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Theological Observer

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON BIBLICAL INERRANCY: SUMMIT II

In October 1978 the first conference of the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy met to affirm this doctrine. The group, who for the sake of convenience may be called evangelicals, was formed to affirm the traditional church teaching on the Bible's origin. Evangelicals are recognizable by a certain attitude to the Bible and their opposition to tampering with the Biblical history. Thus, the movement arose almost as a direct reaction against the radical movement which discounted the historical authenticity of what was reported in the Bible and assigned a minimal role to the Spirit's unique operation in the production of the Scriptures. Since the council's inception, two members of the LC-MS ministerium, Robert D. Preus and Walter A. Maier, have been connected with the organizational structure of the group. In retrospect, it seems that it may have been easier to provide a definition for the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy than it is to define the function of this doctrine in the actual task of interpretation. Summit II met in Chicago on November 10-13, 1982, to tackle this thorny issue. Participating from the LC-MS were John Franklin Johnson of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and Robert Preus, Kurt Marquart, and the undersigned from Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. All invited participants were required to present a theme paper or respond to one. These papers were assigned. The topics of the sixteen theme papers show the multiple ways in which the hermeneutical task was addressed:

- (1) Truth: The Relationship of Theories of Truth to Hermeneutics.
- (2) Historical-Grammatical Problems.
- (3) Genre Criticism and the Sensus Literalis.
- (4) Problems of Normativeness in Scripture — the Cultural vs. the Permanent.
- (5) The Trustworthiness of Scripture in Areas Relating to Natural Science.
- (6) The Adequacy of Language and Accommodation.
- (7) The Author's Intention and Biblical Interpretation.
- (8) The Role of the Holy Spirit in the Hermeneutic Process.
- (9) Philosophical Presuppositions Affecting Biblical Hermeneutics.
- (10) The New Hermeneutic.
- (11) Presuppositions of Non-Evangelical Hermeneutics.
- (12) The Unity of the Bible.
- (13) Contextualization and Revelational Epistemology.
- (14) Patrick Fairbairn and Biblical Hermeneutics as Related to the Quotations of the Old Testament of the New.
- (15) Homiletics and Hermeneutics.
- (16) The Role of Logic in Biblical Interpretation.

Essays on these sixteen topics and two responses to each such essay were prepared ahead of time and sent to the participants. The total number of printed pages came to over 600 pages. No papers were read at the conference, since they were prepared and distributed ahead of time. Each participant was required to be versed in his own assigned area and one additional one. As the conference spanned four days, enough time was allowed for sixteen groups to discuss their themes and work towards theses covering their areas. The results of the sixteen groups were fed back to the central coordinating council, which met considerably past midnight to come a unified conclusion. Hotel conference rooms

were set aside in order to keep the process moving as efficiently and as rapidly as possible.

Before the meeting had begun, Dr. James I. Packer had prepared in preliminary form the theses adopted at the end of the session. Throughout the conference, as information came back from the committees, the theses were adjusted by the central committee in which Dr. Packer continued to assume the lead role. The evangelical movement with its all-embracing attitude to Calvinists and Arminians must by definition be compromising. Squabbles on dispensationalism were bound to surface, but had to be avoided if any progress was to be made. A suggestion by one Lutheran participant to include a statement on the proclamation of the Law and the Gospel as the chief function of the Scriptures was not accepted. This fact does not mean that Lutherans were without influence. The second draft contained this thesis: "We affirm that the Holy Spirit illuminates all who ask God for light in their study of the biblical text, so that believers are not wholly dependent for the understanding of Scriptures on the expertise of professional scholars." Such a statement more than strongly suggests that the Spirit might work outside of the Biblical word through special illumination. The thesis did not appear in the final draft. The general chairman was Earl D. Radmacher, and James I. Packer was the leader of and spokesman for the formulating committee.

