

# Concordia Theological Monthly



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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

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### IS THE JOINT CONFESSION OF FAITH NOW BEFORE THE CHURCH A COMPROMISE?

Dr. Ruff, editor of *The Lutheran* (ULCA), thinks so. In the issue of his paper of April 5 he adverts in several paragraphs to this confession and uses the expression "Missouri compromise." Fortunately the mere fact that the document is called a compromise does not make it a compromise. If the members of the two committees who drew up the document were asked whether it is a compromise, they would, I believe, unanimously deny that such is its character. When the document was planned, the thought that was expressed was not to write a compromise statement, covering up the differences between the two church bodies, but to present to the Church a declaration which would set forth the convictions of conservative Lutheranism in our day and age. There was no intention of hiding anything. But there was the desire of course to express thoughts and convictions and to use language relevant in 1950. If Dr. Ruff looked for expressions like *intuitu fidei* and *Cur alii prae aliis?* and the "first trope" and the "second trope" of the doctrine of election, we can somewhat understand his reaction. Those expressions are not used, not because a compromise document was planned, but because the terms no longer represent issues on which controversy is carried on in our church circles. God be praised! the predestinarian controversy has been concluded, and what is needed is merely a statement of the basic truths, not a survey of the old battle. Another fact which must not be overlooked was the wish on the part of the committees to write a document which would be brief and couched in simple terms so that the laity, too, could understand and appreciate what is presented. Hence technical terms were rather studiously avoided. The use of such language must not be attributed to the endeavor to produce a compromise document, but rather to the desire to place into the hands of our people a confession of faith which would be serviceable to the occupants of both the pulpit and the pew. — A few details from Dr. Ruff's article should be mentioned. He thinks that the doctrine concerning the Antichrist "is played down." Let the reader judge for himself whether that stricture is tenable. The document reads: "Among the signs of Christ's approaching return for judgment the distinguishing features of the Antichrist, as portrayed in Holy Scriptures, are still clearly discernible in the Roman Papacy, the

climax of all human usurpations of Christ's authority in the Church." This does not strike us as a "playing down." If anybody thinks the little word "still" represents a weakening, let him look at the matter calmly. The word tells him that not only were the marks of the Antichrist visible in the papacy in the sixteenth century when the Lutheran Confessions were written, but they are still to be seen in that stupendous institution. Thus the verdict of 1537 is put into the context of A. D. 1950. Concerning the doctrine of conversion, Dr. Ruff says that the new doctrinal statement "clears up the conversion question in two sentences." He apparently finds that strange because of the "heavy skirmishing" (his phrase) that had been going on with reference to this point. But we ask: Is it not fully sufficient to state the simple truth, that our conversion is entirely the work of God the Holy Spirit, without any co-operation whatever from sinful man? Similarly in the paragraph on the Word of God, while it is brief, the main points are mentioned. It is true, the expression "verbal inspiration" is not used, but the new statement contains the significant words: "We therefore recognize the Holy Scriptures as God's inerrant Word." Here is the point on which there is controversy. Let our readers not think that because this new statement uses different language from that to which we have been accustomed the thoughts are new ones, that the old truths are not professed, that difficulties have been neglected, that errors have been hushed up. Nothing was farther from the minds of the committee members when the joint confession was drafted.

W. ARNDT

#### SIX QUESTIONS OF THE WISCONSIN SYNOD

On August 4, 1949, the Wisconsin Synod resolved to address six questions to the convention of the Missouri Synod to be held this year in Milwaukee. Because we believe it important for our readers to be informed in this area, we here reprint the questions.

1. Does the Missouri Synod approve of the participation of its pastors in the programs and in the joint worship of intersynodical laymen's organizations, specifically Lutheran Men in America? If not, only a public disavowal of the offense will remove it.

2. Does the Missouri Synod approve of the co-operation of some of its welfare agencies with Lutherans with whom it is otherwise not in fellowship, in view of the fact that such welfare work is inseparably associated with spiritual implications? If the Synod does not approve, what will you do to clear yourselves of the responsibility for the offense that has been given?

3. Does the Missouri Synod approve the co-operation of its representatives with the National Lutheran Council in matters which are admittedly no longer in the field of externals? (e. g., "Building a New Lutheranism in Great Britain," *Lutheran Witness*, March 8, 1949, p. 76). If not, what will be done to correct the impression that has been given?

4. Does the Missouri Synod approve the position taken by its representatives at the First Bad Boll with regard to the program for devotions and worship? If not, what will be done to remove the offense?

5. Does the Missouri Synod approve of the arrangement whereby prominent members of its official committees are serving with representatives of other Lutheran bodies as sponsors of the book *Scouting in the Lutheran Church*, published by the National Scout Organization? If not, what will you do about the offense that was thus given?

