



"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

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# The Imperatives of Scripture

It is quite natural that in theological discussion we search for every legitimate argument that we can find to support the convictions for which we are contending. That this support must have its source in Scripture is a basic premise of our theological method. The dangers of putting reason on a par or even above Scripture are so obvious that we need not recount them here. But we need to scrutinize even our arguments from Scripture with constant care as to their relevance and validity. This is particularly necessary when we are dealing with a devious and evasive exegesis that would deprive a simple and clear passage of Scripture of its obvious meaning. Such attempts have been made with regard to Romans 16:17-18, in spite of the fact that this passage has long been recognized as a sedes doctrinae concerning church fellowship. Under these circumstances it would seem to be a conclusive argument to point out that such an exegesis involves a tampering with one of the imperatives of Scripture. This seems to be such a crushing reply that we leap at the opportunity.

But is this eagerness truly of the Spirit - or is this our flesh which is speaking? The intent of this article is to show that this depends on how we use the argument and what it is that we put into the term "imperatives." It is certainly true that each of these imperatives is the voice of God, is an expression of His holy and perfect will, and may therefore never be ignored with impunity. But simply to equate the term with "Law," to invest it with all the implications of threat and punishment, to forge the mere grammatical form of the imperative into a lethal weapon which we then proceed to swing like a bludgeon, - all this would mean that we fail to recognize the many different uses of which this

"command" form is capable. It is this severe restriction of the sense of these terms plus the resultant meagerness of our own understanding of the function which also these imperatives fulfill with regard to the proclamation and application of the Gospel which would make him who wields this weapon the first one to suffer from it. The following examples taken from the words of Jesus will illustrate the point.

How wide this range of meaning can be is shown by two words, spoken in close connection with each other, parallel in substance if not in form,\* but which are nevertheless poles apart in their implications. In Matthew 25 the Lord describes the Great Judgment, when He shall say to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of my Father," and to those on the left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed." (verses 34 and 41) The one expression is a most wonderful invitation to enter upon full possession of a blessed heritage, the other a word of final judgment and banishment. The latter is fearful Law, the former purest Gospel. Yet the outward form of both words is the same.

It is instructive to observe how frequently this same *ΣΕΥΤΕ* recurs in the words of our Lord: in the "Come and dine" of the risen Christ on the shores of the Tiberian Sea (Jn 21:12), in the invitation to discipleship ("Follow me" - Mt 4:19; Mk 1:17), in the invitation to the marriage feast (Mt 22:4), in the invitation to share a few moments of rest with Him (Mk 6:31), but above all in the Great Invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Mt 11:28) In each case the word that has the form of a command is in reality a most gracious offer to receive or to share a great

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\*Although the *ΣΕΥΤΕ* of Mt 25:34, the plural form of *ΣΕΥΠΟ*, may according to Thayer well be a contraction of *ΣΕΥΠΙΤΕ*, and thus a true imperative even as to form.

and unmerited blessing. This thought gives us the key to another familiar word of the Savior, one which because of its somber setting is, however, often not appreciated as fully as it should be: "Enter ye in at the strait gate." For children of God who know what lies beyond that gate there should be not a moment's hesitation in recognizing this as another one of those gracious invitations to partake of a great and unmerited blessing. For whatever else these words may say - and we shall return to them presently - they first of all grant us a privilege that would otherwise forever be beyond our reach.

Closely related are the imperatives that confer a gift. They appear in almost every instance where the merciful Healer granted such blessings as the gift of speech and hearing ("Ephphatha" - Mk 7:34), of sight ("Go, wash" - Jn 9:6f), of health ("Be thou clean" - Mk 1:41), and of life itself as it was granted when the Prince of Life spoke those mighty words of command to the daughter of Jairus, the youth at Nain, and at the tomb of Lazarus. Sometimes these gifts were purely spiritual: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost" (Jn 20:22) And then there is the priceless gift of His blessed Body and Blood: Take, eat . . . Take, drink ye all.

