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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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## THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER

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### A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE IN GREAT BRITAIN

In *Religious Education* (March—April, 1953) Dr. John K. S. Reid, secretary of the joint committee of the new translation of the Bible, Edinburgh, Scotland, publishes an interesting article about the new translation which the Churches in Great Britain purpose to publish. The article recognizes the value of the RSV but holds that the time has come when there should not be a revision of existing versions, but an entirely new translation fully adjusted to the language which the English people use today. A joint committee has been appointed, and the Church of England, the Methodist Church of Great Britain, the Congregational Union, and the Baptist Union have been asked for their co-operation in the new venture. An agreement has been reached with the Oxford and Cambridge University Presses on the terms under which they would undertake the publication and have vested in them the copyright of the new version. Members have been appointed to the panels on the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Apocrypha. The new translation is not to displace the Authorized Version, but it is to be used side by side with it. Its "superb literary qualities" are fully recognized; but as the original New Testament was written in the language of the time, so the advocates of the new version hold that the message of the Bible should be presented to the people today in "everyday speech." The new translation should not be a private undertaking as were those of Moffat, Weymouth, Goodspeed, and others, but should be the responsibility of the Church. It will have regard to native idiom and current usage of the English language; it will avoid Hebraisms and Graecisms which have not become anglicized; and freedom will be exercised in altering the construction of the original for the sake of intelligibility in English. The basis is to be the best ascertainable text (in the judgment of competent authorities). The translation will be printed in paragraph form, with the poetical books and passages in verse form, and the modern system of punctuation, including quotation marks, throughout. The work was planned already in 1947. Since then each year has been improved to solve the problems in the way of the version and to secure greater aim of objective and method. As basis the Old Testament translation will have the Hebrew text of Kittel's *editio tertia*. Where textual differences from the Masoretic text occur, each case will be considered on its merits and variations from the Masora will be carefully recorded.



For the New Testament a standard text, for example, Hort, Souter, or Nestle, will be used, but departures will be permitted if they can be vindicated in the judgment of the translators. When the new translation will be ready for publication, the writer does not surmise, but he expresses the hope that the venture "will abundantly prove to be for the profit of all people and *ad maiorem Dei gloriam*." Bible students in America have perhaps largely overlooked the British Revised Version. We have used it for years, and it has proved itself helpful in many cases. Judging from this work, one is inclined to view the new venture in Great Britain rather optimistically. J. T. MUELLER

#### THE MARRIAGE OF DIVORCED PERSONS

In the *Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* (April 15, 1953) Professor Ernst Kinder offers a very timely article on the subject "The Evangelical Conception of Marriage and Meaning of the Church Wedding" (*Die evangelische Auffassung von der Ehe und die Bedeutung der kirchlichen Trauung*). The article evinces the present trend in Lutheran circles in Germany to bring such institutions as marriage, the Christian home, and other important parts of the Christian life within the scope of God's Word. We select from the rather lengthy article a few paragraphs dealing with the marriage of divorced persons. Professor Kinder writes:

"Even if the New Testament now and then reckons with the possibility of separation, it is an established fact that in the case of such a separation (*Scheidung*), it knows only the alternative of reconciliation or foregoing marriage (1 Cor. 7:11). For the Church this must be the rule. This rule cannot be made a general law governing all persons, for not everyone has the power to remain unmarried (Matt. 19:11). For this reason the Church does not question the right of civil legislation to make it possible for divorced persons to remarry. A Christian, however, must ask himself, and the Church must insist upon this, whether he is not bound in his conscience to the rule of the New Testament either to become reconciled or to abstain from marriage. According to the directions of the New Testament, it is certainly excluded—and this must be recognized—that members of the Church may marry again (Matt. 19:8f.; Luke 16:18). Therefore the Church, not only according to these directions, but also according to the entire positive witness of the New Testament regarding the essence of marriage 'in Christ,' has no certain authority and no clear conscience to allow a church wedding (*kirchliche Trauung*) to such as have been divorced.



"It is true, also from this we cannot establish a principle that is absolutely without exception, because the New Testament does not speak of marriage by the Church. So here we have no direct commandment, and wherever there is no clear command of Scripture, the Church has no right to fix any absolute decree."