6. Does the Missouri Synod still hold to its former position that Rom. 16:17 applies to all errorists, whether Lutherans or not? (See Stoeckhardt, *Roemerbrief*, pp. 641 and 642; also Pieper, *Dogmatik*, III, p. 474, Sec. 5; *Brief Statement*, Art. 28.) If so, what will be done to correct the growing impression that this is no longer the case?

The trained reader will at once observe that here we are dealing with questions of casuistry. Thank God, the differences that are pointed to by implication are not of a directly doctrinal nature, they have to do with church practice. Our theologians have always insisted that one must distinguish between doctrine and practice and that while our doctrine has to be right and Scriptural, the practice will always be found to be lagging behind the ideal on account of human weakness.

The question does arise, however, whether after all there are not two sharply differentiated views contending for supremacy here. At any rate, let the reader ponder the following. There is a practice which one may call a practice of consistency. It has established certain principles derived by inference from the Scriptures, and it holds that these principles must be adhered to at all hazards and under all circumstances. It contends that the principles do not permit of exceptions. On the other hand, there is a practice which, while it prizes principles, holds that there is a higher thing than literal consistency, and that is the principle of Christian love. It does not wish to violate the principles, but it holds that when there is a clash between one of these principles and the law of Christian love, the latter must have the right of way.

Let us illustrate. We point to a case which actually happened. A clergyman of a synod not in fellowship with us resided among Mis-

souri Synod Lutherans. When he was away, his child took ill and died. He was called home. None of his synodical brethren being available, he requested the Missouri Synod pastor to conduct the funeral. The latter did it. Afterwards a prominent critic chided the pastor for having been unfaithful to his principles. The principle that apparently had been violated was that of fellowship. The principle says that no church fellowship must be practiced with people who are not of our own communion. Did the pastor commit a sin? He did not follow the principle just mentioned, but he followed what he called a "higher law," the law of Christian love. The critic suggested that the father of the child could himself have conducted the funeral, being a clergyman; the Missouri Synod pastor should not have officiated. Here you have consistency. Would it have been God-pleasing? Let the reader decide.

The question that arises is whether there is not a conflict here between a legalistic and an evangelistic course. The legalist is bound by rules, the evangelical man thinks of rules as a means to an end, he will follow them where he can, but he will recognize that there may be times when they should not be followed.

Did not our Lord Jesus settle this whole question for us in Matthew 12, where He points out that David violated the law of the sanctuary and still did not offend against God's will because there was a higher law that had to be followed, the law of love?

In a class by itself one has to place No. 6 because it deals with a matter of interpretation. We merely wish to say that whoever desires to take Stoeckhardt as his authority in the interpretation of Rom. 16: 17 f. will have to include what this renowned exegete says touching v. 18. "Warum man von falschen Lehrern weichen muesse, zeigt Paulus V. 18. Dieselben dienen unserm Herrn Jesu Christo nicht, wie es sich doch gebuehrt, und wie sie etwa vorgeben, sondern dienen ihrem Bauch. Ihnen liegt nichts daran, dem Herrn Christo Seelen zu gewinnen, sondern sie verfolgen ihren eigenen Vorteil, ihr eigenes Gelueste, suchen sich selbst nur grossen Anhang zu verschaffen, um Wohlleben und gute Tage zu haben."

In general the suggestion is *a propos* that all concerned reread the theses on unevangelical practice commonly ascribed to Dr. Schwan and printed in the English translation of P. T. Buszin in the May, 1945 (Vol. XVI, No. 5), issue of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY. Thesis 5 is of special importance, "It is not evangelical practice to cast the pearls before the swine, but much less is it evangelical practice to keep them in one's own pocket."

W. ARNDT

## WHAT STANDS BETWEEN?

Looking around in the theological world, a Lutheran cannot fail to notice a pamphlet which in 1949 was issued in a revised edition. It has the title *What Stands Between?* that is, between the Evangelical Lutheran Church (the large Norwegian body in our country) and the Evangelical Lutheran Norwegian Synod, affiliated with our church body in The Synodical Conference. The author, J. A. O. Preus, Jr., is professor at Bethany College, Mankato, Minn. Having come to the conviction that much of the teaching in Luther Seminary and in the church body it serves is at variance with the Word of God and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and that in its practice the Evangelical Lutheran Church is not loyal to Lutheran principles, he has left the ELC and joined the Synod of our brethren. His aim in the essay under discussion is to show that the ELC is guilty of false doctrine and unscriptural practice. Whatever view an impartial investigator will reach on the question whether the criticisms here uttered are justified, we hope that many members of the ELC will read what one of their former brethren has to say about conditions in their church body, and that they will do so with an open mind, suppressing all feelings of bitterness. If the charges made are true, action should be taken to have the evils mentioned removed; if they are not true, there is cause for rejoicing.

