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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### THESES ON THE SCRIPTURES

An intersynodical group of Lutherans in Alberta, comprising several synods of the National Lutheran Council and The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, is currently studying the *Brief Statement* and the *Doctrinal Affirmation*. In a recent meeting this group adopted the following theses on Inspiration, submitted by Prof. Arnold Guebert of Concordia College, Edmonton:

"1. The Holy Scriptures, that is, the original text of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, differ from all other books in the world. They are of divine origin and divine character, because God's Holy Spirit employed the writers and gave them the Scriptures by inspiration according to their content (*Realinspiration*) and according to their phraseology (*Verbalinspiration*). Acts 2:4; 1 Cor. 2:3; Rom. 3:2; Matt. 22:43-45; Gal. 3:16; 1 Peter 1:10-12; 2 Peter 1:21; 2 Tim. 3:14-17 (*Trigl.*, Nicene Creed, p. 31; Augsburg Confession, p. 90, par. 49).

"2. This inspiration was not a mechanical process or a mere dictation, as though there was no inner participation on the part of the writers. Nor was only the intellect of the holy men influenced. Rather inspiration was an act of God whereby the writers' entire personality with all its psychic functions was governed by the Holy Spirit so that these living, thinking personalities were His instruments in recording His truth for man.

"3. This doctrine of verbal, or plenary, inspiration, understood in the sense that God not only illuminated the persons and revealed the facts but also inspired the words, is not a theory or a 'theological deduction' but is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16; John 10:35; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 2:13.

"4. Withal inspiration is a unique act of God and remains a mystery. Just how it was accomplished we cannot fathom, which means that it must be accepted by faith, as we accept other miracles of God.

"5. Furthermore, the Holy Scriptures are given by God to the Christian Church for the foundation of faith, Eph. 2:20. Hence the Holy Scriptures are the sole source from which all doctrines proclaimed in the Christian Church must be taken and therefore, too, the sole rule and norm by which all teachers and doctrines must be examined and judged. — With the Confessions of our Church we teach also



that the 'rule of faith' (*analogia fidei*) according to which the Holy Scriptures are to be understood are the clear passages of the Scriptures themselves which set forth the individual doctrines (Apology, *Triglotta*, p. 441, par. 60; Mueller, p. 284). The rule of faith is not the man-made so-called 'totality of Scripture' (*Ganzes der Schrift*).

"6. The doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day, that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of man and hence does, or at least might, contain error is to be rejected. This erroneous doctrine is horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy Apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith.

"7. Since the Bible is the Word of God, His permanent revelation, aside from which until Christ's return in glory to judge the quick and the dead no other is to be expected, it remains for all time not only the sole source, rule, and norm for faith and life, but also the ever fresh and inexhaustible fountain of all comfort, strength, wisdom, and guidance, John 5:39; Rom. 1:16; its specific purpose being to make men wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 3:15."

F. E. M.

#### THE WEIMAR AUSGABE OF LUTHER'S WORKS

There had been rumors abroad in Germany during the past few years regarding an effort under way on the part of the Roman Catholic Church to obtain control of the *Weimar Ausgabe* of Luther's Works and the republication of certain volumes *with newly revised text* under this new management. Considering the strength which Catholicism is putting forth now in Germany, the rumor was not to be taken altogether lightly. We have made it our business to find out what element of truth there might be in it. It now develops that there is a certain project under way which might under circumstances permit the enemies of Luther to falsify the records and confuse the world's scholarship regarding the character of Martin Luther. There is today an organization in Muenchen headed by a former Lutheran Pfarrer, Meissner by name, the Reformationsgeschichtliches Institut, in which also Catholics hold membership. The members of this organization have weighed the possibility of completing the Weimar edition and to work over certain sections of it. The Lutheran authorities which control the publication of the work have taken a negative stand, definite and final, on this proposal, and the official Lutheran Church in Ger-



many, the VELKD, has the index to the entire work at present in process of completion, hoping to finish the job in another year. There will probably be three index volumes.

