

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY

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Book Review

VOL. XXXIV

March 1963

No. 3

and He will complete the building as originally planned. Every stone will be inserted at the proper time and the proper place. Therefore "it is taught by us that the holy Christian church must endure and remain for all time."

God gathers the stones for this building of His church from all nations. However, the grand plan often is concealed from us. When we consider how the Gospel is given to one nation and taken away from another, when we are forced to observe how this person comes to faith while another person hardens himself in unbelief, we are sometimes astonished at the marvelous and hidden ways in which God advances the building of His church. However, *all* the elect will and must be incorporated in the building of the church, for that building, which was planned from all eternity and has been founded in time, moves on day by day toward its completion. And there will come the glorious day when God will tear down the scaffolding of this building and remove from it every trace of sin and weakness, the evidences of creatureliness. Then He will let the church shine forth gloriously as His perfected building and temple. This will constitute the ecumenicity of heaven, and then Christ's high-priestly prayer will be answered world without end.

A discussion of the doctrine of the church is profitable only when it inspires us to bend every effort to be and remain members of this church. To this end we are encouraged to hold on in unanimity to the pure meaning of the Gospel. Therefore we should also do our utmost in proclaiming the true doctrine as fellow work-

ers in the construction of the heavenly temple. May God in His grace grant us this. Amen.

THE GOSPEL OF THOMAS AND THE
PROBLEM OF THE AGE OF THE
TRADITION CONTAINED THEREIN

Under this heading Prof. Oscar Cullmann in *Interpretation* (October 1962) offers a general survey of the Logia discovered in recent times by Egyptian peasants in an old cemetery. The article is well translated by Balmer H. Kelly. Dr. Cullmann believes that the Logia will occupy scholars for a long time in such areas as philology, the history of Gnosticism and of Jewish Christianity, the Synoptic problem, the exegesis of Jesus' words, and the Biblical manuscripts, since sometimes there is found in them a close relationship to Codex Bezae. Some of the Logia agree verbally with Jesus' words in the Synoptic Gospels. Others serve as parallel variants to the Synoptic sayings. More interesting still is a third class of Logia which are not found in any form in our Four Gospels, but which were cited in the apocryphal gospels, the church fathers, and the Manichaean writings, though they are not taken from any of the apocryphal gospels known to us. Of these the writer judges: "Here also it could be a matter of a common tradition." As a fourth category Dr. Cullmann mentions those Logia which up to now have been entirely unknown. On these he comments: "By far the majority of them can be explained simply as gnostic texts. . . . Here again the question is raised concerning the possibility of an independent older tradition, still without saying whether the word concerned comes from Jesus. This last question, which has often incorrectly been pushed into the foreground, may never be answered with certainty." JOHN THEODORE MUELLER