

Concordia Theological Monthly



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ARCHIVES

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH

At a meeting of the *Kirchlich-Theologische Arbeitsgemeinschaft* held in Hanover October 2 and 3, President Brunotte of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany submitted a series of theses on the general theme of co-ordinated efforts of the evangelical churches which are members of the Evangelical Church of Germany, commonly referred to as EKID. Two of these theses—number 12 and 13—deal with the unity of the Church. Because of their wider implications we are submitting them in English translation. They read as follows:

According to Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, no more is required for the unity of the Church than "consentire de doctrina evangelii." Other churches found the unity of the Church on the canonical laws of their respective organizations or on the hierarchy of their clergy or on Apostolic succession or on forms of religious worship. The churches of the Reformation regard unity of doctrine to be of essential importance for the unity of the Church. For them everything else is of secondary significance. Therefore the doctrinal character of the confessions in the churches of the Reformation is of supreme importance. Because of this factor, one can say of the empirical church: the confession to which it subscribes has the power to build the church; it constitutes the church. It gathers those congregations which have the same understanding of the Gospel and sets them off from such as teach otherwise. This statement does not contradict the self-evident statement that it is Christ Himself who, through the Word, founds the Church. The latter statement applies to the church which we believe, the former to the church which we establish and organize.

The concept "doctrine" ("doctrina") is not to be taken in too narrow a sense. It does not mean the skeletonlike scaffold of a purely conceptualized theological system. "Doctrina evangelii" includes rather the entire proclamation in the sermon, in the care of souls, and in education. It is not in the spirit of the Reformation to construct a contrast between proclamation and doctrine and to affirm the proclamation but to deny the doctrine. Sound proclamation exists only then in the evangelical church if this proclamation conforms to doctrine. But here, too, the mere teaching (proclamation) "in actu" is not sufficient. It is not of

first importance that the Word is taught (proclaimed). But it is of first importance that the Word is taught (proclaimed) in its truth and purity ("pura doctrina").

P. M. B.

MURDER AND THE PENALTY OF DEATH

This is the topic discussed from various points of view by sociological experts in the November issue of the *Annals* of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences. According to statistics submitted, the number of prisoners executed in the United States under civil authority from 1921 to 1950 shows a steady decrease. The average annual number of executions in this thirty-year period was 135. In 1950 it totaled 82, the lowest number in the three decades. One article, which traces trends in the use of capital punishment, concludes: "The trends in the use of the death penalty are solidly established in history. A study of them during the past 250 years can be summarized briefly: the over-all international trend is toward the progressive abolition of capital punishment" (p. 19). Other revealing statistics are these: total number of executions in 1930 to 1950 were 3,029. Of these, 1,356 (or 44.8 per cent) were white; 1,636 (or 54.0 per cent) were Negro; and 37 (or 1.2 per cent) were "other." One writer observes:

It is no exaggeration to say that, except for maintaining the traditional legal penalty for taking another's life, the society we live in almost reaches out to encourage murder. What is the commonest topic in the so-called comic books which children read? What is the focal event in the mystery stories sold by tens of millions annually? What is the very stock in trade of television and radio drama and, to a less extent, of film and stage "thrillers"? The gun is perhaps the commonest toy; a travesty of killing, the most popular form of play. "This will kill you" is a polite conversational cliché. "Drop dead!" is a devout injunction heard constantly. A psychologist studying our culture might fairly deduce that we are obsessed with the idea of sudden, violent, and retributive death.

Murder, of course, is the very essence of drama; book and play have always found dalliance with death a sure formula for profitable popularity. *But no generation prior to ours has taken so intimate or universal a role in foreshortening doom, in fact or by fantasy* [italics ours]. It would seem that the decreasing percentage of the population that is not actively engaged in killing is occupied a good part of the time in musing upon the murder

theme. The mind being the delicately suggestible mechanism it is, can we wonder that people so often carry into effect the violent action pattern that is so persistently entertained in thought? (P.26.)

It is not our intention from a typewriter chair to advise the state how best to deal with the problem of the ever-increasing number of murders, robbery, theft, rape, and a host of other sins committed against society. But the Church does have the right to warn the state that "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed" (Gen. 9:6), and that the State is "the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Rom. 13:4). It may be literally true that according to human standards crime does pay. It may also be true, according to statistics compiled by sociologists and criminologists, that punishment does not necessarily act as a deterrent to crime. It may also be true that our generation needs to be grateful that criminals are executed by electrocution or lethal gas or, in instances, by hanging, and that such methods of capital punishment as burning at the stake, boiling in oil or in water, the iron coffin, burying alive, breaking on the wheel, drawing and quartering, impaling, crushing, flaying, shooting, exposure to insects, poisoning, throwing to animals, stoning, drowning, torturing, etc., are no longer in vogue in our country. It may also be true that all too frequently the underprivileged murderer is executed and the privileged murderer sentenced to life imprisonment.

Yet over against all such reasoning stands the clear and unequivocal will of God that crime should be punished by the powers that be. A state which refuses to exercise this right and to perform this duty which God Himself has imposed on it defies the will of our just and righteous God. But this God will not be mocked, neither by the citizens nor by the authorities of the State. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

P. M. B.

THESES ON THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

This journal has repeatedly reported on progress made by the Lutheran unity committees of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia and the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia (vol. 21, pp. 527 ff.; vol. 22, pp. 439 ff.; vol. 23, pp. 284 ff.). According to the *Australian Lutheran* (October, 1952), these two committees have achieved agreement also with respect to their attitude to the Lutheran Confessions. Since their theses have supreme relevance also for Lutheran unity negotiations carried on by Lutheran groups in our coun-

try, we are submitting them in full. They are, in our opinion, a masterpiece of clarity, comprehensiveness, and theological insight and are, therefore, deserving of careful thought by every Lutheran theologian. The theses read:

1. With the fathers of the Lutheran Church in Australia who came to this country as confessors of the Biblical truth expressed in the Lutheran Confessions, we solemnly reaffirm as our own confession the Confessional Writings of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as they are contained in the Book of Concord.