Rather in a class by themselves are the imperatives of prayer. It is one of the little courtesies of life that in dealing with people we temper our requests with a "Please," or put them into the form of a question, even a conditional inquiry: "Would you be so kind as to . . ." We do not want to appear to be too demanding. Extreme need may indeed make one very importunate, as in the case of the Syro-Phoenician woman (Mt 15), or the disciples who so rudely broke in on their slumbering Lord with their despairing cry, "Lord, save us, we perish!" (Mt 8:25) It seems strange, therefore, that Jesus should not only encourage a most direct approach in prayer ("Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" - Mt 7:7), but would actually teach His disciples to be shamelessly importunate in their prayer by showing

them the example of the man who was finally heard "because of his importunity." (Lk 11:8). For the important thing is that we secure those blessings that our Heavenly Father alone can give - be they great or small. So He has taught us to pray with imperatives: "Give us this daily our daily bread," as well as "Forgive us our trespasses . . ."

It is quite natural that our Lord should also make constant use of the imperative in His patient teaching of His disciples. For so large a part of teaching is simply guidance, telling the learner what he should or should not do. But what made His teaching particularly precious was His constantly recognizable concern to provide and preserve for His disciples the priceless blessings of the salvation that He had come to bring. The Sermon on the Mount is full of such instances. It abounds in words of instruction. Following on the parable of the salt of the earth and the light of the world with its obvious bearing on the function of His followers in the world, He tells them, first positively, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," and then negatively: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets. I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." (Mt 5:16 and 17). These were things they had to know and understand if they were to serve Him effectively. He spoke words of warning as well: "Agree with thine adversary quickly," as well as words of encouragement: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." (Mt 5:25 and 6:33). In fact, some of these words serve several purposes at the same time. We have already noted the invitation that lies in the "Enter ye in at the strait gate." But that same word certainly offers encouragement to the weary traveler, just as on the other hand it warns against the dangers of the enticingly broad and easy way that leads to destruction. Elsewhere there are words of sound advice: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." (Mt 6:19f). It sounds a stern and much needed warning: "Beware of false prophets."

(Mt 7:15). But in all these words, in each of these imperatives, we recognize the intense concern of the Savior for the well-being of His own, the concern of the Good Shepherd for His flock and each individual member of it.

These examples are enough to show how in most cases the imperatives of our Lord are bearers of blessings rather than terms of demand, threat, and compulsion. They lie in the area of grace and not of works. True, He could speak sternly also to His disciples, His reply to Peter's tempting suggestion that He spare Himself the suffering and death that He had just foretold was a stunningly stern rebuke: "Get thee behind me. Satan!" (Mt 16:23) His dismissal of Judas ("That thou doest, do quickly!" - Jn 13:27) was terrible in its implications. But among the many words spoken to the disciples these are rare exceptions. There is, however, one group of imperatives that call for special attention, those by which our Lord conferred upon His disciples the mission for which He had prepared them. It began when He sent forth the Twelve (and afterwards the Seventy - Lk 9:1f; 10:1) and commanded them, saying, "Go . . . to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of God is at hand." (Mt 10:5-7) It became very personal when the risen Christ reinstated a fallen Peter with His "Feed my lambs, feed my sheep." (Jn 21:15-17) It was a truly royal mandate for them and for the Church of all time when He said, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations," and "Preach the Gospel to every creature," (Mt 28 and Mk 16) These were imperatives indeed, and yet no one was driven or coerced by them - just as little as were those women at the Tomb who were told to "go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead." (Mt 28:7) This was no burden! It was a privilege to be bearers of such good news, of such an *εὐαγγέλιον* a privilege for them as well as subsequently for His apostles. And though the words with which He told them how they were to conduct themselves, how they were to carry out their difficult assignment (see the rest of Mt 10) as well as how to function in a particularly trying situation

(Mt 18:15-20) - though all these were indeed in the command form; yet they were most welcome directives for these disciples who still had so much to learn and who would have been hopelessly lost without this wonderful guidance and instruction of their Great Teacher.

It is therefore not surprising that these imperatives of Christ find a constant echo in the subsequent writings of these same Apostles, as well as of that one who was born out of due time. So we hear Peter, warning as he had been warned ("Be sober, be vigilant" I Pt 5:8), and repeating almost the very words that had been spoken to him: "Feed the flock of God." (I Pt 5:2) We hear John, teaching others as he had been taught: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." (I Jn 4:11) We find Paul, massing his imperatives for the sake of his disciple: "Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (II Tm 4:2) But always one can hear that same note of concern for the welfare, the salvation of "the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (Act 20:28)

