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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

RECENT GERMAN LUTHER EDITIONS

Under the heading *Lutherausgaben nach 1945* the *Informations-Blatt fuer die Gemeinden in den Niederdeutschen Landeskirchen* (2. Julibeft 1953, 2. Jahrg., Nummer 14) reports on modern Luther editions that have appeared since the end of the Second World War. Of these the Weimar edition is mentioned first, for though most of the work on this phenomenal undertaking had been completed before 1945, there remained still so much to be done that the project had to be reorganized. Prof. Hanns Rueckert of Tuebingen has taken over the management of the enterprise. A new volume of *addenda* (*ein Nachleseband*) and several volumes offering the greatly needed indexes are yet to be published. Textual emendations also have become necessary in volumes that have already appeared. The Weimar edition pursues the goal of absolute completeness and scientific accuracy.

Not so pretentious as the Weimar edition is the more popular edition *Luther deutsch. Die Werke Martin Luthers in neuer Auswahl fuer die Gegenwart herausgegeben* ("Luther in German. The Works of Martin Luther Published in a New Selection for our Present Generation"). The editor is Kurt Aland. Volumes 3, 4 and 5, covering Luther's exposition of Scripture, as also Volumes 6 and 9, have already appeared. In order to offer more of Luther's writings, these appear in an abridged form in this edition.

New editions of individual writings of Luther have also appeared as, for example, of the *Psalter deutsch von 1524* by Fritz Schmitt; of the *Auslegung der sieben Busspsalmen* by Georg Helbig; of the *Magnificat* by Hermine Rohner; of the *Freiheit eines Christenmenschen* by Ernst Kaehler, and others. Last, there have appeared also Luther anthologies, offering various shorter selections from Luther's writings. Very important also are the *Quellen zu Luther* which Hans Preuss has published.

All these publications prove that Luther is still popular and that he is still a pre-eminent teacher of the Christian Church.

J. T. MUELLER

CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS IN SWEDEN

Rev. Hermann Kiesow, pastor of the German Lutheran congregation in Göteborg, Sweden, reports in *Informationsblatt fuer die Gemeinden in den Niederdeutschen Lutherischen Landeskirchen*

(August 25) on current Church-State relations in Sweden. His account highlights some of the difficulties which are likely to arise in a country in which the State gives preferential status to one church—in this instance the Lutheran—and through legislation seeks to regulate not only the external but also the internal affairs of the Church. From this report we call attention to some of Rev. Kiesow's observations.

"A new law which became effective January 1, 1952, now regulates religious freedom in Sweden. Whereas formerly one could sever his connection with the Swedish Church only on the condition that one joined another religious group, this condition has now been waived. But whoever leaves the church, does not escape the church tax. This is reduced, however, in such instances to 60%. Only a small minority has actually left the church. Anti-church groups had looked for a general exodus from the Swedish Church, but they were disappointed. . . .

"The pastor is still an official of the state and as such is burdened with a vast number of purely administrative duties. His preoccupation with civil matters seriously interferes with the performance of his pastoral duties. The state has, in large measure, relieved the church of the care of the youth, the sick, and the aged, but the services of the state are restricted to externals and do not provide for the needs of the soul. No doubt, one of the chief responsibilities of the church lies in the area of pastoral ministration. But the church is unable to meet this obligation because its pastors do not have sufficient time to do pastoral work. The church does not have as many pastors as needed, and the support given pastors by laymen is not adequate. The number of young men preparing for the ministry has decreased. Thus the need of pastors will become even greater.

"The Swedish Church is a state church in the sense that the state, through laws and administrative procedures, exerts a great influence on the life of the church. When, in the age of Absolutism, the external organization of the Swedish Church came into being, the ruling house of Sweden evinced a warm interest in the affairs of the church. This relation has, however, changed in the last century. Today the state tolerates, but does not promote the church. The social democrats have an absolute majority in Sweden. Older members of the church have given up their extreme Marxian views and have developed a more favorable attitude toward the church. Younger members, however, are hostile to the church and seek to use it for

their own political ends. For this reason the attitude of the state toward the church is one of great restraint. The state consistently opposes, for financial reasons, all efforts to divide large congregations into smaller units. Parishes having a membership of over 100,000 souls like those in Brännkyrka and Enskede are inconceivable in other countries and reduce effective pastoral work to hollow mockery.

"The state is very reluctant to grant permits for the erection of new churches although it always stands ready to support social and cultural projects. The few churches which were built in Sweden in recent years are only a fraction of the large number of churches built in other countries, notably in Germany. In Göteborg a movement is gaining momentum which sponsors the erection of small churches. Since the people can acquire neither the funds nor the permission to build large churches, they are satisfied, in view of the emergency, to build barrack churches in the suburbs. These are accomplishing much in the way of attracting new residents and are stimulating the spiritual life of the people in these communities.