2. With the Book of Concord we teach that creeds and confessions are necessary for the Church as a means to —

- a. Summarize the true doctrine of the Word of God ("compend and brief summary of all the Scriptures," Large Catechism, Preface 18, Trigl. p. 573; "sum of our Christian doctrine," Sol. Declaratio, De com. regula 11, Trigl. p. 855);

- b. Express the common consent ("magnus consensus," C. A. 1, Trigl. p. 43) not only with the believers of today (Sol. Declar., De com. regula 1 and 2), but also with the true church of all ages from the time of the Apostles and the ancient Creeds to the end of the world ("coram tota ecclesia," Sol. Declar., closing paragraph, Trigl. p. 1103);

- c. Reject error and heresy (Preface to the Book of Concord, especially Trigl. p. 19; Epitome, De comp. regula 2 and 3, Trigl. p. 777) and thereby fight the devil, who tries to destroy the Gospel (Apol. III, 68, Trigl. p. 175);

- d. Confess the truth before the world ("coram mundo," Apol. III, 68; "before kings," Ps. 119:46, quoted in the title of C. A.; cf. Matt. 10:18);

- e. Confess the faith "in the sight of God" ("in conspectu Dei") and in view of the last judgment (Sol. Declar., closing paragraph, Trigl. 1103; Luther's Confessions 1528, quoted in Sol. Declar., 29 and 30, Trigl. p. 981 f.).

3. With the Book of Concord (De com. regula, Epitome, Trigl. p. 777 and 779; Sol. Declar., Trigl. p. 849 and 853 f.) we make the fundamental distinction between the Scriptures and the Confessions. Holy Scripture is God's own Word, the confession the human answer to that Word (cf. Matt. 16:16; 22:32 ff.; John 6: 68 f.). The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God and are therefore the only source of Christian doctrine, "the only rule and

standard according to which at once all dogmas and teachers should be esteemed and judged," while the confessions, like all human writings, even if written with the assistance of the Holy Ghost, "should be altogether subordinated to them." They "are not judges, as are the Holy Scriptures, but only a testimony and declaration of the faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those then living, and how the opposite dogma was rejected and condemned" (Trigl. p. 777 and 779). Thus all doctrines of the Confessions have to be examined again and again in the light of Holy Scripture.

4. With the Formula of Concord and the Lutheran Church of all times we accept the Lutheran Confessions, including the three "Ecumenical Creeds," not only as highly important historical documents, or as necessary and correct doctrinal decisions of the church in times past, but as dogmatic statements which bind the church today on account of their pure Scriptural doctrine. While their authority is a secondary one (*norma normata*), derived from the authority of Holy Scripture (*norma normans*), they nevertheless possess real authority as a correct interpretation of Scripture. As the confessors of the Formula of Concord accepted the Unaltered Augsburg Confession "not because it was composed by our theologians, but *because it has been derived from God's Word*" ("quia e Verbo Domini est desumpta") and is founded well and firm therein" (Sol. Declar., De com. regula 5, Trigl. p. 851), so we accept the Lutheran Confessions as a summary and as a correct exposition of the Word of God. We hold that the acceptance of and the subscription to the Confessions in the Lutheran Church must always be made *quia* ("because"), not *quatenus* ("as far as"), the Confessions are in agreement with the Word of God.

5. In accepting the Lutheran Confessions, we accept all doctrines taught therein on the basis of God's Word, both in thesis and antithesis, whether they are solemnly proclaimed as dogma of the church (e. g., by the formula "we believe, teach, and confess") or not. As the confessors of the Formula of Concord saw in the various confessions, which they accepted, the summary of the Christian doctrine, so we find in the various writings and articles of the Book of Concord the doctrine of the Lutheran Church, that is, the doctrine of the Gospel in its various aspects. Just as Jesus Christ is the center and content of Holy Scripture,

so the article on justification by faith in Christ is the soul of the Confessions. Every single article points to the "articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae" ("the article by which the church stands or falls," because "of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered"; Smalc. Art., II, 5, Trigl. p.461) and is therefore a witness to the Christ of the Bible.

6. We do not regard as belonging to the doctrinal content of the Confessions matters that lie on the plane of human knowledge, learning, science, and philosophy; these do not touch the doctrine of Holy Writ. Nor is the confessional obligation violated when doubt is expressed whether, in the case of some Scripture passage used as a proof-text in support of a doctrine, the intended meaning has been adequately grasped and applied. To regard the Confessions as a correct interpretation of Holy Scripture does not imply that in every case the understanding of a Scripture passage is to be recognized as sufficient and final.

7. In interpreting the Confessions we regard as the standard text in each case the original and official text, i. e., in the case of the Augsburg Confession the German and Latin text, the Latin text of the Apology and the Tractatus, and the German text of all other writings. The early translations included in the Book of Concord are to be valued as important commentaries, but otherwise they have no authority.

8. Together with the positive doctrine of the Confessions we accept the "condemnations," i. e., censures and rejections of errors and heresies. According to the authoritative explanation of the Book of Concord (Preface, Trigl. p.19f.; Sol. Declar., De com. regula 14 ff., Trigl. p.857 ff.) the condemnations do not mean that true believers and therefore the Church of Jesus Christ are found only in the Lutheran Church. They mean that false doctrine is rejected and that no church fellowship can exist with those who consciously and persistently hold such doctrines. Among these doctrines the denial of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar is especially mentioned. Loyalty to the Lutheran Confessions includes the practical application of these principles in the life of the Church.