While Professor Kinder does not desire to go beyond Scripture in determining a church law which is binding in all cases, he nevertheless insists upon the rule. He recognizes remarriage especially in cases where the innocent part has done everything possible to bring about a reconciliation. It is evident of course that Christ's exception "except it be for fornication" (Matt. 19:9) should not be ignored.

With regard to engagement, Dr. Kinder writes: "From this analysis of marriage it follows that the free, personal consent of both persons (the *mutuus consensus*) is necessary for the marriage; indeed, by this [consensus] marriage is properly constituted (*konstituiert*), but in such a way that this (*betrothal*) is signified before public representatives as witnesses."

J. T. MUELLER

#### THE EVANGELICAL-ROMAN ECCLESIOLOGICAL CONVERSATIONS

Roman theology has not as yet completed its formulation of the doctrine of the Church. Even the papal encyclical *Corporis mystici Christi* has not settled the issues for Rome's doctrine of the Church. The cleavage between Roman Catholic theologians became quite evident in the Boston controversy in the question whether or not the famous dictum "*extra ecclesiam salus non est*" must be taken literally. Most American Romanists hold that membership in the Roman Church may be established by "desire"; that is, an upright non-Romanist becomes a member of the "alone-saving Church" by his sincere attempt to be virtuous. Others maintain that visible and external membership in the Church is the indispensable condition of salvation. In certain sections of Europe the Roman doctrine of the Church seems even more flexible than in the U. S. A., as is evident in the *Una Sancta* movement. This interdenominational movement provides for conferences between Evangelical and Roman theologians in the hope of bringing the two communions more closely together concerning the doctrine of the Church. Though these hopes have been badly shattered when the Pope for the first time in history made use of his infallibility in declaring the assumption of Mary, German Evangelicals continue to study the Roman Catholic doctrines and endeavor to get as clear and as accurate a picture of Rome as possible. Such a study center is the *Konfessionskundliches Institut* at Bensheim. Through the kind offices



of Dr. Otto Piper and others this institute only recently was able to purchase a permanent home to store, catalog, and study its rich depository in Luther studies and particularly its tremendous amount of source material on the doctrinal position of the Roman Catholic Church.

Dr. Gottfried Niemeier-Arnsberg offers an excellent article in *Materialdienst des Konfessionskundlichen Instituts* (December, 1952) on the history of the Evangelical and Roman Catholic "conversations" about the doctrine of the Church. Whenever Evangelicals and Romanists meet, the doctrine of the Church immediately becomes the focal point, and the discussion revolves about the nature of the only saving Church. The author therefore traces the history of the conversations between Rome and Evangelical theology under three main aspects: (1) the controversy between Martin Chemnitz and Robert Bellarmine, (2) the era of Friedrich Schleiermacher, (3) the modern era.

1. Both Martin Chemnitz and Robert Bellarmine make use of their tremendous knowledge of the history of Christian doctrine. But they are poles apart in their basic theological principles. Chemnitz follows the "solus" principle: *solus Christus, sola Scriptura, sola fide*. Bellarmine follows the "and" principle: Scripture and tradition, faith and works, grace and revelation. The clash between the two systems is such that the two can never meet. The author believes that both men reached such a confessional absolutism that each charged the other's communion with being so heretical and heterodox that Christ could not possibly be active in it.

2. In the author's opinion, George Callixt (d. 1656) somewhat modified this confessional absolutism when he established the Church's doctrinal position on the basis of the confessions of the first five centuries (*consensus quinquesaecularis*). But the author maintains it remained for Friedrich Schleiermacher to remove the confessional absolutism completely when he proclaimed his new epistemology and in accord therewith re-defined the Evangelical-Roman Catholic controversy. Schleiermacher denied that the two churches had two conflicting principles. He held that both Churches really have one and the same principle. Each, however, according to the law of individuation, has developed it in its own way; in other words, each Church represents one aspect of the same Christian spirit though one may present it more clearly than the other. But it is impossible for either one to condemn the other, because in both Christianity is present though in a different form. Schleiermacher finds the difference between the two in this, that Evangelical theology makes membership of the



individual in the Church dependent upon his relation to Christ, whereas Catholicism makes the relation of the individual to Christ depend upon his relation to the Church. The author points out that, in his attempt to destroy confessional absolutism, Schleiermacher became the victim of confessional relativism, which was unable to do justice either to Catholicism or to the theology of the Reformation, because, instead of viewing the two systems as consisting in contrast, he viewed them as being parallel one to the other. Therefore all theology which was influenced by Schleiermacher has been unable to make any ecclesiological contribution.