And so with Roman 16:17, "avoid them." It is an imperative, indeed. But before we stress the grammatical form for the sake of the annihilating weapon which it seems to press into our hands, let us recall its content and its intent. For it is precisely one of those protective words of which we have noted so many examples, indicating the concern of the Savior (and in this case also His servant, the Apostle) for the well-being and safety of the Church for which He gave His very life. "Lest by good words and fair speeches they deceive the hearts of the simple." This 18th verse which is so often forgotten or, if remembered, is made a bone of contention as to whether certain causers of divisions and offenses may really be called "Belly-servers," throws a wonderfully clear light on the stern "avoid," letting us see it for what it truly is, namely an expression of the saving love of the Good Shepherd who cannot bear to see harm befall His flock. As He warned against wolves in sheep's

clothing, so He warns here. Let us note this and we shall not have to resort to the "force of the imperative" for the sake of defending our use of the passage - or exposing the evil of evading it! We shall not want to treat these imperatives in that way. For we have found that so many of them are used to convey rich blessings, blessings that will suffer harm if we turn the words that bring them to us into harsh and forbidding commands.

But, it will be said, do we not weaken these words by this procedure? Are we not falling into some new form of Antinomianism? Not at all. For these are words that are addressed to Christians, to believers, to children of God, who recognize in these words the voice of their Heavenly Father, and who find in them an expression of His will, His gracious and good will. Their response has been formulated long ago: "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart." (Ps 40:8) This is what the Apostle meant when he wrote "that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient . . ." (I Tm 1:9) For such willing obedience is worth infinitely more than any grudging compliance that may be exacted by the threats and force of the Law. And this is what the Father seeks in those branches that bring forth much fruit - because they abide in Him who is the true Vine, Jn 15:5.

But does this not indicate that men may after all ignore these words with impunity? Again we answer, By no means. To ignore these words that are such bearers of blessings is to incur the loss of those same blessings, whatever they may be. This may involve an absolute and irretrievable loss, as when the call to faith is scorned, for "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." (Jn 3:18) It may involve a terrible, though not irretrievable experience - such as the one from which the Savior would have protected Peter, had he but heeded the warning. It may mean the loss of comfort and strength that could have been ours through prayer. And as for Romans 16 - to ignore this word of guidance and protection will



certainly jeopardize or involve the loss of that specific blessing that the Lord of the Church is bestowing by this particular directive. Therefore also this passage may not be ignored with impunity. But what that specific loss may be, that is not for us to say.

We do well to leave that to God.

E.R.

## A Warming at Strange Fires

At the close of the year 1960, Christianity Today, the fortnightly church periodical, had attained a circulation in excess of 172,000 copies per issue. Such growth achieved in less than five years by what is essentially a trade journal must be recognized as highly significant. Even a superficial investigation of the contributing circumstances would suffice to reveal the causes of such a phenomenal rise in popularity; for they do not lie deeply hidden.

The success of this magazine demonstrates the hunger prevalent in areas of the visible church which have in recent years been without an adequate public voice. In an age of neo-liberalism and theological confusion which by its humanism has gutted the authority of Scripture and left the Christian world at the mercy of every mountebank with enough genius to invent a different conception of the Word of God, God-fearing clergymen in many denominations have eagerly welcomed the tone of this conservative publication.

It had begun to appear that hitherto reliable theological publications were throwing in the towel in the struggle of Bible-centered faith against the forces of liberalism. Former stalwarts of Christian apologetics had largely stacked their arms and retreated behind the non-committal doors of their ivory towers. Who was left to stand upon the battlements and cry with commanding force against the spoilers of the vineyard? Who was prepared to meet the verbose

exponents of Existentialism, Barthianism and Brunnerism upon the complex battlefield of their own choosing?

Ears were cocked in expectation, hoping that a champion would arise to deliver Israel from the Philistines. An editorial in Christianity Today recently quoted Prof. Thorwald Bender of Eastern Baptist Seminary as saying: "Perhaps there has never been a period in the history of the Church when so many people, in so many places, have engaged in theological discourse as today. On the other hand, the pastor feels the subtle pressure of the laity seeking doctrinal certainties from the pulpit in the midst of the frustrating uncertainties and relativisms of a human idealism signed by the heat of atomic explosions." (Issue, Dec. 5.)

Into the ripeness of this fulness of time Christianity Today was launched as a proposed answer to the need, and met with immediate success. Adopting a policy of free distribution, the publishers circulated their venture widely at its inception and thus established a large circle of appreciative clients from whom the subscription price of future issues was then gently solicited.

