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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

District Presidents of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod Urge the Holding of Free Conferences. — It may be that the set of resolutions passed May 6 by the District Presidents of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod will lead to important developments. But whether this will be the case or not, it is only proper that the resolutions be printed in this journal, too.

"Recognizing that this critical period in the history of the world demands a realistic approach to the cultivation of unity in American Lutheranism, the College of Presidents of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod

"1. Expresses profound distress over Lutheran disunity and declares its desire and willingness to co-operate in efforts to achieve Lutheran unity in doctrine and its application to the life and work of the Church;

"2. Proposes that all Lutheran bodies in America join in free conferences of pastors and laymen, under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit, to establish existing agreement and to remove existing differences for the purpose of bringing about unity of Christian faith and fellowship;

"3. Hopes that a practical result of the discussions will be agreement in doctrine and eventual formation of a federation of Lutheran bodies designed for co-operative Lutheran action on the basis of the Word of God;

"4. Resolves collectively and individually, in the various Districts of the Missouri Synod, to promote Lutheran unity through brotherly discussion with the hope that such discussion will lead to mutual recognition and co-operation;

"5. Requests the President of the Missouri Synod, in co-operation with the leaders of all other Lutheran bodies, to form a National Inter-Lutheran Committee for the purpose of arranging the proposed conferences of Lutheran pastors and laymen."

It is conceivable that some of the Presidents of the other Lutheran bodies will refuse to co-operate; we hope this will not happen. But at any rate, the District Presidents of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod have gone on record as desiring strongly that free conferences be held which may lead to the establishment of fellowship and the formation of a federation of Lutheran bodies.

A.

What Would Happen if Marburg Occurred Today? — This interesting question was ventilated in the *Christian Century* of April 27 on the basis of a questionnaire sent to Lutheran and Reformed theologians by the Rev. S. E. Wirt, minister to students at the University of Washington for the Congregational Christian Churches. The Lutheran theologians approached who sent replies were P. O. Bersell, President Augustana Evangelical Lutheran Church; Franklin Clark Fry, President United Lutheran Church;

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J. A. Aasgaard, President Evangelical Lutheran Church of America; P. H. Buehring, Professor of Church History, Evangelical Lutheran Seminary of Capital University, Columbus, Ohio; Edgar Carlson, President Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota. The Reformed theologians whose opinions were successfully solicited were Reinhold Niebuhr, Union Theological Seminary, New York; George W. Richards, Lancaster Seminary, Pennsylvania; L. W. Goebel, President Evangelical and Reformed Church; Jesse H. Baird, Moderator, Presbyterian Church U. S. A. and President of San Francisco Theological Seminary; Helen Kenyon, Moderator, Congregational Christian Churches. The questions submitted to these representatives were indeed pointed. The Lutherans were asked whether "they thought Luther's attitude at Marburg was correct; whether they would have modified it; whether Luther was right in telling Zwingli that his spirit was 'different'; whether the Lord's Supper was still a dividing issue; and whether they would, if asked, try to bring the two groups, Lutheran and Reformed, into some kind of practical fellowship."

The answers given by the Lutheran theologians on the whole are heartening to members of the Lutheran Church, whose confessional consciousness is live and strong. All of the Lutheran replies called the stand of Luther right; no Lutheran leader thought that he would have modified Luther's position, except one, who favored a somewhat more moderate judgment; all with the exception of one agreed that Luther was right in speaking of a different spirit in Zwingli and his brethren; all stated it was their conviction that Zwingli's position was unscriptural; and not any one of them favored the adoption of a compromise.

The replies sent by the Reformed were characteristic of Reformed theology. These leaders held indeed that Zwingli was right in his attitude on fellowship from the ecumenical point of view; three of them expressed the opinion Zwingli's motives were not primarily political; not any one of them made the teaching on the Lord's Supper a divisive matter, and all were willing to effect some sort of compromise for the establishment of a practical fellowship.

We see that as far as the Lutherans are concerned, the unionist does not here find the grist for his mill which he would like to have. We are glad to note that the Lutheran theologians were fairly unanimous in recognizing that adherence to the truth is more important than the attempt to impress the world with numbers.

A.

Protestants Map Nation-Wide Evangelistic Crusade.—Plans for the "greatest evangelistic campaign ever undertaken by the Protestant Churches of America" were announced in New York following an all-day meeting of the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches. The nation-wide Christian crusade, it was said, will carry through a 15-month period beginning next October 2—World Communion Sunday. It has the "assured

cooperation" of 42 Protestant denominations, including 15 denominations which are not members of the Federal Council. The forty-two Churches have a combined membership of over 35,000,000 persons. Dr. Edwin T. Dahlberg of Syracuse, N. Y., chairman of the evangelism department, said the crusade would be directed by a national committee of 62 members, composed of all the denominational secretaries of evangelism and representatives of interdenominational agencies, pastors, and others. Prof. Elmer G. Homrighausen of Princeton (N. J.) Theological Seminary will act as crusade chairman. Two years in the making, plans for the crusade call for the participation of more than 150,000 local churches and over 50 colleges and universities. The plans, designed to carry the Christian message to virtually every city and town in America, also call for traveling teams of prominent evangelists who will take over local church pulpits.

