

THE SPRINGFIELDER

Vol. XXX

Autumn, 1966

No. 3

THE SPRINGFIELDER is published quarterly by the faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

ERICH H. HEINTZEN, *Editor*

RAYMOND F. SURBURG, *Book Review Editor*

EUGENE F. KLUG, *Associate Editor*

MARK J. STEEGE, *Associate Editor*

PRESIDENT J. A. O. PREUS, *ex officio*

Contents

Page

EDITORIAL

What Kind of Seminary? (II)..... 3

TILlich's NON-SYMBOLIC DOCTRINE OF GOD..... 5

WILLIAM H. HECHT, Norman, Oklahoma

CHAPEL ADDRESS: "A Man Named Matthew"..... 19

HARRY A. HUTH, Springfield, Illinois

RELEVANCY OF THE WORD WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY 23

EUGENE F. KLUG, Springfield, Illinois

Book Reviews 46

Books Received 70

Indexed in INDEX TO RELIGIOUS PERIODICAL LITERATURE, published by the American Theological Library Association, Speer Library, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey.

Clergy changes of address reported to Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, will also cover mailing change of *The Springfielder*. Other changes of address should be sent to the Business Manager of *The Springfielder*, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Address communications to the Editor, Erich H. Heintzen, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

Relevancy of the Word Within the University

EUGENE F. KLUG

I. RELEVANCY IN GENERAL

THE CONCERN for relevance is not modern, nor surely a concern merely of pastors who minister to college and university students. "Who hath believed our report?" was the concerned question of another town-gown pastor, at another time of national affluence, sophistication, intellectual smugness, seven centuries before Christ. The prophet Isaiah poignantly and plaintively puts the question which troubles each of us every day that we go out into the salt mines of our respective parishes and hope for some tangible response to our ministry of the word of the Gospel. What shall we cry? So that men will listen, receive, and believe? Shall it be what they want to hear? Obviously it must be in terms of the human situation, human existence; otherwise relevancy is absent right from the start. But it must also be the Word which God has given us to proclaim, concerning water for the thirsting ones, wine and milk and bread, available without money and without price; not the grubby fruit of men's own labors, but the precious gift of God which delights the soul with fatness and richness, "an everlasting covenant" grounded on the sure mercies of God, given to all the human race and inserted into the very tissue of human history through God's own Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Appraising the Problem

The topic suggests that the Word might not be relevant for those within the university complex, or at least that special problems loom and bristle as one marches on these modern citadels of learning and mills for tooling and dressing the proverbial grey matter of men's minds. It would be utterly naive to assume that a frontal attack on these ivied towers is to be conducted in the same manner that a missionary probes and prods the darkness of men's minds in the green jungle of New Guinea. But while we are quite certain that circumstances will alter cases and methods, the big question is, Does the Word itself have to be recast and trimmed in any way for the more sophisticated task of bringing Christ to the campuses? Here, it would seem, we must be extremely careful that our explorations for new ways of interpreting and making the Word relevant for the campuses do not end with something quite different and quite diluted from the water, wine, milk, and bread, which God gave us in the first instant to cry out for men's taking. The *hors d'oeuvres* that delight the palates of those who love academic twiddle-twaddle and dialectical tiptoeing is seldom the solid fare that will truly build them up in body and soul.

A couple of years ago some of us had opportunity to ask Helmut Thielicke on his own grounds in Hamburg, where he is professor and rector of the the university, as well as preacher at historic St. Michael's, the "sailors' church," where he is listened to appreciatively by literally thousands who flock to hear him, young people, as well as old, just what it was that made his sermons so *zeitgemaess*, *wirksam*, *passend*, that large audiences would come, time after time, to hear him. He felt our question was earnest, not patronizing, and so he answered with due directness and humility, that, in his opinion, it is necessary always for the preacher of the Word to be fully cognizant of the human situation into which he is coming, so that he may know as well as he can what it is that gives shape and form to people's lives, or rather what makes them misshapen, meaningless, and purposeless, for this most often lies deepest in the troubled existence of each human being.

Thus, while our ultimate concern will always be the same one which troubled Luther, *Wie bekomme ich einen gnaedigen Gott*, and we strive hard to get people to ask this question themselves, so that we may share with them God's own precious answer of forgiveness freely extended in Christ, our Lord, it may be necessary in some instances first to convince and reassure them, troubled on the one hand by the sores of poverty and suffering, or, on the other, by the sourness and full feeling of affluence and heartiness, that God is still there, and that life, all of it, is meaningless and irrelevant when it is lived apart from God, that the predicaments in the wasteland of human existence will always be crises of nameless fear and anxiety when faced alone in estrangement from God, and that, therefore and finally, the healing balm of God's Gospel of forgiveness is the only Word on which men can and should hang, since it alone speaks relevantly to the poor, in things earthly and spiritual; to the broken-hearted, in human relations and before God; to the captives, held by the slavery of other men, or imprisoned in the despair and drudgery of a highly organized society which demands conformity in so many different ways—in short, to bring God's healing Word for the aching, sick body of mankind. For such a task, awesome and stupendous because the souls of men depend upon our effective bringing of the witness, we well know that we must be fresh, trenchant, precise and to the point in our message, but above all we must be true, true first of all to God, and then also true to men. When we bring the "goods" to the natives of New Guinea, it must not be in terms of a translation of Pieper's *Christian Dogmatics* any more than we would supply them with the latest zigzag machine from Singer's, and when we deliver it to the campuses, we will, in turn, find primary leaflets from the Sunday School department less adequate than Pieper which is more on their level.

Ah, but there is the rub! What about Pieper, or what about doctrinal formulations in the style of classic Lutheranism? Do these say anything to man in the late afternoon of the twentieth century? To be understood by the man of our day is a concern we must obvi-

ously have, and we must be quite prepared to adapt language and formulations (if indeed there are better terms! fifteen centuries have not turned up better ones on a doctrine like the Trinity, for example!) to the need for communicating meaningfully. But a serious question of major proportions with which we must probe and sweep out every corner of our hearts is whether our concern for a theology that is expressed in the language and thought-forms of our day is driven by zeal for relevant expression or by embarrassment for the articles of faith themselves.

Some Secular Answers

Existentialist thinking has turned man's attention on himself and his desperate condition as seldom before in intellectual history. Incisive and penetrating studies appear from strange quarters lighting up the theater of men's inner workings, with the result that sin, and the depravity of sin, are laid bare under these literary x-rays. There is no denying that the poets, writers, cartoonists, of our day have in some instances succeeded to portray and depict for their audiences the subject of human sin and suffering in a most effective manner. Helmut Thielicke, for one, freely admits that he has gained and borrowed from the insights of some of these superb analysts of the human situation in our times. And need it be said that the terms and the thought-forms in which the Christian pastor presents the sinful condition of mankind can take on sharpness and pungent directness through his having read T. S. Eliot and his *Cocktail Party* or *Wasteland*, William Faulkner's works, some of Tennessee Williams or Arthur Miller, and even Charles Schulz's *Peanuts*? Schulz obviously, like the others, is most successful, to use Charlie Brown's apt terms, in illustrating the "illness" of mankind "among the walking wounded." But man's sickness unto death has never really been hid from his own eyes, and whether it is a Camus or a Schulz, men have always been able to conclude that man's greatest trouble in life is with himself, with his own sinful nature.