While we are on this subject, it will not be amiss to say that the Weimar edition of Luther's works, while the only edition which reproduces the original text of the Reformer's literary work and of his letters and conversations, is in no sense the last word in this field. From its initiation as a national project in connection with the Luther anniversary of 1883, only Luther specialists of the first rank have contributed to the editorial work. Attention has been given, however, to various writings of Martin Luther on the basis of newly discovered manuscripts, and a much closer approach to the original text has in some cases been achieved. Mention might be made in this connection of Erich Vogelsang's *Die Anfaenge von Luthers Christologie* (1926), which supplies many corrections of the text of the highly important "Lectures on the Psalms," dating from Luther's work at the university before 1517. The emendations affect not only matters of spelling or punctuation, but involve new arrangements of the text which shed unexpected light on the manner and the date of Luther's discovery of the meaning of justification by faith. Even the work of so magnificent a scholar as Karl Holl, who added many sidelights on Reformation history and on the development of Luther's theology, has been superseded by later research. The Muenchen edition of selected works of Luther, begun in 1922 (second edition in 1938), contains improvements over the text of the Weimar edition. For the comprehensive study of the great Reformer's work, however, there is as yet no substitute for these splendid 87 volumes, and the index now in course of preparation will crown the usefulness of WA.

TH. GRAEBNER

#### JOHN THE BAPTIST'S BAPTISM

In *Theologische Zeitschrift*, published by the theological faculty of the university of Basel (November—December, 1949), Professor Joachim Jeremias of the University of Goettingen contributes an article in which he compares the Baptism of proselytes with the Baptism administered by John the Baptist. The article is directed against Wilhelm Michaelis, professor of theology at the University of Bern, who had, in several articles, expressed the opinion that the Baptism of proselytes may not be introduced for an understanding of John the Baptist's Baptism and that the latter's Baptism must be regarded as a unique phenomenon. In opposition to Professor Michaelis, Professor Jeremias, who reviewed the evidence presented by Professor Michaelis,



comes to the conclusion that the Baptism of proselytes does suggest remarkable affinities with that of John the Baptist. He attempts to show that the Baptism of proselytes has the two aspects of forgiveness and eschatology. Professor Jeremias even sees in John the Baptist's Baptism the antitype of the Baptism in the wilderness referred to by Paul in 1 Cor. 10:1 ff.

In examining the New Testament materials dealing with John the Baptist's Baptism, one is impressed by the fact that nowhere do the sacred writers establish any kind of relationship between the Baptism of proselytes and the Baptism administered by John the Baptist, just as little as they indicate that John the Baptist was an Essene. Furthermore, the people who came to be baptized by John were not pagans who applied for admission to the Jewish communion, but Jewish people from Jerusalem, Judea, and all the region roundabout the Jordan. Finally, one may not overlook that John the Baptist received his commission to baptize directly from God (Luke 3:2) and that the most peculiar feature of his Baptism was that it was a "repentance Baptism" εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν (Luke 3:3). In his attempt to establish relationships between both Baptisms, Professor Jeremias fails to take into account these most peculiar aspects of John's Baptism. All this is not to say that there may not have existed certain external similarities between both types of Baptism. Both were administered by officiants, and both made use of water. But the singular peculiarities of John's Baptism were that it was a repentance-Baptism for the forgiveness of sins intended, like his message, to prepare the way for the Messiah and that he administered it at the specific direction of God. John's Baptism was thus a unique phenomenon and fundamentally different from other purifications in vogue among the Jews at that time.