No one who reads the pamphlet will doubt that the author endorses and espouses the theology of the *Brief Statement* of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod, and of A. L. Graebner's *Doctrinal Theology* and F. Pieper's *Christliche Dogmatik*. In addition, we wish to say that we admire his zeal and ability. His pamphlet is nothing if not polemical; it bristles with charges and condemnatory judgments. While we are in full agreement with the author's underlying theology, we often cannot endorse his procedure and the verdict he pronounces. The chief method which he employs in submitting evidence for his charges appears to us highly questionable. He relies mainly on statements of professors heard by him and presumably other young men in classrooms of the ELC Seminary in St. Paul. But everybody knows how precarious it is to evaluate a teacher's or anybody else's doctrinal or scientific positions on the basis of mere oral presentations. The possibilities of forming erroneous judgments are so many and so patent that an enumeration of them is neither feasible nor necessary. It seems that if doctrinal errors were taught in the classrooms, there must have been some way of bringing them to the attention of the Church in authentic fashion. Why were not signed statements obtained, which

could be submitted in print? We do not wish to insinuate that the author knowingly misrepresents; we merely say that his procedure is very vulnerable.

Another feature of the essay which we regret to see is that the author several times generalizes in an unwarranted way; because a professor of the ELC has voiced an, in his judgment, objectionable view, he declares, "the ELC teaches this false doctrine." The fair-minded reader cannot help feeling that such a charge implies various bold assumptions, especially these two, that the whole church body knows the professor's position and that it approves or at least tolerates it. No elaboration is needed here.

In many details, too, we cannot approve the author's judgments. On p. 3 he says, "The ELC does not uphold the authority and clarity of the Word." On p. 2 f. this sentence is found, "The ELC . . . does not maintain that Scripture is clear. It treats the Bible as an obscure book in which one may find many variant interpretations and uncertain statements." That is a very serious accusation, and it ought to be proved or withdrawn. No proof is submitted. To us it is absolute news that the ELC does not confess either the authority or the clarity of the Scriptures.

The discussion of the position of the ELC on the doctrine of predestination is highly unsatisfactory. We wish very much the author would have followed the calm, objective way in which Dr. Pieper in his brochure *Zur Einigung* examines the statements of the *Opgjoer* on election. In a number of other instances one is not convinced that a good case is made out by the plaintiff.

But it may well be that not all of the charges of false doctrine rest on a misunderstanding. We ourselves certainly do not approve of the way in which the *Opgjoer* speaks of the so-called two forms or tropes in which the doctrine of election is presented. It is especially in the section on church practice, with its paragraphs on lodgery and unionism, where considerations are submitted which we hope will not be neglected or brushed aside. May the pamphlet, in spite of its evident defects, do much good—that is our devout wish.

W. F. ARNDT

#### REMEMBERING THE DAYS OF OLD

Of the many theological journals which the contributors to the "Theological Observer" column read regularly, some appear weekly, others bi-weekly, still others monthly, and some quarterly. Many of these journals contain materials which require careful scrutiny. Others contain articles with a lighter content. All of them serve a purpose, and most of them are edited by a deft hand. To select from this large number of journals any one for special consideration may appear unfair.

Yet, human as we are, we can't help occasionally to call attention to a certain journal which we find of special value. Last October we commented briefly on *Lutheran Education*. In this issue we wish to call attention to the *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*. This journal which, with the April issue, is entering upon its twenty-third year, was called into existence for the purpose of providing a depository of historical information on our Synod and Lutheranism in America in general. From the editorial comments and notes in this issue, we quote:

The announcement that Dr. W. G. Polack had resigned as editor of *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly* was, we know, a source of deepest regret to all readers. It was only with the greatest reluctance that the Board of Trustees accepted his resignation. Dr. Polack was not only editor for twenty-two years, he was its founding editor. Under his leadership the *Quarterly* grew from a small number of approximately 150 subscribers to its present subscription list of approximately 1,000. The first issues contained twenty-four pages, while current numbers have grown to forty-eight pages. But more important than all this is the fact that the *Quarterly* under the editorship of Dr. Polack has become an invaluable periodical for the study of American Lutheranism and especially for a study of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. Very few phases of scholarly history of the Missouri Synod can be studied today without consulting the *Quarterly*. Dr. Polack drew in writers from many sources during those twenty-two years and thus made accessible to students of church history a vast amount of valuable material. The members of the Institute, together with its Board of Trustees, are deeply appreciative of the services rendered by Dr. Polack.

Upon Dr. Polack's retirement as editor, Professor Arthur C. Repp was appointed as his successor. The editor, so he informs us, "greatly appreciates the opportunity to serve in the field of American Lutheran Church history. . . . The motto of the *Quarterly*, 'I remember the days of old; I meditate on all Thy works,' will help him focus his attention on Him who has directed the destinies of the Lutheran Church in America and will give Him all praise for the success which is reflected in the history of the Church. . . . As editor he hopes to recall for the Church its past in order that it may understand the present and take courage as it continues to work for the future." Doctors Th. Graebner and W. G. Polack, who have been on the editorial committee of the *Quarterly* since its beginning, will continue to serve as associate editors, together with Rev. August Suelflow, who is in charge of the Concordia Historical Institute.