9. Although we accept the Book of Concord as the Confession of the Lutheran Church, we recognize that there are Lutheran Christians or Churches who have not officially accepted the whole Book of Concord. Churches which have never accepted the Formula of Concord are to be regarded as Lutheran as long as they

faithfully subscribe to and uphold the other Lutheran Confessions, for it is possible to be a Lutheran without having accepted the Formula of Concord, but not if rejecting it. We recognize that for laymen, especially for simple Christians and children, the Small Catechism is the simplest summary of the Lutheran faith. Besides the Catechism, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, whose main articles can be understood by every adult Christian, must be the confessional basis of every congregation which claims to be Lutheran. The Young Churches on the mission fields may find it necessary to make a new formulation of the Lutheran doctrine. This is possible, provided the doctrine remains the doctrine of the Confessions of the sixteenth century, because they need the doctrine contained in the Confessions, especially in the Catechism and in the main articles of the Augsburg Confession, in whatever form this doctrine may be presented. The Lutheran Church in future may be obliged to formulate new confessional statements on subjects or about questions which may arise in the course of history. Such new confessions will be Lutheran only if they reaffirm and presuppose the doctrine contained in the Book of Concord, just as the Augsburg Confession confirmed the Eumenical Creeds, and the Formula of Concord reaffirmed the older Lutheran Confessions.

10. In accepting the Confessions as our confession, i. e., as the expression of what "we believe, teach, and confess" today, we recognize the duty of the Church, its pastors and congregations, constantly to use the Confessions as a guide into the riches of Holy Scriptures and to be a truly confessing Church, as our Lord wants us to be (Matt. 10:32). For sin and error will continue, and with them will continue the obligation of the Church to confess in living faith Christ and all His Word in the face of opposing error, until He Himself will confess before His Father in heaven those who have confessed Him on earth.

P. M. B.

PREACHING AND TEACHING DOGMAS AND DOCTRINES

In the *Lutheran Outlook* (October, 1952) there appears in an article entitled "Evidences of the Historic Reality of Objective Christianity" a paragraph which has greatly puzzled this writer as perhaps also other readers. No doubt the author meant to emphasize an important thought. He may have had in mind a Lutheran pastor, now in glory, who preached for two hours on the *Personal Union of the Two Natures of Christ*. I. The Communion of Natures; II. The Communication

of Attributes. Now, it is much better for pastors and hearers to know something about the great subject of Christology, even at the cost of listening to a sermon for two hours, than for pastors and people to forget all about Christology. But there is a middle road between the two extremes. It may be that the writer meant to say that the minister must not lecture on Christian dogmatics in the pulpit, but he does not say that; and so we wonder what the poor average pastor is to learn from this paragraph for his personal pulpit purpose. The paragraph reads:

"Let us, however, remember that to preach and teach objective Christianity and salvation does not mean to preach and teach dogmas and doctrines as such. They have their place at the theological seminaries, but not in the divine worship in the church. Dogmas and doctrines have their place in every sermon, only insofar that they are needed in the same way as the body needs the skeleton; but preaching and teaching dogmas and doctrines has emptied many churches and makes the sermon threadbare, annoying, and uninteresting."

The preaching of Christian doctrine *per se* never empties churches and does not make sermons threadbare, annoying, and uninteresting. But there is a way of preaching Bible doctrine that is liable to do all these things, and that is no doubt what the writer had in mind; only he did not say it. And that is what every preacher must watch in every way in order that his preaching may become better and better. The world today is hungry for doctrinal preaching that is sound and Biblical and flows from the preacher's own deep experience in the school of the Holy Spirit, who still teaches His apostles the divine Word. There are no detailed rules for effective doctrinal preaching; there is only the old *Ora et Labora*: "Pray, and get down into the text." The preacher who keeps in mind that he is standing in Christ's place at one end and is eager in His name to save souls at the other, will not preach threadbare, annoying, and uninteresting doctrinal sermons that empty churches. He is bound to experience at least a little of the great truth: *Die weil man nun durch Gottes Gnade in unsern Kirchen christlich und heilsam Ding lehrt von Trost in allem Anfechten, bleiben die Leute gern bei guter Predigt. Denn es ist kein Ding, das die Leute mehr bei der Kirche behält denn die gute Predigt.*" (Apology, Art. XXIV [XII], 51; *Concordia Triglott*, p. 400 f.)

J. T. MUELLER

THE PASTOR'S REPUTATION

President R. Belter of the Wartburg Synod of the ULCA has for a number of years sent out timely guidelines for the benefit of his clergy. In a recent issue, under the heading given above, he touches

upon a subject which no doubt will interest pastors of all denominations. Because of the length of the guideline we can here quote it only in part. We read:

"Whenever we speak of 'reputation,' we must speak also of 'character.' The latter is what we are in God's sight; the former, what we are in the estimation of the public. Public opinion is supposed to be the mind and conscience of a large group of people. However, that is true only in the measure that the combined opinion reflects the opinions of the individuals comprising that group. Many times has history proved that a *few* people have swayed the thinking of many, and that the voice of the people has not been the voice of God. The life of our Savior is an example of what a few politicians and priests can do to a spotless character. They called Him everything from a liar to a winebibber.

"As far as a pastor is concerned, he does hold a favored position in a community. He is given certain privileges which others do not enjoy in the same measure. On the other hand, he is called upon to denounce sin whenever and wherever it raises its ugly head. So he lives in the shadows of the Twin Mountains of Privilege and Obligation. What a difficult, almost impossible, task it is to please! I often wondered about the workings of the mind which wanted in a pastor a 'man of God' in the finest sense of the term, and yet a 'spineless creature who would wink at wrong or smile at sin.' I am reminded of a statement of one of my professors at the Seminary who, when such contradictions were mentioned, would say: *'Since the Fall of man, logic is in a bad way.'*

"A pastor has been described by someone as 'a good man with a possible bad reputation.' The reason is obvious. The moment we speak to an offender in a faithful way as we should, we become a target for slander. This seems easier for the one spoken to than for him to forsake an evil way. But again, that is part of the pay which the ministry receives and should expect to receive. They did it to Him, the sinless Son of God. It will be done to us as well. Among the many and varied directives given by Paul to Timothy, one was to 'suffer reproach'; and Paul then quickly reminds him that His Word is trustworthy and that whatever the price, it is really worth it. If it happens to you, and it might, remember the words of Gilbert Holland: 'There is a broad distinction between character and reputation, for one may be destroyed by slander, while the other can never be harmed save by the possessor. Reputation is in no man's keeping. You and I cannot determine what other men shall think or say about us.'

