

# Concordia Theological Monthly



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# THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

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## OBJECTIVES OF MINISTERIAL TRAINING

The Board for Higher Education of the Missouri Synod is currently engaged in implementing the re-organized program of ministerial training adopted by the convention last summer. The twofold objective of re-organization is, briefly stated, to lead the ministerial student progressively to spiritual maturity and to enable him to acquire the necessary competence for the present-day ministry. The first objective is intangible, and its implementation will require not only much planning, but also consecrated teachers and students, and especially a rich measure of the Holy Spirit. The second objective is of a curricular nature. The construction of an effective and thoroughly integrated curriculum is as great an undertaking as, probably greater than, the erection of the most up-to-date physical plant. The men charged with implementing this latter objective fortunately have various sources on which they can draw for guidance, such as our own experience of the past century and the pattern followed by others, both in America and in Europe.

There are, broadly speaking, two philosophies of the ministerial curriculum. The one argues that since the Church is concerned with preparing men for the parish ministry, the curriculum should be designed so that it will directly and immediately lead the candidate into the practical ministry. The implications of this philosophy for a ministerial curriculum are obvious. The other philosophy is that theology is primarily a science and that the goal of the ministerial training program is intended first of all to prepare "good theologians." The former philosophy is emphasized more or less in America, while the latter apparently dominates in European circles. It seems, however, that the solution lies in finding a happy medium between these two philosophies.

We submit the following program of ministerial training recently adopted by the Hessian-Nassau Church,<sup>1</sup> in the hope that it may stimulate some discussion on a matter which is of such vital significance to the future of our Church. The program adopted by the Hessian-Nassau Church is typical of the European practice in general. The ministerial training program comprises the following three stages:

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<sup>1</sup> *Amtsblatt der evangelischen Kirche in Deutschland*, November 15, 1950.

1. A thorough humanistic training, usually offered in the nine-year course of the Gymnasium, coupled with a carefully devised screening process. The successful completion leads to the *Abitur*, approximately the equivalent of the American A. B.

2. Four years of theology given by the theological faculty at the university. The method of teaching and the content of courses are on the graduate level. Upon completion of eight semesters of theological studies the ministerial student takes the "first examination." This examination is given by the university or the consistory and covers the entire pensum of the four years. There are no semester examinations. No professional degree is given at this level.

3. Upon submission of his "certificate of graduation" the church officials direct the candidate to a "practical seminary" to take such practical courses as Homiletics, Catechetics, Liturgics. In some instances an internship is combined with the work at the practical seminary, in others an additional year of internship is required. The candidate submits to his "second examination," which is given by the church authorities to determine the candidate's qualifications for the practical ministry.

A synopsis of the Guidelines for the four-year program of theological study prior to the first examination adopted by the Hessian-Nassau Church is as follows:

*Bible Study.* The candidate is expected to have a thorough knowledge of all Biblical books.

*General Knowledge.* Because the preacher of the Gospel is to make the Gospel effective in all strata of human society, the candidate is expected during his stay at the university to take a number of electives in non-theological areas.

*Old Testament.* The candidate must have a thorough knowledge of Hebrew; have pursued exegetical studies of such Old Testament Books as Genesis, Isaiah, Jeremiah, the Minor Prophets, and Psalms. A comprehensive knowledge of the history of Israel, Introduction to the Old Testament, acquaintance with the theology of the Old Testament with reference to the religious and cultural contacts of Israel, and the completion of several seminars dealing with specific problems are required.

*The New Testament.* A thorough knowledge of the Greek language is mandatory, as well as having repeatedly read cursorily the Greek New Testament. The candidate must also have studied exegetically the Four Gospels, Romans, and other important New Testament Letters.

He must be acquainted with New Testament isagogical problems, Hellenism and Judaism, and the theology of the New Testament.

*Church History and History of Dogma.* The candidate is expected to have a comprehensive grasp of the entire field of church history and of history of dogma. In addition he is expected to have completed several seminars dealing with specific problems in both areas.

*Systematic Theology.* The candidate must show that he is at home in the fields of symbolics, dogmatics, and ethics. The candidate is expected to be acquainted with the entire field of Christian dogmatics with all its problematics, to be familiar with the Lutheran and Reformed confessional writings, the chief writings of the Reformation and Old-Protestant dogmaticians. He must have completed at least one seminar dealing with some of the outstanding dogmaticians of the 19th and 20th centuries.

*Philosophy.* The candidate must be acquainted with the problematics of Occidental philosophy and is expected to have studied at least one significant philosopher thoroughly.

*Pedagogy.* The candidate must know the history of education in general and be familiar with one or more educators.

*Practical Theology.* A knowledge of the history and basic problems in the areas of liturgy, the Christian sermon, Christian education, and church law is expected.

