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“New Translations of the New Testament.”

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In a recent notice of Moffatt's new translation of the New Testament (THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, Vol. 3, 323 ff.) we ventured the suggestion that all these modern efforts to re-English the New Testament have a direct value only for professional men to whom the Bible is the tool of their craft, so to speak. Even these will have to use the new renderings with caution, always measuring them against the Greek original, the same as scholars must now do when ascertaining the adequacy of a rendering in the King James Version. The mere fact that the recent renderings are new, that they embody the respectable results of textual criticism, and enlist the increased knowledge of Greek that has become available through modern philology, does not put these renderings in a privileged class, does not confer on them the dignity of a *norma normans*, does not render them infallible. Every translation, no matter how apt it is, will be only *norma normata* from the dogmatic viewpoint. Caution in the use of the new versions, moreover, is necessary also for the reason that every translation, as a whole, is virtually a commentary, and in difficult passages, where the translation is almost a paraphrase, it becomes distinctly and consciously an interpretative effort. Now, each one of the new translations is the work of a single individual, not, as in the case, for instance, of the translation of 1611, the work of a number of men and the result of many conferences with their exchange and critical weighing of varying opinions. Objectivity in intellectual pursuits is a consummation devoutly to be wished for, but it is more than questionable whether it is ever attained. Absolute objectivity seems to be beyond the power of any human being. In any discriminating device from among a number of possibilities the deliberative operation of the mind is pushed into its goal and crystallizes in a decision through some subjective element that appeals to the author more than any other. This subjective element may be, and frequently is, congruent with an objective fact.

St. John's Church in Catawba Co., N. C., One Hundred and Twenty-Five Years Old.

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(Continued.)

II. Joins Tennessee Synod.

At first St. John's Church belonged to no ecclesiastical body; there was none anywhere in the South with which it could have affiliated. The first attempt to bring the various scattered German churches into any kind of an ecclesiastical union was made in South Carolina on November 13, 1787. (See Rev. Dr. Hazelius's *Hist. of the American Luth. Church*, pp. 118—121.) This organization was made up of both Lutheran and German Reformed ministers, together with lay delegates from both denominations, and bore the all-embracing names of *Corpus Evangelicum* and *Unio Ecclesiastica* — you may take your choice! (Two denominations — two names!) The constitution of this *Corpus*, signed by three Lutheran and by two Reformed ministers and fourteen delegates, is a wonderful document. Art. II states that "it is not to be understood that any member of either confession should forsake his confession, but that Lutherans and Reformed . . . who have hitherto united in the attendance on worship shall continue to enjoy the same rights and privileges, without the least reproach in consequence of their respective confessions"; and yet Art. III says: "Under the general superintendence of this directory all affairs relating to churches shall be judged and regulated; as, for instance, the reception and dismissal of preachers, their election, examination, ordination, and induction, the establishment and regulation of churches and schools"! Imagine Reformed ministers examining a young man to see whether he was well enough indoctrinated to become a pastor in the Lutheran Church and then

helping to ordain him! And worse still, imagine Lutheran ministers doing that in the case of some young man who wanted to become a pastor in the Reformed Church! Of course, it may have been of advantage to the young man; if he failed to make the one, he still might make the other denomination! Art. VIII: "Wherever the major part of the members of a congregation should belong to the Reformed Church, such liturgy, formula, and catechism are to be used as the Reformed Church in the Palatinate or Switzerland makes use of; but where the divine service has hitherto been performed according to the ceremonies of the Lutheran Church, the Wurttemberg or Halle formula shall be adopted. The Marburg hymn-book, in its second edition, remains in use in our churches of both confessions."(!) Space forbids further quotation from this interesting and accommodating constitution. The modern Lutheran with unionistic tendencies might study it with benefit, both with regard to its contents and its results — the *Unio Ecclesiastica* soon ceased to exist! It is a Utopian dream to expect a union of all denominations in this world, and every attempt to effect a union of this kind must finally fail. As regards the results of this *Corpus Evangelicum*, Dr. G. D. Bernheim (*Hist. of the Luth. Church in the Carolinas*) says that by 1803 "prose-lyting sects were only too industriously engaged in gathering the scattered members of our churches into their folds, and some once flourishing German congregations became irretrievably lost to the Church of their fathers. The only survivor of the *Corpus Evangelicum* was the Rev. Frederick Joseph Wallern; . . . and as far as the German Reformed Church is concerned, it had then almost ceased to exist." (p. 360.)

