

Concordia Theological Monthly



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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

MIDYEAR COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

Delivered at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., January 22, 1951, on 2 Tim. 4:2: "Preach the Word."

It is exceptional for us to call a convocation for Commencement Exercises at the close of first semester of an academic year. Owing to a number of different causes and situations, we have a number of students that have completed the courses of study toward a diploma of graduation with the close of this semester and a number of others who at this time have satisfactorily met the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

As we speak to you briefly on this occasion, we cannot refrain from mentioning that you are accepting calls into the ministry of our Church — one of you to distant Nigeria in Africa, the others to congregations and mission fields chiefly in the Midwestern part of our country — at a time when the black clouds of a war which could mean the destruction of our nation and civilization are brooding ominously over us. Our nation is facing a menace so mighty and ruthless that it must enter upon a protracted period of universal military service, and perhaps all-out mobilization, in order to assure its ability to preserve to us our precious freedoms and our way of life. That calls for sacrifices on the part of our citizens, great sacrifices, perhaps heartbreaking bereavements. Entering the holy ministry of the Church at such a time means that you are going out to serve people whose hearts are heavy — people who are and will be looking to the men in the holy ministry for comfort, courage, strength, to meet whatever ordeals they may have to face.

What will make you faithful ambassadors for our eternal and exalted King, who is ever the Prince of Peace, in a world situation such as we have today?

While our Lord graced this earth with His footsteps, He said: "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work." Let this be true of you. Never before has the work of the Gospel ministry been more urgent. Never has it called for more diligence and zeal. We send you forth to work, to work untiringly, because men need your service and because the time is short, the night cometh. Only God knows how many years or days we have to do our work for Him. We say — it sounds rather trite, but it is true — our world is hastening towards sunset and evening star.

The night is coming, but as you go to do the work of Him that sent a Redeemer to mankind, *it is still day*. You have a strong body and mind and voice to proclaim to men the counsel of God. And that is doing the work of Him who sends you wherever your community, your people may be, wherever you find men trying to live without God and without Christ or, having embraced Christ, looking to you to help them grow in grace and strength, help them to live the life of Christ. Your orders are given in three one-syllable words (2 Tim. 4:2): "*Preach the Word*." Strip the work of the ministry down to its essentials, and you have this charge of Paul to Timothy: "Preach the Word." Some say that the ministry today is complex and bewildering. Is it? Only when we succumb to the confusion of routine, when we lose sight of the one great task. Whatever helps you in preaching the Word, do it. Whatever gets in the way of preaching the Word, eliminate it. Unceasing preaching of the Word is the only standard by which the ministry of today should be measured. One of the leading religious journals of our country in the past year carried a series of twelve articles on great churches in the United States. One of the observations based on these studies is that a successful church must have a good and capable minister and must have him for a considerable span of years, but he need not be pre-eminent as a pulpit orator. However, the ministers of these twelve churches without exception are men who lead exemplary lives and work very hard at the ministry of the Gospel. They shepherd individuals in need, teach adults "as well as children, administer the often complex affairs of their congregations, lead in good works and train others to help in all these ministries." The series also reveals, and I quote, "that a majority of ministers yield too often to the temptation to subordinate the prophetic to the pastoral claims of their calling. The demands of 'service' seem generally to receive attention before the ever greater need of people to hear the Word of the Lord proclaimed with timely relevance and power. Man's deepest needs in our day as in every other are spiritual, and they can be met only by searching and contemporary proclamation of biblical and theological truth." Here you have a true and factual statement. Will you keep it in mind? Unceasing preaching of the Word is the only standard by which the ministers of today should be measured.