"The spiritual care of patients in large city hospitals constitutes a sorry chapter. The pastors in these centers cannot give this matter sufficient attention, and there are no funds available for the employment of hospital chaplains. The practice of employing prison chaplains has been discontinued although it had fully justified its existence. The state has increased the salary of the clergy. It has, however, in contrast to past traditions, so regulated the salary scale that it now conforms to the salary scale of secular officers employed by the state. The state has also adopted corresponding regulations regarding the furlough of the clergy. These regulations are, however, so impractical that they can hardly be executed.

"Unfortunately, the Swedish Church, some time ago, granted the state the right to pass a law that pastors be held to perform marriages of divorcees of their parishes. The next General Synod will attempt to change this impossible situation. The state favors the employment of woman pastors, but the church is opposed to this plan. The state recently 'democratized' the General Synod by so increasing the membership of the laymen that these now outnumber the clergy. Now the state would like to see the laity exert an influence in the election of the bishop, who until now was elected by the clergy. The church will hardly approve of this change.

"Thus it is evident that the Swedish Church has its problems. . . . Many Swedes are wholly indifferent to the church. Nevertheless, the Swedish Church is genuinely concerned about the welfare of its

members. It approves and promotes the support given it by laymen. . . . Participation in Holy Communion is increasing, likewise also participation in the children's services. Younger members of the clergy are promoting the high-church movement. Leading members of the clergy have, however, expressed their concern over this development. Ritualism can hardly bring about a revival of the church. The conference of bishops has admonished the clergy not to change the order of divine services which is now in vogue, and has voiced its opposition to elevating the chalice in Holy Communion. The question of theological training is being discussed. All are agreed that the present system is not adequate. Some are demanding the introduction of psychology and sociology into the theological curriculum; others are proposing that the study of Hebrew be no longer required for the achievement of the theological degree. . . .

"In spite of the difficulties which are besetting the Swedish Church, this church continues to perform its tasks with untiring devotion. The pressures exerted by the state are compelling the church to give more intensive thought to its real mission. The existing tensions have not resulted in a serious consideration of the principle of the separation of church and state. If such a separation were to be effected, the Swedish Church would possess the power and wisdom to master the situation. For it knows that, in the last analysis, it is serving the Lord of the Church, and He will not forsake it."

P. M. B.

ARE EVANGELICALS BIBLIOLATERS?

In *United Evangelical Action* (August 1, 1953) W. G. Foster, Jr., a Presbyterian pastor, discusses this question very ably and thoroughly. While the reader may not agree with every statement in the lengthy article, the writer's final conclusion seems to be very sound and worthy of careful consideration. He holds that the charge of bibliolatry is the most frequent accusation set over the heads of those who believe in a fully and verbally inspired Bible. As he shows, bibliolatry, as defined in Webster's *Yale Co-Op Dictionary*, is book worship; excessive reverence for the letter of Scripture. The charge of bibliolatry is today raised in many books on the Bible. Thus Bernard Anderson in his *Rediscovering the Bible* sets over against each other those who take the Bible literally and those who "take the Bible seriously without taking it literally." Those who take the Bible literally are the Fundamentalists, and he writes: "Fundamentalism is really a form of bibliolatry, that is, a faith in the Bible itself, rather than in the God who speaks through the Bible. Despite its high regard for the Bible, this movement offers

men a false and — paradoxical though it seems — an unbiblical authority" (p. 17). In a similar way Robert McAfee Brown in his book *P. T. Forsyth, Prophet for Today* writes: "The fundamental heresy of 'orthodoxy' is that faith degenerates from trust in God to assent to propositions about God, belief in doctrine becomes primary" (p. 37). The writer admits that there may be such biblioatry, but contends that the Reformed evangelicals are not guilty of it, for as the *Westminster Confession of Faith* declares: ". . . our full persuasian and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof [Holy Scripture] is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts" (Ch. I, par. 5). The fact that this is precisely the opinion of recent and ancient Fundamentalists he illustrates by excerpts from A. W. Tozer's *The Divine Conquest* and Bishop J. C. Ryle's *Holiness*. The latter, for example, writes: "It is no answer to tell me that you believe the truth of Christianity and hold the articles of the Christian faith. Such religion as this will never save your soul. The devils believe in a certain way and tremble (James 2:19). Saving Christianity is not the mere believing a certain set of opinions and holding a certain set of notions. Its essence is in knowing, trusting, and loving a certain living Person who died for us — even Christ the Lord" (p. 250). On the other hand, those who take the Bible seriously, though not literally — and these are the liberals — override and set aside the Bible while pretending to regard the authority of Christ. Thus Herbert H. Farmer in his article on *The Bible: Its Significance and Authority (Interpreter's Bible, Vol. I, p. 13)* writes: "It is necessary to insist . . . that whatever place may be assigned to the Bible as the standard and norm, the truth that Christ, the living Christ, speaking through the Holy Spirit, is the supreme authority, must not be qualified in any way whatsoever." That sounds well enough, but then he says: "It follows that it is a most grave disloyalty to Christ and to the Scripture, which He uses to speak to men, to turn the latter into an overriding authority of the extrinsic 'yardstick' sort, whether by ascribing to it a miraculous infallibility whose statements no one can question . . . or by using it as a kind of *sortes Vergilianae*, or means of divination" (p. 25). Then he goes on to say: "When we have set to one side the infallibility of the Scriptures, and have fully admitted that the Christian believer or theologian in the use of them must be guided in the last resort by his own conviction of truth, we admit in principle the right to set to one side some of the Biblical content" (p. 26). Similarly Dr. George Buttrick writes: "So the story of the Tower of Babel, though it is not a scientific account of the origin of languages, is tragic truth concerning the pride of man which destroys the work of man's

