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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

A PLEA FOR CONTINUED UNITY NEGOTIATION FROM AUSTRALIA

In the *Australian Lutheran* (August 27, 1952) Prof. F. J. H. Blaess of Concordia College publishes an ardent plea for continued unity negotiations, which deserves a hearing also in Lutheran circles in North America. He writes:

"Sometimes the remark is heard that the lay people are not so much interested in doctrinal agreement as in the getting together of the two Lutheran churches in Australia. 'We are not interested in doctrine.' We do not believe that this is the general attitude among the Lutheran laity, and those who are alleged to have made such or a similar statement perhaps mean deeply involved theological questions, which they would leave to the clergy, rather than the fundamental doctrines of our Christian faith. Lutherans, who have received their religious instruction according to Luther's Small Catechism, must of necessity and quite naturally have been brought up to believe the essential Christian truths in a similar manner. That is why you sometimes hear people say, there is no difference between what is preached in this Lutheran Church or in that. We are thankful to God that by His grace Lutheran Churches have continued to preach the chief parts of Christian doctrine taken from the Bible and arranged by Luther in questions and answers in his Small Catechism.

"But the Lutheran Churches have been divided by teachings which differed from 'the faith once delivered to the saints' and from what the Lutheran Confessions have preserved unto us as the 'eternal, immutable truth of God.' Also in Australia there were doctrinal differences, which split the congregations into church bodies opposing each other. The intersynodical negotiations have removed most of these doctrinal differences and have presented to pastors and people theses of agreement for their earnest study and approval or otherwise. For any Lutheran to say that he is not interested in these matters, reveals either ignorance or indifference. The believers at Berea were not indifferent to the message brought them by St. Paul. They searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so (Acts 17:10 ff.).

"A recent letter states: 'There is much indifference and apathy on the part of both members and ministers, unfortunately also much pessimism, and very little interest is taken.' Another writer says: 'To establish a union after more than a hundred years of heated arguments on the interpretation of Scripture texts . . . would require a miracle to

happen. . . . Of course, God can lead and guide hearts and minds, but . . . I think that the meetings held are wasting valuable time.' A third writer says it makes him sad to write that 'there are many who get no farther than saying, they'll never unite, and there they stay.' Reports indicate that more congregations and parishes are taking up intersynodical discussions on the Theses of Agreement at the congregational or parish level. That intersynodical negotiations after years of apparent deadlock have resulted in agreement on a number of differences is God's gift of grace, the fruit of the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit.

"We sympathize with those who are pessimistic because of the hard, bitter experiences of the past, or who have suffered by being misjudged and misrepresented. But nothing can excuse us from the duty of seeking reconciliation with those who are estranged from us, or from continuing earnest endeavors to establish and preserve 'the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,' which must be the basis of Lutheran union. Where would we be if the Lord Jesus had said: 'It is of no use'? If we are children of God and abide in His Word, we must learn to forgive and forget; we must strive not to let the divisions of the past continue; we must grow in spiritual knowledge and life, so that we may be 'perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment' (1 Cor. 1:10)."

The plea for continued unity negotiations is, of course, contained in the final paragraph, but the preceding statements so ably depict the problems connected with the Lutheran unity movement, in Australia as well as here, that they form a helpful background for the heartfelt appeal of Professor Blaess, who is serving on the Australian unity commission.

J. T. MUELLER

FORWARD TO LUTHER!

Bishop Anders Nygren, former president of the Lutheran World Federation, sounded this appeal in his keynote address at Hanover on Saturday morning, August 26. The Bishop elaborated his appeal as follows:

"Now and then one hears in our Church the slogan 'Back to Luther.' There may be something valid in this slogan, for, in truth, we are under obligation to preserve and improve our spiritual heritage. Nevertheless, this formulation is questionable for two reasons:

"1. There never is a return in history. History always moves in a forward direction toward the future. What lies behind us can never produce history unless it is a living present or a living future.

