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Miscellanea

P. E. Kretzmann

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Miscellanea

The Church in a War-Torn World

What we are about to present in this brief discussion may seem strange to many whose thinking has been along the lines of a rather complacent traditionalism, an attitude which may be developed within a generation or two and then claim for itself the support of centuries. There is always the greatest danger in concentrating so exclusively upon one particular part of the Church's teaching that any presentation which emphasizes also other aspects of the Church's relationship to the world will be under suspicion as being at least tinged with dangerous tendencies. To speak very plainly: There are people even in the midst of the Lutheran Church who hold that the Church, in *all* its teaching, must concern herself exclusively with spiritual matters, with the salvation of men's souls, so that all the affairs of this present life are to be ignored, that is to say, the otherworldliness of the Church's true message is to be the exclusive concern of every pastor and of every Christian congregation.

This view is one hundred per cent correct if we think of the Church only in her chief function of extending the kingdom of God, inasmuch as according to this purpose the Christians are dead to this world, and their life is hid with Christ in God. Col. 3:3. Their citizenship is in heaven. Phil. 3:20. Although in the world, they are not of the world, but consider themselves strangers and pilgrims in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Phil. 2:15; 1 Pet. 2:11.

But for all that, as Scripture plainly states, the Christians, according to the body, are still in the midst of the world, not hermetically sealed up, but charged with the duty of maintaining social contacts, also with unbelievers of every type. In general it must be held that there is purpose connected with the life of the believers in the midst of the world, namely, that of living in good works. As Eph. 4:10 has it: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has prepared beforehand that (*hina*) we should walk in them." The same emphasis upon design in the life of Christians is found in Rom. 6:4; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20. And this design is made a part of the functions of the means of grace in the Great Commission, Matt. 28:20, as well as in the one chief proof text connected with the doctrine of Holy Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:17. This life of good works is described from its negative side, for example, when Christ asks His heavenly Father to keep the believers from the evil, while they are still in the midst of the enemies of their salvation. John 17:15; Rom. 12:2; Eph. 5:7,8. On the other hand, it is not only by means of the preaching of the Gospel that we are to make contacts with the unbelievers about us, but also through our conduct as Christians, namely, by carrying out the commands of the Lord in the domain of Christian ethics and thus trying to influence those who are still without to appreciate the power of the Spirit of God in the lives of men. See, for example, 1 Pet. 3:1 b; Phil.

2:14-16. We are to let our light shine before men, in truly good works, that they may see these manifestations of our mystical relationship with the Savior and be constrained to glorify the Father which is in heaven. Matt. 5:14, 16. Our very conduct as children of light is to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness. Eph. 5:8, 11.

But Scripture goes farther than that, since it sets specific duties before the Christians, which they are to carry out in their various contacts with the people among whom they are living, under whom they may be earning their livelihood. Some of these directions are familiar to us from the Table of Duties. Others are referred to or implied in numerous passages of Holy Writ. The command "By love serve one another," Gal. 5:13, is not confined to the relationships within the Christian congregation, for in chap. 6:10 the Apostle bids the believers to do good unto all men. The Bible clearly speaks of various professions and trades, many of which had the majority of their contacts with such as were not believers, and yet all such believers are urged to perform the duties of their calling with all faithfulness. The Bible gives specific rules to believing rulers and kings, particularly in the Book of Proverbs. And the Bible just as definitely specifies the duties of citizens under any form of government.

If we, therefore, speak of duties of citizens in the present circumstances, under the impact of the unparalleled cataclysm of the global war with which we are most definitely concerned, we are fully conscious of the distinction between Church and State, of the separate dominions of their functions. Our discussion will not propose, in any way, shape, or form, a mixture of Church and State. We are not, even in the most remote manner, suggesting any aspect of a social gospel, for we are fully aware of the fact that nothing can ever be substituted for the message of sin and grace with which the Church is entrusted, by which we operate on the hearts of men.