The fivefold objective of the crusade, as outlined by the Department of Evangelism, is as follows: (1) "A spiritual quickening of the ministry and membership of the churches. Christians today need to be motivated and empowered for their evangelistic responsibility. (2) The reaching and winning of the vast unchurched multitudes of the nation for Christ and His Church through every worthy means and method. (3) The careful instruction and assimilation of every new member who is brought into the membership of the churches. (4) The enlisting of all members who have moved to new communities and have failed to identify themselves with any local church where they now live. (5) The vital transformation of persons through Christ, so that Christian personalities shall be developed in the home, business, politics and in all other human relationships in order that these new persons may in turn produce a more Christian society." R. N. S.

The Outlook for Missions in China.—Missionaries, mission boards, and Christian people in general are mentally suffering *angina pectoris* at the thought of what is happening in China, the relentless rolling forward of the "red wave" and the apparently total collapse of the so-called nationalist government. The question that everybody naturally asks is, What will happen to Christian missions when the Communists are in the saddle? An item in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, one of the best-known papers of England, though not of recent date—it was published April 14—may nevertheless, because coming from a trained observer, be of interest. Having dwelt on pessimistic comments that had appeared in the press, he weeks ago had pointed out, "First, Chinese Communism might possibly not be of the extreme Marx-Leninist type, and Chinese national pride might limit Russian influence. And, secondly, that if circumstances were going in the future to be uniform in every part of China, it will be for the first time in history." Then this observer continues, "Today I can offer to my readers a much more hopeful view; a view based on a well-informed article in a London newspaper, on a letter from a friend with

a quarter of a century's firsthand experience of China, and on the action of all the great missionary societies. Persecution appears to have died down, and the official policy of Mao Tse-Lung is said to be tolerance for all religion. Dr. John Wellington, Bishop of Shantung, is said to be on his way back to his diocese. A personal friend whom the S. P. G. felt unable, at the end of last year, to send to China is to go shortly. The China Inland Mission, the Church Missionary Society, and the London Missionary Society are all hoping to send out fresh parties of workers during the next three or four months. It may, of course, prove that this view is too hopeful. But if Christianity has a fair field in China and if all the churches strain every nerve to make the fullest possible use of their opportunities, who can say what the results might be? If so vast a country as China could prove that a Communist land need be neither a police state nor an anti-Christian one, it might do more for world peace than it could have done if the Communists had been defeated. The future of Chinese missions will be watched with intense interest."

This man, it will be observed, writes with caution; we all hold our breath. Our helplessness is very evident. Let our prayers be all the more ardent. A.

Debate on Eucharistic Prayer.—A report in the *Lutheran* of June 1 speaks of a debate carried on at a session of the Pennsylvania Ministerium (U. L. C. A.) on the eucharistic prayer inserted in the liturgy submitted by a special committee at the last meeting of the U. L. C. A. and referred by that body to the Church for study. The chairman of the committee sponsoring the addition of this prayer is the venerable Dr. Luther D. Reed, former president of Mount Airy Seminary and one of the acknowledged authorities on matters liturgical. We are convinced that it is altogether foreign to the intentions of the committee to introduce anything that favors the Roman Catholic false doctrines pertaining to Holy Communion, but it cannot be denied that since the word *sacrifice* occurs in the prayer, the impression is created that one of Rome's most flagrant errors here finds endorsement. The discussions must have been interesting, searching, and penetrating. It was pointed out that the submitted prayer is not in harmony with the Gospel of the New Testament and fundamental Lutheran teaching, inasmuch as it directs attention not so much to what God does, but rather to what man does. That the proposed addition comes in the garb of venerated antiquity was granted, but it was emphasized that what our people need is not antiques, but forms that aid a living faith and edify God's children. The vote was 289 against and 31 for the insertion of the prayer. Undoubtedly, if the committee does not decide to drop the prayer altogether, it will be presented in a revised form when another report is made to the U. L. C. A. convention.

A.

Some Information on Barth.—As usual, *Bibliotheca Sacra* in its April—June number for 1949 provides a rich menu. Among

its interesting articles is one that has the title "A Conservative Interviews Barth." It is written by Miner B. Stearns, Th. D., who is located in Brussels, Belgium. It was last year that he obtained an interview with the famous Basel professor. One of the points that were discussed by the two men had to do with the strange assertion of Barth that the resurrection of Christ should not be viewed as a historical event. Barth calls the resurrection of Jesus "the non-historical event *kat' exocheen*." This matter was cleared up to the satisfaction of the visitor. Barth makes a distinction between *geschichtlich* and *historisch*, both of which words are translated "historical" in English. Barth admits that the resurrection of Christ was *geschichtlich*, but he maintains it is not *historisch*. What he means to say is that while the event certainly occurred, it is impossible for us to "prove it scientifically at this late date to the satisfaction of all historians." Whether this distinction linguistically is justified, we shall not examine now. When Barth was asked whether he believes in the verbal inspiration of the Bible, he said that his reply had to be both Yes and No. The Bible has a human and a divine side. As far as the human side is concerned, it may and does contain errors, is his contention. This position of Barth toward the Scriptures is not news. He has stated before that he accepts at least some of the positions of negative higher criticism which finds errors in the Scriptures. Barth asked his visitor to judge him not by what he had written many years ago, but by his present productions, especially by his *Dogmatik im Grundriss*, which was published in 1947. Evidently he believes that a man has the right and the duty to grow intellectually and spiritually, ever striving to reach a better understanding of God's revelation and a higher degree of devotion to the Savior. A.

