

2-1-1950

Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

Paul M. Bretscher

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bretscher, Paul M. (1950) "Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 21, Article 14.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol21/iss1/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

THE POPE'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

On December 24, Pope Pius XII, "Bishop of Rome and Vicar of Jesus Christ, Successor of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, Supreme Pontiff of the Universal Church, Patriarch of the West, Primate of Italy, Archbishop and Metropolitan of the Roman Province, Sovereign of the Temporal Dominion of the Holy Roman Church and Sovereign of Vatican City" (quoted in *Yearbook of American Churches*, 1949 edition, p. 81) officially inaugurated the "Jubilee Year" with all the pomp and pageantry of a medieval crusade. In December last, all roads seemed to lead to Rome. As the Pope said in his Christmas message — with more eloquence indeed than devotion to historical accuracy —: "Without privilege of race or class, Rome is the fatherland of all; every Christian can and should say: 'Rome is my fatherland.' Here God's supernatural providence over souls is more particularly in evidence; here the saints acquired the norm and inspiration of their heroism; this land of benediction knew the triumphs of the martyrs and was the training ground of dauntless confessors. Here is the immovable rock to which your hopes are anchored; it is the site and ancient 'trophaeum' of the glorious tomb of the Prince of the Apostles on which rests the chair of perennial authority of the Vicar of Christ." *Life* magazine, in its issue of December 26, featured pictures of Michel Angelo's frescoes in the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The *Saturday Evening Post* in its issue of December 24 ran an article on the "world's most famous church" [St. Peter's in Rome]. Newspapers gave front-page space to column after column on the happenings in Rome on December 24, and some published a whole series of articles on the significance of the "Jubilee Year." And on December 24, the radio kept Americans informed on what was taking place in St. Peter's square, even enabling them to hear the vibrations of the silver hammer used by the Pope as he entered through the mysterious door. Not since the last convocation of cardinals a few years ago, did the public means of communication allocate so much time and space to affairs in the Catholic Church.

But for Catholics and also many non-Catholics the most significant aspect of the beginning of the "Jubilee Year" was Pope Pius' Christmas message delivered by him on December 23. From this message, we single out only the Pope's appeal to all non-Catholics to join the Catholic Church. The appeal reads: "Oh, that this Holy Year could

welcome also the great return to the one true church, awaited over the centuries, of so many who though believing in Jesus Christ are for various reasons separated from her! With unspeakable groanings, the spirit, who is in the hearts of good people, today cries out imploringly the same prayer of our Lord: "That they may be one" (John 17:11). With good reason men are anxious about the effrontery with which the united front of militant atheism advances; and the old question is now voiced aloud: why are there still schisms? When will all the forces of the spirit and of love be harmoniously united? If on other occasions an invitation to unity has been sent forth from this apostolic see, on this occasion we repeat it more warmly and paternally; we feel that we are urged by the pleadings and prayers of numerous believers scattered over the whole earth, who after suffering tragic and painful events turn their eyes toward this apostolic see as toward an anchor of salvation for the whole world."

To this appeal we reply as follows. We, too, deplore the schisms and divisions in Christendom, and we say with the confessors who in 1530 signed the *Augsburg Confession* (*Triglotta*, p. 41) that "we are prepared to confer amicably concerning all possible ways and means, in order that we may come together, as far as this may be honorably done, and, the matter between us on both sides being peacefully discussed without offensive strife, the dissension, by God's help, may be done away and brought back to one true accordant religion; for as we are all under one Christ and do battle under Him, we ought to confess the one Christ . . . and everything ought to be conducted according to the truth of God; and this it is what, with most fervent prayers, we entreat of God."

"The truth of God." That was for the heroic Lutheran confessors of the sixteenth century, as it is for Lutherans today, the Holy Scriptures. The divisions in Christendom can be removed in a God-pleasing way only if all who confess Jesus Christ as their Lord are ready to be guided in all religious matters wholly by the Holy Scriptures. Will Pope Pius XII seriously consider such a proposal? Furthermore, Lutherans of our day subscribe unreservedly to the declarations adopted by the confessors at Smalcald in 1537, which read in part: "The Roman Pontiff claims for himself [in the first place] that by divine right he is [supreme] above all bishops and pastors [in all Christendom]. Secondly, he adds also that by divine right he has both swords, i. e., the authority also of bestowing and transferring kingdoms [enthroning and deposing kings, regulating secular dominions, etc.]. And, thirdly, he

says that to believe this is necessary for salvation. And for these reasons the Roman bishop calls himself [and boasts that he is] the vicar of Christ on earth. These three articles we hold to be false, godless, tyrannical, and quite pernicious to the Church." ("Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope," *Triglotta*, p. 503.) If Pope Pius XII is ready to renounce the titles and honors which he claims to hold by divine right; if he is ready to declare his position in the Church is one of human origin; if he will have his Church disavow the infamous dogma of the infallibility of the Pope (decreed July 18, 1870); if he will give Christendom the assurance that he will not declare "the bodily ascension of Mary" a dogma of the Church; and if he is prepared to confer with non-Catholic Christians as a brother in Christ in keeping with Matt. 23:8-10, then also Lutherans will take his plea seriously.