"2. When we refer to Luther, we are not thinking of a person who lived in the past. What Luther achieved does not lie behind us, but far, far ahead of us. It does not belong to a past era. On the contrary, Luther broke through to a point which lies ahead of us and which we must seriously strive to discover for the purpose of moving toward it. The Reformation is not an end, but a beginning. All the minor developments which, following the Reformation, relieved one another, such as orthodoxy, pietism, rationalism, and romanticism, had their day and were able to realize or were unable to realize their peculiar objectives. But they are past and gone. The Reformation, however, was a beginning and is a beginning for us still, and its realization lies ahead of us in the future. Dr. Martin Luther still stands at the beginning of his activity.

"Therefore we must not *go back* to Luther but *forward* to Luther. For he shows us the way to a profounder appreciation of the Gospel of Christ.

"What we mean to say with the slogan 'Forward to Luther!' we can also express in this way: Forward to the *central* content of the Gospel! Forward to the *entire* content of the Gospel! Forward to Christ, who is for us dying mortals the living and life-giving Word of God."

One need not agree with the Bishop's philosophy of history. One might question the clarity of his thought. One might find in his appeal rhetoric rather than reality. One might even charge him with saying an indisputed thing in such a solemn way. One might interpret his remarks as an elaboration of the sentiment expressed by Karl Holl in 1917, when, in the course of his brilliant lecture on Luther, he said: "We are not celebrating a requiem when we think of Luther. We are rather forming contact with one who is living." In any case, Bishop Nygren did make an appeal to the Lutherans in Hanover to take the Gospel in all its implications as seriously as Luther took it.

In this sense, there is such a thing as moving *forward* to Luther. Certainly, also in our Church there have been devoted students of Luther who have kept the memory of Luther alive and who brought to the surface the most characteristic features of Luther's theology. Nor were our forefathers ungrateful to the Reformer. Their greatest contribution to Luther was the Concordia Publishing House edition of his works. Nevertheless, we of our generation need to press forward to Luther. There is in Luther's theological thought, born of the Gospel, a breadth and depth deserving of the most thorough investigation. Indeed, as an English writer has said, Luther is deliri-

ously relevant to our day. Considering present-day interest in such matters as Biblical anthropology, the interrelationships of theology and philosophy, the relation of Christian thought to humanism and culture, the modern reaction to positivistic and materialistic forms of thought, the implications of the growing tensions between modern theism and atheism, the ecumenical character of Lutheranism: the "forward to Luther" appeal by Bishop Nygren comes as a most welcome challenge.

But there are difficulties to be reckoned with. Not the least of them is the language barrier. Luther wrote in Latin and in early High German. Whereas Germans are translating both Luther's Latin and German works into modern High German, the time will never arrive when all of Luther's works will be accessible in the English language. But the investment of time and effort in the study of Latin and early High German for the purpose of employing this knowledge in the study of Luther will pay high dividends. If we are truly concerned about providing answers born of the Gospel to some of the most perplexing problems of our day, and if we wish to escape the danger of solving some of these problems by easy recourse to pragmatic expediency, then the Lutheran Church will need to take to heart the Bishop's appeal and to act on it. It seems safe to say that the Lutheran Church in America is entering the most critical stage of its history. It will, therefore, be doing itself and the Gospel of Jesus Christ a tragic disservice if it neglects to take up the challenge "Forward to Luther!"

P. M. B.

ROM. 5:1: ἔχομεν OR ἔχωμεν? THE ANSWER OF THE EARLIEST EXTANT TEXT

In the *Harvard Theological Review*, April, 1952, pp. 81—85, the noted student of the New Testament text William H. P. Hatch discusses and edits "A Recently Discovered Fragment of the Epistle to the Romans." This fragment (written on a small piece of vellum), as far as its text can be reconstructed, covers Rom. 4:23 (ἐγράφη)—5:3 (θλίψις). It is the property of Dr. Leland C. Wyman of Boston University, who bought it from a dealer in antiquities in Cairo on July 3, 1950. The Wyland fragment will bear the number 0220.

Dr. Hatch judges that the manuscript to which it belonged was written in the latter part of the third century, which means that it is the earliest known witness for the text of the six verses mentioned. The fragment supports Codex B everywhere except in 5:1, where it reads the indicative ἔχομεν.