On Kierkegaard.—A good article on this famous Danish thinker appeared in the April, 1949, number of the *Lutheran Outlook*, written by W. Rodemann. The title is "A First Approach to Soren Kierkegaard, the Pioneer of the Absolute." If a person wishes to orient himself quickly on the chief facts pertaining to the life and work of Kierkegaard, who many years after his death became a potent factor in philosophy and theology, this article will render the desired service. Kierkegaard died in 1855, 42 years old. The books on which his fame rests were written between 1842 and 1855. It is certainly strange that almost a hundred years have passed since his death and that it is only about thirty or forty years ago that his name began to be prominently mentioned in theological circles throughout the world. Mr. Rodemann writes: "The first one who dared to treat him in a philosophical course in our country was the Swedish American David F. Swenson of the University of Minnesota, who also acquainted William James with Kierkegaard's writings, one of which he had translated. It was, however, published only a few years ago, when another enthusiastic admirer of our 'Danish Hamlet,' Dr. Walter Lowrie of Princeton, former Episcopalian minister in Rome, after his return to America

published the first scholarly biography of Kierkegaard in English. This publication, a substantial volume of about 600 pages, began what has been called the English Kierkegaard Renaissance, with an English edition of Kierkegaard's works (of which 13 volumes have appeared) by the Princeton University Press as main achievement. About half a dozen additional volumes (among them four volumes of *Edifying Discourses*), mostly translations by Dr. and Mrs. David F. Swenson, were published by the Augsburg Publishing House in Minneapolis. The last valuable contribution is *A Kierkegaard Anthology*, edited by Robert Bretall (Princeton, 1946)."

In writing these lines we certainly do not wish to create the impression that we endorse all the views that Kierkegaard uttered. But it cannot be denied that not only was he a virile, versatile thinker and forceful writer, but that he stated some thoughts which had to be stated. It is often said that he is the man who began what is called existentialism. A paragraph in Mr. Rode-mann's essay will introduce the reader to what is called existentialism in a simple and yet quite effective way. We quote: "Luther and the Church of the Reformation, he [i. e. Kierkegaard] states, emphasized justification by faith; if they were living today they would stress with St. James, 'Faith, if it hath not works, is dead.' 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' World-conquering Christianity is no intellectual assent to a certain philosophy of life; no, it is unconditional surrender of our whole existence to Him who invites us, 'Follow me!' This is 'existential thinking.'"

It will be seen from this that Kierkegaard, who had become a candidate of theology, was the determined foe of a dead faith and dead orthodoxy. Perhaps there is nothing that so characterizes his writings as this particular feature. A.

I. V. F. in Great Britain.—In the *Presbyterian Guardian* appears an interesting letter written by Dr. Ned Stonehouse, member of the faculty of Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia (the institution founded by the late Dr. J. G. Machen), who is visiting in England and Scotland. During the spring vacation he delivered lectures in Oxford under the auspices of the Christian Education Committee of the Graduates' Division of the Inter-Varsity Fellowship of Evangelical Unions, which conducted a course for teachers. Dr. Douglas Johnson, a physician, is the general secretary of this organization. Its journal, published monthly, contains articles of a caliber that any paper could be proud of. In passing, Dr. Stonehouse mentions the Rev. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, D.D., who once upon a time was a successful physician, but now in London preaches Christ and Him crucified to audiences of tremendous size. It seems, as Dr. Johnson two years ago remarked to the writer of these lines, that the physicians have to lead the theologians back to the old foundations. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship people desire to remain loyal to the Scriptures, they spurn negative higher criticism, and they emphasize faith in the divine Christ as the only way of

salvation. Glancing at church affairs in general, Dr. Stonehouse states that only about ten per cent of the people are said to have a serious connection with the Church. What is the trouble? The inhabitants of Great Britain have become indifferent in matters of religion; apparently secularism has seized them. The questions that occupy their thinking are: What shall we eat? What shall we drink? Wherewithal shall we clothe ourselves? What is needed is the preaching of repentance. The Inter-Varsity Fellowship is endeavoring to fight indifference and apostasy at a prominent place in the nation's life, the universities. A.

Postmillennialism. — *Bibliotheca Sacra*, published by the Dallas Theological Seminary and Graduate School of Theology (formerly Evangelical Theological College), espouses Fundamentalism, and one of its definite features is the teaching of premillennialism. One must give the journal credit for seeking to furnish a fair survey of views on both sides of the question. In the April to June, 1949, issue we find an article entitled "Postmillennialism," written by the Rev. John F. Malvoord, Th. D. If anybody is engaged in a study of the questions pertaining to the millennium, we urge him to obtain this article. While we do not agree with everything submitted (for instance, with the assertion that postmillennialism was not Apostolic teaching), we must say that the article is informing. Postmillennialism is the position of those who think that the second coming of Christ will occur not before, but after the thousand years spoken of Revelation 20. It is a view commonly held by Lutheran theologians. Strange to say, Dr. Malvoord does not seem to be acquainted with the Lutheran literature on his topic. Toward the end of the article a paragraph is submitted which has the caption "Summary of Postmillennial Theology." One of the views ascribed to postmillennialists is given thus: "The final coming of the Lord is climactic and is in the very remote future. There is no hope in the foreseeable future, certainly not within this generation." That is a surprising statement. We wonder what induces the author to believe that, for instance, we Lutherans do not hold that the Lord's Day can come at once, tomorrow, or day after tomorrow. His researches have not been comprehensive enough. A.