3. The most recent phase of the controversy between Rome and Evangelical ecclesiology is, according to the author, an attempted synthesis between Chemnitz—two opposing principles in the same historical reference—and the Schleiermacher thesis—a unified principle in a dual historical background. According to the author, this third phase of the conversation between Romanists and Evangelicals has thus far been predicated largely on the New Testament studies of Friedrich Heiler, E. Reisner, and G. Harbsmeier, who maintain that the New Testament itself contains such conflicts, e. g., between Peter and Paul, as have been brought to light in the Catholic-Evangelical antithesis. But the author points out that more is necessary, since all large denominations claim that their respective ecclesiologies are found in the New Testament. Since all communions appeal to the New Testament, it is well to keep in mind that "the Biblicism" of Calvinism differs fundamentally from that of Lutheranism and that both in turn differ from that of Roman Catholicism. Rome, too, looks for a Biblical foundation for its ecclesiological statement (as appears in Karl Adam's *The One and Holy*), but tradition plays a still larger role in the formulation of its doctrinal position.

It has therefore become increasingly important for partners in this conversation to view the entire doctrine of the Church from Christology and to keep in mind that Jesus Christ is the absolute Lord of His Church. It is therefore not sufficient merely to speak about, or simply to adduce, Scripture passages as prooftexts, but to manifest at all times the Christological significance for every statement concerning the doctrine of the Church. This means that everything that is done in the Church must be done in such a way that it points to the Lord of the Church, that the gifts of the Church are His gifts, her existence is His working, and her manifestations are His manifestations. Only within the framework of Christology is it possible to speak with authority. From this viewpoint nothing better has been said about the Church



than Article VII of the Augustana. In speaking of the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments the Article points beyond the Church to the contents of the Gospel and the gifts of the Sacrament, namely, to Jesus Christ. Every concept of the Church which goes beyond the boundaries of this article goes *eo ipso* beyond Scripture itself and reduces the Church to an "enthusiastic" utopia or to a secular institutional organization.

In view of this fact any conversation between Evangelicals and Romanists concerning the concept of the Church must center in the understanding of Article VII and remain within the limits and boundaries which this article has fixed. It is here where the spirits separate. It is not a system of principles nor history which digs a deep chasm between the two communions, but it is the interpretation of Scripture itself, as Karl Bauer states: "At the beginning of the German Reformation a German university professor arises with all the conscientiousness and logical sequence of such a professor. But this professor does not wish to please his own wisdom. He is a *doctor biblicus*, and in his conscience he is bound to that which he has found with his new hermeneutics as the kernel and heart of the Scriptures." And that must still be the principle today. The hermeneutics of the Scriptural Word separates the churches, and the Augustana merely confirms the unbridgeable chasm which separates Romanism from Lutheranism.

Confessional absolutism as well as confessional relativism can therefore be overcome only when it is recognized that Jesus Christ is the only exclusive, unconditional Lord of His Church, where His Gospel is preached in purity. It must therefore recognize at the same time that we are always confronted by the danger and the temptation somewhat to shortchange the Lord Jesus in His absolute Lordship. It is, after all, the specific sin of man, and of the pious man, to attempt to give his own interpretation concerning God and His Word. Therefore the Evangelical-Catholic contrast is not settled in the extent and activity of each Church. In both communions, even as in every Christian heart, there is a contrast between the Lordship of Christ and human wisdom.

