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Contents

PAGE

EDITORIAL

An Acknowledgment 1

CONFESSIONAL CHURCHES IN THE ECUMENICAL
MOVEMENT WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO THE LUTHERAN WORLD FEDERATION.... 2

HERMANN SASSE, Luther Theological Seminary,
Adelaide, Australia

BULTMANN AND THE OLD TESTAMENT (II):
HIS APPROACH AND INTERPRETATION..... 35

RAYMOND F. SURBURG, Department of Exegetical
Theology (Old Testament)

BOOK REVIEWS 65

BOOKS RECEIVED 88

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Editorial

An Acknowledgment

IN THIS ISSUE of the Springfielder we are presenting an article by Dr. Hermann Sasse dealing with the Lutheran World Federation and the ecumenical relationships of world Lutheranism.

Dr. Sasse needs no introduction to our readers. Probably more than any other man alive today Dr. Sasse can be called Mr. Lutheran. He is welcome in the offices of bishops, synodical presidents, theological seminary presidents, and pastors and laymen of the church. Recently he was instrumental in effecting the union of Lutheran synods in Australia. After over 100 years of separation the Lutherans of Australia have finally gotten together, in part due to the valiant efforts of Dr. Sasse. Australia is the only continent in the world where the Lutherans all belong to one church and are in doctrinal unity.

The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod faces some serious and important decisions at its New York convention. We take great pleasure in presenting Dr. Sasse's article as one contribution to the ongoing debate relative to whether we shall or shall not join the Lutheran World Federation. Needless to say, Dr. Sasse's remarks also apply to other inter-denominational and ecumenical relationships on the part of our beloved church. We commend his remarks to the clergy of our church and we hope that the discussions and the debates at New York will reflect both understanding and love for the truth.

J.A.O. Preus

Confessional Churches in the Ecumenical Movement

With Special Reference to the Lutheran World Federation

HERMANN SASSE

PREFACE

*Ordini Theologorum in Seminario Concordia Springfieldiensi
Collegis, Amicis, Fratribus*

THE FOLLOWING PAGES have grown out of deliberations concerning possible membership in the Lutheran World Federation of such Lutheran Churches which so far, for conscience's sake, have not joined the Federation because they could not convince themselves that this could be done without violation of their confessional obligation. Such deliberations have been going on in America, Australia and within the Lutheran Free Churches in Europe for years. One of the reasons why the decision was always postponed is the fact that all ecumenical organizations of our time are "movements". They have grown in a long history out of earlier organizations. Also, when they received their present name and constitution they remained movements. At each of their respective world assemblies changes became manifest. The fact that the L.W.F. has to date not been able to define its own nature is sufficient proof of it.

It should be self-understood among Lutherans that the decision to join or not to join can never be a question of opportunism or church politics if the confession of the church is at stake. It would be to the L.W.F. as well as to the particular church of no benefit if the decision were based on merely utilitarian considerations. A church which would join in order to profit from this membership or to gain influence, and not in the conviction that it is its duty to accept and support the aims and purposes, the constitution and its basis, would be a bad member. It would be even immoral to join an organization and to accept its constitution with the intention to subvert or to alter it. If changes seem to be required they must be made beforehand. It would be equally immoral to demand that the membership of certain churches which have been admitted, although that never should have been done, must be terminated. The acceptance of the L.W.F. must be the acceptance of it as it today.

Since the L.W.F. itself has not been able to define its own nature, it is the duty of those who are asked to join to answer the question for themselves. This cannot be done on the basis of some superficial observations or on the basis of an examination of the Constitution only because the words of a constitution can be understood differently. It must be done after a thorough investigation of the relevant facts. We have tried to do this by looking at the background of the L.W.F. as one of the great ecumenical organizations of our time. It is to us the most important example of the problem of the relationship of the ecumenical movement to the confessional bodies. We could not avoid entering into a discussion of this entire problem, one of the greatest ecclesiastical problems of our time. What has been the destiny of the confessional churches in the ecumenical movement? Is it desirable that this destiny repeat itself in the Lutheran Church? Can it be avoided? What can be done to further Christian unity without giving up the confessional heritage in which in the earthly church the treasures of the Christian faith are hidden?

Such questions have occupied the author for more than forty years since the preparation of the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne, 1927. As a delegate from Germany to this Conference he is one of the survivors of that great gathering. For years he belonged to its Continuation and Executive Committees. He was a member of the British-German Theologians' Conference and took part in the first official conferences between Roman Catholic and Evangelical Theologians in Germany after World War II. He has translated and partly edited thousands of pages of ecumenical documents. He was active in the Lutheran World Convention. He had a share in the union negotiations between Lutheran Churches in several parts of the world. He remembers the great leaders of the Ecumenical Movement in Sweden and Germany, England and America, Greece, Russia, the Near East and India. This is mentioned to ward off the suggestion of ignorance, ill will, and confessional narrowness.

It may well be that some people, especially newcomers to the ecumenical work of our century, cannot understand that confessional Lutheranism and the deep concern for real unity among Christians belong together. They should study the Lutheran doctrine of the *Una Sancta*. The intention of the confessors at Augsburg when they transmitted to the Emperor the confession which he had demanded was, "to have all of us embrace and adhere to a single, true religion and live together in unity and in one fellowship and church, even as we are all enlisted under one Christ" (Preface to the Augsburg Confession 4). That this was not possible was the great disappointment of the Reformers. They could only say with Melancthon (at the end of the Preface to the Apology): "And so we commend our cause to Christ who will one day judge these controversies. We beseech him to regard his afflicted and scattered churches and restore them to a godly and abiding harmony." This is the prayer of the Lutheran Church.

This small treatise was written at the suggestion of The Reverend Dr. John W. Behnken, Honorary President of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, to whom true Lutheran unity was always a deep concern. I dedicate this small work to the Theological Faculty of Concordia Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, who has done me the honor of numbering me among their doctors, in deep gratitude and in *communione fidei*.

HERMANN SASSE.

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Easter, 1967.

I

THE NATURE OF the Lutheran World Federation can be understood only if one keeps in mind that this federation is one of the great ecumenical organizations of our time, part and parcel of the ecumenical movement which is deeply rooted in the history of Christendom in the 19th century. It began around 1830 when the theologians of all denominations began to rediscover the concept of the Church and when the churches throughout the world, in Europe as well as in the newly developed continents and especially on the mission fields, were confronted with the task to adapt their organization and their work to the requirements of a new age. This gave to the problem of the unity of the Church an unheard of urgency. In the theological and ecclesiastical discussions from the very outset two conflicting ideas have been dominating the great movement. One is the Pietistic concept of church unity. Here

the church is understood as the sum total of believing individuals who associate themselves on the basis of what they find to be their common faith. The confession of this faith, of the subjective convictions of the "associated individuals" (Marx's definition of society) makes the believers one. This leads to the formation of local or regional unions which vary according to the circumstances. Thus we find the union churches of Germany in the 19th century, each of them based on a different doctrinal statement, or the corresponding schemes of union on the mission fields of Asia and Africa of today. It is this concept of unity which underlies the definition of church unity by the World Council of Churches (*New Delhi Report*, p. 116ff.): "all in each place." The other concept of church unity is that of the great confessional churches of Christendom, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, conservative Reformed and Presbyterian, and at least to a certain degree Anglican. It sees the basis of church unity not in subjective experiences and opinions, but in the objective truth of the divine revelation which is given to us and which the church expresses in a confession that binds together the believers in many places and throughout the world and even the generations of Christendom from the time of the Apostles to the Last Day. This leads to confessional churches that transcend the geographical, national and linguistic borders of the "all in each place." The price to be paid for the preservation of what each of these churches believes to be the truth of the Gospel is the co-existence of various church bodies "in each place." The scandal of these divisions is felt also by such confessional bodies. According to them, however, this scandal cannot be removed by ignoring the doctrinal differences or by trying to overcome them on a local level by a compromise on the basis of personal opinions and sentiments. If Christendom is not to disintegrate into a multitude of small entities the unity, or whatever amount of unity is possible, can be reached only by patient negotiations from church to church and by a common quest for the one truth of God's Revelation.

In the 19th century, apart from individual countries like Germany where Protestantism was evenly divided between union and confessional churches, the confessional principle was predominant. Thus the contribution of that century to the ecumenical movement was the formation of world wide confessional organizations: the Lambeth Conference of the Anglican Communion (1867), the *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Konferenz* (German Lutheranism with participation from Sweden and the General Council in America)

¹ The text, as confirmed by The Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches 1961 reads: "We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Saviour are brought by the Holy Spirit into one fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people."

(1868), the "World Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System" (1875), the "Ecumenical Methodist Conference" (1881), and the corresponding federations of the Congregationalists (1891) and Baptists (1905). These organizations understood themselves as "ecumenical," this word being used at that time in the sense of "world-wide," "international." It is only during the last two decades that "ecumenical" is used for activities and organizations purporting to unite churches of various confessions or "traditions" as the present usage is. Hence the Methodists have abandoned the name "ecumenical," for their conference. Even Rome has accepted the words "ecumenical," "ecumenical movement," "ecumenism" in the new sense without, however, ceasing to call a Roman Council "ecumenical" which it is definitely not according to the present terminology of Geneva.

Side by side with the confessional principle stood the Pietistic understanding of the church and its unity and asserted itself in the 19th century more and more in all those fields of Christian life and ecclesiastical activity which had grown out of the Pietistic heritage. The work of the Bible societies, all missionary activities ("home missions," "inner missions," "foreign missions"), Christian youth work (YMCA, Christian student movements) were the fields in which Christians of various denominations ("all in each place") co-operated and cultivated the Pietistic idea that the children of God in all denominations are one and must make their oneness manifest. With the growing importance of these activities in modern Christendom this concept of church and church unity was bound to come to the fore. At the turn of the century it was about to overcome the old confessionalism, first in the English speaking countries, especially America, then also in Europe. So the ecumenical movement of the 20th century was born which is characterized by the constant tension between two contradictory and mutually exclusive principles.