F. E. M.

#### REPORT ON THE LWF CONVENTION IN 1952

In *Information Service of the LWF* (January 10) Dr. S. C. Michelfelder, executive secretary of the Lutheran World Federation, with headquarters in Geneva, reports in some detail regarding the convention of the LWF to be held in Hannover in the summer of 1952. We quote:

"The famous *Marktkirche* is now being rebuilt and should be ready. It is planned to hold a great service of Holy Communion there. It will seat 2,500 people. Then for the Assembly itself, we are promised the *Stadt-Halle*, with its many rooms in connection. One huge auditorium will hold 5,000 to 6,000 people. Another beside it, the *Niedersaechsische Halle* (a brand-new auditorium) will seat 3,000. Abundant smaller rooms are available for sectional meetings and smaller committees. Dining facilities will be adequate for any number of people. Then there is an open-air stadium, where over 50,000 people may assemble. It is planned to hold the closing mass meeting there, to which the general public will be invited. Hannover already has 1,500

beds available in hotels, and we are assured that there are 150,000 additional beds available now in private homes.

"The German National Committee will sponsor the preparation for two sections of the program, Section III (Inner Missions) and Section VI (Women's Work). The U. S. A. Committee will sponsor Section IV (Evangelism and Stewardship) and Section V (Youth and Students). The Swedish National Committee will sponsor Section I (Theology) and the Federation itself Section II (World Missions). The general theme for the whole Assembly is: 'The Living Word in a Responsible Church.'"

From a German bulletin which also reports on plans for the convention in Hannover we quote the following grateful German sentiments:

"In the course of our history of blood and tears we Germans have become very largely the recipients. We are humbled at the thought of the great sacrifices of love which Christians of our faith have brought to help us in our distress. In our common repentance, in our mutual forgiveness, our faith has passed through a fiery trial. In the future lying before us we Germans shall have to demonstrate that we were ready not only to receive, but are ready also to give and to serve others with the gifts which we have received from God. . . . In this sense we joyfully look forward to the convention of the Lutheran World Federation in Hannover in 1952.

P. M. B.

#### ROME AND EVANGELICAL CHRISTIANITY

In a German clergy bulletin dated February 1 and published under the auspices of the United Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Germany, *Oberkirchenrat* Dr. Huebner publishes an article titled "The Roman Church Opposes Ecumenical Co-operation." Since we believe this article to be of considerable theological significance, we are herewith submitting it in translation. Dr. Huebner writes:

"We note a clear line running through the last three formal utterances of the Pope in Rome regarding the relation of the Roman Church to non-Roman Christendom.

"The *Monitum*, dated June 6, 1948, by taking recourse to Canon 1325, Paragraph 3, of the *Codex Juris Canonici*, emphatically forbade all non-controlled and supra-confessional discussions and conferences and warned against Roman co-operation with the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam in 1948.

"*De Motione Oecumenica*, dated December 20, 1949, carefully regulated discussions and meetings of Catholics with non-Catholics, placed

them under the special supervision of the Holy See, and granted them status only in view of the consideration that apostates from the Roman Church might be won back to the only saving Church.

"The encyclical *Humani Generis*, dated August 12, 1950, emphatically calls to order Roman theologians who, moved by a misguided love of peace, have dealt gently with separatists and errorists, and insists on their absolute obedience to the infallible teaching office of the Roman Church.

"The keystone in this development was placed on November 1, 1950, when the Pope declared the dogma of the bodily assumption of Mary. For him who is informed it is no secret that in the proclamation of this new dogma the Pope was concerned not so much about doing honor to Mary as about doing honor to himself as the infallible teacher of the Church. For the first time the Pope here employed the dogma of infallibility, declared in 1870, and, from the Evangelical point of view, proclaimed a grievously false judgment. But more: he disregarded the principle which has guided all Christian churches, and for a time also the Roman Church, viz., that all doctrines of the Church must be grounded in the Apostolic witness of Jesus Christ. By virtue of a false authority vested in him and contrary to the witness of the Holy Scriptures and the early Christian tradition, the Pope proclaimed a new dogma, which every Roman Christian who wishes to save his soul must believe.

"From the above documentation, we draw two inferences:

"1. Whereas in these turbulent and dangerous times most other Christian churches throughout the world believe the hour to have come when they must find a way to get into closer relationship with one another, the Roman Church regards it as the need of the hour to fortify its own front and to suppress even the most cautiously made efforts to effect some understanding between the Roman Church and the various Christian bodies. In Rome the ecumenical movement is interpreted as a sign of weakness within Protestant Christianity. Rome hopes to promote her prestige by disapproving of every form of *rapprochement* with other Christian churches. Rome believes her strongest weapon to be the absolute authority of the Pope as the teacher of the Church. Therefore she is concerned about sharpening this weapon and, at the same time, about developing the Roman Church into the most perfect organization with every means of propaganda, of pomp, and pressure on the consciences. The almost unanimous and spirited reception of the new dogma in the entire Roman Catholic world . . .

clearly shows how far the Roman Church has moved in the direction of achieving its goal.