P. M. B.

#### THE CHURCH IN THE EASTERN ZONE

Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin publishes a very illuminating article under this heading in the *Ecumenical Review* (Winter Number, 1950). No one perhaps knows the church situation in the Eastern Zone better than does Dr. Dibelius, who has shared the hardships of the Christian Church ever since Eastern Germany was occupied. A few sentences from his articles are quoted to give our readers a general idea of what Christians, of whom many are professed Lutherans, may suffer in the Russian Zone. He writes: "Economically, things are bad in the Eastern Zone. Dismantling is being carried out on a large scale, just as it is in the Western Zone; but in addition there are reparations to be paid



out of current production. By far the greatest part of what is produced is sent to the East. This also applies to a large extent to the products of agriculture. . . . Clothes are the scarcest commodity of all. Good footwear is unobtainable. The women in Eastern Germany all have to do hard physical work, and can do nothing with the high-heeled shoes which are sent in large quantities from abroad. . . . The 'free shops,' belonging to the co-operatives, provide a partial solution; they sell all kinds of things which are unprocurable elsewhere. These free shops are quite beyond the means of everyone who is still paid on a pre-war basis—and this group includes all the pastors and everyone employed by the Church. . . . The German people today are very poor. . . . The rebuilding of damaged houses is going on very slowly in the Eastern Zone. . . . The purchasing power of the East German mark is steadily falling. At the time of the writing the rate of exchange between the Western and Eastern mark is about 1:7. . . . Not only are the big landowners thrown into bitter poverty, but crowds of factory owners and business people are imprisoned on some flimsy pretext, so that their enterprises can be confiscated by the State. . . . But the most important thing of all is the re-education of the people, with all possible speed. Education in politics begins at school, among quite small children. The secondary schools and universities are open only to pupils who are in agreement with the new outlook. . . . The Communist Party has not yet succeeded in gaining a majority, or even a considerable minority among the population. But it holds all the important positions. . . . It must be realized that flight from the Eastern Zone is always a hard decision, taken only in utter despair. For everyone who crosses the frontier has to leave behind everything that he possesses. . . . The pastors and church workers are not among those who leave unless they feel that their lives are directly threatened, and there are not many such cases. They know they are responsible for their people and are therefore prepared to share their lot. Many pastors live in ruins, just as their parishioners. They are practically cut off from the spiritual life of the West. Owing to the low rate of exchange, it is impossible to buy a book published in the West. Very little literature is produced in the Eastern Zone, and what there is, is subject to Russian censorship. . . . Church services are usually allowed to go on in the Eastern Zone without interference. The only thing that hinders people from attending them is that they often have to work in the fields on Sundays, and it takes a great deal of courage to disobey this order. To be quite fair, however, it must be said that for some decades the people's attachment to the Church has left much to be



desired. The Russian commandant can therefore say, with some justice, that the people who are sent to work in the fields would not go to church in any case. . . . The churches nearly all have pastors. It is no longer possible to appoint pastors with a university education in every case; to a large extent the church councils have been obliged to fall back on men with very little theological training or on laymen. . . . The number of young people who are allowed to study theology is much smaller than at the Western universities, because many students are excluded from the University, owing to their origin or for other reasons. . . . In the Eastern Zone the school is a definitely Communist establishment, from which no one is allowed to withdraw. The Church can arrange one or two hours of religious instruction at its own expense and on its own responsibility. . . . The Church has had to put up with a good deal of interference and is usually only tolerated as long as it confines itself to small circles. . . . During the years since the war, church life in the Eastern Zone has improved under the influence of the refugees. But there has been no real revival of spiritual life. The people are too tired, both physically and morally, and the destruction of so many churches and parish halls has its effects. . . . It is a life full of deprivations and difficulties, hardly conceivable in Western countries. But the people who are living in the Eastern Zone and bravely carrying on their work in the Church do not envy those whose lives are easier. They know that the true Church of Jesus Christ always stands under the sign of the Cross. And every day they feel the presence of the living Christ in the churches of Eastern Germany. That is what really matters."