Nestle has adopted the indicative in his text since his 17th edition, in spite of the weight of external evidence in favor of the subjunctive. Recent commentators quite generally have come around to reading ἔχομεν because of the requirements of the context. We should like to point out here that grammar, too, argues strongly for the indicative. We note the οὐ at the beginning of v. 3. Now οὐ in the New Testament is the negative of the indicative, μή that of the other moods. Reading ἔχομεν in v. 1, the correlated καυχώμεθα of v. 2 will also be indicative, likewise the καυχώμεθα of v. 3. Then the οὐ is perfectly in order. If we read the subjunctive ἔχωμεν in v. 1, the καυχώμεθα in both of the following verses almost certainly must be read as subjunctive. Then the οὐ of v. 3 would be thoroughly irregular.

The significance of the new fragment in this old textual debate is thus stated by Dr. Hatch: "The Wyman fragment is the earliest known witness for ἔχομεν in Rom. 5:1, and thus the indicative in this verse is attested by a good text which antedates the earliest testimony for the subjunctive. Furthermore, this evidence for ἔχομεν is probably pre-Hesychian. Therefore the argument for the indicative is greatly strengthened, and the claim for the subjunctive to be the right reading is correspondingly weakened" (p. 83).

This textual question is not without theological import. The change of ἔχομεν to ἔχωμεν is in line with a long list of examples in the later textual tradition in which the joyous indicatives of faith are turned into pale subjunctives of exhortation or optatives of pious wishes. This points to a period in the developing Catholicism which, as it advanced, grew more and more legalistic and understood the Apostles less and less. A convenient list of such cases may be found in Fritz Barth, *Einleitung in das N. T.* 2. Aufl., Guetersloh: 1911, p. 444. V. B.

ROMANISM AND BIBLE STUDY

America, national Catholic weekly review, devotes its issue of September 27 to the "Catholic Bible Week," in particular, to the study of the Bible by Catholics. Among the articles pertaining to the subject, we find the following: "Johann Gutenberg and Catholic Bible Week," "Teaching Christ Through the Bible," "Feature 'X': Johann Gutenberg and Mrs. Brown," and in the review section: "English Versions of the Bible," "The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages," "A Monument to Jerome," "The Sacred Canons." There is something very gratifying in this zeal on the part of the Romanists for the spread of the Bible, for despite the fact that Catholics must read and under-

stand Scripture in the light of the Church's dogma, there is no doubt that the power of the divine Word will assert itself in many hearts toward a more evangelical understanding of the Christian doctrine. Incidentally, it might move us Lutherans to pursue our sacred propaganda for more and better Bible study in our own areas with greater vigor. We still fall far behind of what we might do in this matter despite the revival of interest and effort which recently set in.

J. T. MUELLER

KANT'S PHILOSOPHY — THE GREAT ENEMY

In the *Anglican Theological Review* of July, 1952, a very interesting article appears with the title "The Adversary." The writer of the article is Walter Lowrie, now residing in Princeton, N. J. For a long time he was pastor of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Rome, Italy. Great fame came to him when he began to translate and interpret Kierkegaard, and he is now considered one of the specialists on this renowned Danish philosopher. Mr. Lowrie states that he is not a philosopher and that if a person will criticize his remarks as showing but a very poor understanding of philosophical problems, he will not mind, because he has "no face to lose" in this area. (If this is true of Walter Lowrie, it applies, of course, ten times more to this humble commentator on his little article.) The adversary whom Mr. Lowrie has in mind is the Kantian philosophy. That might seem very strange. A few of the thoughts of Mr. Lowrie will have to be submitted. He admires Kant and declares his philosophy indispensable. Where the dangerous error of Kant enters is in the view of this philosopher that "the thing in itself" cannot be known, but that we have to be satisfied with the phenomena which we observe and which we can point to as results of the law of cause and effect. Mr. Lowrie grants that when we are dealing with inanimate things, as we do in physics and chemistry, this Kantian view deserves being upheld. However, it gets to be a destructive factor when life, and especially the human soul, is studied. On account of the Kantian influence, life, while its existence is not denied (how could it be?), is largely ignored and not taken into consideration in the calculations of the scientists. (A book which those who are interested might read to obtain further information and stimulation touching this subject is *The Sacramental Universe* by A. A. Bowman, a philosopher who, according to our human estimate, died all too early.) Religion suffers a terrible blow when this kind of philosophy is followed, and with it suffer all the higher interests of mankind, among them poetry. Mr. Lowrie points out that Goethe, of whom he says that he was a profoundly religious man (though decisively not a