"There was a day when Christians, almost all, had 'bad reputations' but excellent characters. Remember the persecutions! There are still many people today who have 'bad' reputations. In Russia, said someone: 'A Christian is considered a fool'; and in Spain a Protestant is 'potentially dangerous.' It matters very little what people think. Does God approve of our actions? That is vital. To feel responsible to Him is the finest of all guidelines."

J. T. MUELLER

DECLINE OF GOOD PREACHING IN ENGLAND

Only there? Marcus Donovan, writing in the Anglican journal *Theology* (November, 1952, p. 422), deplors that the level of preaching has declined. His analysis of the cause reminds one of Acts 6:2. He writes: "The shortage of clergy is responsible for a lack of attention to the craft of preaching. A priest who had been Select Preacher at his University told us that he had some difficulty in obtaining a curacy because the qualifications demanded were entirely those requisite for youth work." He goes on to say: "The average incumbent is occupied with finance, while the average assistant is kept busy by youth organizations. Neither gets a chance to work at his task of presenting the Gospel persuasively, let alone impressively. . . . It will be tragic if the necessity of being harassed by problems of maintenance should unfit the clergy for their proper task."

The writer then urges his readers to ponder some words of the Bishop of Southwark in his recent Visitation Charge: "All through my visitation last year I was brought up against the vital need of congregations which are well instructed in the essentials of their faith. . . . A teaching sermon need neither be dull nor highbrow; it can always be adapted to the particular level and experience of a congregation, and must always be closely and clearly related to life."

V. B.

PORTUGAL AND CATHOLICISM

Dr. Ernest Gordon in the *Sunday School Times* (November 13, 1952) calls attention to the fact that in Portugal the Holy Year of 1951 proved itself a great failure. It had been predicted that it would "close in a sea of glory at the Fatima shrine" and that millions would attend this celebration both from Portugal and abroad. But to the clergy and the army of entrepreneurs and hotelkeepers, who awaited huge financial returns, the Fatima festivity was a sorry disappointment. According to the Catholic newspaper *O Debate*, "foreigners were rare in spite of the affirmation and reaffirmation that they would come by steamer, train, and airplane from all parts of the world."

More disappointing still was the fact that no miracles could be reported, while accidents and thefts were frequent. One thief, disguised as a friar, was especially in evidence at the moment when the high ecclesiastics pleaded through microphones for large gifts to the Pope. Finally, in a great thunderstorm the tower of the Fatima basilica was struck by lightning and part of the pulpit was destroyed. The disappointed pilgrims left lamenting.

Meanwhile evangelical workers report that in Leiria, near Fatima, evangelical work has been blessed beyond that in other parts of the country, that the people thirst for the Word of God, and that the warnings of the Roman bishop of Leiria against helping the heretics are falling on deaf ears.

A Lisbon writer, Alexandre Lobato, is calling for the wiping out of Protestant missions in Portuguese colonies on the ground that they are unable to develop a Portuguese nationalist spirit among the Negroes. "Religious liberty," he writes, "is all very fine for civilized people, but not for primitive people, who accept whatever is said to them. Homogeneity should be preserved, nor should there be religious conflicts as between the North and South of Ireland. We want no religious islands, separated from our national unity."

Also in America there is no toleration of Protestantism where the Roman Church is still in power. Dr. Gordon in the same issue writes of an inspection of a Protestant school in Colombia, S. A., by a Catholic school officer. He told the teacher: "Everything is fine. Your books are correct; your room is well ventilated, but the only thing on which we do not agree is religion. You have ten days in which to take the necessary steps to have your school approved." The teacher knew that to have the school approved meant going to Mass. A few days later the mayor of the town (Sincelejo) appeared. As he commanded the children to pick up their books and leave the school, he told the teacher: "Perhaps you do not realize that in Colombia there is no liberty of schools or conscience."

Catholic piety, as Dr. Gordon reports, is *sui generis*. When in 1952 the Eucharistic Congress was held in Barcelona, Spain, eighteen bulls were killed in bullfights, "which appear to have been a Eucharistic Congress side show."

J. T. MUELLER

ESCHATOLOGICAL DISCUSSIONS IN THE W. C. C.

The 1954 convention of the World Council of Churches will have as its general theme: "Jesus Christ, Our Lord, the Only Hope of the Church and the World." The committee preparing the preliminary

studies on this topic submitted its first report early last summer. This report caused considerable discussion, because representatives of the member Churches in the W. C. C. are not agreed as to the meaning of Christian hope. The tensions run all the way from an apocalyptic literal interpretation of the Scripture references to the Second Coming of Christ to an interpretation of the Christian hope according to a this-worldly *Weltanschauung* and in terms of modern speech and secular associations. The first report was published in *Ecumenical Review* July, 1952, 419 ff. and a synopsis in *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, November, 1952, 846—850.

The second report of the study commission attempts to resolve some of the tensions. This report in five chapters was published in *Ecumenical Review*, October, 1952, and a synopsis was furnished in *Christian Century*, December 31, 1952, and January 7, 1953.

The first chapter deals with "Christ — Our Hope," and on the basis of eight Scripture references the following points are developed.

The Savior's word in John 5:25 prompts the Committee to state that by His death Christ has reconstituted the world, and that by faith in Him we are already participants in the new creation, the life that is to come.

