

6-1-1952

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

William Arndt

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Arndt, William (1952) "Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 23, Article 37.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol23/iss1/37>

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

DOCTRINAL TEACHING STRESSED

More and more it is recognized that the vague, colorless teaching which Modernistic churches dispense is a diet that entails starvation. A writer in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (England) of March 6, 1952, reports on a meeting in which the question of doctrinal instruction at "missions," that is, evangelistic services, was ventilated. He contrasts present methods of winning people for the Church with those in vogue fifty years ago. At that time, he says, when evangelists presented their plea, a strong appeal was made to the emotions. This method, he holds, should not be put on the shelf in an absolute sense. But at the same time there is the intellect of people, he emphasizes, which has to be utilized. Instruction has to be given. The writer admits that the Free Churches (those Protestant churches not connected with the State Church, the Church of England) have not used this method to any great extent. The Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, has employed it with telling effect. The writer used to be a reporter, and he states that when his assignments took him to Roman Catholic "missions," he found the messages were delivered "with power and clarity." He furthermore breaks a lance for the proper training of Sunday school teachers. Too often, so he points out, people are employed as teachers in Sunday schools who are not qualified. If doctrine is important, it has to be taught; and if it is to be taught successfully, the teachers have to be competent. It is a pleasure to chronicle that these facts which most of us consider altogether obvious are placed before the public in an influential British paper.

WILLIAM ARNDT

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF LUTHER FOR CHRISTIANS OF OTHER COMMUNIONS

When on November 15, 1950, Bishop Anders Nygren celebrated his sixtieth birthday, Archbishop Yngve Brilioth of Uppsala presented to him a dedicatory volume with a *tabula gratulatoria*, listing admirers from all over the world, among them our own Dr. Theodore Graebner and Dr. Lawrence Meyer, and most important essays, which discuss problems facing Lutheranism today, by such prominent churchmen as (just to mention a few) Walter Kuenneth, Hanns Lilje, K. H. Rengstorf, Edmund Schlink, Helmuth Thielicke, Otto Dibelius, Gustaf Aulén, Ragna Bring, and others. Dr. Graebner's *Bad Boll* essay *Kirche und die Kirchen* has also been given a place in this appealing book, which because of its comprehensive presentation of subjects of

vast importance to Lutheranism today deserves careful study in all Lutheran areas. The English edition bears the title *World Lutheranism of Today* and is obtainable at Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo. (438 pages, 9×6. \$4.85). The essays are presented in German, English, and French.

We do not refer to the book to review it, for that is quite another task, but merely to point out the excellent essay by Prof. Philip S. Watson, of Birmingham, England, *The Significance of Luther for Christians of Other Communions*, and its challenge to Lutheranism in America to supply the world with at least a practical, though complete edition of Luther's works for those who cannot read German. Professor Watson shows that Luther's influence on English denominations has been tremendous, and this despite the fact that Luther's works were not too widely and well disseminated in England. The article must be read to be fully appreciated, but a few facts, culled from it, may perhaps demonstrate what Luther might do in English-speaking countries today were he only given a chance to witness. According to Professor Watson, Luther lived and testified to the truth through John Bunyan, who said of the great Reformer's exposition of *Galatians*: "I do prefer this book of Martin Luther upon the *Galatians*, excepting the Holy Bible, before all the books that ever I have seen, as most fit for a wounded conscience" (p. 374). From Luther's *Galatians* Charles Wesley learned the doctrine of justification by faith alone. His brother John learned the doctrine from Luther's Preface to *Romans*, and though he later bitterly attacked Luther, charging him with "total ignorance with regard to sanctification," he nevertheless regarded him as unsurpassed in his treatment of justification. Luther's influence in England, however, was still greater through the "Lutheran material" which "found its way into the confessional documents, such as the "Ten Articles," the "Bishops' Book," the "Thirteen Articles," and others. In Scotland, Luther's theology influenced men like Patrick Hamilton, George Wishart, and even John Knox. Luther's enemies in England of course continued, but there also arose defenders of his theology which has permeated the thought of all evangelical denominations. We recommend for diligent study this fine essay as also the others which *Welt-Luthertum heute* offers to its readers. J. T. MUELLER

THE BIBLE, TRADITIONS, AND THE CHURCH

"No. . . . The Bible Is NOT Our *Sole Guide!*" This is the caption of an advertisement which recently appeared in some of the leading semipopular periodicals such as *The Atlantic Monthly* (May). The

advertisement was released by the Supreme Council Knights of Columbus, Religious Information Bureau. It seeks to demonstrate that "Christianity began with the coming of Christ — not with the writing of the Bible"; that "Christ had established His Church . . . long before any of the books of the New Testament had been written"; that "the Savior did not command us to read anything, but He did command us to hear His Church"; that "the Bible was not intended to be . . . the sole source of Christian teaching and belief"; that "the Church had existed 1,600 years, in fact, before the theory was advanced that the Bible should be the *sole* guide to Christian believers"; that "Christ established His Church to carry on His mission and spread His teaching"; that "while the Bible is the inspired Word of God, there are certain truths taught and exemplified by Christ which it does not record"; that "these truths will be found in the life, practice and teaching of Christ's Church — traditions dating back to the days of the Apostles and ante-dating the printing of the Bible."

