

Concordia Theological Monthly



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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THESES ON ESCHATOLOGY

In the July, 1950, issue of this journal, p. 527, we published the theses on the doctrine of the Church as they were adopted by the two Lutheran Synods in Australia, the U. E. L. C. A. and the E. L. C. A. The former is in fellowship with the American Lutheran Church, the latter in fellowship with The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. The *Australian Lutheran* of January 24, 1951, submits the theses on eschatology which have been adopted by the Joint Intersynodical Committee.

These theses are significant because of their soundly Biblical approach to eschatology. So frequently eschatology is thought of exclusively as a future event and is attached to dogmatics as a mere appendix. On the other hand, eschatology is frequently viewed in terms of the establishment of Christ's sovereign Lordship over all men; in short, the establishment of the Kingdom of God in this world. However, eschatology must be viewed as an "already— not yet."

The theses are prefaced by the word of 1 Pet. 1:3-5 and read as follows:

Preliminary Statements

a. The Gospel proclaims both present and future salvation and accordingly it kindles not only faith but also a firm and joyous hope in the hearts of those who become one with Christ through the Holy Spirit. The object of this hope is the return of Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead, and the glorious visible consummation of all those things which His people even now possess in faith as hidden spiritual realities; victory over sin, death and Satan, the redemption of the body, and the gift of eternal life.

The faith of a Christian is therefore essentially eschatological; though he sojourns between the time of Christ's First and Second Advent, he is continually living in the Last Times, as one who possesses even now what shall be his in eternity.

Luke 17:21; Matt. 12:28; 5:3, 10; John 3:3; 2 Cor. 5:17; Rom. 8:1; Gal. 2:20; 1 Cor. 15:58 ff.; John 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:7; 1 John 3:2; Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; Tit. 2:13; 2 Pet. 3:12-14; Heb. 9:28; 11:10.

On the other hand, all who reject the saving call of the Holy Spirit in the means of grace are not only deprived of the spiritual gifts of eternal life, but are even now under the condemnation of God and therefore without hope. John 3:18; Rom. 8:6; 2:8; Eph. 5:6; 2:12; John 3:36.

b. The basis and center of all doctrines, also of the doctrine of the Last Things, is the Person and Work of Jesus Christ, His Gospel, His atoning and reconciling death, His resurrection, His ascension, His gift of the Holy Spirit.

The Person and Work and Gospel of Jesus Christ are also the norm and criterion for the interpretation of all eschatological passages and figures in the Old and in the New Testament.

When dealing with eschatological matters, it is particularly necessary to practice a Christocentric approach; to adhere closely to the words of Scripture; to emphasize the clear doctrinal passages (*sedes doctrinae*); to interpret Scripture with Scripture; to read the Old Testament in the clear light of the New Testament; to maintain carefully the essential distinction between Law and Gospel.

Only by following these hermeneutical principles can we guard against false, enthusiastic interpretations or fantastic exploitations of prophetic passages, as well as against becoming guilty of a legalistic and formalistic abuse of Holy Scripture or a secularization of the Christian hope. Such wrong interpretation or fantastic exploitations would build salvation on an earthly foundation and regard the eschatological passages as a mere catalogue and chronology of the Last Things.

c. Although the prophetic passages on the Last Things are also profitable for doctrine, nevertheless all interpretations of the eschatological passages of the Old Testament and New Testament must recognize certain inherent limitations. We have our Christian hope in faith and as yet sight is denied to us; we know in part, but not fully; much God keeps hidden from us, because some prophecies on the Last Things are not yet fulfilled and/or the phenomena and events with which they deal are still in process of development; many of these prophetic passages are expressed in figurative language. A theology of the Last Things must therefore avoid a preconceived, unscriptural approach and not endeavor to interfere with the sovereign freedom of God, who Himself will fulfill His prophecies in His own way and time.

Therefore, a detailed interpretation and application of prophetic passages on the Last Things is not always possible, and no interpretation of all parts of the prophecy of the Last Things can be made binding upon Christians. When interpreting such passages, special caution and mutual patience must be practiced, always providing that the inviolate authority of the Scriptures and of all doctrines revealed in them in clear words is upheld and the central importance of the doctrine of justification is acknowledged and there is the readiness to fight for these two principles of the Reformation with spiritual weapons against all falsification and weakening, and thus the true peace of the Church is preserved.

d. The correct doctrine of the Last Things is of great importance for the life and work of the Church; it leads to sober-mindedness, patience in hope, and sound Scriptural practice; it counteracts false aims, enthusiastic expectations, and wrong practice. Those who have the Christian hope expect the battle between the true Church and the godless world to continue to the end of time; they are prepared for the most fearful temptations and tribulations as the end draws nigh and wait with yearning for the blessed Last Day, the return of the Lord, and the perfect life in eternal communion with God. Meanwhile, they strive to prepare men for the world to come by the preaching of the pure Gospel.