Revised Catholic Catechism Touches on Current Issues. — Publication of a revised edition of the Baltimore "penny" catechism which served as the standard text in Roman Catholic religion classes in this country for 70 years was announced in Washington, D. C., by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine. Twelve years in the making, the new catechism is a companion — on the high school and college-adult education level — to a revised catechism brought out in 1941 for elementary school pupils. A 426-page text, the catechism was completed under the direction of the Episcopal Committee of the Confraternity. This group includes Archbishops John T. McNicholas of Cincinnati and Robert E. Lucey of San Antonio, and Bishops Edwin V. O'Hara of Kansas City,

Matthew F. Brady of Manchester, N. H., James E. Kearney of Rochester, N. Y., William T. Mulloy of Covington, Ky., and William P. O'Connor of Madison, Wis. Questions and answers in the revised catechism touch, among other things, on economic and political life, the Catholic citizen's duty to his country, loyalty to government, the moral standing of various forms of government, voting, and war.

The new Baltimore textbook, "reflecting the great drive toward labor-management-government cooperation in industrial life in the 20th century pronouncements of the Catholic Church," contains the following statement: "Employers who defraud laborers by not paying them a just living wage keep what belongs to others and are guilty of grave injustice not only to the employee but also to the members of his family. This injustice can cause serious sins in the domestic life as well as in the social life of a community. Employees who waste time during working hours, do careless work, or neglect to take reasonable care of the property of their employers violate the Seventh Commandment." Also classified as a sin against the Commandment "Thou shalt not steal" is the incurring of debts "beyond one's ability to pay." "The desire for pleasure and social and political ambition," the new catechism says, "do not justify living beyond one's means, an abuse which has become a prevalent vice." Concerning loyalty to the government, the Catholic learns that "a person who plots against his country or rebels against its legitimate authority commits a grave sin." The catechism adds, however, that citizens have the right "to defend themselves against tyranny when there is no other way to secure the exercise of their fundamental human rights."

As regards the moral standing of governments, the catechism declares: "Citizens may accept any form of government that does not claim for itself rights that belong to God alone or those that are proper to the individual, to the family, or to the Church.— The State exists for the common good of men, and not men for the State. A government may not infringe on the right of an individual or of a family to worship God and to live according to His laws; nor may it forbid parents to instruct their children in the truths of God and to train them in virtuous living.— A government may not prohibit the Church from preaching the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and legislating in all those matters that pertain to the worship of God and the salvation of souls."

The new catechism says a Catholic has the duty of bearing arms unless he is "convinced from adequate and unquestionable evidence that the war is unjust." It adds that four conditions are required for a just war: "First, if it is necessary to defend the rights of the State in a grave matter; second, if it is undertaken only as a last resort after all other means have failed; third, if it is conducted justly in accordance with natural and international law; fourth, if it is not continued after due satisfaction has been offered or given by the unjust aggressor nation." R. N. S.

On a Rapprochement between Catholics and Protestants.— In the February, 1949, issue of *Stimmen der Zeit*, a Roman Catholic monthly appearing in the publishing house of Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, a Jesuit priest by the name of Max Pribilla submits an informative article having the title "Interkonfessionelle Verstaendigung," which may be translated: "An Attempt of Denominations to Reach an Understanding." The denominations or ecclesiastical divisions are, of course, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. What is happening? Is Rome willing to cease being Rome? Are Protestants offering to drop their traditional opposition to papal doctrines and claims? Evidently something is stirring; it may be merely a little breeze and ultimately turn out to have had no significance; but that is not what concerns us at present. Developments in France have been pointed to by observers as indicating the adoption of a more conciliatory attitude by the Roman hierarchy. Now comes this article speaking of affairs in Germany. The author warns us that no real revolutionary happenings can be reported; the barriers are still there and at present cannot be removed. In discussing the differences between the denominations the author states that in the various churches themselves there are numerous shades of belief. "In the Catholic Church, too, there is no uniformity [*Einerleiheit*]; even in theory and practice exist many differences which are more than mere surface features. Let the reader think of the many matters of controversy between Catholic dogmatists, moralists, exegetes, liturgical writers, asceticists, etc. The Catholic may be a Thomist or a Molinist, defender or opponent of Probabilism, without being interfered with by the Church." [Louis Molina, d. 1600, was a Spanish Jesuit who tried to bridge the chasm between the mild Augustinianism of the Dominican Thomas Aquinas and the Semipelagianism of Duns Scotus, whom the Franciscans followed. Probabilism is the view that in questions of morals you may follow a certain course if you can show through the declaration of a famous teacher that it probably is correct. On this matter a great controversy was waged among the Catholics in the 17th century; Pascal's renowned Provincial Letters deal with it in part. A.]