own hands whether in Babel or Berlin; and which always brings such confusion of tongues that Russia cannot understand the United States or Hitler's Germany comprehend the natives of Norway" (*Interpreter's Bible*, I, 166). Toward the end of his article the writer suggests this thought: "When we follow the thinking of those who cry 'Bibliolater,' we all too often realize that we are being led down a pathway that ends at the place where the Bible does not matter and the mind of man is the end of all things. The Scriptures have ceased to be the Word of God to man, and man has become the one who is qualified to sit in final judgment upon the Scriptures. This newer view begins by seeking to set man free from having to take the Bible literally, and it ends by leading man to the place where he does not have to take the Bible seriously at all."

J. T. MUELLER

AN OPINION FAVORING THE RETENTION OF LANGUAGE STUDY IN THE THEOLOGICAL CURRICULUM

Theologische Literaturzeitung (March) publishes the opinion rendered by the theological faculty of the University of Berlin on a proposed reformation of the theological curriculum prepared by Dr. Wilhelm Hahn (Heidelberg) and Dr. Hans-Heinrich Wolf (Bethel). The opinion does not agree with the proposal of Drs. Hahn and Wolf that the theological faculties in German universities make it their major concern to train pastors for the evangelical ministry of the German Church. The opinion maintains that theological students should be subjected to a rigid scientific study of the theological disciplines, even though some of them may absorb ideas in conflict with the evangelical faith. The opinion also disagrees with the proposal of Drs. Hahn and Wolf, who—so we gather from the report—favor a reduction in language requirements and the introduction of areas of study into the curriculum which are said to make for a wider appreciation of the problems of life. The opinion therefore favors the retention of the traditional requirements in language study. Since the question is very much alive whether or not our program of ministerial training should continue to require many hours of foreign language study, we are submitting for consideration the following paragraphs from the opinion rendered by the theological faculty of the university of Berlin:

There is no doubt that the requirement that a student learn one, two, even three languages exceeds the capacity of some students. For not all students are endowed with the talent to study foreign languages. Especially the transition to Hebrew, which is a Semitic language and which has its own special peculiarities ranging all the

way from the alphabet to syntax, presents many difficulties. But as long as we side with St. Jerome and Luther against St. Augustine, who regarded the LXX and the *Vetus Itala* derived from it as the original Christian text, we may not give up the study of Hebrew. There does not exist, and there cannot exist, a legitimate interpretation of the Old Testament which does not take recourse to the Hebrew text, since word families in our language hardly ever agree in meaning with corresponding families of words in the Hebrew language.

Every student must achieve an appreciation of the difficulties of translation which the above situation presents and thus gain enough insight into Hebrew to be able to use a scientific commentary. Even though the student may, in course of time, lose his hold on the language, if only the impression of its peculiarity remains and therefore the knowledge that in the absence of help by others he can only then use the Old Testament effectively if he has the ability to translate the text. Therefore we should retain the languages even though in individual cases the results may not warrant it. *Semper aliquid haeret!* We should, however, consider whether exegetical studies of the Old Testament might not be read in pastoral conferences more frequently than is the case at the present time so that the pastor's knowledge of the language does not so soon fade out because he fails to use it.

P. M. B.

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

New York.—Plans for the Second Latin American Lutheran Conference, to be held July 20—23, 1954, near Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, were announced by Dr. Stewart W. Herman, director of the Lutheran World Federation Committee on Latin America.

Among the participants, he said, will be Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, Germany, president of the Lutheran World Federation, Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, executive secretary of the LWF, Bishop Johannes Smemo of Oslo, Primate of the Church of Norway, and Bishop Anders Nygren of Lund, Sweden, past president of the LWF.