A primary stimulant to people deeply concerned with the preservation of what to them constitutes Gospel-preaching is found by them in the telling frontal attack levelled by Christianity Today against the hard face of modernistic theology. The magazine is able to draw upon a rich fund of dignified scholarship. The superbly keen minds which edit the magazine and the front-rank caliber of many contributors combine to provide the reader with a high grade of thought-provoking material. This ranges from positive theological presentations to devastating reflections upon the theology of liberalism as well as upon the stubborn remnant of extreme social-gospelists still inhabiting the fringes of Christendom.

One of the finest examples of such polemics has been the exquisite satire of the "Ferlora Gospel,"

a guest editorial credited to "Richard Hunter, Associate Professor of English, Muskingum College, New Concord, Ohio." This somewhat obscure author introduced his contribution with a somber, tongue-in-cheek by-line that reads: "After the tragic death of the recent president of the National Conference of Christians and Agnostics, Hollis Ferloren, certain papers were found in his breast pocket. We pass their contents on to you. Mr. Ferloren is survived by his widow, the former Hope Flickering of Toledo, Ohio." There is of course no such association as a "National Conference of Christians and Agnostics;" and if a reader is at least bi-lingual, he will during the reading of the "breast pocket papers" suddenly bring his nagging mind back to the introduction and discover that "Hollis Ferloren" is actually "Alles verloren;" whereupon the maiden name of the widow also appears in proper perspective.

The apparent levity of this play on words is, however, only apparent. When the opening paragraph of the alleged legacy of Mr. Ferloren announces the theme of his message, its deadly seriousness is unmistakable despite the biting irony: "As Christianity has been accused of excessive fondness for antiquated ideas, it is my responsibility to present it to you in terms pleasing to the modern mind. Surely such a worn-out phrase as 'Sell all you have and give to the poor' would explode with new force were we to say, 'Translate your bonds and debentures into ready capital to provide an upgraded standard of living for the lower class;' 'Love thy neighbor' could become 'Display empathy in a psychic ethnocentricity;' and 'Fear not: I have overcome the world' could ring clear as a bell as, 'Unblock your libido: the existential predicament has been transcended.' Just a little thought, and Christianity can be lifted out of the coarse fabric of everyday life and given, along with human engineering, archery, and training in running a slide-projector, academic respectability." (Issue, Dec. 5, 1960)

Examples of expert doctrinal positivism in Christianity Today, particularly in its exposition of

Inspiration and of other fundamentals of Scripture, are too numerous to mention, and even very selective quotations would carry us beyond the aim of this discussion. We undertake rather to point out that many of the articles, despite their professional excellence, are designed to promote the Calvinistic theology. This was to be expected. The journal is an organ of Fundamentalism and breathes the spirit of the Reformed persuasion. In the same issue from which we have quoted above, for example, we find a year's-end symposium of evaluation and forecast, a scanning of the Christian horizon condensed from the observations of fifty contributing editors. In this symposium preoccupation with the Kingdom of God as a visible concept is strongly discernible. Millennialistic vibrations quiver between the lines and set the whole picture shimmering. Leading contributors of the magazine, such as Oswald T. Allis, G. C. Berkouwer, Geoffrey Bromiley, Frank Gaebelien and numerous others, are stalwarts of the Dutch and American Reformed school of theology.

It may be timely, therefore, to plant a yellow flag of caution at the edge of the growing field of influence which Christianity Today, as well as the numerous books being published by its individual theologians in recent years, have staked out in Lutheran circles. It cannot be gainsaid that the products of this vocal, aggressive and undeniably able branch of Christendom have made a profound impression also upon conservative Lutheran pastors and theologians whose own professional journals have fallen upon evil days.

There was a time when publications such as the Quartalschrift of the Wisconsin Ev. Luth. Synod and the Concordia Theological Monthly of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod served as adequate witnesses of the Truth and defenders of the Faith. They boasted a genuine scholarship and displayed a keen awareness of the nature and threat of modernism. Their trumpets sounded a clear tone and prepared the Church for battle.

Among us it is hardly necessary to point out that the former commanding presence of these publications has retreated to midget proportions. Not only has the voice of the trumpet subsided to a squeak; alas, there is a subtle harmony of subversive doctrine emanating from its throat. The change was initially noticeable in an atmosphere of increasing reticence. Polemics and apologetics became less vigorous and more rare. Today this needful phase of orthodox theology has become conspicuous either by its total absence or by the insipid quality of its approach. Such degeneration is nowhere better typified than by a very recent report in the C. T.M. reviewing the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches which convened at San Francisco in December of 1960. This article, with its mixture of fawning evaluation and viewing with concern, concludes with this utterly toothless judgment upon a crassly unchristian organization:

"In view of these uncertainties regarding the basis as well as the goal of the National Council it would appear to be charitable - to say the least - to recognize the scruples of such as hesitate to be identified by full membership in this organization." (C.T.M. Feb. '61, p. 107).