II

The early years of the 20th century revealed to a certain degree the great crisis of Christianity which was due to come. These were the years of the *Fin du siècle* in France, the time when Protestant theology on the Continent began to rediscover the eschatological character of the Gospel (e.g. Albert Schweitzer). The growing hostility of the workers of Europe to all religion was one of the signs of that time. The Russian Revolution of 1905 foreshadowed what would happen to Russia and to the Eastern Orthodox Church twelve years later. The Roman Church was shaken in its very foundations by the Modernist controversies which abated after the outbreak of the war and has been revived in an unexpected way after the Second Vatican Council. The political tensions in Europe led to the first attempts on the part of the churches to work for peace among

the nations. And in the other parts of the world the problem of the unity of the Christians became more and more urgent. If unity of the churches could not be attained, then at least ways and means of co-operation had to be found. After all attempts of the 19th century to negotiate unions between the great Protestant churches in the United States had failed, in 1908 the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was founded as a federation of the churches of Reformed background for the purpose of working together in the fields of practical Christianity. For years this had been propagated under the motto, "doctrine divides, service unites." By working together in common tasks they would grow together and make more and more manifest the unity and catholicity of the Church. The idea of the Social Gospel as it was discovered in those years, the application of the Gospel not only to the life of the individual Christian, but to the society as a whole was the strongest motive in the early history of the Federal Council which proved a great success. Churches that could not accept this program remained outside, especially the Lutherans, the Anglicans and conservative Reformed groups. The Anglicans were working together with the Council through a Committee of the Protestant Episcopal Church which had to deal with questions of social ethics. And at least one Lutheran Church, found it possible to co-operate without acquiring full membership. That was the later United Lutheran Church. The Federal Council soon exercised a great influence beyond America. Its program was essentially that of the later "Universal Conference on Life and Work" (Stockholm 1925). It is no overstatement to say that the Federal Council has made American Protestantism that spiritual world power which it became when it entered the church history of Europe after the First World War.

Still more urgent than in countries which had received for generations the immigrants from all countries of the Old World, with their various religious background, was the question for church unity on the mission fields of the entire world. Here the competition of hundreds of Christian denominations threatened to deprive the message of the Gospel of its credibility. The attempts on the part of churches and mission societies to solve at least the most urgent problems of co-operation found their climax in the First World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh in June 1910. It was the first of the great Christian World Conferences of this century and in some respects the most successful one. It has developed the methods of preparing and holding such conferences. The series of the volumes of this conference is the first great monument of the modern ecumenical movement. Its fruits, especially the International Missionary Council, have survived the otherwise devastating effects of the Great War on Christian world missions. One must have known former members of the great conference of Edinburgh in many parts of the world in order to know what this great experience has meant for the spiritual life of individuals and for the growth of the ecumenical idea in the whole of Christendom.

The formation of the Federal Council in America in 1908 and the Missionary Conference of Edinburgh in 1910 were a tremendous challenge to the confessional bodies which the 19th century had produced. It seemed that the non-confessional, Pietistic principle would eventually prevail. It was quite obvious that in the American Council as well as in the missionary movement an unhealthy, dangerous enthusiasm went hand in hand with the most admirable practical achievements. As in the Pietistic movements of the 18th century an otherworldly chiliasm, the expectation of the millennium of Christ's rule on earth, was wedded to a very worldly-wise *praxis pietatis* not only in praiseworthy and important Christian activity, but sometimes even in shrewd church politics, so now a chiliastic expectation of the Kingdom of God which was supposed to be just around the corner, seemed to be inseparable from the work of the Federal Council and from the missionary movement. The last words of the moving address with which John Mott closed the Edinburgh conference are significant. Referring to the opening address by the Archbishop of Canterbury (Davidson) on the first day of the great assembly, he said: "It may well be that the words of the Archbishop shall prove to be a splendid prophecy, and that before many of us taste death we shall see the Kingdom of God come with power." Four years later the First World War broke out. In Stockholm, 1925, the representatives of the Federal Council and its member churches declared that they were determined to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. They were shocked by a sermon in which Bishop Ihmels of Saxony rejected the Pelagianism and made it clear that we men can not bring about God's Kingdom. "This was the most un-Christian sermon I ever heard" said one of the leading American delegates at home in his report.

III

Two churches were especially challenged by this development, Anglicanism and Lutheranism. In 1908 the Anglican bishops of the world met for the Fifth Lambeth Conference. When in 1867 the first of these conferences was summoned to the Palace of the Archbishop of Canterbury (Longley) in London only 76 of the then 144 Anglican bishops had come. Not even all the English bishops were present. Some resented this fantastic enterprise of the colonials—the invitation had been issued at the urgent request of the Church in Canada in 1865—others were afraid of what today is called a "super-church" which might destroy the independence of the bishops. Doctrinal troubles in South Africa with repercussions in other Anglican churches and the continuous union discussions and negotiations in the United States had caused Canada to demand a sort of council for the Anglican Churches of the world. The suggestion was accepted under the condition that only a free con-

ference without any power of legislation and jurisdiction was feasible. This character as a free conference has been retained. The Lambeth Conference has no legal status, even less than the Lutheran World Federation which is incorporated. And the same is true of the Anglican Communion which is not a legal organization, but a spiritual fellowship of the Anglicans of the world. Even the most important decisions of the Lambeth Conferences are only recommendations which are by no means always accepted by the churches.

One must remember the peculiarities of the Constitutional Law of England which never has had a written constitution if one wants to understand the development of these new forms of ecclesiastical institutions in the past 100 years. They had to be developed because the ecclesiastical set-up of England could not be repeated in the colonies and dominions. They rest not on the old doctrines of the Church of England, but on a modern concept of the so-called "historic episcopate" which was unknown to the "Articles of Religion" as well as to the Book of Common Prayer and which was read into the old documents by modern Anglicanism. This concept has become the substitute for the lost dogma of the classical Church of England.

This becomes clear if we ask what the nature of the Lambeth Conference is. Who speaks in their documents? In Vatican II it is "Paul, Bishop, Servant of the Servants of God, together with the Fathers of the Council" who is speaking, the Pope with the Council. At Trent "this holy Synod of Trent . . ." speaks in the proclamations. Lambeth is not a synod, but a free conference of certain bishops. "We Archbishops and Bishops of the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church in communion with the See of Canterbury, three hundred and ten in number from forty-six countries, under the Presidency of Geoffrey, Archbishop of Canterbury . . .". So begins the Encyclical Letter of Lambeth 1958. Who is included in this number? Certainly not the Old Catholic bishops who are also in "full communion," that means "*unrestricted communicatio in sacris*" with the See of Canterbury. Lambeth 1958 has accepted and recommended for acceptance by the Anglican Churches the distinction made by the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lund, 1952, between "full fellowship" and "inter-communion" which would mean "the varying degrees of relation other than full communion, which already exist, or may be established in the future, between Churches of the Anglican family with others outside this family" (*Report*, Part II, p. 23, see Resolution 14). This is a doubtful distinction. There is only one *communicatio in sacris*, practised either legitimately or illegitimately. "*Nulla communicatio in sacris cum haereticis et schismaticis*," this is the rule established by the New Testament (I Cor. 16:22; Rom. 16:17f.; I Tim. 6:20; Titus 3:10; I John 4:1ff.; II John 9ff.) and recognized by all churches that claim to be orthodox. It was also the principle of the Church of England in the past.

The loss of dogmatic substance is the great disease of modern Christendom. It has destroyed or is destroying the majority of the Protestant churches. It seems as if this disease is now even spreading through the Roman Church. What we say here about the Anglicans is more or less true also of us Lutherans. We all, the Christians of all denominations, are involved in what threatens to become the greatest catastrophe of Christianity. Fully conscious of this context, we try to understand our own situation when we try to understand the development of Anglicanism in this century.

Coming back to the problem of the nature of the Lambeth Conference and of the Anglican Communion whose instrument and whose expression it is we ask: What is an Anglican Church? We know what a Lutheran Church is. It is *per definitionem* a Church of the Augsburg Confession, a church in which the Gospel is taught and the sacraments are administered according to the doctrine of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and no other doctrine is allowed to take its place. This would probably mean that certain Scandinavian churches and the territorial churches of Germany, to take only these examples, can no longer be regarded as Lutheran, though no one would deny that strong remnants of the old church do exist in these church bodies. A similar answer could be given if we ask what a Reformed Church is, namely, a church in which the doctrine of the Reformed Confessions is still taught and believed. At the Synod of Dort (1618/9) the Church of England was still represented as one of the Reformed Churches of Europe. Its confession, the Thirty-nine Articles, is doubtless one of the great Reformed confessions of Europe despite its deviations from Calvin. *

Today a church may keep this confession along with the old Book of Common Prayer and yet not be recognized by Canterbury, as e.g., the evangelical wing of the Church of England in South Africa. The present Archbishop recognizes instead the Province of Cape Town, a definitely smaller church which does no longer regard the Thirty-nine Articles as a binding confession of the Church and has replaced the Book of Common Prayer with a new liturgy, as quite a number of Anglican churches have done. To belong to the Anglican communion requires the full communion with the See of Canterbury, and this communion is not bound any longer to the doctrine of that confession which every Anglican priest must sign upon his ordination, but, apart from the ancient creeds, to another doctrine which we shall have to examine presently. Strictly speaking, the nature of Anglicanism can no longer be defined. For if full communion with the See of Canterbury has become the mark of the church and if this communion can be granted to Old Catholics and Eastern Orthodox who expressly condemn as heresy the most important doctrines of the Articles of Religion, and if either full or limited communion can be granted to Lutherans who, in the view of many Anglicans, are heretics, then the borders of the church cannot be defined, and this means: even the border between church and heresy, truth and error disappears.