In reporting such a conference, it is difficult to avoid being extremely personal, since observing all the meetings in process was impossible. I was a respondent in the committee on genre criticism, which at its first session literally leaped into the question of the propriety of using certain tactics judged by many to be incompatible with Biblical inerrancy. One New Testament scholar, self-identified as an evangelical, had written a book which allegedly claimed that one of the evangelists had played fast and loose with the historical data. His approach was judged unacceptable. The underlying question is when does a self-proclaimed evangelical scholar lose his right to be considered such.

In the committee on homiletics and hermeneutics, of which I was an adjunct member, I quite innocently brought up the Christocentricity of the Bible with special attention to the Old Testament. The point was not merely the belief that there is Messianic prophecy in the Bible (to which all present were committed) but that Christ is the basic theme of the Bible. A great deal of discussion followed, to put the whole matter mildly. Article III, affirming that Christ is the central focus of the Bible, was the formula resulting from that discussion. With sixteen committees at work, each producing separate theses for incorporation in a final statement, much of the basic work remained under the surface. Each participant will see events from his own experiences. There is the happy possibility that one of the publishing houses in Grand Rapids will make all the essays, together with the final deliberations from the committee, available in a single volume. This publication would provide a picture of the state of evangelical hermeneutics today and allow readers to come to their own conclusions.

To provide one example of a hotly debated issue, the work of committee on the use of the Old and New Testaments attracted much attention, with much of its discussion involving Hosea 11:1, "Out of Egypt I have called My Son." Was the statement to be taken only as a direct Messianic prophecy, as it is taken in Matthew 2, or could it have a wider meaning? The matter came up in several committees to which I was not assigned; thus, I was only able to catch the tail end of the discussions. A compromise was hammered out and appears as the second sentence in Article XVIII, "The single meaning of the prophet's words includes, but is not restricted to, the understanding of those words by the prophets and necessarily involves the intention of God evidenced in the fulfillment of those

words." One side was unwilling to tolerate the idea that one passage could have two or more meanings. The other side would not accept the idea that one word was valid in only one historical situation. The problem was resolved by affirming that the specific meaning of the text must relate to any applications of it but that a broader application is possible. The key word here is "application."

The question has to be raised of the legitimacy and value of confessional Lutheran participation in evangelical groups. There can be argument as to whether it should begin, because it is already happening at different levels. For example, the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod officially participated in the production of the New International Version of the Bible, which in many places adjusts passages to fit a Calvinist, and sometimes Fundamentalist, bias. Evangelical methods of evangelism and stewardship are brought into Lutheran circles without any awareness that an essentially un-Lutheran theology is being brought along. These, however, are not matters involved in the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy, but they do show that Lutherans have been involved with evangelicals in one way or another. Participants came together because of a similar background in the last two or three generations when the special divine quality of the Bible as revelation had been attacked, ignored, or re-interpreted.

Confessional Lutherans and evangelicals are going to approach theology differently on the cultural level. Where Lutherans have a keen awareness of their confessional heritage, even where they deviate from it, evangelicals approach the hermeneutical task with no such formal commitments. For them such commitments are unnecessary fetters. This is not to say that they do not operate out of their theological self-understandings, but these self-understandings are not in each instance codified as they are for Lutherans with their confessions. Therefore, Lutherans often come to their hermeneutical conclusions before and apart from the hermeneutical tasks; evangelicals are less compelled to set forth conclusions so firmly, even if these conclusions are not seen in any way as being binding. A Lutheran, operating in evangelical circles, does not have the luxury of appealing to the confessional position of his church. He is forced to put forth his arguments purely on Biblical grounds. Evangelicals, on the other hand, suffer frequently from having to leave many questions open. This dilemma prevents evangelicals from defining themselves except in a general way. On the other hand, it does provide them the opportunity of approaching the exegetical task with less clearly stated exegetical presuppositions, and thus they operate with a higher degree of freedom. This may explain why evangelicals have taken the lead in exegetical research and why confessional Lutherans have not matched their productivity either in quantity or quality. This paucity of exegetical materials have forced confessional Lutherans to rely on evangelical exegetical scholarship. Since evangelicals are not bound by confessional documents in the sense that Lutherans are, they find it easier to produce documents. Lutherans operate with a catholic attitude toward their confessional documents and thus must demonstrate that any new one is in accord with the older ones. This may explain why evangelicals were in a better position to offer a document like "The Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics." They are not hampered by the once-and-for-all attitude that Lutherans inevitably assume. The document was hammered out in the course of four days and should not be read with either the same devotion or historical-critical attitude that is brought to the reading of the Lutheran Confessions.

