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John Theodore Mueller

A Tribute

By RICHARD R. CAEMMERER

MY first acquaintance with Doctor John Theodore Mueller was that of a beginning student at Concordia Seminary, where I served also as his part-time secretary. Two first impressions have remained vivid through the years: his utter seriousness concerning the vocation of theological professor and a devotion to duty and application to the tasks in hand that seemed, to a schoolboy at least, almost fanatical in its steadiness. Those were the days of a small faculty in which every member had a series of administrative tasks to add to his classroom responsibility. He was secretary to the faculty, administrator of the library, and contributor to *Der Lutheraner* and this journal. The staggering output of labor at the desk, the formidable lists of projects, the array of manuscripts in work, the nationwide correspondence in theological and practical counseling, the program of scientific theological study (I remember typing the huge thesis for Xenia on the authorship of Job) — this was bewildering to the neophyte. But Doctor Mueller was kindly, a genial host and raconteur, ready to steer every beginner into the career of service; and a charming wife and five lively children helped to preserve the human touch.

In retrospect the most remarkable thing about this lifelong assiduity (a partial list of his output is attached) was that it never submerged the concern for people. Alongside of the scientific study and output were always projects pitched directly at the

people. Facile in both the English and German languages, he sought to bring to the people the theology of Scripture in their own tongue. Sundays were for preaching, in those years as assistant pastor in a local parish. As years went on Doctor Mueller's effectiveness as preacher became recognized all over the country. He was a mainstay of our radio station KFUE for many years. Part of his many-sidedness includes facility in verse — bilingual, no less — and always of a lucid, warm, edifying variety. The most dramatic display of this concern for people is that in days when his contemporaries would look about for lesser loads, and even since the death of his helpmate and companion Mrs. Adeline Mueller, he has become vacancy preacher of a local parish which had suffered through long illness of its pastor, and has produced a revitalization talked about by the members.

As a professor Doctor Mueller has been of the classic type, concerned in first place with both exegesis and dogmatics, but aware of the historical and practical also. Three sons in the parish ministry have kept his interest in the practical fields keen. Unexpected facets of concern have emerged — missions in Africa, the neo-fundamentalist renaissance. He loves to express himself in the categories familiar to Lutheran Confessions and orthodoxy, but he stays abreast of Brunner, Barth, Bultmann. He is known as an elder statesman by theologians of many denominations, and he

enjoys a birthday cake with youngsters from the current student body.

Forty years of service in one faculty tend to produce a legend, and Doctor Mueller's is in the making. His colleagues and students past and present join wholeheartedly in thanking our Lord for the prime factors in that image: unremitting labor; unswerving devotion to a theology always from Scripture, always by grace, always in Christ; unflagging concern for the people, the targets of our Gospel; and a good cheer, through the years, that is a lesson of faith to us all.

A SELECTION OF TRACTS AND BOOKS
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The Christian Fundamentals. New York: Ernst Kaufmann, 1926.

Faith Unshaken. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1926.

Five Minutes Daily with Luther. New York: Macmillan Co., 1926.

The Church at Corinth. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1928.

Luther's Large Catechism, with special paragraph heads and notes, a jubilee offering for the 400th anniversary of the original publication of Luther's Large Catechism, 1529—1929. Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, 1929.

Thy Kingdom Come. Outline for Mission Lectures. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1935.

Brightest Light for Darkest Africa. Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1936.

Great Missionaries to Africa. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941.

John Paton, Missionary to the New Hebrides. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1941.

Concordia New Testament with Notes (a revision). St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1942.

My Church and Others. St. Louis: Rudolph Volkening, 1945.

Concordia Bible with Notes. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946.

Franz Pieper's Christliche Dogmatik, umgearbeitet und verkuerzt, in einem Band. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946. (Ten thousand copies of this condensed dogmatics were given to German pastors and theologians by the Missouri Synod after World War II.)

Great Missionaries to China. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1947.

A Brief History of the Origin, Development, and Work of the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America for Its Diamond Jubilee, 1872 to 1947. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1948.

Great Missionaries to India. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1952.

Luther's Reformation: Its Background and Blessings. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1952. (Translated into French.)

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tion). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1954.

Luther's Commentary on Genesis (abridged). Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1956.

Christian Dogmatics. Adapted from Francis Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik* though with many original contributions. Translated into Spanish, French, Portuguese, and partly into Chinese, Japanese, and Korean. St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1934.

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"Notes on the Papal Encyclical of Pius XI: *Lux Veritatis*," CTM, III (March 1932), 161—166.

"Luther or Calvin" (German), CTM, IV (May 1933), 255—264.

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"The 'Other Martin' and His Significance for Lutheran Theologians in America" (German), CTM, VII (September 1936), 661—670.

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"Notes on Christ's Descent into Hell," CTM, XVIII (August 1947), 610—617.

"St. Paul's *Usus Practicus* of Holy Baptism," CTM, XIX (June 1948), 417—439.

"Notes on Luther's Conception of the Word of God as the Means of Grace," CTM, XX (August 1949), 580—600.

"The Issue Involved in the Lutheran Rejection of Consubstantiation," CTM, (August 1950), 602—605.

"Brief Studies: Notes on the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Italy," CTM, XXII (February 1951), 129—133.

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"The Concept of God in Luther and the Lutheran Confessions," CTM, XXVI (January 1955), 1—16.