Briefly summarized, these are the thoughts expressed by Father Pribilla: The Churches are intolerant of each other; that is unavoidable as long as they intend to keep their identity. The old dogmatic differences of the sixteenth century have, generally speaking, remained. Unless God performs a miracle union is still extremely remote. But it cannot be denied that the world situation has brought about a profound change of outlook and sentiment. The flood of religious indifference, atheistic Marxism, and intellectual nihilism have made Christians in all denominations see that they are attacked by common foes, and many persecutions have been jointly borne by representatives of the various Churches. It has been found that differences in doctrine and practice could in calmness be studied jointly. The old points of controversy have largely lost their significance for the laity. Today the question that

agitates people is not, How do I find a sin-forgiving God? but, Is there a God at all? and, Has our existence here on earth any meaning? There is evident, for instance, in the essay of Peter Brunner of Heidelberg on "The Roman Catholic Church and Ecumenical Endeavors" an earnest and honest effort to understand Roman Catholic thinking and striving. There is the so-called *Una Sancta* movement, a term which designates an effort made to bring about a rapprochement of the divided Churches. Here we are not dealing with an organization, but with tendencies endeavoring to create an interest in bringing the Churches together and to remove the difficulties. On the Catholic side the Bishop of Regensburg, Dr. M. Buchberger, has come out with a publication which seeks to produce an understanding of the efforts just described. Lectures delivered in Stuttgart in 1947 by Karl Adam, a Roman Catholic scholar, admit that in the Church of the sixteenth century abuses existed; the people manifested the genuinely Teutonic impatience which seeks to remove defects in radical fashion, and thus the schism was caused. Concerning Luther, so Karl Adam says, Protestants who are informed know that the fine old story about Luther [*Luthermythos*] is untenable; they have to admit that while he was an extraordinary personality, his life and work are full of contradictions. On the other hand, Roman Catholics have to agree that the old polemics against Luther are neither in keeping with the truth nor with the desire for peace. Another Catholic author, Johannes Hessen, seeks to explain Luther by classing him with the prophets whose task it is in critical times to lead the Church from stagnation and pollution to life and purity, resulting in a Luther picture which is too favorable (!). The work carried on by scholars of both parties, who seek to establish without prejudice the real facts pertaining to the origin of the Reformation, is not without wholesome fruit. To further the efforts at an understanding by a joint study of Luther is hardly feasible on account of Luther's violent opposition toward the Papacy and the antipathy of many Protestants to his views on liturgical worship and the holy ministry. Besides other difficulties, Luther is hardly read today by the average Protestant. Furthermore, he has written so terribly much that you can find support in his writings for a variety of views, much depending on the period of his life when he discussed a certain position. Hence it is best not to think of Luther as basis, but to go directly to the Gospel.

With respect to conferences between Catholics and non-Catholics, a *monitum* was issued by the Sanctum Officium (the papal office) and published in the *Osservatore Romano* of June 6, 1948. It decrees that for such undertakings the permission of the Holy See, or in urgent cases, at least of the Bishop must be obtained; and at such meetings a *communicatio in sacris* must be avoided. The intention of this *monitum* was not to make conferences between the two parties difficult, but rather to guard against manifestations of unhealthy enthusiasm. The meetings spoken of in the *monitum* are larger conventions, not private conferences, such as regularly

occur when people wish to join the Catholic Church. The *communicatio in sacris* is a term for public worship and the administration of the Sacraments and does not refer to private prayers. The *monitum* concerns itself exclusively with conferences in which matters of doctrine are considered; it has nothing to do with gatherings that deal with economic, social, and political questions. In the past many mistakes have been made when the removal of the schism was attempted. But certainly we should not be loyal to the will of God and to the Church if on account of fear of possible blundering we should discontinue our endeavors to work for the unity of Christendom. These are the chief thoughts submitted by author Pribilla. Our report, while altogether sketchy, has nevertheless become somewhat long; it will, we trust, give our readers some insight into the thinking of German Roman Catholics of moderate tendencies. A person at once thinks of Professor Sailer, Bishop of Regensburg, who about 150 years ago, like his friend Martin Boos, represented an evangelical tendency in German Roman Catholicism and whose work seems to have led many people to Christ, without, however, resulting in an ecclesiastical upheaval.

A.

On Federal Aid for Public Schools.— On account of the far-flung line of Christian day schools, operated at enormous expense by the congregations of our Synod, every development in the movement to provide Federal aid for the public schools of the individual States in which the educational system seems to be lagging, is of deep interest to us. This will suffice to introduce an editorial which appeared in the *Globe-Democrat* of St. Louis, Mo., May 31, 1949, and which had the caption "States and Federal Aid."

"A convincing answer to the proponents of federal aid to education may be found in the report just made public by the Council of State Governments on 'The Forty-eight State School Systems.' This report, ordered by the Governors' conference last year, is the first comprehensive study the states themselves have made of public elementary and secondary education throughout the country.

"It is the argument of the supporters of federal aid that only through the National Government can adequate educational opportunities for all school children be assured in the United States. The council's report shows that in every state in the nation, expenditures for education have sharply increased in the last 10 years. In 1937—38, the median per pupil in daily attendance was \$82.79. In the 1947—48 school year the median was \$178.71. Adjusting the figures to allow for increased costs, the rise amounts to 28 per cent. During the same decade, the percentage of state aid to schools also rose sharply.