On the basis of Col. 3:3,4 the Christian hope is said to be the constant expectation that God in Christ will complete what He has begun, in fact, hope as faith already possesses the title-deed of that on which its hope is set.

1 Peter 1:3 is said to teach that in Jesus Christ God has made us His sons and heirs. The Christian life must therefore be viewed in the light of its future, because the Holy Spirit, in whose fellowship the Christian life is lived, is the spirit of promise and the token of our inheritance. Through Him the powers of the "new age" are at work among us. Thus the Christian life is grounded in what Christ has accomplished and at the same time awaits the final uncovering of the redemptive work of Christ.

According to Heb. 2:17 Jesus became our faithful High Priest, to make expiation, that is, in Jesus God became man and shared man's predicament, suffered, and died. But God raised Jesus, and on the resurrection of Jesus is based the Christian hope and the affirmation of the lordship of Christ over death and over every hostile power. Since Christ's lordship must finally be made manifest, the Christian hope looks to the return of Christ. However, it is difficult to make such a statement convincingly, because of our isolation from the world in which Christ suffered and for which He died.

In Hebr. 13:13, 14 Christians are admonished to go "outside the camp." Our calling as His witnesses demands that we live unconformed to the world, share in His passion, and live under the sign of the cross. Only at the foot of the cross love goes out to meet the misery of men, and only here hope can be proclaimed, and only men whose hopelessness has been met by God's unbounding grace can speak effectively of our expectation of Christ's return, an event in which present and future are closely tied together.

In His words to Pilate, Matt. 26:64, Christ indicates that His lordship is future and can be discerned now only by faith in the midst of our conflict with evil. However, we not only look for the judgment as a future event, since Christ has already come in His judgment and constitutes the boundary of our lives and meets us at each step forward. Thus the future is already given in the present as a token, and the present, however rich, always looks forward to the future with tense expectation.

On the basis of Rom. 8:23 the Commission points to the paradox of the "already-not yet" in the Christian life. The Christian looks forward to the redemption of his body, to the resurrection, and already participates in Christ's risen life; he anticipates the final Judgment, but at the same time realizes that the Judgment has already begun. It is the Crucified who reigns. Hence there is no room for an ultimately tragic interpretation of history nor for an optimism which looks for victory on man's own terms.

Love of the brethren, according to 1 John 3:14, is the evidence of the Christian's conquest of death. Only those who set their discipleship in the context of the hope, that in His return Christ will fulfill His ministry, are able to obey His commands to love the neighbor and to spend themselves in deeds of kindness. Thus the hope of Christ's return places us into the proper perspective for our present obedience.

In the second chapter the Committee sets forth its view on the Christian hope in the life of the believer. It states that the Scriptures frequently express the idea of hope in terms similar to those in ancient apocalyptic literature. The Commission believes that these terms may be of service, but also lend themselves to grave misunderstanding, and it is essential to note the difference between Christian eschatology, as the destiny of man and the world, and the pre-Christian or sub-Christian apocalyptic outlook. This is said to be essential in order to see afresh the meaning of the Christian teaching of the "new age." While the "new age" awaits its fulfillment at the end of history, it has also come already. It is the new creation, the new beginning of

humanity, the new perspective of individual and social life, in fact, the new source of the meaning of history and the new promise of glorious fulfillment even beyond the history of the earth. The "new age" came when in Christ mankind is brought under judgment in a new way and when in Christ men and women find new depths of mercy and new hope, not in an escape from the world, but in a sharing of Christ's victory over the powers of evil. Thus the "new age" has brought the kingdom of God in Christ and His community.

But the created world, mankind in particular, is still incomplete. The ignorant and willful wrongdoing of men has distorted God's work, and every man feels the effects of the wrongs which have accumulated in the social order. Now every man must wrestle with demonic forces which bedevil the whole course of history and bring the world under divine judgment. From this judgment the Christian is not exempt and he must expect suffering and catastrophes. When the Christian accepts God's judgment and bears his cross without bitterness, he actually participates in the sufferings of his Lord and is given strength to endure by the hope of sharing in His resurrection. If the Church is to fulfill her ministry, she must see in the "new age" not only the "not yet" but also the "already."

In Chapter III the Committee contrasts the Christian hope and the utopias of today, such as Stalinism, Scientific Humanism, Democracy, and points out that in these mankind encounters the demonic forces in human life which ultimately will destroy the manhood of mankind. In opposition to these utopias the Christian Church must preach Christ as the Hope of the world who meets men and women in their complex hopes and fears. Christ can do this, because He was so wholly consecrated to His Father that He can make the very estate of every individual His own both for judgment and for salvation. He is the "Second Adam" and on His road of dedication He recapitulates the experience of humanity.

In Chapter IV the Committee discusses the Christian hope and our earthly calling. The Christian hope, revealed in the resurrection of the Crucified, has crucified all our self-centered desires and prompts us never to be content with the *status quo*, but constantly to strive toward a better and worthier life for mankind. It is the Church's calling to await expectantly the coming of peace, righteousness, freedom, life, truth. Because we rest secure in the hope of eternal peace, we are summoned to work for temporal peace in our sorely divided world. Because our faith has found the righteousness in Christ, we are urged to seek for a greater measure of righteousness in the social and political

spheres. Because Christ is our freedom, we are enabled to proclaim to mankind the freedom from every form of bondage. Because we have life in Christ, we cannot pass by in Pharisaic indifference those who have fallen among thieves and murderers. And finally because Christ is our Truth, our hope in Christ prompts us to encourage all men in their search for truth.

In the fifth chapter the Committee speaks of the Christian hope and the Church's mission, namely to summon men everywhere to repent and to accept the promise of His kingdom, and to draw men into the Church, the community of the redeemed.