We are here dealing with the ethical teaching of Holy Scripture concerning the duties of citizens, Christian citizens, if you please, over against the Government, not only in times of peace, but also in times of war. Christian citizens, in times of peace, will individually perform such duties as paying taxes, serving as officials of the Government, not only when drafted into service, but when their abilities and capacities are clearly needed. They will observe the laws made for the entire citizenry, such, for example, as concern property, building, also such laws and ordinances as go beyond the limits set by the Word of God, as in cases where the restrictions of prohibition affect the temperate use of spirituous liquors or the prohibited degrees in holy marriage are extended to include cousins. The same principles apply to congregations in their outward organization as corporate bodies or persons under the laws of the Federal Government or of an individual State. In most cases, property actually used for purposes of worship is tax exempt, this being a courtesy on the part of the powers that be. However, in the case of other property owned by a congregation, taxes levied by the Government are to be paid without opposition, particularly special taxes for particular improvements. In all such instances a congregation acts as

an organization acknowledged by the Government as a corporate body. A Christian congregation will, in all such cases, be mindful of the Savior's word "*Render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's.*" Matt. 22:21, that is: Do your duty as citizens of the country in which you live.

Now, it is a fact that in these relationships there are certain overlapping areas or fields of interest, and that is the field of civic righteousness. Every good government is vitally concerned about good morals. Most governments are also ready to concede to the Church, to individual congregations and their pastors, a definite sphere of influence in this field. Knowing the influence of religion in the lives of church members, the States of the Union and other governments have authorized ordained and licensed clergymen of the various Christian denominations and of other religions to perform marriage ceremonies. It is not that the sanction of the Church is needed for the validity of the ceremony, for, as Luther rightly remarks, marriage is "a secular, earthly matter." But the interest of the Church in homes established upon the teachings of any church body coincides with the interest which the State has in maintaining homes as units of the State. A pastor who officiates at a wedding ceremony can do so only on the basis of a license issued by the respective official of the Government. We do not, on that account, say that a pastor performing a wedding ceremony is mingling Church and State. Another instance: The State is often very anxious to have pastors serve as parole officers, since they hold positions of authority and trust in the community and very frequently can exercise control over some wayward person when the influence of others fail. It is not a mingling of Church and State if a pastor serves the State in this capacity. And he may very well serve also in other Government positions if his congregation is satisfied that this incidental service will not interfere with the duties of his office. In itself such service is not condemned in Scripture.

Such an area of overlapping interests is also that of chaplains in the armed forces of a country, which involves the payment of a salary by the Government. The State is not interested in, not concerned about, the particular kind of Gospel message that the chaplains of the various denominations dispense, even if individual officers draw their conclusions regarding the effectiveness of the message brought by the representatives of certain church bodies. What the State is interested in is this point that the presence of the chaplains and the influence exerted by the chaplains produces a better moral attitude in the armed forces of a country. That there are certain dangerous possibilities, especially as to unionistic by-products, under this arrangement, is incidental, not essential, to the project. And the Church welcomes particularly this phase of the arrangement that we are in a position to give spiritual care to the men from our congregations who are serving their country, particularly under the Selective Service Law. Syncretism and unionism, although undoubtedly a danger in the situation, is not a necessary by-product of conditions, not even in the Navy of the United States, as past history proves.

All these considerations should serve for the guidance of congregations and pastors under the impact of the present war with its many implications. That soldiers may very well be considered as being engaged in a God-pleasing station is clearly stated in Scripture, and our Lutheran Confessions have frankly included this point in setting forth the rights of the civil government, as also Luther did in many parts of his writings, as, for example, in his classic *Ob Kriegsleute in einem seligen Stande sein koennen*. (Cp. C. T. M., XII: 207 f.; 321 ff.) The attitude of so-called "conscientious objectors," if it is based on so-called "pacifism," cannot be defended or condoned by the Church, but should be corrected according to the Bible, the persons concerned meanwhile being treated as weak Christians and consistently corrected from the Word of God, so that their erring consciences may be set aright.