There is nothing new in this interpretation of Christian history. The Roman Church has always espoused it and, in substance at least, gave it official sanction at the Council of Trent (1545—1563). Yet it irritates one to note that so reputable a journal as *The Atlantic Monthly*, for the sake of a few hundred paltry dollars, opens its advertisement columns to the perpetuation of one of the most egregious misinterpretations of which the Roman Church has become guilty. And it disturbs one to think that many readers of the advertisement who, because they seek guarantees for religious truth in the visible manifestation of the Church, will be further impressed with the pretensions of the Roman Church. For the obvious purpose of the advertisement is to promote the dogma of the Roman Church that it alone may lay claim to direct descent from Christ and His Apostles. What are the basic issues and facts involved?

1. The statement in the advertisement that "the Bible is the inspired Word of God" is, indeed, true. The fact is that in recent works on Biblical doctrine, Roman Catholic authors have unequivocally confessed the truth of divine inspiration of the entire Scriptures. But these same writers virtually cancel out and contradict their demonstrations of the divine inspiration of the Bible by their support of doctrines and dogmas which conflict with the clear teachings of the inspired Word of God and continue to teach the same errors which the Lutheran reformers repudiated in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church.

2. The Roman Church has, especially since the days of the Ref-

ormation, fastened on three sources of divine truth. These are: a) the Bible; b) the traditions; c) the voice of the Church, that is, the official pontifical pronouncements on doctrine and life. Especially within the past century it has become evident that the traditions of the Church as well as the pronouncements emanating from Rome are regarded in the Roman Church as authoritative and final as the voice of God which spoke through the Prophets, through God's Son, and through the Apostles. One need think only of the promulgation of the dogma of the Bodily Assumption of Mary by Pope Pius XII on November 1, 1950, and its all but immediate and universal acceptance by Roman Catholics.

3. We recognize the existence of traditions in the Christian Church. But we must distinguish between "traditions" and "traditions." There are traditions in the Church which, provided they do not conflict with the teachings of Scripture, may be useful and may even be deserving of perpetuation by the entire Christian Church. We think of the tradition known as the *signaculum crucis*, which Luther retained and which we still employ in some of our religious ceremonies. The three ecumenical creeds are, in a sense, traditions. They were formulated by the Church of the early centuries and have been transmitted through the centuries to our own day. There is nothing objectionable in these creeds, and the Lutheran Church recognizes them as correct statements of Biblical truths.

But the advertisement in *The Atlantic Monthly* speaks of another kind of traditions. It admits that these traditions are not recorded in the Bible, but it maintains that "they were taught and exemplified by Christ" and are found "in the life, practice and teaching of Christ's Church—traditions dating back to the days of the Apostles and antedating the printing of the Bible." The advertisement does not provide instances of this kind of traditions. The best one can say about them is that they have lived a precarious existence in the minds of Roman Catholic scholars and that, to this day, the honest historian has been compelled to search them out in the twilight zone of apocryphal Gospels, legends of saints, and in dubious statements in early patristic writings. Luther and the reformers and, following them, practically the entire Protestant Church rejected these traditions as sources of Apostolic teaching and divine truth and as binding on Christian consciences. Nevertheless, that these traditions are of value to the Roman Church need hardly be demonstrated. The dogma of the Bodily Assumption of Mary could hardly have been promulgated except for "proofs" of this dogma which Roman Catholic scholars claimed to

have discovered in the early traditions of the Church (see Heinrich Bornkamm, "Motive und Konsequenzen des neuen Mariendogmas" in *Für Arbeit und Besinnung*, Nr. 12, 1951).

4. Indeed, the first list of New Testament writings which corresponds completely with the one approved by the Christian Church of our day appeared as late as A. D. 367. But this does not mean that the New Testament books were not known, read, and recognized as divinely given books before 367. These books were written by Christ's Apostles or their immediate assistants, such as Mark and Luke, and represent the oral teachings of the Apostles. The content of these books, together with those of the Old Testament, constitute the one source of Christian teaching. Though, due to the imperfection of the Church, certain books not written by Apostles or their assistants enjoyed, for a time, a prestige similar to that enjoyed by the Apostolic writings, the former were eliminated from the New Testament collection by the close of the fourth century. It is not without significance that the great ecumenical creeds of the Early Church rest squarely on the teachings of the Apostolic, rather than on those of apocryphal, writings. For the Christians of the early centuries the Apostles' doctrine as recorded in their writings was the final criterion, source, and authority of divine truth.