But there is always one danger in this "honest to oneself" approach, if not "honest to God," that a certain redemptive quality and power are thought of as resulting from each human being's completely frank reflection upon and confrontation of his sickness unto death. Existentialism is in this way the same old dish, with new sauce, a modern form of liberal theology. The latter spoke of the absurdity of the cross and described redemption in terms of the "benevolent unfolding of history," to use a term of Arthur Schlesinger Jr. On the basis of such "theology," that history is self-redeeming, he concluded that "tolerance, free inquiry, and technology, operating in the framework of human perfectibility, would in the end create a heaven on earth, a goal accounted much more sensible and wholesome than a heaven in heaven."

How should the church speak the Word to a world, which as far as the Bible is concerned has pretty well disabused itself of its

validity, which as far as heaven and hell go has more than laughed them out of existence, which as far as the great concepts of the Christian religion, grace, redemption, forgiveness, faith, etc., are concerned has found them quite irrelevant as it goes on its merry hell-bent, sex-chase way, and which, finally, as far as God Himself is concerned has determined that He is quite unnecessary in a world that is structured with iron-clad scientific laws and canons, a God, in other words, who is quite dead?

Relevancy of The Truth

In another day, at another time and place, by someone quite other than the usual seeker after religious verities, the question was raised of Christ Himself, What is truth? Perhaps it was born of skepticism, doubting that truth could ever be known; perhaps of a certain sophisticated, pagan and secular spirit; but serious it was, and it still is no joking matter, then as now, to look into the eyes of the One addressed and hear His solemn answer: "To this end was I born and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth." And then He just as solemnly, and for all time, set all men squarely before the proposition which divides time and eternity, and unbelieving men from God: "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (Jn. 18,37) People have asked Pilate's question in every period of history, and out of every conceivable situation and circumstance in human existence, and it has been the peculiar task of the church, under commission of the Lord of truth Himself, to proclaim the great verities or articles of faith which God has revealed through His Word, and especially through the Word Incarnate, so that all men might know Him that is true, and be saved.

The sense of immediacy in delivering this truth of God is simply the conviction that without it life presently is fractured and eternal life is forfeited. As to the first, the fractured condition of life, it must be the church's conviction that every individual needs the unifying power of the Gospel to integrate the various fragments of human existence, not least the disciplines of learning, lest a kind of centrifugal force pull his life apart on all sides, as in the case of the man whom the Apostle describes as "ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3,7; cf. also Col. 2,6-10), threshing about in a futile sort of way for meaning and purpose in his existence, but hopelessly lost. Christianity has the Word of truth which can supply the centripetal power to save him, to keep his life from disastrous autonomy, or rule of the self by the self, on the one hand, and from heteronomy, or imposition of arbitrary authority from the outside, on the other hand, to use Tillich's terms. For Christianity has God's Word of truth in Sacred Scriptures, inspired of God, to speak the truth concerning the creation of all things, man's fallen condition, the atonement in Christ, the justification of sinners by faith, the seal of the resurrection, the building of the church, the return of Christ for judgment and is

thus equipped to interpret all of life to divine and eternal purpose. As to the second point, proclaiming eternal life in Christ, the church has no option but to trumpet the teaching clearly, fully and fearlessly. It may be trite to say it and remind our day of it, but almost every one of the great universities of our country, Harvard, Yale, William and Mary, Princeton, Dartmouth, Rutgers, Chicago (name one that was founded for the advancement of atheism!) had as its constitutional concern not merely the training of the youth, English and Indian, for "knowledge and godliness," as the Harvard charter specified, but also for heaven! Men's aspirations are always *dies-seitig*. Their gods are idols of this world and time—secularism, scientism, nationalism, Great Society, equality of races, economic utopia. With so many preaching to the times, may the church not fail its master in preaching for eternity, *jenseitig*, however unpopular it be.

Relation of Holy Scripture to the Truth

What image shall we present around the ivied halls and quadrangles? That we have all the answers? Hardly! But what we do contend is that finally all truth and especially we ourselves have to be measured by the criteria of judgment which the Word of God sets up. People are talking about almost every last one of the issues God's Word speaks to but they are not talking about them in terms of what is stated there, and as the old Negro spiritual reminds us, "Everybody talkin' 'bout heav'n ain't goin' there." Not even the pulpits of our land, nor our seminaries, are free from the criticism, that with all the to-do about religion little attention is sometimes being paid to what is actually said in Holy Scripture. This becomes particularly true at a time when it is claimed that little is said there anyway in a straightforward manner, that most of it is in symbolic language, that all of it has to be translated for our day. The language, we would agree, yes, but if we mean that the thought-forms, the message, must somehow conform to the norms and canons of contemporary thought and patterns of scientific method, then we are using Christian forms and language merely to give a chocolate coating to pagan philosophy and idolatry.

We believe deeply that our goal for the young minds entrusted to, or in reach of, our ministry should not merely be to leave them with a convenient spiritual appendage to the rest of their academic accomplishments, like a carport attached to some splendid edifice. When our ministry in their behalf is done, there should be the realization that Christianity includes all of life, every aspect of knowledge and existence, and that all of it takes its proper place within our faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. There is need, if man is really to understand and rightly use his existence, to bring everything, every thought and act, as the apostle says, "into captivity to the obedience of Christ." (2 Cor. 10,5) Again, this does not at all mean that full measure of devotion and energy should not be channeled into the aspects of truth that can be, indeed

should be, discovered by man in research and study, in mathematics, physics, biology, psychology, even in literature and Biblical studies; but it does mean, that while in all these areas the claim of absolute truth is absurd, in the person and work of Christ, the Lord, it is not, and He is the very Truth, and in Him all other things in life take their true perspective and place. Those to whom we minister, faculty or student, must have learned that all that they are and have and know is grounded in Him who "is the visible expression of the invisible God," through whom "everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen," who is the "first principle and the upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation" and "the head of the body which is the Church, . . . justly Lord of all." (Col. 1,15-17—Phillips trans.)