Nor does this exhaust the possibilities of the situation. There are areas of overlapping interests in this present wartime emergency which will be brought home to us in an increasing measure as the full impact of the catastrophe strikes our country. Since the Government is interested in the housing of thousands of defense workers, it may call upon individual citizens as well as corporate bodies, organizations of every kind, to offer their buildings, such as parish houses, for this purpose. Such facilities may also be required and hence requisitioned for day nurseries, hospitals, child care centers, juvenile welfare centers, and similar projects. The Government's Office of Civilian Defense is working on plans that take into account many phases of the present wartime emergency as it affects non-combatants. For individual Christians to take a hostile attitude would be both futile and foolish; and for congregations to refuse co-operation as the situation may require would not be in harmony with the duties obviously implied in the obedience to the Government demanded by the Fourth Commandment. We have many reasons to be most thankful that our Government, in times of peace, has held its requirements at a minimum, not only in keeping with the letter, but also the spirit, of the Bill of Rights. The Church has duties in a war-torn world. It is trying to recognize the full implication of these duties in spreading the Gospel where it is so sorely needed. That is the spiritual side of our work, our real task, our supreme and only duty in the actual sphere of the communion of saints. But we cannot afford to forget that, as human beings, as citizens of the State, both individually and collectively, we owe our Government service.

P. E. KRETZMANN

A Novel Christmas Present

Faith Theological Seminary of Wilmington, Del., organized about six years ago by Fundamentalist Presbyterians, has only a small library. The Rev. John Sanderson, pastor of the Bible Presbyterian Church in St. Louis and a recent graduate of Faith, induced his congregation to forward to the seminary library a shipment of Lutheran books published by Concordia Publishing House as a Christmas present. He hopes that this novel Christmas gift will enable the faculty and the student body to become better acquainted with the doctrinal position of our Synod,

even as this young pastor is acquainting himself with the Lutheran doctrine by taking regular courses at our Seminary. The shipment included such standard works as the *Triglotta*, *Law and Gospel*, *Walther and the Church*, *Christian Dogmatics*, *Popular Commentary*, *Popular Symbolics*, *Concordia Cyclopedia*, *Doctrinal Outlines*, *God and the Cosmos*, *Pastoral Theology*, *Reason and Revelation*. Such a gift will awaken in the hearts of the donors greater interest in the real heart of a seminary, the library. Our own people have made special gifts to the kitchens of our colleges and seminaries—and may the custom continue! But could we not inaugurate a Donation Day for our libraries! The librarians of our theological libraries at St. Louis and Springfield will gladly make suggestions.

F. E. M.

In Touch with Our Historical Past

Recently in a circle of men deeply interested in the future welfare of our Church it was pointed out that for the preservation of our Lutheran heritage our present and future generations of pastors must keep in touch with our historical past. This can be done either by enabling our theological students to study the writings of our fathers in their vernacular or by making our rich treasures of Lutheran theological values accessible to them in an acceptable English translation.

The suggestion is indeed timely. Our Lutheran literature in the English language is still so limited that to a large extent our pastors must use the theological works of Reformed and rationalistic scholars. It does not require much effort to show just what that might mean to our Church in years to come, for it goes without saying that our teaching and preaching is nothing else than a reflection of what we read and absorb by study. We give to others what we ourselves receive. Shall we in future disseminate Reformed or rationalistic thought?

In view of the coming centennial of our Church, it is perhaps well for us to consider the point at stake. We have choice treasures of sound theological lore buried away in our many synodical reports, the numerous volumes of *Lehre und Wehre* and those of *The Theological Quarterly*. In fact, also the early volumes of the *Lutheraner* contain so many learned theological essays that they deserve to be studied by our ministers today.

Reflecting on this subject, the writer took time carefully to examine for articles suited to the needs of the present crisis, as also for other valuable material, Volume Thirty-eight of *Lehre und Wehre*, published in 1892, just fifty years ago. The faculty of our seminary at that time was numerically small. In fact, there were only three professors to take a prominent part in the literary work for our periodicals, Dr. F. Pieper, Dr. G. Stoeckhardt, and Dr. A. L. Graebner. (Fortunately in 1893 came Professors L. Fuerbringer and F. Bente and in 1896 Professor G. Mezger.) But what these men wrote has abiding value. Even the relatively few literary contributions made by outsiders show a high degree of excellence in form and content. It may be worth our while to scrutinize what our scholastic periodical of half a century ago offered its readers.