5. It is true, the Christian Church existed before the New Testament writings came into being. Peter and Paul, James and John, and the rest of them were Christians and members of the Christian Church before they wrote their books. Christian churches existed in Jerusalem, Samaria, Antioch, Galatia, Ephesus, Rome, and elsewhere before any, or many, New Testament books were written. And all these churches and many more existed before the New Testament books were assembled in a definitive collection. But neither was there at the time when the New Testament books were written a Roman Catholic pope, nor was there a Roman Catholic Church. The Church existed, but this was the Church of Jesus Christ, which recognized only Him as its Lord and King and which regarded itself as His body. And the several churches of that early day were guided in matters of faith and life by the doctrine of the Apostles which these Apostles had received directly from the Head of the Church.

When these Apostles passed from the scene, their doctrine, which they had articulated also in writing, that is, in the acknowledged books of the New Testament, was transmitted to later generations. It was transmitted through the preaching of the Apostles' doctrine as well as through the writings bequeathed to the Church by the Apostles.

The Early Church was built, therefore, not on the utterances of an authoritative voice in Rome, not on decrees of councils and synods dependent on sources other than Apostolic teaching, but on the doctrine of the Apostles as the early Christians knew it from the Apostolic writings. Small wonder that Luther's defiant declaration at the Diet of Worms rocked the world. And small wonder that the "*sola Scriptura*" principle so forcefully expressed in the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church is regarded by the Roman Church as an intolerable heresy. For if it is admitted that the Holy Scriptures are the only source of divine truth, then the alleged "traditions dating back to the days of the apostles" as well as pontifical utterances which pretend to be divine oracles are the words of men and not the words of God.

Conclusions: In their Confessions most Protestants regard the Bible as the inspired Word of God and they regard it as the *only* inspired Word of God. Though they have a warm appreciation of many traditions which in course of time originated in the Church and contributed to the life and worship of the Church, they assert with the Reformers of the sixteenth century that all traditions, whether they can be dated back to the days of the Apostles or whether they are of later origin, are subject and subordinate to the Holy Scriptures and may never become sources of divine truth alongside the Holy Scriptures. Lutherans today, as in the sixteenth century, reject the antichristian presumption of the Roman Catholic pope to speak as the voice of God in matters governing doctrine and life. They reject, finally, the pretension of the Roman Church that it is the Church which Christ founded and that it has preserved intact what Christ taught and what He intended His Church to teach. But that Church is not the Roman Church headed by the pope, but the one holy Christian and Apostolic Church, the communion of saints. Cf. 1 Tim. 3:15. P. M. B.

ROME REDISCOVERS THE BIBLE

In *Christian Life* (March, 1952) James V. Claypool of the American Bible Society publishes an article in which he draws attention to the spread of Bibles carried on by Romanism today. In the closing paragraph he writes: "The current scholarly edition of the New Testament by the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine is outstanding mostly because it is being put into not less than 2,500,000 Catholic homes in America, fully as many as the total issues of our Revised Standard Version New Testament." Before that, in three paragraphs, he sums up the impressions which he received from recent "authoritative pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church." Two of these are of

special interest to Protestant readers, namely (2): "The Roman Catholic attitude toward the Bible is not quite as narrow as Protestants ordinarily think"; and (3): "It is important that this venerable ecclesiastical organization which we are wont to say 'never passes up a good idea' and 'always knows a good thing when it sees it,' is going all out for Bible reading at a time when Protestants are doing less Bible reading than their fathers and grandfathers."

Without being pugnaciously negative over against the good which is being accomplished by the modern Catholic Bible movement, for evidently also this new Bible emphasis is directed by God toward the fulfilment of Christ's prophecy "that this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world" (Matt. 24:14), it is well for us to keep in mind that Rome has not experienced a change of heart in the matter of general Bible reading by the Catholic laity. For one thing, Protestant versions are still being opposed by the Roman clergy in Catholic countries. Again, the versions which Rome promotes are distinctively oriented to its specific doctrines either by translation itself or by the footnotes, or both. Never should Protestants forget the canon, laid down by Leo XIII in his encyclical *Officiorum et Munerum*, of January 25, 1897, according to which "all versions in the vernacular, even by Catholics, are altogether prohibited, unless approved by the Holy See, or published under the vigilant care of the bishops, with annotations from the Fathers of the Church and learned Catholic writers." No doubt, too, there never would have been a Douay Version had not the English Protestant Version become dangerously popular in Roman Catholic areas. It is in light of these and other historic data that the modern "authoritative pronouncements of the Roman Catholic Church" must be considered. By way of conclusion we quote one of these from Dr. Claypool's editorial to show how even today Rome writes and interprets church history: "The Catholic Church, and only the Catholic Church, ever really taught the Bible to the people at large, and for this purpose she employed painting, poetry, music, sacred plays, and the ceremonial of her services. By these means the people, very few of whom could read, were made familiar with the Bible story and teaching. The Reformation swept away all these things and thus deprived the people of their only means of becoming acquainted with the Word of God, for it was and is useless as a means of instruction to scatter Bibles amongst people who cannot read. Hence the Reformers, instead of giving the Bible to the people, took it away from them." We ask: "Did the sacred plays and the ceremonial of Catholic services, together with what else is here mentioned,