"2. On the other hand, the encyclical *Humani Generis* is evidence that behind the external façade of pomp and propaganda not everything in the Roman Church is as perfect as it appears to be. There are, obviously, among Roman theologians not a few who are not in a mood to shut themselves off completely from modern currents of thought. In addition to the external enemies of the Church, such as immanentism, idealism, and existentialism, there are in the Church itself enemies who are clamoring for a reform of theology and its method, who question the absolute sovereignty of the Thomistic system, who are interested in new approaches to Scriptural exegesis, and who, above other concerns, are not subordinating themselves readily to the teaching authority of the Church. All of these non-conformist spirits are exposed in this encyclical and called to order and to a return to sound doctrine. This encyclical operates, to say it crudely, like the purges resorted to in totalitarian regimes and will certainly not miss its objective. . . ."

In a closing note, Dr. Huebner expresses the hope that in spite of these clear utterances of the Pope, the Church of Rome will not shut the door completely and that it may still be possible for Evangelical theologians to carry on discussions with Catholic bishops, as they have been doing in recent years.

Dr. Huebner's analysis coincides largely with our own. There can be no doubt that the Roman Church is closing its ranks. In our country it is no longer on the defensive, but has taken the offensive and is slowly but surely realizing objectives which only a generation ago lay altogether outside its reach. Yet the way to offset its influence is not the almost frantic promotion of Protestant union at any cost, but the proclamation by the Christian churches of the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ and humble submission to the Savior's direction. Fortunately, also our Lutheran confessional writings are eminently relevant and clearly indicate how we are to meet the pretensions of the Roman Church. May we study them!

P. M. B.

#### CATHOLICS AND LUTHERANS ON SECRET SOCIETIES AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

With manifest joy the *Catholic Mind* (November, 1950) quotes from the *Catholic Transcript* a lengthy opinion on two resolutions of our Milwaukee convention held in 1950. We read (quoting in part):

"It [the convention] served notice on its adherents of the danger of secret societies and the incompatibility of membership in these and

membership in the Lutheran Church. Many lodges, the church is saying in effect, are but a secularistic substitute for religion. They have a creed which denies or ignores the Holy Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the atonement. This is completely and irreconcilably at variance with the doctrine of the Lutheran Church. To subscribe simultaneously to the former and the latter is impossible. Therefore Communion will be denied to those who belong to such lodges; and the church goes on to warn against Freemasonry's absorption of the young. . . . A similar stand has been taken by the Catholic Church for centuries. It is significant surely that the Lutherans have accepted it as their own."

With regard to religious education the opinion states: "The convention went on record as saying that the separation of church and state, which is traditional in America, does not demand the exclusion of religion from the education of children. The state, declare the Lutherans, can be on friendly terms with the church without interfering with its functions or breaking down the distinction between the two institutions. In fact, the state should cooperate with the church wherever the welfare of the nation demands such cooperation. The First Amendment of the Constitution, the Lutherans argue, merely prohibits the establishment of an official national church; it does not mean that the state is to be indifferent or hostile to religion, nor does it prevent the state from cooperating with and befriending religion on a non-preferential basis.

"The Lutherans urge the building and maintenance of parochial schools for the children of their sect[?]. While Christian parents should be willing to pay the expenses involved in founding and maintaining Christian schools, they say, the state should give some consideration to the children who do not have the opportunity to attend such schools. Evidently the Lutherans would ask no assistance for children attending parochial schools. While we agree with them that the founding and maintaining of parochial schools should be the financial responsibility of the members of the church, we think that children attending them should not be deprived of benefits paid for by everyone alike, but discriminatingly and unjustly withheld from some children."

It should be stated in fairness to our Church that it has not simply adopted the stand taken by the Catholic Church for centuries against secret societies, for its objections to anti-Christian secret societies are based on Scripture and not on papal pronouncements so that there is an entirely different motivation. There is also considerable difference (despite apparent agreement) between the Catholic view of Church and State co-operating in religious education and our own. We cannot



expatiate on the matter here, but certainly there is nothing of the animosity in our stand on the question which shows itself in the writer's closing words:

"Here is proof that others than Catholics are beginning to recognize the error and injustice which has been foisted upon the nation by a few zealots for secularism. As the consequences of this trick become plainer and more general, the ranks of those objecting to it will increase and grow more articulate and active. The present situation is not irreversible; it will be changed."

Perhaps Luther's: "Ihr habt einen andern Geist denn wir," would help to describe the difference.