In 1892 our Church was engaged in controversy on such questions as election and salvation, synergism, the prerogative of Holy Scripture

as the only source and norm of faith, and the like. It is not surprising, therefore, that Volume Thirty-eight of *Lehre und Wehre* should largely be made up of articles discussing doctrine, most of them running through several numbers of the volume. All of them are scholarly and most of them so very timely that today they might be taken out of their musty volume and placed (in a fitting English form) into Volume Fourteen of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY as appropriate reading material for our present-day pastors.

We are sure that studious ministers would appreciate reading such essays as the following: Dr. Pieper's "Foreword" on the *sola Scriptura* and the *sola gratia*; Dr. Stoeckhardt's "Christ in Old Testament Prophecy"; Dr. A. L. Graebner's "The Oldest Lutheran Church in America"; Rev. F. P. Merbitz' "The Doctrine of Original Sin According to Article I of the Formula of Concord"; Rev. G. Seuel's "The Godly Sorrow According to 2 Cor. 7:10"; Dr. Pieper's "Is it Really Lutheran Doctrine that the Conversion and Salvation of Man Does not Depend Alone on Divine Grace, but, in a Certain Relation, also on Man's Conduct?" Dr. Pieper's "Synergism in the Doctrine of Inspiration"; Rev. A. G. Doehler's "Luther's Translation of Job 19:25-27"; Dr. Pieper's "The Unbelief of Those Who are Lost, Solely Their Fault"; Dr. Stoeckhardt's "What Does St. Paul Teach Concerning Inspiration in 2 Tim. 3:15-17?" Dr. Pieper's "The Latest Case in the German State Church"; Dr. Graebner's "The Beginning of the Papacy"; Dr. Pieper's review of "Professor Graebner's *History of the Lutheran Church in America*." As we see, practically all of these articles touch on vital points of theology and therefore deserve as careful study today as they did fifty years ago. They are sound and solid Lutheran theology.

Under the title "Vermischtes" *Lehre und Wehre* also offered "Miscellanea." These miscellaneous articles, of course, vary in value according to their content. Nevertheless, we are sure that our pastors would profit by reading of Spurgeon's fearless testimony on behalf of the divine inspiration of the Bible, or the fine tribute to Luther's Bible translation, or Dr. Pieper's discussion of the Erasmus type of synergism, or the status of the doctrine of Inspiration in Lutheran circles in Germany, or why the theory of evolution was rejected by a prominent French professor, or the unscriptural character of the German State Church, or Mohammedan propaganda in Africa, or why the Pope condemned the promotion of the Elector of Brandenburg as King of Prussia, or the abomination of India's fierce Juggernaut, or the Pope's golden rose given expensively to favorites of his, or the re-dedication of the Castle Church at Wittenberg and the Pope's chagrin at this celebration, or the extensive mission work carried on among Jews in Central Europe, and the like. These are only a few of the many items offered, but they are sufficient to show that also the brief miscellaneous articles make fascinating and profitable reading for pastors today.

The "Theological Observer" material is grouped under the heading "Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches." Some of this will hardly interest the present-day generation of pastors; much of the material, however, is historically and doctrinally valuable even today, especially for ecclesias-