And preach the Word with conviction. Who is a minister approved of the Lord? Do you recall the occasion when our Lord spoke to the people about that great preacher of His day, John the Baptist? He asked them: "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man

clothed in soft raiment? . . . But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. . . . Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there has not risen a greater than John the Baptist." There you have our Lord's own sample of what a minister of His ought to be and what he ought not to be. John was no scatterbrained preacher riding one hobbyhorse after another. He had a message from God. It was: Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand. This message he delivered faithfully, fearlessly, unceasingly, until his voice was hushed. *You* have a message from God. Your order is: "*Preach the Word.*" You have that Word. It is God's complete and sufficient revelation to man, His inspired, inerrant Word, recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Carry out your orders. Preach the Word as God has given it in its truth and purity. Be instant in season and out of season in doing so. Κήρξον τὸν λόγον — capitalize the last of these three Greek words, then read: Preach the Logos — the Logos, the Word of John 1, the Word that was made flesh and dwelt among us, the Word that in the beginning was with God and was God. Preach the Christ.

This is our last charge to you. Go forth from this your alma mater with the blessing of God, which we pray upon you. And may God help you to be true to your orders, so that you may be able to say to your people wherever you serve, as St. Paul said to the Corinthians: (1 Cor. 2:1-5): "I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified. And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

Preach the Word! And the God of love and peace be with you. Amen.

LOUIS J. SIECK

THE "SECOND SET OF RESOLUTIONS" AND THE COMMON CONFESSION

The *Australasian Theological Review* (Vol. XXI, July-September, 1950, Nos. 1—3) raises the question as to the meaning of the "second set of resolutions" which Committee Number Three at Milwaukee submitted to the delegate convention in connection with its regular resolutions on the *Common Confession*. It asks:

Just what does the second set of resolutions mean? . . . Does this [the main resolution: The *Common Confession* shall be recognized

as a statement of agreement on *these doctrines* (our italics)] suggest that there are still other doctrines on which agreement must be reached? Perhaps we had better wait for an authoritative explanation.

The same question has been put to the undersigned also by others interested in the *Common Confession*. The writer may therefore be justified for giving his personal opinion (which however agrees with that given by Committee Number Three on the floor of the convention) on the second set of resolutions at this place. The second set of resolutions is not to qualify or limit the *Common Confession* as an acceptable confession in any way. The *Common Confession* stands as an expression of agreement reached by the two Churches in question. It does not embrace all doctrines of the Christian *corpus doctrinae*, but it is an official declaration that the ancient controversies between the two synods now have been settled. Hence there exists no longer any doctrinal cause of division between them.

However, while this is true, the Committee thought it wise to regard not only the past, but also the future. What the second set of resolutions clearly and unmistakably says is that since not all phases of the doctrines of the Scriptures have been treated in the *Common Confession* and since through further study or future developments there might be shown the need of clarification or expansion, such clarified or expanded statements should be discussed by the committees on doctrinal unity maintained by the two synods and submitted to the conventions of the two Churches for either approval or rejection. The second set of resolutions therefore is a directive for future procedure in case clarifications or expansions should become necessary. Very encouraging are the remarks with which Dr. Hamann closes his fine review. He says:

All Lutherans who have the cause of Lutheran unity at heart, including those who were disposed to regard the *Common Confession* as not altogether satisfactory in every detail, should be glad and grateful in view of what has been achieved. After protracted discussions and many setbacks the two churches are again at the point which they had reached in 1938; but the situation is clearer owing to the single document of union now before them, and the augury is perhaps a little more hopeful as regards the future. We are not disquieted by the criticism of men who evaluate the document as an indication of a doctrinal weakening on the part of Missouri. . . . Among the obstacles still to be overcome before the consummation of fellowship the most formidable are perhaps the question of entangling alliances with unionistic implications and the difficulties that may be created by present synodical affiliations. The way to full unity and union will be cleared when all are determined to follow the divine Word

implicitly and to raise no demand not warranted by that Word. This may appear to be a mere counsel of perfection, but to bring about such determination and the clear insight that must direct it, is not beyond the power of God's Holy Spirit. (John 16:13.)

J. T. MUELLER

CONVENTION OF AMERICAN LUTHERAN CONFERENCE

The *Lutheran Outlook* (January) contains a comprehensive report by Dr. H. L. Yochum on the 1950 convention of the American Lutheran Conference held at Sioux Falls, S. Dak., on November 8 to 10. From this report we reproduce the following significant resolutions adopted by the Conference:

1. *Twentieth Anniversary of the American Lutheran Conference*

At the tenth biennial convention of the American Lutheran Conference we take note of the fact that twenty years ago five Lutheran church bodies entered into an association involving official church fellowship on the basis of statements regarding doctrine and practice known as the Minneapolis Theses.