really tell the whole, pure story of Jesus and His love?" Again: "Should not Catholic writers, before accusing the Reformers of taking the Bible away from the people, recognize the established facts that through the Reformation the peoples of the earth received not only readable Bible versions, but also the necessary education enabling them to read the Scriptures themselves, so that they do not have to rely for religious instruction on 'sacred plays' and 'ceremonials' which falsify the saving Gospel of Christ?"

J. T. MUELLER

THE GOSPEL IN THE SACRAMENTS

When Professor Anders Nygren of the University of Lund a short time ago was created Bishop of Lund, he, in agreement with the custom of the Church of Sweden, sent to the pastors of his diocese a pastoral letter on their ministerial office and message, which has now appeared in an English translation under the title *The Gospel of God* (cf. review, *Concordia Theological Monthly*, February, 1952, p. 152f.). In this generally sound and inspiring book the fifth chapter, "The Gospel in the Sacraments," endeavors to point out the relation of the Gospel to the Sacraments and vice versa. Here we find, among many correct and important statements, some which are not in agreement with Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. Very rightly Dr. Nygren emphasizes the Gospel character of the Sacraments and condemns the Romanistic view, which also in the Sacraments "alters it [the Gospel] into a law and 'righteousness of works.'" Distinguishing between the Romanist and the Lutheran doctrine, he writes: "The sacrifice goes from us to God, the testament from God to us. In the Lord's Supper it is God who in Christ stoops down to us. In the sacrifice of the mass we seek to climb up to God in all His majesty and make ourselves acceptable to Him" (p. 66). So far, so good! But Dr. Nygren goes beyond Luther and the Lutheran Confessions when he writes: "Luther says of the water in Baptism, 'Without God's word it is only water and no Baptism.' In the same manner one can say of the word which is set in contrast to the Sacraments, 'Without the Sacraments it [the Gospel] is only a word, and not the power of God, not God's act for our salvation.' The Gospel is given to us by God in the inseparable unity of word and Sacrament. What God has joined together, let not man separate" (p. 69). Just before that he remarks: "Only in the unity of both [the Gospel and the Sacraments] is the full import of the Gospel as a message, which is at the same time a deed, and as a deed, which is at the same time a message, to be found. He who would retain the Word, but push the Sacraments aside, waters down the Word and robs it of

its character as a deed" (p. 68). On page 69 he tells us: "That which takes place in the Sacraments is that the Lord Christ by them incorporates us into Himself, and makes us living members in the body of Christ, in the Church."

This last statement is correct, but what is wrong in the author's previous representation is, on the one hand, that he ascribes something specific to the Sacraments which cannot be ascribed with the same force to the Gospel, and, on the other, that according to his words, the Gospel without the Sacraments would lose something of its character, in short, that the Sacraments serve as supplements to the Word, adding to its completion. Over against this, Luther taught that whatever God does for the sinner's salvation, both in justification and in sanctification, He does solely through the Gospel, applied in preaching, in Baptism, in the Holy Supper, in absolution, and in the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren (Smalc. Art., Part III, Art. IV; *Triglote Concordia*, p. 491). With respect to the special character and purpose of the Sacraments, Luther and the Lutheran Confessions describe them as the "visible Word" and, more specifically, as pledges of His gracious promises conveyed in and by the Gospel, or, to use the words of the Augsburg Confessions, as "signs and testimonies of the will of God toward us, instituted to awaken and confirm faith in those who use them" (Art. XIII; *Triglote Concordia*, p. 49). *Haec enim sunt signa novi testamenti, hoc est, signa remissionis peccatorum* (Apology, Art. XII (V.), 42; *Triglote Concordia*, p. 260). All who go beyond the clear words of Scripture concerning the Sacraments are in danger of misrepresenting their essence and purpose and of depriving the Gospel of its central place and function in the *ordo salutis*.

J. T. MUELLER

THE APOTHEOSIS OF ALBERT SCHWEITZER

The Catholic World (March, 1952) warns against forgetfulness of the fact that while Schweitzer's heroic, self-sacrificing work as a medical missionary in Africa indeed deserves admiration, he denies in his philosophy the first and major premise of the Christian faith, the doctrine of Christ's deity. We quote a few striking paragraphs.

