

# Concordia Theological Monthly



F E B R U A R Y . . . 1 9 5 8

## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

### "ON CONDITION THAT" OR "BECAUSE"

The *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (October 1957), under its special feature "Survey of Periodicals," presents a summary of S. Lyonnet's article "Le Péché Originel et l'exégèse de Rom. 5:12-14" (*Recherches des Sciences Religieuses* 44:63-84) as follows: "Re-examines these verses in light of the patristic interpretation of the East as well as the Old Testament texts which form their background to conclude: 1) that θάνατος must be understood in its full Pauline significance as meaning not only physical death (separation of body and soul) but also, and especially, eschatological death (definite separation from God), 2) that ἡμαγότον refers to the personal sin of each individual adult, 3) that ἐφ' ὃ should be translated as 'on condition that' rather than 'because.' Thus Paul is teaching that each man (adult) ratifies the sin of Adam by his own personal sin. This does not destroy the doctrine of original sin in this passage but rather emphasizes that the personal sins have their root in the sin of Adam or [are] a consequence of that sin." Meyer in his Commentary on Romans points out that most modern expositors have interpreted ἡμαγότον of individual sins, but affirms that the parallelism in Rom. 5:12-20 demands the ancient exposition that when Adam sinned, all men sinned in and with him so that all men became mortal through Adam's fall. Augustine's thought: *Omnis ille unus homo fuerunt* is, therefore, essentially correct though he wrongly derived it from ἐφ' ὃ in the sense of *in quo*. At any rate, there is no warrant in New Testament grammar and lexicography to justify the translation "on condition that." The lexicons of Thayer, Arndt-Gingrich, and others support only the translation "for this reason that" or "because."

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER

### THE ROLL OF APOCALYPTIC THUNDER

The German language uses an untranslatable "apokalyptisches Wetterleuchten" for the spiritual weather in which the Lutheran Church behind the iron curtain must try to survive. The violence of this cataclysmic thunder was recently increased by the decree of the Soviet regime that young people of confirmation age must participate in the Communist ceremony of rededication (*Jugendweihe*) to the cause of Marxian dialecticism. Hitherto this has been an optional arrangement; and the Soviet tyrants saw themselves mocked by the fact that no

more than 2 per cent of its youth ever showed enough interest in this ceremony to take part in it. Now there is no longer a choice except that of obeying the decree or refusing to do so at the price of almost everything that matters in life.

Young Christians who must decline to be dedicated to the materialism of the Communist movement will find themselves deprived of every opportunity for further education. No jobs of any kind, except possibly the most menial assignments, will be open to them. They will be harassed by neighbors, party workers, and government officials at every turn. Imagine what this means for parents concerned for the spiritual welfare of their growing children! The only alternative to a certain and slow death seems to be the cynical kind of duplicity which flourishes vigorously under any totalitarian system. But can a man be saved when he has lost his integrity?

In this respect, too, the Communist movement strongly resembles the beast of the Apocalypse (Chapter 13), "having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." Small wonder that the souls under the altar cry: "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

#### TECHNOLOGY AND THE CHURCH

We are at war. It is not a shooting affair yet. It may never be. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt about the fact that we are in a struggle for survival with the Soviet Union. The launching of two satellites suddenly made all the world aware of the fact that, despite its totalitarian ways, the Communist system could, in some areas of technology, advance to a point beyond the present accomplishments of the United States. The two great powers are now at a point where they can totally destroy each other in very short order. It is just possible that this state of affairs will prevent a hot war from breaking out. The United States now faces the task of moving ahead more quickly in its scientific program than it had thought necessary for the past ten years.

There is only one way in which the United States can again catch up with and surpass the Soviet Union; and that is by devoting a maximum amount of energy and resources to the development of space research. We have been used to neglecting basic investigations for so long that now, when we need quick results, we are caught short. It has been estimated that we are at least seven years behind Soviet science in certain phases of development.

The President of the United States has in several official pronouncements indicated that our great nation will now have to organize itself for greater accomplishments in the field of research and scientific production. This may have some very serious consequences for the church, especially since the Secretary of State has announced that Americans may well have to do without some of their "marginal freedoms." It is just this kind of statement that can be used to push the work of the church still farther into the background of our life.