"These findings do not suggest that federal aid is imperative for the public schools. On the other hand, the report points out that 'the most encouraging facts emerging from this survey are the manifest concern in all states for the improvement of education

and the realistic way in which problems are being faced in many states.'

"The council's report makes another significant comment, which goes to the crux of the debate over federal aid. 'Accompanying the acceptance of state responsibility,' the report states, 'is the conviction that a large share of local control is both desirable and essential. * * * The belief that education should be kept close to the people appears to be accompanied more and more by a feeling that it should be as free as possible from political entanglements and from the domination of any interests that might use it for selfish ends.'

"This statement deserves the careful attention of the House of Representatives, which now has before it the federal aid bill passed by the Senate. Under a policy of federal aid, federal control of public education in this country is inevitable." A.

Goethe Bi-centenary.—Throughout the world the name of Goethe is frequently mentioned this year; he was born Aug. 28, 1749, and it is not only in Frankfurt on the Main, his native city, that the two-hundredth anniversary of his birth is observed. In the United States a special Goethe bi-centennial committee was formed, with Herbert Hoover as honorary, and Robert Hutchins, chancellor of the University of Chicago, as actual chairman. When these lines are read, the series of events planned to celebrate the bi-centennial in a worthy manner will be in progress. They were scheduled for the period from June 27 to July 17 and were to be held in Aspen, Colo., in the heart of the Rockies, where disturbing and distracting incidents were not likely to occur. Lectures, recitals, and concerts by renowned speakers and artists had been provided; the world of letters and of culture was to render homage to the author of *Faust* and of many immortal lyrics. From Africa had come the famous theologian, medical missionary, organist, musicologist, and Goethe student Albert Schweitzer, and the only address scheduled for him in the United States was to be delivered at the bi-centennial in the charming Colorado summer resort.

It does not belong to our province to evaluate, from the point of view of art, literature, and science, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, this titan of human culture, this universal genius who reached heights of understanding and accomplishment which inspire awe and wonder. What we as theologians are interested in is his attitude toward God, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, repentance and faith. The person who expects to find in Goethe a spokesman for the divine truths revealed to us by God in the Holy Scriptures will be disappointed. It cannot be denied, of course, that the great poet's feelings were moved when he witnessed humble, sincere worship of God, and the loveliness of truly reverent and pious devotion did not escape his observant aesthetic eye, but he did not think that he himself needed the mercy of a forgiving God and the presence of the Holy Spirit. There was one shrine at which

he knelt in adoration, that was beauty, both in nature and in people, and in the last analysis he was his own god.

If anybody wishes to read an interesting, stimulating essay on Goethe's thoughts about God, the supernatural world, the great truths of revealed religion, let him procure a copy of the *Review and Expositor* (Baptist), published in Louisville, Ky., for April, 1949. It contains an article by Prof. William A. Mueller, member of the faculty of the Louisville Baptist Seminary, which is written with insight and with admiration for the literary giant, but likewise with keen discernment of his weaknesses and limitations. Professor Mueller is himself of German birth, hailing from Duesseldorf, and can be expected to be acquainted with Goethe's works and the tenor of his life. His article has the title: "Wolfgang von Goethe in the Light of the New Testament." A.

Teaching of Atheism Forbidden. — In Chicago a judge recently was confronted with a unique question. The judge we are referring to is the Hon. Rudolph F. Desort of Cook County, of the "superior court." A certain Mrs. Esther Free came before him with a complaint against her estranged husband, a printer. She asserted that her husband teaches atheism to her two daughters, aged 7 and 11, telling them, for instance, that "the story of Christ is a myth and there is no God." The decision which Judge Desort handed down enjoins the father from teaching his children atheism and atheistic tenets. He admitted that in reaching his conclusions he was not able to depend on "much legal precedent" because there is none available. In explaining his position he stated, according to *Religious News Service*, that "whenever a dispute between parents over children is brought to a court, the children become wards of the court." Since it had become his duty to decide what was best for the children, he was convinced that in reaching his decision he did not go beyond his authority. As to the teaching of religion, he stated as his conviction: "The shaking of a child's faith in God disrupts the home and upsets the child emotionally. Teaching of a religion to a child is to the best interest of any child and of society." A.

At Home **Brief Items from *Religious News Service***

Four hundred and fifty-nine Southern Baptist churches from thirteen States and the District of Columbia have signed tentative applications for low-power frequency-modulation radio stations, it was announced in Dallas by Dr. R. Alton Reed, director of radio activities for the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The stations would cost not more than \$2,500 each and would cover a radius of only three to five miles.

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church sent 267 missionaries to overseas stations during 1948. Of the total number, 178 missionaries were from America, and the rest from Australia, southern Europe, and other overseas divisions.

A record number of 14,808 persons were baptized into the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in North America during 1948. Claude Conard, the statistical secretary of the denomination, said that during 1948 each active Adventist ordained minister in the United States and Canada baptized an average of twelve persons. American membership in the church is now 235,460, and world membership totals 647,781.

In what is believed to be the first Good Friday sermon ever delivered by a rabbi, Dr. Sidney S. Tedesche of the Union Temple Reformed Synagogue, addressed the parishioners of the Rugby Congregational Church in Brooklyn, N. Y., as the guest of the Rev. James F. Laughton. Offering the Passover-Easter picture as a basis for world fellowship in the face of world discord, Dr. Tedesche declared that "our young people should be given something to live for so that the world picture will be one of peace instead of chaos."