J. T. MUELLER

#### THE LUTHERAN CHURCH AND PIETISM

Under the heading *Die lutherische Kirche und der Pietismus* the *Jahrbuch des Martin Luther Bundes*, 1949/50, offers an article by Paul Fleisch which on the whole excellently portrays the fundamental differences between Lutheranism and Pietism. Since Pietistic influences are apt to creep into the good graces also of Lutheranism in America, it might be profitable for us to consider a few principal points which the writer emphasizes. According to the article, Pietism encountered the Lutheran Church in Germany, in the main, three times: ca. 1700, when it began to flourish as a strong, distinctive movement; in the second half of the 19th century, when a revival movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*) had its inception; and at the close of the 19th century, when there arose a special fellowship movement (*Gemeinschaftsbewegung*). Since then there have been Pietistic influences in Germany



of various kinds and degrees, and this especially because of the prevalent opinion that Pietism as a helpful ferment might redound to the good of Lutheranism. The writer next discusses the various Pietistic movements and then takes up the divergence of Lutheranism from Pietism on various points. There is a divergence first with regard to faith and the assurance of salvation. Lutheranism identifies faith with the assurance of salvation, while Pietism regards such assurance, rooted in experience of feeling (*im Gefuehl*), as a fruit and supplement of faith. The writer says: "Whoever says sincerely: 'I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord, who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned person (*Menschen*),' is assured of his salvation. Even if this faith should still be weak or at times troubled by doubts, it is assurance inasmuch as it is trust (*Vertrauen*). Assurance of salvation is faith, is trust in action (*Vertrauen in actu*); but it is not something which is added to faith nor something upon which faith rests. But just that very thing Pietism always in some way avers. The act of conversion, in which by faith a person surrenders to the Lord Christ completely, is, Pietistically considered, never completed until the person has obtained peace (*zum Frieden kommen*), and that means that he has received the [special] gift of the assurance of salvation. Pietism regards it as abnormal (*unnormal*) if 'a child of God, who has given himself to his Lord, is emotionally (*im Gefuehl*) without peace.' Thus the assurance of salvation is changed into a special assurance, into a 'sealing' (*Versiegelung*), which in some way is regarded as an emotional impression (*Gefuehlseindruck*). But then the assurance of salvation in the last analysis rests upon a subjective emotional experience (*Gefuehlserlebnis*) and no longer solely on the objective foundation of Christ. For this reason the Lutheran Church cannot go the way of Pietism. It could indeed say, just as does Pietism, that one must have a personal Savior. But this 'having' [quotation marks in the original] consists for Lutheranism in the act of faith (*in actu des Glaubens*). The personal confession: 'I believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord,' is and remains a personal venture of unwavering trust in the Word. This confidence does not rest upon a special emotional experience, but faith, trust, confidence, and assurance are one. Such faith God the Holy Ghost works through the divine Word, and the Lutheran Church is confident that wherever the Gospel is being preached in its purity, the Holy Spirit will most certainly engender such a venturing, salvation-assured faith as He pleases. In a similar way we must consider the Christian life of holiness (*Heilungsleben*). According to Lutheran doctrine, sanctification does not consist in some special asceticism or some arbitrary



abstinence from adiaphora, but here Lutheranism clings to the Pauline 'All things are yours.' Pietism promises to train living, consecrated congregations by way of conventicles, but this Pietistic way of sanctification, of creating an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, Lutheranism cannot go. The *ecclesiola in ecclesia* Pietism regards as the nuclear church, the real, living, and proper church, while everything else is merely 'mission material.' Such 'ethical gradation' (*Stufenethik*) Lutheranism does not recognize, because, according to Lutheran doctrine, Christianity does not consist in ethics, but in faith, and there are no such rungs in faith. Whoever believes, even if his faith should be weak, is a Christian." In conclusion [omitting other very important dogmatical and historical material] the writer makes the point that wherever Lutheranism has admitted Pietism, this has resulted in a weakening of the Lutheran conviction (*des lutherischen Bewusstseins*). But irrespective of all historical considerations, the major question at this point remains whether Pietism is true or not. If the Lutheran Church, in accord with its Confessions, believes that God engenders faith in some and in some way (*irgendwem und irgendwie*) wherever His Word is preached in its truth and purity and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution, Lutheranism simply cannot go the way of Pietism.