tical orientation. We quote a few of the many topics: Already fifty years ago Modernism among the Presbyterians had become so strong that liberal Dr. Briggs at Union Theological Seminary found many influential defenders of his viewpoint. — On December 22, 1891, died Paul de Lagarde, "extreme critic" and professor of Oriental Languages in Goettingen. — Under the title "Poor Japan" report is made of a "Christian" Japanese who, denying Christ's deity, sought to establish in his country a new religion, a mixture of Christian and Buddhist ethical tenets, thus beginning the Japanese anti-Christian movement that became victorious only a few months ago. — Prof. W. R. Harper misses "a theological classic" on Inspiration and asks: "Who will write it?" — An Anglican, a graduate of Oxford, becomes a Mohammedan. Incredible? "Why should it be incredible [asks Dr. Pieper] when so many Oxford graduates have turned Romanists and, as such, followers of the great Antichrist?" — Missourians are accused of teaching particular election as a means of gaining personal assurance of salvation. — An interesting study: the parish school problem in Illinois and Wisconsin. — The Pope's *tolerari potest* of Archbishop Ireland's Faribault school plan: Rome provides the public schools with Catholic teachers (sisters) while the State pays. — Clear and Scriptural is the reply of the Milwaukee Pastoral Conference to the suggestion of the Wisconsin Sabbath Union that the Church should insist that the Chicago World's Fair be closed on Sunday. — Dr. W. Koelling's confession over against the rationalism of Dr. Zoekler: "I re-affirm my deep conviction that the whole Bible is *verbaler* inspired by God the Holy Ghost and that it is therefore inerrant." — The strange exegesis of 2 Thess. 2:10 by one Prof. Dr. F. Zimmer: "In order that one may be an elect, he must personally fulfill the condition that he loves the truth." — The colloquy between Buffalo and the New York Ministerium with fifteen theses regarding the doctrine of the ministry adopted and the establishment of pulpit and altar fellowship between the two synods. — The synods of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Michigan unite into one body, forming the General Ev. Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Other States. — Dr. Hilprecht, professor of Old Testament Exegesis, resigns from Mount Airy because his demands upon the seminary students were too severe. Writes Dr. Pieper: "Old and New Testament exegesis will always remain a *crux* to professors of exegesis unless students come to the seminary adequately equipped with a working knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. Only the well-gifted and ambitious students can make up what they have missed in language study during their preparatory school period." Dr. Hilprecht, by the way, later achieve fame as a ranking Assyriologist at the University of Pennsylvania. — Professor Wellhausen, "a destructive critic," leaves Marburg University to become Professor of Oriental Languages at Goettingen. — At the convention of the United Synod of the South at Knoxville, Tenn., the Tennessee Synod endeavors to enforce Paragraph III of the *Regulations in Regard to Work*, reading: "Every minister, professor, or missionary in any institution or enterprise under the supervision or control of this United Synod, before entering upon the performance of the duties of his office, shall make affirmation that he will inculcate nothing that

is in conflict with the doctrinal basis of this United Synod as defined in its Constitution, but that all his religious teachings shall be in conformity with the same; and that he will not foster nor encourage *inter-communion*, or altar fellowship with non-Lutherans, or unionistic services, or any secret society of a doubtful or deistic character." It failed in the attempt; the paragraph was not adopted.—The synods of Ohio and Iowa make preparations to hold a colloquy with a view to church union.—Dr. Butler predicts a union of the "great and ever-growing" Lutheran Church in America on the doctrinal basis of the General Synod. In his opinion the Lutheran Church must strive, not for pure doctrine, but for a "higher plane of spiritual life," for "diets for dogmatizing in this age produce dyspepsia."—A moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly found himself in a predicament; he had printed his synodical sermon beforehand and as he preached it, the ministerial and lay delegates, with copies in their hands, followed the text closely to see if he really did preach what he was supposed to preach.—Dr. Harnack of Berlin advises students to subscribe to the Apostles' Creed, but to work toward its abrogation after they have become ministers.—Ernest Renan dies in Paris at the age of seventy, representatives of the State honoring him by their addresses at his funeral. "The evil he did during his life [writes an exchange] will live after him, and thousands will rise up to curse his name."—Professor Virchow, Rector of the University of Berlin, advocates the abolition of the study of the ancient classic languages as the foundation of a general higher education, suggesting in place of them the study of mathematics, philosophy, and natural science.—In Holland the *Midnight Mission* endeavoring to keep men away from the dives receives no support from the police. Still, the mission proves itself highly successful.—At the celebration of "Sedan Day," in commemoration of the victory of the Germans over the French in 1870, a high school professor in Hanover addresses his students as follows: Go and prove yourselves worthy of your fathers. No matter whatever God you may worship—Allah, Buddha, Brahma, Jehovah, the almighty, eternal, gracious God of the Christians, whose love and mercy rest also on those who pine in prison—be honest." Remarks Dr. Stoeckhardt: "The end of the religion of the German State Church is bound to be pure paganism."

To study these old numbers of *Lehre und Wehre* thoughtfully and systematically means to take a graduate course in sacred theology—systematic, exegetical, historical, and practical. We live in the present; we orient ourselves to the future; but from our rich and abiding theological past we gain the inspiration and stamina to become useful both for the present and the future. *Tolle, lege.* J. T. M.