Christian), was greatly disturbed by the philosophy of Kant and disagreed with Schiller on this point. A writer that should be studied in this connection, says Mr. Lowrie, is the "magician of the north" Hamann, the great speculative thinker, who was a contemporary of the illustrious German poets at the end of the 18th century. Mr. Lowrie's intense interest in Kierkegaard comes to the surface when he at the conclusion of his fascinating remarks writes: "A century ago Kierkegaard prophesied that ruination would come from the pursuit of science, meaning, from the methods of thought which it imposed." Those of our readers who in this maelstrom existence still have time and inclination for some philosophical reflections ought to read the article to which we have drawn attention.

W. F. ARNDT

MY DAY WITH A GOOD SAMARITAN

Under this heading in the *Lutheran* (September 24, 1952), Rev. Dr. B. L. Hess, pastor of the Warren Park Presbyterian Church, Cicero, Ill., publishes a most interesting and informative article on the refugee work of the L. W. F., in particular, on the ministry of Dr. Edwin Moll, on the basis of a prolonged visit which he recently made in Jordan. Having witnessed this work himself during the past summer, the undersigned can vouch for the truth of what is said in the article. For the Arabs in Jordan this relief work is of the greatest value, and both Moslem and Christian Arabs are full of praise at the fine way Dr. Moll is handling things. The need of the Arab refugees is still desperate and deserves general support on the part of all Christians. It is a successful way to counteract Communist influences. Dr. Hess quotes Dr. Moll as saying: "We have ministered to 670,000 people in cash, kind, and relief." Of King Abdullah's praise of the work he writes: "King Abdullah, who was killed last year in the mosque in Jerusalem, said to me after we had lunch together: 'I am descended from the Prophet. I am a Moslem. I have witnessed Christianity in action all my life. I have held it in contempt—not because I am a Moslem, but from a character point of view. I have seen monks fighting over holy places, actually fighting with their fists, throwing stones at each other. . . . I cannot understand how this harmonizes with their belief. But I have the greatest respect for what you are and what you do. You do not make much propaganda; you do not ask a man what his religion is, where he sends his children to school. If he is hungry, you feed him. If he is cold, you clothe him. That is the kind of religion I respect.'" But the blessings of the work reach farther. Dr. Hess remarks: "Because of the warm regard of Moslems for the hand of Christ stretched out through Lutheran relief, it is not

uncommon for parents to come to Lutheran schools and say, 'We want our children to be brought up in your way, as Christians.' Even the Chief Sheik, Mustapha, priest of the Dome of the Rock, has sent his youngest son to be educated in these schools. The Dome of the Rock is one of the world's most beautiful buildings on one of its most sacred spots—where the temples of Solomon and Herod were built and where Mohammed is supposed to have ascended into heaven. Sheik Mustapha also asked that his sister be permitted to work in the serving center." In closing the article, Dr. Hess quotes Dr. Moll as saying: "If we Christians could only conduct ourselves in the proper way, with lives patterned after Christ's! I wish I could live another 25 or 30 years and see this thing unfold. I think we are in a most strategic position." Besides the Lutherans, also the Roman Catholics and other Christian groups are doing relief work in Jordan. But the Lutherans, owing perhaps also to the fine work of the former Schneller institutions, seem to have a firm hold on the Arabs. The *Lutheran* reports that Dr. Moll is now recovering from the serious illness which befell him during the latter part of August. While Dr. Moll has valuable assistants, the loss to the relief work through his leaving would be tremendous.

J. T. MUELLER

"THE MODERN DISCUSSION WITH ROMAN CATHOLICISM"

Under this heading (*Das heutige Gespraech mit dem roemischen Katholizismus*), Kristen Ejnar Skydsgaard, in the *Informationsblatt fuer die Gemeinden in den niederdeutschen lutherischen Landeskirchen* (1 *Jabrg.*, Nr. 18; Hamburg, 27. September 1952), holds out hope for a better understanding between Protestantism and Romanism on the basis of the critico-historical Bible research permitted Catholic scholars by the papal encyclical *Divino afflante Spiritu*, of September 30, 1943, which was published on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Bible encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* (November 18, 1893). The new conception of the critico-historical Bible study, as the article sets forth, might even lead to a deeper appreciation of the modern ecumenical movement in Christendom by Catholic church leaders.