Considering, and this by way of conclusion, how the Pope has, especially within recent years, succeeded to influence American thought, to promote the Catholic faith, and to demonstrate his power in virtually every area of public life; considering also how impotent much anti-Catholic thought and action in our country is for the reason that it often fails correctly to diagnose the true character of the hierarchy's claims and designs, Lutherans in our land will do well in this "Jubilee Year" to rethink and restudy the objections of the Lutheran confessors of the sixteenth century to the power and pretensions of the Roman Church as these objections are so clearly expressed in the *Confessions* of our Church. On the positive side, Lutheran pastors will be particularly aware of their grave responsibility to proclaim and teach with persuasive clarity the cardinal principles of the Lutheran Reformation: *sola gratia*, *sola fide*, and *sola Scriptura*.

P. M. B.

HONOR TO WHOM HONOR IS DUE

On October 9, 1949, a bronze statue of Leif Erikson was unveiled on the capitol grounds in St. Paul, Minn. The inscription on the granite base reads: "Leif Erikson, Discoverer of America, 1000 A. D." Among the many Scandinavians who participated in the ceremony was at least one Catholic by the name of Edward A. Harrigan. This participant reports his experiences at the unveiling of the statue in *America* (December 3) under the title "A Catholic Looks at Lutherans."

In his report Mr. Harrigan makes the point that the Scandinavian Lutherans must have been chagrined when they heard the speaker, who quoted from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*, tell the audience that Leif Erikson was a Catholic. "As I stood there under the overcast sky that October Sunday afternoon," so Mr. Harrigan muses, "I could not help

but feel more than a little sad for those good people whose ancestors were robbed of their faith more than 400 years ago. They did not revolt. In 1526, King Christian III forced heresy on an unwitting and unwilling people, as the only religion tolerated by the crown." He then continues to inform the reader, in a vein of complete dissatisfaction with the situation, that "in Norway and Sweden, with a combined population of 9,970,000, there are only 20,400 Catholics; Denmark has 20,000 Catholics in a population of nearly four million. All 20,000 Greenlanders, whose country is a colonial possession of Denmark, belong to the Lutheran state religion."

A few comments are in order. To be sure, Leif Erikson was a Catholic, and we hope the kind of Catholic who believed wholly in the substitutionary suffering and death of Jesus Christ and not in the alleged saving merits of Mary and the saints. But even though Leif Erikson was a Catholic, we ask, in current American style, "So what?" Doesn't Mr. Harrigan know that in our country we honor national heroes regardless of the religion they professed? Genuine Americans honor Columbus not because he was a Catholic, but because, owing to his discovery, Europeans began to come over in ever-increasing numbers to settle this land of ours. We honor Benjamin Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Lincoln, and many others not because they were non-Catholics, but because they made great contributions to the well-being and development of our country. This is the American way. This is also the Scriptural way. Peter, "Prince of the Apostles" according to Catholic teaching, exhorts Christians, "Honor the king" (1 Pet. 2:17), without adding a reservation having to do with the religious affiliation of the king. Paul writes to the Romans: "Render therefore to all their dues . . . honor to whom honor" (Rom. 13:7), without adding a conditional clause to the effect "if the ministers of the state are Christian or otherwise deserving of honor." That is one of the strange things about Lutherans that they respect and esteem also those who, though not of their faith, are used by God, the Ruler also of the "kingdom to the left," to promote the common welfare of the state.

But Mr. Harrigan's delight in telling Lutherans that Leif Erikson was a Catholic is a very minor matter. More serious is his charge that Lutheranism is a heresy, for it was Lutheranism which came to the Scandinavian countries very early in the Reformation era. The charge is an old one. From the Catholic point of view "the Reformation was the last of the great heresies." Much depends on who it is who brands others as being heretics. From the Jewish leaders' point of view, Jesus

Christ was a heretic, also Stephen, Paul, and others. From the pagan Roman point of view the Christian martyrs were heretics. From the Catholic point of view, Wycliffe, Hus, and Luther were heretics. The question is: "Who is a heretic from God's point of view? Who is a heretic from the point of view of the Holy Scriptures, the complete and final revelation of God?" If Mr. Harrigan will take the time to find out who heretics are according to the Scriptures, he will discover that the terms "heresy" and "heretics" apply to those who deny the clear teachings of Scripture and in their place "teach for doctrines the commandments of men" and who, as the name implies, cause divisions in the Church. Let him draw his own inferences. P. M. B.

