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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE WORD OF GOD

Under this title the *Scottish Journal of Theology* (March 1961), among other things, compares the Fundamentalist view of the Bible with that of the Liberal approach. It says that while the Fundamentalist tries to safeguard his view of verbal inspiration by doctrines of absolute inerrancy and historical and scientific infallibility, and so on, the value of this positive approach must nevertheless be recognized, since it emphasizes the *objective authority* of the Bible, an authority which, rightly understood as interpreted by the Holy Spirit, can be relied on as an infallible guide to faith and life. The Liberal approach is very different. While it does not deny the authority of the Bible, rightly understood, as a rule for faith and life, its emphasis rests upon the human, historical side of the composition of its literature. Another aspect of the Liberal approach is its tendency to pick and choose bits here and there in the Bible as edifying and to dismiss the rest. Thus John Baillie was ready to agree that 1 Corinthians 13 is verbally inspired, but that quite clearly the Bible as a whole is not. The chief danger of the Liberal approach, however, is its *subjectivity*. If the Bible only in parts contains the Word of God and in others speaks with a fallible human voice, who is to judge what is the Word of God and what is not? If the Bible is not infallible and inspired except in parts, where is its authority to be found? The writer then quotes Gabriel Hebert, who in his work *Fundamentalism and the Church of God* (Student Christian Movement Press, 1957) says:

A theory has been held in recent years that the Revelation consists essentially in the acts of God Himself . . . and that the books of the Bible contain the human record of these things, as described by faithful but fallible

men. In this view the Bible, consisting of "words of men," is no more than a human record and commentary on God's mighty acts of salvation. . . . But what has happened to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit? The implication is that in the events recorded in the New Testament God sent His Son and in Him revealed His glory, and then left us to trace out according to our poor notions the works of His mighty wisdom. . . . But this separation between the Word of God and the words of men simply will not do. It is to make a separation between the Son of God and the Spirit.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

THE NEW TESTAMENT CANON IN THE LUTHERAN DOGMATICIANS

In the publication of our Springfield seminary, *The Springfielder* (spring 1961), Prof. J. A. O. Preus presents a most scholarly, well-documented, interesting, and timely article on this greatly neglected and also greatly debated subject. Professor Preus reaches the conclusion that four criteria of canonicity appear in the thinking of the dogmaticians: (1) content, (2) apostolic authorship or supervision, (3) the use of the book in the early history of the church, and (4) inspiration. The dogmaticians all use these criteria so that actually there is not such a great difference among them as would first appear. Luther emphasized content more than the other criteria and more than the dogmaticians did. Chemnitz perhaps more strongly than any other emphasized apostolic authorship, yet he adds inspiration as one of the prime criteria of canonicity. The later dogmaticians emphasized the criterion of inspiration more than some of the other criteria and more than did the early dogmaticians. Yet it was by no means their only emphasis. The difference among the dogmaticians was not one of exclusiveness but

one of emphasis. They were all basically agreed as to what made a book canonical and as to which books were Scripture. The position of the Lutheran dogmaticians, while differing in emphasis, indicates a likeness of thought. All agreed that the Canon was made up of books that were inspired, written by apostles, known and witnessed in the early church, and containing divine and evangelical teaching. The dogmaticians teach us two things: (1) the Canon, viewed as a list of books by a definitely known group of authors, is not an article of faith; (2) we need have more of the dogmaticians' reverence for Scripture as a God-breathed, authoritative Word, which we recognize on the basis of its authorship, human and divine, its content, and the history of its use through the ages of the church.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

AMERICAN FREEDOM AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

Church and State (May 1961) discusses under this heading the relation of our American tradition of freedom to the Christian faith. The article contains vital statements which merit widespread consideration, as a few quotations will show.

