

2-1-1952

Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

John T. Mueller

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mueller, John T. (1952) "Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 23, Article 12.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol23/iss1/12>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION

Liberalism in general and Neo-Orthodoxy in particular are today waging a fierce battle against the Christian doctrine of Scriptural inspiration. The *status controversiae* is no longer the question whether Inspiration is verbal or dynamic, but the traditional doctrine of inspiration is being repudiated in its entirety. In his book *The Christian Knowledge of God*, Dr. J. Harry Cotton declares, among other things, that since scientific criticism has disproved the infallibility of the Bible, it is "sophistical" to defend "Biblical inerrancy." He charges the "orthodox" view of Biblical inspiration with "three fatal defects": 1. "It is simply not true. The view of verbal inerrancy is a man-made doctrine." 2. "'Orthodox' biblicism is a very subtle and dangerous form of idolatry. Men thus tend to worship the Bible . . . rather than God." 3. "The doctrine of inerrancy confers on the Church a false and pretentious authority over the minds of men" (p. 125 ff.). In his recent work *Rediscovering the Bible*, Dr. B. W. Anderson attacks the Christian doctrine of inspiration with the same vehement hostility. He rejects the doctrine that "the words of the Bible are the very words of God Himself," and he travesties the doctrine of inspiration by describing it thus: "The writers of the Bible were passive secretaries who mechanically transcribed the divine words" (p. 15). He refuses "to take the Bible literally" (p. 19). He avers that "it is inaccurate to speak of the Bible itself as the Word of God" (p. 21). Dr. Carl F. H. Henry in his *The Drift of Western Thought* sums up the charges of the modern enemies of Biblical revelation, or inspiration, as follows: 1. Biblical revelation, or inspiration, is impossible. 2. It is superfluous, since human reason is able to attain absolute truth without it. 3. Special revelation, such as the Bible claims, involves a divine particularism which is immoral (p. 78 ff.). We refer to this almost universal attack of liberalism, in its various forms, upon the divine inspiration of the Bible to call attention to the fact that this doctrine is at present pre-eminently the one which requires renewed study and defense. Nor can we disregard the new charges that are being preferred against the Bible, nor the new false viewpoints which have become popular in wide theological areas through the spread of the Barth-Brunner-Niebuhr doctrine of revelation. We owe it especially to our students attending colleges and universities to show them intelligently and convincingly what Scripture

itself teaches concerning its divine origin and character in witness of the truth, believed by all sincere Christians, namely, that it is the Word of God.

J. T. MUELLER

STEMMING THE SECULARISTIC TIDE

Dr. Carl F. H. Henry, noted Christian philosopher and educator, in a recent article in *The Watchman Examiner* (October 11) challenges the Christian churches of our land to greater efforts in combating modern secularism and naturalism. He contends: "We are sending American man power to Korea to combat naturalistic Communism in terms of armed might, when in point of fact our American youth have not carefully worked out the only durable answer to any naturalistic philosophy. . . . The extent to which Americans think that naturalistic Communism can be adequately met and refuted by some other species of naturalism is mute evidence of the declension which has befallen our culture. When a people incline more and more to think that the solution of our key problems is to be found within naturalism as an accepted major premise, and when their main concern is to develop naturalism in a benevolent and altruistic rather than in a tyrannical and egoistic direction, they are evaporating the very meaning of life."

But Dr. Henry not only calls attention to the evil of secularism and naturalism in much of American thought and education, he also suggests a program of action to improve conditions. We are taking the privilege to quote from his "constructive steps" the following significant statements:

"1. *Strengthen the lines of Christian education.* Whatever gains we make in public education will never amount to the equivalent of substantial Christian education. The evangelical colleges and seminaries must be preserved, strengthened, and implemented. They are lifelines of evangelical truth, and their academic competence, as well as spiritual vitality, are barometers of tomorrow's atmosphere in the evangelical camp. Both at the upper and lower educational levels, this task must not be shunned. . . . The expansion of the Christian day school movement, to take up the void from kindergarten to the academies or preparatory schools, should not be relaxed. Believers or unbelievers can be made at the age of six as well as at twenty.

"2. *Assume our responsibilities in public education.* Every American who is a taxpayer has not only opportunities, but responsibilities, in the public school system. The Dewey philosophy formulated within evolutionary empirical naturalism has infiltrated the school system in many of our communities with hardly a voice of effective protest from

evangelicals. Even sound ministerial groups have seldom done what might be done by way of marshaling public interest. . . . The time is overdue for channeling able teachers of evangelical conviction into public education, for seeking effective representation for solidly Christian convictions on our boards of education, and for a reorientation of public education to moral and spiritual imperatives.

"3. *Train competent scholars in the whole gamut of graduate studies* not only in the theological realm, but for leadership in all areas of academic study, whether in Christian or public education. Too many teaching posts in larger schools have fallen to men of non-evangelical conviction simply because other scholars have not been trained for those places of responsibility. Just as Roman Catholic forces, by a specific objective, train men for diplomatic posts—frequently with a consequent hardship upon evangelical missionary effort—just so, without the accompanying intolerance, evangelical youth should be encouraged to enter into those vocations which a Christian may hallow in the service of God, for the sake of the moral and spiritual stability of the educational realm as a whole. When that is done, we may expect that textbooks in the many areas of cultural enterprise will not go out of their way to twist and misrepresent the genius of evangelical Christianity. When gains are made along these lines, then modern educators will be less guilty of corrupting the youth of our land and parents can send their children to school without fear for them."

In the above suggestions, Dr. Henry again demonstrates his ability to convert sound Christian thought and his philosophy of Christian education into a meaningful program of action. We thank him for his fine contribution.

