianity, especially on the part of Moslems.

To reduce expenses of maintenance, six Protestant churches in east Boston, representing four different denominations, will vote on a merger plan, according to the Rev. William J. Villaum, director of research and planning for the Massachusetts Council of Churches. The identity of the churches will not be announced until after the members have voted.

Dr. E. J. Homrighausen, professor of Christian education at Princeton Theological Seminary, has begun his duties as secretary of evangelism in the World Council of Churches' Department of Reconstruction. His task is to organize and inspire evangelistic work throughout Europe and prepare for the anticipated creation of a separate department of evangelism by the Assembly of the World Council in Amsterdam, Holland.

Ten new languages and dialects were added last year to the list of Bible translations, bringing the total to 1,090, according to a survey by the American Bible Society.

New languages are Aztec, Chol, Mixteco, Tarahumara, Tzeltal and Tzotil, spoken in Mexico; Naga: Chang and Naga; Mao, used in Assam; Nantcheri, prevalent in French Equatorial Africa; and Palau, found in Micronesia.

Far-reaching changes in the internal administration of the Norwegian State Lutheran Church are recommended in the report of a special governmental commission set up in November, 1945, under the chairmanship of Bishop Elvind Berggrav, Primate of the church. One of the commission's most important recommendations concerns the establishment of a church Council, to consist of 25 members, the majority of whom will be laymen. The Council will include nine clergymen and two theological professors, but only three of Norway's eight Lutheran bishops will



have seats. The Council will meet once a year and will be the supreme body of the Norwegian Church in all spiritual and internal matters. It will have the right to be heard by the king in all disputes involving ritual questions, and will be consulted before any laws are introduced in Parliament affecting the spiritual life of the church.

Finnish government authorities have approved plans for the establishment of a self-supporting Roman Catholic Junior High School in Helsinki. The school is intended principally for children of English-speaking parents, but will also admit Finnish children. All courses will be conducted in English. Finland has about 3,000 Catholics, served by three churches and five priests.

Dr. J. B. Lawrence, executive secretary of the Home Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, has estimated that more than 80 per cent of the people in the South never go to any church. He said, "We must get out from the walls of our churches and carry the gospel to the people where they are. We need large numbers of missionaries who will be willing to live in trailers in migrant camps over the land and be schoolteachers and ministers in these needy communities."

Douglas A. Hyde, for five years news editor of the *Daily Worker*, London communist paper, has resigned from his job and the communist party and intends to join the Roman Catholic Church. In a statement explaining his decision, Hyde said he had been "appalled by what has happened in recent weeks in Czechoslovakia."

The American Bible Society reported that during 1947 a total of 9,310,439 copies of the Scriptures, written in 167 languages, were circulated. Calls for Scriptures in the United States accounted for 4,020,683 copies of the total.