Theses

1. We believe:

a. That Christ will at the Last Day return visibly and in glory to judge the quick and the dead in righteousness, Acts 1:11; Acts 10:42; Acts 17:31; John 5:27; 2 Cor. 5:10; Jude 14:15; Rev. 1:7;

b. That He will raise all the dead, John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15; 1 Cor. 15:12 ff.; Luke 20:37, 38; 1 Thess. 4:14;

c. That He will give to the godly and elect eternal life and everlasting joy, John 5:29; 6:40; 10:28; 1 John 2:25; 1 Peter 1:3-5; Psalm 16:11; John 17:24;

d. That He will condemn ungodly men and the devils to be in torments without end, Matt. 10:28; 25:46; Mark 9:43-48; John 5:29; Jude 6; Rev. 20:10; 21:8; Isa. 66:24; Matt. 8:12;

e. And that, at Christ's return to judgment at the Last Day, this present universe will come to an end, Matt. 24:3, 14; 13:39; 1 Cor. 15:24; 2 Peter 3:10; Matt. 5:18; Luke 21:33; 2 Peter 3:7-13.

Cf. also Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:9; 1 Thess. 4:13-18. Augsburg Confession, Art. XVII; Catechimus Minor, Art. II and III.

2. The Scriptures clearly teach, and we teach accordingly:

a. That the kingdom of Christ on earth will remain under the cross (Apology VII—VIII, 18—19, Cat. Major, Pars. III, 65—67) until the end of the world, that is, the Church on earth will always be the Church militant and have the form of a servant, Acts 14:22; John 16:33; 18:36; Luke 9:23; 14:27; 17:20-37; 18:8; Matt. 10:22; 1 Tim. 4:1 ff.; 2 Tim. 3:1 ff.; therefore, there is no clear Word of Scripture for the teaching that before the end of the world the Church will enjoy a season of special prosperity;

b. That the second visible coming of the Lord will be His final advent, His coming to judge the quick and the dead, Matt. 24:29, 30; 25:31 ff.; 2 Tim. 4:1; 2 Thess. 2:8; Heb. 9:27, 28; Cat. Minor, Art. II; Cat. Major, Pars. II, 25, 31;

c. And that the time of the Last Day is and will remain unknown until the Lord's coming to judgment, Matt. 24:42; 25:13; Mark 13:32, 37; Acts 1:7.

3. With the Augsburg Confession (Art. XVII, 5), we reject every type of millennialism or chiliasm, which teaches that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the Church over the world.

4. Rev. 20, which is the chief passage adduced for chiliastic teaching, dare not be interpreted so as to contradict other clear passages dealing with eschatology. The question whether the "thousand years" of Rev. 20 designate one thousand ordinary years, or whether this term designates a period known to God only and fixed by Him, is not divisive of church fellowship. No interpretation of these "thousand years" dare be given contrary to the analogy of faith.

5. On the basis of such Scripture passages as John 5:28 and 6:39, 40, we teach the resurrection of all the dead, both the godly and the ungodly, on the Last Day. There is no passage in Scripture sufficiently clear to warrant the teaching (*publica doctrina*) that there will be a physical resurrection of martyrs prior to Christ's coming to judgment. Any interpretation of Rev. 20:4-6 must be in keeping with relevant clear passages of Scripture.

6. a. We believe that since God wants all men to be saved (1 Tim. 2:4) and, because of Rom. 11:1, God has not cast away "His people" and desires also all the descendants, all Jews, to be saved (Rom. 11:15);

b. In view of Rom. 11:25, 26, we admit the possibility that a greater number of Jews may be converted in the last times; however, there is no stringent Scriptural proof to entitle this view to become the teaching (*publica doctrina*) of the Church;

c. The expectation that a time will come when all descendants of Abraham on earth, all the Jews, will be converted to Christianity and thus be saved has no foundation in Scripture;

d. We declare it to be the bounden duty of the Church to protest against persecution of the Jews, to proclaim the Gospel also to the Jews and to pray for them with the Church of all ages, that God and our Lord may take away the veil from their hearts that also they may acknowledge Jesus Christ our Lord.

7. (A statement on the teaching of Scripture concerning the Anti-christ will, as indicated above, be made later.)

On behalf of the Joint Intersynodical Committees —
S. P. Hebart, Secretary, U. E. L. C. A.; F. J. H. Blaes,
Secretary, E. L. C. A.