P. M. B.

LUTHER'S THEOLOGY AND MODERN EXISTENTIAL THOUGHT

In *Universitas, Zeitschrift fuer Wissenschaft, Kunst und Literatur* (September, 1951) Professor Georg Wuensch demonstrates the value of Luther's theology as a norm or directive for present-day existential thinking. Modern speculative thought, he holds, is fundamentally oriented to two diametrically opposed philosophies: Marxian materialism and philosophical and theological existentialism. Both represent, though in different ways, man's striving for what is actual or real, or the fundamental verities that lie at the basis of human existence. Realism, however, also lies at the foundation of Luther's theological fundamentals. His burning desire for the knowledge of truth, free from all illusion, brought him face to face with the problem of existence (*Sein*) and led him to a true appraisal and understanding of man, including

the limitations of his cognitive faculty. Already in his early lectures on the *Roemerbrief* (1515/1516) Luther remarks: "Existence is prior to action, but prior to existence is suffering" (*Prius est enim esse quam operari; prius autem pati quam esse*). The "being cast into" (*das Geworfensein*) existence is the first; existence is the second; action (*das Wirken*) is the third.

Upon this existential anthropology is founded Luther's doctrine of justification. Luther thus says: "We are justified not by doing right; but because we are justified we do what is right" (*Non enim iusta operando iusti efficitur, sed iusti essendo iusta operamur*). Luther's thinking differs indeed from that of modern man, whose existential reasoning regards man *per se*, apart from the one by whom he is cast into existence. For Luther the Creator is the Subject who has cast him into existence. This fact man experiences when he is cast into existence a second time, that is to say, when in regeneration God causes him to exist as a new creature. The first is the work of the Creator, the second that of the Holy Spirit. At this point, Luther differs from Ludwig Feuerbach, who in his anthropological motivation of religion follows to some extent the great Reformer. For Luther, faith is not the work of man, creating God, but the work of God, who creates man. Hence Luther can say: "Faith is a living, dynamic reality. It is no idle speculation. Faith as the work of the Holy Ghost renews man. Faith, more carefully appraised, is suffering [that is, a passive enduring] rather than [human] action."

While, however, God alone justifies and converts man, the *subjectum convertendum* is not determined by his existence to sin. "No one sins either by coercion or against his will" (*Nemo coacte et invite in peccato est*). This motif occurs already in Luther's *Roemerbrief* of 1516. It is more fully developed in his *De Servo Arbitrio* of 1525, where he expatiates on the premise that "man is free also as a sinner, just as he is free as a believer." This does not ascribe to man absolute self-determination, for he is free only within the frame of what he *is*, while in that of *what* he is, he is not free [that is, while man possesses *libertas a coactione*, he has no *libertas spiritualis*]. In the area of *what* a man is, he is subject to powers over which he has no control; for he is subject either to God or to the devil, just as he is "ridden" (*geritten*) by either one or the other.

Luther's existential realism appears especially in his *sola fide*. According to Luther, it depends solely on God whether a man's existence is either "something or nothing." His is an absolute *mere passive* relation to God, just as *passive sicut mulier ad conceptum*. This *mere*

passive in man's conversion is not at all understood by modern man, for he shares Luther's conception neither of faith nor of sin. To Luther justifying faith is not a mere *notitia*, but such a firm reliance "that the heart does not permit itself to be torn away from the object of its trust." Such faith takes God seriously, while to modern man God's reality is an illusion. But as modern man does not take God seriously, so also he fails to take sin seriously. To modern man, Luther's conception of sin seems exaggerated, if not pathological. To Luther, sin is not merely the failure to do what is right, but an inescapable revolt against God, beginning with his very first existence, his first birth; for sin in its primary meaning is hereditary sin (*Erbsuende*). It is not primarily a doing, but a being. It consists not of individual active transgressions, but in the [corrupt] condition of the total man. The importance of this lies in the fact that neither Marxianism nor existentialism can be apprehended without acknowledgment of what Christian theology denominates "original sin." As soon as man recognizes himself as to what he is, without any illusion, there begins in him the condition of *desperatio*. But modern man neither knows nor concedes Luther's cure of this overwhelming despair, namely, the efficacious divine grace which comes *ab extra*, or the "being apprehended by grace through faith" (*das Ergriffensein von der Gnade im Glauben*), which means His re-creative transplanting of man into a second birth [conversion and justification]. Such is Luther's meaning of *iustificatio sola fide, sine operibus*.

Luther's existential realism is illustrated also by his doctrine of prayer. To pray means for Luther to ask according to God's will (*im Sinne Gottes*). But no man knows God of himself. Even a Christian must sense (*qua homo corruptus*) the folly of petitioning the infinite Divine Majesty, for he cannot fathom what God's will really is with respect to himself. From this viewpoint Luther writes: "We are paupers in prayer: timorous and weak in our requests" (*Nos sumus pauperes in vocando; trepidi et infirmi petendo*). Again: We pray "according to our infirmity far behind His ability to do" (*longe infra potentiam eius secundum infirmitatem nostram*). Yet every prayer [of a Christian] is valid because of God (*von Gott her*), for it is not our work that decides, but divine grace which makes our inadequate prayer correspond to what God desires to do (*was seinem Sinn entspricht*). So also prayer is "justified" by faith.