J. T. MUELLER

#### "LET FREEDOM RING"

This is the title of a brilliant article by Dr. Edward B. Willingham (Baptist) published in *The Watchman-Examiner* (February 15). Dr. Willingham pleads with Americans not to take religious freedom for granted, but rather to be on the constant alert lest they lose it. Following a brief review of the spread of discrimination, intolerance, and persecution shown by Catholics toward Protestants in Italy, Spain, Bolivia, and other Latin American countries, the author quotes extensively from an article which appeared April 3, 1948, in the Italian Jesuit review *La Civiltà Cattolica* and which clearly shows the attitude of Catholics toward Protestants. We are taking the liberty of reproducing the pertinent paragraphs:

"The Catholic Church being convinced, by reason of her divine prerogatives, that she is the one true Church, claims for herself alone the right to freedom, for this right may only be possessed by truth, and never by error. Where the other religions are concerned, she will not take up the sword against them, but she will ask that, by lawful means worthy of the human creature, they shall not be allowed to propagate false doctrines. Consequently, in a State where the majority of the people are Catholic, the Church asks that error shall not be accorded a legal existence, and that if religious minorities exist, they shall have a *de facto* existence only, not the opportunity of spreading their beliefs. Where material circumstances—whether the hostility of a government or the numerical strength of the dissenting factions—do not allow of this principle being applied in its entirety, the Church requires that she shall have all possible concessions, confining herself to accepting as the least of all evils the *de jure* toleration of other forms of worship. In other countries the Catholics are obliged to ask for full liberty for all, resigning themselves to living together where

they alone had the right to live. The Church does not in this way give up her thesis, which remains the most imperative of all laws, but adapts herself to the hypothesis, which must be taken into account on the material plane. Hence extreme horror on the part of the Protestants, who hold it up against the Catholics that they withhold freedom, indeed *de facto* toleration, from others when they are in the majority, and on the other hand demand it as a right when they are in the minority.

"The Catholic Church would be betraying her mission if she were to proclaim, either in theory or in practice, that error can have the same rights as truth; especially when the highest duties and interests of man are at stake. The Church can feel no shame at her intransigence as she asserts it in principle and carries it out in practice, though the areopagus of the nations of today may smile pityingly or rage against it as tyrannical."

In view of the above, Dr. Willingham rightly comments: "The members of the Society of Jesus, for which the article quoted was written, are recognized as expressing the normal attitude of the Roman Catholic Church."

P. M. B.

#### WARNING AGAINST LODGES

"A Pastor Looks at the Lodge" is the title of a timely article published in *Sunday School Times* (October 28, 1950) by Rev. Paul Gerard Jackson, who was pastor of a Baptist church, but is now engaged in evangelism and Bible teaching. Rev. Jackson points out that while evangelists and revivalists, as also some ministers, deal unsparingly with a variety of other sins, they, with rare exceptions, let secretism severely alone. If they mention it at all, they do it with the qualification that the lodge is all right in its place, but must be kept subordinate to the house of God and that the Church of Christ must come first.

However, so the writer continues, church and lodge are incompatible. This is true despite the fact that many congregations dedicate several services a year to lodges, for such services are held in praise of the lodge, and not in criticism of its religion. When the author of the article attempted this years ago, many members left the church in protest against their pastor's attitude, having first vainly agitated to have him removed from his office.

Lodgism, Rev. Jackson contends, is a pseudo faith which, while boasting of belief in God and emphasizing morality, comes to many as a substitute for the church, initiating its members into profounder mysteries than the simple faith which their church provides. Secretism

thus constitutes a system of religion which negatives Christ and nullifies His Gospel, while at the same time it offers a way to eternal life and happiness of its own.

The writer admits that some lodges are little more than mutual-aid and insurance organizations, but states that such secret orders as the Freemasons and the Odd Fellows are religious systems with elaborate rituals and definite doctrines. He writes:

It can easily be demonstrated that such secret orders as Freemasonry require their initiates to take oaths in their lodge ceremonies that are blasphemous. They also subject many of the historical and symbolical portions of the Bible to a perverted and profane representation utterly repugnant to Christian sensibility. It can furthermore be shown that Freemasonry in several instances wickedly dishonors our blessed Savior by actually striking out the sacred and saving name of Jesus Christ from certain familiar New Testament Scriptures, a mutilation of Holy Writ which not even a Modernist who disbelieves in our Lord's deity would care to perpetrate. The same unholy offense is committed in the case of several well-known Christian hymns: the name of Christ must be removed before they can be suitably sung in Masonic ceremonies.

Since so much can be shown, then it is certainly no exaggeration to characterize such systems of syncretism as satanic. And it is the plain duty of every Christian pastor and leader to summon God's people to separation from these lodges if ever we are to expect the blessing of God in spiritual power upon our church and nation. Said D. L.