"What is called 'Schweitzer's living example of Christianity at work' is appealed to as perfect justification of his philosophy. Those who make such an appeal ignore the fact that what he lives on is his spiritual residue of inherited Christian ethics. His philosophy as such really by-passes the certainties of our Christian heritage and offers instead only the paralyzing uncertainties of agnostics.

"What wonder, in the face of so many American leaders' acceptance

of his actual teaching as that which witnesses a 'humble belief in Christ's fundamental humanity,' that our cultural epoch appears to foreigners as one that has discarded Christianity and is looking about for some different kind of moral assurance to take its place! That moral assurance is certainly not to be found in Schweitzer's *Quest*, which represents neither 'primitive' Christianity nor any possible approximation of it.

"The muddle-mindedness of our age as to what Christianity is, our vagueness and indefiniteness about Christ, represents intellectual dishonesty as well as wrong religion.

"While it remains everlastingly true that in the realm of ethics the best part of belief is action, yet the Christian's living faith-basis is so much more important than any action . . . that there is no comparison between the two indissoluble aspects of Christianity. . . . His notion that Jesus was a mere man of an era, deluded by false Messianic hopes, breaks Christianity's first premise, standing as it does in His own Person. An infinite number of Schweitzer-like lives of medical and other like services to human welfare cannot make any kind of restitution for that broken premise. . . . The African missionary-doctor's humanism (and our own idolatry of humanism has been given a not inconsiderable impetus from Schweitzer's) is as much at odds with his philosophy as Hegel's own church-going, sacrament-receiving private life as a Lutheran was with that pantheist's public announcements in his *System*. No less than Hegel's *pretended* Christianity, Schweitzer's involves the same essential denial as it represents the appearance (and what a glorious appearance!) of Christianity with its reality."

J. T. MUELLER

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

A bill liberalizing the policy for selecting YMCA trustees has been passed by both houses of the New York Legislature. The measure repeals a section of the law which says that each YMCA trustee "shall be a member of some Protestant evangelical denomination, not more than two of whom shall be members of any one denomination." The bill was backed by the State YMCA organization.

* * *

More than 53,000 displaced persons were brought to America prior to March 1 under the Church World Service Resettlement Program. In addition, over 30,000 have been resettled in the United States through the National Lutheran Council.

* * *

A veteran atheist leader, Robert H. Scott of San Francisco, Calif., has filed a formal complaint to the Federal Communications Commission against the American Broadcasting Company for refusing time for a reply to a network broadcast of a radio plan which, he charged, heaped ridicule and contempt upon atheists. He condemned what he called "a veritable orgy of prayer and piety" which for several years has been increasing on the radio without any opportunity being afforded atheists for a reply. "The keeping of American radio open for the broadcast of religious programs and closed to atheism and kindred views is a misuse of the public domain," he claimed.

* * *

The Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia is celebrating its centennial with a campaign to enroll 1,000 new members. The Society's collection includes more than 100,000 historical manuscripts, rare prints, paintings, 75,000 bound records of Presbyterian churches dating back to 1706, and relics of the colonial period.

* * *

A full-sized replica of Moses' Tabernacle in the wilderness, with all its symbolic objects, is exhibited in St. Petersburg, Fla. The tabernacle, 75x100 feet, is housed in a stone shrine on the shore of Lake Maggiore. It was built by the Rev. Hart G. Baldwin. Sunday afternoons and daily during the tourist season he dresses in a replica of the ornate costume of an Old Testament high priest and explains the symbolic meaning of each part of the sanctuary . . . no admission charge. Each

part of the shrine is constructed according to the specifications given to Moses during his days on Mount Sinai and followed by him in the construction of the tabernacle. Full-sized reproductions include the outer court, the gate, the brazen altar, the Holy Place, five golden pillars, seven golden candlesticks, the golden altar, the table of shewbread, and the Holy of Holies.

* * *

The *Christian Advocate*, the official weekly publication of the Methodist Church, is celebrating its 125th anniversary. Regular editions of the publication run to 325,000 copies. The anniversary issue will be printed in 500,000 copies. . . . It is one of the oldest religious publications in the nation. In its early days it became the most widely circulated newspaper in the young nation. Methodist circuit riders, who carried bundles of the paper in their saddlebags, acted as circulation and distribution agents. Secular newspapers of the day limited themselves to strictly local circulation. The *Advocate*, as a national newspaper which often was the sole news source reaching outlying communities far from the Eastern seaboard, carried many regular domestic and foreign news items unrelated to religion; among the latter, a regular feature was a listing of current prices for commodities—including rum.

* * *

Denmark is drafting a new constitution. The *Catholic Weekly of Denmark*, *Katolsk Ugeblad*, is urging the abolition of a constitutional provision that the king must be a member of the Danish State Lutheran Church. . . . The present king, Frederick IX, has no male heirs. The argument used by the paper is that no such stricture is imposed upon the heads of the various government ministries; hence the king is "worse off than any of his subjects." He should be given a free hand.