The Australian Lutheran, January 24, 1951

GREEK MEETS GREEK

"A study of the Greek New Testament is a delight to every lover of the Word of God. But to the preacher such a study is both a delight and a source of nourishment. What a strange thrill there is in discovering new light breaking forth from the Sacred Scriptures! There is hardly a chapter in the New Testament that does not flash with an added glory when it is studied in the light of recent archaeological discoveries." This is the conclusion reached by the Rev. Richard M. L. Waugh in an article titled "The Preacher and His Greek New Testament" and published in *Religion in Life* (spring number). The article is compelling evidence that the author descended deep down into the mine of God's Word and came up with nugget after nugget of pure linguistic gold. Many of his findings are such as we have not noted elsewhere in similar studies of the New Testament text. Rev. Waugh has a highly developed nose for detecting the significance of prepositions in compound verbs without becoming a victim of prosaic and indefensible literalism.

The title of Rev. Waugh's article raises the question: "Does a preacher in this day and age still need to read and consult his Greek New Testament?" To this question it is easy enough to counter: "I don't see why he should. Don't we have wholly adequate translations of the Greek New Testament—interlinear and polyglot, literal and paraphrastic, ancient and Elizabethan and modern, authorized and non-authorized, Protestant and Catholic? And when we get into difficulties, don't we have such good commentaries as the ICC, Lenski, *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, Moffatt, Barnes' *Notes*, and others? And those of us—their number is fast diminishing—who still know German, don't we have access to Meyer, the *Handbuch*, and *Neues Testament Deutsch*? And if it's a case of merely checking on a word or phrase, why not use the word studies prepared by Vincent and Robertson? And besides, what time do I have to read and consult the Greek New Testament? I must preach and teach and 'commit' (attend committee meetings) and cut stencils and go on a hike with the juniors and visit my sick and look after the erring and follow up mission opportunities and marry and bury people and take care of countless other matters. It's all right for others to do it, they have the gifts and the time for it, but, Brother, don't look at me!"

Now, it is fortunate that the Word of God "is not bound," as St. Paul assures us in 2 Tim. 2:9. It is not bound within prison walls. Nor is it bound to one language, to one people, to one country, to one age, and to one culture. It is a book which can be and has been translated into

hundreds of languages. It is a book whose words throb with life and truth regardless of the language in which it is read. And nowhere in the entire New Testament is there a divine imperative directing preachers of the Word to read and study the New Testament in the original Greek. And yet . . .

Yes, there is that inescapable and troublesome "and yet," which so often in our daily dialectic makes for insecurity of thought and a restive conscience. The fact is, we can, by reading and consulting the Greek New Testament, do a better job of interpreting the New Testament, we can get a good bit closer to the divinely intended sense, we can get a bit closer to the Spirit hovering over and in His sacred words, hear His gentle voice—soft as the breath of even—whispering into our hearts His deepest thoughts. Our relations overseas have taught Americans—at last—that communicating through interpreters is a workable but not wholly satisfactory arrangement and that we had better begin seriously to study German, French, Russian, Swedish, Japanese, Chinese, and other foreign languages. And so they are blessed indeed who can read and consult Mark and Paul and the rest of them without the assistance of an intervening interpreter—a translation.

I submit, in conclusion, for a little thought the observations made by A. T. Robertson in the very last paragraph of his monumental *Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (4th edition, 1923, pp. 1430—31):

"Jesus noticed small points of language (ἰῶτα ἐν ἧ μίᾳ κεραία, Mt. 5, 18) though we have no documents from His pen. The preacher can be accurate in details and have all the more power in his speech. Τὰ ῥήματα αὐτοῦ ἐγὼ λελάληκα ὑμῖν πνεῦμά ἐστιν καὶ ζωὴ ἐστιν (John 6, 63). All the people still hang on to the words of Jesus, listening (ἐξεκρόματο αὐτοῦ ἀκούων, Lk. 19, 48) for hope and guidance in a world of disorder and despair. The world will find the way out if it follows the leadership of Jesus. I could not close these three years of further toil on this grammar without this tribute from my heart to the Master, who makes all work worth while and who challenges us all to share His own work while it is day, before the night comes when no one can go on with his work (ἐργάζεσθαι, John 9, 4)." P. M. B.

THE PROGRAM OF THE 1952 ASSEMBLY OF THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION

Special commissions, national committees, and study groups are presently at work in preparing the program for the second assembly of the Lutheran World Federation to be held at Hannover, Germany, in 1952. The following theme and outline has been agreed upon:

THE LIVING WORD IN A RESPONSIBLE CHURCH
 DAS LEBENDIGE WORT IN EINER VERANTWORTLICHEN KIRCHE

I. *Theology*

The Living Word *creates* and *sustains* the Church
 Das Evangelium *schaft* und *erhaelt* die Kirche

II. *World Missions*

The Living Word *calls* the Nations to God
 Das Evangelium *ruft* die Voelker zu Gott

III. *Inner Missions*

The Living Word *permeates* the Whole of Society
 Das Evangelium *durchsetzt* das gesamte oeffentliche Leben

IV. *Evangelism and Stewardship*

The Living Word *moves* the Congregation to Fullness of Service
 Das Evangelium *erweckt* die Gemeinde zu Dienst und Zeugnis

V. *Students and Youth*

The Living Word *equips* Youth for the Complete Life
 Das Evangelium *weist* der Jugend den Weg

VI. *Women of the Church*

The Living Word *gives* Woman her Place in Church and Society
 Das Evangelium *gibt* der Frau Verantwortung in Kirche und
 Gemeinschaft

At the Lund meeting in 1948 the Assembly was divided into four sections. At Hannover, however, the group will be divided into six sections.