Moody:

"I do not see how any Christian, most of all a Christian minister, can go into these secret lodges with unbelievers. They say they can have more influence for good, but I say they can have more influence for good by staying out of them and then reproving their evil deeds. Abraham had more influence in Sodom than Lot had. If twenty-five Christians go into a secret lodge with fifty who are not Christians, the fifty can vote anything they please, and the twenty-five will be partakers of their sins. They are unequally yoked together with unbelievers. 'But, Mr. Moody,' some say, 'if you talk that way, you will drive all the members of secret societies out of your meetings and out of your churches.' But what if I did? Better men will take their places. Give them the truth anyway, and if they would rather leave their churches than their lodges, the sooner they get out of the churches the better. I would rather have ten members who are separated from the world than a thousand such members. Come out from the lodge. Better one with God than a thousand without Him. We must walk with God, and if only one or two go with us, it is all right. Do not let down the standard to suit men who love their secret lodges or have some darling sin they will not give up."

Nothing need be added to what is here said. Lutheran pastors will of course not approach the problem in a legalistic manner, but with such evangelical persuasiveness as aims to get the member out of the lodge and not out of the church. If, however, all evangelical methods fail, then church discipline must be applied in accordance with Matthew 18. But even such disciplinary measures are the proclamation of the divine Word and have as their objective the saving of the soul.

J. T. MUELLER

THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE OF MONOTHEISM  
IN PRIMITIVE RELIGION

The seventh volume of Father Wilhelm Schmidt's (S. V. D.) *opus magnum Der Ursprung der Gottesidee* (Band VII, 3. Abteilung: *Die Religionen der Hirtenvoelker, II: Niloten und Synthese mit Hamiten und Hamitoiden*. Muenster, Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung. DM 42.50) is being reviewed and studied in our country. The *International Review of Missions* (October, 1950) discusses extensively and thoroughly the views which Father Schmidt projects in his new and profound study. We read (in part):

"For over twenty-five years Father Schmidt has indefatigably carried on an investigation of the religion of peoples of the simpler cultures. Six volumes in this series, issued between 1920 and 1935, dealt with *Urvoelker*. In the seventh he has turned from primitive to primary culture groups, that is, from the food-gatherers to the food-rearing peoples of N. E. Africa. Now this volume deals with the neighboring Nilotes and compares their religion with that of the Hamites and Hamitoids.

"In all his research the learned author is concerned to establish and illustrate what he considers proven fact and not mere hypothesis, namely, that the farther back one goes in human history, the clearer the belief in one supreme God — monotheism — becomes, and that as cultures developed, this pristine belief was overlaid, obscured, corrupted by the growth of animism, spiritism, and magic. . . .

"Although the primitive idea of God is obscured at later stages, careful analysis succeeds in discovering what effectively survives of that idea. . . .

"For his data Father Schmidt relies on published and unpublished material collected by ethnographers and missionaries, Roman Catholic and non-Roman Catholic. He appears to treat the material with scrupulous fairness, while subjecting it, especially where it is at variance with itself and with his convictions, to critical analysis. . . . Much space

is given to mythology, and here it is interesting to note that some Nilotes share with the Bantu the myth of the origin of death and the myth of the Tower built up toward heaven. In one variant the fall of the tower is succeeded by the linguistic dispersion of mankind.

"Against many older writers who regarded Nilotic gods as otiose, unreachable, and not worshiped, Father Schmidt concludes that in most of the tribes there is a living and even intimate cult, with direct as well as indirect approach to the Supreme Being, by means of prayers and offerings. He, the Creator, is also the Founder and Guardian of Moral Law, breaches of which He punishes."

The Nilotes number about two million. They inhabit the region of the Upper Nile, extending from the southern Anglo-Egyptian Sudan into Uganda. The most widely spread divine name is *Jok* (*Yok*), which Father Schmidt regards as standing for a personal deity, while others consider it to be the denomination of a "neutral power permeating the universe, neither well nor badly disposed toward mankind unless made use of by man."

Father Schmidt's work goes far to support the argument of Christian Apologetics that monotheism has not stemmed from animism, polytheism, and the like, but that animism, polytheism, and other low cult patterns are degraded forms of worship brought about by a decadence of religious and moral thought in man. J. T. MUELLER

#### CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA

*Theology Today* (January, 1951) reviews the report of Bishop Stephen Neill of the World Council of Churches on the growth of Christianity in Africa, which is based on his recent visit to that no longer dark continent. It comments:

It was the newness of everything Christian in Africa that made its strongest impression upon him. Few settlements were to be found in Africa before 1850. For instance, Uganda today has over half a million non-Roman Christians and possibly more Roman Catholic Christians, and yet on the Sunday Bishop Neill preached in the great cathedral of Namirembe, one of the worshipers was an aged and distinguished chief who could look back to the time when there was not a single Christian in Uganda.

It is only fifty years ago that the first missionary party entered the city of Kano in northern Nigeria. The first baptism among the people living in the highlands of Kikuya took place in 1906. Of a group of 28 theological students in Nigeria, 22 of them had been baptized during school days, and only six were children of Christian parents. After 400 years of Christian missionary work in India only one person

in forty is a Christian, whereas after a little less than a century of mission work in Africa, one person in nine is a Christian.