Asserting this, we by no means wish to downgrade natural truth, the proper realm of scholarship and research at every campus. We believe with Justin Martyr that "all that has been well said belongs to us Christians." But by the same token, revealed truth in Holy Scripture, is of a higher importance than natural truth, simply because it transcends it in capacity, content, and consequence. Therefore, to handle God's Word of truth as though we were lords over it, free to believe or accept what pleases our intellect, to take it seriously at some points and reject it at others, offends against the very person and lordship of God. God's Word is holy as He is holy; what we do to the former reflects our attitude toward the latter. As Luther reminds us, all of Scripture is really one spread out name of God. This truth he catches and elucidates beautifully in his explanation to the first petition of the Lord's Prayer, how the name of God is to be kept holy among us: "When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as the children of God also lead a holy life according to it. This grant us, dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God's Word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us, heavenly Father."

There is no question of whether one's preaching will be relevant if it is loyal to the Word of God; the only risk is that the world may not think it relevant according to its norms of reason and scientific method. The question simply boils down to this: Is God, or is man, the measure of all things? How shall truth be determined? Ah, "there's the rub," as Hamlet puts it. The Christian believes that God speaks both in His special revelation, a most important part of which is His inspired Scriptures, to which revelation men are objectively tied today, if they would know God truly, and in His "second book," the realm of nature, where He has left all men a witness of Himself. While the latter is very real and genuinely a revelation given by God, it is the conviction of Christian faith that man, who is a sinner and who distorts the world around him and the things which it witnesses concerning God, must not use his fragmentary knowledge of the created realm as a norm whereby to sit in judgment over God's special revelation of Himself and His

divine purposes, specifically, His inspired Word of Scripture. The mere fact that the universe around us is, as Einstein once reminded his audience, like a watch whose case is forever locked and sealed, and that man, therefore, is destined to find out its intricate workings and mechanism from the outside, should teach man due and proper humility in his judgments over against God, his Creator, since man as a creature knows next to nothing of the why and wherefore of things around him.

II. RELEVANCY OF THREE SPECIFIC ARTICLES OF FAITH

It appears to me that this whole matter of being relevant for our day boils down to three crucial areas, each involving one of the articles of faith: specifically, how we come to know, or the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture; how we are to explain our life and the universe, or the creation of the world and miracles in general; and the central article of the Reformation, how we know we are accepted of God, the article on which our fathers said the church stands or falls, justification of the sinner by faith alone. Can we any longer speak relevantly to contemporary man, if we hold these articles as our fathers held them and taught them? We are caught in the middle of a devastating cross-fire, the withering ridicule of unbelieving reason which has never spoken in these terms and never will, and the still more devastating assault of liberal theology, which while it uses the traditional language, has not preserved the traditional meaning on inspiration, creation, justification, and has shown under the guise of a new "orthodoxy" that it does not intend to. To a large extent it has also convincingly carried with it a large bloc of conservative Christianity which formerly held to these teachings, on the simple argument that to remain scientifically and intellectually respectable it is necessary for all who would preserve the church and the Gospel in our day to move theologically to the same position. What to do? Join the current, or resist it? Teach that the Bible is inspired, but not literally so? That the world was created, but not literally so? That sinners are justified by Christ, but not literally by a life-and-blood ransom? If we take these alternatives, we must recognize that we have then reduced the evident, literal sense of the Scripture, demythologized it, interpreted it otherwise than its simple, straight-forward style expresses, introduced a meaning behind the words, and ended up with a Yes and No theology which is trying to straddle the fence, and which, as a result, is in danger of having its guts ripped out, and probably deserves it so.

The Inspired Scriptures

How else can the doctrine of inspiration be taught, if it is to be taught at all, than in terms of God having supplied impulse to write, fitting thought and fitting word, and proper governance through all, so that while the writers, each in turn, wrote as living, intelligent, and thinking penmen, they wrote nonetheless as His obedient instruments, and the product was, therefore, not a fallible

one, marked with their usual shortcomings and inconsistencies, but by His own infallible judgment and will and truth. We dare not lose sight ever of the truly *human* side to this remarkable process, but that which the Bible itself is calling attention to in its own explanation of its origin is especially the *divine* inspiration of the whole record by God. And because Scripture is the God-inspired medium through which God makes Himself and His purposes known unto men, also in our day, so that we may share in the revelations which God has given of Himself in the past, the Scriptures do not merely signify or give witness to the revelation but are themselves God's revelation.

Those who yield the divine inspiration of Scripture, verbal and plenary, do not understand at what cost they do so, or they don't care. It is impossible to teach *sola Scriptura*, that when Scripture speaks, God speaks, unless verbal inspiration is held and taught; and to think of inspiration in any other terms than verbal, is to attempt to think an *Unding*, or absurdity, for that is what inspiration means, God supplying His word, His words, to men. It is impossible to speak of a divinely efficacious Word that is sharper than a two-edged sword and able to turn hearts from unbelief and rebellion to belief and obedience, unless Holy Scripture is the inspired, holy Word of the Spirit of God Himself. It is impossible to speak of God's Word as completely and perfectly sufficient for men's salvation, unless its divinely inspired character is assured. And finally, it is absolutely impossible to speak about the perspicuity of God's Word—that we can clearly know and see what God says and means, not merely what some pious souls are reporting that He said!—unless the Scriptures are throughout the errorless, inspired Word given from on high by God Himself. Of course, there are those who will deny that Scripture has such attributes, that it, for example, is a perfectly clear light in the darkness of this world. But those who claim that Scripture is an obscure and equivocal book, as Erasmus did, Luther counters with the searching and non-debatable question in return: "Why need it have been brought down to us by act of God? Surely we have enough obscurity and uncertainty within ourselves, without our obscurity and uncertainty and darkness being augmented from heaven! And how then shall the apostle's word stand: 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction?'"¹

Having referred to Luther, let us once and for all be done with the gutless canard that Luther had a rather free and loose and permissive attitude toward sacred Scriptures, as though he was distinguishing it from the Word of God. An honest and objective appraisal of just one of his writings, for example the *Bondage of the Will*, will completely destroy such unscholarly, not to say un-Lutheran, assertion. Indeed, it is for assertion on the basis of Holy Scripture as God's Word that Luther pleads: "Let us have men who will assert, men twice as inflexible as very Stoics! . . . Take away assertions, and you take away Christianity. . . . Does not