IS KARL BARTH DRAWING CLOSER TO ORTHODOX THEOLOGY?

This question is justified in view of the fact that Karl Barth, to use his own words, has discarded the "eggshells of philosophical systematizing," and in his theologizing has arrived at a "Christological concentration," that is to say, at a point where he has found it necessary "to think through and set forth once more and in a totally other way what he said before as a theology of the grace of God in Jesus Christ." These statements are taken from articles which Barth published some years ago in the *Christian Century* regarding the theological change which occurred in him in recent years. In *Evangelische Theologie* (Dezember 1948, Heft 6) these articles are published under the heading *Parergon — Karl Barth ueber sich selbst* (pp. 268 ff.) in the German original, and they afford the reader valuable insights into his later theological orientation. It is interesting to note that Barth declares that as he decided to treat theology primarily as a theology of the grace of God in Jesus Christ, he was prompted "in a heightened degree to a critical evaluation of church tradition, as also of the Reformers, and, in particular, of Calvin" (*loc. cit.*, p. 272). In other words, Karl Barth is honest enough to tell his readers that his is *not* the theology of ecclesiastical tradition, of the Reformers, and, above all, of Calvin. The same he clearly states in a foreword to his work *Die christliche Lehre nach dem Heidelberger Katechismus*, brought to public attention by its publishers, the Chr. Kaiser Verlag, Muenchen, in *Evangelische Theologie* (April 1949, Heft 10). In this book notice there is offered the following quotation from Barth's foreword: "There is given here no historical exegesis of the Heidelberg Catechism; not the Heidelberg Catechism, but primarily the doctrine as such is reviewed and treated. Nor should the title say that here Heidelberg orthodoxy is being presented. We no longer live in the 16th century, but in the 20th. When

one occupies himself with Christian doctrine today, it makes no sense to be rooted to the 16th century as charmed and to adhere as inflexibly and unalterably as possible to that which was said then and there. That would be a procedure not in agreement with the Reformation. The Heidelberg Catechism directs us to Scripture, and according to this it must be measured." John Horsch once applied to a certain liberal who expressed his heterodoxy in orthodox terms the words of Isaac: "The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau" (Gen. 27:22). Also in neo-orthodoxy there is heard the voice of orthodoxy, while there appear in it very palpably the hands of liberal orientation and investigation. The Heidelberg Catechism, in the opinion of this writer, was written by men who regarded Holy Scripture as the divinely inspired Word of God and so as the objective divine truth. This position of Reformed orthodoxy Barth has never held. His own Word of God is not the Bible, but something that is entirely subjective and therefore variable and transient. Were Barth to draw the conclusions which his premises warrant, there would be but little difference between his neo-orthodoxy and the crass Modernism which his system of theology has done so much to deprive of its philosophical foundations.

J. T. MUELLER

LUTHER'S EXPOSITION OF LUKE 16:9

Under this heading, Otto Hof, in *Evangelische Theologie* (Oktober 1948, Heft 4) presents in a well-documented essay Luther's explanation of Luke 16:9 and similar passages. In summing up his finds, the writer says: "In the question of the justification of man before God [according to Luther] works do not count. The inner [spiritual] righteousness before God is obtained by man solely by faith in Christ. . . . The passages regarding works concern and regulate the life among men. They do not deal with the question how we are justified before God, but [tell us] that we should prove our inner righteousness by means of external righteousness, and these are indeed two things. (Luther: 'From this you see that there is a great difference between being pious and being recognized as pious, or between becoming pious and proving piety.' W. 10, III, 286, 30.) For this reason we must well keep apart the passages that treat of faith and such as deal with works and assign them to their respective spheres. (Luther: 'If we are to decide how this meaning can be maintained, it must be carefully considered that the passages concerning works pertain to the external man [sanctification] and those of faith to the internal [justification]. W. 20, 466, 20. Again: 'God has divided me into two: here and there. Therefore divide the passages according to their places.' W. 17, I, 375, 13.) We dare