Dr. Skydsgaard points out that when critico-historical Bible research became popular in Protestant circles, Romanism frowned upon the movement, and rightly so since "practically nothing was left of the Bible, which was treated as a book of religion on the same level with other religious books." "Today," the writer holds, "a change has taken place, not indeed in the sense of a return to the ancient orthodox conception with its unhistoric view of Scripture, but through a new

understanding of the greatness and originality of Biblical revelation." "Faith in the divinity of the Book has indeed ceased, but faith in God, whose Word addresses us through the Book, has increased all the more." This new understanding of Biblical revelation, as he says, seems to find favor in the Catholic Church, for the tone of *Divino afflante Spiritu* differs decidedly from that of *Providentissimus Deus*. "On some points the encyclical speaks with great caution, but with considerable clarity it recommends the historic and scientific study of the Bible." The writer is pleased especially with the strong emphasis that is put on the original text "as having greater authority and more weight than any other text, whether ancient or modern. This evidently is a subordination (*Degradierung*, degrading) of the Vulgate in its relation to the original text. For this reason textual criticism will play a prominent role" [also in the Catholic Church].

The meaning of the new conception of Biblical revelation is of importance in establishing a better relation between Catholicism and evangelical Christianity, for now Catholic and evangelical scholars "may read the Bible together." "They now have a common platform on which they may meet for the common endeavor to find the real meaning of the Word of the Bible." "In the light of Biblical history both parties are led to re-think their dogmatical inheritance," especially "the great separative questions of sin and grace, justification and sanctification." The writer, moreover, senses already in Catholic dogmatics a surrender of the abstract philosophical terminology, in particular, of that Aristotelian Thomism, which is a result of the new Catholic Bible study and which will make it easier for Catholic scholars to discuss doctrine with evangelicals. This again will further the ecumenical understanding between the two denominations, which "may now consider theological problems without their being at variance with the Holy See."

J. T. MUELLER

CONCLUDING POSTSCRIPTS

According to the *Lutheran* (October 22), the ULCA had its biennial convention in Seattle early in October. Officers returned to office are Dr. Franklin Clark Fry, ULCA president since 1945; Dr. F. Eppling Reinartz, secretary since 1947; and Dr. G. Elson Ruff as editor of the *Lutheran*. The new treasurer is Dr. Edmund F. Wagner, president of New York's General Realty and Utilities Corporation. The convention adopted the following significant resolutions: to receive into membership the Caribbean Synod, which is composed of 19 congregations in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands; to instruct the Com-

mittee on Worship to request the joint Commission on the Liturgy and the Hymnal to have printed in the new Service Book, which is to appear in 1955, the text of the Revised Standard Version as that of the stated lessons for the day; to approve raising pensions to the \$900/\$450 level and to ask its Pension Board to report in 1954 on the prospects for raising the minimum to \$1,200 for retired pastors and \$600 for widows. * * *

The same issue of the *Lutheran* reports on the opening of the new theological seminary of the ULCA in Berkeley, Calif. "The new seminary opened its doors in September. A few weeks later Dr. Charles B. Foelsch was inaugurated as the first president. Twenty-five students have enrolled, most of them West Coast residents but a few from the East who wish to prepare for ministry in the California or Pacific synods. Four professors were on hand for the opening day: Dr. Foelsch; Dr. E. Theodore Bachmann, who once taught at Chicago Seminary and more recently at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn.; Dr. Gerhard Lenski of the American Lutheran Church; and Dr. Harry J. Mumm." * * *

The Living Church (October 19) informs its readers that the same day (September 30) that saw the publication of the RSV saw the appearance also of the first eight books (Genesis through Ruth) of the [Roman] Catholic Confraternity Bible. The editorial comments: "The Catholic Confraternity Bible started out to be a translation from the Latin of the Vulgate, but in the midst of the work plans were changed. Reason: Pope Pius XII, in an encyclical, had in effect told Biblical scholars that translating from the Vulgate was sheer laziness and directed them to make their translation from the original tongues. Accordingly, the CCB version . . . is made from the Hebrew." For once we extend congratulations to the Pontiff in Rome, Pius XII. We may be sure that if the CCB translators follow the Pontiff's directive also in the translation of the books of the New Testament, Roman Catholic readers of the new translation will raise their eyebrows slightly higher than Protestants who are at present comparing the readings of the RSV with those of the AV. * * *