American Protestants contributed over \$83,000,000 more to their churches in 1948 than they did the year before. Figures released in Buck Hill Falls, Pa., at committee meetings of the United Stewardship Council, representing twenty-six major Protestant denominations, showed that Protestants gave \$839,915,228 in 1948 as compared to \$756,126,123 the preceding year. The contribution statistics, based on the records of fifty-two denominations, revealed that the average church giver donated \$23.71 in 1948 contrasted to \$21.86 in 1947. While church giving was up, especially for the upkeep of the local church, contributions to foreign missions showed practically no gain. For "congregational expenses" Protestants averaged \$17.72; for foreign missions \$1.22 in 1948. The year before donations were \$15.81 for local churches as compared to \$1.05 for overseas work.

The rural church can no longer be regarded as "the poor relation" among American churches, according to the Rev. Deane Edwards, secretary of the Commission on Worship of the Federal Council of Churches. Mr. Edwards stressed that a new vitality "is probably related to a back-to-the-land movement, but even more may be attributed to a recognition of the contribution rural America makes to the nation's stability."

A budget of \$5,552,095 for 1950 was voted in Greenwich, Conn., by the national council of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The amount represents an increase of \$1,902,095 over the 1949 budget of \$3,650,000.

More than 150,000 young people will trek to the 800 assemblies of the Methodist Church to be held throughout the country this summer, the Rev. Hoover Rupert, director of the denomination's youth department, reported in Nashville, Tenn. Anticipated attendance is about 50,000 more than last summer, and about one hundred new enterprises will be featured. The meetings will include camps,

institutes, and assemblies, and conferences for youth from 12 to 23 years old. Leaders for these enterprises will be trained at six Methodist youth leadership conferences.

Schools founded and fostered by church groups will make larger contributions to society if they do not receive governmental support, Dr. John C. Gross, head of the Methodist Church's division of educational institutions, declared in Atlantic City, N. J. Dr. Gross addressed a meeting of the Methodist Board of Education, which comprises 109 ministers and laymen of the Church. The division of educational institutions connects 127 Methodist-related universities, colleges, and schools, with a combined enrollment of 181,027 students, including 81,084 veterans. Urging that church schools be kept independent and free, Dr. Gross said: "The Methodist Church should not abandon its educational institutions upon the doorstep of the United States treasury."

Yale Divinity School in New Haven, Conn., will establish a precedent next year when a group of laymen deliver the annual Lyman Beecher Lectures on Preaching. Previously, the lectures were given by clergymen. The speakers for next year are Charles P. Taft, former president of the Federal Council of Churches; Miss Helen Kenyon, moderator of the General Council of the Congregational-Christian Churches; President Henry M. Wriston of Brown University; President Arthur S. Flemming of Ohio Wesleyan University; and Edmund W. Simmott, director of the Yale Division of Sciences. Miss Kenyon will be the first woman ever to deliver a Beecher lecture. The general topic for the 1950 series is "The Church and Its Ministry."

A banquet was held in Philadelphia to mark the 125th anniversary of the American Baptist Publication Society, a group whose colporteurs have helped establish 17,500 Sunday schools and 4,250 Baptist churches in this country. The society was among the first church publishing houses to issue uniform Sunday school lessons and graded courses. Today it publishes 177 different kinds of lesson quarterlies and periodicals, with a total circulation of over 18,000,000 copies a year.

The Vermont Senate killed by a narrow margin a proposal to permit local taxation of all Catholic schools, plus several junior and private colleges in the State.

Abroad

Sweden's centuries-old State Lutheran Cathedral at Uppsala has received its largest bequest for the last three hundred years — ground property in Stockholm valued at 280,000 crowns, or about \$77,000. Cathedral officials said a tenth of the interest from the property will go towards scholarships for students of theology, and the remainder will be used for the benefit of the church itself.

Increased paper allotments will enable the National Bible Society of Scotland to make up for its restricted wartime output of Scriptures. One hundred ninety tons of paper have been ordered to produce 150,000 Bibles and 200,000 New Testaments for distribution in Africa.

Dr. Simha Assaf, rector of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has protested against the proposed sale of ancient Bible manuscripts which he charged were illegally removed from Palestine to the United States by Mar Athanasius Yeshue Samule, Syrian Orthodox Archbishop of Jerusalem and Transjordan. Dr. Assaf was joined in his protest by Dr. Eleasar Sukenik, professor of archaeology in the Hebrew University. According to Dr. Assaf, the cave where the scrolls were found is located in Israel, and hence Archbishop Athanasius had no right to take any of them from the country. On the other hand, Archbishop Athanasius, who is now touring the United States and Canada, has reportedly asserted that it is doubtful whether the site of the discovery is in Israel or not. He was quoted as saying he removed the manuscripts he bought with the permission of Transjordan authorities.

Soviet occupation authorities have authorized the Gustav Adolph Foundation, a Swedish Lutheran organization, to take possession of the chapel on Luetzen battlefield near Leipzig, in the Soviet zone. Previously the foundation had bought a large piece of ground around the chapel so as to preserve the original setting of the historic location.