One serious consequence for the church may be that of reduced income. If a greater amount of men and material has to be invested in scientific advancement, less of our total resources are available for the work of the church. Yet this is a less serious danger than a second one; namely, the possibility of our church-school system falling into disrepute and even under suspicion in a society managed and directed toward one technological goal. On a number of occasions Lutheran schools have been called divisive of democracy. Up to this moment that charge has not been taken too seriously, if for no other reason than that school space and personnel have been at a premium. And yet it is not hard to envision a situation in which the national requirements for the training of scientific personnel may seriously cast suspicion on any extensive program of church education unless that, too, would be directed only to technological ends and so deny itself.

A third danger might well develop from this necessary interest in scientific progress. It is just possible that when our national life is organized toward the achievement of this single goal, other concerns become of less value. The time may come when there is a graded system of handling the individual needs of persons and groups and when priority will be given to such as contribute directly to technological advancement. A fully organized society would be in a position to issue various types of ration cards, for example, whose value would be determined by the "usefulness" of the individual for the national program.

The early church got into difficulty with the Roman Empire when it refused to worship anyone but God. It may be that science and its wholesale pursuit, in demonstration of a concerted national effort, may yet become the altar on which all of us are expected to burn our little pinch of incense—or else! Everything will depend on the way in which the nation's effort is to be managed.

Someone might be tempted to say that American officials are much too sensible to encourage the development of a totalitarian pattern in our way of life. Let's not be lulled into that kind of cozy indifference; for eternal vigilance is still the price of liberty. Behind the instruments

of government there lurk demonic forces that are eager to turn any emergency into a means of depriving the church of her freedom and so to pervert our life. This has happened before, even in Germany of the thirties and forties, even though it had the benefit of the highest degree of enlightenment per square head of any modern nation.

MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

*St. Louis, Mo.*—A group of scholars launched plans to establish a center for research in the Protestant Reformation at Concordia Theological Seminary here, an institution of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

They attended the first meeting of the Foundation for Reformation Research, which will gather material for the center. The project is backed by a \$100,000 fund that includes a grant from the Aid Association for Lutherans, an Appleton, Wis., insurance company.

The foundation will collect and collate original documents pertaining to the Reformation era and will microfilm all important primary and secondary sources connected with the subject. These include the continental, English, and Scandinavian phases of the Reformation, the Counter Reformation, and other related historical periods.

The collected materials, available to students and scholars, will be housed in a library and research center at the seminary. A full-time director will be named to head the work.

Members of the foundation's board of directors are Dr. Alfred O. Fuerbringer of Concordia Seminary, president; Dr. Harold J. Grimm of Indiana University, vice-president; Dr. Carl S. Meyer of Concordia Seminary, secretary-treasurer; Dr. Roland H. Bainton of Yale University; Dr. John T. McNeill of Harvard Divinity School; Dr. Jaroslav J. Pelikan of the University of Chicago's Federated Theological Faculty; Dr. Theodore Tappert of Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia; Dr. Ernest G. Schwiebert, command historian for the Air Research and Development Command, Baltimore, Md.; Dr. F. Niedner, St. Charles, Mo.; Mr. Herbert Knopp, Valparaiso, Ind.; Mr. J. Fleischli, St. Louis, Mo.; Prof. Edgar Krentz of Concordia Seminary.

Dr. Pelikan said that Reformation research in America has been "hampered for want of a central clearinghouse and catalog of sources."

"No longer can Americans rely upon German and Scandinavian scholarship in Reformation study," he said. Although German and Scandinavian scholars will undoubtedly continue to do outstanding

work on the Reformation, it devolves upon American scholars in their unique situation to find their own sources for the study of the Reformation and its possible significance for the contemporary life of the church."

Dr. Pelikan is editor of the first 30 volumes of a 55-volume American edition of Luther's works currently in process of publication.

"Anyone who calls himself a Protestant is obliged to take seriously what the Reformation was and did and then to see what this might mean for his life now," he said.

"If the churches of America which find their own heritage and tradition embodied in the Reformation are to be faithful to that heritage, they must have available to them reliable, complete, and significant information about the Reformers and their work. Thus the establishment of this foundation can be of primary significance for scholar, theologian, and the general public."