At this writing it is still too early to expect theological journals to publish carefully done critical reviews of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, which went on sale September 30. We have noted, however, one review in the *Watchman-Examiner* (October 16). The author, George S. Syme, Jr., concludes that a theological bias favoring

liberalism characterizes the revision. His final statement reads: "Whether this revision will be able to replace the cherished Authorized Version in the hearts of Christians remains to be seen. Certainly, there is much of high literary quality. Nevertheless, this revision, like the many others of this century, reinforces the need for preachers to obtain facility in the Hebrew and Greek, the basic tools of their trade. Hours spent in acquiring the use of these tools should not only be recognized as most practical, but also most important. Important, that is, if he expects to prepare accurate expository sermons." Conferences will do well to instruct their Greek and Hebrew "sharks" to check both the RSV and AV readings against the original text and to report to their conferences. They will find nothing more stimulating and profitable, and they will at the same time render not only their conferences, but also our entire Church a magnificent service. There are such "sharks" in practically every conference of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod. This is their golden opportunity! May God bless their efforts!

* * *

In the *Lutheran Outlook* (October), a reader who signs himself "Augustana Pastor, Kansas," comments as follows on the lodge question: "During all the talks and writings about merger of the various Lutheran groups, it has grieved me that nothing has been indicated as to what our stand would be toward the lodge question when such a merger is realized. I do not believe it is a 'dead issue,' but very much alive in the minds of many of us. I am now past 75, so I belong possibly to a past generation that touched the pioneers and well remembers their zeal for this cause. How can we expect a Lutheran group that denounces the lodges as ungodly and unscriptural in their teachings (claiming a religious system, which they certainly have) to unite with another group that favors and honors the secret societies. . . . Personally I can only offer my own definite objections to the whole lodge system as Christless, self-righteous, etc. May God in His mercy save the American Lutheran Church that is to be from that soul-destructive power!"

Among many articles and books which detail the experiences of German soldiers in Russian prison camps, the account of Helmut Gollwitzer titled *Und fuehren wohin du nicht willst* is one of the most significant in postwar literature. It is a moving account of what Gollwitzer — now professor of theology in Bonn — observed in Russia during his imprisonment 1945 to 1950. It is at the same time an exposition of the tensions arising in the heart of a Christian who lives

in the shadow of death but who has learned to say to his disquieted soul, "Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise Him." The author concludes his diary with a comment on an experience he had on Christmas Eve 1948. On his way to the barracks where a Christmas service was to be held, he overheard a German prisoner saying to a comrade, "The whole thing, everything, everything is so utterly senseless." But in place of speaking to this prisoner and inviting him to the service, he passed by him after the manner of the priest and the Levite. Recalling that incident, Gollwitzer observes, "Our worst and most frequent guilt is our failure to share with others the Gospel which we have; in particular, our failure to share it with those whom we meet only by chance, but of whom we know that they are wrestling with despair, since they expect nothing from the Gospel because they have never really known it."

* * *

In the past few years, *Theology* (British), featured articles on great English preachers. The October issue contains an article on Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester, who performed his ministry in the first beginnings of the English reformation and who was martyred in Oxford in 1555 in the reign of Queen Mary. Summarizing Latimer's preaching ministry, the author, F. J. Taylor, writes: "The words which Latimer employed to describe the sermon of Jonah at Nineveh may justly be applied to his own discourses. 'This was no great curious sermon, but this was a nipping sermon, a pinching sermon, a biting sermon; it had a full bite, it was a nipping sermon, a rough sermon and a sharp biting sermon.'" P. M. B.

BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"

Mission Boards and other Church agencies are urging Christian writers in India to combat the inexpensive literature which Communists are distributing widely in the country and for that purpose to simplify their language and to produce stories, based on facts and experience, which will appeal to the people. The work of Miss Vimala Rajamanickam, an editor of a monthly magazine for children, is cited as a successful effort in this direction; a series of short stories written especially for the industrial workers in the textile and metal industries center of Bangalore is evidently exerting considerable appeal.