Under God's blessing this fellowship of leaders, pastors, and laymen of the constituent churches has fostered better understanding and a growing sense of unity, has promoted the sharing of distinctive heritages to the enrichment of all, has facilitated the discovery and development of numerous areas of co-operation in study and activity, and has served as an agency whereby common interests could be served more efficiently by the combined resources of all. The benefits of two decades of such association have been directly and indirectly extended to most of American Lutheranism and have contributed to the success of other intersynodical endeavors.

Therefore we thank God for His gracious guidance and blessing throughout these twenty years, for the growing spirit of unity and co-operation and the enlarged vision which our fellowship in the American Lutheran Conference has effected. We recognize with appreciation the devoted service of those who have been the leaders of the Conference, some of whom have been called to their eternal rest and reward. We look to God for direction as we welcome opportunities of continued usefulness during the critical years confronting us.

2 *Representation at the Vatican*

The American Lutheran Conference declares itself emphatically opposed to any representation of the United States of America or its president at the Vatican since that would be a manifest violation of the principle of separation of Church and state, would give offense to those not members of the Roman Catholic Church, and would aggravate religious antagonisms which threaten the unity of the American people.

3. *Papal Proclamation*

Noting that Pope Pius XII has proclaimed the dogma of the bodily assumption of the Virgin Mary, we as Lutherans must protest that there is no basis for such a doctrine in the canonical Scriptures and that the ecumenical creeds of Christendom make no room for it. To bind upon the conscience of Christians as an article of faith any doctrine not clearly revealed and taught in the divinely inspired Scriptures is a palpable and presumptuous sin, which widens still further the cleavage in the Holy Christian Church. In the face of this superstitious error we must again assert that it is Christ alone who saves us and who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is to be honored with prayer and adoration.

P. M. B.

THE MILWAUKEE CONVENTION ON ROM. 16:17-18

In reporting on the resolution on Rom. 16:17-18 adopted by the Milwaukee convention in June, 1950, Dr. H. Hamann in the *Australasian Theological Review* (Vol. XXI, July-September, 1950, Nos. 1 to 3), after quoting the adopted resolution and referring to a demand for an "official" interpretation of the passage some years ago, concludes his articles with the following pertinent remarks:

Here too one may register unmitigated satisfaction. No Lutheran Church could take any other action and remain purely Lutheran. The defeated overture would probably not have been made at all, had all ministers remembered the words which the late Dr. L. Fuerbringer wrote many years ago in his little *Guide to Hermeneutics*: "*Auch die Kirche darf nicht zur Richterin des Schriftsinnes werden.*" Any attempt to settle exegetical difficulties by promulgating an "official" interpretation is a step in the direction to Rome.

The ruling of Synod on the demand for an official interpretation, or exegesis, of Rom. 16:17 at that time reads, as reported by Dr. Hamann, as follows:

Resolved, That Synod recognizes that there may be legitimate differences of opinion in purely exegetical matters (cf. paragraph 48 of *Brief Statement*), but that this liberty does not extend farther and that no interpretation may be held which is contrary to the analogy of faith.

J. T. MUELLER

A TOO RIGOROUS INSISTENCE UPON STEWARDSHIP

In a postscript to a review of a pamphlet on stewardship, recently published in our country, the *Australasian Theological Review* (Vol. XXI, Nos. 1-3) utters a word of warning which we believe is well in place. We read:

The reviewer feels moved to say a few things upon the concept of stewardship in general without particular reference to the book discussed above. Dare he confess that the teaching of certain Christian duties under the aspect of stewardship has never greatly appealed to him? He taught these truths and duties to the best of his ability, without knowing the very term "stewardship," just as did many thousands of Lutheran pastors not only of the present generation, but of several centuries.