It is evident that from the beginning of our national history Christian ideas have played an important role in the development of the American tradition of freedom. It is necessary only to recall the contributions of the Puritans and Roger Williams in the foundation of American freedom to give some indication of this influence. Yet it is also evident that the American tradition of freedom is not essentially Christian. Because of the close relationship of Christian ideas to the development of democracy in America there is a tendency to associate these two elements uncritically, thus identifying the Christian faith with observable weaknesses in the democratic process. It is more accurate to say that the Christian contribution is secondary, the more direct influence being the rationalistic humanism of classical Greek

thought and the Enlightenment, which continues as the dominant element of the American democratic faith. It is the problems in this philosophy which primarily lead to the problems of the American idea of freedom. . . . From the Christian point of view the humanistic basis for freedom is inadequate in at least two points. First, it involves an unrealistic estimate of human nature, the emphasis on the essential goodness of man. The uncritical acceptance of this view in American life led to vast abuses associated with unregulated capitalism in the past and is the root of a naive faith of some in the "social planning" in our day. In both cases the assumption is that men will put the general welfare above selfish motives. . . . Again, the humanist position fails to furnish a sufficient moral ground for the application of the idea of freedom. By its very nature humanism involves ethical relativity in that there is no ground beyond human reason to which to appeal. . . . If ideas of freedom are based primarily on humanistic assumptions their dynamic will be ultimately dissipated in intellectual confusion and moral uncertainty.

The writer adds that the "Christian contribution to the development of human freedom has been to provide moral certainty and spiritual dynamic. . . . It is not surprising that those areas of the world where the greatest progress has been made in human freedom are those in which the Christian ideal has most deeply penetrated."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

DOES THE CHEIROGRAPHON OF COL. 2:14 REPRESENT CHRIST HIMSELF?

Under this heading the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (July 1961) discusses this question, which has been raised in more recent times on the basis of the *Odes of Solomon* (*Ode XXIII*), which, as has been suggested, evidences "a Jewish-Christian exegesis of St. Paul's cheirograph." If the *cheirographon* does represent Christ, inasmuch as He is the Revelation of the Father, then, the writer

holds, we have a much easier reading for our verse than the classical exegesis will allow, for Christ was literally nailed to the cross. Fundamentally, *cheirographon* means "written with the hand," or more technically, a "certificate of debt." Classical exegesis refers the cheirograph to the Mosaic Law. The cheirograph thus represents a certificate of debt resulting from our transgressions. By our sins we had violated the precepts of the divine Law, and so we had become insolvent debtors, because we were incapable of procuring adequate compensation for our debt. The precepts of the Law were an accusation before the divine tribunal, calling down upon us punishment. On the cross Christ annihilated the certificate of our debt by nailing it to the cross. The debt is annulled with regard to the "ordinances" of the divine Law so that they can no longer condemn us. Such is the conservative classical exegesis of the cheirograph.

The champions of the so-called Jewish-Christian exegesis (Battifol, Daniélou, and others) regard Christ Himself as the *cheirographon* inasmuch as He is the new Revelation, or the Word of God come down upon earth. The cheirograph would thus stand for the condemnation which was upon us because of our sins. This thought is in line with St. Paul's statements that Christ was made sin for us (2 Cor. 5:21); that He became a curse for us (Gal. 3:13), and others. The undersigned still prefers what the article calls the "classical exegesis," but the second view is also interesting, though in the last analysis both pronounce the same Gospel truth of Christ's redemption.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

MORALITY OF NUCLEAR WAR

The final number of Volume III (July 1961) of *Militärseelsorge*, the admirably edited quarterly of the West German Roman Catholic military ordinariate, includes an article on "Christian Morality and Atomic

Weapons" by two Münster theologians, Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde and Robert Spaemann. The authors summarize in the following theses the conclusions that they are compelled to draw from contemporary Roman Catholic teaching on war as derived from papal pronouncements and the reflections of modern moral theologians:

"(1) Modern warfare has not yet reached the stage where it is morally impermissible in itself.

"(2) The licitness of a war of defense in itself does not simultaneously establish the licitness of all the means of defense that a situation may require; there is no *absolute* right of defense.

"(3) The principle that we must weigh values against one another (*Güterabwägung*) leads to the conclusion that it is not permissible to counter a conventional attack with an atomic counterattack, as well as to the further conclusion that an atomic counterattack is not permissible when it can no longer serve the ends of protection or defense, but serves merely to visit upon the enemy the same evil that he has visited upon us.