Modern Anglicanism is the attempt to have church without confession. It is certainly an interesting and in some respects highly important experiment, for this experiment has definitely shown that the church vanishes with its confession. A confession may be altered, it may be developed, it may be exchanged for another confession. But no church can abolish it altogether without destroying itself. Since 1958 the "Anglican Communion" understands itself as a "family" of churches, as the document quoted shows. This is the usage which came into existence at the Faith and Order-Conference at Lund, 1952. So the Report of Lambeth 1958 speaks of "Churches of the same denominational or confessional family, such as the Churches of the Anglican Communion, and of the Orthodox, Lutheran or Reformed 'families' of Churches" (*loc. cit.* p.23). This usage is more than a picture. It illustrates the great change which has come about in the modern ecumenical movement. The great denominations of Christendom used to understand themselves as confessional bodies or as "confessions." What constituted Lutheranism, Anglicanism or the various types of Reformed Christianity was the confession of their faith. Today the confession plays no longer that role. They have become "families." A family is not constituted by the common confession of faith, but by the common descent, physical and mental similarities, language, history, cultural traditions, treasured heirlooms. "Your speech betrays you." In this case the new speech betrays the end of the confessional churches, "the end of the confessional era."

IV

It was Anglicanism which took up the challenge which the ecumenical ideas of the American Federal Council and of the Edinburgh Conference posed to the confessional bodies. When in 1908 the Fifth Lambeth Conference met in conjunction with the Pan-Anglican Congress, the Church of England and her daughters overseas were still very conscious of their Anglican heritage and their mission to the entire world. Though Anglicanism was divided in parties and the old heritage of the English Reformation had become the possession of a minority party, the "Catholic Revival" (Brilioth) of the 19th century had borne its fruits. The old Tractarianism of J. H. Newman and his friends who remained inside the Church of England had changed into various High Church and Anglo-Catholic groups. But it has left to the later generations the ideals of a truly Catholic Church and the firm belief in the divine character of the episcopal office. The first of the Tracts for the Times, "Thoughts on the Ministerial Commission," written by Newman in 1833 in his superb English and sent out to all ministers of the Church of England has had a tremendous influence on the entire clergy. Its mighty appeal to remember "our apostolic descent" still resounds today in the hearts of the Anglican clergy. "We have

been born, not of blood, nor of the will of man, but of God. The Lord Jesus Christ gave His Spirit to His Apostles; they in turn laid their hands on those who should succeed them; and these again on others; and so the sacred gift has been handed down to our present bishops, who have appointed us as their assistants, and in some sense representatives." This has become the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae* in modern Anglicanism. The Apostolic Succession has replaced the apostolic faith of the Reformers.

While the Catholic churches East and West have retained and are retaining the "apostolic succession" as a matter of faith and order, they never have placed that emphasis on the succession which we find in the Anglican Church. To them the apostolicity of the Church is the threefold *apostolicitas originis, successionis et doctrinae*. When Archbishop Ramsay—then of York—paid an official visit to the Patriarch of Moscow and asked for the recognition of the Anglican orders the answer of the Patriarch was: We are not interested in your succession. We are interested in your doctrine. What does your church believe and teach? A heretic is, so to speak, for the Church of England not a man who teaches a false doctrine, but a man who claims to teach the Gospel and to administer the sacraments without the episcopal commission. Since every Anglican clergyman has received this commission there are no real heretics in that church, whatever errors may be taught by individuals.

This strong belief in the "historic episcopate" was the soul of Anglicanism when the ecumenical discussions began. This was the reason why they rejected the ecumenical ideas of the Federal Council and why they were dissatisfied with the Conference of Edinburgh which had necessarily to avoid doctrinal issues. The Church was at that time rich in great men, great in scholarship and character. Bishop Gore, for instance, a man who had been instrumental in reconciling "Catholicism" and modern critical theology, was on the brink of leaving the Church when in East Africa (Kikuyu) shortly before the War intercommunion between Anglicans and men of the Free Churches had been practiced. Charles Brent, then Bishop of the Philippines, belonged at Edinburgh to a group of Anglicans who every morning met for Holy Communion. In this group, he reports, the plan of a World Conference on Faith and Order was conceived. The task of this conference should not be to negotiate unions—this could be done only from church to church—or to suggest and prepare plans for church unions—this became a task of Faith and Order only after it had been made a branch of the World Council of Churches. The conference should rather be limited to a thorough investigation of the disagreements and agreements existing between the churches and to the communication of these results to each member church. This Conference was officially established at the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in America, 1910, and began its preparatory work which led, delayed by the war and other circumstances, to the World Conference at Lausanne, 1927.

The Lambeth Conference of 1908 reaffirmed the program of church reunion which had been prepared in the United States and Canada in the 19th century and which had been officially adopted by the Third Lambeth Conference in 1888, the famous Lambeth Quadrilateral. As necessary and sufficient for the reunion of the churches is to be regarded the acceptance of 1. the Holy Scriptures, 2. the Apostles and the Nicene Creeds, 3. the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, 4. the historic episcopate. This program has since been reaffirmed by each subsequent Lambeth Conference (1898, 1908, 1920, 1930, 1948, 1966). It was proclaimed in the Lambeth Appeal of 1920 "to all Christian people." It had inspired the founders of the World Conference of Faith and Order, and it has been tried out in many union schemes in various parts of the world. The bone of contention in these attempts has always been the acceptance of the "historic episcopate." It has always been understood that this does not exclude various forms of the episcopal office which always should give the presbyters, deacons and the laity their responsible part in the administration of the church. The question which has led to the most serious discussions and contentions was always whether the ordinations properly received in Protestant churches without the succession in the Anglican sense can be recognized as valid. In South India their validity is practically recognized for an interim period of 30 years. This has been rejected in Lanka (Ceylon) and other countries. Various forms of supplementary ordinations have been suggested and tried out. The name "reordination" for the rite is generally repudiated.

No satisfactory solution to this problem has been found, and probably none can be found, especially since the validity of the Anglican orders which is taken for granted only by the Anglicans themselves and some high church groups outside the Anglican orbit has not been recognized by the Eastern Orthodox or the Roman Church. That the Anglicans are in possession of the apostolic succession in the technical sense must be admitted since nowadays always an Old Catholic bishop takes part in the consecration of an Anglican bishop. But how will they justify their separation of the apostolicity of the doctrine from the apostolicity of the succession? Every Catholic knows that the succession means nothing without the doctrine. Behind the controversies between the Anglicans and the Free Churches and other Protestants there stands in the last analysis a dogmatic issue. If we are told that we must be ordained (or whatever the name of that rite may be) by a bishop if our ministry is to be valid, we want to know: Why? If our Anglican friends tell us that it is sufficient to have the hands of a bishop laid on us and that no doctrine on the nature of this rite is required, we must ask: Since when does the Christian Church know sacraments or essential rites without a doctrine about them? What is the doctrine of ordination in your church and what is its basis? From the fact that in some cases we hear in the New Testament that the apostles laid their hands on future office bearers it does not follow

that this was always so. But even if it should have been a common custom, where do we read that this custom must be continued at all times? In the New Testament we hear only that the commission to preach and to administer the sacraments goes on until the end of the world. But we have no command on the form how this commission must be passed on. The Church has certainly the freedom to choose episcopal ordination. But the dogma that a non-episcopal ordination is invalid or defective and needs supplementation is certainly not based on Holy Writ, as any dogma of the Church should be. It is a theological opinion based on tradition and comes under what the Anglican Articles VI and XXXIV teach on such tradition.

V

The long and bitter disputes on the fourth point of the Lambeth-Quadrilateral have overshadowed the first three points. It is not necessary to discuss them here. Only one point may be made. Is it really sufficient to accept the two ancient creeds? They say nothing against Pelagianism which has been condemned even by Rome. Is it possible to ignore the Reformation completely? Behind these points the ecumenical idea of Anglican Latitudinarianism of the 17th century becomes visible, the idea that it must be possible to unite the churches on the basis of "the Ancient undivided Church" of the first four or five centuries. These are thoughts which have proved untenable, not only from the point of view of history and theology, but also from the practical experiences on the field of church unions in so many parts of the world. The Lambeth-Quadrilateral was an achievement of the Anglicans of the 19th century, a real achievement in view of the practical problems of church union in America. It is certainly one of the most important documents in this respect, a real achievement if one considers the place and the time of its origin. It is with respect that one must take cognizance of the endeavours of those bishops and theologians in the United States and Canada to give an answer to the urgent problem of church unity in these countries. Compared with other attempts this stands out especially in the seriousness of its approach. These Anglicans have taught their countrymen that church unity is not simply a matter of organization. But they were working under conditions which are no longer those in which the churches of the outgoing 20th century have to live and work. One wonders why modern Anglicanism has never tried to improve it apart from altering some phrases which often were a watering down of the content. One could write a history of modern Anglican theology by simply following up the attempts to re-formulate the passage on the Scriptures. Theologically and ecclesiastically it is now obsolete.

It was an anachronism to proclaim it so emphatically in the Appeal "To all Christian People" and to ignore completely the wise and realistic proposal of a "League of Churches" put forward in

the touching Appeal to the Churches by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Constantinople.