not mingle them into each other, though also we dare not separate them from one another. (Luther: 'If you want to cook them into each other and say, as declares the Gospel, that they make [us] friends before God, that the text does not say.' W. 27, 302, 14.) For if you do that, then you will have the devil ('*so wird der Teufel daraus*'), since then man will either get to work-righteousness or to a 'faith' which forgets that it also owes love. In this respect the passages which speak of works have a discriminating function, for they serve to expose those who make themselves a 'faith'; their illusion is made manifest by their lack of works. (Luther: 'On account of such an imaginary and fictitious faith Scripture offers such passages concerning works, not in order that we should become pious through works, but in order that we may exhibit the external proof and difference between a dead and a true faith; for wherever faith is sincere, it does that which is good; if it does not do that which is good, it is surely a dream and an illusion of faith. W. 10, III, 286, 20.) Beyond this, these passages [concerning works] have, within their proper scope, a positive value. Because we are sluggish in the exercise of our faith, we need admonition, and Christ applies that to us in this friendly way. So considered, Luke 16:9 and the other passages which treat of works are indeed not the whole of the Christian doctrine, but certainly an important part of it." While the article perhaps conveys to us no new truth, it well reminds us of something in the Christian doctrine which we are apt to forget, and the writer's profound Luther research suggests how much doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness we may find in the great Reformer's writings if only we take the time to look for them.

J. T. MUELLER

PRESENT TRENDS IN PROTESTANT THOUGHT

Nels F. S. Ferre, in *Religion in Life* (Summer Number, 1948; Vol. XVII, No. 3), under the given heading, published an article which was esteemed so highly in Germany that it was presented in an excellent and complete translation in *Evangelische Theologie* (Jahrgang 1948/1949; Juni 1949, Heft 12). The general conclusions which the writer draws may interest also conservative theologians. We read: "(1) Literalistic fundamentalism is strongly on the decline and is therefore defensive, whether evasively or aggressively, and yet also looking for a constructive way out while rightly cherishing its deepest inner truth. (2) Yesterday's liberalism is also on the wane, but it cannot easily be surrendered until its insistence on intellectual honesty is adequately met; until, that is, Christian truth is seen in relation to, and confirmed by, truth in general; (3) Swedish theology will shortly be

far better known here and will loom up as strong along several lines, but the main contribution it seems likely to make is the clarification of the meaning and centrality of *Agape* for Christian faith. (4) Existentialism, or neo-orthodoxy, is strong in its central affirmations: theocentricity, the centrality of Christ for Christian faith, the stress on revelation as authority, and its mood of faith. But, except for some borderline work, it has lived mostly in a negative relation to all other provinces of thought and life, education and civilization. I think that in general we must accept its affirmations and deny its negations. For the latter we must substitute constructive work to integrate our seeing into whole-vision for the sake of a confused and shattered world. It seems likely that we may be in for dangerous drives toward a narrow biblicism. In days of stress the Bible seems the most available external authority, but *no theology that denies a free, open, and all-inclusive method can be lastingly adequate* [italics in the original]. The centrality of faith must not mean the murdering of reason. Such an assassination will be eventually revenged by an ineffectual intellectualism. We need both to keep faith central and yet to give reason its proper place as faith's check and challenge, confirming its conclusions when both faith and reason are right" (p. 345). We are grateful to Dr. Ferre for telling us so frankly that present-day liberal Protestantism means to continue its old program of having faith checked and challenged by reason. The same trend is noticeable also in Swedish theology and in existentialism or neo-orthodoxy, though in different ways and degrees. Ferre fears "dangerous drives toward a narrow biblicism" and avers that "such assassination [of reason, as found in conservative biblical theology] will be eventually revenged by an ineffectual intellectualism." But the very opposite is true. Ferre reproves the negative character of existentialism, but even more than neo-orthodoxy the extreme liberalism in our country, known as modernism, has terminated in an "ineffectual intellectualism," as long ago John Horsch in his *Modern Religious Liberalism* pointed out. Not the murdering of reason, but the murdering of faith is bound to terminate in ineffectual intellectualism. Dr. Ferre is wrong also in stating that fundamentalism is on the decline. If by that term he means Biblical conservatism, he may be reminded that this is very much alive and pre-eminently active in spreading the Gospel, vitalizing Christian education, and strengthening Christian civilization. In fact, the only thing that is spiritually effectual today is the conservative type of Christianity which liberalism so unjustly condemns as "narrow biblicism."