*Chicago.*—A new service book and hymnal of the Lutheran Church in America—12 years in the making—was introduced for the first time at a meeting of Lutheran church officials here.

More than 200 persons, leaders in the field of liturgics and church music, assembled for a period of intensive training in use of the book designed to provide a uniform order of worship and a common hymnal for most of the Lutherans in North America.

Representatives from the eight participating bodies from all parts of the U.S. and Canada which had prepared the book attended the meeting in November.

Dr. Edgar S. Brown, Jr., executive director of the department of worship of the United Lutheran Church in America, presided. He said 635,000 copies of the first edition will be off the presses in February.

*Oslo, Norway.*—The Voluntary Church Convention declared here that Bishop Kristian Schjelderup's denial of an everlasting torment in hell "has never been the teaching of the Christian Church and that the Church of Norway must abide with its confessional books in loyalty to the Word of our Lord."

In a four-point resolution, which has received wide attention, the convention also said the fact that Bishop Schjelderup was not asked to resign "did not mean that his teaching was recognized as the teaching of the church." As to practical co-operation with Bishop Schjelderup, it said, "Each one must make his own decision in loyalty to his conscience before God."

The resolution also dealt with relationships to the state and said that the government's decision four years ago—that Bishop Schjel-

derup was not "outside the confession" — does not mean that the government can tell the church what to teach. The Church of Norway is still "a confessional church," it added.

The resolution was introduced in support of Bishop Johannes Smemo's opening address, in which he dealt extensively with the so-called "Schjelderup case," which now is four years old. Bishop Smemo pointed out that the dispute has never died down and has caused many difficulties to practical co-operation and to the whole work of the church. He therefore felt that a final word should be said.

But Bishop Smemo also stressed that "the deviations of Bishop Schjelderup do not concern the most vital points in our faith" and that other well-known theologians hold the same views as Schjelderup. The state church "must also be wide enough to include such views, even if the church cannot recognize them as its own teaching," he said.

The four-point resolution, which closely followed the line Bishop Smemo suggested in his opening address, was passed with 108 votes. Eighteen votes were cast for a resolution which only reaffirmed that the Church of Norway still is and must be "a confessional church," the teaching of which is directed by its confessional books. Ten delegates wanted no resolution at all.

The Voluntary Church Convention is an unofficial but old institution in the Church of Norway. To its meeting every four years 168 delegates are elected at diocesan meetings. The nine bishops are ex officio members of the convention.

The resolution on the "hell dispute" did not mention Bishop Schjelderup by name. Introducing the resolution, Bishop Johannes Smidt pointed out that it was an attempt to put an end to the tragic affair in order that the church could concentrate on more constructive matters.

Bishop Schjelderup refused to defend himself or to argue his position. Asking for the floor immediately after the motion was introduced, however, he restated his belief that "life has two ends, there is a punishment, but I believe that an everlasting punishment in hell is contrary to the spirit of God's revelation in Christ."

Bishop Schjelderup also told dramatically about his difficulties in his diocese, where a boycott was organized by "leading circles in Oslo," and he asked the convention, if it really wanted him to resign, to say so clearly. In reply Bishop Arne Fjellbu said that it would be "a catastrophe" if Bishop Schjelderup resigned. The intention of the resolution was to set forth principles to be followed irrespective of persons.

The reaction against the resolution has been very strong in the secular press. It has been interpreted as aiming at "freezing out" Bishop

Schjelderup. Bishop Smemo especially has been violently attacked. Since the meeting the bishops both individually and jointly have published statements in which they have reconfirmed that no one has voiced the view that Bishop Schjelderup should resign. In a broadcast Bishop Fjellbu stated that he wished Bishop Schjelderup to continue as bishop in Hamar and expressed the hope that pastors and congregations would co-operate loyally. He indicated that the other bishops were of the same opinion.

In a later statement Bishop Schjelderup said that in view of many expressions of sympathy he has decided to continue as bishop. He feels that the reaction after the convention has shown that there is "a strong desire for a more broadminded attitude within our old folk church." He also dissociated himself from the attacks on Bishop Smemo, who is head of the Church of Norway.