everyone wish for liberty to be a skeptic in such matters (doctrinal)? The Christian will rather say this: 'So little do I like skeptical principles, that, so far as the weakness of my flesh permits, not merely shall I make it my invariable rule steadfastly to adhere to the sacred text in all that it teaches, and to assert that teaching, but I also want to be as positive as I can about these non-essentials which Scripture does not determine; for uncertainty is the most miserable thing in the world.' . . . What can the Church settle that Scripture did not settle first? . . . The Holy Spirit is no Skeptic. . . . The notion that in Scripture some things are recondite and all is not plain was spread by the godless sophists (whom now you echo, Erasmus)—who have never yet cited a single item to prove their crazy view; nor can they. And Satan has used these unsubstantial spectres to scare men off reading the sacred text, and to destroy all sense of its value, so as to ensure that his own brand of poisonous philosophy reigns supreme in the church. I certainly grant that many *passages* in the Scriptures are obscure and hard to elucidate, but that is due, not to the exalted nature of their subject, but to our own linguistic and grammatical ignorance; and it does not in any way prevent our knowing all the *contents* of Scripture. . . . It is unintelligent, and ungodly too, when you know that the contents of Scripture are as clear as can be, to pronounce them obscure on account of those few obscure words. If words are obscure in one place, they are clear in another. . . . Who will maintain that the town fountain does not stand in the light because the people down some alley cannot see it, while everyone in the square can see it? . . . I know that to many people a great deal remains obscure; but that is due, not to any lack of clarity in Scripture, but to their own blindness and dullness, in that they make no effort to see truth which, in itself, could not be plainer. . . . They are like men who cover their eyes, or go from daylight into darkness, and hide there, and then blame the sun, or the darkness of the day, for their inability to see. So let wretched men abjure that blasphemous perversity which would blame the darkness of their own hearts on to the plain Scriptures of God. . . . 'Here,' you (Erasmus) say, 'are problems which have never been solved.' If you mean this of the enquiries which the Sophists pursue when they discuss these subjects, what has the inoffensive Scripture done to you, that you should blame such criminal misuse of it on to its own purity? Scripture makes the straightforward affirmation that the Trinity, the Incarnation and the unpardonable sin are facts. There is nothing obscure or ambiguous about that. You imagine that Scripture tells us how they are what they are; but it does not, nor need we know. . . . Blame not the Scriptures, but the Arians and those to whom the Gospel is hid, who, by reason of the working of Satan, their god, cannot see the plainest proofs of the Trinity in the God-head and the humanity of Christ."²

Luther had absolutely no patience with those who were "disposed to trifle even a little and cease to hold the sacred Scriptures

in sufficient reverence"³ and who, unlike the apostle Paul, "rush against the Word of God," as though they rated their own thoughts and ideas far above it.⁴ Those modern detractors of Luther's faithful handling of the Scripture deserve the master's biting reply, as did Erasmus: "Against you particularly, I would say of the whole Scripture that I do not allow any part of it to be called obscure. . . . All the articles which Christians hold should be both fully certain to themselves, and also supported against opponents by such plain and clear Scriptures as to stop all their mouths, so that they can say nothing in reply. This was the burden of Christ's promise to us: 'I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist.'"⁵ Luther is perfectly aware of the fact that Bible interpreters of Erasmus' ilk who read their own meaning into the plain sense of Scripture, and explain, for example, Jesus' words "Without me, ye can do nothing," to mean "without me ye can do very little," are claiming that "they all quote the Scriptures as witnesses and assertors of what they themselves are saying."⁶ But he brands their obvious limitation of the text "hypocritical artfulness," since it casts "a slur on the clear light that there is in Scriptures," and allows a man "to whitewash his own stubbornness" at receiving Scripture in its simple meaning."⁷ And Luther thunders, "Who is unaware that all the Scriptures can be annulled by a single little word?" That has been the fate of Scripture in the hands of every higher critic. "But," cries Luther, "the question is, whether it is satisfactory for a Scripture to be annulled by a single little word. Is it rightly annulled?"⁸ Luther, moreover, refused to let Erasmus suggest that a little manipulation of Scripture's meaning in accord with reason's canons is a proper way of lifting the so-called paradoxes or contradictions out of the text. Instead, he argued, that the plain sense of Scripture must stand, however, difficult our reason finds it, and "thus will the Scriptures be free from contradictions and the inconveniences, if not removed, may be borne with."⁹

"I beg and faithfully warn every pious Christian," Luther writes in his beautiful prefaces to the books of the Bible, "not to stumble at the simplicity of the language and the stories that will often meet him there. . . . These are the very words, works, judgments, and deeds of the high majesty, power, and Wisdom of God; for this is Scripture, and it makes fools of all the wise and prudent. . . . Therefore let your own thoughts and feelings go, and think of the Scriptures as the loftiest and noblest of holy things, as the richest of mines, which can never be worked out, so that you may find the wisdom of God that He lays before you in such foolish and simple guise, in order that He may quench all pride. Here you will find the swaddling-clothes and the mangers in which Christ lies, and to which the angel points the shepherds. Simple and little are the swaddling-clothes but dear is the treasure, Christ, that lies in them."¹⁰

Sometimes it is claimed that the doctrine of the inspiration

of Holy Scripture is not included in our confessions. This is to lose sight of the fact that the great formula which binds all Christendom together, the Nicene Creed, has treated the matter clearly and simply in its reference to the Holy Spirit, "who spoke by the prophets." By this the church in the fourth century unmistakably referred to the unique origin of the Holy Scriptures. This is especially clear in the amended and somewhat lengthened Armenian version of the Nicene Creed where the words are, "who spoke in the Law, and in the Prophets, and in the Apostles and in the Gospels." The tragedy of modern Christendom therefore, is not merely that at Trent the Roman church set the "living tradition" of the teaching church alongside Scripture as authoritative, but especially that Protestant churches have allowed themselves to be persuaded by rationalistic principles, that they can speak of the authority of the Word of God, *sola Scriptura*, without accepting and confessing that the Scriptures are this inspired Word, that they do not merely contain it, nor are only a record of past revelations, or the vehicle merely which God may be pleased to use now and again to let His Word come through, or under certain special circumstances become the Word of God. Where is the tribunal of truth, of God's truth, if the Scriptures are not the inspired, authoritative Word in all their parts? If we do not have this unassailable rampart, then we might just as well retreat to the safety of the Roman church's tradition, for it is older than most others; or to the more obvious center, anthropocentric humanism, where man is honestly and plainly asserted to be the measure of all things. If the doctrine of the inspiration of Scriptures is lost by default, then not a single article of the Christian faith, the Trinity, the person of the God-Man Jesus Christ, the creation of the world, is any longer safe.

Creation of the World

As to the last named, the creation of the world by God, one would have to have his blinders on not to recognize the tension between Scripture's teaching and the theories of modern science. Because of the latter's prestige, a certain embarrassment has been felt by many within the church and a frantic scrambling to reinterpret the literal and traditional account of Genesis 1 and 2 in a way that will leave room for the "assured results" of scientific discovery and also leave a respectable place for the church in the contemporary world. Let it be said at the outset that the "embarrassment" appears to be less for those who are truly steeped in knowledge of science and in knowledge of Holy Writ, and more for those who have a smattering of second-hand wisdom in each. Simply on the grounds that not all science is *per se* evolutionary, let it also be stated that a good amount of valuable and productive cross-pollination takes place and can continue to take place between science that is dealing with genuinely assured results and a Biblical theology that is true to the doctrine of divine inspiration. By asserting this, the implication by no means is being made that it is possible to make a

point-for-point reconciliation of the Bible and science at all levels, but, by the same token, there is no ground for the contention that the two have nothing in common. Nothing we know from Scripture, for example, would contradict Galileo's observation that "nature's great book is written in mathematical language." To this insight Sir James Jeans speaks meaningfully and sensitively: "So true is it that no one except a mathematician can hope fully to understand those branches of science which try to unravel the fundamental nature of the universe" and the conclusion that the practitioner of this the most exact arm of science reaches is that "from the intrinsic evidence of his creation the Great Architect of the universe now begins to appear as a great mathematician."¹¹ And in both areas, mathematics and the revelation God has given in His Word, we believe, what we find and observe, simply because God has placed these things before our eyes.