J. T. MUELLER

#### LUTHERANISM AND ANTHROPOSOLOGY

While German anthroposophy is perhaps not generally known within our Church, it may be well to call attention to this unchristian enthusiastic movement, developed especially by Rudolf Steiner, one of the best modern Goethe students. Since some anthroposophists still claim that the system is reconcilable with Christian premises, Ernst Emmert in the *Jahrbuch des Martin Luther Bundes*, 1949/1950, in a scholarly article entitled *Die lutherische Kirche und die Anthroposophie*, shows at great length that Lutheranism and anthroposophy are direct and radical opposites. Anthroposophy means to be wise in a human way and by virtue of human ability and speculation. It means to be humanly wise with regard to man's essence and destiny, his origin and fate, his natural and spiritual relations. It means to be wise with regard to all things that pertain to man, and this indeed from sources which lie in man exclusively and which he can tap by his own power. Here, then, as the writer shows, is the great gulf between Lutheran faith and anthroposophic arrogance. Anthroposophy does not recognize a transmundane God, who is omnipotent and gracious, and to whose creative power man owes his existence and salvation. Anthroposophy there-



fore can have no divine service or worship (*keinen Gottesdienst*), but has only a human worship of self. Nor can anthroposophy recognize the Biblical doctrine of sin. Hence, man needs no redemption by divine intervention, such as Christianity proclaims; there is only self-salvation (*Selbsterloesung*), which thought, however, in anthroposophy is extremely nebulous. Anthroposophy knows of no divine Redeemer, and of no divine salvation, and of no Holy Trinity, and of no Christian hope of final redemption. Its fundamental premises are Oriental, mystical, theosophic. It purposes to preserve the Occident from secularism, but is itself inherently secularistic and opposed to the spiritual agencies that can undo secularism. Owing to its aggressive propaganda the movement has gained many adherents, especially in Stuttgart, Hamburg, and other prominent cities in Germany. But at this very point, Lutheranism, though it must reject the hybrid work-righteousness and the Semi-Pelagian doctrine of the human will which anthroposophy teaches, can learn from this pagan movement the important lesson of the necessity of spreading its Scriptural and saving truths without fear and with becoming zeal. The article closes with the impressive words: "The Lutheran Church lives alone by this faith ["Given and shed for the remission of sins"], and it cultivates it by its humble proclamation of the Gospel and by grateful celebration of the Sacrament, which Christ Himself has instituted. It would cease to exist if it would not live in all its communicant members *sola fide, sola gratia, secundum solam Scripturam*." J. T. MUELLER

#### THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

Under this heading, Eric Larrabee in *Harper's Magazine* (January, 1950) introduces his readers to the contents of a book, *Worlds in Collision*, which Dr. Immanuel Velikovsky is preparing for publication. The book is the first of four or more volumes in which the same author will maintain that not only at the time of the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt and when Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, but at many other times has the earth undergone vast and disastrous cataclysms in which its rotation was interrupted. If this thesis seems sensational, let the reader remember that *Harper's* is exceedingly careful of what it publishes. We shall not go into detail in reproducing Dr. Velikovsky's arguments and theories, but let the reader study the article in *Harper's* and perhaps also *Worlds in Collision* when it appears in print. After all, the miracle of Joshua's command may have been wrought by God through a comet, as Dr. Velikovsky contends; and the tradition of the Nahua Indians in the Annals of Cuauhtitlan to



the effect that "once in the remote past the night did not end for a long time" may after all have something to do with the Joshua miracle. The Christian apologist today no longer meets with the rebuffing cynicism of the rank materialist. The A-bomb and the H-bomb are teaching our generation very impressive lessons. "Men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken" (Luke 21:26). Is it perhaps that the world today is under God's judgment more than it has been at any time in the past? But this judgment, terrible as it is, has a benevolent purpose on God's part: "And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world" (Matt. 24:14). In this dying world there must be a living Church to witness the divine truth without fear.

J. T. MUELLER

#### ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

The United Lutheran Church has scheduled special sermons in its more than 4,000 churches for the National Christian College Week beginning on April 23. It has commissioned 150,000 workers to obtain \$6,000,000 within six days for its church colleges.

The Seventh-Day Adventists reported an all-time high enrollment in its educational institutions for the present school year. They maintain a total of more than 3,942 schools throughout the world, with about 9,177 teachers, 180,121 students, and an investment of about \$27,000,000.

