

# CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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# Editorial ✠

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## "A PASSIONATE LOVE FOR THE TRUTH"

In this issue Pastor Herbert Lindemann discusses the characteristics of the scholarly pastor. The pastor-scholar, he maintains, "should have some acquaintance with and sympathy for the attitudes, objectives, and methods generally accepted among scholars." What is the one quality of scholarship which, above all others, should characterize the pastor? Pastor Lindemann answers: "Honesty: a passionate love for the truth, a rigorous elimination of all prejudice, illusion, and old wives' tales, a willingness to investigate and then to accept the factual results of the investigation, however unpalatable these may be." That perceptive observation happily provides a point of unification for the articles in this issue.

An arena in which all Christians today are under obligation to practice strict honesty — "a passionate love for the truth, a rigorous elimination of all prejudice" — is the forum of ecumenism. Who has felt that obligation more keenly in recent years than those Lutherans who attended the sessions of the Second Vatican Council? Carl Meyer's article reflects the efforts of one Lutheran observer at Rome to listen with an open mind to what the council was saying to non-Roman Catholics and to provide an analysis of its statements for those of us who were not there. His report will be of interest to the Lutheran pastor-scholar who is determined to be both informed and honest in what he says about the Roman Catholic Church in this year of the 450th anniversary of the Lutheran Reformation.

The *Documentation* section of this issue presents the two documents recently prepared and issued by the Commission on Theology and Church Relations of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. In the historical preface to the first of these documents ("A Lutheran Stance Toward Contemporary Biblical Studies") the CTCR notes that a "crass theological liberalism" was in the past associated with the use of the historical-critical method of Bible study. This explains the negative attitude which formerly prevailed within the conservative branches of Christendom toward the historical-critical approach to the Scriptures. The "Stance" document, however, frankly recognizes that the liberal presuppositions and conclusions of former generations of practitioners of historical-critical methodology are not necessarily inherent in the methodology itself. In fact, current advocates of that methodology frequently openly repudiate the "crass theological liberalism" and the untenable presuppositions of earlier historical critics. The pastor-scholar whose seminary training dates to the era when the conservative churches were of necessity repudiating the liberalism of historical criticism will appreciate both the reminder and the challenge which are built into the CTCR's document: the reminder that historical-critical Bible study today differs from that of an earlier generation and the challenge to evaluate anew the current uses of historical criticism in a spirit of honesty. To borrow Herbert Lindemann's terminology, the CTCR is asking today's Lutheran clergyman and Bible student to reevaluate contemporary Biblical

studies with the mind-set of a Christian scholar whose approach is characterized by "a passionate love for the truth, a vigorous elimination of all prejudice," and a willingness to accept the factual results of his investigations. In the study document on "The Witness of Jesus and Old Testament Authorship" the members of the CTCR provide a laudable example of the application of methods of contemporary Biblical studies to specific questions of Biblical interpretation and of isagogics.

Albert Glock's article on "The Study and Interpretation of the Old Testament" was, of course, prepared quite independently of the work of the CTCR which resulted in the "Stance" document. But it is interesting to read Professor Glock's article in the light of the CTCR'S document and to observe how the two frequently reinforce each other. Both, it will be observed, acknowledge an acquaintance with—if not an indebtedness to—the "Guiding Principles for the Interpretation of the Bible" as accepted by the 1949 Ecumenical Study Conference at Oxford, England. The careful reader will appreciate the scholarly restraint which characterizes Mr. Glock's approach, especially the reservations with which he proposes qualified answers to questions of Old Testament interpretation which at present can be answered only tentatively.

This issue of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY is dedicated to the pastor-scholar who embodies "a passionate love for the truth," particularly the man who knows and proclaims Jesus Christ as the incarnation of all truth, who says of Himself: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one comes to the Father, but by me."

WALTER WEGNER