Commission I is currently at work in preparing the theological material to be submitted to the section on Theology and is charged with the responsibility of preparing a statement of what the Lutheran churches confess, teach, preach, and publish. Professor Regin Prenter is chairman of this commission. He will be assisted by such men as Professors Ragnar Bring of Lund, E. Schlink of Heidelberg, W. Elert of Erlangen, George Aus of St. Paul, H. Sasse of North Adelaide, E. Sommerlath of Leipzig, and George Merz of Neuendettelsau.

Section II will concern itself chiefly with discussing the responsibility of the Lutheran churches in the field of World Missions. At present Dr. F. A. Schioltz of the U. S. A. National Committee is directing the study. He is assisted by Dr. H. Meyer of India, Dr. C. Ihmels of Leipzig, and Lic. W. Schilberg of Neuendettelsau.

Section III will study the area of Inner Missions, which in European terminology denotes welfare service in its specific and narrow sense, particularly the various social welfare agencies, charitable institutions, and the refugee service. This section is sponsored by the German

National Committee, which will present its findings on the responsibility of the Lutheran churches for "the least of these our brethren."

The U.S. Committee has taken the sponsorship for preparing the materials for Section IV, which will concern itself with Evangelism and Stewardship. It will study the entire program of evangelism and take cognizance of the areas of preaching, teaching methods, congregational organization, Bible study, Sunday school and day school methods, community canvass, in short, the program as it is related to Home Missions. The anticipated outcome of this section is to make relevant the theme "The living Word must end in deed as well as word if the Lutheran Church is to be a responsible Church."

Section V on Student and Youth Work will attempt to implement a program which will lead to greater interest in youth and students to build the church of tomorrow. Doctors M. Wee of Carthage, Ill., Gould Wickey of Washington, S. P. Hebart of Australia, the Rev. Savarimuthi of India, who recently was on a tour in America, are a few of the members of the commission who will prepare this study.

A commission made up primarily of women, e. g., Frau Dr. A. Nopitsch of Nuernberg, will prepare the study materials to be taken up by Section VI and will be sponsored and financed by the German National Committee. In all there are fifteen commissions at work at present. In addition to the areas mentioned, these commissions are respectively studying such problems as ecumenical relations, international affairs, publications, publicity.

The *Revised Handbook* from which we have taken the above information places the entire program envisioned for 1952 under the Savior's prayer "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth," which Luther paraphrased so beautifully as follows: "The world is conquered by the Word, and by the Word the Church is served and rebuilt." If the theme "The Living Word in a Responsible Church" is translated into action, the Lutheran World Federation will prove to be an effective instrument in strengthening the Lutheran Church and in widening the borders of Christ's kingdom. F. E. M.

THE ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT AND SOUTHERN BAPTISTS

Dr. G. Kearnie Keegan, secretary of the department of student work, Baptist Sunday School Board, Nashville, Tenn., feels himself constrained by the present-day emphasis on ecumenicity and by the fact that "Southern Baptists as a major denomination are not organically connected with these movements" to clarify the attitude and principles of his denomination which keep it apart from ecumenical co-operation.

The chief hindrance in the way is the doctrine of the autonomy and independence of the local church. While, as he says, local Baptist churches voluntarily band themselves together in district associations, State convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention, they nevertheless preserve the centrality and autonomy of the local church through safeguards.

Messengers elected by the local churches to represent them have no delegated authority that would make any action taken by them binding upon the local churches which they represent. The Southern Baptist Convention, by the nature of its organization, constitution, and by-laws, is powerless to join any ecumenical movement and speak authoritatively for the local churches. The same is true of the State convention and associations. Baptists, of course, as he admits, have the right and privilege as individuals and local churches to co-operate with any worthwhile Christian movement, but with the clear understanding that they act as individuals or a single unit and are not presuming to speak for other Baptists.

That, of course, does not mean that there are no Christians outside Southern Baptist ranks: "but," writes Dr. Keegan, "we would state emphatically and unequivocally that the genius of our co-operative effort, based on what we believe to be the inspired Word of God, leaves no other alternative than to maintain our present position. Our first responsibility is to do our own job well."