Luther's existential realism is patent especially in his doctrine of the Church. To Luther, the Church is the congregation of all believers in Christ. But the Church is not a "bodily communion" (*nicht leibliche*

Versammlung), but "the communion of hearts united in the one faith" (*die Versammlung der Herzen in einem Glauben*). The Church is not the work of man, not a human organization existing on the basis of fixed ceremonies, ordinations, clerical prerequisites of sanctity, and canonical law. The Church indeed must have external order and planned proclamation of the Gospel, but the proclamation depends wholly on God in its effect. Also here it is divine grace and faith that counts, not any work of man. To Luther it was self-evident that God's kingdom on earth could never be externally glorious, potent, and imposing. Seemingly Luther's conception of the Church is organizationally (*organisatorisch*) weak, but in reality it is powerful; and it must prevail wherever man's consciousness of the actual relation of God to man has not been stifled.

Luther's existential realism does not mean that the objective of Lutheranism is a sort of quietism, or watchful inactivity (*konservative Gerubsamkeit*). Luther's insistence upon the believer's activeness belongs quite into another chapter (sanctification). The purpose of the article was merely to point out the one side of Luther's theology, namely, man's passive reception (*das passive Empfangen*) of active divine grace.

Luther, when describing God's relation to man and vice versa, most certainly did not have in mind either Marxian nihilism or philosophical and theological existentialism. But Luther's theology has long ago solved the problem of God's grace and man's sin in their relation to each other (so far as this problem admits of a solution in our finite space world), just because his whole theology was so nicely oriented to Scripture, in particular, to the Law and the Gospel. "*Zurück zu Luther!*" should be taken seriously by all means. J. T. MUELLER

WHEN SHOULD THE CHURCH MAKE ITS VOICE HEARD?

Bishop E. Berggrav, formerly Lutheran bishop of Oslo and at present one of the presidents of the World Council of Churches, some months ago raised this question in an address the substance of which appeared in *The Ecumenical Review* (October) under the title "The Responsibility of the Church and the World Council in Time of Tension."

The question raised by the Bishop has often been discussed. It is well known that the Roman Church as well as some Protestant Churches do not hesitate to make their voice heard at the slightest provocation and concerning almost any issue not only in the areas of theology, religion, and morals, but in other areas as well. Among Christian papers, *The Christian Century*, though an undenominational journal of religion, attempts to voice week after week what it believes

is or should be the voice of Protestantism regarding current national and international affairs.

Certainly, there are times when the Church or, to be more specific, a church denomination has a right and a duty to make its voice heard if for no other reason than to protect its own vital interests. Yet the Church needs always to exercise great caution and reserve before it dares to speak out in public, lest it neglect, on the one hand, the principal task to which God has called it, the promotion of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and lest it, on the other hand, presume to pass judgment on issues regarding which it is not adequately informed. The Church, by its very nature, will always be an irritant to the godless and wicked world. Nevertheless, it should be careful not to become guilty of unjustifiable irritations. In the above article, Bishop Berggrav sounds a timely warning, and Christian churches will do well to listen to his wise counsel. He writes:

"Some of us may have been on the point of thinking that the aim of the World Council of Churches was to set a wrong world right. I think we were wrong so far. Our aim first of all must be to set Christianity right in ourselves and in our Churches. This does not prevent us from also doing our best as Christian citizens, but that is another matter.

"May I jump directly into one of our practical difficulties in this Council: How far is it our main duty always to speak to the world—to make the voice of the Churches heard, as it is often put? According to what has been said hitherto I think it sufficient just to raise the question. But allow me a suggestion: What if the World Council of Churches kept silent for, say, five years, and meanwhile worked hard on the programme of Christ in our hearts and in our Churches? To put this as a proposal would be irresponsible, but we may be permitted to indulge our fancy. Or another way round: The Churches should never issue a message unless they are certain God is forcing them to cry out."

P. M. B.

THE KIRCHENTAG IN BERLIN

This convention held July 10—16, 1951, in both sectors of Berlin and, according to trustworthy estimates, attended by up to 400,000 evangelical Christians, mostly German, has been repeatedly and variously assessed as to its significance for Protestantism. All writers seem agreed on one point: it was an act of faith of immense magnitude. Among many reports on the *Kirchentag*—and we ourselves both read some of these during our stay in Germany last summer and received oral accounts from Lutheran pastors representing both sectors and both

zones—perhaps the most comprehensive and penetrating one is by the president of the *Kirchentag* himself, Reinold von Thadden. His report appeared in the *Ecumenical Review* (October), published by the World Council of Churches. From this report we submit a lengthy paragraph because we believe this paragraph to have immediate relevance to the emphasis our own Church is placing at present on lay activity in the Church. What Reinold von Thadden here says, can hardly be said more effectively. The paragraph reads:

"This year's *Kirchentag* settled on the frontier in more than one sense. It was not only the frontier between the two opposed world powers of our time, but also the frontier between 'Church' and 'World,' between the Kingdom of God on the one hand and the hard realities of everyday life on the other. Only where the Church meets the world at its frontier and declares its solidarity with the misery and sinfulness of the world, can the Church fulfill its mission. By maintaining close proximity with the world, by rubbing elbows with man in his secularized environment, by emerging from pious seclusion, the Church can address itself to the world. This is why the laity question is so enormously important: the layman represents the Christian message in the battlefield of the world, the pioneer on the outposts of the Church, in the very frontier region where world and Church collide. None other but the layman is charged with the task of enduring the incessant tension between God's commandments and the laws of economy, between the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount and the exigencies of political and professional life, between individual pious belief and the decrees of a worldly government. It is the layman who is called upon to testify, amidst the chaos of our time, to the secret of redemption through the Cross of Christ and the morning of resurrection. He is the witness of the Church. Where in a particular charge the layman fails in his judgment and his courage, the Church fails, and the message of the Church becomes the object of disbelief, and its pious phrase a laughing-stock. There can be no living Church without the living community of responsible laymen. The Church cannot rest on tradition alone, it cannot merely rely on its authority and on smooth functioning. It needs the fundament of a wide-awake congregation. The Church must seek a novel approach. In this respect, the Berlin *Kirchentag* showed the way towards a revival of church consciousness, thereby enhancing the importance of and bestowing a higher degree of responsibility on the clergy. Where a living laity approaches the clergy with its burning problems, and where the clergy can satisfy this hunger for the truth from the abundance of the Gospel, the future of the Church stands unshakable."