To reaffirm it at the conferences up to 1958 was not only a blunder, but a sign of a regrettable stagnation. When the Tenth Lambeth Conference will meet next year to celebrate a century of Anglican union, the Quadrilateral will be eighty years old. Has nothing really changed in Anglican thinking of the Church and its ministry? Why is this great Church which once was leading in Biblical and historical scholarship stagnating in its theology? Some searching questions should be asked by the bishops at Lambeth 1968.

The greatest shortcomings lies in the fact that this attempt of a great Christian Church to speak to the ecumenical enthusiasts of its time and to warn them against the dissolution of the churches into small ecumenical conventicles ("all in each place") has utterly failed. Why? Perhaps a church which has ceased to be a confessional church and has degenerated into a "family" can no longer speak for the "confessional bodies." What the Anglican Churches now experience is the experience of modern Protestantism: The abandonment of the old confession leads to the loss of any confession and to the dissolution of the Church. For the church, any church, dies with the loss of its dogmatic content. There are no "undogmatic" churches because the dogma belongs to the very nature of Christ's Church. If the era of the confessions ends, then the era of the Church would end.

What has happened wherever the Lambeth Quadrilateral was used as the pattern of church unions is the dissolution of the Church. "All in each place" agree on a new confession and a new church order, all in South India, all in Ceylon, all in North India, all in each African mission field. They all accept the Scriptures (in what sense is left to them). All accept the two ancient creeds (with a "reasonable liberty of interpretation"). All allow the continued use of the local Catechisms and of the classical confessions of the Reformation, provided nothing is regarded as binding doctrine except "the faith ever held by the Church" as it is "witnessed to and safeguarded" (not confessed) in the old Creeds. Each of these churches, South and North India, Ceylon, Tanzania and the other new national churches has, of course, its own problems which, as we are told, must be settled in the confession (why? not every question must be dealt with in a confession); each of these union churches tries to improve the organization of the ministry. And so union stands against union. For Bishop Newbegin the Church of South India is the real union. In Ceylon and in other places they declare: Never again a South India. The Methodists in South India belong to the local union. The Methodists of Australia and New Zealand will join their local unions, as the Methodists in Canada did. But beyond the border, in the U.S.A. the Methodists refuse to join the United Church of Christ. They will perhaps be in Dr. Clarkson Blake's forty million Super-Church which he once

proclaimed in the Cathedral of his great friend Bishop Pike. This, then, will be the set-up of Christendom in the next generations: a chaos of United Churches replacing the old chaos of the denominations of the confessional era.

VI

No resistance was to be expected from the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches of the world. There were and still are Reformed churches with strong convictions concerning the dogma of the Church. But they are a minority in the Reformed "family," strangers in what once was the great Reformed and Presbyterian Church. Still today the old custom of preaching on the Heidelberg Catechism is retained in Dutch Reformed churches throughout the world. Their knowledge of and love for the Catechism could put us Lutherans to shame. Also Reformed theology has rediscovered the Reformed confessions after the First World War, partly under the influence of Karl Barth whose famous Gifford Lectures of 1938 on the Scottish Confession of 1560 were not only a monument of this discovery, but were also a confession in themselves.

But in Barth as in the entire modern Reformed theology there is a strange tension, if not a blunt contradiction, between confessionalism and anti-confessionalism. This became obvious already in 1925 when Barth wrote an opinion for the "World Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System," which was meeting at Cardiff, on the question whether a new Reformed confession of faith was desirable and possible (*Theology and Church, Collected Essays*, vol. 2). He denied that question by presenting his view of a Reformed confession. In contrast to the Lutherans who claim for their Augsburg Confession not only validity for all Lutheran Churches, but also validity for the future because (*quia*) it expresses the truth of God's Word, Barth understood the Reformed confession as the expression by a locally limited Christian community (e.g., Switzerland, France, Belgium, Scotland, Hungary) of the truth which they had found in the Scriptures. So he accepted "the pious *quatenus*" of Reformed confessions. The church accepts this confession "as far as" it expresses the truth of God's Word. If God leads us into a better understanding we replace it by a new confession. So the validity of the confession is also limited in time, *bis auf weiteres*, for the time being. This is not simply the view of the old Reformed Church. The Reformed churches of the 16th and 17th century knew also a *quia*. It was the view of Karl Barth who in very many points deviates from Calvin and from classical Calvinism. One is reminded of the famous words in the sermon which Robinson preached to the Pilgrim Fathers when they left for America. Luther and Calvin, he said, were shining lights in their time, but they did not penetrate into the whole counsel of God. God will let break forth from His Word new truths. Some of his best friends have found in Barth something of that enthusiasm of

the early Congregationalists. The real confession is the new confession, and the Church must continue to confess in that sense that it formulates again and again its faith anew. In this sense he saw in the Barmen Declaration the real confession of a really "Confessing Church" and has always desired that this new confession should be elevated to the rank of the confessions of the Reformation. With this idea he has inspired the whole "Confessing Church" in Germany and deeply influenced the ecumenical circles including Lutherans like Bishop Lilje who has tried time and again to cause the Lutherans to confess the old faith in new tongues which would be understandable to man in our time (see his speech at the Minneapolis assembly of the L.W.F. and his utterances at Helsinki).

Though the Reformed Churches did not accept Barth's view put forward at Cardiff—the question was referred to a committee—and though the endeavours to solve the problem of a new confession have never ceased, there was no possibility that the Reformed Churches as a whole could give a witness against the enthusiasm of modern Ecumenism. There are signs of a growing interest in the confession of the church such as the new "Confession of 1967" which the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. is going to adopt. Whatever one may think of its content—it is a collection of old and new confessions including the Barmen Declaration which henceforth should be regarded as a Reformed Confession and nothing else—in any case this publication shows that the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches do not want to lose their identity as churches of a particular confession. However, as long as the authority of these partly contradictory confessions is not clarified and as long as the Reformed Churches have in their midst the most dangerous ecumenical enthusiasts and are partly dominated by non-Christian concepts of unity (the Masonic concept of a "religion in which we all agree" that is supposed to underlie all positive religions) there is no hope that they will escape the destiny of being swallowed up by the unconfessional union churches or even an Utopian Ecumenical Church (under the Bishop of Rome).

VII

We have now paved the way for a discussion of Lutheranism in the ecumenical movement, and especially of the nature of the Lutheran World Federation. More than any other of the great Protestant churches Lutheranism has preserved its confession or at least a respect for it. Even the most liberal churches which regard themselves as belonging to the Lutheran "family" and claim to represent the Lutheran "tradition" show a strange loyalty to the Augsburg Confession and to Luther's Small Catechism." What was the attitude of the Lutherans to the Ecumenical Movement? We have seen how the Lutheran churches began to form their own confessional organization, the "General Evangelical Lutheran Conference" in 1868, a time when the existence of Lutheranism as a church in

Germany was threatened by the political preponderance of the Prussian State that had been enlarged by the conquest of Lutheran territories. This Conference was established with the outspoken aim to defend the Lutheran Church against those who denied its right to exist as a church and to preserve the Lutheran confession for the coming generations. It had the strength and the weaknesses of a defense organization. But despite its weaknesses, organizational and otherwise, it has been the instrument to preserve Lutheran consciousness and to maintain interest in Lutheran theology, mainly through its famous *Kirchenzeitung* (first editor Luthardt) which had a similar influence on European Lutheranism as Walther's *Lutheraner* on the Lutherans in America. The organization still lives on in Germany as *Lutherisches Einigungswerk*. Regional conferences in Germany and in Scandinavia (one of the most important at Upsala in 1911) with participation of American Lutherans kept the idea of a "Lutheran *oikoumene*" alive.

Also for the Lutherans the impulse to further organization came from America where the First World War was instrumental in creating a new solidarity between various Lutheran groups. "The American movement toward unity and co-operation was highlighted by such developments as the formation of the Norwegian Lutheran Church (1917), now part of The American Lutheran Church; the United Lutheran Church in America (1918); and the National Lutheran Council (1918). Events at home and abroad, coupled with an earnest observance of the 400th Anniversary of the Reformation, provided the logic and impetus for greater unity and co-operation." So Dr. A. R. Wentz describes the situation in his highly interesting chapter "The Lutheran World Convention, 1923-46" in *The Lutheran Churches of the World*, published in 1952 by the L.W.F. at Geneva (p. 24). This movement corresponds in a certain way to that which led to the formation of the Federal Council of 1908 by the various Reformed groups and churches. The uniting power of co-operation was now experienced also by Lutheran Churches in America.

A vast work of relief and reconstruction began in war-torn Europe. Already before the conclusion of the Armistice in France the newly founded National Lutheran Council sent its first commissioners to Europe to bring the greeting of the Lutherans in America to their fellow-believers in Europe, to investigate the situation "with a view to enable the National Lutheran Council intelligently to afford such counsel and succor as will contribute to *strengthen, hearten and encourage them in establishing the church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession* in harmonious relation to our whole household of faith" (*loc. cit.*, p. 25; emphasis added). The relief work which now began was by no means limited to Lutherans. Much of the feeding of the hungry which went under the name of "*Quäkerspeisung*" was actually the work of the N.L.C., just as after World War II the relief work of the Lutherans, including the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, benefited the needy irrespective

of their church affiliation. The rule of St. Paul, "Let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10), was the guiding principle. The newly discovered solidarity of the Lutherans in America was now extended to the Lutherans in all Europe, especially to the impoverished and starving people in Central and Eastern Europe, including Russia, and even to the refugees in Asia and the Near East.