The writer closes his article with an appealing paragraph which betrays no rancor, but shows a kind and appreciative attitude toward those who believe that they must engage in ecumenicity. He writes: "Beyond a doubt, we can anticipate a tidal wave of ecumenical pressure to roll over the campuses in the near future. These friends who espouse this movement are sincere in their belief that this is the answer to Christendom's dire need in this dark hour. Certainly, no one will be critical of their honest efforts. Many will co-operate on a fraternal basis in areas that in no wise call for compromise of convictions or principles. All will be quick to recognize the danger of becoming involved in 'everybody's business' and letting our specific assignment go unattended. In the face of this anticipated trend we pledge you our prayers and give you this loving admonition: 'Stand firm in the faith.' Keep our young people anchored in the local church and be an example in love, compassion, understanding, courtesy, humility, and every other Christlike characteristic."

The article shows the basic difference on the question of ecumenicity between Southern Baptists and The Lutheran Church—Missouri

Synod. In recent months these two denominations have repeatedly been placed in juxtaposition as equally opposing ecumenical endeavors. In reality, however, genuine Lutheranism is not opposed to any ecumenicity that is not at variance with Scripture. As its Confessions are truly ecumenical — a fact which Dr. F. Bente pointed out years ago — so also its doctrinal and ecclesiastical orientations in general. Southern Baptists, on the other hand, because of its undue stress on the autonomy of the local church, is by its very church polity separatistic. While Lutheranism is primarily interested in the acceptance and maintenance of ecumenical Christian doctrine, Southern Baptists subordinate doctrine to the supremacy of local church decision. Lutheranism, too, seeks to preserve the rights of the local congregation, but while considering ecumenical co-operation, it keeps in mind as its primary problem any possible denial of the divine truth, to which the local congregation is subject no less than is the synodical body. In short, Lutherans are not Southern Baptists on the point of congregational rights, nor are Southern Baptists Lutherans in their motivation of ecumenical avoidance. To Lutherans the problem involved in joining present-day ecumenical movements is not that of the centrality of the local church, but the question of causing confusion and giving offense by unionism. As earnestly as Christians must avoid a meretricious ecumenicity, just so earnestly they are to strive after the genuine Christian ecumenicity, which is Scriptural.

J. T. MUELLER

WE ARE CONFUSED

Under this heading "a Layman," in the *Lutheran Outlook* (March, 1951), writes an article which every Lutheran pastor ought to consider with prayerful, conscientious care.

The writer is confused, first, because there is no clear voice coming from the Church with regard to how matters pertaining to merger and union are progressing. He had read the theses, statements, and confessions of conferences and committees on union and is awaiting the logical result — action. He cannot see a valid reason why a closer-knit body cannot be obtained. The pew sees no difference in doctrine. Such are the writer's complaints. Since they are addressed to the churches connected with the NLC, it is up to these churches to inform their members on the progress of the union movement in this federation. But for all Lutheran church bodies in our country the rule applies: Let pastors be frank with their laymen and tell them precisely where the various synods in our country stand doctrinally so as to avoid confusion.

The writer, moreover, is confused "because there is so little clear voice from the pulpit these days." He says: "Scripture has something to say about the trumpets that give an uncertain sound. Some of our present day preaching reminds one of Paul's 'sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.' This is not just so much nostalgic ranting about 'the good old days.' I wish our preaching had made as much progress as our general life. . . . It is remarkable how much interest in religion is to be noted these days. Conversation between men (at least thinking men and women) will turn as quickly to religion and the affairs of the Church as not. It is a sad comment on our times that so much of this conversation shows signs of confusion in these days when our nation is stirred by the religious consciousness, when churches are often crowded, when people are listening for a clear sound of the trumpets of salvation. Yet they do not hear it. . . . Possibly one fault lies in the fact that Scripture so often is not the source of the material on which the sermon is based. We hear quotations from Barth *et alii* and everybody else except what the Bible has to say to the seeking heart." While the pastor must always listen to more or less of criticism of his preaching, let him earnestly ask himself whether that which he is preaching is the Word of God properly applied to the exigencies and needs of his hearers. Here is a challenge which no pastor can escape.

We pass over the charges of the writer that he is confused at the "different practices," the "disorder which prevails in some of our churches," and the "worldliness which is creeping into our church," to point out his final charge of "dual membership in church and lodge," at which, too, he is confused. He writes:

A matter of far more serious nature, which is alarming us, is the question of dual membership in church and lodge. In all the above matters as well as in this question there is a great deal of Scripture to point the way if the Church would only heed. Jesus once called attention to the fact that it is impossible to have two masters. Have modern conditions brought about such a great change that this is now possible? Hardly, for Jesus spoke for all times as well as eternity. So, in blunt words, you cannot be a Christian and a Mason at the same time. For how can a person confess his sins and unworthiness and ask God's forgiveness on Sunday and then some night of the same week don the white apron at some Masonic lodge and thereby proclaim his purity and sinlessness? On joining the Masons he was told that "the white apron is the emblem of innocence . . . more honorable than any other order that can be conferred upon you at this time or any other future period." Or how is it possible to confess on Sunday that Jesus

Christ is God's only Son and your Savior and during the week at lodge confess that you are yourself a son of God? Those who think they can, one would like to ask whom they think they are fooling. Surely not God, for He cannot be mocked.