F. E. M.

#### EMANCIPATION FROM THE SCRIPTURES

Under this heading, Prof. Uuras Saarnivaara, in the *Lutheran Outlook* (April, 1953) publishes a scholarly article, which he closes with the earnest question: "Is this [emancipation from Scripture] the way that the Lutheran Church—a large section of it—in America has chosen?" We recommend the article for careful study. It is relatively



brief, lucid, and convincing. Dr. Saarnivaara subjects to a keen scrutiny Aulén's view of Scripture. For Aulén, he writes, a doctrine is not validated or proved to be true by the fact that a certain part of the New Testament teaches it. Even the teaching of Jesus or Paul, or a book like the Epistle to the Romans, is no infallible authority. If a theologian or Christian shows that a doctrine is taught by Jesus, Paul, or some part of the Scriptures and on that basis holds that it is true and valid, he is a legalist. Likewise, if he holds that, *e. g.*, the doctrine of justification as Paul teaches it in Romans is Christian because it is taught by this Apostle and is in the New Testament, he has a legalistic conception of the New Testament. . . . The conceptions of the Christian faith, found in the New Testament, cannot without further consideration be accepted as legitimate parts of the Christian faith. The theologians and the Church must first consider, examine, these conceptions of faith found in the New Testament, and only if they are found to be correct (by what criterion?) can they be accepted. To Aulén the New Testament has no objective authority. The writer next compares Aulén's view of the Bible with that of Luther and shows that what Luther says in a number of quoted statements is in direct contrast to the view set forth by Aulén. The background of the conflict between Luther and Aulén is that the latter follows the Kantian-Neo-Protestant line of thinking, separating Scripture from a direct contact with God and assigning it wholly to the world of phenomena, whereas Luther believes that the Bible is a product of God's direct activity. Aulén has a much lower view of the authority of the Bible than has the Catholic Church.

In concluding his article Dr. Saarnivaara writes: "The fact that Aulén's dogmatics is widely used as a textbook in seminaries, gives reason to serious concern: Is American Lutheranism well on its way toward emancipation from Scripture? Is it giving up the Scriptural authority much more thoroughly than the Catholic Church? Are Lutheran pastors making a false oath when they promise to have Holy Scripture as the norm and rule of their faith, life and teaching?"

J. T. MUELLER

#### A HOME STUDY COURSE IN CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

Under this general heading Dr. John Murray, professor of systematic theology at Westminster Seminary, has so far published in the *Presbyterian Guardian* eight articles on Christian doctrine which in more than one way elicit the reader's admiration. The series is intended not for theologians, but the common people; yet it presents the Christian doctrine, from the Reformed view, of course, both profoundly and comprehensively. Under the more specific heading "The Application



of Redemption" Dr. Murray treats the doctrine of justification, of which the first part appears in the issue of May 15. To show what this periodical expects its readers to know of the article of justification by grace through faith, we quote a number of sentences on the "Nature of Justification." Dr. Murray writes:

"The truth of justification has suffered at the hands of human perversion as much as any doctrine of Scripture. One of the ways in which it has been perverted is the failure to reckon with the meaning of the term. Justification does not mean to make righteous, or good, or holy, or upright. It is perfectly true that in the application of redemption God makes people holy and upright. He begins to do this in regeneration, and He carries it on in the work of sanctification. He will perfect it in glorification. But justification does not refer to this renewing and sanctifying grace of God. It is one of the primary errors of the Romish Church that it regards justification as the infusion of grace, as renewal and sanctification whereby we are made holy. And the seriousness of the Romish error is not so much that it has confused justification and renewal, but that it has confused these two distinct acts of God's grace and eliminated from the message of the Gospel the great truth of free and full justification by grace. That is why Luther endured such travail of soul as long as he was governed by Romish distortion, and the reason why he came to enjoy such exultant joy and confident assurance was that he had been emancipated from the chains by which Rome had bound him; he found the great truth that justification is something entirely different from what Rome had taught. That justification does not mean to make holy or upright should be apparent from common use." Here follows an extended investigation of the New Testament use of "to justify." The article then closes with the word:

"This is what is meant when we insist that justification is forensic. It has to do with a judgment given, declared, pronounced; it is judicial, or juridical, or forensic. . . . Regeneration is an act of God in us; justification is a judgment of God with respect to us. The distinction is like that of the distinction between the act of a surgeon and the act of a judge. The surgeon, when he removes an inward cancer, does something in us. That is not what a judge does—he gives a verdict regarding our judicial status. . . . The purity of the Gospel is bound up with the recognition of this distinction. If justification is confused with regeneration or sanctification, then the door is opened for the perversion of the Gospel at its center. Justification is still the article of a standing or falling Church."