J. T. MUELLER

DR. THEODOR HEUSS, AN ACTIVE EVANGELICAL CHRISTIAN

It is gratifying, as *Fuer Kirche und Gemeinde. Evangelisches Sonntagsblatt fuer Baden* (September 25, 1949) points out, that Dr. Theodor Heuss, the president of the German Western Republic, is an active and professing evangelical Christian, who has been deeply interested in the Evangelical Church of Germany and its charitable projects since his youth. His interest attaches above all to the Evangelical Academy at Bad Boll. Early in his youth Dr. Heuss became an intimate friend of Pastor Wurster of Heilbronn, who later became professor of practical theology at Tuebingen. He joined the Christian-Social movement advocated by such men as Adolf Stoecker and Friedrich Naumann, assisted Friedrich Naumann as editor of the well-known periodical *Die Hilfe*, and later became its editor in chief, living in Heilbronn, where, in the course of time, he was elected delegate to the *Reichstag*. He served the German parliament till 1933, when he was forced out of office by the growing influence of Hitler. After the Second World War he was minister of public worship and education (*Kultusminister*) in the territory of Wuerttemberg-Baden, making his home in Stuttgart. As Dr. Heuss, so also his wife has been very active in church work and is a devoted member of the Church. Men of the type of Dr. Heuss, Dr. Gerstenmaier, and others, who are now serving the German people in public office, do noble service, counteracting not only the influence of Communism, but also that of Roman Catholicism, which by its aggressive activism is making itself strongly felt in German politics.

J. T. MUELLER

THE PRIMARY PROBLEM UNDERLYING FIRST CORINTHIANS

Evangelische Theologie (April 1949; Heft 10) offers a very helpful study by Heinrich Schlier on the subject *Ueber das Hauptanliegen des 1. Briefes an die Korinther*. The Letter, he says, aims to edify the Corinthian congregation by instructing it as regards the relation of *gnosis* to *agape*, or the relation of knowledge to love. The Corinthian *ecclesia* was dominated by enthusiasm. Due largely to its rich endowment with *charismata*, it regarded itself as being already in the *teleion*, the stage of perfection, and so able to lead a pneumatic, charismatic life, free from the shackles of the Law and already sharing the prerogative of the resurrection. It therefore repudiated the Apostolic *kerygma*, believing that God reveals Himself in Christ by means of personal, pneumatic revelations mediated by the charismatic gifts of the Spirit. Against this enthusiastic immediacy of revelation St. Paul emphasizes the necessity of the Apostolic *kerygma*, which, on the one hand, supplies the true

gnosis and, on the other, establishes the Christian Church. This emphasis on the Apostolic *kerygma* was necessary because the Corinthian enthusiasts misunderstood in principle their Christian existence. They sought Christ, their justification, and their Christian life in the charismatic endowments and so lost themselves in an antinomianism which countenanced even *porneia*. In all this the writer finds a very earnest warning against enthusiasm in general, which seeks the Christian *gnosis* not in the Apostolic Word, but in forms of subjective feeling, and so ultimately loses all Christian knowledge and, besides, violates the principle of Christian love. One regrets that the writer does not emphasize, in this connection, the objective truth of Scripture, but his warning against enthusiasm certainly is well in place.

J. T. MUELLER

GOETHE ON MARRIAGE AND CHRISTIANITY

There is in Helsingfors, Finland, a German evangelical congregation, whose pastor, Licentiate G. Sentzke, is the able editor of a church paper called *Deutsch-Evangelisch in Finland*. A recent number, one of many sent to us, reports an opinion on marriage and Christianity by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, the bicentennial of whose birth on August 28, 1749, was observed in wide areas. Goethe writes: "Whoever attacks marriage and undermines by word or deed this foundation of all social morality, must deal with me; or if I cannot master him, I will have nothing to do with him. Marriage is the beginning and culmination of all culture. It makes the ruthless gentle, and the refined has no better opportunity to prove his gentility. Marriage must be indissoluble, for it is the source of so much happiness that any special unhappiness must be regarded as nothing in comparison to it. But why do we want to speak of unhappiness? From time to time man is overcome by impatience, and then it pleases him to regard himself as unhappy. If he permits the moment to pass, he will consider himself lucky that something [marriage] which has lasted so long still exists. There is no adequate reason for divorce. In human life there are so many joys and sorrows that it is impossible to compute how much married people owe each other. It is a debt which only eternity can pay off. Marriage at times may become inconvenient; that I certainly believe, but so it is right. Are we not married also to our conscience, and do we not often like to get rid of it, because it is even more inconvenient than ever a man or a woman can become?" This favorable opinion on marriage by Goethe must not be discounted because his own life did not always conform to the lofty demands of this divine Law. It rather deserves the greater attention since it comes from a person who, though faulty

in his life, nevertheless had, in a rich measure, the gift of appreciating true values. Similarly Goethe rated very highly the Christian Church and religion, though he himself stood aloof from Christianity. In another copy of *Deutsch-Evangelisch in Finland*, Pastor Sentzke quotes from Adolf Harnack's *Die Religion Goethes in der Epoche seiner Vollendung* the following statement of the great Weimar poet: "The Christian religion is a powerful reality (*Wesen*), upon which fallen and suffering humanity from time to time and again and again has raised itself up; and as this efficacy is ascribed to it, it is [recognized as] exalted above all philosophy and [as] requiring from it no support." But what was it, we ask, that Goethe admired in Christianity? In the same report on Goethe's attitude to the Christian religion we read also this paragraph: "In the Gospels there is effective the reflection of a sublimity (*Hobeit*) which radiated from the Person of Christ and is so divine as never before the divine appeared upon earth. If I am asked whether it lies in my nature to render to Him adoring reverence, I reply: By all means! I bow before Him as the divine revelation of the highest principle of morality." Goethe appreciated the ethical values both in Christianity and in the institution of marriage. He neither understood nor desired the Gospel of God's redeeming love in Christ Jesus.