The soul of this great work was John A. Morehead whom church history will always mention as one of the great leaders of the Lutheran Church in the 20th century. Deep Lutheran piety, the concern of a true shepherd for the souls of men, the great Christian love of the pioneers of the Lutheran Inner Mission such as Wichern and Löhe, sincere confessional loyalty and an admirable ability of organization were the outstanding marks of Morehead. His bequest to the later Lutheran World Federation was that the works of Christian charity must always have the first place. They are still the outstanding achievement of the Lutheran World Federation and should never be curtailed, although it must be a matter of grave concern that the Lutheran Church today—also in the countries where not two generations of theologians were decimated through the wars—is stronger in charity than in theology. It should be equally strong in both. The great successor of Morehead at the end of the Second World War and in the L.W.F. was Sylvester C. Michelfelder who repeated the work in a way worth of the great tradition.

All this led to the formation of the Lutheran World Convention at Eisenach, 1923. One hundred and forty-seven delegates from twenty-two nations and four continents established an organization which in its constituency and its aims went far beyond what the old Conference could have been. Abdel Ross Wentz, the church historian of Gettysburg, the only one of the American delegates who lived to see and to help to organize the Lutheran World Federation twenty-four years later at Lund, expressed in his report his conviction that "a glorious future lies before our Lutheran Church . . . Many of us go away from the first Lutheran World Convention with high hopes that what here has been done is really the beginning of a new period in the history of the Evangelical Lutheran Church" (*The Lutheran Churches of the World*, p. 29). On the whole Lutheran sobriety prevailed. Söderblom stated expressly that the purpose of the meeting was "not to organize ourselves, but to edify one another in our common faith. Within Christianity as a whole, it is our special mission as Lutherans to cultivate the strength of the inner life" (*op. cit.* p. 28; emphasis added). Strength and weakness of Lutheranism of that time are expressed in these words. Its strength was the Lutheran piety, the respect for the Word of God and an unquestioned loyalty to the confessional heritage which pervaded the proceedings of Eisenach as well as the whole work of the Lutheran World Convention. Its obvious weakness was the readiness to leave the building up of the future organization of

Christendom to the Anglicans and the Reformed Protestants. Two years later, at the Universal Conference on Life and Work in Stockholm, it became obvious that despite Söderblom's leading role the leadership of the Ecumenical Movement was bound to fall to the non-Lutheran churches of the English speaking world.

What was the reason for this? One reason was the state of the Lutheran churches in the defeated, impoverished and powerless nations on the Continent. In Scandinavia the Lutheran Church existed in the form of national churches in the small and linguistically divided nations. But the deepest reason was the lack of inner strength, especially in the field of doctrine and theology. There was—and is still today—an amazing amount of sound Lutheran piety in all of these churches, although the heritage of the fathers is rapidly decreasing. There was in the circles out of which the Lutheran World Convention grew a deep attachment to the Lutheran Church and its confession, an unquestioned loyalty to the doctrine of the Reformation. This was especially the case in the Lutheran Churches in America. Only with the highest respect can one think of the Lutheran leaders of that generation, of men like Morehead, Reu, Hein and Knubel. They loved their church because they loved their Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel. But even in the old Lutheran countries the convinced Lutherans were a small minority. Theology was dominated by Historism and Liberalism and was slowly coming under the influence of new powers, the social and national theories of that time, and the theology of great Reformed thinkers such as Barth, Thurneysen and Emil Brunner. There was a Luther-Renaissance, especially in Sweden and in Germany. But this remained mainly in the spheres of academic theologians. It did not penetrate the life of the church, as Karl Barth's theology later did when in Germany the conflict with Hitler's totalitarian state began. Lutheran theology in America had produced some great scholars, e.g., Michael Reu. But Biblical and dogmatic theology remained, as in many American churches, limited to passing on a great tradition. The refusal of the Lutheran Churches within the Synodical Conference to co-operate with L.W.C. is not not surprising. These churches had not and could not have fellowship with the national and territorial churches of Europe. They knew exactly what was going on in the theology of Europe: the dissolution of the dogmatic substance.

There is a strange contradiction within European Lutheranism which might be illustrated by the example of Söderblom. He who has personally known him, one of the great Europeans of his age, knows the various strata of the soul of this, in many ways, great man. Swedish pastor in Paris, then professor of Comparative Religion in Upsala and later at Leipsic, he was called to the archepiscopal see of Upsala in 1914. The tragedy of the war which separated his best friends, the tasks of neutral Sweden to work for reconciliation between nations and churches showed him his great life's work. Brought up in the Swedish Church, as student an ardent member

of the Student Christian Movement with its interest in world missions and in ecumenical activities, he developed into that type of theologian who became leaders in the churches of Europe. The theological Liberalism of the Religion-Historical School could never extinguish his love for the Church of his beloved country. He was a comprehensive thinker in whose system there was room for general revelation. "There is a living God. I can prove it," were his strange last words—referring to the rich phenomena of Biblical and Christian history, the Saints of all ages, including Luther. With equal love he looked at Catholicism and Protestantism. The scholar became as Primate of Sweden a man of the Church, a colleague of the great Anglican bishops of those years. A genial and lovable person he was above the deadly seriousness with which other church leaders looked upon their office and themselves. The deepest tension which developed in the years after Eisenach 1923 was the tension between his love for the Lutheran Church and the ecumenical obligations he had entered. It could happen that at Lausanne after an almost sleepless night he rejected an important paper on the unity of Christendom and the relationship of the individual churches with it which had already been distributed in print, and replaced it by another version which was meant to do more justice to the doctrine of the Lutheran confessions on the Church. The whole tragedy of Lutheran participation in the ecumenical movement reflects itself in this scene. One of the few men who at that time realized the insufficiency and the dangers of Söderblom's theology was Archbishop Johannessén of Finland.

We cannot write here the history of the Lutheran World Convention. Suffice it to say that the assemblies of Eisenach (1923), Copenhagen (1929) and Paris (1935) revealed the following facts. At no time did the theological work of the Convention, and this is true also of the Lutheran World Federation, measure up with the practical work of charity. Theology was almost entirely left to the "*Lutherakademie*" of Sondershausen, a private enterprise of Prof. Carl Stange of Göttingen and partly financed by the state, even at the time of Hitler's rule. The relationship of the Convention to the World Conferences on Life and Work and on Faith and Order was never defined. Thus Lutheranism, as far as it was represented by the Convention, did never define an ecumenical program beyond the resolution of Paris, "to bring the Lutheran Churches and organizations of the world into an enduring and intimate relationship with one another in order to promote oneness of faith and confession, and to ward off antagonistic and hostile influences" (*op. cit.*, p. 29). The Convention planned for Philadelphia in 1940 would have had as a major issue the problem "Church and churches." But the Second World War intervened. The Convention, since Paris 1935 under the incompetent leadership of a German provincial bishop, came to an unedifying end during the war years; while the Lutheran Churches, since 1925, in the wake of the Ecumenical Movement of the Reformed and Anglican

churches of the West, were drifting into the harbour of the World Council of Churches which after a long process of formation was established at Amsterdam in 1948.

Before that happened, the Lutherans met in 1947 at Lund to replace the deceased Lutheran World Convention by a stronger organization, the Lutheran World Federation. No objection could be raised against that, provided it was made clear from the outset what the relationship between the L.W.F. and the W.C.C. should be and under what conditions Lutheran churches which took their confession seriously could join the new ecumenical organizations. Lund failed to clarify this issue which had been left to the L.W.F. by the program for Philadelphia. So the last opportunity for the last of the great confessional churches that go back to the Reformation to "confess in the sight of God and before all Christendom" the Biblical doctrine of the Church and its unity was missed. We cannot blame our American brethren for that. They maintained the great tradition of the old Convention and repeated the work of relief and reconstruction on a much larger scale and under the most difficult circumstances under the able leadership of S. C. Michelfelder who in this respect maintained the true *successio apostolica* of the sainted J. A. Morehead. But the European Lutherans at the receiving end should have shown their gratitude by doing in the field of theology what the Americans simply could not do. They have been punished for their grave sin of omission. The frictions and constant conflicts between what is left of Lutheranism at Geneva and the ruthless ecumenical pirates of the W.C.C.—we speak of them, not of some Christian gentlemen who may be found also there—are the consequences of the failure of the Lutherans to confess their faith when it was still time. Perhaps this faith had become very weak and was in some cases even already lost.

What could have been done before the die was cast at Amsterdam? Towards the end of the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne, 1927, Lutheran delegates tabled a solemn declaration which was signed by the leaders of the Lutheran delegations from America, France, Germany, Latvia, Norway and Sweden. In this they protested against the idea of many of the members of the conference that the doctrinal documents should be accepted by majority vote and passed on to the churches as suggestions for church unions. Instead they demanded that these texts should be carefully studied by a small committee of experts from the various denominations who possessed the confidence of their churches, and should be the basis of responsible discussions between the churches (Orthodox, Lutheran, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, Congregational etc.). In other words: not interdenominational conferences of more or less accidental constituency, but the responsible dialog between the great churches of Christendom should be the forum for ecumenical decisions. This declaration, however, was soon forgotten. In the assemblies of the W.C.C. no Lutheran Church has ever made a confession. This became the privilege of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

The Lutheran declaration of Lausanne which found the sympathy of many delegates from "confessional" churches of various denominations anticipated the great decision which was to be made at Amsterdam, 1948. The issue was whether the World Council of Churches should be organized along regional or denominational lines. It was the old issue: Should the unity of the Church be first the unity of "all in each place" or the unity of those who, though in many places, are united by one faith? Amsterdam was a sweeping victory of the pietistic-unionistic-enthusiastic "all in each place." This victory was confirmed by the declaration on "The Church's Unity" (*New Delhi Report*, p. 116ff., see also the brief outline of the discussion pp. 134ff.) The W.C.C.'s "List of Member Churches" (*New Delhi Report*, pp. 408-20) enumerates the churches geographically, according to the alphabetical order of the countries from Argentina to Yugoslavia. If one wants to know which Lutheran Churches are members one has to search for each of them in each country. The existence of confessional bodies is not recognized or passed over in silence. The American Lutheran Church belongs together with the two denominations of the Religious Society of Friends and with the Seventh Day Baptists to the group U.S.A., and not to a group "Lutheran Churches." It was just this Church which had demanded, as a condition for membership in the W.C.C. that the World Council should be organized not regionally, but according to confessions.² This *conditio sine qua non* was soon forgotten, as similar conditions in the case of other churches. Before New Delhi the Church of Greece was prepared to remain in the W.C.C. under three conditions, e.g., that the International Missionary Council should not be integrated into the W.C.C. None of the conditions was fulfilled, and the Church of Greece gave in. The Vatican of Geneva knows how to deal with rebels.