Christian missions play a large role in the educational life of Africa. "Three-quarters of the education of young Africans is in the hands of Christian missions." . . . Three-quarters of the students attending the four African university colleges are evangelical Christians, and the remaining one-quarter are Roman Catholics, Muslims, and pagans. The Church faces a promising future in the field of higher education and the training of Africa's leaders.

The gravest problem Bishop Neill finds in the areas of leadership and the relation of Christian living to old pagan fears, practices, and relationships.

J. T. MUELLER

#### A MONUMENT TO HIS CHRISTIAN FAITH

That Noah Webster was an erudite scholar is perhaps known to the majority of educated persons today; but that he was a believing Christian and that by his books he endeavored to inculcate upon his many readers the truths of Christianity is no doubt little known. Dr. Ernest Gordon in the *Sunday School Times* (January 13, 1951) offers the following short paragraph on the tribute which Webster paid to the Bible in his writings. We read:

"The Bible and the Dictionary" represents a fresh and unfamiliar trail which has been explored by the Rev. J. S. Potter, who reports on it in the *Presbyterian Tribune*.

Noah Webster's great work was a monument to his Christian faith. Because he knew that his dictionary would be widely used by schools and colleges and in homes where Christ and the Bible are revered, he chose, wherever possible, Scripture quotations to illustrate English usage and idiom.

In the *Webster International* of 1934 there are by actual count 2,025 Bible verses and Biblical references. In earlier editions the number was even greater. Every book of the Bible is represented, besides the Apocrypha. Christian ideas are carefully defined. For example, there are nine separate comments on faith and a long paragraph is added on evangelical, or justifying, or saving faith, summed up as "that firm belief of God's testimony and of the truth of the Gospel which influences the will and leads to an entire reliance on Christ for salvation." Bible verses quoted are Rom. 5:1; Heb. 11:6; 2 Cor. 5:7; Rom. 10:10; Gal. 1:23; Rom. 3:3; 14:22; Deut. 32:20.

Writing to his daughter in 1835, Webster declared his faith in the truth of the Scriptures and his cheerful commitment to the Savior, on whom he rested all his hope. Webster's blue-backed *Speller* was his most popular and widely known book. In 1880 Appleton the publisher spoke of it as having "the largest sale of any book in the world

except the Bible." For forty years it was sold at the rate of a million copies annually.

But Webster thought of his crowning work as a Revision of the Bible into the American idiom (now out of print). He spent five years on this enterprise, anticipating the many "modern English" versions of later times. This work is all-too-little known and appreciated.

J. T. MUELLER

#### THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND AND THE ENGLISH FREE CHURCHES

Under this heading, Professor Nathaniel Micklem, principal of Mansfield College, Oxford, offers a thoughtful article on the English union movement and its problems in *Theology Today* (January, 1951).

Just now the movement apparently has reached an impasse, aggravated largely by the inauguration of the United Church of South India, which has brought to light in a special way the difficulties that face the Anglican Church when it contemplates union with Free Churches which are so differently oriented to doctrine and church polity. We are not interested in the details of the problem, but there are several phases of the project which obviously are applicable to other union endeavors. For clarification we quote a few sentences from the able discussion:

Churches can only come into close relationship with each other on the basis of a common faith. There was some difficulty here on both sides. It is not altogether easy to convince Anglicans, who lay great stress upon creedal orthodoxy, that those Free Churches, such as the Baptist and Congregationalist, which are committed to no formal written standards of faith, are reliably orthodox, expressing their faith in terms of a covenant rather than of creedal subscription. The Free Churches on the other hand, being more concerned with living faith than with formal orthodoxy, do not find it very easy to assert of all parts of the Church of England that it is sound in matters of faith. But while there are important differences of emphasis here, there is no clear difference of doctrine. The Conference could report that "on the doctrines of God the Father, the Person and work of Christ, the Person and mission of the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, and the Life Everlasting we have found nothing which separates any one of these Communion from another."

Professor Micklem views the matter of church union very soberly. We find in his article nothing of the "unite-or-bust" stress which characterizes so many union movements in other areas. He writes:

It is impossible to predict what will be the outcome of the labors of this Joint Conference. What would be involved in implementing the Archbishop's suggestion is now plain. There is bound to be strong,

even violent, conscientious objection from those whom I may describe without prejudice as the more extreme elements on both sides. There will be a large central body of opinion which will hold that these proposals [of the Joint Conference] deserve the most careful and prayerful consideration of all the Churches; for the spiritual prize of Table Fellowship [altar fellowship], which would imply the virtual healing of the old estrangement and the ending of a great scandal, is worth the loss of many cherished habits and many conventional ideas if only it can be achieved without violence done to principle.