J. T. MUELLER

OUR OBLIGATION TO THE JEWS

The Jews are still with us. In fact, their number is increasing, largely because of accessions from Europe. As a group they are displaying an amazing degree of cohesion, especially in their support of Jewish refugees and of the Israel state in Palestine. Does the Church have an obligation to the Jews? It has never denied it. But perhaps the time has come when also our own Church must again take very seriously its own obligation to the Jews.

As Harold Floreen points out in the *Lutheran Companion* of December 7, there are, roughly speaking, three kinds of Jews. There are the orthodox Jews (over 3,000 synagogues) who cling to the traditional minute regulations, including those having to do with kosher foods, and who hold to the divine inspiration of the Old Testament as well as to that of the Talmud. There are also the Reformed, or Liberal, Jews (about 360 temples) who seek to adjust themselves to modern life. They reject the bondage of minute regulations and the inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures and accept the findings of Higher Criticism. The belief in a personal Messiah, held by the orthodox Jews, is replaced by the Reformed Jews by the belief that the Jewish nation itself is to be regarded as Messianic. There are, finally, the conservative

Jews (about 320 congregations) who are a kind of halfway house, revering much of tradition, but also maintaining the need of adjustment to modern life.

With respect to the reasons why Jews reject Christ, Mr. Floreen observes: "To be sure, Christ was originally rejected by the majority in Israel largely because He did not satisfy the materialistic and nationalistic aspirations which had become attached to the Messianic hope, and by the leadership because He appeared to threaten their standing. Materialism plays a part today, too; but, far more than we realize, the rejection of Christ by Jews is a matter of tradition and the consequence of early training. Hence, their failure to accept Him quickly does not necessarily represent a malicious attitude on the part of each individual, for the average individual knows little concerning the true character of Christ. Furthermore, the traditional rejection unfortunately appears to be justified [so many Jews believe] in each generation because of the animosity and persecution suffered at the hands of many professing Christians. Christ is thus judged by the attitudes and actions of His professed followers."

We do have an obligation also to the Jews. As individuals we are to witness to them as we meet them in the community where we live. As a Church we cannot escape the responsibility of including in our efforts to evangelize every people, also the Jews. P. M. B.

STATUS OF LEGALIZED STERILIZATION

In *America* (Catholic weekly, December 10), Edward Duff critically reviews an article titled "Preventive Sterilization in 1948," contributed to the *Journal* of the American Medical Association by Clarence J. Gamble, M.D., and expresses his complete disapproval of legalized sterilization. From his review we are submitting Mr. Duff's statistics:

"Our American venture in eugenic sterilization at government expense began in Indiana in 1907. Today, 27 States have such laws on their statute books. Under these laws 49,207 men and women have had their reproductive powers mutilated in expectation of thus decreasing the number of future mental defectives. California . . . has used the law most extensively, supplying 19,042 cases to the total. Delaware has the dubious honor of leading the States in the most rigorous application of the law last year. Out of every 100,000 of its population, Delaware sterilized 11.4 in 1948. North Dakota, North Carolina, and Iowa followed on the list with decreasing percentages. In 1948, of 1,336 legal sterilizations, insanity was the ground in 28 per cent of the cases, feeble-mindedness in 67 per cent." P. M. B.

ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

A \$100,000 Christian elementary school is being built at La Fayette, Ind., by the La Fayette Christian School Society, a Protestant non-denominational group of parents. The school, scheduled to open in September, 1950, will teach kindergarten classes as well as the first eight grades, welcoming children of any denomination. The curriculum will include religious instruction.

The American Bible Society's Advisory Council announced that 400,000 Bibles will be shipped in 1950 to the Eastern Zone of Germany, and 200,000 to the West. A budget of \$3,146,000 was adopted by the Advisory Committee for the Society's 1950 program, an increase of \$800,000 over last year. Plans for 1950 call for publication of more than 13,500,000 Scriptures.

Dr. James De Forest Murch, president of the Evangelical Press Association, spoke before the second annual Christian Writers' Conference in Wheaton, Ill., and said that writers are going to have a lot to say on whether the world receives the message of Christianity or continues its race to atomic doom. Writers from eight States and Canada attended the sessions sponsored by the Christian Writers' Institute, which was launched to stimulate interest in, and improve techniques of, religious journalism.