Though the *Quarterly* has its own way of promoting both the Insti-



tute and itself, we are happy to wish this very valuable journal of our Church a *bon voyage* as it continues its journey under Editor Arthur C. Repp.

P. M. B.

#### MUSICAL HERITAGE OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH

It is a trite saying that the greatest music came into existence under the inspiration of the message of God's love in Christ, proclaimed by the Church. The outstanding example is the music produced by J. S. Bach, the bicentennial of whose death is being observed throughout the world this year. But there are other great Christian names in the history of music who also contributed to the most eloquent expressions of musical art. There are the great predecessors and contemporaries and successors of Bach. There is the glorious church music written many centuries before Bach's day by Christian composers, many of whose names are no longer known. To hear some of this music was this writer's privilege when the Midwest Chapter of the American Musicological Society met in St. Louis in April and presented on two evenings of the convention, church music of unforgettable beauty. One program bore the title "Music of the Baroque Era" and featured music by Bach, both vocal and instrumental, and by such other masters as Dietrich Buxtehude, Heinrich Schuetz, Michael Praetorius, Gallus Dressler, Matthaëus Le Maistre, and Hans Leo Hassler. The high point of that evening's performance was the singing of Luther's Communion Service from the *Deutsche Messe* of 1526 by the Collegium Musicum of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, directed by Gerhard Schroth. The following evening the Chapel Choir of Valparaiso University, under the direction of Dr. M. Alfred Bichsel, presented the "Spirit of the Liturgy in the History of Music." In the course of this program the audience had an opportunity to hear a great variety of compositions illustrating the various parts of the church liturgy, such as the Introit, the Kyrie, the Gloria in Excelsis, etc.

To the glory of God it should be said that our Church is on the way of fostering a deep interest in the music of the church worship. To know what our institutions for the training of pastors and teachers are doing in this respect and what, in particular, the University of Valparaiso is doing in this direction must make everyone in our Church grateful to God. And to know that throughout our Church there are choruses directed by well-trained and competent conductors who are featuring in their programs the great heritage of music in the Church is also something for which we ought to be truly grateful and which should receive the continued and increasing support of our people.

P. M. B.

## HUNGARIAN LUTHERAN LEADERS DECLINE TO START CHURCH RESISTANCE

The West has relatively little information concerning the religious situation in Hungary. We know that the Lutheran Bishop, Lajos Ordass, was deposed from office, but we do not know the real reasons for his removal from office. The executive committee of the Lutheran World Federation, of which Bishop Ordass is a member, naturally is deeply concerned but unable to do anything, because Dr. C. S. Michel-felder's attempt to obtain a visa to enter Hungary was in vain. The question of primary concern for Western Lutherans is whether or not the Hungarian Lutherans have made unwarranted concessions to their Communist-controlled government. The reader is asked to draw his own conclusions on the basis of the following report from R. N. S.

Eight top-ranking leaders of the Hungarian Lutheran Church have sent a message to "our Lutheran brethren in the West," declaring that they "cannot take responsibility for starting a so-called church resistance" in Communist-dominated Hungary. The text of the message, published in the latest issue of the *Hungarian Church Press*, clearly intimated that many phases of church life in Hungary are being hampered by the Communist government, but insisted that nevertheless the Lutheran Church is growing in its spiritual work and influence. Obviously inspired by charges of Lutheran leaders in the United States and elsewhere that the Hungarian Church has failed to take a strong stand against State encroachments, the message declared that the Church should not start a "political struggle in this country." It also challenged the belief that there "cannot be true Christianity in the Eastern Hemisphere," declaring that "such an opinion would be the negation of the omnipotent power of God." The message said that the difficulties facing the Church are no more trying than were those experienced by the Apostles in the time of the Roman Empire and that the Hungarian Church leaders are "responsible before God" only to ensure "that His Church might subsist in Hungary." "We cannot, therefore," the message asserted, "take the responsibility for starting a so-called church resistance on account of the limitation of certain aspects of church life which we have to recognize in the light of the Word as belonging to the nature of the Church in the sense of the New Testament." . . .