* * *

"We concluded that the reason the United States has never lost a war and never won a peace is that it has a wonderful department of war, but no department of peace," said Dr. Glenn Clark; so he and Dr. Frank Laubach are leading an unofficial "department of peace" in a five-story building in Washington, D. C. It is the center of a number of prayer groups which include members of Congress and their families. Chairman of the "prayer council ring" which is behind the movement is Mrs. Peter Marshall, wife of the former chaplain of the Senate and the author of *A Man Named Peter*.

With the death of Giovanni Battista Cardinal Nasalli-Roccadi Corneliano, Archbishop of Bologna, the Pope's College of Cardinals is reduced to 48, or 22 below full quota. There are now 17 Italian and 31 non-Italian cardinals. * * *

The Vatican newspaper *Osservatore Romano* admitted that it may have been deceived as to the authenticity of photos published last November purporting to show the miracle of a "revolving sun" near the Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima, Portugal, in 1917. . . . The "Miracle of the Sun" is said to have taken place at Fatima on October 13, 1917, when over 70,000 persons flocked to the site where three shepherd children claimed to have seen an apparition of the Virgin Mary. Witnesses stated that the crowd was awe-struck by the sudden melting of a heavy overcast sky into brilliant sunshine; the sun appeared as a revolving wheel of light throwing out varicolored hues in all directions. . . . The *Osservatore's* front-page statement came shortly after the *Voice of Fatima*, official journal of the shrine, had alleged that the photos were not authentic; that the pictures were not taken at the shrine in 1917, but at Torres Vovas, a few miles away, in 1923, and that they portrayed only an atmospheric effect at sunset. The Vatican paper said that the Fatima photos had been submitted to it as genuine: "If in spite of all this the photographs, as it is stated, were not authentic—a thing which at the time was not thought possible—it is clear that our good faith was taken advantage of. It is clear, however, that the prodigy of 1917 (at Fatima) is beyond discussion, as it happened before tens of thousands of witnesses, not a few of whom are still alive."—Yes, they saw an "atmospheric effect at sunset"! While the admission of the *Osservatore* is far from sufficient, perhaps some of the readers will draw the right conclusion and apply it to other so-called miracles. * * *

Dr. Channing H. Tobias, a Negro Protestant leader in the YMCA movement and member of the United States delegation to the United Nations, whose name has lately appeared in the press because of his visit to Pope Pius XII, protested against the imprisonment in Czechoslovakia of the Associated Press correspondent William Otis at a recent U.N. General Assembly session in Paris. The Ukrainian delegate countered by charging shameful treatment of Negroes in Georgia and anti-Negro laws in other States. In his rebuttal to this charge, Dr. Tobias replied: "I am a Negro, born in Georgia, and I have survived my youth with sufficient good frame to stand here as a representative

of all the people of the United States. True, we have some bad laws and some good ones not enforced, but the thing we have which you have not is freedom to fight bad laws and insist on good ones being enforced."

* * *

Senator Estes Kefauver, at a churchmen's Washington seminar attended by nearly 150 church leaders (including some of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod), gave the advice that church members ought to write members of Congress more often. Too much of the Congressional mailbag is full of appeals from various selfish interest groups. "It is difficult for members of Congress to keep a perspective," he said. "If the good people back home would write us more often giving us their views on matters of national legislation and public policy, it would be very helpful. We need to hear more often from those whose only interest in legislation is the public welfare and who approach public issues from the moral point of view. It is to you church people that we must look for support for a good Congress and a good government. If you don't help give guidance to your public officials, you are abdicating that responsibility to those with selfish axes to grind." . . . The three-day seminar was devoted largely to workshop discussion groups on such topics as immigrant labor, United Nations appropriations, anti-filibuster resolutions, international disarmament. Also housing, the problems of the American Indian, child labor, the Voice of America, and immigration legislation were discussed.

* * *

Delivering a Lenten sermon on "The Church and the State" to an overflow crowd of worshipers at the Church of the Sacred Heart in Washington, D. C., Auxiliary Bishop Fulton J. Sheen of New York said that American Catholics subscribe wholeheartedly to separation of Church and State as practiced in the United States; Church and State ought not to be too intimately associated; history has shown that "when we become too close to the things of this world, too interested in the political order, or too absorbed in the economic, we have suffered for it." He said that Catholics can be loyal to the First Amendment of the Constitution, with its provision for religious liberty, without any mental reservation. "There is a lie abroad that the Roman Catholic Church is perverting the nation, is bent upon raiding the treasury, is guilty in some way or other of subverting the Constitution in order that the State may be subservient to the Church. This is not true. We are not in favor of an established Church in

the United States (italics by the undersigned). We do not want an established Church and have never wanted it. We are loyal to the United States, and we propose to remain loyal to it."—As for the vast bulk of American Catholics, we believe that that is true. Now, if the Bishop could only show us a document in which the Curia in Rome declared that Pope Boniface VIII was wrong in the Bull "Unam Sanctam" and Pius IX was in error in some of the statements of his Syllabus of Errors of 1864, and show us the signature of Pope Pius XII under the document—that would take us much farther toward the belief that the Roman Church is no longer *semper eadem*, but has changed.