For some time some confessional Lutherans have spoken of the value of adopting a quasi-confessional document on the nature and interpretation of the Scriptures. This adoption has not taken place, simply because, as mentioned,

Lutherans take a profoundly serious view of church documents. The evangelicals, as in many matters, have filled in the gap and provided, not only a workable document, but perhaps a better one than one coming from one denomination. While the LC-MS has been exposed to (to the point of being threatened by) recent exegetical procedures, its total exposure is not as great as the exposure of the evangelical seminaries collectively. Their scholars are more likely to have studied under the pace-setting New and Old Testament exegetes and thus are capable of addressing the larger problems. The Chicago document does not resolve the Lutheran-Calvinist debate over the Spirit's operation in the Word; the document was not intended to address the traditional difference. Therefore, it would be unfair to read the document in the light of that question. It does speak to questions faced by Lutherans and evangelicals since the 1950's, and perhaps should be considered the most lucid composite response to appear in American Protestantism.

The question which Lutherans face is what role they can play in the evangelical concern for proper hermeneutics without adopting the basic Reformed presuppositions of evangelicalism. It seems clear that Lutherans and evangelicals each claim for the Bible a different purpose. Both hold to its divine origin and see salvation as its purpose, but the middle ground is viewed by each somewhat differently. Thus, evangelicals stress the Bible as revelation making salvation known. Knowledge, truth, and revelation are words often stressed by evangelicals. Lutherans do not understand the Bible as simply revealing unknown things about God, but as providing an intimate communion with Christ. For Lutherans, Scripture does not lay down laws for sanctified living, but presents Christ everywhere in such a way that the Christian life is permeated by Him. Though the emphasis may seem slight, it is real and important. For Lutherans revelation is Christological — and not merely Christocentric — and the Spirit functions only in regard to Christ. He does not reveal mysterious things about God apart from Christ. The difference between evangelicals and Lutherans is the difference between religions of knowledge and of redemption.

In one committee this matter came up in the course of the discussion. It was not difficult to defend the Christological position, since Jesus upbraids the disciples on the way to Emmaus because they had failed to come to the realization that all the Scriptures spoken of Him. One participant described concern for the Christological nature of the Bible as a Lutheran quirk. Article III, stating that Jesus Christ is the central focus of the Scriptures, was directed to this Lutheran concern for the Gospel, though this truth is capable of stronger expression.

It is difficult to identify all the real behind-the-scene movers in this kind of situation, as there were sixteen contributing committees. Present at each committee was a liaison man who not only reported the adopted resolutions of each individual committee, but also identified any critical point that might receive less than universal support from the entire group. Thus minor issues were prevented from absorbing the time of all. James I. Packer remained responsible for the form of the final statement. Earl D. Radmacher was the chief coordinator in administrative matters. The group, under his leadership, had determined to speak to the hermeneutical issue with concrete answers, and this goal was accomplished. Evangelicalism by its very nature has a lower awareness of denominationalism than Lutheranism, but inevitably Calvinism and Arminianism square off against one another sooner or later in a meeting like this one. Though the final statement does not and was never intended to speak to this tension, the tension came up several times. In the Arminian-Calvinist debate,

Lutherans, who always seem to be a mere remnant in size at such gatherings, are generally left out in the cold. As a tribute to his pioneering contributions, Carl F. H. Henry was given the honor of giving the final address, which was intended as a rally call. His address concluded the conference on Saturday morning.

A catalyst throughout the sessions was Walter Kaiser, dean of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, a professor of Old Testament theology. His rising prominence in evangelical circles was indicated by his being chosen for the opening address. More often than not, participants looked to him to resolve difficulties, which he did with a wit that was at the same time charming and disarming. All such conferences need such persons. His prominence at the meetings indicates that evangelical concerns at the present time have moved from more purely theological concerns to exegetical ones. In the fifties and sixties concern centered around the theology of Barth, Brunner, and Bultmann, with a reaffirmation of the Bible's inspiration and inerrancy. The 1982 Chicago meeting shows that evangelicals are now addressing the question of what these principles mean in actually using the Bible. Evangelicals are always going to be concerned with such things as sanctification and the changing of society in a way that will make Lutherans feel uncomfortable. These are long-standing differences (now nearly five hundred years old), and are not likely to be resolved now. Evangelicals have learned to live with differences that Lutherans never could. They have, however, taken the lead in addressing hermeneutical questions. Here they have been most effective. Anyone who considers that they are obscurantist simply has not bothered to read them. They are neither simplistic nor negative. The Chicago Statement is an attempt to provide an umbrella-like explanation of what they have been doing and guidelines for future activity. It is not intended to provide rules for exegesis. The evangelicals will, for example, not tolerate any approach that casts in doubt the historical authenticity of events reported in the Bible (see, e.g., Articles XIV and XXII). At the same time they are not only considering but also using new techniques of exegesis. Consider the names of the essays mentioned above and Articles XIII and XVI with their references to literary techniques and genre study.

One LC-MS participant remarked that, even though the evangelicals are not in leadership positions in the mainline denominations, they are going to be the religious leaders in the United States by the beginning of the twenty-first century. Though their political strength has been perhaps over-rated, they are a force which could not be imagined twenty years ago. Their congregations may be independent of denominational structures, but they are the ones numbering between 5,000 and 10,000 members. Their churches are full. The same predominance is true also in providing raw theological leadership. James Boice, the council's chairman, is both a prolific theological writer and the pastor of a large Philadelphia area congregation. In setting forth the traditional church doctrine for modern times, the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy took the lead of 1978. The group has taken the lead in even the more thorny issue of hermeneutics.

Lutherans by confessional commitment and heritage must avoid complete involvement in the movement, but the International Council on Biblical Inerrancy does provide an opportunity to air and identify the important hermeneutical questions and come at least to certain limited conclusions. It would be difficult to identify any other group that has provided this opportunity so constructively. Evangelicals with their Reformed heritage and with no appreciation of Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms cannot avoid seeking a triumph of the Gospel in political terms. Still this flaw does not negate the

Lutheran debt to many evangelical scholars for their prolific and high-quality work in the field of exegesis. Lutherans can repay this debt to evangelicals by stressing such themes as the proclamation of Law and Gospel as the ultimate function of the Scriptures. The proclamation of the Law and the Gospel is really only a restatement of the central fact that all Scriptures come from Christ and speak from Christ. Even though the document should not be considered uniquely Lutheran, certain changes offered by the Lutherans present were accepted by the group to remove certain obviously offensive statements. Confessional commitment requires not only allegiance to our position, but also actual involvement with other Christians in sharing what we hold so dearly. Confessional Lutheranism cannot be synonymous with parochialism to the point of sectarianism. Evangelical hermeneutical research puts confessional Lutherans under obligation to share more fully in exegetical tasks. It remains to be seen as the twentieth century draws to a close whether we will assume this exegetical obligation.