I am well aware that the usual excuse offered by those who hold such dual membership is that it is for business reasons only. They tell us, and unfortunately many (including pastors) believe them, that one cannot advance very far in business or politics unless one is a Mason. What nonsense! One look at the business or political world will disclose a large number of Roman Catholics in high places. And everyone should be familiar with what the Roman Catholic Church has to say regarding the Masonic Lodge. How then can one explain the fact that these Catholics are up there? I personally have, speaking in all humility and with thanks to God, advanced a long way in the industrial world. In the course of years I have transacted a good deal of business with many people in the business world as well as government. Yet in all these years I cannot recall losing a single deal due to the lack of Masonic affiliations. So that excuse has always seemed rather phony to me. . . .

I have before me "The Official Monitor of the Grand Lodge Ancient Free and Accepted Masons." In it I find the questions that must be answered by the candidate before admission. There is asked: "Do you seriously declare upon your honor that, unbiased by friends and uninfluenced by mercenary motives, freely and voluntarily, you offer yourself a candidate for the mysteries of Masonry?" That then should be clear, the man has lied either to his pastor or to the lodge. You cannot serve two masters. And yet this thing goes on: Masons in churches, holding offices and piously using business as an alibi. Is there any wonder that we are confused?

J. T. MUELLER

A STATEMENT ON GAMBLING

The Senate Crime Investigating Committee, as is well known, found criminal and political corruption in our country to be so well organized and so widely rampant that the chairman of the Committee, Senator Estes Kefauver, was led to write in a report on the investigations: "We are dangerously close to the ruination point" (*Saturday Evening Post*, April 7).

How shall the Church react to this sad state of affairs in our national life? Certainly, the Church has no right to prescribe and dictate to government agencies what to do to curb and suppress crime and corruption. Nor may the Church, even in this social crisis, neglect for a moment the glorious task for which it exists, the proclamation of God's free forgiveness in Christ. Nor may the Church substitute for the preaching of the Gospel the promotion of an earthly kingdom of

law and justice. Nevertheless, the Church always has the right to express itself regarding moral conditions in the country. It has the right with prophetic voice to condemn vice and crime. It has the right and duty to warn its members against becoming embroiled in the ways of the world. As an example of what the Church can do by way of protest and condemnation of one form of public evil, we submit the following *Statement on Gambling* recently adopted by our New Orleans Pastoral Conference:

1. The term *gambling* ought not to be applied loosely to every instance of "taking a chance." The *gambling* to which this statement applies comprises four essentials:

- a. There is a chance to win an attractive prize.
- b. Only persons who lay out money are eligible to win the prize.
- c. The number of possible winners is fixed and limited. The number of people who can *try* to win is unfixed and unlimited.
- d. Here distinguish between *private* and *promoted* gambling: In the case of *private* gambling, the total amount invested in the attempt to win, becomes the prize of the winner. In the case of *promoted* gambling, the total amount invested in the attempt to win greatly exceeds the value of the prize itself. Thus somebody makes a profit.

2. Gambling is a *sin* against the Law of God, which says, "Thou shalt not covet," for the gambler is motivated, not by the God-pleasing desire to serve others, but rather by the overpowering desire to serve himself, to get the *most* for the *least*. It is the *greed* and *covetousness* of the sinful heart that makes gambling so *exciting* to the gambler and so *profitable* to the promoter.

3. We consider it a tragedy that gambling is so frequently promoted and practiced, without censure, on the ground that it is "for a good cause." We hold that the *goodness of a cause is never sufficient to justify the evil of the means* employed to attain it. This applies equally to:

a. Some officials and citizens of neighboring parishes [counties], who have tolerated gambling houses on the ground that they contribute toward keeping taxes low;

b. The City, approving gambling at the Fairgrounds Race Course, on the ground that it brings revenue to the City;

c. Civic groups, sponsoring festivals with gambling devices as a means of raising funds, protected by the cloak of "community service";

d. Churches, which sponsor and encourage raffles, and which make free use of other gambling devices, protected by the double cloak of "good cause" and "freedom of religion."

4. Far too high a price is paid when "good causes" are aided by

gambling. For gambling destroys the individual, makes havoc of the home, and is a deadly blight on the community.

5. We consider it a deplorable tragedy that children are so frequently employed to encourage gambling by the sale of raffle tickets. These children are learning from an early age to take gambling for granted, to see nothing harmful in it. We encourage thinking citizens of New Orleans to oppose this evil. Make a donation if you will, but refuse to accept the ticket.