P. M. B.

THE WORD AND THE SACRAMENT

Religion in Life (Autumn, 1951) publishes a contribution by Dr. Chad Walsh to David W. Soper's new book *Room for Improvement—Next Steps for Protestants* on "The Reform of Protestant Worship," in which he speaks of "the barrenness of Protestant worship." Supplying a remedy, he suggests four "axioms," namely, that worship should be God-centered; should consist in worshipping Him, not theorizing about Him; should be Trinitarian; and, finally, should express the nature of the Church. We are here interested especially in what he says of the weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper. He writes: "I believe that a weekly celebration of Holy Communion would satisfactorily fulfill the purposes of worship as I outlined them" (p. 592). In the discussion of the subjects there occur the following expressions: "Holy Communion is the only type of group worship definitely instituted by Christ Himself. . . . From Paul's Epistles and the Book of Acts as well as other Christian writings of the first few centuries, it is undeniable that Holy Communion was the normal form of worship on Sundays, and was also frequently practiced on week days" (*ibid.*). The writer suggests that the change to very frequent Communion should not be made abruptly. "A vast amount of education is necessary; otherwise the new system would seem merely an empty fad. A gradual approach is best—monthly for a considerable period of time, then twice a month, and finally every week" (p. 594). Preaching, of course, should not be omitted. "There should also ordinarily be a sermon. The ideal balance could be symbolized by an arrangement common in many churches: the altar or Lord's table at the back of the chancel, with a pulpit to one side, nearer the congregation, and a lectern containing an open Bible on the other side" (p. 595). At the Communion service "the congregation should be kept busy. In addition to singing hymns, it should join in a number of prayers and responses. There should also be a general confession of sins, followed either by a prayer for forgiveness or a formal absolution pronounced by the minister" (*ibid.*). So far so good. But we do not agree with the writer's suggestion that "to dramatize the priesthood of all believers, the offertory should be emphasized" not only by offerings of money brought forward, but also by having laymen in ordinary clothing bear the bread and wine from the back of the church to the front in order that the congregation might realize the symbolism of the offertory—"to imagine themselves, as individuals, being offered to God under the form of bread and wine" (*ibid.*). That introduces into the Communion service an element which is not Scriptural. Considering the fact that "many Protestants regard Holy Communion as symbolism pure

and simple," he replies: "Even if Holy Communion is nothing but symbolism, it is a very effective symbolism. Possibly Zwingli agreed with this view, but Luther, with his doctrine of consubstantiation, emphatically did not, while Calvin seems to have occupied an intermediate position which involved the belief that Christ was actually present in some real sense though not in as physical a fashion as Luther contended. If Protestantism professes to be a return to primitive Christianity, the historical evidence points overwhelmingly to the fact that the early Christians were convinced of what we may call the 'real presence' of Christ in the Sacrament. They seldom bothered to argue or theorize about it in the manner of the later schoolmen; they simply took for granted that when the mystery of Holy Communion was celebrated, He was there, communicating Himself to the communicants" (p. 596).

Considering the article as a whole, the reviewer envisions in it a modern return to liturgical services on the part of Protestants. As one scans the writer's basic thoughts, one can recognize here almost an approach to our Common Order of Service with Holy Communion. On the whole, this Common Order of Service seems to be a most satisfactory and edifying form of worship. It connects the Church of today with the ancient Christian past, affords the worshipers an opportunity to administer their prerogatives as spiritual kings and priests by singing hymns and joining in prayer and response, places the preaching of the Word in the center of worship, and finally prepares the communicants for a proper reception of the Lord's Supper, which is nothing else than the individual proclamation of divine forgiveness, under the pledge of Christ's body and blood in the consecrated bread and wine. Whether or not every congregation wishes to hold a Communion service each Sunday is left to the option of the local church, for there is no divine command enjoining this. There is one important thought that should be considered in connection with public worship. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession emphasizes it when it says: "Of all acts of worship that is the greatest, most holy, most necessary, and highest, which God has required as the highest, in the First and the Second Commandment, namely, to preach the Word of God" (Art. XV; *Conc. Trigl.*, p. 327).

J. T. MUELLER

THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM

In the *Westminster Theological Journal* (November, 1951), Dr. John Murray, professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary, has published the second of a series of articles on Christian Baptism in which he treats Infant Baptism from the Calvinistic point of view. The argumentation runs true to form and shows the wide gulf between Lutheranism and Calvinism on the doctrine of the means