The writer's final paragraph shows a deep insight into the present-day church and world situation and will no doubt find many sympathetic listeners. He says:

The theologians and ecclesiastics who sponsor this Report have done their best. But perhaps in the wisdom of God church unity will not be achieved by the principles of theologians or the devices of ecclesiastics, but by force of circumstance. For sixteen hundred years Christ's Church has enjoyed great prestige in the West. In more recent years it has enjoyed in Asia and Africa such prestige as came from its association with the technical civilization of the West. Already in Europe and Asia political power and social planning are passing more and more into the hands of the hitherto unprivileged classes which, where they are not anti-religious, tend to be unsympathetic toward religion. It looks as if the Church will be stripped of prestige, of political power, and of accumulated wealth. In many countries it may well be reduced to companies gathering in private houses, as at the first, or to Christian "cells"; nor should such a development in any degree be regarded as a disaster. Where the Church would consist of little groups in covenant with one another and their Lord, the Congregational conception of the essence of the Church might (so far) find its vindication and acceptance. But it would soon be regarded as vital that such groups be linked together by personal ties and a common confession. We might predict that before long there would be found, as in the first centuries of church history, a local episcopate and some common simple creed, and Anglicanism would find a certain vindication. But since it is certain that such Christian "cells" and household churches would need pastoral care and leadership, we might anticipate the appearance of an ordained lay eldership and thus the vindication of the Presbyterian tradition.

This is no prophecy of what will happen, but a reminder of what may happen. We may hope that the cause of Christian unity may be greatly furthered by the publication of this Joint Report; but if it should fail of its purpose and none should be persuaded, God will reunite us in His own time and His own better way. J. T. MUELLER



## WHEN LOVE LEAPS RELIGIOUS BARRIERS

Under this heading, Rabbi J. L. Fink in the *Jewish Layman* (January, 1951) voices his opinion on marriages involving Jews and non-Jews. He admits that "Reform Judaism boasts of its liberalism," but warns that "its passion for latitude of thought does not justify conduct which leads to self-destruction." He argues: "Liberal in thinking though we are, we cannot neutrally preside over our own liquidation as a people and as a faith, which is precisely what widespread intermarriage would mean."

According to Rabbi Fink, "when a Jew marries someone from outside the Jewish community, he or she contracts either a mixed marriage or an intermarriage. In a mixed marriage the non-Jewish member of the marriage remains unconverted to Judaism. Mixed marriage is clearly unpromising in its prospects of happiness for both parties to the marriage and, what is more important, it is clearly a suicidal trend as far as our peoplehood is concerned. All the currents of Jewish history, tradition, and law move against both the promise of happiness in, and also the performance of mixed marriages. The Central Conference of American Rabbis on more than one occasion affirmed its opposition to mixed marriages, resolving that 'mixed marriages are contrary to the tradition of the Jewish religion and should therefore be discouraged by the American Rabbinate.' Few if any rabbis will officiate at such marriages, for they are banned in every wing of Judaism."

This warning the rabbi regards as necessary because "in some communities, particularly in smaller communities of long-established families, marriage with non-Jews is reaching menacing proportions. The growing tendency of Jewish life in a small community is for Jews to intermingle socially with their non-Jewish neighbors, and people who intermingle often intermarry. As long as this process continues, there is no check on the complete assimilation of a considerable portion of the Jewish population."

But "there is a ray of hope in this situation," the writer thinks, "in intermarriage as against mixed marriage. In intermarriage the non-Jewish partner accepts the Jewish faith. Lip service to Judaism from the non-Jew does not qualify him or her for intermarriage; nothing short of a genuine conversion to Judaism qualifies him. . . . The conversion to Judaism on the part of the non-Jewish partner to an intermarriage must be completely sincere and permanent, lest the intermarriage degenerate into a mixed marriage."

For this reason rabbis, before solemnizing an intermarriage, must insist upon the thorough Jewish training and education of the non-Jews,

which "will wipe out all theological differences between husband and wife." To this he adds: "We do not encourage intermarriage, but we accept it when it comes. Wisely guided, it can become a source of strength for our people instead of a cause of weakness."

There is sound advice, *mutatis mutandis*, in the writer's closing words: "One of our major problems today is to instill enough Jewish consciousness and loyalty into our young people to make them want to choose helpmates who were born into Judaism. But when we fail, when love leaps religious barriers, and young people seek to intermarry, the parents and rabbis must make the ceremony of conversion the most vital, significant, and whole-souled ceremony in the life of the proselyte. If a so-called conversion is accepted as a concession, endured with an artificial formality, in order to attain the goal of marriage, and therefore to be forgotten, then it will be meaningless, deceptive, and, worse yet, destructive of Jewish loyalties. Yielding to such a misnamed conversion emphasizes in a most repugnant manner the use of hypocrisy to attain marriage. The essence of successful intermarriage is in the honesty, the good faith, and the constancy of the convert to Judaism. I have seen it work successfully many times, and I recommend it as our sole and helpful solution to this vexatious question."