"Our Church is being judged by God" on account of its former "omissions and disobedience," the message continues. "In the decades past," it said, "it was interwoven with certain social and economic systems and was unable to resist the temptations of purposeful nationalism and militarism." However, the Lutheran Church, although

"humbled by this judgment," is experiencing "a respite of grace amidst external difficulties." "The Holy Ghost strips off everything that has in the course of time stuck to the body of the Church in the shape of human guarantees and additions and grants a wonderful revival and renewal wherever the Gospel is purely preached. Never did the Word of God speak in the Hungarian Lutheran Church so abundantly as it does now, and never was it listened to by so many people. Except during the period of tolerance at the end of the 18th century subsequent to the persecution of the Hapsburgs, never were so many churches being built as now. Perhaps from the days of the Reformation, there has never been a time in the life of our Church in which it could have been faced so seriously by the reality of sin and yet rejoice at grace with so much gratitude as now."

In this position, the message urged, "we ask more comprehension, patience, love, and trust from our Lutheran brethren." . . . "We shall be grateful to our western brethren should they be willing to continue their brotherly help to us, being sensible of this obligation because they were spared from the destructions of war, and are materially strong. However, we should like to avoid even the semblance of this aid being anything but the manifestation of Christian charity and the ecumenical idea, according to which the members of Christ's Church take care of one another."

F. E. M.

#### MISSION TO THE HOLY SEE

In its issue of April 1, *America* takes note of the Federal Council's attack on U. S. representation to the Holy See, in particular with the paragraph which, according to *America*, appeared in the *Bulletin* published March 8 by the Federal Council.

The paragraph reads:

The maintenance of diplomatic relations with the Vatican . . . confers on one church a special status, not held by other churches, in relation to government. It is thus directly contrary to our historic principle that all churches should have the same status in the eyes of the state.

In reply to this paragraph, *America* editorializes:

The word "confer" in this passage warrants analysis. The President of the United States, by sending a representative to the Holy See, might be said to *recognize* the special "status" of the Roman Catholic Church, but even this statement would be misleading. The President would not thereby recognize the *theological* claims of the Catholic Church. He could be said to be recognizing the special *diplomatic* "status" of the Holy See. The Holy See's special diplomatic "status" is beyond

question. It in nowise depends on whether we maintain a representative there. It is simply a fact. To the Federal Council it is a very distasteful fact. The Catholic Church is, in the first place, truly *international*. Moreover, it has a *center* to which thirty-four nations already send diplomatic representatives. In the Vatican State, the Holy See can carry on international diplomatic relations unhampered by subjection to any temporal sovereignty. No other international organization on earth, religious or non-religious, enjoys a similar "status." The Federal Council cannot change this situation.

To the above analysis we reply as follows:

1. Indeed, "in the Vatican State, the Holy See can carry on international diplomatic relations unhampered by subjection to any temporal sovereignty." The Vatican State is an independent state. Mussolini made it that. It is not subject to any temporal government. It is a state in its own right. Stalin's bitter barb, "How many legions has the Pope?" did not help Stalin's cause, yet it is understandable. Also Tito and Gottwalt know very well that in their dealings with the Catholic Church they are not dealing with a church only, but also with a state.

2. That thirty-four nations are already sending diplomatic representatives to the Vatican State may well be true. But so what? Does the writer mean to suggest that the United States ought to get busy at last and fall in line and do what other nations are already doing? We do not know which these thirty-four nations are, but we believe to be within the bounds of truth when we suggest that the great majority of these nations are those in which the Catholic Church controls affairs of the state and is held to remain in close touch with her international headquarters in the Vatican. The United States, however, is very largely a Protestant country, and its Constitution does not allow for preferences on religious grounds to any group. Furthermore, Americans ought not forget that throughout the period in which Myron Taylor served as President Roosevelt's and President Truman's personal representative to the Vatican, Protestants in our country repeatedly protested against this arrangement, which they believe to be wholly at variance with the letter and spirit of our democracy. Whether present protests against the appointment of a successor to Myron Taylor will be successful remains to be seen.

3. By sending a representative to the Holy See, so the editor in *America* writes, President Truman "would not thereby recognize the *theological* claims of the Catholic Church. He could be said to be recognizing the special *diplomatic* 'status' of the Holy See." Let us look at the facts. By sending a representative to the Holy See, the

President would recognize both the religious and secular status of the Holy See inasmuch as the Pope is officially regarded by the Roman Catholic Church as "Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the Temporal Dominions of the Holy Roman Church and Sovereign of Vatican City."