Such pompous understatements must nauseate every energetic Lutheran conservative and supply ample cause for the respect accorded to Christianity Today among those whose own spokesmen have left them in the lurch. But the traumatic effect of the breakdown in Lutheran positiveness has plunged Lutheran circles into considerable spiritual peril. Its result has been an uncritical readiness of acceptance in the hearts of incautious pastors, a receptiveness that fails to set up guards against the plausible yet perilous "other gospel" of Reformed Theology.

One faintly senses the relevancy of a simple fable of the old West. It concerns a cowboy hastening through a thickening blizzard toward the shelter of his home ranch. En route he comes upon a lonely cabin in the prairie. A flickering light in the little window suggests warmth and rest. The half-frozen man

knows that he ought not dally; but his resolution falters and he decides to ask for a few moments' respite in the strange cabin. There being no answer to his knock, he enters and finds the cabin unoccupied. But a pleasant fire is roaring in the fireplace, and without further reflection he crouches before it and luxuriates in its heat. His tired body relaxes, he is overcome by sleep - and falls forward into the flaming logs. Thus the latter state of that man became worse than the first. He should have gone on home to the care of his fellows.

Let those who rejoice in the heat of fundamentalism's fervor beware its singeing qualities. Fundamentalism is not Lutheranism. Above all, in essence it is not truly scriptural. Moreover, the sons of the fathers of Lutheran orthodoxy must not forget that their illustrious teachers of former generations were militant opponents, not only of the corruptions of Antichrist, but of Calvinism as well. Dr. F. Pieper, for example, could and did say: ". . . in those doctrines in which the Reformed Church differs from us and by which it has divided Protestantism it does so because it has put rationalistic axioms in the place of the Scripture principle." (Dogmatics, I, 197.) In a more extensive passage he writes:

"Because the Calvinists teach particular grace and an immediate operation of grace, they must lead sinners smitten by the Law to base the favor of God on gratia infusa, on an internal change, i.e., on sanctification and good works, instead of on the means of grace. Far from safeguarding the Gospel against the 'ergism' (salvation by works) of Rome, i. e., against the perversion of the Gospel into Law, Calvinism regularly and necessarily embraces this perversion. Since there is no immediate operation of the Spirit, as Calvinism assumes, the purported experience of the Spirit's operation must be man's own product. This is the reason why Calvinists, like all other teachers of the doctrine of works, construct definitions of the Gospel which make it Law. The Calvinists define the Gospel as a mere 'plan of

salvation,' i.e., as a proclamation of the terms upon which man may share in divine grace. . . . For the Calvinists the Gospel is anything but\* the proclamation and gift of the remission of sins purchased by Christ." (Ibid.III, 247f.)

It is greatly to be feared that the state of theological scholarship among us, lowered by the consuming demands upon our time, the fast pace of our age, and other factors, disables many of us for the needful task of penetrating the learned and persuasive surface of the material offered by Christianity Today and attaining to a perception of the real theology which it promotes. Nor does the occasional article of a Lutheran theological professor welcomed to its pages serve to make us more conscious of the need for cautious reading and a discerning of the spirits, although the appearance of his name in such heterogeneous company ought to underscore the fact that we are here dealing with people for whom the scriptural concept of full doctrinal unity as a prerequisite for the fellowship of preaching has no practical reality.

Doctrinally, Christianity Today - and we may include certain lesser periodicals of our day such as the Christian Beacon - is oriented in Calvinism and, insofar as it is Calvinistic, lacks the power of the Gospel. Its attacks upon liberalism, while doubtless sincere and impressive in their gravity of tone, are oftentimes academic and philosophical rather than armed with the gleaming sword of the naked Scripture. Its evangelical hero, meanwhile, is Billy Graham, a leading exponent of enthusiasm.