J. T. MUELLER

#### ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

The number of members in the Lutheran churches of all synods in the Washington, D. C., metropolitan area has increased from 14,206 to 22,024 in the period 1943 to 1950. The United Lutheran Church still maintains its lead with 11,605 members, a gain of 2,695 since 1943. Membership in the churches of the Missouri Synod during the seven-year period has climbed from 2,208 to 4,952. The American Lutheran congregations have increased their membership from 2,526 to 4,589. The one church of the Augustana Synod has grown from 562 to 878.

The Southern Baptist Sunday School Board was exceedingly prolific last year in issuing study and reading materials. Nearly 55,000,000 pieces of literature rolled off their presses. Among this mass of reading matter there were 43,668,750 periodicals, 8,405,000 tracts, 498,670 new books, 1,808,919 reprints of old books, and 603,418 record books.

The Soviet State publishing house in Moscow has issued a new Russian dictionary, containing explanations — all strictly materialistic — for 20,000 foreign words and phrases. In defining the word "Bible," the dictionary says: "The Bible is a collection of fantastic legends

without any scientific support. It is full of dark hints, historical mistakes, and contradictions. It serves as a factor for gaining power and subjugating the unknowing nations." The word "religion" receives more consideration. The dictionary definition says: "Religion is a fantastic faith in God's angels and spirits. It is a faith without any scientific foundation. Religion is being supported and maintained by the reactionary circles. It serves for the subjugation of the working people and for building up the power of the exploiting bourgeois classes. The liquidation of the bourgeois society and the advent of the communist system has destroyed the foundations of religion and is putting the laws of natural science in place of the cunning lies which are being advertised by all religions. The superstition of outlived religion has been surmounted by the communist education of the working class, by its active participation in the construction of the free, socialistic life, and by its deep knowledge of the scientifically profound teachings of Marx-Leninism."

Mormons in California are making preparations for the erection of a two-million-dollar temple in Los Angeles which will exceed in size the famous temple of Salt Lake City.

Over 2,500 Protestant clergymen have filed a motion with the U. S. Supreme Court in which they ask permission to submit a brief as "Friends of the Court" in support of Dr. John Howard Melish, ousted rector of Holy Trinity Church in Brooklyn, N. Y. In the petition we read: "The doctrine of separation of Church and State presented by this case involves much more than the destinies of the petitioners or of the particular religious organization to which they belong. The clergy presenting this one seek an opportunity to defend all religious beliefs from the invasion of civil authority, and specifically, to establish the principle that in matters affecting the affairs of a religious organization, the State may not either directly or indirectly provide rules or penalties where the religious organization has provided its own rules for the management of its affairs and the solution of controversies within its organization, and its own penalties for a breach thereof. The ruling of the Court below is founded on and tends to establish a rule of law that a civil court may by injunction enforce an ecclesiastical judgment disregarding the specific method of enforcement provided by the canons of the particular religious organization. To permit such a rule or law to prevail would breach the wall between church and state which—as this Court has said—must be kept high and impregnable. It would grant to the civil court the authority to make such rules as in its discretion it might deem desirable, irrespective

of the canons and the wishes of the religious organization or of the contract by which members and clergy banded together. Enforcement by a civil court of an ecclesiastical judgment by methods inconsistent with those provided by the laws of the church is, we submit, a violation of the First Amendment of our Constitution. The issuance of an injunction by the trial court to enforce an ecclesiastical judgment on the pain of imprisonment for contempt was a direct invasion by the civil authority of the religious liberty guaranteed by the Amendment."

The Polish parliament abolished five present Roman Catholic holidays as non-working days. Hereafter the Polish Communist government will recognize only twelve non-working days in a year, including Communist national holidays. Sunday is not considered a non-working day.

In addressing the Evangelical Press Association, Professor Roland T. Wolseley pleaded for more effective journalism techniques in church papers. He listed the following points as major shortcomings of the present religious press: (1) failure to utilize the best techniques within the budget set up; (2) the frequent use of undocumented and unproved assertions; (3) dull writing; (4) stock religious language and clichés which do not convey much meaning to the general public.

Radio Station WRUL of the World Wide Broadcasting Foundation in Boston is broadcasting Scripture readings in the Russian language each Sunday on the station's European beam at 3:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time. The Scripture selections are chosen to bring out such ideas as humility, mercy, "God is love," prayer, and the Commandments.

The United Lutheran Church in America will conduct a school on marriage and family relations at Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio, June 18—22. About 175 pastors and laymen from United Lutheran synods throughout the United States and Canada are expected to attend and will be trained as instructors in marriage and family life problems. Discussions will center on the effect that war, mobilization, divorce, and other factors have on family life and marriage.

At a special service in Oslo, attended by members of the Norwegian royal family and a group of leading church and State dignitaries, Dr. Eivind Berggrav preached his last sermon as Bishop of Oslo and Primate of the Norwegian State Lutheran Church. Dr. Berggrav intends to devote a good deal of his remaining time to promoting the ecumenical movement as one of the six presidents of the World Council of Churches.