We shall refrain from commenting at this time. To state it frankly, we are not sure whether we understand the language of the report. The conservative theologian can find in it a splendid summary of the Gospel. In fact, the Lutheran can hear refrains from the exposition of the Second Article and the Second Petition in Luther's Large Catechism. On the other hand, the terminology and the applications will no doubt find a responsive ear in Liberal Theology. The Bultmann School, which looks for the fact behind the "mythos," could accept this report. This report will, no doubt, elicit detailed eschatological studies by representatives of the various member Churches, and then one will be in a position to judge the eschatology of the World Council of Churches.

F. E. M.

CONCLUDING POSTSCRIPTS

At its Hanover Assembly the Lutheran World Federation resolved upon the appointment of nine commissions which are to study the following areas of theological interest: theology, Lutheran world service, world missions, education, liturgics, stewardship and parish life, international affairs, students, and welfare work. According to the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* (November 15), Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover, president of the Lutheran World Federation, appointed the following theologians to serve on the commission for theology: Professor Werner Elert (Erlangen, Germany); Professor Peter Brunner (Heidelberg, Germany); Bishop Anders Nygren (Lund, Sweden); Professor Regin Prenter (Aarhus, Denmark); and Professor Taito Kantonen (Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, Ohio). This commission will give thought to a number of theological considerations which came to the surface at Hannover, but were referred to a special commission to be appointed. One of these considerations is the relation of Scripture to the incarnate and living Word.

The "welfare state," so a writer in *Theology* (December) argues, did not suddenly jump into existence but is the result of a number of significant factors and forces whose roots are imbedded in the nineteenth century even though it has become customary to refer to the nineteenth century as the century of "rugged individualism" made possible by the *laissez-faire* policy in government. By way of elucidating that "rugged individualism" was not as "rugged" as is sometimes supposed, the author quotes a gem from Sidney Webb, famous British sociologist, written by him all of seventy years ago. The passage reads:

The individualist town councillor will walk along the municipal pavement, lit by municipal light and cleansed by municipal brooms with municipal water, and seeing, by the municipal clock in the municipal market, that he is too early to meet his children coming from the municipal school, hard by the county lunatic asylum and the municipal hospital, will use the national telegraph system to tell them not to walk through the municipal park, but to come by the municipal tramway, to meet him in the municipal reading-room, by the municipal museum, art gallery, and library, where he intends to consult some of the national publications in order to prepare his next speech in the municipal town hall in favor of the nationalization of canals and the increase of Government control over the railway system.

The author, who discusses the "welfare state" from the Christian point of view, concludes: "Instead of denouncing the materialism of the age, which is a very easy thing to do, Christians would be better occupied in discovering how the evident tendency of the welfare state to make us all preoccupied with security and coziness can be effectively balanced by contrary provisions that will keep us aware of our ultimate insecurity except in the hands of our Savior and that will prevent our being cushioned against everything in the real world that makes for doubt, tension, struggle, loneliness, eccentricity, and dying to live."

* * *

P. M. B.

The following illuminating critique of Bultmann's theology is taken, not from a book, but from the manuscript of a lecture delivered not long ago at a conference in Germany! You'll say that this nugget is worth the price of a year's subscription to the *C. T. M.* "R. Bultmanns entmythologisiertes Kerygma von Jesu Kreuz und Christi Auferstehung gruendet in einer christozentrischen theologia crucis ganz eigenen Gepraeges. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit ihm wuerde eine ausgebreitete Untersuchung existentialphilosophischer, exegetischer und

historischer Art erfordern, ehe wir den dogmatischen Kern des Bultmannschen Programms zu Gesicht bekommen. So muss an dieser Stelle die Feststellung genuegen, dass sein 'eschatologischer' Heilsglaube als 'geschichtliche' Bedeutsamkeitserhellung eines mehrdeutigen Faktums der Todeshistorie auf der transzendentalen Bruecke von der existentialen Interpretation her zur heutigen existentiellen Entscheidung hin die streng jenseitig bleibende Gnadenoffenbarung und die personalistische Entscheidung punktuell miteinander zu verbinden sucht. Dem biblisch-reformatorischen Realpraesenzglauben Christi im Suender der Todesgeschichte ist diese Transzendentalisierung von Verkuendigung und Glaube wesensfremd."

V. B.

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

A Baptist clergyman, Dr. Milton C. Froyd, director of research at Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, charged that too many mediocre men are going into the ministry; and the blame rests with our secular culture which encourages superior men to go into practically every vocation but the ministry. "No one ever talks to the superior youth about entering the ministry, with the result that if he ever had an interest, it is likely to be lost." The challenge of the ministry is usually presented in a highly charged atmosphere in which the emotionally unstable student tends to respond. The Church "will have to find ways of challenging its ablest, most resourceful young men to the possibilities of the call of God to the ministry. We must not allow our young men to feel that merely because they possess superior abilities they are thereby automatically eliminated from the possibility of being called to the ministry." — How about Christian parents teaching their boys (and then living up to it themselves!) that St. Paul was right when he wrote to Timothy (1 Tim. 3:1): "If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work"?

* * *

The Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. has purchased Radio Station KALA in Sitka, Alaska, to operate as an educational project in co-operation with the Territory Education Department at Juneau and the University of Alaska. Broadcasts will extend educational opportunities to Eskimos, Indians, and whites at Sheldon Jackson Junior College in Sitka.

* * *

Remains of one of the largest known early Christian basilicas have been unearthed under an 18th-century barn at Aquileia, near Trieste. Also discovered were ruins of what is believed to be a 3d-century

Jewish synagog. The basilica is said to date from the 4th century, when Aquileia was a thriving center of Christianity with a population of nearly one million. The city was destroyed by Attila the Hun in the 5th century.