of grace. In particular, it demonstrates that the Reformed recognize no means of grace even when they speak of *media gratiae*, since they hold to the principle that, as Zwingli expressed it, the Holy Spirit needs no *dux vel vehiculum* to enter into the hearts of men. But behind the denial that Baptism is a means of grace is also the Reformed tenet which the *Lutheran Visitation Articles* of 1592 express thus: "Children of Christians are holy before Baptism and from their mothers' wombs; yea, while still in their mothers' wombs they are [established] in the covenant of eternal life; otherwise Holy Baptism could not be administered to them" (*Conc. Trigl.*, p. 1157). Dr. Murray indeed insists upon Infant Baptism on the ground of its divine institution; there is for it a *necessitas mandati divini*, although there is for it no *necessitas gratiae medii*, to put it in the words of our dogmaticians. He writes: "It is sufficient for us to know and to answer that it is the divine institution" (p. 9). At times, however, he speaks of Baptism as if it were a means of grace, as, for example, in the sentence: "God has ordained it [Baptism] as one of the provisions whereby He administers His grace to the world" (*ibid.*). But in order that this statement might not be understood in the Lutheran sense, he adds: "[Baptism] does not effect union with Christ. . . . Baptism does not convey or confer the grace which it signifies" (p. 39). In a footnote to this statement he remarks: "This is directed against the thought of Baptismal regeneration. It hardly seems necessary to set forth any extended refutation of this sacerdotal conception" (*ibid.*). However, while saying this, he adds that Baptism does possess efficacy. Answering the question: "What precisely is its efficacy?" he writes: "God condescends to our weakness. He not only unites His people to Christ, but He also advertises that great truth by an ordinance which portrays visibly to our senses the reality of this grace. . . . This is the purpose of Baptism as a *sign*. . . . As a *seal* it authenticates, confirms, guarantees the reality and security of this covenant grace . . . just as God confirmed His promise to Noah by the bow in the cloud" (p. 39). So after all Baptism is not a means of grace in the Biblical sense; and this he tells us in the sentence: "Baptism has one import . . . it signifies union with Christ, purifying from the pollution of sin by regeneration of the Spirit, and purifying from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ" (p. 41). In view of such statements our Lutheran dogmaticians have said that the Reformed seals are "empty" seals, and more definitely the *Lutheran Visitation Articles* define the Calvinistic doctrine of Baptism in the words: "Baptism is an outward washing of water, whereby an inner washing from sin is only signified. Baptism neither works nor confers regeneration, faith, the grace of God, and sal-

variation, but only signifies and seals these" (*Conc. Trigl.*, p. 1155). This charge is just, for Calvinists do not recognize in Baptism, as also not in Holy Communion, the *verbum evangelii* through which the Holy Spirit works and strengthens faith and seals the forgiveness of sins, conveyed by the Gospel promises. Luther's theology concerning Baptism is set forth in the simple words of his Small Catechism: "Without the Word of God [the Gospel is meant] the water is simple water and no Baptism. But with the Word of God it is a Baptism, that is, a gracious water of life and a washing of regeneration in the Holy Ghost." To this Scriptural doctrine Calvinism has never agreed.

J. T. MUELLER

THE DOCTRINE OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION IN MISSION WORK.

The *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (November, 1951), published by the "students, faculty, and alumni of Union Theological Seminary," offers an informative and stimulating article on "Christian Apologetics in Relation to Islam." Seeking a new approach to the winning of Muslims, the writer criticizes, among other missionary methods, a false emphasis on the Bible as the inspired Word of God. He says: "Until now the main controversy between Islam and Christianity concerning this doctrine [revelation] has been whether the Koran or the Bible is the real revelation of God. . . . How many pains the Christians have taken in the past to show that the Bible is the true revelation of God because it is verbally correct from one cover to the other, dictated word by word by God, and written down by holy men without error!" (P. 12.) He then proceeds to say that the Muslims claim the same prerogative for the Koran and, besides, point out "some contradictions in the text of the Bible . . . to show the falsity of the Christian teaching" (*ibid.*). The article then contends that "the main issue between Islam and Christianity in regard to the doctrine of revelation is not whether the Bible or the Koran is the true revelation, but the conception of revelation and its test." And the test of a revelation is "its spiritual meaning and its appeal to the deepest aspirations of the human soul" (*ibid.*) What we wish to emphasize is that the writer's charge against the supposed customary missionary method is in need of a two-fold correction. In the first place, at least the orthodox Lutheran doctrine of inspiration is here stated incorrectly. Not even the much-attacked Lutheran dogmatists of the seventeenth century, such as Quenstedt and Calov, who emphasized Biblical inspiration more than others, asserted that the Bible was "dictated word by word by God." Our Lutheran dogmatists certainly did not have in mind a mechanical inspiration, for they taught that the sacred writers wrote "cheerfully, willingly, and intelligently" (Quenstedt) and not "in a certain *enthousi-*

siasmos [trance] as the heathen claimed with regard to their sooth-sayers" (cf. *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 103 f.). Again, it is hardly correct to say that in the past Christian missionaries approached the Muslims with the primary emphasis on Biblical inspiration. At least so far as we know, those who witnessed the Word of God to the Mohammedans began their instruction with the doctrine of sin and followed this up with the proclamation of the Gospel of redemption from sin through Christ. In other words, their missionary method was not one of apologetics, but that of preaching Law and Gospel, or calling the Muslims to repentance and faith. The doctrine of Biblical inspiration came later, when they were asked to explain on what grounds they rested their Gospel proclamation. The modern liberal "revelation" is certainly not able to do what only the living divine Word of God in Scripture is able to do. As a matter of fact, liberal missionaries in many cases have not tried to convert the Mohammedans at all, but rather fellowshipped with them, asserting that there are "good points" also in the religion of Islam. Finally, if the test of revelation is "its appeal to the deepest aspirations of the human soul," that expression very much requires explanation. According to Scripture, even the deepest aspirations of the unregenerate human soul are "enmity against God" (Rom. 8:7; 1 Cor. 2:14).