Admittedly the mode of teaching is Scriptural even though to the writer's knowledge Christians are directly called "stewards" only once in the Bible (1 Pet. 4:10: as good stewards of the manifold grace of God). Our author may be right in declaring: "The word 'steward' perhaps more than any other word, indicating our relationship to God, expresses clearly the place that God has assigned to us in life." . . . But the Christian believer can never forget that His blessed Lord calls those that are His own "friends" and "brethren." . . .

Unless it be constantly recalled and repeated that what the Christian does in the service of God he does in faith, as the brother of Christ and the child of the Father in heaven, the too constant and exclusive emphasis on the stewardship relation will almost inevitably result in some taint of legalism on the part of both preacher and hearer. The present writer admits his ignorance as to the origin of the stewardship concept. It seems obvious however that it originated in the Reformed Church and it reflects to a certain extent the legalism and the political bias historically associated with that community. We find the same sentiment expressed by John Milton, the pious Puritan, who wished his whole life to be spent "as ever in my great Task-master's eye."

The Lutheran Christian prefers to bring his service to God and man under the aspect of "filialism," to use the term which the late Dr. Fr. Bente — if it was his own coinage — used to characterize the Christian ethics; that is, the believer's faith prompts him to loving obedience to his heavenly Father. The legalistic note just mentioned appears plainly in the "points of stewardship" set up by the United Stewardship Council, as quoted in the booklet with which we have dealt. . . . Point 6 asserts: "Stewardship fully applied will solve (a) the social, (b) the racial, (c) the industrial, (d) the economic problems of the world." Perhaps it will. But Christian stewardship presupposes Christians.

Is there any hope that the whole world will become Christian? The hope and the implied program of the United Stewardship Council can never, if we are to follow the declarations of Holy Writ, become those of the Lutheran Church. To guard against misunderstanding, let us repeat that we do not impugn the Scriptural character of the teaching summed up under "stewardship" provided that the *analogia*

fidei be not disregarded; and questions of origin need not trouble the Christian who is taught to prove all things and to hold fast that which is good (1 Thess. 5:21). The fact remains nevertheless that too rigorous an insistence upon stewardship as the sum and substance of Christian duties, especially if coupled with the disregard of other relevant Scripture teachings, may easily result in legalism and a false asceticism.

J. T. MUELLER

ROMAN CATHOLIC DECREE ON ROTARY

In an article titled "Rotary and World Brotherhood Week" (*America*, January 27), the Rev. John La Farge, S. J., analyzes for Catholics some basic implications of "world brotherhood" apropos of "World Brotherhood Week," which is to be observed, by proclamation of President Truman, the week of February 18 to 25. His analysis leads him to speak of the decree issued on January 11 by the Holy Office which forbade clerical membership in Rotary clubs. From this article we submit the following pertinent paragraphs, which we believe throw considerable light on the action of the Pope and the position of the Roman Church regarding non-Catholic organizations:

The Vatican's ban applies only to priests and not to Catholic laymen. Vatican authorities, says the NC Roman correspondent, hold that the advisability of laymen belonging "allows for judgment and decision in individual cases whether or not the Rotary Club falls within the provisions of Canon 684," the law which governs lay participation in various organizations (*note*: Canon 684 reads as follows: "The faithful deserve praise when they join societies which have been erected or, at least, recommended by the church. They should beware of societies which are secret, condemned, seditious or suspected and of those which strive to withdraw themselves from the legitimate provision of the church").

A similar decree, though not so stringent, was issued on February 4, 1929, when the Sacred Consistorial Congregation replied to questions of "not a few" bishops, who asked whether they could permit priests to join the Rotary. The answer then was "*non expedit*" ("it is not expedient"), which left it to the judgment of the individual bishops to make special exceptions.

Objections raised against the Rotary International by leading Catholic periodicals in 1928 and 1929 were similar to those cited today. The point was raised that Rotary had adopted a code of ethics which expressed a secularistic or utilitarian point of view. Religious indifferentism seemed to be favored. In the Latin countries, Rotary International was under strongly Masonic influence. The *Civita Cattolica*, Jesuit journal published in Rome, sagely noted at that time,

however, that Catholics in the United States were probably better able to take care of themselves when in contact with persons of other faiths than were the more sheltered Catholics of the so-called Catholic countries.