David P. Scaer

POSTMILLENIALISM AND THE AUGUSTANA

In the September 1982 issue of *Ministry: A Magazine for Clergy* ("the international journal of the Seventh-day Adventist Ministerial Association"; 55:9, pp. 12-14) appeared an article entitled "The One Thousand Years of Revelation 20" by Hans K. LaRondelle, Th.D., professor of theology in Andrews University (Berrien Springs, Michigan), a proven scholar committed to the infallibility of Scripture. LaRondelle, following the usual contemporary categorization, denominates the four major approaches to the interpretation of Revelation 20 as historic premillennialism, dispensational premillennialism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism. Both forms of premillennialism hold that the church will enjoy a period of visible glory in human history exactly one thousand years long between a physical resurrection involving only righteous people (the Second Coming) and a physical resurrection involving wicked people (Judgment Day). The historic premillennialists have included not only theologians whose doctrine of Scripture is conservative (e.g., J. Barton Payne), but also more liberal minds (e.g., G.E. Ladd). The dispensationalists raise upon this basic premillennial foundation an elaborate theological edifice for which the doctrine of the millennial kingdom, with a Jewish state in Palestine as its chief cornerstone, provides the basic blueprint — so much so, indeed, that dispensationalists traditionally deny any mention of the New Testament church in Old Testament prophecy. It is the dispensationalists, of course, who are currently most vocal in popular American eschatology (e.g., Hal Lindsey). The Adventist view advocated by LaRondelle is, on the other hand, a unique form of non-dispensational premillennialism.

Postmillennialism differs from premillennialism in rejecting, not only the special position allocated to the Jews by dispensationalism, but also the fundamental tenets of two (or more) resurrections and a literal interpretation of the word "thousand" in Revelation 20. LaRondelle correctly observes that postmillennialism is similar to amillennialism in holding "that Christ's kingdom is a present reality because He reigns in the hearts of His believers." Unlike amillennialism, however, postmillennialism, as LaRondelle points out, "expects . . . a conversion of all nations prior to the Second Advent." He continues his

depiction of postmillennialism in this way (p.12):

Consequently it looks forward to a period of earthly peace without friction among nations, races, or social groups. The kingdom of God will grow gradually through ever-expanding gospel preaching. Thus the millennium is conceived to be not a quantity of time, but a quality of existence differing from our present life style only in degree. The millennium will end with the apostasy of the antichrist and the personal return of Christ in glory, followed by one general resurrection of the righteous and the wicked.

Thus we now denominate as "postmillennialism" the position which the old Lutheran dogmaticians used to call "subtle chiliasm," while they would have thrown almost all modern premillennialists into the box labelled "crassest chiliasm" (*crassissimus chiliasmus*). Postmillennialism was a very popular view (the most popular form of chiliasm, indeed) in the optimistic reign of Queen Victoria. Very few of its adherents, however, managed to survive the two world wars of this century. It has been just long enough, however, since World War II for the unquenchable faith of modern man in the inevitability of progress to begin reasserting itself in the theological garb of subtle chiliasm.

We must demur, therefore, to the assertion of LaRondelle that the "Lutheran Augsburg Confession and the Puritan Westminster Confession are basically postmillennial." I am not aware of any statement in the Westminster Confession which either endorses or rejects millennialism of any species, but the imputation of postmillennialism to this classic statement of Presbyterian doctrine seems to contradict the more historically accurate statement of LaRondelle that in post-Augustinian times amillennialism "became the traditional position in both Catholicism and Protestantism, specifically in the conservative Reformed and Presbyterian churches of today." We would concede, however, that even traditional Reformed theology is, for many reasons (including its theocratic confusion of law and gospel, church and state, the Sinaitic covenant and the new testament), a fertile breeding ground of chiliasm fungus. The Augsburg Confession, on the other hand, explicitly excludes from the Lutheran Church all advocates of millennialism (including postmillennialism). The third paragraph of Article XVII (in the Latin form) makes this asseveration concerning those who subscribe this confession: "They also condemn others who are spreading Jewish opinions to the effect that before the resurrection of the dead the godly will take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being suppressed everywhere." Also relevant are the citations of John 8:36 ("My kingdom is not of this world") and Philippians 3:20 ("Our commonwealth is in heaven") in Article XXVIII ("Ecclesiastical Power," 14-16). Other pertinent points are the assumption that the end of world history could come at any moment (contrary to the postmillennial dream of a long golden era yet to arrive) and the repudiation of the optimistic view of future events essential to postmillennialism. Thus, the confessors address this appeal to the Holy Roman Emperor in Article XXIII ("The Marriage of Priests," 14, German form):