The next attempt to form an ecclesiastical body of the German Lutherans of the South was made in North Carolina. It was a nearer approach to a truly Lutheran body; none but pastors of Lutheran churches belonged to it, and the Augsburg Confession was its doctrinal basis. The name of this organization is The North Carolina Synod, the third oldest synod in America, formed in May, 1803, by four ministers of North Carolina.

St. John's first synodical connection was with this North Carolina Synod. It remained in this synod until 1820, when the Tennessee Synod was formed, although, most likely, it did not join the Tennessee Synod until 1824, as we shall attempt to show a little later.

Here we naturally ask this question, Why did St. John's withdraw from the North Carolina Synod? The answer is, To save

itself from the doctrinal shipwreck toward which the North Carolina Synod was rapidly steering. The North Carolina Synod had not begun on any too firm a Lutheran doctrinal foundation. But if the foundation was not rightly laid, the superstructure which was being erected on that uncertain foundation was even more dangerous for the faith of those who might make their spiritual home within its walls.

In 1810 the North Carolina Synod met in session at Organ Church, Rowan County, N. C. At this meeting one G. Schober was ordained and at once elected secretary of the synod. This man Schober was a member of the Moravian Church and continued to be a member of that Church all his life, although he was here ordained by Lutheran pastors to be the pastor of Lutheran congregations — and was their pastor for a number of years. That was sowing the evil seed, and those who were sowing it should have known what the harvest would be.

During the sessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of North Carolina, six years later (1816), it was resolved that the secretary (Rev. Schober still secretary!) "compile all the rules adopted by this synod and publish them in the English language." In accordance with this resolution the secretary, the next year, laid before the synod a manuscript compilation with the high-sounding title: "Comprehensive Account of the Rise and Progress of the Blessed Reformation of the Christian Church, by Dr. Martin Luther, actually begun on the 31st day of October, A. D. 1517; interspersed with views of his character and doctrine, extracted from his books; and how the Church, established by him, arrived and progressed in North Carolina — as also the Constitution and Rules of that Church, in North Carolina and adjoining States, as existing in October, 1817." If Rev. Schober ever thought that anybody would call his book by that name, he was mistaken, for it later went by the simple name "Luther." This book contains a translation of twenty-one articles of the Augsburg Confession, a translation which, according to Dr. B. M. Schmucker, was made, with all its omissions and notes, by Dr. E. L. Hazelius, who was a graduate of the Moravian Theological Seminary at Niesky and, for a time, classical teacher at Nazareth, a Moravian institution of learning in Pennsylvania, later professor at Hartwick Seminary, and finally at Gettysburg Seminary. In the Tenth Article the word *true* is omitted, "and the article is accompanied with a footnote which perverts the true sense and so modifies it as to make it acceptable to the various denominations; and so, too, in regard to

the Eleventh Article. Really, the translation is very defective." (Henkel, *Hist. of the Ev. Luth. Tenn. Synod.*) "Its general tone and tenor are compromising and unionistic, with a tendency to latitudinarianism and looseness in doctrine, rather ignoring the true Confessions of the Church and disparaging her distinctive features, with a view to a general fraternal union with the different denominations." (*Ibid.*)

On page 210 Rev. Schober says: "I have attentively examined the doctrine of the Episcopal Church and read many excellent authors of the Presbyterians, know the Methodist doctrine from their book *Portraiture of Methodism*, and am acquainted with the Baptist doctrine so far as they admit and adore Jesus the Savior. Among all those classes who worship Jesus as God I see nothing of importance to prevent a cordial union; and how happy it would be if all the churches could unite and send deputies to a general meeting of all denominations and there sink down upon the rock Jesus, at the same time leaving to each their peculiar mode and form," etc.

On pages 211 and 212 he says: "I think my sentiments are as orthodox and Calvinistical as need be, and yet I am a sort of speckled bird among my Calvinist brethren. I am a mighty good churchman, but pass among such as a Dissenter *in prunello*. On the other hand, the Dissenters, many of them I mean, think me defective, either in understanding or in conscience, for staying where I am. Well, there is a middle party, called the Methodists, but neither do my dimensions exactly fit them; I am somehow disqualified for claiming a full brotherhood with any party; but there are a few among all parties who bear with me and love me, and with this I must be content at present."

Of a hymn-book, called *Gemeinschaftliches Gesangbuch*, intended for the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, published by Scheafer and Maud, of Baltimore, he says in his "Luther" book: "This meritorious undertaking paves the way to universal harmony, union, and love among all our Lutheran and Reformed Churches, removing all the obstacles which hitherto prevented that happy effect, and establishes a uniformity in that part of divine worship which cannot fail to be highly gratifying to all those who consider brotherly love an indispensable attribute of Christianity."