J. T. MUELLER

THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION IN GREEK

Recently the undersigned happened upon a jubilee volume from A.D. 1730 commemorating the presentation of the Augsburg Confession, a volume consisting of two parts, one for the general public and published in Dresden, the other for people trained in Latin and Greek and published in Leipzig. By some enterprising person these two publications were bound together. The first half consists in the German text of the Augustana with appropriate edifying comments by Valentin Ernst Loescher. The second half presents the Augustana in three languages, German, Latin, and Greek; next a Greek poem, with a Latin translation, in which the doctrines set forth in the Augsburg Confession are given a metrical dress by Laur. Rhodomannus; and finally a Latin essay in which the authorship of the Greek version of the Augustana is discussed. The second section was prepared by M. Christian Reineccius, a prominent schoolman and author whose home was Weissenfels in Saxony. The essay on the question who wrote the Greek translation of the A.C. is the item that occasions my brief remarks. It has the title, *Exercitatio Historica de Augustana Confessione Graece reddita a Paulo Dolscio Plavensi, quam, sub Praesidio M. Christian Reineccii, defendit J. G. Jenike, SS Th. Stud.*

Weissenfelsae die II. Sept. 1726. Accordingly, the author of the essay seems to have been a student of theology, J. G. Jenike by name, although Reineccius assumed full responsibility for all the material it contained. The essay is brief, but well documented. The chief facts reported in it are here put down.

In September, 1547, Melanchthon wrote to Joachim Camerarius expressing his joy that this friend was translating the Augsburg Confession into Greek. Jenike doubts that this version was ever finished and published, because it is not found anywhere (*quia nullibi ea comparet*). In 1559 Melanchthon wrote that he had sent a Greek version of the Augustana to Constantinople through a learned man, a deacon of the Greek Church, who had been his guest all summer. A number of writers later on assumed that Melanchthon himself was the author of the translation, but Jenike submits the text of Melanchthon's letter addressed to a certain Bordingus, which shows that this assumption is not tenable. The letter reads: *Mitto tibi interpretationem Graecam Confessionis sine meo consilio editam. Probo tamen phrasin ac misi Constantinopolin per virum doctum, qui ibi diakoni officio fungitur et tota aestate noster hospes fuit ac narravit multas adhuc ecclesias in Asia et Thracia et vicinis regionibus esse, sed paulatim propter servitutis aerumnas diminui frequentiam.*

Since Melanchthon here definitely says that the translation had been published without his having been consulted, but that its diction received his approval, it seems clear that he was not the translator. The name of the deacon to whom he refers is given by Jenike as Demetrius. The man in Constantinople to whom the Greek version was sent was the patriarch of the Greek Church in that city, Joasaphus (by others he is called Josephus or Josaphatus). The author of this version, as the title of the essay indicates, was Paulus Dolscius. The same version, according to Jenike, the Tuebingen theologians sent to Jeremias, who in 1574 had become the patriarch of Constantinople. In a note it is stated that a certain Hilarius reports Greek translations were made later quite often by others. Cf. Phil. Cyprii Chron. Ecclesiae Graecae.

On the question whether Melanchthon was the author Jenike presents a special paragraph. A number of scholars maintained that Melanchthon himself had made the Greek version which was sent to Constantinople, but this view has no factual foundation, says Jenike. Neither can it be held, so he adds, that Melanchthon prepared any Greek version of the Confession at all. The translator, Paulus Dolscius, was a medical doctor and practitioner. He was at first the rector of the college (Gymnasium) in Halle, and later, in 1580, he became the

burgomaster (*urbis consul*) of that city; and there he died in 1589. Jenike enumerates these works of Dolscius: The Psalter of the Prophet and King David put in Greek elegiac verses and published in Bale (Basel), 1555; the Augsburg Confession translated into Greek and published in Bale in 1559, inserted, likewise in 1584, in the reports of dealings with the Patriarch Jeremias of Constantinople; a Greek version in elegiac meter of Ecclesiastes, Leipzig, 1559, and a similar version of Jesus Sirac, published in Leipzig, 1571. What a learned man this physician and schoolman must have been! His delight evidently was "in the Law of the Lord," and to him Psalm One could very well be applied. Honor to his memory!

To characterize this version it ought to be mentioned that the author used both the Unaltered and the Altered Augsburg Confession as his basis. This accounts for it that Article IV on Justification which in the original German and Latin version is very brief is rather lengthy in the Greek. It seems, however, that the erroneous views which Melanchthon inserted in the Variata were not taken over by the translator. Thus Article X on the Lord's Supper is an exact translation of the article as it was originally presented to the Emperor in 1530. The Greek employed is simple and evinces acquaintance with the old classics.

The Jenike essay concludes with a Greek letter written by Matth. Dresser to his friend Dolscius; and since it has to do with the subject of this note, I submit a translation of it. "To Paulus Dolscius, physician and mayor of Halle in Saxony, Greetings! You write that you are treated very wrongly by those who say that the Confession of the orthodox faith, presented in Augsburg, was translated into Greek by Melanchthon. For you hold it unfair to say that nominally you are the author of the translation, but that in reality it was made by Melanchthon. At the same time you ask me in the interest of historical truth to speak up for you and for what is right. Now, since you are my friend, I promise to do to the extent of my ability what you ask for. First of all, then, I consider your complaint to be justified, and I hold that my opinion is proved correct not only by your incontrovertible testimony, but by the very diction of the document, which is widely different from that of Melanchthon. Hence I do not hesitate to affirm that those who attribute the translation to Melanchthon have no acquaintance with his style. In the second place, I admit it is only fair from every point of view that I should come to the aid of the truth and of yourself; therefore I am willing to do this in every way and all the time, as far as I am able to do it. My best wishes for your well-being! Leipzig, August 10, A.D. 1587. Matth. Dress." (Dresser).