* * *

An eruption of volcanic origin was reported to have occurred on Mount Ebal, midway between Jerusalem and Nazareth. It is the first known volcanic activity on the Biblical mount, although the area has been the center of earth tremors. . . . Mount Ebal rises some 3,092 feet above the ancient city of Nablus, known as Shechem in Biblical times, which lies in the fertile valley between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim. On Mount Ebal's summit are the ruins of a thick-walled fortress, called El-Kala, dating back to the Crusaders or earlier, and on its western slope is a Moslem shrine containing what is claimed to be the skull of John the Baptist. Abraham and, later, Jacob and his sons camped at Shechem (Nablus), and in 933 B.C. Jeroboam chose it as his capital when the northern tribes separated from the kingdom of David.

* * *

The first German financial contribution for refugee aid outside Germany has been sent to the World Council of Churches in Geneva, Switzerland, by the Central Bureau of *Hilfswerk*, relief agency of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID). The contribution comprised donations from all German regional Evangelical Churches. A letter accompanying the contribution stressed that it was "an expression of gratitude for the aid which Germany and German Evangelical Christians received during the past years from foreign churches. "It will give proof," the letter said, "of the growing consciousness of responsibility among German Protestants for the distress of refugees beyond the German borders."

* * *

The case of the Lima school near Durand, Wis. (see last month's Brief Items), and 13 other public schools, all of which are taught by nuns, has been decided by the State School Superintendent of Wis-

consin, George E. Watson, by denying State tax support to these schools. He held that in his opinion these schools violated State law in one or more of these ways: 1. They selected teachers on the basis of religious tests; 2. They included sectarian instruction in their curriculum; 3. They failed to operate a complete school of eight grades. The case will perhaps be taken to the courts for a decision.

* * *

The pastor of the South Hartford, N. Y., Congregational Church, the Rev. Marion C. Frenyear, paid only 25 per cent of her 1951 Federal income tax because she is opposed to the Government's "warlike ventures." She is a Christian pacifist, she declared, and "cannot support war in any way." . . . For the same reason she paid only 25 per cent of her Federal tax bill last year. The collector of internal revenue at Albany placed a lien against her salary and indicated that the same method would be used this year to collect the unpaid taxes. . . . Last year the delinquent taxes were paid by the treasury of the church, and the amount was deducted from the pastor's salary.

* * *

According to a report issued by the American Bible Society, some part of the Bible has been published in 1,049 languages and dialects, as of December 31, 1951. Fifteen new languages were added to the list last year. . . . The whole Bible has been published in 195 languages, a complete Testament in 252, and at least a Gospel or other whole book in 602.

* * *

The plan of uniting the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. (Southern), and the United Presbyterian Church (a plan recently approved by special representative groups of the three bodies at a meeting in Cincinnati) is opposed by a group of ministers and elders of the Southern branch who maintain that under the union plan "the Southern Church would find itself submerged, and its testimony stilled. Under existing conditions there will be no union until underlying problems having to do with church polity, doctrine, and administration have been faced and met. Should these fundamental issues be ignored, a split in Presbyterian forces is certain to result, with disharmony rather than unity resulting."

* * *

For the General Conference of the Methodist Church, meeting in San Francisco, April 23, the Church's Commission to Study the Ministry submits a report the highlights of which are:

1. The present rule prohibiting unordained supply pastors from administering the Communion shall remain unchanged.

2. The "no smoking" pledge shall no longer be required of a ministerial candidate, but he shall be asked "to make a complete dedication of himself to the highest ideals of the Christian ministry."

3. Standards for Conference membership shall not be lowered for supply pastors, but "supplies" shall be given every possible encouragement to complete the prescribed course of study to make them eligible for Conference membership.

To point 1 the commission, headed by Bishop Gerald Kennedy of Portland, Oreg., said: "It is hard . . . to see how ordination can retain any real meaning if unordained men, without putting forth any effort or following any discipline, have all the rights and privileges of ordination." (Of the 22,210 pastoral charges in the Methodist Church, 7,549 are filled by "supplies.") . . . To point 2: At present candidates for the ministry are required to answer satisfactorily the question: "Will you abstain from the use of tobacco and other indulgences which may injure your influence?" The report says: "This seems to single out one indulgence and leaves unmentioned any number of weightier matters. It raises to central importance an indulgence which does not merit such a place of honor." It is recommended that the committee "shall insist that the applicant recognize the great importance of living an exemplary life free from all harmful practices which would discount his ministry, such as the use of intoxicants, narcotics, and tobacco, and urge that he consecrate himself to purity of life in body, mind, and spirit.