P. M. B.

#### THE THEOLOGY OF REINHOLD NIEBUHR

There is no doubt that the influence of Reinhold Niebuhr, both in our own country and abroad, is exceedingly great. Recently he has addressed professors and pastors of the EKID in Berlin. The *Lutheran* has recently completed an arrangement with him to supply "a brief article once each month" (cf. *Lutheran*, March 25, 1950). In the essay furnished for that particular issue he treats the subject "No Man Is Good," and what he says in it is briefly summed up by Editor Ruff as follows: "No matter how hard we try, we cannot achieve goodness. We must depend on God's forgiveness and mercy, of which we are assured through Christ." This summary is quite evangelical, and no one could find fault with it. Nor will the casual reader find fault with the article. Everything seems to be very correct, very orthodox. But is it? In England, as Prof. Louis Berkhof points out in an article, "Advocate of Liberal Christian Realism," in *United Evangelical Action* (April 1, 1950), Niebuhr has been designated as a "prophet from America." Dr. Berkhof writes of him: "He may be regarded as the most outstanding representative of Christian Realism, who contributed far more than any one else to a constructive presentation of the more recent liberal teachings. He greatly influenced such men as his brother, H. Richard Niebuhr, Walter M. Horton, Robert L. Calhoun, John C. Bennett, and Henry P. Van Dusen, though these do not agree with him on all points, and in general have retained more of the earlier liberal teachings."

In his article Professor Berkhof examines Niebuhr on three counts: Divine Revelation, Sin, and Grace. His judgment of Niebuhr as a Christian theologian is entirely negative. Now, we do not ask our readers to judge Niebuhr's theology on the basis of what Dr. Berkhof says, but rather to use Berkhof's verdicts as guidelines when they study Niebuhr's books. We know Professor Berkhof as an able dogmatician of the strict Calvinistic profession and a most competent apologist, who, we may add, tries to be eminently fair when dealing with opponents.

Professor Berkhof's critique of Niebuhr's doctrine of divine revela-

tion, stated in part, may be summarized as follows: "Niebuhr follows the Barthian school in placing great emphasis on the necessity of a divine revelation. In distinction from Barth, however, and in agreement with Brunner, he recognizes *two kinds of revelation* (italics in original), which he distinguishes as private-individual and public revelation. The public revelation is God's revelation in the course of history, including the history of God's chosen people and also the life of Jesus Christ. Private revelation comes to man in momentary impressions, which God makes on man on various occasions, and in the light of which man must chart his course. In all this, it will be seen, there is no evidence of a return to the Bible, as God's special and infallible revelation. According to Niebuhr, it is impossible to return to that antiquated position, though he is willing to learn some lessons from the Bible." Niebuhr's position on the Bible as the objective Word of God is, therefore, that of Barth, in particular, that of Brunner, who on this point is even more liberal than is Barth.

On Niebuhr's doctrine of sin Berkhof writes (quoted in part): "Niebuhr stresses the fact that man not only sins from time to time, but that he is a sinner by nature. He even believes in original sin. This seems strange in view of the fact that he regards the story of the fall as a myth. He interprets this myth as a symbol of something that occurs in the life of every man. He [man] wants to be as God, the real lord of life. That is every man's sin, and that is original sin, the sin from which all other sins result." To this Dr. Berkhof adds: "This certainly does not look like the Biblical conception of sin." We might put it more strongly: It certainly is not, for, as, with Barth, Niebuhr repudiates the traditional Christian doctrine of Scripture, so he also repudiates the traditional Christian doctrine of original and actual sin.

On Niebuhr's doctrine of grace, that is, of Christ's redeeming and sanctifying work, Berkhof writes: "Alongside of the new emphasis on the inevitability of sin, the need of divine grace comes to the foreground once more. Man must desist from his efforts to work out his salvation in his own strength and seek the aid of divine grace. This grace is supremely revealed in Jesus Christ. He does speak of Christ as both God and man, but finds the deity of Christ only in this, that He reveals God. Inconsistently he regards Christ as sinless, even though but a man, while he maintains that every man sins inevitably. Moreover, Niebuhr denies the Scriptural doctrine of vicarious atonement, the very heart of the Gospel. According to him, God, in His infinite love, took it upon Himself to atone for the sins of men. He suffered that men might live. The Cross revealed the heinousness of sin and also

the justice and the self-sacrificing love of God. This was calculated to drive men to despair and to repentance, a repentance that appropriates salvation. Thus a moral influence is all that is needed to save man. This [so Berkhof judges] is far from the teachings of Holy Writ."