* * *

Expansion of foreign missionary work of the United Lutheran Church in America into Malaya was unanimously approved by delegates to the convention in Seattle, Wash. . . . It was reported to the convention that the 6,381,000 population of Malaya is 99.8 per cent non-Christian. The country was described as a "hub" of the Far East. Malaya, Dr. Franklin Clark Fry said, is a focal point of all the Far Eastern tensions, racial and social, which have created a favorable situation for the advance of Communism. He called for "a counterattack against the enemies of the Gospel." . . . Missionaries who have been withdrawn from China will be sent to work among the Chinese of Malaya. A special effort will be made to send missionaries to the "new villages" recently established as a front against Communist infiltration of the peninsula.

* * *

The new law exempting religious and other private nonprofit schools from property taxation, passed by the 1951 legislature of California and signed by Governor Earl Warren, had not become operative because the opponents of the law had secured the required number of signatures on a petition calling for a referendum. The law was now, in the election of November 4, approved by a majority of California's voters. . . . California was the only State which imposed taxes on its non-profit schools. The school tax had netted the State about \$700,000 annually. . . . The new law extends to more than 900 elementary and high schools, educating 183,000 children, the tax exemption previously enjoyed by private colleges in the State. . . . Opposition to the law was spearheaded by the California Taxpayers Alliance; support for the law was led by an organization called "Californians for Justice in Education," headed by Admiral (ret.) Chester W. Nimitz.

* * *

In 1937 the Baptist Convention of Arkansas, unable to pay a debt of \$1,250,000, made a 35-cents-on-the-dollar settlement with their note and bond holders, canceling \$800,000 of the debt under the bankruptcy law. But when the depression was over, in 1943, Dr. Ben L. Bridges, executive secretary of the Convention, recommended that Arkansas Baptists undertake to pay this amount. The Convention accepted the recommendation (despite the objection of some delegates) and voted to pay about 10 per cent of the canceled indebted-

ness a year. This was done by a Baptist Honor Club, whose members paid \$1 a month, by modest allocations of the Convention, and by the Arkansas Baptist Woman's Missionary Union. "Together we have proved to the world," said Dr. Bridges, "our belief that Christians must be honest."

* * *

The Methodist Council of Bishops, assembled in Atlantic City, N. J., heard a report by Bishop John Wesley Lord stating that there are 20,000,000 young people in our nation who belong to no church or synagog as compared to 6,000,000 who are now Protestant church members. "Left without Christian teaching," he said, "these 20,000,000 may become the seedbed of Communism, Fascism, secularism, and atheism. Won for Christ, they will be the bulwark of freedom."

* * *

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, world-famous Protestant medical missionary, philosopher, musician, and author, has returned to French Equatorial Africa after a six-month furlough in Europe. The 77-year-old Alsatian-born theologian has been a medical missionary in Africa for the past 38 years and for 26 of them has directed a hospital and leper colony he founded at Lambarene. . . . During his furlough Dr. Schweitzer was inducted into membership in the French Academy, and shortly before sailing from Bordeaux was presented by Queen Louise of Sweden at Stockholm with the Prince Carl medal, awarded annually for international achievement in humanitarian work.

* * *

Now comes the National Geographic Society with the opinion that children owe their beloved Christmas trees to Pope Gregory the Great (540—604). After making a historical study of the custom of having Christmas trees the Society holds that Pope Gregory never heard of a Christmas tree during his lifetime, but he exhorted Christian missionaries not to destroy such pagan customs as were innocent and in accord with Church tenets. He stipulated that these customs were to be woven into the fabric of Christian ceremony where possible. "Thus, when the missionary Boniface went from England to Germany, he made no attempt to halt the Teutonic custom of worshipping Odin's sacred oak. Instead, he persuaded the people to substitute for the oak an evergreen tree decorated in honor of the Christ Child." (I do not know what the Society's authority is for that statement; my history books tell me that Boniface cut down Odin's sacred oak and built a chapel of the wood.) The report proceeds: Reformer Martin Luther gave his approval to the Christmas tree at an early date. Thus

it became a custom in both Protestant and Catholic households in Germany. . . . The Christmas tree came to America only a little more than a century ago, the custom being unknown in this country earlier than 1840. Homesick German immigrants first brought their decorated "Tannenbaum" to America, where their neighbors admired and copied it, although it was not until after 1900 that the custom really became universal in the Northern States. Its spread was much slower in the South. (In this country, the Krausnick family of Cincinnati had an evergreen tree in 1835. The Saxon Lutherans were used to trees and sadly missed them while on the ship coming to America. "Here," records said, "no Christmas tree brightened the eyes of the children as they sadly clung to their musing parents; for them it was a dreary Christmas Eve." Gustave Koerner, political adviser to Abraham Lincoln and ambassador to Spain, used a decorated sassafras tree at Belleville, Ill., in 1833, and August Imgard of Wooster, Ohio, is frequently credited with having introduced the tree to the American Christmas celebration because of the evergreen he had in 1847. The first historical account of a Christmas tree in a church service comes from a Lutheran church in Rochester, N. Y., where Pastor John Muehlhauser, later president of the Wisconsin Synod, set one up in 1840. It was in 1851 that Rev. Henry C. Schwan saw to it that there was a Christmas tree at Zion Church, Cleveland, where he was pastor. — The Rev. August R. Suelflow, Curator of Concordia Historical Institute, in *St. Louis Lutheran*.) Introduction of the Christmas tree in England about 1845 had much to do with its acceptance in America, the National Geographic Society believes. Prince Albert brought the custom to England after his marriage to Queen Victoria, and the royal family adopted it enthusiastically.