6. If *public opinion* does not unite in condemning gambling wherever it is promoted and practiced, *laws* designed to curb it can neither be fairly written nor properly enforced. The real challenge and responsibility rests with all those in charge of training the youth—*parents, schools, and above all, the churches*. When these wholeheartedly unite in condemning gambling, *both by word and by example*, then and then only is there hope that in years to come we shall gradually be freed from this notorious blight on our community life.

P. M. B.

THE ORTHODOX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AND THE LODGE

In the *Presbyterian Guardian* of March 15, 1951, an important article dealing with the lodge appeared. This journal is the official organ of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the body which owes its origin to the dynamic leadership of the late Dr. J. Gresham Machen. The author of the article is Edward Wybenga, who wrote it in response to a request by the editor of the *Guardian*.

Mr. Wybenga points out that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has grappled with the lodge question since 1939; committees have been at work; their reports are available in the official proceedings. Endeavoring to condense the reports, Mr. Wybenga in the article before us treats the question What is Freemasonry? In a second article the question How should the Church deal with Masons? is to be considered. For the benefit of those who are not able to procure a copy of this number of the *Presbyterian Guardian*, I shall summarize the thoughts presented.

Masonry, says Mr. Wybenga, is the mother of all oath-bound secret societies; hence by characterizing it one gives a description of lodges in general. [Of course, caution must be exercised here to avoid committing an injustice. A.] Answering the question What is Freemasonry? Mr. Wybenga says: Freemasonry is a religion that conflicts with Christianity at a number of crucial points. That it is a religion is evident from "the character of its symbols, its religious ceremonies, prayers, oaths, and temples—all of which have religious significance," and from the frank admissions of its leaders who definitely assert this character of their order.

Its conflict with Christianity can be seen in the origin of its religion, which is "not the Bible, but man's mind." It can be established, furthermore, through Freemasonry's teaching on God, its "god being an all-inclusive deity." As to the Bible, it is simply "put on a par with the sacred writings of all religions." In the field of ethics, not the revelation of God in the Scriptures is made the final arbiter, but "human experience, both individual and racial, is the one final authority in morals" (quoted from Haywood, *Great Teachings of Masonry*, p. 39). Oaths, "violent and reckless," are demanded of the candidates concerning matters on which they have no knowledge, while according to the Christian religion an oath is a very sacred thing with which we may not trifle. The conflict is most sharp in the question of salvation. While Christianity teaches "salvation solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ," Masonry "is inclusive; it honors all religions as so many different ways to the one goal of salvation." On the question of brotherhood Masonry naturally ignores the special bond which binds believers in Jesus Christ together; its teaching on this subject is not that of the New Testament.

These are the points which Mr. Wybenga places before us. His article certainly proves that it is not only "narrow-minded Lutherans" among Protestants who oppose Masonry.

WM. ARNDT

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Weekly Protestant publications reported to have the largest circulation are the *Christian Advocate*, Methodist, with 315,000; *Signs of the Times*, Seventh Day Adventist, with 275,000; and the *Lutheran*, United Lutheran Church, with 100,000. Biweekly with circulation over 100,000 are *Presbyterian Life* with 400,000; the *Lutheran Witness* with 310,000. Monthly with circulations exceeding 100,000 are the *Christian Herald*, 400,000; *Royal Service* (Woman's Missionary Union, Southern Baptist Convention), 213,000; and the *Methodist Woman*, 210,000.

Miss Margaret Hills of the American Bible Society said in a recent report that at least one complete book of the Bible now exists in 1,034 of the world's languages and dialects, that the whole Bible has been published in 191 languages, a complete New Testament in 246 additional languages, and at least one book in 597 other languages or dialects.

The State Legislature of Iowa has received a measure providing for the teaching of the literature and history of religions, particularly of the Bible, in Iowa public schools. The measure, drafted by Dr. M.

Willard Lampe, director of the University of Iowa School of Religion, reads as follows: "Whereas the literature and history of the religions of the world are an important part of the record of the aspirations and struggles of the human races for better ways of human living; Whereas in particular the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, commonly called the Bible, are an important part of the moral and spiritual heritage of America in this State; Whereas a knowledge of the Bible and of the literature and history of the Jewish-Christian tradition generally is highly desirable for an understanding of our history as a nation and for an appreciation of our culture and ideals as a freedom-loving people, Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa: That the public schools be encouraged to include the literature and history of religions, and in particular the Bible, in their courses of study; That safeguards be established to make sure that all experiments and procedures in connection with this project shall be in accord with public sentiment and with standards of educational excellence so as to secure appropriateness in the readings and studyings of each age group and with the avoidance of sectarian indoctrination in all groups; and That the State Department of Public Instruction, in consultation with representative religious and educational leaders of the State as it may deem desirable, draw up and submit to local school boards recommendations for putting this act into effect."