J. T. MUELLER



## DEGREES CONFERRED BY CONCORDIA SEMINARY

This journal takes pleasure in presenting the names of the candidates for one of the degrees offered by Concordia Seminary together with the topic of the dissertation. The following twenty-four graduates of 1953 received the B. D. degree:

Frederick Bartling	"Kerygma in Peter's Sermons"
Daniel De Block, Jr.	"Pre-Darwinian Interpretations of the Concepts of the Origin of Life, Variation, and Survival of Characters"
Luther Engelbrecht	"Marsiglio de Padua and the Defensor Pacis"
Carl Graesser, Jr.	"The Eighth-Century Prophets' Opinion of Cultus"
Herbert Hohenstein	"A Critical-Exegetical Study of Hebrews 6:4-8"
Curtis Huber	"Kierkegaard's Critique of Hegelian Idealism"
Enno Klammer	"The Influence of Pragmatism on Contemporary American Religious Education, with Especial Reference to the Sunday School Materials of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod"
Herbert Kretzmann	"The Relation of the Unio Mystica to the Corpus Doctrinae"
Walter Lang	"The Race Relations Problem of Today in the Light of St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians"
Donald Meyer	"The Metaphysical Bases of the Doctrine of God in Aquinas and Augustine"
Theodore Michalk	"The Concepts of Sin and Grace in Hinduism"
Marvin Middendorf	"The Conversion of St. Paul as Reflected by Paul's Usage of Charis"
Norman Nagel	"Incarnation and the Lord's Supper in Luther"
Louis Nuechterlein	"Chorale Texts and Tunes in Some Representative Present-Day Protestant Hymnals"
Clifford Peterson	"The Educational Ideas and Methods of the Brethren of the Common Life"
Don C. Preisinger	"The Christian Attitude Toward Birth Control"
Walter L. Rosin	"German Society at the Close of the Middle Ages and Its Effect on the Reformation"
Norbert Streufert	"A Study in Pauline Christology, Christ the Lord of All, an Interpretation of Col. 1:15-20"
Howard Tepker	"Problems in the Book of Jonah, the Date and Authorship"
John Tietjen	"The Meaning of the Epiphany Season of the Church Year"
Herman C. Waetjen	"The Concept of Doxa, Chiefly in the Gospel of St. John"



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| Richard Wagner | "The Evangelistic Methods of Dwight L. Moody"   |
| Walter Warmann | "The Lodge Question as Viewed by the Churches Affiliated with the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America" |

**Five fellows earned the S. T. M. degree:**

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| Victor Constien | "An Evaluation of the Theological Content of 'This Is the Life,' the Television Film Series of 1952—1953 Produced by Lutheran Television Productions" |
| Arthur Strege   | "A History of Missouri Synod Work in Japan"   |
| Milton Rudnick  | "Anglican and Orthodox Reunion"   |
| David Koenig    | "The New Testament Attitude Toward Government"  |
| George Krause   | "The Employment of Textual-Critical Methods and Principles by the Revision Committee in the RSV, with Special Reference to the Pauline Epistles"      |

**The Th. D. degree was conferred on the following three:**

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| Milo E. Lee           | "Doctrinal Peculiarities of the Epistle of St. James"   |
| Waldemar B. Streufert | "A Descriptive Study of the Methods of Argumentation Employed by the Writers of the New Testament"  |
| George Dolak          | "A History of the Slovak Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States of America, 1902 to 1927" |

F. E. M.

**BRIEF ITEMS FROM "RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE"**

In his annual report to the convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts Bishop Norman B. Nash warned political leaders against false witness. Congress, he said, has a duty to investigate subversion, but it also has a duty to distinguish between "gossip and truth." "A few reckless political leaders are ready to violate the commandment against false witness and to give circulation to rumor and falsehood." As a result, many citizens who are already alarmed over the totalitarian menace have become ready to believe the worst of any who are defending "our great American political tradition" of the right to differ. Congress, by its methods, should "protect, not destroy, good reputations and individual rights, particularly the right to express unpopular opinions. Otherwise, in defending our liberties, we shall lose them. In this matter the very foundation of government and of morals is indeed at stake."