Theme of the Conference, which will discuss the responsibility of the Lutheran Church in Latin America, is "Our Heritage is Our Faith," Dr. Herman said.

New York.—Membership in Lutheran Churches of the United States and Canada totaled 6,673,945 persons in 1952, an increase of 197,344, or three per cent, over the previous year, according to the annual statistical summary compiled by the National Lutheran Council here.

Of the total members, 6,485,782 are located in the U.S. and 188,163 in Canada.

Confirmed (adult) membership in both countries increased by 102,246 persons to total 4,551,880, a gain of 2.3 per cent, as compared to an increase of 90,843, or 2.1 per cent in 1951.

The 197,344 increase in baptized membership was distributed among the 16,884 congregations in the two countries, representing an average of about 11.7 new members per church.

The Council's summary is based on figures supplied by 16 church bodies, as well as independent congregations, and by the Negro missions conducted by the four groups associated in the Lutheran Synodical Conference. Of the 16 bodies, 14 recorded gains in membership, and two reported no change—as their figures were taken from statistics compiled in previous years. For the first time in several years no losses were reported.

For the eighth successive year, the largest numerical increase was registered by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, which gained 61,088 baptized members, or 3.4 per cent over 1951. With a membership of 1,847,284, the Missouri Synod is the second largest Lutheran body in America.

The United Lutheran Church in America, largest of the bodies, reported an increase of 43,757 members, or 2.1 per cent, making a total membership of 2,087,945.

Greatest advance on a percentage basis among the major bodies was shown by the Evangelical Lutheran Church for the seventh straight year. This Church, the third largest Lutheran group in America, had a gain of 34,311, or 3.9 per cent, giving a 1952 total of 907,124 members.

In the field of parish education, the combined churches had 2,905,612 pupils, with 287,776 teachers, in 27,466 schools.

These comprised 15,365 Sunday schools with 2,095,747 pupils; 1,465 weekday released-time schools with 80,184 pupils; 9,195 vacation Bible schools with 607,612 pupils; and 1,441 parochial schools with 122,069 pupils.

Of the parochial schools, 1,145 were conducted by the Missouri Synod.

The number of ordained ministers rose to 15,289, an increase of 361 over 1951. Organization of 102 new congregations, 20 fewer than in 1951, raised the number of churches to 16,884.

Congregations in 1952 spent locally \$172,228,042, an increase of \$9,900,554 over 1951. Their contributions to the Church at large rose

to \$52,950,194, an increase of \$12,138,415 over the previous year, as compared to a decrease of \$1,585,372 in 1951.

Property valuation reached an all-time high when it passed the billion-dollar mark. Values were boosted by \$115,104,619, or 12.7 per cent, to \$1,020,971,138.

Lourdes, France.— Seventy thousand pilgrims and 1,230 stretcher cases took part in the annual Rosary pilgrimage to the famed Lourdes shrine. Groups of pilgrims from Belgium, Switzerland, Holland, and Spain joined those from all parts of France and North Africa.

Thirty special trains, converging from 22 different points, as well as a fleet of motor coaches and private cars, transported the pilgrims.

Manila.— Archbishop Jose Maria Cuenco of Jaro, Iloilo, has called upon Philippine Roman Catholics to vote only for pro-Catholic candidates in the November 10 elections.

Archbishop Cuenco said Catholics must vote only for pro-Catholic candidates "to protect the rights of 16,000,000 Filipinos, which a handful of Freemasons tried to trample down."

Rome.— The Sacred Congregation of Rites, at a preparatory meeting here, discussed two miracles attributed to Pope Pius X, the "Pope of Christian Doctrine," who was beatified in June, 1951.

One of the miracles was that of Francesco Belsani of Naples who was declared healed in August, 1951, of a lung cancer. The other was the recovery from meningitis, in February, 1952, of Sister Maria Luisa Scordia of Palermo, Sicily.

The Sacred Congregation accepted a medical commission's report certifying the supernatural character of the two recoveries. At least two miracles after beatification are required for canonization.

At a later general meeting of the Sacred Congregation, at which Pope Pius XII will be present, the miracles will be studied again, and the Pope, if he deems it proper, will issue a decree that the cause of Blessed Pius X may proceed to solemn canonization.

It is expected that the canonization will take place during the 1954 Marian Year.

Rome.— Pope Pius XII, in an encyclical addressed to the Roman Catholic hierarchy throughout the world, proclaimed 1954 a Marian year in honor of the 100th anniversary of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception was decreed an article of faith by Pope Pius IX on December 8, 1854. It teaches that the Virgin Mary was free from original sin from the moment of her conception in her mother's womb.

L. W. SPRIZ