The famous Belgian moralist, the Rev. J. Creusen, S. J., writing in *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* for April, 1929, found in Rotary "as a whole" no tendencies hostile to religion. He believed in the sincerity of those who represented it as an honest effort at mutual, material, intellectual and moral help.

In the summer of 1929, every effort was made by the President of Rotary, I. F. Sutton, a Catholic, to dispel what he considered to be misconceptions of Rotary in the minds of the Roman authorities. He held several cordial conferences with the Rev. Enrico Rosa, S. J., editor-in-chief of the *Civiltà*, and with the Rev. Pietro Pirri, S. J., of its staff, author of one of the articles in question. Every point was gone over thoroughly. In a formal statement President Sutton explained that Rotary was primarily a businessmen's and professional men's organization whose purpose is simply to promote higher standards of business practice, understanding, good will and peace throughout the world, and that it had absolutely no connection with Masonry or any other organization. P. M. B.

ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

The annual figures on the world-wide missionary activity of twelve North American Lutheran groups compiled by Dr. Andrew S. Burgess, professor of missions at Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., reveal that these groups sent 158 missionaries to fields in fifteen countries during the past year. Of the 969 missionaries on sixteen fields, The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod has the largest number, 209. The United Lutherans follow with 191, the Evangelical Lutherans with 143, the American Lutherans with 133, and the Augustana Lutherans with 125.

The executive committee of the National Council of Churches adopted a budget of over \$4,350,000 for 1951. More than half of the budget has been allocated to the four major divisions of the council — \$1,150,271 for foreign missions, \$1,200,993 for Christian education, \$407,310 for Christian life and work, and \$285,702 for home missions. Other major allocations include \$389,715 for broadcasting and films, \$190,391 for women's activities, and \$143,299 for general administration. The remainder of the budget has been allocated as follows: Treasury and Business Department, \$139,370; Finance Department, \$105,947; Field Administration, \$97,377; Research and Survey,

\$73,165; Public Relations, \$92,660; Ecumenical Relations, \$78,333; Church World Service, \$47,000; General Department of United Churchmen, \$25,000; Bureau of Architecture, \$27,073; Publication and Distribution, \$119,177; Washington Office Committee, \$18,972; and General Council Miscellaneous, \$41,571.

During the first ten months of 1950 the American Bible Society distributed 71,500 Bibles, 77,595 New Testaments, and 1,395,855 Gospels in China. The Society expects to distribute an equal number of Bibles and portions of the Bible in China during this year. To take care of this need and other unusual needs arising in Korea, Japan, and the Philippine Islands, the Society adopted a supplementary budget of \$918,000 in addition to its regular annual budget of \$2,161,500, the highest regular budget in the history of the Society.

The Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church appropriated \$14,134,566 for its missionary work during 1951—52. The division of foreign missions will spend \$5,964,910 of this sum for overseas work in forty countries; the division on home missions and church extension, \$2,429,449; the women's division of Christian service both in the United States and overseas, \$5,740,207.

Dr. Hardly C. Powers, a general superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene, feels that missionaries may be forced out of Africa within the next ten years if the home churches don't strengthen their present mission fields. The rapidly arising nationalistic spirit fomented largely by atheistic Communism is building up a wave of anti-foreign-missionary, anti-God teachings. In South Africa in particular the 8,000,000 blacks are being taught to resent missionaries as forerunners of foreign imperialism.

The Rev. Edward J. Sullivan, pastor of St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church in East Bridgewater, Mass., instructed Catholic parents to return Gideon Bibles which their children had received in public schools. The priest took this action after Msgr. Cornelius T. Sherlock, arch-diocesan superintendent of parochial schools, had informed him that distribution of Bibles in a public school is contrary to State law.

The St. Boniface Association in Germany reports that more than 7,000 temporary places of worship have been set up in Eastern and Western Germany for Roman Catholic displaced and expelled persons. According to the report there are about 6,300,000 displaced Catholics in Germany with almost 3,500,000 expellees.