The Christian faith concerning the creation is stated in Genesis 1 and 2, and is supported by many other references throughout Scripture (Job 38, 4; Ps. 104; Ps. 139, 14-16; Jer. 10,6; Neh. 9,6; John 1,3; Eph. 3,9; Col. 1, 16,17). It was a true creation, God giving existence to something that did not exist before, by His almighty fiat creating all things out of nothing, that is, with no prior existing material, a true, complete, and working creation.

Since the doctrine of creation has no bearing directly upon forgiveness of sins and salvation, it was rightly classed by our forefathers as a nonfundamental teaching, but its importance as a Scriptural teaching was never doubted or denied. For this reason, indeed, it is found confessed in the first two ecumenical creeds of Christendom, the Apostles' and the Nicene, and down through the centuries the words of these confessions concerning "God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," have been repeated over and over again with consistent agreement. Luther reminds Erasmus, and us, in his *Bondage of the Will* that "man, before he is created to be man, does and endeavors nothing towards his being made a creature, and when he is made and created he does and endeavors nothing towards his continuance as a creature; both his creation and his continuance come to pass by the sole will of the omnipotent power and goodness of God, Who creates and preserves us without ourselves. Yet God does not work in us without us; for He created and preserves us for this very purpose, that He might work in us and we might cooperate with Him, whether that occurs outside His Kingdom, by His general omnipotence, or within His kingdom, by the special power of His Spirit."¹² Accordingly, over against his Maker, who alone is truly free, it is necessary that man always remember his creaturely position and not insolently assert his own thoughts against those of the Almighty, especially not in contesting any of His revelation and teaching in Holy Writ, which would be tantamount to saying "that there is no information more useless than God's Word."¹³ For those who are smart alecks in this vein Luther has the perfect silencer: "So your Creator must

learn from you, His creature, what may usefully be preached and what not? God was so stupid and thoughtless, was He, that He did not know what should be taught till you came along to tell Him how to be wise, and what to command?"¹⁴

Christians should no doubt be careful in claiming more for Scripture's account than is given there; but they must be just as careful in not stating less than is there. It may be impossible from Scripture to explain all the questions that are raised concerning specific items in the creation, the fossil record in the sands of time, the problems connected with dating, etc., but in no way must the wonder of God's creative work be reduced as a production taking place in the six wonderful days at the beginning of this world's history. (Gen. 1 and 2; Ex. 20, 11) No amount of juggling of the meaning of "day" in those opening chapters can make the problem any smaller, for exegetes across the board today agree that "day" in Genesis 1 can only be understood in terms of our 24-hour day. By the same token, the various time-clocks of modern science (uranium, thorium, radio-carbon 14), and especially the so-called "uniformitarian principle," must not be thought to have brought in a final verdict against the Genesis account. If anything, much of this recent evidence is forcing more conservative judgments from scientists on the relative age of the relics unearthed from the clay, sand, and rock. Least of all ought there be division among us, "very definite diversity of thought,"¹⁵ as a recent editorial in the *Lutheran Witness* quoted the Commission on Theology and Church Relations as stating to be true among members of the Synod.

Why not? I believe the following reasons are compelling:

1. There is little to be gained by joining the ranks of evolutionists at a time when serious doubts are being raised about and loopholes poked into the armor that was long thought impregnable, when there are increasing signs of discontent and skepticism.¹⁶
2. Evolution is no new theory. St. Paul held to creation by God in spite of the views of Lucretius (96-55 B. C.) and Democritus (460-362 B. C.), ancient evolutionists.
3. No division of science has ever successfully supplied the evidence which would once and for all prove that the evolutionists are right and that Christianity is a fool's philosophy. Consider these points:
 - a. There are many gaps in the available data, and none of the links (either in fossil or living form) have ever been discovered, as evolutionists themselves admit.
 - b. None of the evolutionary theories have ever been proved; each one remains tenuous theory at best. For something to be proved scientifically, it must stand the usual tests which science itself lays down according to established rules.

- c. Evolutionism is hardly a simpler interpretation of the available data, simpler, that is, than supernatural creationism. Thus we have to do with a philosophy of science when dealing with evolutionism, and this is a distinction which dare never be lost. When Harold C. Urey (famous University of Chicago atomic scientist) says that "the question of *how* life began is one of the most complicated subjects in all science," and that he frankly does not know, he is a scientist. When, however, he adds glibly that "once life began . . . the chain of evolution was rather simple," he is a philosopher and no scientist.
 - d. Nowhere in the natural realm of things do we have a single answer to the proposition that evolution proposes: namely, that an effect can be greater than its cause; or to put it another way, that something of simple and non-complex nature can produce or become something which it is not, something greater and more complex.
Today scientists assert not only that "evolution is not repeatable" but also that "no evidence has ever been found of chance or manually directed evolution." (John Grebe) "Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it only because the only alternative is special creation and that is unthinkable." (Sir Arthur Keith)
 - e. Evolution should not remain unchallenged when it asserts that it could not care less about beginnings and that it only has concern for the present. This leads to sweeping, unproved generalizations. Consider the arbitrary and unscientific presuppositions in this statement of Bateson: "It is easy to imagine how Man was evolved from an Ameba, but we cannot form a plausible guess as to how *Veronica agrestis* and *Veronica polita* (genus of herbs or shrubs) were evolved, either one from the other, or both from a common form. We have not even an inkling of the steps by which a Silver Wyandotte fowl descended from *Gallus bankiva*, and we can scarcely believe that it did."¹⁷
 - f. Ofttimes the main reason for accepting evolutionism is not the evidence or proofs which it offers, but the very weak point that it is in agreement with the principal world view of things and, to remain respectable in the eyes of others, one dare not disagree.
- 4) "Theistic evolutionism," often derisively termed the "stop-gap theory, or child of embarrassment," is not a satisfactory compromise. It is not acceptable to the consistent evolutionist, who believes that gradual progressive changes in

living things come about through resident forces within these beings. Nor does it accord in any way with Biblical teaching to call in the creative activity of God at periodic moments. Thus it is a contradiction in terms, and I believe it is an evident departure from the text and meaning of Genesis 1 to state, as does Alfred Sauer: "I believe one may correctly use the term 'theistic evolution' when he is pointing out that God the Creator wrote certain powers into the earth and the sea and thus enabled them to implement His creative Word. God actually told the earth to put forth vegetation (Genesis 1:11) and to bring forth creatures (Genesis 1:24), and He commanded the waters to swarm with all kinds of marine life (Genesis 1:20). I hold that when a scientist who is a believing child of God uses the concept of evolution as a hypothesis in his scientific labors, he consciously does it within the framework of his faith that God alone is eternal, that God is the maker of all else that exists, and also that God is still active in what the church has called *Creatio Continua*."¹⁸

5. The great threat to Christianity which is posed by the acceptance of the evolutionary principle in the area of biological origin of species is that the same principle or thinking is applied to all other areas of human existence, including religion. The cultural evolutionist views Christianity as a primitive specimen of the past, a phenomenon which modern man has just about outgrown.