Special committees of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern) and the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church announced a unanimous agreement in Atlanta, Ga., on a plan of union to be submitted to the governing bodies of both denominations in June. Under the proposed plan doctrinal standards, for the most part already accepted by both groups, would rest in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Large and Shorter Catechisms. The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in the United States would be the basis of government, worship, and discipline in the united Church.

Bishop Hugh L. Lamb of Philadelphia urged Catholics to "manifest more zeal for their faith in the winning of others to Christ. — In spite of its size the Catholic Church in recent years has not made the progress it should. A gain of 119,000 converts in the United States, and of 3,528 in this archdiocese — many of them by marriage — leaves much to be desired."

In a special two-day plenary session, Roman Catholic bishops of France mapped out plans to evangelize areas in France where religious life is at a low ebb.

The National Council of Churches has issued a report of a recent survey which shows that American church membership since 1926 has increased at a rate nearly double that of the country's population growth. Between 1926 and 1949 church membership went up 51.5 per cent while the population grew but an estimated 30 per cent. During the 23-year period Protestant groups added 16,954,322 members for a 56 per cent growth, Roman Catholics added 9,005,305 for a 48.4 per cent increase, and Jewish synagogues 918,758 for a 22.5 per cent gain. The total membership of the 54 tabulated religious bodies rose from 53,230,413 in 1926 to 80,682,575 in 1949.

Since 1948 the number of Methodist ministerial students has increased 47 per cent. At present the ten theological schools of the Methodist Church have an enrollment of 1,771 men. Three years ago these schools had an enrollment of 1,261. Approximately 1,200 Methodists are preparing for the ministry in other seminaries.

The removal of legal barriers and the urgent need for academic seminary training for Negro Baptist students have opened the doors to Negro students in three Southern Baptist theological seminaries: The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary at Fort Worth, Tex., and the Baptist Theological Seminary in New Orleans.

The Rev. Norman Weand of the English Department of Loyola University commended Roman Catholic writers for lifting Catholic literature to new heights. He pointed to such works as *The Greatest Story Ever Told*, *The Song of Bernadette*, *The Cardinal*, and *The Seven Storey Mountain* as representative of the high plain of modern Catholic literature. The Rev. Weand declared that a changed attitude toward Catholic literature exists in America today probably because outstanding Catholic writers are distinguished from others by their concept of man's nature. He added: "Writers as different as Daudel and Mauriac and Graham Greene or Evelyn Waugh hold the view that man is a created being with a supernatural destiny. They realize that Dostoevsky's view of reality as man's relations with God and Satan is the true one, that other types of 'realism' lead only to a fool's paradise."

A pro-Communist minority of native church workers has seized control of the Lutheran Church in China and has announced its intention to build a "Chinese people's independent Church," cut off from "the influence and relationship of imperialism." According to the National Lutheran Council report, the participants in the meeting adopted a

manifesto in which they described themselves as an "Enlarged Council" representing 90,000 Christians—the entire membership of the Lutheran Church in China. The "Enlarged Council" voted "to cast out all offices of the church that had been inherited from imperialism, to revise church constitutions which are colored with imperialism, and to change the church name which has come from foreign literature to a name that is truly Chinese." The new title of "Justification by Faith Association of the Church of Christ in China" was adopted. The new council adopted an eight-point "patriotic pledge," including the promise "to completely wipe out the friendliness to America, worship of America, or fear of America and in its place strongly to build up a hate-America, despise-America, and belittle-America attitude; and establish a concept of love of the fatherland and its people."

The Museum of Religious History at the Union Academy of Science in the Soviet Capital Moscow has opened two new anti-Vatican sections. One of the sections is devoted to "The History of the Papacy and the Inquisition," while the other deals with "The Vatican in the Service of Imperialism." 2,000 exhibits in the new sections will show "the connections between the Pope and Fascism" and demonstrate "the activities of the Vatican against the Soviet Union and the people's democracies."

According to an unofficial census of our 96 Senators, 85 of them are Protestants, 10 Roman Catholics, and one a Jew. The Protestant members include: 19 Methodists, 14 Presbyterians, 14 Episcopalians, 10 Baptists, 8 Congregationalists, 6 Disciples of Christ, 5 Lutherans, 3 Mormons, 3 Christian Scientists, 2 Quakers, and 1 Unitarian.

A bill has been introduced in the Nevada assembly requiring district court judges and clerks to attempt reconciliation between parties seeking a divorce. If the bill is approved, the district court clerks will have to issue a printed dissertation entitled "A Serious Talk About Your Welfare" to each person filing a complaint. The proposed form is to explain the evils of divorce and broken homes and suggests that those contemplating divorce should seek advice for their problems from a professional adviser, such as a marriage counselor, before going through with the divorce. Sponsors of the bill don't want Nevada to continue its divorce mill and believe the State has a moral obligation to try to remedy existing evils because Nevada's liberal divorce laws attract large numbers of people.