* * *

Anent the announcement to members of Italian Catholic Action that membership in the YMCA and YWCA was forbidden under Roman Catholic Canon Law, YMCA headquarters in New York said that their most recent survey, in 1947, disclosed that 28 per cent of the membership of the movement in the United States was Roman Catholic.

* * *

In Ottawa, B.C., a city-wide boycott of stores selling obscene books and magazines was planned at a meeting of men and women representing every lay Roman Catholic organization in the Ottawa archdiocese. Under the plan drawn up "vigilante committees" will patrol the stores and note the establishments where publications listed as "objectionable" are sold, and the public will be urged to boycott these places. At the same time stores which "pass" the committees' exam-

ination will be given the fullest publicity, and the public will be encouraged to give them their patronage. . . . The Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Parent-Teacher Associations will lead the drive. . . . E. D. Fulton, M. P. for Kamloops, B. C., and author of the Fulton Bill, which outlawed crime comics in 1950, addressed the meeting and promised to seek the creation of a joint Commons-Senate committee to study new legislation on the subject. He claimed that a "New York combine" forced distributors and dealers to market indecent material under threat of having their entire book and magazine supply seriously depleted. He urged, however, that an aroused public opinion was necessary for the passage of required legislation; "the dealers will tell you they'd love to see some action, but that they are helpless."

* * *

A meeting of the Old Prussian Union Church, scheduled for May 11 to 15 in Goerlitz, Silesia, was banned by the East German government. No reason was given for the ban. . . . This is the old "*Unierte Kirche*," formed in 1817 by the administrative merger of the various "*Landeskirchen*." In 1947 they had a membership of 14,000,000, of whom, it is said, about 90 per cent were Lutheran and the rest Reformed. Dr. Luther Kreyszig of Magdeburg is provisional president of the group.

* * *

Every issue of *RNS* reports persecution of Roman Catholics behind the iron or the bamboo curtains and persecution of Protestants in Roman Catholic countries. . . . 3,700 Roman Catholic missionaries have been expelled from China, it is claimed. Bishop John O'Shea of Kanchow was accused at a public meeting of killing "many thousands of children" at his orphanage. . . . Cardinal Spellman, who visited Hong Kong, is quoted saying that the persecution of Roman Catholic missionaries in Communist China was "a repetition of the worst persecution and martyrdom in the early days of the Church." . . . The grief of the Pope over the persecution of the Church is described by Archbishop Gerald P. O'Hara, papal nuncio in Ireland: "Truly, Pius XII has been called upon to be a man of sorrows like his divine Master." . . . Meanwhile, a Presbyterian church at Ibague, Colombia, was stoned on March 20 by a crowd of children "gathered and led by three priests who urged them on: 'You must smash this serpent in the head.'" . . . Baptists of Miglionico, in the province of Masera, Italy, complain that their church has been closed by the civil authorities. . . . In Toronto the Foreign Missions Division of the National

Council of Churches asked the U. S. State Department to take vigorous action to halt "a wave of attacks" on Protestant missionaries in Colombia. Dr. W. Stanley Rycroft declared: "there have been easily over 100 of these cases in the last two years" — Dr. J. A. Dell, in a recent number of the *Lutheran Standard*, adds: "It makes a difference whose missionaries are being persecuted."

* * *

An intensive inquiry conducted by parish priests in Rome revealed that out of a population of 1,800,000 only 400,000 attend Sunday mass regularly; another 400,000 fail to attend because they are "too young, too old, or too busy" — meaning that one million Catholics of Rome deliberately ignore their religious duties, as a Commission member said. In one parish, he added, out of 8,000 children only 500 attended Catechism classes. Which points to the oft-mentioned fact that church statistics in countries where everyone is counted as a member of the State Church unless by deliberate action he has secured his dismissal must be taken with a grain of salt.

* * *

A cable from Hong Kong announced that the last missionary of the United Lutheran Church in America remaining in Communist China has been imprisoned. This is the 27-year-old missionary Paul J. Mackensen, Jr., of Baltimore, Md. Charges against him are not known.

* * *

At the annual conference of the National Association of College and University Chaplains, the president of Howard University in Washington, D. C., Dr. Mordecai W. Johnson, declared that the modern college and university is aware of being "deeply injured in its religious life." The injury resulted from the monopoly of the curriculum by highly specialized subjects, the preponderant and disorganizing influence of the natural sciences, and the disappearance of religion from its hitherto dominant place in the curriculum. "The university began its existence," he said, "with a Christian world view based on an assured conviction of the nature of human beings and the possibilities of world communities arising therefrom; but in the last 200 years it has been forced to operate within the boundaries of aggressive nationalism." . . . The meeting was attended by more than 100 delegates from 40 States.

THEO. HOYER