VIII

So the new Lutheran World Federation failed in 1947 to propose and to fight for an ecumenical program that would have been in harmony with the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession concerning the Church and its unity. What is possible among Christian churches that cannot reach full agreement on the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of Christ's sacraments is the serious and responsible discussion of the doctrinal issues dividing Christendom. One has only to look into the Third Part of the Smalcald Articles to know that almost every question of the Christian doctrine, including the article on Justification, can be discussed by Lutherans with responsible theologians of other churches. However, there is one inescapable condition for any dialog of this nature.

² Editor's note: The WCC Constitution, Amsterdam, 1948 provided for representation on a confessional basis. For a discussion, cf. A. R. Wentz, *A Basic History of Lutheranism in America*, Revised edition (Philadelphia-Fortress Press: 1964), 366-371.

This was to Luther the unquestioned acceptance of "the sublime articles of the divine majesty," the Trinitarian and Christological dogma of the Church. There is, moreover, the possibility for churches of different dogmatic convictions which share this common possession to form a federation, transitory or permanent, for the achievement of certain practical aims in the realms of Christian charity, of legislation by the state concerning marriage and family, school and education, the legal status of the churches, and perhaps in other fields which lie outside the proper functions of the church in preaching the Gospel and administering the sacraments.

What a task would it have been for the Lutherans at Lund 1952, for the last of the confessional churches which could do that, to proclaim an ecumenical program of such nature or at least to inaugurate negotiations about that before entering the W.C.C. Then the Lutheran World Federation could have been built up as the organization of Lutheran Churches which would be prepared to help on their part to organize a World Council of Churches as a Council of the great Christian Churches built upon the foundation of the historic Christian Faith which all claimed to share, a federation of the confessional bodies which then might enter in discussions concerning overcoming their divisions. This would not have been impossible as far as the W.C.C. itself is concerned. For even this Council has certain "criteria for membership," and not only the question of the size of a church seeking membership and similar organizational questions. The W.C.C. would not accept any sect. Only churches which accept the "Basis" can be accepted. The old basis, adopted at Amsterdam, was indeed unsatisfactory and had to be redrafted. The Lutherans demanded that the Scriptures should be mentioned, the Orthodox demanded a clear confession of the Trinitarian faith. The liberal churches did not want anything that smelled of a dogma. The Americans wanted their Social Gospel to make this world a better place to live in, worthy to be called "Kingdom of God." To satisfy them all the new basis was accepted which reads: "The W.C.C. is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the Scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the One God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit." The Orthodox accepted this because they understood that to contain a confession of the faith in the Trinity. The liberal swallowed it as liturgical formula without dogmatic meaning. The Lutherans seemed to have not even noticed the absence of an affirmation of the authority of the Scriptures. Since only acceptance of the formula is expected and not of any interpretation of it, every one is happy, except the Unitarian Churches which in England already belong to the British Council of Churches ("Can what an Englishman believes ever be heresy?", asks Bernard Shaw.). But there are already enough Unitarians in the member churches of the W.C.C.

But could the new L.W.F. have taken in 1947, or at any later time, a clear stand in this matter? The answer must be no. The

Lutheran territorial churches of Germany were just at that time confronted with the same problem. Should the necessary reorganization of German Protestantism lead to a renewed and improved Federation of Churches, as it had existed in the *Kirchenbund* since 1922? Should a "United Lutheran Church of Germany," a "Reformed Church of Germany" and, if necessary, a "United Evangelical Church of Germany" form a "Council of the Evangelical Churches" of Germany, as it was proposed by many Lutherans as the only possible solution, if to the Churches of the Reformation in Germany the freedom should be granted to constitute itself and to organize its life in conformity with their confession? Or should all evangelical churches of Germany be compelled to enter a pan-German Evangelical Church irrespective of their confessional obligations?

It was not only the alleged national interest, but mainly the weakness of the Lutherans and the strong desires of Karl Barth and the growing Vatican of Geneva which prevented a victory of the confessional over the regional principle. How could the bishops who in Germany allowed, with a bad conscience, the demands of the confession to be defeated, maintain it at Lund and Amsterdam? And the Scandinavians? Sweden which accidentally had retained the apostolic succession, had established intercommunion with Canterbury when the Swedish Bishops Conference of 1922 sanctioned the agreement which had been accepted by Lambeth 1920. Still in 1922 Söderblom had to defend this measure against the confessional Lutherans in Sweden who pointed out that the Church of England denied many doctrines of the Lutheran Church. By the time of Lund 1947 no objection raised was any longer.

Meanwhile the intercommunion has grown into full communion; e.g., in any consecration of a Swedish bishop an Anglican bishop takes active part, even on the Swedish mission fields in India and Africa. In Sweden the "apostolic succession" was defended as an adiaphoron as any specific form of the rite of ordination indeed is an adiaphoron, a rite neither commanded nor forbidden by God's Word. This excuse is accepted by all churches in the L.W.F. No one still seems to remember the Tenth Article of the Formula of Concord which states expressly that *in casu confessionis aut scandali*, when a clear confession is demanded from the church and its leaders nothing is adiaphoron. As a matter of fact, the Swedish Church has come to cherish the "succession" in such a way that there are many Swedish pastors who would regard the ordination as practiced in the other Lutheran Churches as at least defective. We do not know whether this is true also of the female pastors with which God has plagued the Swedish Church and others. The plague is spreading through the world. There are thousands of ordained women in the Protestant churches, more than 500 of them in Germany (182 in the Lutheran, 4 in the Reformed, the rest in the United Churches). The L.W.F. could not even discuss this matter. Whether we like it or not, whether we understand the New Testament rule or not, it is a clear command which Paul gives

as a command of the Lord (I Cor. 14:33-37), that the public ministry of the Word and the sacraments should not be exercised by women. We seem to have reached the stage when human traditions begin to rule the Church, while God's Word is rejected and those who take a divine command seriously are slandered as unevangelical legalists. How could the Church of Sweden possibly criticize the Anglican proposals for union? How could it possibly take a stand for evangelical confessionalism at Amsterdam and in the subsequent meetings and activities of the W.C.C.?

And what about the Lutheran Churches of America? They would have been entitled to speak and act for the Lutheran Confession at that time. In the thirty years which now have passed since the formation of the L.W.F. at Lund they have increased in stature and in favor with man. Whether also in wisdom and favor with God remains an open question. They have sent their young men to Europe to get a European degree in theology, preferably a German one which is supposed to be the seal of perfect wisdom and knowledge. The time may come when our American brethren will realize that "authentic scholarship" and "relevant scientific theology" does not save churches. If we can wish the younger generation in our American sister churches one thing, it should be the spirit of criticism which has since the days of the great thinkers of Greece created science and scholarship in the Western World. It is that *technē kritike*, that art of judging which Plato has defined as the attempt to understand the deepest essence of the realities without destroying them (*sozein ta phainomena*). It was a false "critical" theology which has destroyed the Word of God instead of explaining it. A theology is false and a nuisance to the Church which destroys the dogmatic substance of the church under the pretext to make it plain or to express it in "relevant" terms which modern man would readily accept. It is true of mankind in all ages: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God," even not the man who has reached the state of "maturity."

Let us hope that our younger brethren in America become a little more critical, not only critical of their fathers and their churches, but also of the churches abroad. They should ask themselves how it was possible that the churches in Europe accept so uncritically all claims of the Anglican Church. Why do neither the church historians nor the dogmaticians nor the practical theologians examine these claims? Why does no one ask, in an age of alleged deeper Biblical studies, what the New Testament teaches on Church, church unity, the ministry? Why do we all take modern concepts of the ecumenical movement for granted? Who tells us that God wants all who call themselves Christians to be united in one big visible church? Certainly not our Lord and His Apostles. We read that into the New Testament. Who has invented the idea that the Church as the Body of Christ consists of churches and that this body is unfortunately divided? The body of Christ cannot be divided, neither the sacramental nor the spiritual body. "A sumente

non concisus / non confractus, non divisus / Integer accipitur." Who has invented the myth of an "Ancient undivided Church" which must be "reunited" into the "Future Reunited Church"? Who has invented the idea that by means of a dialog we can attain unity? In some cases it may be possible, in others not. Most certainly it will not be possible if this dialog aims at a minimum of doctrine and at formulas of compromise. A lot of these have been written in our time to overcome the doctrinal differences concerning the sacraments.

No formula has been found yet to overcome the contrast between those who teach that the consecrated bread is the body of Christ and those who teach that it is not. Even if in Holland, the home of Cornelis Hoen from whom Zwingli took over his doctrine, Roman Catholics now try their hands at a compromise by suggesting a new doctrine of "transsignification" ("In Holland everything changes in the Church except bread and wine"), the alternative remains. And all compromises on the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Baptism are marred by the fact that when unity seems to be reached the representative of the Quakers and the Salvation Army rises and states that all is nice and good, but that external sacraments are not necessary. Then you may try to convince him that this is wrong. In the very moment when the Quaker admits, he ceases to be a Quaker and must be replaced by another Quaker. So the dialog must be continued until the last member of the Society of Friends has accepted the sacraments. And the dialog itself? We already hear alarming statements that our separated brethren in Rome, after they have converted the other churches to a renewed Catholic Church wish to extend the dialog to the Jews, the Moham-medans, the Buddhists, the Marxists and atheists.