A quarter million children, young people, and adults are being reached in summer-conference programs sponsored by forty Protestant denominations co-operating in the International Council of Religious Education. These conferences, served by over 26,000 leaders, reach 160,000 young people between the ages of 12 and 24, 4,000 children under twelve, and about 35,000 adults. Seven denominations of the Council have introduced family conferences in their program.

State legislatures have given increasing attention in recent years to property exemption laws affecting religious institutions. In Washington, D. C., all organizations claiming institutional exemptions must now file an annual statement with the commissioners and give the use to which the property is being put. Similar laws have been adopted in Iowa and Oregon. Oregon and Kentucky laws further require assessors to list exempt property on the assessment rolls. Such tax roll listings are now required by a total of twenty States.



Egypt's director of elementary education, Ashmawi Pasha, has been instructed by the education ministry in Cairo to study the possibility of a state subsidy for 128 tuition-free schools operated under Roman Catholic sponsorship. The schools, which have a combined enrollment of 10,000 poor children, are located in upper Egypt, a comparatively backward region.

Israeli minister of religion, Judah Maimon, urged the revival of the Sanhedrin before a meeting of rabbis in Tiberia, northern Israel. Rabbi Maimon proposed that the revived Sanhedrin include 75 members—23 from Jerusalem and the rest from other parts of Israel. He said that the new Sanhedrin might be empowered to deal with proposed changes in Jewish law and also exercise other types of authority.

India's new constitution, which bars discrimination against citizens on the grounds of religion or race, became effective on January 26, when the country was officially proclaimed a republic. Some of the points specified are: All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate religion; every religious denomination has the right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, to manage its own affairs in religion, to own and acquire property, and to administer such property.

Sixteen Lutheran seminaries and twenty-nine Lutheran colleges in our country have on their campuses 389 non-American nationals. Two hundred thirty-eight of these nationals are displaced persons or refugees. Two hundred seventy-six are actually affiliated with the colleges and seminaries as students or staff members, while the other 113 are wives or children. Thirty-five of the 276 are teachers, four are members of administrative staffs, twenty-eight are maintenance workers, 202 are students, and seven are employees of institutions in miscellaneous capacities.

The Roman Catholic hierarchy of America had designated Septuagesima Sunday, February 5, as Bible Sunday and asked that a sermon be preached on the Bible in which laymen were exhorted to frequent reading of the Sacred Books. The following words from the announcement regarding the use of the Bible in the Catholic Church make interesting reading:

"The divine inspiration of the Bible is a fundamental doctrine of the Catholic religion. God inspired the writing of the Sacred Books



for the instruction, comfort and salvation of mankind. The Catholic Church has always held the Bible in highest honor and encouraged the faithful to read it. During Solemn Mass the Book of the Gospels is incensed as a symbol of the Church's homage and reverence for the Word of God. When the Gospel is read at Mass, the faithful rise and stand in respect. In the Middle Ages, when books were hand-copied and very expensive, Bibles were kept in the churches accessible to all. If these Bibles were chained, it was for the same reason that telephone directories are chained in public booths—that all might use them and no one might steal them. The Church grants an indulgence of 300 days to the faithful who spend at least a quarter of an hour reading the Bible."

The Austrian information bureau in New York has issued a report that G. W. Pabst, an Austrian film director, has been commissioned by an Italian film company to make a movie on the life of Pope Boniface VIII (1294—1303), who proclaimed the first Holy Year in 1300. Production of the film is expected to start in January and should be completed by the fall of 1950.

The 300th anniversary of the publication of the Scottish Psalter will be observed in the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. throughout 1950. The Hymn Society of America is sponsoring the tercentennial observance. The Psalter is regarded as standing with the King James Bible and the Book of Common Prayer as a great religious classic. The guest speaker at a special service on May 1 will be Dr. Henry Sloane Coffin, president emeritus of Union Theological Seminary, New York City.

ALEX W. C. GUEBERT