Finally, perhaps it ought now be asked, on the basis of Scripture's teaching and the concerns expressed above, whether more important than "Must we be embarrassed for the church's teaching on creation?" is not the question, "Must God be embarrassed for us in apologizing for this teaching before the world?"

Justification Through Christ by Faith

The matter of achieving acceptance, of oneself, by others, by God, is a third area of concern in speaking relevantly to our contemporaries in the intellectual arenas. Involved is the whole question of justification. A man requires it psychologically, we know, if he is to live with himself; he must have it also from others, if his life is to be free from gnawing uncertainties and anxieties. But underlying all is a spiritual dimension, man's need for justification before God, and by God; without this, he can neither live meaningfully with himself, nor with others.

The verdict at Helsinki in summer, 1963, was that Lutherans, particularly in central Europe, were expressing embarrassment for the historic and classic formulas of the Reformation on the article of justification. A curious sort of turn of events, "embarrassment!" Justification by faith alone is the material principle of Reformation theology, its life principle, the crucial point of departure and divi-

sion with the Roman church. Does the present "embarrassment" suggest that Luther was too heady, that the cleavage would have been less like radical surgery, if Luther and his fellow reformers had "with a calmer wisdom" (Archbishop Temple's suggestion) and better understanding of the issue, particularly of the doctrine of justification, dealt with their opponents, perhaps thus avoiding the bitter break "by a more conciliatory temper and a more synthetic habit of mind?"¹⁹ Even the study document on justification, "Christ Yesterday, Today, Forever," prepared by Warren A. Quanbeck for the Lutheran World Federation meeting at Helsinki, appears to suggest that Lutherans in the 20th century might have the wrong understanding of the article on justification, especially as expressed in the old formulas; that perhaps the insights brought in from scholarly research in lexical and other textual resources would alter our teaching today, at least the "insistence upon the centrality of Justification" in our theological thinking, for it might just be that our thinking and position are warped; that "it is no longer possible simply to continue . . . using the same vocabulary and employing the same arguments," because of the "erosion of language" and the "change in the climate of our culture."²⁰

Undoubtedly some of these concerns are very real and very legitimate. Language and terminology which are outmoded must never stand in the way of understanding. Communication must be crystal clear. Nor ought changes in the climate of our culture be ignored on the radar screen of the church's tracking system. The church must speak relevantly on an article whose cutting edge affects man's very life.

It is fair to ask, how is the church being advised to articulate on the subject of justification for times like ours by those who are the critics of the old Reformation formulas? In this connection it seems fair also to ask whether the new treatments of the article on justification by Roman theologians, like Hans Küng, should send Protestants scrambling to see whether perhaps they have misjudged the Roman church all the while?²¹ These individual efforts by Roman theologians to achieve rapprochement with the "separated brethren" are commendable, but they are a long ways from changing official pronouncements like the following:

"If anyone says that men are justified, either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ, or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and remains in them; or also that the grace by which we are justified is only the good will of God, let him be anathema."²²

More vital, it seems, than dialog with the Roman church, is the theological thinking and phrase-making which is going on among Protestants, particularly those dissatisfied with the old terminology, who now seek for language and thought-forms on justification which address our day meaningfully. Paul Tillich is one who is quite un-

willing to speak of atonement or justification in terms of a divine-human Savior giving His life as a ransom for sinners, as though by the perfect sacrifice of this one man all were made righteous. The whole idea is offensive to him and generally unacceptable to the modern mind. Instead he speaks of Jesus of Nazareth (Tillich never refers to him as the Christ, but merely as the New Testament picture of Jesus as the Christ!) as living his life under the conditions of human existence in such a way, in such dynamic relation with God the Father, that he successfully negated his own finite limitations as man, and dependence on the things of this physical world. Midst the risks and uncertainties of this troubled existence he achieved a true humility, losing of self, and dependence upon the infinite God, thus effecting the possibility of the "New Being in Jesus as the Christ," the way to the restoration of a trusting and loyal new life. For us, then, to be redeemed means to participate in this new reality through Christ (since Jesus portrayed exactly the New Being, that is, what God meant man to be), to bear the marks of our finitude humbly and in servant-like manner, and thus "to participate in the ultimate reconciliation of all estranged finitude with its absolute source in God, even while we continue to live on the earthly plane in the midst of the suffering and mystery of mortality."²³

Rudolf Bultmann's theology does not differ greatly from Tillich's on this point, its chief emphasis being existential. However much he denies it, Bultmann's approach is still merely a cloak for an anthropo-centric understanding of the human being. To speak relevantly to man today, Bultmann contends, we must help him see the world around himself and the purpose he has in life as having reality not in the things he sees, which are about him, but in the things beyond him; that man, moreover, must be aware "that he is not lord of his own being . . . , that in this state of dependence he can be delivered from the forces within the visible world."²⁴ It is Bultmann's considered judgment that Christianity's traditional teaching of Jesus as the incarnate sinless Son of God, who by His blood vicariously atoned for our sins and thus delivered us from punishment and eternal death is a "mythological interpretation" which has "ceased to be tenable for us today."²⁵ As little as we are concerned today "how he actually originated"²⁶ so little do we still think of Christ being crucified *for us* "in the sense of any theory of sacrifice or satisfaction."²⁷ What Christ's crucifixion means for us, its true "redemptive aspect," is "the crucifying of the affections and lusts . . . , the overcoming of our natural dread of suffering and the perfection of our detachment from the world."²⁸