But it may then happen that not only the walls between the Christian denominations become transparent (Edmund Schlink), but also other walls. We quote only one example. At the meeting of the International Missionary Council at Tambaram, Madras, in 1938 Walter Marshall Horton spoke of his friendship with "a Buddhist priest whom to this day I persist in regarding as my brother in Christ. He gave me a picture of a Bodhisattva . . . which to him perfectly symbolized the spirit and attitude required by his simple creed: 'to cleanse the heart of evil, and endeavour to make this world a kingdom of God.' There is a faint smile of self-congratulation on that picture face, which reminds me of the great gulf that remains forever fixed between Buddhist self-discipline and the Christian sense of grace toward sinners; but *when I talked with the priest who gave me the picture, that gulf was not there. Differences of tradition seemed to vanish between us, as I often felt them melting away between Christians of different communions at ecumenical gatherings*, and our souls met in something less tangible and definable than forms of speech and thought, but infinitely more real and authoritative. *If I belong in any sense to the Body of Christ,—then he does too.* It would be blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, the

Wind of God that bloweth where it listeth, for me to deny my Buddhist brother his place in that Body. When I ventured to say as much to a group of Christians in Kobe the next day, I was sternly reminded that "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"; but I thought to myself that I have rather have the Spirit without the Name, than the Name without the Spirit" (Tambaram Series vol. I, "The authority of Faith," London 1939, p. 149f.; emphasis added). This is the end of the dialog, if consistently carried on. We all should love our pagan brother in Adam. He is a sinner, as I am a sinner. But to make him my Brother in Christ, this is the denial of Christ, the only Saviour of sinners, of the Holy Spirit, of the Living God and His eternal Word.

IX

Why is it that none of the Christian Churches has been able to criticize effectively the Ecumenical Movement as it has been organized in the World Council of Churches? Of course, we are told, we all criticize it. We all reject such exaggerations as the statement by Horton. That's why we have a Lutheran World Federation which at Geneva is constantly at loggerheads with the World Council. But why is it at Geneva? Why must its leading men hold high offices in the policy-making bodies of the W.C.C.? To prevent it from becoming still worse? It cannot become worse. And what have the Lutheran Churches achieved in it? We must make our Lutheran contribution, we hear. Contribution to what? The L.W.F. has not made and cannot make a contribution which would change the course of the W.C.C. One of the purposes of the L.W.F. is according to its constitution, "to foster participation in ecumenical movements" which has been changed at Helsinki to "to foster Lutheran participation in ecumenical movements" which at Helsinki has been changed into "foster Lutheran interest in, concern for and participation in ecumenical movements." Since participation in the W.C.C. presupposes the acceptance not only of the basis, but also of the freedom of any member church to interpret this basis as it likes, the question would arise: Can a Lutheran Church with a good conscience join the W.C.C.? It most certainly cannot do that as long as the basis is not interpreted in a way which excludes churches which do not regard the Trinitarian faith as binding on the Church. What has the L.W.F. done to rectify that? Nothing. On the contrary it "fosters" membership and *de facto* the churches of the L.W.F. hold membership in the W.C.C. Of its own member churches the L.W.F. expects that they accept its own Doctrinal Basis which now reads: "The L.W.F. acknowledges the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the only source and infallible rule of all church doctrine and practice, and sees in the three Ecumenical Creeds and in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church especially in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession

and Luther's Small Catechism, a pure exposition of the Word of God."

Apart from the regrettable limitation to the Small Catechism which theologically and practically is inseparable from the Large, this basis should be satisfactory to any Lutheran Church if it were understood as the Doctrinal Basis of the old Convention was understood. For this was meant as excluding churches in which the Unaltered Confession was not the only *publica doctrina*. There might be a possibility in a federation like this to create a second form of affiliation for congregations and groups of serious Lutherans who lived in a union church in which also other doctrines are tolerated. But churches which do not hold the Lutheran Confessions as the only public doctrine could not be admitted. However, this has been done in the cases of the Church of Brazil, of Italy and some others. The Church of Pomerania could have returned to the Church of their Lutheran Fathers. But then it could not remain a member church of the "Evangelical Church of the Union." The acceptance of the Church of the Batak before it had accepted the Unaltered Augsburg Confession and the whole Small Catechism was a clear breach of the Constitution. One could sympathize with that church which is a daughter of the (United) Barmen mission. One could try to find means and ways to support it morally and financially. But to regard its un-Lutheran confession as a substitute for the Augustana should have been impossible. For this confession does not teach the sacraments according to the Catechism, it is silent on the Office of the Keys. It was for mere church-political reasons that it was admitted and that it got at once a share in the government of the L.W.F. This grave violation of its constitution will have far-reaching consequences for the L.W.F. For now churches in other parts of the world which are in the same position will demand admission. The *Lutheran World* has repeatedly reported on union negotiations and suggested that Lutheran Churches which join the new unions in Africa and other parts of the world should have the right to remain members of the L.W.F. What is at stake in all these cases is not only "doctrine", but the sacraments of Christ and with them the authority of the Word of God.

The cry for new confessions is going through the Protestant world, including Lutheranism. This will lead Lutheranism into the situation which we find on the Anglican and Reformed mission fields: The confession of the Lutheran Church which once bound together not only the Lutherans of a certain time, but also the Church of today with the Fathers and with the true confessors until the end of the world, will disintegrate in the Lutheran world just as it has disintegrated in the Anglican and in the majority of the Reformed churches. The Augsburg confession, altered by every one according to his pleasure, will cease to be a confession. It will remain a historical monument of a deceased Church, a reminder of a great "tradition" which has had its time. The Lutheran Church will perish, swallowed by the vast ecumenical church of the future.

Dr. Clifford Nelson has already preached its funeral sermon at Helsinki on the text Phil. 2:5-11 "Must not the Lutheran Church in this hour, as it seeks 'the form of a servant' be profoundly aware that the institutional structures must be prepared to die? Only as we and other churches are 'obedient unto death' will God 'highly exalt' us and thus manifest to the world His servant, the one holy, catholic and apostolic Church. To the Philippian Church and to us Paul says: 'Have this mind in you'. Maybe this is what "Christ Today" is telling the Lutheran Church" (Helinski Report, p. 295). It is not Christ who says that. It is only Geneva which speaks here and one can hear the same thought in hundreds of ecumenical sermons every Sunday.

X

The purpose of the old Lutheran World Convention was to save the Lutheran Church, to strengthen it and to preserve its life as far as this lies in human hands. This clear aim gave to the Convention in all its weakness and with all its shortcomings, organizational, theological and otherwise, a great meaning. "*Non moriar, sed vivam et narrabo opera Domini*" (Psalm 118:17). This word, which was so dear to Luther and the old Lutheran Church in the days when everything seemed to be lost, we should write with large letters over our church in this time of temptation, despair and apostasy. Can it ever become again the motto of the Lutheran World Federation? Probably not, at least this seems so if one reads regularly the *Lutheran World*. This journal certainly contains interesting information. But what does the word "Lutheran" in its title mean? As the editor of the German parallel edition reported at Helsinki, it has been seriously considered to drop the name and call it "Koinonia" or "Dialog." Nothing would indeed be lost if the word "Lutheran" were dropped.

The purpose of the former official paper of the L.W.F. was to "inform the Member Churches about each other and to give all of them information regarding the L.W.F. and its tasks." The present journal is more interested in the dialog with the Anglicans and other churches—incidentally in the most uncritical way. Nowadays it brings articles from the angry young men in the Roman Church. Uncritically it reports the events in the W.C.C., the union negotiations throughout the world and provides in its book reviews the simple pastors and missionaries in the lonely mission stations and remote parishes in New Guinea, Australia, South Africa and South America with information about the latest theological fashions in all sorts of non-Lutheran churches in Europe and America. If this paper in any way reflects the mind of the L.W.F. then one would have to conclude that the L.W.F. has become the Lutheran wing of the "Oikoumene" of Geneva and that its main purpose is to help the Lutheran Churches of the world to die a painless and edifying death in the hope for a glorious resurrection in the great Ecumenical Church of the future.

We refuse to believe that. We know that our church throughout the world has still confessors. We know that there are still many faithful Lutherans also in the churches belonging to the L.W.F. We refuse to believe that our churches will fall a prey to that evil spirit of an "ecumenism" which has nothing to do with the true ecumenicity of the Church, but is a spiritual disease which destroys that by which the *Una Sancta* lives, the authoritative Word of God and the sacraments as Christ has instituted them. We know how great the dangers are for our churches, as for all churches. If our bishops and presidents are no longer guardians of the doctrine, let them go. God will judge them. If our professors are no longer teachers of the Word of God, but talkers who in their vanity and self-conceit think they can solve all problems of the church by way of a dialog, let them talk. But let them not expect from our congregations that they pay the exorbitant costs of their conferences which produce nothing but papers with which nobody is satisfied. Let us remind our professors of Luther's word: "*Non in doctrina, sed in disputatione veritas amittitur*," not by teaching, but by discussing the truth is lost. And if they are ashamed of the doctrine of their church in this age of uncertainty, relativism and unbelief, let us remind them of the courage of Luther who dared to resist the scepticism of the man who was at that time the spokesman of European education and scholarship, with the words: "The Holy Spirit is no sceptic."