* * *

The 130-year-old Methodist weekly, *Zion's Herald*, is reverting to a newspaper format with the first edition of 1953. For 52 years it has been a magazine, but for the first 78 years, since 1823, it was a newspaper. "We found out some time ago," the editor, Dr. Emory S. Bucke, said, "that laymen are interested almost solely in news in their church papers. We also found that, when news is obscured by a welter of features, articles of opinion, spiritual dissertations and the like, they often do not even read the news. Ministers apparently read and liked the features and articles, but our surveys showed that the laymen wanted news, with a sprinkling of editorial comment and a nice dish of 'other people's mail' — letters. Since *Zion's Herald* is primarily

a publication for laymen, we decided to see what could be done to make it more readable for them." — We wonder if the editor of *Zion's Herald* is right in his opinion of laymen; we doubt it.

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A record budget of \$3,166,000 was approved by the advisory council of the American Bible Society. The principal reason for the large increase in the budget is a greater distribution of the Scriptures among United States Armed Forces and United Nations' servicemen in Korea.

* * *

Representatives of the National Lutheran Council of the United States and the various European national committees of the Lutheran World Federation met at the Loccum monastery, near Hannover, Germany, to make plans for putting Lutheran World Service into operation next May 1. . . . Loccum is the only Evangelical monastery in Germany; Bishop Hanns Lilje of Hannover is also abbot of this monastery; he was host to the above Commission and presided at the meetings. As president of the L. W. F. he appointed the members of the Commission authorized by the Federation's assembly in Hannover last summer. . . . Members of the Commission: The Rev. Henry J. Whiting of Minneapolis, Minn., executive director of the Lutheran Welfare Society of Minnesota; Dr. Carl E. Lund-Quist of Lindsborg, Kans., executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation; Bishop Hans Meiser of Munich, chairman of the United Evangelical Church in Germany; Dr. Paul C. Empie of New York, executive secretary of the National Lutheran Council; Dr. Julius Bodensieck, the Council's theological representative to the European Church; Dr. John Scherzer, secretary of the Council's European desk. . . . Refugee aid will be one of the Federation's main tasks, it was said; and it was urged that the Lutheran World Service be made a "supranational" agency, recognized by all governments and international organizations, "a tool to be used by all Churches," breaking through linguistic, traditional, and national barriers.

* * *

Establishment of a universal feast of Mary the Queen, corresponding to the feast of Christ the King, was urged by the Mariological Society of America at its annual meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. With this aim in view a committee was created by the society which will prepare a petition to Pope Pius XII asking that the feast of "Mary's universal queenship," already observed in some countries and by some religious orders, be extended to the entire Church. In discussion periods and

talks the meeting examined the nature of Mary's queenship, its basis in Scripture and tradition, and the developing history of its study by the Church. Msgr. Ferdinand Vandry, rector of Laval University, Quebec, Canada, one of the speakers, said that Mary was rightfully queen of the universe because she helped in "the foundation of Christ's Kingdom by consenting to become an indispensable factor in the Incarnation and therefore in the Redemption; the establishment of the Kingdom by co-operating with Christ in the work of the Redemption; the government of the Kingdom by dispensing as mediatrix the graces of the Redemption." "Mary's rights to govern the Kingdom of Christ," he said, "are those of a real sovereign," although "subordinate to that of Christ. However, it is far superior to purely ministerial power. It is so closely united to the dominion of Christ as to be *a condition of its exercise.*" (Italics mine.)

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In response to the 1952 Thanksgiving clothing appeal of Lutheran World Relief, 2,035,592 pounds of clothing, shoes, and bedding were contributed by United States Lutherans—the largest collection of clothing in any L. W. R. Thanksgiving appeal. Lutheran officials estimated that over half a million needy refugees in Europe, Korea, and the Holy Land will benefit from the clothing.

* * *

Crosthwaite Church in Keswick, England, has celebrated the 1,400th anniversary of its founding. The present church building dates "only" from the 14th century; but there has been a church on the site ever since A. D. 553. In that year, Kentigern, a Christian leader who sought refuge in this Cumbrian Lake district from the pagan king Strathclyde, selected a spot of high ground overlooking Derwent Water, and Bassenthwaite Lake as the location for a church. Because he marked the place by planting his cross in a thwaite (clearing), it has since been known as Crosthwaite.

* * *

By unanimous vote the Board of Education of New York City directed that, beginning with the new semester around February 1, all public schools in the city open each day's classes by singing the fourth stanza of "America" as an act of reverence aimed at strengthening moral and spiritual values. The stanza is to be sung immediately after the Pledge to the Flag, which earlier was instituted as a daily custom in the schools. The board's directive will be put into effect in all elementary and junior and senior high schools.

A strange coincidence that the very next item in the report of "Religious News Service" deals with another attempt to make something illegal, and therefore presumably immoral, legal and moral if sponsored by churches. — A bill providing for the legalization of bingo games when sponsored by religious, charitable, and fraternal organizations was introduced in the State Legislature of New Jersey. Last year such a bill, though passed by both branches of the Legislature, was vetoed by Gov. Driscoll.

* * *

A Philippine town (Calivo on Panay Island) has voted to impose a five-peso (\$2.50) tax on Christmas carolers. The explanation was offered that in recent years the custom of carol singing at Christmas had become "professionalized," with individual carolers often earning from 15 to 20 pesos a night; it was only proper, therefore, that the local government should tap this new source of revenue.

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By adding 24 new members to the College of Cardinals on January 13, 1953, Pope Pius XII has again brought the College to its full strength of 70. The Pope disclosed that he had considered increasing the size of the College, but decided against it as "inopportune."

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According to the Lutheran Foreign Missions Conference of America, American Lutheran church bodies gave \$3,659,670 to support foreign mission activities on 51 fields in 18 countries during 1952. The figures were compiled by Dr. Andrew S. Burgess, professor of Missions at Luther Theological Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.

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The German Roman Catholic Youth Federation has urged the West German government to pass "protective legislation" against the recruitment of German youth for the French Foreign Legion. Reports are quoted by the press that over 70 per cent of the French Foreign Legion members are German and that more than 30,000 German youth have already lost their lives fighting in Indo-China with the Legion.

THEO. HOYER