Dr. Bengt Sundkler, former research secretary of the International Missionary Council in London, England, has been appointed to the newly created professorship of mission history at Uppsala University. Born in northern Sweden in 1909, Dr. Sundkler worked as a missionary in South Africa for several years after obtaining a doctorate in theology from Uppsala University.

Formation of a Czechoslovak Bible Society was announced in Prague at a public meeting in John Hus House, headquarters of the Czech Brethren Church. Chiefly responsible for the new society is the Rev. B. Cernohorsky of the Czech Brethren Church.

The Methodist Church of Australia is the fastest growing religious body on that continent, according to the Rev. Alan Walker, minister of the Waverly Methodist Church in Sydney and religious adviser to the Australian delegation to the United Nations. The Rev. Walker reported that during the past fourteen years membership in the Methodist Church has increased 27 per cent in Australia against a 15-per-cent increase in population.

British Protestant missionary societies are facing serious financial difficulties caused by a falling off in receipts. The London Missionary Society, a predominantly Congregational organization, reported that home contributions for 1948 were 14,345 pounds

(about \$57,380) less than the amount necessary to balance the budget. Immediate drastic reductions in expenditures were ordered by the Board of Directors to avoid drawing 27,000 pounds (\$108,000) from the society's almost exhausted contingency fund. The Methodist Missionary Society, which organized a drive last year to increase home subscriptions by 100,000 pounds (\$400,000), reported it had raised only 71,000 pounds (\$284,000) from home and overseas subscriptions and had to draw upon its war savings fund to balance accounts.

Three gifts of rare interest were presented to Pope Pius XII on behalf of the French government in honor of his golden jubilee as a priest. The presentations were made in the Vatican palace by Count Vladimir d'Ormesson, French ambassador to the Holy See. One of the gifts was a rare edition of a Commentary on the Psalms by the famous preacher Abbé Bossuet, bound in old red Morocco leather and embossed with the priest's coat of arms. Another was a facsimile of the first poster ever printed in France, dated 1462, and enumerating in Gothic characters the jubilee indulgences accorded by Pope Nicholas V to the Cathedral of Rheims. The third gift was *The Instruction of the Christian* by Cardinal de Richelieu, bishop of Lucon. This was one of the first books in French to be printed by the royal printing works in 1642.

Pope Pius XII has again urged that Jerusalem and its environs be placed under international rule and that free access be granted to pilgrims visiting the Holy Places in Palestine. The pontiff's plea is contained in a new encyclical letter beginning with the words *Redemptoris Nostri* and intended to complement his encyclical *In Multiplicibus*, issued last October, which also dealt with Palestine.

The University of Louvain, a Roman Catholic institution, has established its first center of higher study for natives in the Belgian Congo. Members of the Society of Jesus have been given charge of the center, which is located near the Kisantu mission station, 75 miles from Leopoldville. Twenty-three European laymen have been attached to the station. About 120 natives have already registered for courses.

Roman Catholic confessional schools in Germany are disappearing, according to the Rev. William E. McManus, assistant director of the department of education of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, Washington, D. C. Speaking before the annual convention of the National Catholic Educational Association here, Father McManus said the confessional schools were disappearing "simply because German Catholic educators, clergy and laity, do not really understand nor appreciate the essential purpose of Catholic education." Father McManus described the confessional schools of Germany as examples of the "futility of identifying true values of Catholic education with mere externals of church control. . . . In the German plan Catholic confessional schools are

simply public schools with an exclusively Catholic teaching staff and student body. Their course of study, textbooks, and examinations, differ not at all from those used in Protestant confessional schools and neutral schools. Religious instruction is the church's exclusive responsibility and, as such, has little relation to the school program as a whole. In each little German community where the people are exclusively or predominantly Evangelical, the confessional school is a symbol of the ideals of religious education, not of religious influences in the social-economic order, not of a Catholic or Evangelical philosophy of life, but only of partisan political power in the name of religion, or a narrow and often bitter sectarianism and of a group's determination to perpetuate its domination of a community. Now that the postwar adjustment in Germany has created a widespread dislocation of people, few entirely Catholic or Evangelical communities remain. As a result, confessional schools are being replaced by neutral schools."

Fifteen cardinals and fifty archbishops and bishops residing within a one-hundred-mile radius of Rome voted at a semi-public consistory in the Vatican for the canonization of five new saints, all women. The new saints, and the dates on which they will be solemnly canonized, are: Jeanne de Lestonnac, founder of the Daughters of the Blessed Virgin Mary (May 15); Maria Giuseppa Rossella, founder of the Daughters of Our Lady of Mercy (June 12); Bartolomea Capitanio and Vicenza Gerosa, co-founders of the order of Sisters of Charity (May 18, 1950); Jeanne de Valois, Queen of France and founder of the order of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary (June 28, 1950).

Mission intensions to be prayed for by members of the Apostleship of Prayer during 1950 have been approved by Pope Pius XII. The mission intensions will be: January, Missions Threatened by Atheism; February, Christianity in Japan; March, Progress of the Church among Negroes in America; April, Missions in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanganyika; May, The Social Question in India; June, Sanctification of the Native Clergy; July, Christians in the Mussulman Regions; August, Conversion of Protestants; September, Indians of Latin America; October, Care of the Sick in Missions; November, Freedom and Progress of Catholic Schools; December, Task of the Church in the Philippines and the Far East.