W. F. ARNDT

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

A Federal judge in Huntington, W. Va., ruled that a man may be a conscientious objector by personal conviction though the religious faith he professes requires no abstention from bearing arms. . . . Judge Harry E. Watkins so decided in granting temporary C.O. status to a Roman Catholic, who told local draft officials he was not opposed to bearing arms in a "just war," but that he believed "such wars are only theoretical in the present scheme of things." . . . An examiner, himself a Catholic, had ruled that this stand could not be based on the man's religious faith; but Judge Watkins, in agreeing to rule on an appeal from the examiner's report, said that the question to be decided was not whether profession of the Catholic faith implied objection to military service, but whether the individual's own interpretation of its teachings led him to object to such service.

The general council of the Seventh-Day Adventists adopted a budget of \$17,060,000 for 1952. Some \$9,000,000 of this will go for overseas work, the remainder to be spent in North America. . . . The denomination maintains 283 colleges and academies, and 4,155 elementary schools; also 106 hospitals and sanitariums, with assets totaling \$30,000,000. . . . The council was told that Seventh-Day Adventist membership in Central Europe increased 75 per cent since the war's end, rising from 26,981 in 1945 to 44,628 today.

Delegates of the American Council of Churches, in session at Gary, Ind., adopted a sharply worded resolution favoring universal military training, declaring that the individual Christian owes the duty of service to the State as a divinely ordained institution.

Methodists planning a fleet of bookmobiles. — According to the sales manager of the Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, Tenn., a bookmobile has been put on the road, equipped not only with books, but also with church school literature, altar ware, and visual aids. The new unit, now operating in the South, is the first of a fleet to be operated throughout the country.

A criticism of American churchmen was voiced by the Rev. D. H. C. Read, chaplain to Edinburgh University, who recently returned from a visit to Canada. In America, he said, more than anywhere else, there was a tendency "to employ the methods of modern business, high-

pressure advertising, public-opinion polls, mass suggestion, and success stories to swing the masses into the Church." The danger of this technique, he warned, "lies in the subtle shift of emphasis from the objective truth of the Christian Gospel to its pragmatic value to society. The result of such a policy is to transform the Gospel challenge of 'Repent and Believe' into the cynical technique of 'How to Win Friends and Influence People!'" . . . He also warned churchmen against the danger of "identifying Christianity with the political aims of the Western democracies. We know how a Fascist or Communist government seeks to muzzle the Church and devitalize it; but in the much more congenial atmosphere of the non-Communist world we are much less likely to be aware of political pressure on the Church. The censors of sermons are not sinister figures in the back row of the gallery, but decent, good-hearted folk in pews who are being conditioned to identify the political judgments of the Western world with the will of God."

The director of the Mormon missionary home in Salt Lake City, Utah, reported that a total of 5,368 missionaries are now working in every area except Russia, the satellite countries, and North Africa. . . . The nation's defense program has reduced the average of 6,300 missionaries usually kept in the field.

From a report to the American Bible Society by officials of the Society.—Last year's total of six million volumes had been exceeded in the first nine months of this year; this record distribution of Bibles, Testaments, and Gospel portions in the face of rising costs; Bibles formerly published at 25 cents each now cost 50 to 60 cents. . . . The conflict between Communism and the Free World has created an "acute situation" for Bible work. . . . In Hungary, the secretary of the Bible Society has been imprisoned, while in Czechoslovakia the Bible Society has been disbanded by the government. Nothing is known of the situation in Romania, and in Bulgaria it is not known if the Society agent is alive. As far as is known, no Bibles have been printed in Russia for two decades, and few have been distributed. No Scriptures have entered the Soviet Union in the last three years, but the American Bible Society has \$125,000 worth of Scriptures on hand for distribution in Russia if and when the situation changes. . . . Scriptures for Korea are published here and in Japan, since the Bible House in Seoul was burned. Scriptures valued at \$1,250,000 have been provided for Korea and distributed to South Koreans, refugees, pastors, and prisoners of war, many of them North Koreans. Chinese Scrip-

tures for prisoners of war have been obtained from Hong Kong. . . . A new Braille Bible for the blind (King James Version) has been completed, consisting of 18 volumes, requiring five feet of shelf space. Scriptures for the blind were distributed in 35 languages and systems. . . . A new recording of the entire Bible on 170 Talking-Book records has been completed; these records are sold to the blind at 25 cents each. . . . Next year's production program calls for 825,000 Bibles, 1,203,000 Testaments, and 12,541,750 portions of Scripture.

* * *

Soviet young people were called upon "to fight religion" by the Russian youth organ *Young Bolshevik*. The article said that "victory for Communism will come only after the struggle against all the religious traditions of the world has been won. . . . Under our Communist conditions religion continues to play a reactionary part. It clings to all that is old and false; and being a most viable conservative ideology, it impedes the overcoming of other remnants of the past." . . . The Communist education of the youth and workers "is therefore indissolubly connected with exposing and overcoming religious morality."

* * *

Last spring a priest, Father Balm of the Augustinian Order, became chaplain of the Sorbonne University in Paris. Alarmed at the spread of existentialism among students who had been raised as Christians, Balm, together with a colleague, Father Nicodem, studied the theories and tenets of Sartre's philosophy, seeking its weak points and most vulnerable arguments. Then the two swung into action. Doffing their clerical robes, they donned the traditional students' garb of blue jeans and sweater every night and went into the hotbeds of existentialism. There they sought out student converts to the movement, argued with them and offered the hope of religion. They had notable success; Balm is credited with having prevented at least four suicides in three months. . . . The success of this work and Father Balm's appeal led the Order to send eight additional priests to Paris. These have taken quarters on the Seine's famed Left Bank, where they will frequent bars and cafes of the district which are crowded day and night with disillusioned students discussing the miseries of the world and the existentialist approach to them.