According to the New Testament (I Cor. 12:28) the true doctorate in the Church is a gift of God the Holy Spirit. If our doctors fail us, let us ask the Holy Spirit for the renewal of this doctorate. If our theologians are ashamed to celebrate the 450th anniversary of the Reformation for fear it might hurt the ecumenists of all denominations, let us tell them that the pain caused by hearing the truth is the most wholesome pain and that the same Saviour who says to His disciples: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you," could also say: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword . . . and a man's foes shall be they of his own household."

To these words Luther referred when in his great speech at Worms he replied to the admonition not to cause a split in church and nation. During his whole life he was aware of his great responsibility. "I know what I am saying, and I well realize what this will mean for me before the Last Judgment at the coming of Christ." Perhaps no modern Lutheran today would take the stand which Luther took at Worms and in many decisive hours of his life. No modern theologian understands the "certitude" of Luther's faith. We people of an age of scepticism and doubt are all inclined to misunderstand this certitude as false security and stubbornness. We have seen so many heretics and leaders of sects that we can hardly distinguish between a sectarian and a Reformer. The sectarian relies on human opinions which he reads into the Bible. He is always sure of himself. The Reformer is never sure of himself, but he

relies entirely on the written Word. He knows that this word contains immeasurable depths which no human mind can grasp, that also his understanding of this or that word, of this or that Biblical book may be insufficient or even wrong. So Luther has spent a lifetime in searching the Scriptures, constantly improving his translation and his exegesis, seeking always the advice of others. But this study of the Scriptures has convinced him of the "*claritas Scripturae*".

In all things pertaining to our salvation Scripture is clear, it explains itself and does not need a teaching office which explains it infallibly. For in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks. This is what Scripture says of itself, what Christ taught when he quoted Scripture. It is the belief of the apostles and the entire Church which in its great Ecumenical Creed confesses of the Holy Spirit: "*Qui locutus est per prophetas.*" The history of this Creed shows what is meant by this and by its "*secundum Scripturas.*" "*Ubi Spiritus Sanctus, ibi Christus.*" Where the Holy Spirit is there is Christ, where Christ is there is the Holy Spirit. This is a theological rule contained in the New Testament. In the Scriptures Christ Himself speaks, as the entire Bible is witness of Christ. This is the reason why Scripture interprets Scripture. The clarity of the Scripture is, of course, not the clarity of a mathematical textbook, nor is it that kind of clarity which we expect in a work of modern Western historiography. It is the clarity with which the Holy Spirit speaks to those whose ears He has opened: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the Churches."

Here lies the reason why modern Protestants, even modern Lutherans are ashamed of the Reformation, ashamed of Luther who allegedly broke the unity of the Church which actually was already broken for some centuries. Modern Protestantism no longer understands the doctrine of the Reformation of the clarity and sufficiency of Holy Scripture because it no longer believes in its inspiration. Hence this constant flirting with the "tradition" of the church as another form of the word. Modern theology does no longer understand the inspiration because it does no longer understand the Holy Spirit. It is really astonishing that even great theologians of our time rejected the Inspiration because the scholastic form of this doctrine in the Orthodoxy of the fathers is no longer tenable. In other questions they can distinguish a dogma of the church and the theological terminology in which it may be shrouded. Why not here?

All this has led to a situation in which Catholics and Protestants, Anglicans and Lutherans seem to agree with Erasmus who rejected Luther's "firm assertions" and had to hear Luther's reply: "*Tolle assertiones et tulisti Christianismum.*" Take away the dogmatic statements and you have taken away Christianity! Here the deadly disease becomes manifest which has taken hold of all churches, including Rome. It is perhaps the greatest surprise in the church history of our time that even the rock of St. Peter seems to begin to crumble under the impact of the earthquakes of this revolutionary age. For many Protestants this is a matter of satisfac-

tion. They feel justified now in their liberal rejection of dogma, discipline and authority. What would Ignatius say about members of the Society of Jesus marrying nuns, what St. Dominic about the conflicts among his Blackfriars, what Leo XIII about the new "Americanism" which is far worse than anything that was known by this name and was condemned so strongly by him? What would Newman and Manning say about the outgrowths of ecumenism in the Catholic Church in England? What Moehler and Scheeben about Catholic professors who try to outshine their Protestant colleagues in their radical criticism of the Bible?

There is a strange similarity between the breakdown of the authority of the Church in the Roman Church and the breakdown of the authority of Holy Scripture in the Anglican, Presbyterian-Reformed and Lutheran Churches, to say nothing of the rest of the Protestant world. One of the truly ecumenical realities in Christendom today is the common experience of one great emergency which exists in all churches equally. They all seem to be suffering from the same disease which becomes manifest in the loss of dogmatic substance, in the inability of their leaders to maintain discipline and obedience, in the failure of the Christian people and their pastors to confess their faith fearlessly and to suffer for it, if necessary; in the pride of us theologians who think that by our loquacious discussions or our "creative" writing all problems of the Church can be solved. What is the nature of this disease? And what can we do about it?

XI

To understand this disease we do well in this year when the 450th anniversary of the Reformation is celebrated, to look into that time when the Church had to go through very similar experiences. At that time it seemed that the cause of Christ in the world was lost. Hearts were breaking in the Church. The best Christians were shedding tears when they saw disintegration of very old institutions in the church. The Reformers did not do their work light-heartedly. Their one and only aim was to help save the Church of Christ from complete destruction, which had been going on since the breakdown of the papal authority around 1300 A.D.

It was at this time that Luther re-discovered Biblical truths concerning the Church which had been forgotten. The history of the Church is not simply the marching on of God's people from victory to victory. "*Vexilla Regis prodeunt.*" It is true, "the standard of the King proceeds." But "*Fulget crucis mysterium,*" "Forth shines the mystery of the Cross." The Cross is most certainly the sign of victory, but the victory of Christ crucified. For He is always the Crucified, "*Christos estauromenos,*" as Paul calls Him (I Cor. 1:23 comp. 2:2: Gal. 3:1), the perfect tense indicating an event which is lasting, and not only "*staurotheis*" (aorist) as He is called when the uniqueness of the historic event is emphasized, as

in the Nicene Creed. Christ has remained the Crucified even as He who rose from the dead, ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of the Father. Even in the Sacrament He gives us His body, crucified and glorified simultaneously, and the blood shed on the cross. Christ's triumph is always the triumph of the Crucified, hidden for human eyes under the cross ("*cruce tectum*"), and so are the victories of His Church. Already in the Fourth century serious Christians wondered whether Constantine's victory in the battle at the Milvian Bridge in Rome had really been the triumph of Christ. When on the eve of St. Bartholomew, 1572, thousands of Protestants were killed in France, the Pope after a shock celebrated this event with a solemn *Te Deum* as a victory for the church. No one doubts today that he was mistaken. We all know that Christ triumphs also in the death of His saints. Peter and Paul conquered Rome not by converting Nero or making a concordat with him, but by dying there. Such is the history of the Church, the Church of the "shining army of the martyrs" ("*martyrum candidatus exercitus*") of which we sing in the *Te Deum*.

This history is, as the church knew at all times when it was healthy and strong, a mighty battle between God and His adversary. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (Eph. 6:12). This is what the Apostles knew when they warned their churches against Satan and his angels. What a tremendous superhuman spiritual power must have stood behind Mohammed if it was possible to wrestle away from Christ within one century the vast majority of Christians in the Near East and make them Mohammedans! Our Fathers were always shocked by this destiny of the Church in the countries which were the earthly home of the Church. They were trembling before this mystery of the "Oriental Antichrist". And we think today as the bishops of the Second Vatican Council did (Const. on The Church, section 16; Const. on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions, sect. 3), that we can bring back to the church by way of a harmless dialog with these nice people—there are, indeed, very nice people among them whom we honor—the millions of adherents of Islam which at present is one of the fastest growing religions in the world! We all, Catholics and Lutherans, Anglicans and Presbyterians, could learn from Luther what it means: "Der alt böse Feind/ Mit Ernst er's jetzt meint/ Gross Macht und viel List/ Sein grausam Rüstung ist/ Auf Erden ist nicht seins gleichen." "The old evil foe/ now means deadly woe/ Deep guile and great might/ Are his dread arms in fight/ on earth is not his equal." And if our ecumenicity has not yet reached that stage where we can sing this together and ponder over Luther's profound doctrine on Antichrist, the religious man who puts himself into that place which belongs to Christ alone — whenever and wherever that may happen—then let us turn to the Bible and hear the warnings of our Lord Himself (Matth. 24:4 and 15) and the

holy apostles Peter (I Peter 5:8; Paul (II Cor. 11:13ff.) and John (I John 4:1ff.) The history of the Church cannot be understood unless one knows of the Antichrist who appears again and again in many forms in the Church of Christ. He loves church offices and other holy places. Synods are his delight and theological conferences the places of his greatest triumphs. He preaches pious sermons from our pulpits and teaches in theological faculties. Proudly he marches in our colorful processions. He writes in theological journals and inspires "creative" book-authors. None of us is safe from his persuasive power, unless we use the weapons of which St. Paul speaks, Eph. 6:13-18, and pray with our Fathers:

/ Ach bleib bei uns, Herr Jesu Christ,
 . Weil es nun Abend worden ist.
 . Dein wertest Wort, das helle Licht,
 . Lass ja bei uns auslöschen nicht.
 . In dieser letzten bösen Zeit
 - Verleih uns, Herr, Beständigkeit,
 . Dass wir dein Wort und Sakrament
 . Rein behalten bis an unser End.

This is what all Christians of all denominations can and ought to pray.

CORRECTION: In the Winter, 1967 issue (Vol. XXX, No. 4), page 35, substitute "Braun and Mezger of Mainz" for "Pannenberg of Mainz."