The secretary of a Lutheran synod writing such stuff! A Lutheran synod becoming responsible for the publication and dissemination of such a work as that; for "an amount of money sufficient to pay for printing and binding 1,500 copies of the work,

at a cost of 75 cents a copy, was taken out of the treasury"! It takes no great stretch of imagination to see where the North Carolina Synod was headed for.

If the imagination needs something more to see the un-Lutheran drift of the North Carolina Synod, then here it is. The records of this same meeting of the synod which ordained Schober and elected him secretary (at Organ Church, in 1810), contain the following: "On motion of Rev. Philip Henkel it was resolved that, inasmuch as awakenings arise in our days by means of three days' preaching, and the like is to be wished among our brethren in the faith, a trial of such preaching be made, with the proviso that three ministers of our connection hold these meetings, to which also ministers of the Moravian and Reformed Churches, whether German or English, be welcomed; at each of these meetings the Communion is to be administered." The time was then set for holding these meetings in the various congregations. This means that right then and there the North Carolina Synod had begun to imitate Pietism-Methodism by trying to bring men into the church by the door of revivals and the "mourners' bench." Since that day it has been hard, at times and in some places, to tell by its practise whether the North Carolina Synod is a Lutheran synod, a Moravian brotherhood, or a Methodist conference; nor has the synod washed its garments entirely clean from these un-Lutheran stains even to this day.

However, in Staunton, Va., May 4, 1795, there was born a son of the Rev. Paul Henkel, who was destined, in God's hands, to stand like a tower of strength against this evil foe of unionism which was threatening to overwhelm the Lutheran Church in Western North Carolina and the surrounding territory. That son became the Rev. David Henkel, practically a self-made man, but, at the same time, the best-informed young man who had applied for ordination in the North Carolina Synod up to, and including, his day. He knew the Lutheran doctrine, and he had the courage to preach the Lutheran doctrine. On an occasion one of these religion-is-love pastors told the Rev. David Henkel that he was not preaching correct doctrine. He defended himself with a translation from his Latin *Book of Concord*. His opponent charged that he had made an incorrect translation. By chance he came across a German translation of the *Book of Concord*. This showed that his translation was correct. This opened the eyes of some laymen. The church council of Henkel's opponent met to discuss the matter with their pastor. One member of the council presented the *Book*

of *Concord* to his pastor and said, "We want to know whether you are going to preach according to this book in the future." The minister tried to evade the question. But the council would have no evasion. Finally he picked up the *Book of Concord*, and bringing it down on the table, said, "From this day henceforth I will not; it is nothing but a controversial book." Then the elder immediately picked up the book and brought it down on the table with the statement, "From this day henceforth you won't be our preacher!"

Soon there were two parties: the unionistic, new-measure party and the strict, confessional party. It wanted but a start, and the North Carolina Synod would have been torn asunder. The start came in form of a question about the time for holding the sessions in 1820. The end of it was that the liberal, unionistic, we-are-all-brethren element remained to carry on the work of the North Carolina Synod along its lines, while the strict, true, confessional Lutheran element organized the Tennessee Synod.

St. John's stood by the confessions of her Church. She did not want union without unity. She knew that she could not walk with those with whom she was not agreed. Therefore there was but one thing for her to do, and that she did — she withdrew from the North Carolina Synod.

However, there seems to be some reason to believe that she did not join the new Tennessee Synod till 1824. The records show that in 1814 the pastor, Philip Henkel, was called to the State of Tennessee and that the Rev. Daniel Moser became his successor. In 1824 the Tennessee Synod met in Keinadt's (Coyner's) Congregation in the Valley of Virginia. The records of that meeting contain the following: "... 2) Rev. Daniel Moser, Lincoln County" (part of which is now Catawba County), "North Carolina, having expressed a desire to be received into connection with this synod, and a petition, number six, signed by members of three of his congregations . . . , certifying that since 1820 neither they nor their minister belonged to any synod, and asking to be received into Synod, . . . it was resolved that he and his congregations be received, and that he be recognized as one of its pastors." Again, in the parochial report of this same session we find these words: "Rev. Daniel Moser, *since 1820*, baptized 350 infants and one adult and confirmed 121." At any rate, St. John's was a member of the Tennessee Synod in 1825, because the sessions of the Synod were held in St. John's, beginning on September 5, 1825.

(To be concluded.)