J. T. MUELLER

#### THE EMPEROR CHARLES V

Under this heading, Prof. John H. S. Burleigh of the University of Edinburgh offers in *The Evangelical Quarterly* (January, 1950) a biographical sketch of the emperor before whom Luther witnessed the divine truth at the Diet of Worms on April 18, 1520. Dr. Burleigh pictures the character of Charles as follows: "Charles may have to be written down a failure, a self-confessed failure. He was essentially a commonplace man, slow, hesitant, obstinate from his very conscientiousness, unequal to the tasks which destiny assigned to him. But then, they were impossible tasks. The new Europe must have slipped inevitably from the control of any representative of traditional Christendom. But he was not an ignoble failure. Morally, both as a man and as a king, he stands head and shoulders above his contemporaries Francis I, Henry VIII, or any of the Popes. Loyal and affectionate toward his family, he yet demanded from them, as indeed from himself, entire selfless devotion to what he took to be their evident mission in history. The instructions he wrote for his young son Philip when he left him to be regent in Spain in 1542 are truly touching documents. The life of a ruler wholly devoted to his duty is there described. Based upon reverence for God and love of justice, the virtues of self-control, diligence, study, conscientious attention to the details of business are inculcated. The temptations and dangers of power are underlined. The habits of courtiers and the ambitions of royal servants are described, and the need for austere and critical isolation on the part of the monarch is stressed. A certain resignation, even weariness, makes itself apparent, but there is not a tinge of cynicism or of Machiavellianism. This *Mirror of Princes* was written as he set out on his last great enterprise that was to end in defeat and abdication. Finally one must refer to the simple, sincere, and genuine piety which breathes through all his private documents. In his first public pronouncement at the Diet of Worms he had declared his wholehearted allegiance to the Catholic tradition. But there was nothing of the fanatical Counter-Reformation about him. This is doubtless why modern Romanist historians reserve all the bouquets for his bloody son. Charles lived in a larger world. He saw the need for church reform. It was owing to his constant pressure that the Council of Trent was at last summoned, but he did not foresee that

its attitude and decisions would close the door to all comprehension and frustrate all his hopes. If only he had been able with Luther to break through the Three Walls of clerical pretension behind which ecclesiastical corruption lay entrenched! After all, the single monk with the Gospel in his hand availed more than the mighty potentate to cleanse the Augean stables and infuse fresh life into the religion of Europe."

We believe that this delineation of Charles V is excellent. We believe, too, that Dr. Burleigh has discovered the secret of his failure when he writes: "If only he had been able with Luther to break through the Three Walls of clerical pretension!" Charles failed, because when, on April 18, 1521, he was faced at Worms with the opportunity to break with the papistic tradition and old world view and to join the new evangelical world movement, which Luther inaugurated by preaching the Gospel, he cast his lot with those who could not look forward. The hopes of the German princes were set upon his decision to break with Rome and to follow Wittenberg. Charles chose to remain a loyal son and servant of the Church and thus turned fate against him.

As a relatively young man of 56 years he resigned his too burdensome office in 1556 and ended his days in the cloister of Yuste in Spain, not indeed as monk, as it has often been said, but as private gentleman of means, spending his leisure on his favorite avocations. There he died two years later at the age of 58 years. The *New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia* judges: "From his point of view it probably would have been advisable to crush Lutheranism in its infancy." That in fact was his own confession, for shortly before his death he (as is said) expressed regret "that he had not burned the archheretic at the Diet of Worms." But as we see God's guiding hand not only in the crowning of this man as emperor, for his character was such that under him Luther's Gospel movement was not crushed until it had become too strong for destruction, but also in the shaping of events that tied his hands until the evangelical movement had grown to manhood. Almost until the end of his reign, Charles faced inimical and profligate popes, inimical and treacherous rulers of France, and inimical and cruel Turks, so that he needed the Lutheran help against his private and political enemies. On April 18, 1521, Luther witnessed the truth at Worms not merely by the grace of the evangelical princes, but by God's special guidance and protection. The Reformation movement was God's, not man's. Charles certainly was a man of destiny; but Luther still more was a man with a mission from God, and it was Charles' egregious mistake that he was not able to read the handwriting on the wall.

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## ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

The United Stewardship Council has released figures on fifteen major Protestant denominations on the average membership gain and on giving during the past twenty-five years. Some of these figures are quite interesting. The Southern Baptist Convention moved from 3,574,531 members in 1925 to 6,000,000, a gain of 67 per cent; the United Lutheran Church from 856,180 to 1,355,912 members, a gain of 58 per cent; the Methodist Church from 6,570,144 to 8,651,062, a gain of 31 per cent; the Episcopalians from 1,139,192 to 1,583,928, a gain of 39 per cent; the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. from 1,828,916 to 2,330,136, a gain of 27 per cent. In giving, the Southern Baptists stand at the top. From \$37,359,614 in 1925, they advanced to \$156,606,414, a gain of 319 per cent. The Church of the Brethren stands next in line. It advanced from \$1,862,975 to \$5,306,936, a gain of 184 per cent. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. (Southern) increased their giving by 130 per cent; the Evangelical United Brethren Church by 129 per cent; the United Lutheran Church by 126 per cent. The Episcopal Church increased its gifts from \$39,047,394 to \$65,850,868. The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. advanced from \$57,241,511 to \$86,086,965; and the Methodist Church from \$138,015,852 to \$196,435,168.

During the same period The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod experienced a growth in communicant membership from 658,671 in 1924 to 1,179,411 in 1949, a gain of 79 per cent, exceeding that of the Southern Baptists. In this period there was a gain in contributions from \$13,977,167 in 1924 to \$56,308,838 in 1949, or 324 per cent, which also tops the Southern Baptists, according to our statistician, Armin Schroeder.