Dr. Kenneth Scott Latourette, chairman of Yale University's department of religion and noted authority on Christian Missions and Far

East history, is retiring at the end of the current academic year. Dr. Charles W. Forman, secretary of the National Council of Churches' department of program emphasis, has been named to succeed him in the chair of missions at Yale's Divinity School on August 31. Dr. Forman was born in India, the son and grandson of missionaries. He pursued studies at Ohio State University, the University of Wisconsin, and Union Theological Seminary, went to India in 1944 to teach at North India United Theological College, Sharanpur, United Provinces, returned to the United States, and in 1951 joined the staff of the National Council. He is an ordained minister of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. . . .

Judge J. H. Glasser of Garfield County, Okla., declared that the records of his office show a decline in juvenile delinquency cases since released-time religious education programs have been carried on there. Prior to this program there was an increase of 150 per cent in juvenile delinquency in the country. "It is time," said the jurist, "to put the first things first and emphasize Christianity as the only assured factor in resolving human inequalities." . . .

Three large bodies of Syrian Christians have changed from the old Julian to the Gregorian calendar: the Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar and the Malankara Jacobite Syrian Church last year, and the Episcopal Synod of the Orthodox Syrian Church of Malabar in April of this year. . . .

The National Evangelical Film Foundation, at a dinner in Philadelphia, Pa., attended by church leaders engaged in film production, named The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod production "This Is the Life" the best TV film program of 1952. . . .

Plans are being made for an Anglican world congress to be held in Minneapolis, Minn., August 4—13, 1954. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Geoffrey Francis Fisher, has invited the Rt. Rev. Stephen E. Keeler, Episcopal Bishop of Minnesota, to be his guest in Lambeth Palace in England, July 20—24, to discuss matters that will be brought before the congress, such as any possible plan of intercommunion with non-Anglican churches as a step prior to further consideration of organic unity; mutual interests involved in the co-operation of English churches with the Convocation of American Churches in Europe. A budget of \$50,000 will be needed for the congress. . . .



The director of the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, Robert MacRae, in an address to a joint meeting of the Lutheran Welfare Conference in America (an affiliate of the National Lutheran Council) and the Associated Lutheran Charities (affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America), voiced some critical remarks and proposed some constructive measures which seem worth noting. Social work needs the Church, he said; it originated in the Church and could not long endure if the Church were abolished. "As possessor of superior moral insight, the Church has a responsibility to keep awake the social conscience of the community and must attack relentlessly, with all the vigor of a great heritage, the evils that infest society." But he warned that "the Church will not accomplish this task if it approaches it with self-righteousness or with greater concern for the length of a woman's skirt than for the well-being of her soul. The development of proper attitudes toward God will result in proper social attitudes." But some of the worst social work in America is being done by church-sponsored agencies. "Some of it is so bad it smells; some of it is silly, sentimental, stupid, and oblivious of all professional developments of the past 50 years; and some is guilty of the worst discriminatory practices against minority groups." Some fail to recognize the need for properly trained personnel; too many clergymen who had proved unsuccessful in the ministry were given jobs in church social work; this should not be regarded as a haven for incompetents.

Speaking to a group of 250 clergymen, members of the Washington Ministerial Union and Ministerial Alliance who paid their annual courtesy call at the White House, President Eisenhower said: "I so firmly believe that all free government is soundly based on religious faith that I feel no one teaching moral standards and spiritual ideals should do so apologetically." Turning to a group of chaplains who accompanied the clergymen, he added: "I occasionally have had quarrels with chaplains. It was always because they were too diffident in their preaching. I think they should have been a little more belligerent in what they had to say." He drew a chorus of "Amens" from the clergymen. We, from this distance, would add another "Amen."

The Norwegian Synod of the American Evangelical Lutheran Church celebrated its centenary during the annual convention of the Synod at Bethany Lutheran College in Mankato, Minn., May 29 to June 4.

THEO. HOYER