In loyalty to Your Imperial Majesty we therefore feel confident that, as a most renowned Christian emperor, Your Majesty will graciously take into account the fact that, in these last times of which the Scriptures prophesy, the world is growing worse and men are becoming weaker and more infirm.

The Latin version reads, "Inasmuch as the world is growing old and man's nature is becoming weaker, it is also well to take precautions against the introduction into Germany of more vices." All these themes of the Augustana, as well as many others inimical to chiliasm in general and postmillennialism in particular, receive considerable development in the later confessions. For example, the

recognition of the papacy as the Antichrist prophesied by Scripture surfaces already in the following year in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession (VII-VIII: 4, 23-24; XV: 18-21; XXIII: 25; XXIV: 44-51, 98) and is reiterated with dogmatic certitude in the Smalcald Articles (II, II: 25; II, IV: 10-15; III, III: 25), the Treatise on the Power and Primacy of the Pope (39-59), and the Formula of Concord (SD X: 20-22). This identification of the papacy as the Antichrist opens a yawning chasm between the Lutheran Church and all postmillennialists as well as almost all modern premillennialists and, indeed, almost all modern non-Lutheran and pseudo-Lutheran amillennialists.

There have, admittedly, been claimants to the designation "Lutheran" who have advocated postmillennial views. Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), the father of pietism, proffered milky millennialism in his *Behauptung der Hoffnung kuenftiger besserer Zeiten* (1692), indulging in pleasant dreams of happier times for the church than she had ever enjoyed previously — as the result of a general conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. The famous pietist exegete Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752) elaborated upon Spener's eschatological outline in such a radical way that his ideas were closer to modern premillennialism (indeed, dispensationalism) than to modern postmillennialism, so that he is regarded by many as a hero of the premillennial faith, even as he is regarded by higher critics, very significantly, as preparing the way for the advent of *Heilsgeschichte* ("salvation history") theology. Bengel predicted a millenium of exactly one thousand years to begin in the year 1836, bringing a general conversion of Jews and Gentiles, a greater measure of the Holy Spirit in the faithful, and increased fruitfulness of the earth.

The moderate critic, Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890), imbibed chiliast spirits with moderation in polite deference to prevailing tastes. In his discussion of Isaiah 2:4 he produced this epitome of nineteenth-century naivete (*Isaiah*, tr. James Martin [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, rep. 1975], I, pp. 116-117):

If any dispute arise, it is no longer settled by the compulsory force of war but by the word of God, to which all bow with willing submission. With such power as this in the peace-sustaining word of God (Zech. ix. 10), there is no more need for weapons of iron: they are turned into the instruments of peaceful employment . . . There is also no more need for military practice, for there is no use in exercising one's self in what cannot be applied. It is useless, and men dislike it. There is peace, not an armed peace, but a full, true, God-given and blessed peace. What even a Kant regarded as possible is now realized, and that not by the so-called Christian powers, but by the power of God, who favours the object for which an Elihu Burritt enthusiastically longs, rather than the politics of the Christian powers. It is in war that the power of the beast culminates in the history of the world. This beast will then be destroyed. The true humanity which sin has choked up will gain the mastery, and the world's history will keep Sabbath. And may we not indulge the hope, on the ground of such prophetic words of these, that the history of the world will not terminate without having kept a Sabbath? Shall we correct Isaiah, according to Quenstedt, lest we should become chiliasts? "The humanitarian ideas of Christendom," says a thoughtful Jewish scholar, "have their roots in the Pentateuch, and more especially in Deuteronomy. But in the prophets, particularly in Isaiah, they reach a height which will probably not be attained and fully realized by the modern world for centuries to come." Yet they will be realized. What the prophetic words appropriated by Isaiah here affirm, is a moral postulate, the goal of

sacred history, the predicted counsel of God.