Obviously, atonement or justification in these terms—and this is the way even "conservative" neo-theology is talking today—is a rejection of what is derisively called a metaphysical notion, of objective justification of sinners by Christ's vicarious shedding of blood, of Christ *for us*, and a replacing of this with the old theology, as old almost as the church is old, of Christ *in us*. The meaning of justifi-

cation, then, according to the latter view, is that God is most in control of our lives, Satan is repudiated, evil is put down, and a new relation between God and man is effected, a creaturely recognition of, and servant-like attitude toward, the Creator. William Hor-
dern has expressed it very well: "Jesus came into the world as one who advances into enemy-occupied territory. He allowed himself to be put under the control of the forces of evil knowing that they would overreach and thus defeat themselves. The powers of evil which crucify Christ are made to fulfill the will of God. The complete rule of God over all things is thus manifested. . . . When Christ arose from the dead, it was not simply an announcement that there is a life hereafter. It was the shattering of history by the creative act of God. It begins a new era for the universe, a decisive turning point for the human race. . . . The resurrection proclaims the fact that there is a power at work in the world which is mightier than all the forces that crucified our Lord. The resurrection is not just a personal survival of the man Jesus. . . . It is a cosmic victory. . . . a victory that can be shared by men. To those enslaved by passion, crushed and disillusioned, the promise comes, 'You can share Christ's risen life!' The God who raised Christ from the dead will not find your problem too difficult to handle. It can be overcome by a vital relationship with the living and resurrected Christ. This is the true atonement, the making at one of man and God."²⁹

Much of this language is very dear to the heart of a Christian believer as he reflects on the meaning of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Perhaps much of the content is intended to reproduce faithfully the *kerugma* of the Christian faith. But, if the "true atonement" is to be thought of in terms of a cosmic victory, a new era for the universe, a victory over the forces of evil wherever they appear, a mounting above enslaved passions, crushed and disillusioned hopes, a solving of all problems, no matter how difficult, through a vital relationship with Christ, then it is apparent that the chief fault of modern theology is that it still does not know how to divide law and gospel, to distinguish between sanctification and justification. It is as simple as that. But also as tragic! What we are being asked to do in reformulating our theology for this century, for rapport with the Romanists and with the Arminians and with the Calvinists, is to speak no longer in such sharp terms as *sola gratia*, but in terms, no matter how subtle the disguise, which proclaim what Luther called an "active righteousness." The Christian world needs to read again Luther's masterful commentary on Galatians, or if they have never read it, which is more likely, that they get right with it, before they read another word by Barth, Bultmann, Tillich and all the rest. What happens, Luther challenges the thinkers of his day, if this article on justification be lost? "Then is all true Christian doctrine lost."³⁰ Is compromise ever possible between what is known as active righteousness, the transformation and renewal in man, and passive righteousness, the forgiveness won

and freely given us through Christ; between righteousness of the law and righteousness of faith? Luther answers flatly—and we hope for all time: "There is no mean."³¹

Justification, reconciliation with God, must never lose its objective sense. This is an aspect which stands first and very basic. Of it David speaks in the 25th Psalm: "Turn Thee unto me." (16) David well knew that if he was to be restored to communion with God, there was need that God be reconciled unto him, that there be a full atonement, that He turn to him with forgiveness. Pre-supposed in all this was the fact that sin had injured not only David himself, and others, but God! And his plea is grounded, therefore, not upon the all-too-human "let's forget about it" and "let bygones be bygones," but upon the solid promise of God concerning the Righteous Branch who would redeem Israel, the promised Messiah in whom He would show His great mercy and forgiveness. Thus the cross was not something up in the air somewhere, a pious bit of idealistic abstraction, but it was inserted, as the Gospel proclaims, into the very tissue of history and the human race, as the apostle Paul so beautifully explained to the Corinthians: "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." (2 Cor. 5, 19) This is a wondrous truth, "a wondrous justice," as Luther calls it, God declaring not merely that He is ready to forgive, that in Christ crucified there is the possibility of forgiveness, but that Christ by His vicarious sacrifice has made full expiation for sin, that God is propitiated, that forgiveness is there as a *fait accompli*. It is a weak gospel, therefore, which says, God is ready to forgive; it is a mighty gospel which says, God is turned to us, He has redeemed us, He is reconciled to sinners.

Men have pondered the question, Was not God a forgiving God before Christ came and was crucified? In answering this question, it must be stated first of all, that if the sense and intent of the question is, Was there forgiveness for the people in the Old Testament?, there is little reason to find fault with it. The answer is quickly discovered in a summary like that in the great eleventh chapter of Hebrews, where the heroes of faith are listed and their salvation is traced to their trust in the promised Messiah. But the question is unjustified, in fact insolent, if its intent is to raise doubt about the method chosen by God for man's salvation, to query, What need was there for Christ's passion and suffering, or Was not the crucifixion after all superfluous, or Does forgiveness and reconciliation really depend upon the cross, or Would it not have been enough for Jesus to tell a few choice parables on forgiveness, like the prodigal son, and then consider his work done and return to heaven? Jesus obviously came to do much more than to enlarge and broaden men's ideas about forgiveness through a few memorable parables, more, too, than to assure a few of the disjointed souls of his day that their sins were forgiven them; He came to effect and gain forgiveness and reconciliation for the whole race, the whole world of mankind.

Thus, what this teaches is that Christ, by His vicarious atonement, brought a true and actual ransom payment, satisfying God's holy and just wrath against sin. To Christ the guilt and penalty of our sin was imputed; and to us the righteousness of Christ is imputed; all the gifts of our beloved Bridegroom become ours, and we are declared righteous, with full pardon and forgiveness. This is the passive righteousness of which Luther speaks, in which alone there is hope and comfort for sinners. Reconciliation means that first of all there was a changed condition between God and man; God's feeling toward man was now as though men had never offended against Him and owed nothing at all; all was well and sound.

It is never enough to explain reconciliation, as modern theology does, in terms of a renewal within man, which his fellowship with Christ has somehow helped to effect. The formula, according to the usual thinking, is that God is a God of love; He wants to pardon and forgive, if we will but be reconciled to Him and each other. Barclay, for example, in his word studies says in connection with the term that is usually translated as "ransoming": "Nowhere in the New Testament is there any word of to whom that price is paid. It could not have been paid to God, because all the time God was so loving the world. It could not have been paid to the devil for that would put the devil on an equality with God,"³² and thus make the jailor into the judge. But the mystery is not quite so great, that is, the mystery of how to explain love and wrath in God at one and the same time. Obviously, as Scripture shows, this is always in terms of the divine-human relation, and on this it surely is not silent. It was the holy law of God which had been broken by man's lawlessness and sin; it was God who had been offended by such unbelief and rebellion; it was He who in holiness and justice demanded that the guilt and the penalty be paid, and the Gospel announces—this is the *Kerugma*!—that it was Christ who did it for us.