"(4) There is disagreement on how far the principle that requires restriction of the consequences of warfare to combatants (controllability) warrants the conclusion that atomic weapons are impermissible; very many bishops and theologians adopt the conclusion as far as H-bombs are concerned and a majority do so as far as 'ordinary' atomic weapons are concerned.

"(5) [Roman] Catholic teaching on war obligates all concerned to observe the international law that is in effect. The current requirements of international law unexceptionally forbid the use of atomic weapons in the face of a conventional attack; in the face of an atomic attack such a counterattack with atomic weapons is justifiable as a means of self-preservation." (Pp. 296, 297)

ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN

**BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE
NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL**

New York.—Membership of the Lutheran churches in North America totaled 8,456,863 adults and children at the end of 1960. The Lutheran bodies reported 8,188,289 baptized members in the United States and 268,574 members for their affiliated groups in Canada, according to the annual statistical summary issued here by the National Lutheran Council. The figures were compiled by Miss Helen M. Knubel, secretary of research and statistics in the council's Division of Public Relations.

The total represents a gain of 143,015 members, or 1.7 per cent, during 1960—133,872 in the U.S. and 9,143 in Canada. The percentage of increase is considerably below the average gain of 3.1 per cent over the past ten years, when increases in membership ranged from 2.7 to 3.6 per cent.

Composing the third largest Protestant denominational grouping in America, the Lutheran churches are exceeded in numbers only by the Baptists and Methodists.

The NLC's summary is based on statistics supplied by 14 Lutheran church bodies. Eight of the bodies recorded advances in membership, two reported no change, and four suffered losses.

The six bodies that participate in the National Lutheran Council—United, American, Augustana, Lutheran Free, Suomi Synod, and American Evangelical—have 5,566,932 members, a gain of 83,559 over the previous year. The Synodical Conference, which consisted of the Missouri Synod, Wisconsin Synod, Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches, and Evangelical Lutheran Synod, with Negro Missions—has 2,864,141 members, or 60,149 more than in 1959. Four independent bodies—National Evangelical, Finnish Apostolic, Lutheran Brethren, and Eielsen Synod—total 25,790 members, a loss of 693.

The gain in baptized membership of

143,015 in 1960, distributed among the 18,118 congregations, marks an average increase of 7.8 new members per local church, compared with the average of 12.5 for the previous decade. Confirmed or adult membership advanced by 104,903 to a grand total of 5,557,729, a gain of 1.9 per cent. This would indicate an average accession of 5.7 adult members per congregation in 1960, somewhat less than the average of 6.8 over the past ten years.

For the 16th consecutive year the highest numerical increase was made by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod as it accounted for 57 per cent of all the new members reported. Among the major bodies, it also showed for the third year in a row the greatest gain on a percentage basis. The Missouri Synod added 81,744 baptized members, or 3.4 per cent, to boost its total membership to 2,469,036. Over the past 16 years it has gained 1,028,665 members, an average of 64,292 annually. The synod is the second largest Lutheran body in America and one of three with more than two million members each.

The top-ranking United Lutheran Church in America reported a net increase of 17,997, or 0.7 per cent, and now has 2,495,009 members. The ULCA is scheduled to merge next year with Augustana, Suomi, and the AELC into a new denomination of more than three million members to be known as the Lutheran Church in America.

Third largest of the bodies, the new American Lutheran Church, which began operations this year after a three-way merger, has 2,306,780 members, a gain of 49,611, or 2.1 per cent, over the separate figures reported last year by the former ALC, Evangelical Lutheran Church, and United Evangelical Lutheran Church.

The greatest gain percentagewise of any body, regardless of size, was registered by the Lutheran Free Church. It showed an

increase of 3,654, or 4.4 per cent, and now has 87,250 members. The LFC has authorized a referendum in its congregations next fall on the question of affiliation with the new ALC.

Second highest percentage was compiled by the National Evangelical Lutheran Church with a gain of 421 members, or 3.8 per cent, to 11,397. The NELC this year took steps expected to lead to merger with the Missouri Synod in 1963.

In the field of parish education, the churches enrolled 4,065,106 pupils, 23,199 more than in 1959. Sunday schools gained 5,416 pupils, vacation Bible schools 5,755, released-time schools 1,515, and parochial schools 10,513.

Sunday schools had 2,667,474 pupils in 17,683 schools served by 323,764 teachers; vacation Bible schools had 1,087,977 pupils in 8,128 schools with 115,268 teachers; released-time schools had 121,003 pupils in 1,562 schools with 8,653 teachers; and parochial schools had 188,652 pupils in 1,632 schools with 7,504 teachers.

Most of the parochial or Christian day schools are conducted by The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod with 1,293. The Wisconsin Synod has 221 schools, the American Lutheran Church 50, the Evangelical Lutheran Synod 13, the United Lutheran Church 10, the National Evangelical Lutheran Church 3, the Synod of Evangelical Lutheran Churches 2, the Eielsen Synod 1, and the Negro Missions 39. Last year the Augustana Lutheran Church listed two parochial schools, but this year reported that no figures were available.

Last year the former ELC also reported 38 such schools, the ALC 90, and the UELC 3 for a total of 131. This year the merged ALC lists only 50 schools but with an increase of 849 teachers and 2,364 pupils for a total of 1,230 teachers and 10,477 pupils. Apparently many schools in areas

with more than one congregation have been consolidated since the merger.

The number of ordained Lutheran pastors rose to 18,796, an increase of 373 over 1959. Of these, 13,717 or 160 more than the previous year were serving in pastorates during 1960.

Congregations totaled 18,118, a net gain of 160 compared to 244 in 1959. Preaching places showed a sharp decrease of 534 and now number 211, a drop explained by the fact that the Missouri Synod inadvertently included South American preaching places in its report for 1959.

In congregational finances, expenditures by the churches for their own activities increased by \$13,088,526, compared to \$6,708,706 in 1959, to a total of \$332,992,610. Contributions to church work at large showed a gain of \$4,499,101, compared to \$1,313,370 the previous year, and reached \$82,069,447. Total expenditures amounted to \$415,062,057, a gain of \$17,587,627 over 1959. This was more than twice the increase of \$8,022,121 in that year and a little more than two thirds the increase reported in 1958.

A separate compilation of statistics for the Lutheran churches in Canada, included in the foregoing figures, revealed that Canada has 268,574 baptized members and 167,218 confirmed or adult members. They are served by 1,057 congregations and 55 preaching places. The clerical roll consists of 691 pastors, of whom 545 are serving congregations.

Geneva.—The Lutheran World Federation Broadcasting Service and sponsors of the International Lutheran Hour have signed an agreement for "co-operation in radio evangelism in Africa and Asia." Under the agreement, programs of the Lutheran Hour—which is the largest nonstate religious broadcasting operation in the world—will be put on the air from the federation's 100-kilowatt short-wave "Voice of the Gospel"

radio station now being constructed at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

For its part the Lutheran Hour organization will contribute at least \$50,000 toward the original capital cost of the station by the end of 1962 and annual sums to its operating budget in proportion to its share in the station's Lutheran broadcasts. The Lutheran Hour, which regularly airs religious programs in more than 50 languages to people in over 115 lands, is sponsored by the Lutheran Laymen's League of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, with headquarters at Saint Louis, Mo. The 2,469,000-member Missouri Synod is the largest Lutheran church body in the world not affiliated with the LWF.

Action of the federation's representatives in entering into the pact with the Lutheran Hour sponsors was ratified by the LWF Executive Committee at Warsaw on July 1. Under its terms Lutheran Hour programs "will be identified as such," but their number and kind are to be determined by the LWF Broadcasting Service in consultation with LH officials "on the basis of programing strategy and need." Moreover, "to encourage and strengthen Lutheran broadcasting over local stations, the LH indicates its willingness to share financially in the local Lutheran radio broadcasts of participating national churches which are unable to underwrite the total costs immediately." It was agreed that "such support shall be determined on the basis of individual requests forwarded through, and approved by, the LWF/BS and contingent upon LH approval of the programing material to be employed."

The agreement was drafted at federation headquarters here in June 1960. Signing for the LWF were its then Executive Secretary Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist, Director Arne Sovik of the Department of World Mission, and Director Sigurd Aske of the Broadcasting Service. Signatories for the Lutheran Hour were Executive Director Paul Friedrich of the Lutheran Laymen's League and Di-

rector C. Thomas Spitz, Jr., of the Hour's foreign operations—both of St. Louis.