The same thoughts, again suggested by the logic of *Heilsgeschichte* theology, filled the mind of Delitzsch when he read Isaiah 65 (*Ibid.*, II, pp. 491-492):

But to what part of the history of salvation are we to look for a place for the fulfilment of such prophecies as these of the state of peace prevailing in nature around the church, except in the millenium? . . . The prophet here promises a new age, in which the patriarchal measure of human life will return, in which death will no more break off the life that is just beginning to bloom, and in which the war of man with the animal world will be exchanged for peace without danger. And when is all this to occur? . . . This question ought to be answered by the anti-millenarians. They throw back the interpretation of prophecy to a stage, in which commentators were in the habit of lowering the concrete substance of the prophecies into mere doctrinal *loci communes*. They take refuge behind the enigmatical character of the Apocalypse, without acknowledging that what the Apocalypse predicts under the definite form of the millennium is the substance of all prophecy, and that no interpretation of prophecy on sound principles is any longer possible from the standpoint of an orthodox anti-chiliasm, inasmuch as the antichiliasmists twist the word in the mouths of the prophets, and through their perversion of Scripture shake the foundation of all doctrines, every one of which rests upon the simple interpretation of the words of revelation.

The postmillennialism of Delitzsch is the logical conclusion from his *Heilsgeschichte* theology and his consequent deviation from orthodox Lutheranism in identifying the central theme of Scripture, going so far indeed as to maintain that "we must free ourselves from the prejudice that the centre of the Old Testament proclamation of salvation lies in the prophecy of the Messiah . . . as the Redeemer of the world" (*Psalms*, tr. James Martin [Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, rep. 1975], II, p. 300). In a similar way, not only such liberals as John Bright, but also modern millennialists (e.g., Ladd and such dispensationalists as Herman Hoyt and John Walvoord) have snatched the sceptre from justification by grace through faith in Christ and have enthroned in its place the realization of the kingdom of God as the predominant theme of Scripture.

Thus, despite the pretensions of Spener, Bengel, Delitzsch, and the like, the orthodox Lutheran church recognizes no chiliast as the rightful bearer of her name for the simple reason that he has broken his ordination vow to her to conform all his teaching to the Augsburg Confession — as presented to emperor, empire, and world in the year 1530 — and to the subsequent Lutheran Symbols. Thus, *The Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States* takes this stand: "With the Augsburg Confession (Art. XVII) we reject every type of Millennialism, or Chiliasm," including the postmillennial opinion "that before the end of the world the Church is to enjoy a season of special prosperity" (42:1). Among the charges which the *Brief Statement* brings against chiliasm, postmillennialism as well as pre-millennialism is convicted on the following counts: it contradicts the clear teaching of Scripture "that the kingdom of Christ on earth will remain under the cross until the end of the world, Acts 14:22; John 16:33; 18:36; Luke 9:23; 14:27; 17:20-37; 2 Tim. 4:18; Heb. 12:28; Luke 18:8"; it "engenders a false conception of the kingdom of Christ"; and it "turns the hope of Christians upon earthly goals, 1 Cor. 15:19; Col. 3:2" (42:2-3). Likewise, the Synod declares in the following article, "we teach that the prophecies of the Holy Scriptures concerning the

Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2:3-12; 1 John 2:18, have been fulfilled in the Pope of Rome and his dominion" (43). Consequently, the church of the Augsburg Confession must insist that the condemnation of chiliasm and the identification of the Pope as Antichrist are not to be included "in the number of open questions" — "these doctrines being clearly defined in Scripture" (44).

Douglas McC. Lindsay Judisch