There are no perfect analogies of what it was that God did for us in Christ. The atonement is unique. But some idea of what reconciliation and forgiveness mean stands out even in human relations. Suppose for a moment that a man has injured one of his friends by some act of meanness, perfidy, or deceit. Immediately a barrier comes between them. It will mean much if the evil-doer can be sure in a general sort of way that his injured friend is of forgiving disposition. It will mean still more, if the friend who has been wronged sends a go-between to assure the other that, while he was deeply cut, nevertheless he is ready to forgive. It will be still more effective, if the one wronged will come himself and give such assurance. But, as we know, human love can go to even greater lengths. A friend might even sacrifice his life for a wrong-doer, because the other was his friend, if thereby the miscreant might perchance be lifted up out of his condition of shame and moral turpitude to wondering gratitude and trust. The apostle Paul, for example, notes that it is not very likely, "yet peradventure for a good

man some would even dare to die." (Rom. 5,7) But the true wonder of God's love in Christ is, as the same apostle states in the next verse: "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Like this there is no parallel or analogue in human experience.

Precisely this is the Gospel, that God for Christ's sake pardons, forgives, is reconciled to us, not because of who we are, but because of who He is, a gracious, loving God, who in Christ has imputed all His wealth unto us and sinners all. And now when the Holy Spirit comes to us, broken, despairing, contrite sinners, whose pretensions of righteousness have been pulverized by the law, with the wonderful appeal, "Be ye reconciled to God" (2 Cor. 5, 20), be ye followers of God, walk in love as dear children, then our hearts are filled with faith in Christ; and because with faith, also with joy, with confidence, with peace; and no longer are we ashamed, but each can say and exult in all humility and gratitude: I am justified and reconciled unto Him.

Conclusion

The fact that preaching of the cross, justification through the vicarious atonement of Christ, has never been meaningful and relevant to the world by its standards, but a stumbling-block to those who are spiritually drunk³³ and an offense to those wise in their own conceits, should warn us that the Gospel of Christ's passive righteousness must in no way be shaped to fit into the pattern of thinking today. Nor must we be dissuaded from our task by the sophistication of the critics who dismiss Christianity as a caricature because of the shallowness and Pharisaism of so many of its followers. Because they can point out these "soft spots," have genuine, passionate concern for humanity in a way that some Christian folks do not, and are articulate unmaskers of unreligion and irreligion among many of Christianity's adherents, especially the professional "Kingdom boundary markers," does not mean that they will, therefore, be at the pearly gates to welcome the faithful.

The fact is that all religious notions of men have always come short of the Gospel truth, for had they known it they would not have crucified the Lord, as the apostle says. (1 Cor. 2,8) No matter how thin you slice them, therefore, they are all varieties at best of the "Great Pumpkin" theology, to use *Peanuts'* terminology. The ultimate criterion, after all, is sincerity, according to Charlie Brown and his cronies. "I doubt if he likes large pumpkin patches," offers Linus. "They're too commercial. . . . He likes small homey ones. . . . They're more sincere." Charlie Brown interjects what is obviously the minority side of the question: "Somehow I've never thought of a pumpkin patch as being sincere." But suddenly, as they stand in the middle of their darkened pumpkin patch, Linus, who is emotionally and religiously geared for the unexpected, catches sight of something (it happens to be Snoopy's outline, with his big ears) and shouts: "There he is. There he is.

It's the Great Pumpkin! He's rising up out of the pumpkin patch." Overcome with his own excitement, Linus promptly klunks out and sees nothing more. When he comes to, wondering what has happened, he is assured by Charlie Brown that it was nothing; no Great Pumpkin appeared; no toys were left, just a used dog. But Linus is in no mood for listening, least of all about something as obvious as Snoopy; his is a one-track mind: "He must be well on his way by this time. Happy journey, O Great Pumpkin! Happy journey!" And Snoopy, the dog who had caused all the stir, muses to himself: "Used dog! Good grief!"²⁴

Snoopy is Charles Schulz's "hound of heaven," a kind of parable figure through which he tries to depict the mind of Christ. But to most people, as to Linus and Charlie Brown, poor Snoopy is just a used dog and no more than that, often in the way, despised and useless.

God's own Son, our Lord and Savior, came suddenly into the pumpkin patch of this world, in the fullness of time, was made of a woman, took on Himself the form of a servant, suffered and was crucified, in order to make atonement for the sins of the whole human race; but was despised and rejected of men, and still is, merely an ill-used man. What people want is Great Pumpkin religion, of their own devising, with the "toys" that make this earth a heaven. They, too, have one-track minds.

May it be permitted us, may it also be our resolve, as it was the apostle Paul's firm determination, "to concentrate entirely on Jesus Christ himself and the fact of his death upon the cross", that men's faith "should rest not upon man's cleverness but upon the power of God," (1 Cor. 2,2.5) for Christ "was delivered to death for our sins and raised again to secure our justification." (Rom. 4,25)

FOOTNOTES

1. *Bondage of the Will*, Packer-Johnston translation (Revel, New Jersey, 1957), p. 128.
2. *Op. cit.*, pp. 67-73 *passim*.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 129.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 262.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 271.
10. *Works of Martin Luther*. Philadelphia edition, vol. VI, pp. 367-368.
11. Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* (Macmillan, New York, 1931), pp. 136 and 144.
12. *Bondage of the Will*, p. 268.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 97f. Luther is here discussing not the creation of all things but the happening of all things under the sovereign, determinate counsel of God; but what he says applies to all of Scripture's teachings.

15. *Lutheran Witness*, July 7, 1964.
16. H. M. Morris. *The Twilight of Evolution* (Baker, Grand Rapids, 1964), p. 85.
17. Anthony Standen. *Science is a Sacred Cow* (Dutton, New York, 1950), p. 103.
18. Seminary Newsletter, An Alumni Bulletin (Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo. Feb. 1965), p. 5.
19. Archbishop Temple, Quoted by Hedegard, D., *Ecumenism and the Bible* (London, 1955), p. 68.
20. Warren A. Quanbeck. *Christ Yesterday, Today, Forever! A Study Document on Justification* (National Lutheran Council, New York, 1962), pp. 9-10.
21. An overly exuberant John Macquarrie apparently thinks so: "We may well find, as Hans Küng has sought to show, that the gulf between Catholic and Protestant views of justification is not unbridgeable." *Principles of Christian Theology* (Scribner's, New York, 1966), p. 305.
22. *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, Session VI, Cannon II, trans. by H. J. Schroeder (Herder, St. Louis, 1941), p. 43.
23. D. D. Williams *What Present-Day Theologians are Thinking* (Harper, New York, 1961), p. 133.
24. R. Bultmann. *Kerugma and Myth* (Harper, New York, 1961), p. 11.
25. *Op. cit.*, p. 35.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
29. Wm. A. Hordern. *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology* (Macmillan, New York, 1955), p. 205f.
30. Dillenberger. *Martin Luther, Selections* (Anchor, New York, 1961), p. 106.
31. *Ibid.*
32. Wm. Barclay. *A New Testament Workbook* (Harper, New York), p. 83.
33. Luther's term for those filled with pretensions of their own righteousness.
34. Robert L. Short. *The Gospel According to Peanuts* (John Knox Press, Richmond, Va, 1965), p. 109.