Many Eskimos in Canada's arctic regions are becoming regular churchgoers. The Rt. Rev. Donald B. Mersh, the Anglican bishop of the arctic, reports that Eskimos carry their prayer books with them wherever they go and that churches are filled to overflowing every Sunday. He has held confirmation services out of doors in freezing weather because there was no room in the chapel for friends and families who came to witness the service. According to his report the demand for ministers and missionaries far exceeds the supply in the Canadian northland.

The Moody Institute of Science laboratory in West Los Angeles, Calif., will release a new science-religion sound-color film, "Hidden Treasure," soon. Cameramen from the Moody Institute spent eighteen months in catching the wonders of the universe in remote places for a pictorial record of the strange phenomena of nature. This is the fifth film in a series on "Sermons from Science." Preceding Moody science-religion films are "God of Creation," "God of the Atom," "Voice of the Deep," and "Dust or Destiny." The United States Air Force is using these science-religion films as part of the servicemen's character-building program.

The general synod of the Netherlands Reformed Church has given final approval to a new constitution which takes the place of the charter which has been in effect since 1618. The new constitution calls for radical departures in the traditional "hands off" policy toward national and world affairs. Outstanding features of the new constitution are provisions authorizing the general synod to act as spokesman for the Church in its relations with the State and empowering it to speak out on all public issues in which religious or moral considerations are involved. Another effect of the constitution is to give the general synod close supervisory powers over all church activities rather than limit its functions to policy making.

A special commission of the Jerusalem Rabbinate has defined the limits of Sabbath walks in the Jerusalem area for observant Jews. The commission also defined the limits where pious Jews may walk but not carry things. The farthest point designated was Ain Kahim, four miles west of Jerusalem.

A long chapter in the history of the Roman Catholic Church in India was closed when the Indian-born auxiliary bishop Valeriano Gracias was appointed as archbishop of Bombay to succeed the Most Rev. Thomas D. Roberts, an English Jesuit. This appointment is a

major step toward the complete "Indianizing" of the Roman Catholic Church in India and followed the ratification last summer of an agreement between Portugal and the Vatican ending the Padroado, the system under which the Portuguese government had rights of ecclesiastical patronage in India. According to the Padroado the Vatican was under obligation to name a Portuguese National as archbishop of Bombay alternately with a British National.

In 1949 several Catholic educators and theologians founded the American Mariological Society for the purpose of promoting study and research in Mariology. At the second annual convention in Worcester, Mass., the members were told that in the early history of the Roman Catholic Church the doctrine of Mary's co-redemption was held implicitly, but that from the 9th to the 16th century the doctrine developed more explicitly, especially in the writings of St. Bonaventure and St. Albert the Great. The "Scriptural" argument for Mary's co-redemption is said to rest on the parallelism found by the early writers in the association between Adam and Eve, on the one hand, and Mary and Christ, on the other. By theological reasoning this association of Christ and Mary was developed to the point where it is seen to involve a formal co-operation by Mary in the redemptive work of Christ.

In answer to attacks which are charging the American school systems of rearing religious illiterates, Dr. Herman L. Shibley, superintendent of Indianapolis schools, sent out several thousand questionnaires to high school pupils. Of the 4,195 pupils who answered the questionnaire, 3,343 claimed membership in a church or synagogue. Dr. Shibley, also asked those pupils who did not attend church to list their reasons for non-church attendance. 471 listed no reasons at all. The next largest group claimed they could not get out of bed early enough on Sunday morning. Of the remainder, 67 said they worked; 31 claimed they were too far from a church of their denomination or that transportation difficulties were too great; 24 asserted the services were uninteresting; 17 had other meetings they preferred to attend; and 9 had uninterested parents or family difficulties. Only 6 claimed they had no belief in church nor God. Answers to the question as to what might be done to make church and Sunday school more attractive included the following responses: special youth activities, better and more interesting services and sermons, youth participation and leadership in the church, better trained and more interesting pastors, more and better music, better youth-adult relationships.

ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT