

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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ARCHIVES

# THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

## THE ORTHODOX AND THE PAPACY

Under this heading, explained more fully by the subtitle "Reflexions on a recently published book," the *Eastern Orthodox Quarterly* (Summer 1961), a Roman Catholic periodical published in London, reviews briefly but sympathetically *La Primauté de Pierre dans l'Église Orthodoxe*,\* containing four essays by Orthodox authors on the important subject of papal primacy. He sums up the leading thought of the first essay (by N. Afanassieff) in the statement that the Church of Rome enjoyed only a "preeminence of witness." The second essay (by N. Koulomzine) defends two principles: first, that Peter could not act independently of the other apostles, and second, that after the dispersion of the apostolic college Peter ceased to have any superiority in the church. The third essay (by J. Meyendorff) maintains that the Greek fathers upheld the superiority of St. Peter, but that from the 13th to the 16th century the Greek theologians, for valid reasons, rejected the Roman claims to superiority, e. g., the faith in Rome was defective, and the popes failed to merit their superior rank. The final essay (by A. Schmemmann) admits that, though in theory the Orthodox acknowledge no power above that of the bishop, in practice the superiority of synods and patriarchs has been accepted. According to this writer, a church council is the supreme expression of the church's witness to a doctrine, while the patriarchs are focuses of unity. He suggests that the Orthodox would admit the pope as the supreme focus of unity, but not as possessing authority

\* Nicolas Afanassieff, Nicolas Koulomzine, Jean Meyendorff, Alexandre Schmemmann, *La Primauté de Pierre dans l'Église Orthodoxe* (Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé, 1960; 151 pages; paper; price not given).

over other churches. The reviewer, Michael M. Winter, holds that, while Rome cannot give up its doctrine of papal primacy, the essays nevertheless show how the doctrine of the papacy may be effectively presented to non-Catholics, who detest the "dragoon" ethos which they see in the Roman Church. It must be presented as something animated by the spirit of the words "Simon . . . dost thou love Me? . . . Feed My sheep."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

## THE THEOLOGY OF MENNO SIMONS

In the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* (July 1961) Dr. J. A. Oosterbaan, professor of theology at the University of Amsterdam and of the Mennonite seminary in the same city, briefly discusses the theology of Menno Simons as a memorial on the occasion of the fourth centennial of his death (d. 1559). The writer says that anyone approaching the writings of the Mennonite leader with the intent of discovering thoughts of a strictly scholarly character will be disappointed. But whoever approaches them with spiritual sensitivity, seeking to penetrate to the center of his religious life, will be impressed with his deeply rooted faith. In his publications there always is present an atmosphere of strong personal faith and devotion, and this with a combination of gentleness and firmness easily made him the leader of the heterogeneous groups of the early Anabaptists. What is more, a striking concurrence may be found between the theology of Menno Simons and that of Karl Barth. This does not mean that Barth borrowed from Menno, but the similarity nevertheless is remarkable. It pertains to adult Baptism and to the central doctrines of the Christian faith in general. There is, for example, a striking agreement between the two theologians regarding the

method of interpretation and the *locus* of Christology. Again, there are strong similarities in their connection of the doctrine of creation with that of the atonement, the rejection of Calvin's predestination, the criticism of Luther's absolutist emphasis on *sola fide*, the accentuation of conversion and the new birth in Christ, the rejection of infant Baptism, and the opposition in general to an overemphasis on the use of the sacramental signs. Like Barth, Menno also warns against the danger of clericalism and ecclesiasticism, preferring to speak of the church as a Christocratic brotherhood in which any kind of officialdom must give way to brotherly service. Other specific Anabaptist issues, e. g., the relation of church and state, as also social and economic concerns, came to the fore much later.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM THE  
NATIONAL LUTHERAN COUNCIL

*New York.*—A six-week study of Protestant-Roman Catholic relationships in the United States and Mexico was started here in September by Prof. K. E. Skydsgaard of Denmark, internationally known scholar who serves as research professor of the Lutheran World Federation's Commission on Inter-confessional Research. Dr. Skydsgaard, on leave from the University of Copenhagen, where he is professor of dogmatics, on Feb. 1, 1960, started the special research work that has taken him to major European centers of Roman Catholicism, including a five-month stay in Rome.

In the United States he is scheduled to meet prominent Catholic and Protestant theologians throughout the country and visit students and faculty members at several of the nation's outstanding Catholic and Protestant seminaries and universities. He came to the United States to continue the LWF research work. His itinerary here is being arranged by the Department of Theological

Cooperation in the National Lutheran Council's Division of Lutheran World Federation Affairs.

The Danish theologian, who is known as a leading authority on differences in doctrine and practice between Protestantism and Catholicism, emphasized on his arrival in New York on Sept. 19 that his work and the object of the LWF Commission is not guided by "polemical, anti-Roman" feelings. "We are trying to conduct a very sober, scholarly study," he said, "attempting to get to the various points where we are divided." He said that if Protestants and Roman Catholics "do not try to start afresh" in attempting to unearth and understand their differences, "we will go no step further; we will come to the Day of Judgment and be in the same place."

*Chicago.*—A Lutheran editor who is a colonel in the chaplain branch of the U. S. Army Reserve has reported for an extended tour of active duty on Oct. 1. He is the Rev. Alfred P. Klausler, editor of the *Walther League Messenger*, monthly youth publication of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Mr. Klausler is command chaplain of the 322d Logistical Command, a Chicago-based reserve unit, which has been called up in the national defense mobilization ordered by President Kennedy. While the length of his duty is uncertain, indications are that it will be for a minimum of a year.

In addition to serving as editor of the *Walther League Messenger*, a post he has held for 15 years, Chaplain Klausler has also been executive secretary and treasurer of the Associated Church Press and assistant pastor of St. Philip Lutheran Church in Chicago.

*Winnipeg, Manitoba, Can.*—Twenty-two representatives from Lutheran churches across Canada assembled here for continuation of Lutheran doctrinal discussions looking toward pulpit and altar fellowship in Canada.

Representatives of the several Lutheran

bodies in Canada have gathered annually in recent years for the discussion sessions. Talks in 1960 and also this year centered in Article VII of the Augsburg Confession: "Also they teach that one holy Church is to continue forever. The Church is the congregation of saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered. And to the true unity of the Church, it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments. Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rights or ceremonies, instituted by man, should be everywhere alike."

Confining discussions to "the Sacraments we administer," the group expressed acceptance of 11 general theses, including sections on Baptism and the Lord's Supper. It was decided to continue discussions on the same theme at next year's meeting before issuing any statement on the subject. In 1960 the assembly adopted and released a seven-point statement on "the Gospel we preach."

The following took part in the Sept. 6—7 discussions:

The American Lutheran Church — Dr. Karl Holfeld, president; Dr. G. O. Evenson, the Rev. A. Husted-Christensen, the Rev. A. N. Morck, the Rev. W. K. Raths, the Rev. W. E. Riekert, Prof. T. P. Solem.

Augustana Lutheran Church — Dr. Otto A. Olson, president; Prof. Harold Floreen, the Rev. Donald W. Sjoberg.

Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod — Alberta-British Columbia District: the Rev. Alfred Miller, president; the Rev. Edward Fox. Manitoba-Saskatchewan District: the Rev. L. W. Koehler, president; the Rev. A. E. Koslowsky, the Rev. Walter Ritter. Ontario District: the Rev. C. H. Neuhaus.

United Lutheran Church in America — Canada Synod: Dr. A. F. Buehlow, Dr. C. R.

Cronmiller, Dr. U. S. Leupold. Nova Scotia Synod: the Rev. Clifton L. Monk. Western Canada Synod: Prof. Walter Freitag.

Lutheran Church — Canada — the Rev. F. A. Schole, president.

Re-elected to serve on the arrangements committee for 1962 were Dr. Holfeld, chairman; Dr. Olson, secretary; Mr. Koehler and Dr. Earl J. Treusch, executive director of the Canadian Lutheran Council.

*Eisenach, (East) Germany.*—The Reformation season brings an increased flow of tourists and pilgrims to this small Soviet Zone city where as an adolescent student Martin Luther lived and sang in the streets to earn his daily bread. During 1960 some 37,000 visited Eisenach's Luther House, which contains the rooms where the young Reformer-to-be stayed under the motherly care and guidance of Ursula Cotta. He occupied the two rooms for three years, beginning in 1498, when he was 15.

In the past five years Luther House has had 158,500 visitors — an average of 31,700 annually. Among other popular "Luther places" here is the famed Wartburg Castle, where the Reformer was kept in safety by the Elector of Saxony after he refused to retract some of his teachings at the Diet (parliament) of Worms.

Luther House now belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Thuringia. Besides Luther's rooms, it contains, as a tribute to "the founder of the Evangelical ministry," a display showing the public influence of the Protestant parsonage across the generations. The exhibition, whose objects are constantly being changed, was originally set up at Wittenberg. During the war it was moved to the Hainstein and in 1956 to Eisenach. Since 1937 it has been cared for by the same person, *Diakon* Hans Trummer.