At least two hundred pulpit exchanges between Northern Baptist and Disciples of Christ clergymen took place throughout the country on Sunday, November 13. The pulpit exchanges were recommended in a joint commission report looking toward merging the two churches. The report, which visualizes consummation of the union by 1955, was approved at the last annual meetings of both denominations.

The North Carolina Baptist Convention, meeting at Raleigh, N. C., adopted the following points on the problems of racial and minority groups: 1) All Christians are brothers in Christ. 2) Every member of a racial or minority group is a person and should be treated as such. 3) No racial group because of biological inheritance is superior or inferior to any other group. 4) The members of all racial and minority groups should be recognized as citizens constituting a state under one government with equal rights. 5) All citizens have the right to equal privileges and treatment in our local, State, and Federal Governments. 6) All racial and minority groups have a right to be represented by members of their own group or bodies concerned with the general welfare of the community—police, education, courts, elections, etc.

7) Christians should protest injustices and discriminations against any group and strive to promote community good will between all groups. 8) The members of every group should eliminate from their speech terms which degrade or show contempt for other groups, especially in the presence and the teaching of children. 9) Christians must believe and teach that prejudice or ill will toward any group is unchristian.

Delegates to the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Baptist General Convention adopted a resolution banning churches which recognize non-Baptist Baptism or open Communion or which join the Federal Council of Churches or the World Council of Churches. Dr. M. E. Ramay, the Convention's retiring president, introduced the resolution as a substitute for a constitutional amendment which he first proposed at the 1948 meeting in Muskogee. The resolution, Ramay explained, would mean that any church practicing "Modernism" could not send "messengers" to the State convention.

Vatican officials have disclosed that a process has been started in the archdiocese of Vienna, Austria, for the canonization of Emperor Charles, last of the Hapsburg monarchs of Austria-Hungary, who died in exile in 1922, four years after abdicating his throne.

Lack of religious teaching in American public schools was said in Providence, R.I., to be a chief reason for Protestant-Catholic tension in this country. Speaking at the last public hearing by a special State commission on released-time, Edwin Gora, who has taught school in Poland, Germany, and India, said there is less feeling in Europe between Protestants and Catholics than in this country. Five Roman Catholic priests, a pastor of the Augustana Lutheran Church, the State deputy of the Knights of Columbus, and a Providence school teacher who spoke as a Catholic layman, favored released-time legislation.

John S. Gibson, volunteer worker for the Catholic Youth Guidance Board of the archdiocese of Newark, N. J., believes that juvenile delinquency may be curbed by the use of infiltration tactics. Speaking at the annual convention of the National Conference of Catholic Charities, Gibson said the infiltration technique was employed by winning over one boy of a neighborhood gang and then helping him to organize a recreational and guidance program designed to keep the other youngsters out of mischief.

A report prepared for the annual meeting in Washington, D. C., of the American Roman Catholic hierarchy said the two most important

events of the year in Catholicism were the Vatican's excommunication of Communism's supporters and the question of Church-State relationships in the United States. The report stressed the impossibility of appraising the break between Marshall Tito of Yugoslavia and Cominform but urged that the United States condition its support of Tito by a continuing demand for a cessation of religious persecution in Yugoslavia. "The question of Church-State relationship" in the United States, the report said, "continued to be debated widely" and had an "unusually important bearing" on the discussions about the proposed Federal aid to education, which in some respects "overshadowed" all other concerns of the National Catholic Welfare Conference during 1949. The report also stated that 2,304,965 pupils were enrolled in Catholic grade schools, 482,672 in secondary schools, 299,807 in colleges and universities, and 23,965 in seminaries.

Seventh-Day Adventists in this country plan to visit six million homes in 1950. The mass visitation will take place on March 4, June 3, and September 2. Plans for the visitation were explained to church leaders by Elder Lemuel E. Esteb of South Lancaster, Mass., who declared, "It's time for religion to put on its boots and walk out to where the people are."—A budget for \$16,000,000 for special purposes, \$2,400,000 more than the highest previous budget, was adopted by the annual fall conference of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in St. Louis. Of this total \$9,000,000 is for overseas expansion, including \$412,500 for radio programs in foreign countries, and \$300,000 to place ten missionary families in Japan.