On April 9 the American Bible Society began a mass distribution of gospels and New Testaments in the Latin American sections of San Antonio, Tex. Some 500 laymen helped in distributing the Scriptures in a six-week house-to-house visitation program. Dr. Frank W. Langham, the district secretary of the Bible Society, estimated that between 100,000 and 125,000 copies of the Scriptures will be distributed during the visitation program. In previous years similar mass distribution carried the Scripture into many Spanish homes in the shipbuilding areas of the Texas coast and in the Rio Grande Valley.

The American Embassy at Prague has received notification from the Czech foreign ministry that all American missionaries must leave Communist-dominated Czechoslovakia at a very early date. The action

will apply to missionaries of all faiths and is ordered under provisions of the new church-control laws which prescribe that all practicing clergymen in Czechoslovakia must be natives, take an oath of allegiance to the government, and receive their salaries from the state. The only exceptions in favor of foreign clergymen will be those from eastern European countries, particularly Russians.

The Muhlenberg Press of the United Lutheran Church will award \$5,000 to the winner of the 1950—51 writing contest on entries which must be submitted on or before March 31, 1951. All entries must deal with subjects emphasizing Christian living or example, in fiction, biography, or fictionalized biography, and be between 100,000 to 125,000 words in length. The award — \$2,500 outright and the balance toward advance royalties — was made possible by the will of John Rung, layman of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Petersburg, Pa., who died in 1891.

For many years the Columbia University staff in New York has included religious counselors to its Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish students. For the first time in its history the University has recently appointed three religious counselors to Eastern Orthodox students. The counselors, the Very Rev. Georges Florovsky, the Rev. John Zanetos, and the Rev. Vasile Hategan, are all from New York.

The Boston University School of Theology recently dedicated a new million-dollar chapel described as a "monumental protest against bigotry" and intended as a house of prayer for all people. The books and journals from various denominations were placed in the cornerstone. Among them are the Methodist Hymnal and Book of Discipline, the Anglican Book of Prayer, donated for the purpose by Protestant Episcopal Bishop Norman B. Nash of Massachusetts, the Jewish Standard Prayer Book, and a Roman Catholic book of devotions, given by Archbishop Richard J. Cushing of Boston.

Protestant and Eastern Orthodox delegates from several countries ranging from China to Finland and from Germany to Madagascar met at an eight-day conference held at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss family and marriage problems. Among the delegates were members of mothers' unions, Christian marriage guidance councils, psychologists, and clergymen of the Anglican, Baptist, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches. The delegates devoted most of their time to these major themes: "Biblical Guidance for Marriage and Family Life"; "The Roman Catholic and Protestant Concep-

tions of the Family and Its Responsibilities"; and "The Relationship of the Church and State to Family Life."

A committee of Roman Catholics, headed by Achille Cardinal Lienart, bishop of Lille, France, is planning on publishing the Douay Bible in a new popular edition which will sell at \$1.50 a copy. The Cardinal hopes that this cheap edition will encourage more French people to read the Bible. Strange to say, the new edition will not be put on sale in bookshops, but will be distributed to subscribers only.

The Roman Catholic Episcopate of the Province of Quebec issued a pastoral letter on reforms in industry which would "gradually" achieve the sharing by "organized labor" in "management, profits, and property." The rather long letter (35,000 words) bears the signatures of the heads of twenty-five archdioceses and dioceses and recommends the establishment of a "corporative organization" which would combine both workers and employers. The letter which was read in all churches in the province on Sunday, March 25, contains these main recommendations: (1) Support of the 90,000-member Canadian Catholic Federation of Labor. (2) Legislation to give the laboring class the means to take its place in the community and to "share in the benefits of progress and contemporary culture." (3) Support of state measures to combat Communism. (4) Support of priests active in social action, based on the Church's social doctrine, and in labor and employer organizations. (5) Endorsement of the work of the Sacerdotal Commission on Social Studies, an organization of the clergy with power to pronounce on social questions.

The recent Vatican document on church-union discussions which implicitly endorsed co-operation between Catholics and non-Catholics for common social aims has raised some rumors to the effect that the Catholic Church intended to relax its stand against some Masonic sects. To counteract these rumors, the Vatican newspaper, *Osservatore Romano*, published an article in which it reminded its readers that Catholics are forbidden to join the Masons or any other oath-bound secret society under penalty of excommunication.

His Holiness, the Dilai Lama, the fourteen-year-old ruler of Tibet, thinks he has made an important contribution to Yale University. Recently the library received a collection of rare and sacred Sanskrit books comprising ninety-nine volumes of the Kagyur believed to be the authentic teachings of Buddha. The young ruler expressed the hope that the "true teachings" of Lord Buddha in the Kagyur will "spread like bright sunlight over all the darkness of humanity."