Warsaw.—After three years of discussion, the Lutheran World Federation Executive Committee chose here the motto "Christ Today" for the federation's Fourth Assembly at Helsinki. The assembly will take place from July 30 to Aug. 11, 1963.

Theme discussions at the gathering in Finland are to deal with "the relationship between the doctrine of the justification of the sinner for Christ's sake and the life of service of the individual Christian and of the Church."

About 700 delegates, official visitors, LWF staff members and press correspondents are expected to attend the 1963 gathering, with unofficial visitors estimated at more than 5,000.

The committee here voted to publish at the time of the assembly an enlarged directory of world Lutheranism, including statistical and historical information such as that contained in the formerly issued Lutheran world almanacs. It decided also that systematic Bible studies related to the assembly theme should be based on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians and that they should be distributed to member churches for their wide use beginning a year before the assembly.

Washington, D. C.—Lutheran ministers engaged in welfare chaplaincy work number 364. According to a report issued here by the Rev. Carl R. Plack, 301 of these are full-time chaplains. The other 63 perform ministerial functions in welfare agencies or institutions in addition to duties as parish pastors.

Of the full-time chaplains, Mr. Plack said, 190 are from churches which participate in the National Lutheran Council, 108 from The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, and 3 from the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Mr. Plack is secretary for chaplaincy services in the NLC's Division of Welfare.

The statistics were made available from a roster of Lutheran chaplains compiled by the NLC chaplaincy services' office for the use of church bodies and individuals interested in the total picture of Lutherans' contribution to nonmilitary chaplaincy services in America.

Helsinki, Finland.— One of the major results of the annual meeting here of the Commission on Theology of the Lutheran World Federation was the development of plans for the publication of studies in such areas as the coming Ecumenical Council of the Roman Catholic Church, pulpit and altar fellowship, the validity of the Lutheran Confessions, and other questions of doctrine and practice.

Announced at the commission meeting was the forthcoming publication of a volume on "The Gospel and the Ecumenical Council." The book, produced by a team of Lutheran scholars of Roman Catholic doctrine, will evaluate the coming Vatican council and its importance for Protestants. This will be the first published material from the LWF's Commission on Interconfessional Research. Edited by Dr. K. E. Skydsgaard, the volume will have contributions from American theologians Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan of the University of Chicago and Dr. George Lindbeck of Yale.

In addition, two other studies are being readied for publication by the Commission on Theology before the fourth assembly of the LWF in Helsinki in August 1963. One of the studies will deal with the validity of the Lutheran Confessions, and the other will discuss the present position of Lutherans on the question of pulpit and altar fellowship. Both volumes will outline the present attitudes of the various Lutheran church bodies

throughout the world and will give an overall picture of the churches in regard to these issues, which have been matters of discussion and dispute. In each case a team of scholars are at work preparing the material.

The Americans involved in the study of the place and use of the Lutheran Confessions are: Dr. Eugene Fevold, professor of church history, Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., and Dr. Robert Fischer, professor of church history, Chicago Lutheran Seminary, Maywood, Ill. Dr. Fred Meuser, professor of church history at the Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, Columbus, Ohio, will be engaged in work on the volume concerning the question of pulpit and altar fellowship.

The Commission on Theology is also preparing material for discussion by the next assembly of the LWF in Helsinki. It is expected that the commission's studies on the nature of the Lutheran World Federation and on the doctrine of justification will evoke considerable discussion. It is planned that this material, along with a report on the work of the Commission on Theology, will be in the hands of the member churches of the LWF in advance of the next assembly so that there will be serious study of the material prior to the assembly itself.

Tyler, Minn.— The American Evangelical Lutheran Church at its 84th annual convention here became the fourth and last church body to complete favorable action on a merger that will establish a new denomination of more than three million members. On the third day of its sessions, Aug. 15—20, the AELC voted 260 to 7 to join with the United, Augustana, and Finnish Evangelical (Suomi Synod) Lutheran churches in forming the Lutheran Church in America.