A series of seminars for Christian citizens sponsored by Protestant groups will be held in Washington, D. C., during the first five months of 1950. They will be motivated for three separate audiences, classified as students, adults, and churchmen. Seminars for both high school and college students will be sponsored by Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Quaker organizations. The National Intercollegiate Christian Council of the Y. M. C. A. and the Y. W. C. A. will sponsor two seminars for college students, and the United Christian Youth Movement will sponsor one seminar. Adult seminars will be independently sponsored by the Friends' Committee on National Legislation, the Department of Social Welfare of the United Christian Missionary Society of the Disciples of Christ, and the Brethren's Service Commission. The churchmen's seminars will be a joint project of the Presbyterian (U. S. A.), Methodist, Northern Baptist, Congregational-Christian churches, and the United Council of Church Women.

More than 3,500,000 Protestants in Germany's Eastern Zone are without adequate pastoral care because of a lack of clergymen due to Soviet restrictions on theological training. Dr. Martin Fischer of the Berlin Church Academy said that the Soviet Zone needs 900 pastors to bring the ministry up to normal strength. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Saxony has again called upon Soviet occupation officials to return church property of thirteen church institutions confiscated during the Nazi regime.

Financial aid from American church groups has put the Church of Finland in a strong position. The major American gift was one million dollars from the Lutheran churches in America associated with the National Lutheran Council. Of this amount 60 per cent has already been transferred to the Finnish Church and is being used to reconstruct sixteen churches destroyed during the war. Contributions from American churches also helped in the building of a new Bible center to replace the one lost in the transfer of Karelia to Russia. All kinds of religious books as well as Bibles will be printed at the center.—A Communist attempt to remove religious instruction from the school curriculum met with failure. Since then the Communists have been relatively silent on the whole question of the Church, apparently in the hope of not alienating potential members of the party who are church members. For its part the Church has had no formal break with the Communists and has succeeded, to a large extent, in keeping the children of Communists in its Sunday schools.—Ninety-six per cent of the population are members of the national Church. Of the remaining 4 per cent, half are members of some other Church; the largest single group among these is the Greek Catholic Church with 70,000 members; Roman Catholics, Jews, Methodists, and Baptists number less than 7,000 altogether.

A report summarizing the obligations of church members was adopted in London at a special meeting of the House of Laity of the Church Assembly, governing body of the Church of England. Prepared by a special committee on "The Discipline of The Laity," set up in 1946 under the chairmanship of the Rt. Rev. Harold E. Wynn, Bishop of Ely, the report contained six rules outlining the obligations of laymen. These are: (1) Regular Communion, (2) Attendance at public worship at least once on Sundays and on the greater holidays, (3) Discipline on Fridays and in Lent, (4) Regular contributions to the life and work of the Church, (5) Observance of the Church's marriage law, and (6) Approach to Holy Communion with penitence. Lenten and Friday "discipline" refers to the abstinence from meat on Fridays and the practice of some form of self-denial during Lent.

A series of conferences and study courses designed "to alert the social conscience of Christians" are scheduled for 1950 at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva. Among the problems to be considered will be those of family life, state-operated and voluntary social service, the place of sociology in the strategy of the world-wide Church, and the challenge of biology to modern Christian thinking.

Protestant leaders in Indonesia are hopeful that American missionary organizations will divert their activities toward their country now that Communist-controlled areas of China are no longer accessible. According to the Rev. Alex Rotti, a member of the church council in Timor, two and a half million of Indonesia's total population of seventy-five million are Protestants. He said the influence of the Indonesian Protestants, whose number includes about a third of the nation's leading personalities, is proportionately far greater in the political and cultural sphere than that of any other group. At present he said the Protestant community in Indonesia comprises the Minahassa, Timor, and Molucca churches, which are independent, indigenous bodies, and the Protestant Church of the Western Archipelago, stretching over Java and Sumatra, with Dutch Eurasian and Dutch-speaking Indonesian members. In addition, he said, there are the Netherlands mission groups, including the East Java Church, with 100,000 members, who are all converted Mohammedans; the Batak Church, with 600,000 members; and the Posso Church on Celebes, with 20,000 adherents.

Religious freedom is guaranteed in India's new constitution adopted in New Delhi by the Constituent Assembly. The charter contains an article declaring that, "subject to public order, morality, and health, all persons are legally entitled to liberty of conscience and the right freely to profess, practice, and propagate their sacred beliefs."

A second edition of the revised Turkish version of the Bible has been published in Istanbul jointly by the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society. The first edition appeared in 1941. The revised Turkish Bible is printed in Latin script and in the new Turkish, which ignores many old Arabic words and includes a great number of revived idioms and new terms. The first Turkish Bible dates back to 1666. It was a translation made by Ali Bey, Polish-born former slave, who achieved fame after he had reached manhood and embraced the Islamic faith. His manuscript was sent to Leyden, Holland, to be printed, but its publication was delayed until 1827.

ALEX C. W. GUEBERT