* * *

There is always a lapse of time between the date that this is written and the date when it appears in print. Hence things happen; e.g., the item in this column on p. 874f. of the November issue: "Protestants, Stop, Look, Listen!" Before the readers had this in hand, the "prophecy"

was fulfilled! — With this in mind I write the following: Archbishop Aloysius Stepinac has been conditionally released from prison by the Tito government; the "conditionally" plainly expressed in the Communist government's official announcement of his release, which referred to him as "the former archbishop." . . . But he disputed this announcement; he said, "I am still Archbishop of Zagreb"; that he would never give up his diocese "by government force"; that his future status was entirely "in the hands of the Holy Father. . . . I will never leave the country by force. I will remain here until the Holy Father decrees otherwise." . . . His future was of secondary importance, he declared; the main thing was for the Tito government "to fulfill the essential conditions of the Church's demands." These demands included recognition of marriage as a sacrament, the re-establishment of church schools, and complete acceptance of the Catholic press. — To us on the side lines this looks like one totalitarian power's trying to dictate to the other; and we are interestedly watching who will win, meanwhile deploring the fact that the cause of Christ and His Gospel does not seem to matter to either side!

From Pusan, Korea, United Nations chaplains report that thousands of Chinese and North Korean Communist prisoners of war are attending religious services in their camps. The prisoners' attendance at services is purely voluntary; some men have even built their own churches in the camps. . . . The prisoners include many Christians who have been forced into the Communist armies.

The Rev. Joseph Demmel of Munich was elected to head the Old Catholic Church in Germany. He succeeds Bishop Erwin Kreutzer of Bonn, who resigned because of poor health. . . . The Old Catholic Church of Germany was formed in 1871, when groups of Roman Catholics seceded from Rome in protest against the definition of the dogma of papal infallibility. The Church claims about 30,000 members.

Rome reports that Vatican authorities have authorized the micro-filming of virtually all the ancient manuscripts in the Vatican Library. . . . Heretofore, the manuscripts have been almost inaccessible except to students and scientists given special permission to examine them. . . . It is expected that when the filming is completed, copies will be made available to approved institutions for study for preservation in their archives.

The latest German clerical manual shows that of a total population of 64,400,000 in all four zones of Germany, 59.7 per cent, or 38,400,000, are Protestants, 35.1 per cent, or 22,500,000, are Roman Catholics, while 5.2 per cent, or 3,500,000, belong to other religious groups or profess no creed.

* * *

Communist leaders in East Germany are discouraging all public Christmas parties and observances outside the churches. Even family celebrations have been curbed by a decree prohibiting the cutting of Christmas trees to 15 per cent of those cut last year. . . . Instead, Communist authorities are trying to substitute the celebration of Stalin's birthday on December 21 for the Christmas festival. Schools, kindergartens, and Communist youth groups were warned not to hold Christmas parties this year; instead, celebrations of Stalin's birthday will be held. . . . Meanwhile, Soviet Zone Information Minister Gerhard Eisler issued orders to directors of East German radio stations that the December programs should concentrate "exclusively" on the promotion of Soviet-German friendship and Stalin's birthday.

* * *

Realizing the morale and public relations value of well-kept church grounds and landscaping, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) maintains a central ground-planning office. . . . The landscaping department is ready to give detailed instructions, advice, and complete landscaping plans to L. D. S. church groups. All Mormon church groups make applications for landscaping advice, submitting pictures of their buildings and their requests. The landscaping department goes over the plans, suggests types of plants and shrubs and gives detailed reports on the care of the plants. . . . Church officials say that the central landscaping department has done much to make Mormon church edifices all over the world stand out as well-planned, well-landscaped buildings.

THEO. HOYER

CORRECTION

Dr. Allen Wikgren, to whom I referred in my article on Luke 17: 20-21, comments as follows in a letter of December 15, 1951: "The comment which I made in *Nuntius* did not have anything directly to do with the Lucan passage, and I do not wonder therefore that you failed to understand the ellipsis in that connection. I was only commenting on Riesenfeld's note regarding C. H. Robert's interpretation of certain examples of *entos* to mean 'in the possession of' or the like. Riesenfeld thought that this was not quite accurate and suggested that

the phrases might be abbreviated expressions for 'in the house of' or equivalent, an ellipsis of the noun occurring in these instances. I merely supplied what I thought to be some actual examples of such an ellipsis in certain passages of the Septuagint which are commonly cited to support the meaning 'among' for *entos*. Such an ellipsis might of course be supposed in the Lucan passage, but I do not see that it would contribute anything to the solution of the problem of the meaning of the text, and it was not advocated by Riesenfeld in his note or by myself."

PAUL M. BRETSCHER

AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

The Rev. Raymond F. Surburg is pastor of Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Brooklyn, N. Y. He holds advanced degrees from Columbia University in Semitics; the Biblical Seminary of New York City in Religious Education; the American Theological Seminary in Church History; and Fordham University in the History and Philosophy of Education.

Prof. Carl Gaenssle earned his doctorate in the field of Semitics at the University of Chicago. For many years he taught the classical languages on the secondary and collegiate level at Concordia College and other schools in Milwaukee, Wis.

Victor Bartling is professor of New Testament Interpretation at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

W. F. Beck is editor of *Bible Stories in Pictures*, published by Concordia Publishing House.