* * *

A resolution adopted at a recent meeting of the Kentucky Synods of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., and the Presbyterian Church, U. S.

(Southern), will be mailed to every Protestant minister in the State. The resolution calls upon every Presbyterian minister to (1) make a determined effort to have a period of counseling with every couple before agreeing to marry them; (2) promise to make an effort to keep in contact with every couple after the marriage; (3) agree to ask each couple to promise to contact them or some other minister in the event of family discord, especially problems that might lead to separation or divorce. . . . A few years ago statistics showed that one marriage in seven ended in divorce; today that figure has been doubled.

* * *

R.N.S. takes notice of a warning issued by the President of the Eastern District of our Synod, Dr. Charles A. Behnke, to pastors and church teachers against setting up their own clinics for counseling in the fields of psychology, medicine, and psychiatry, when better advice is available from social agencies and professionals. Such a practice is dangerous, he said, because the minister and teacher is not trained for such work. . . . At the same meeting of the Buffalo Regional Conference Prof. Gerhard P. Schroth, manager of the Family Worship Hour and director of the Lutheran Choir, Chicago, stressed that "the purpose of the choir in the Lutheran Church is not to render an anthem each week, but to be the musical elders in leading the congregational singing and to help in singing the liturgy."

* * *

Dr. Emil Brunner, Professor of theology at the University of Zurich, Switzerland, has been appointed professor of religion at the new Japan International Christian University near Tokyo. Announcement of the appointment was made by Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette, president of the Japan International Christian University Foundation in the United States. Dr. Brunner will serve the university for three years, beginning September, 1953.

* * *

At the annual convention of the National Lutheran Editors' and Managers' Association in Omaha, Nebr., Dr. Edward W. Schramm, editor of the *Lutheran Standard*, described the increased centralization of synodical authority as a danger to the Church. "Synod members relax because they feel they are paying others to carry on their work," he said. "From the parish level to the peak of synodical authority there's a tendency to turn decisions over to bureaucrats. It is a healthful condition to have tension between the centrifugal and centripetal forces of the Church." . . . Mr. O. A. Dorn of our Concordia Publishing House was elected president of the Managers' section of the Association.

As one way of overcoming the dwindling number of nuns in recent years, Pope Pius XII urged women's religious orders to discard outmoded and non-essential customs. The retention of customs and usages that were acceptable in other times might now be a barrier to women in choosing the religious vocation. He spoke specifically about the garb of nuns and emphasized that "the religious garb must always express consecration to Christ: it is this which everyone expects and wants; but it should also conform to modern demands and correspond to the needs of hygiene." He, however, censured "those who, be they priests or laymen, preachers, speakers, or writers, no longer have a single word of approbation or praise for the virginity devoted to Christ; who for years, despite the Church's warnings and in contrast with her opinion, give marriage a preference in principle over virginity." . . . The Pope's message was addressed to the First International Congress of Mothers General meeting in Rome.

* * *

The Hymn Society of America arranged a contest for a hymn "expressing the spiritual significance of the Bible and its contribution to the life of the individual and society." The contest was won by a retired school teacher in Central Falls, R. I., Miss Sarah E. Taylor, English-born daughter of a clergyman of the Primitive Methodist Church. Her hymn, entitled "The Divine Gift," was picked from 550 entries and was sung publicly for the first time at celebrations throughout the country marking the publication of the Revised Standard Version of the Bible. The text of the hymn (copyrighted by the Hymn Society of America) follows:

O God of Light, Thy Word, a lamp unfailing,
Shines through the darkness of our earthly way,
O'er fear and doubt, o'er black despair prevailing,
Guiding our steps to Thine eternal day,

From days of old, through swiftly rolling ages,
Thou hast revealed Thy will to mortal men,
Speaking to saints, to prophets, kings, and sages,
Who wrote the message with immortal pen.

Undimmed by time, the Word is still revealing
To sinful men Thy justice and Thy grace;
And questing hearts that long for peace and healing
See Thy compassion in the Savior's face.

To all the world the message Thou art sending,
To every land, to every race and clan;
And myriad tongues, in one great anthem blending,
Acclaim with joy Thy wondrous gift to man. Amen.

THEO. HOYER