In warming ourselves at strange fires, we ought to be fully cognizant of the constant risk of ingesting the vapors of their rationalistic spirit. The

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\* The translator has not done justice to Pieper's original German: "Dem Calvinisten ist das Evangelium alles andere, nur nicht die Verkuendigung und die Darbietung der von Christo erworbenen Vergebung der Sunden." Literally: For the Calvinist the Gospel is everything else, only not the proclamation and proffer . . . . etc.

heritage of Luther must not be smothered in the hearts of leaders and shepherds of our flocks by the very forces against which Luther militated so successfully and from which we have been spared by God's Grace. While we agree that Reformed Fundamentalism offers much that is stimulating and instructive, it is urgently necessary that we relate its expressions to the basically legalistic and synergistic source from which they derive their values. It is our business to learn how to appreciate isolated expressions of Truth as a gift of God without identifying the whole movement with orthodoxy or - what is more likely and equally indefensible - identifying ourselves with the movement in a subtly unionistic devotional fellowship that enervates and ultimately corrupts our Spirit-wrought convictions and our preaching.

E.S.

## A Pastoral Letter

### Part I

(Explanatory note: When we were asked by the editors of the Journal of Theology to render one of Dr. V. Koren's excellent articles into English, we determined that a most timely article would be his Letter to fellow pastors after having been chosen president of the Norwegian Synod to succeed the Rev. Herman Amberg Preus, whose death occurred on July 2, 1894. Quite a few of Dr. Koren's addresses have been made available in English, especially in the books Grace for Grace and Faith of Our Fathers. But why is this Letter so timely just at this time?

No one acquainted with the struggle which has been going on within the Synodical Conference for more than two decades will deny that there has been need of a friendly word of true pastoral counsel to settle the confusion which has been spread abroad among our people, largely because they do not know the facts. When Luther spoke about the qualities



which were needed by the man who was to lead in the work of God's kingdom, what was the virtue he singled out as the one needed most of all? "Das Mutterherz," the mother heart, is his answer. He says: "Where the mother heart, the great love, is not present and governs the preacher, there the little lambs will be poorly shepherded." (St. L. Walch 13, 483.)

It is especially to encourage the pastors who are far removed from the fellowship and counsel of fellow pastors, and who may be tempted to think that their labours are of little or no account, that he sends out this bit of wholesome advice. It was not true, as some wanted us to believe, that President Koren was an harsh man, who delighted in "putting a man in his place." No man with the wealth of Scriptural knowledge and as deep a concern for the hearts and souls of men as characterized Dr. Koren could ever be an harsh man. But what he detested with all the vigor of a sensitive heart and soul was the vain mouthings of those who were ever anxious to impress their fellows with their wisdom, which had no foundation in that word of truth which has been written "for our admonition."

Dr. Koren could be very gracious in his commendation of that which met with his approval. But he did not want anyone to go away with the idea that there might not be things which needed correction. As a sample of this, I shall never forget the lesson he taught me as a young man at a Lincoln Day celebration in my college days. They had given me ( a freshman) the task of delivering Lincoln's well-known Gettysburg Address. That I did as best I knew how and as I imagined it had been delivered. Dr. Koren sat in the very front row of seats in the auditorium that night. He was a great admirer of the martyred president. At the end of the program he came up on the stage and commended me for the way in which I had delivered the address. "But," added the honest Dr. Koren, "that was not the way it was delivered. Lincoln would have spoken thus in that final sentence: 'government of the peepul, by the peepul, and for the peepul.'" And no doubt he was right when he said it.

It is the Mutterherz which beats through this entire Letter. He does not look upon himself as the only one who has the correct answer in every instance. But he does tell all of his fellow pastors where they are to find their answer as well as their comfort in all their problems. It is in the written word (it was Dr. Koren who chose the synod's well-known slogan: γράφειν, it is written.) In the words of an Isaiah his counsel is this: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." Isa. 8,20. God bless Dr. Koren's memory among us, both for his Scriptural counsel and his word of real encouragement. It is sorely needed in our confessionless and therefore confused age.) Now the Letter.

Dear Brethren!

Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus, our Lord! When I this summer at the death of my old friend and fellow worker (President H. A. Preus) was compelled to surrender my former and to me more precious position as district president and to assume the office of general president, I was asked whether they could expect from me an address to the clergy upon my entrance to the office. I then considered it quite unnecessary. My position in the church body had not essentially been changed, and it had so often fallen to my lot to speak to the clergy in introductory and synodical addresses, that I at this time did not feel it demanded of me to say anything else than what I so often had said.

When I now, nevertheless, through this writing address myself to you, my dear <sup>the</sup> fellow workers in the ministry of the word, then it is thought of the conditions under which so many of you are labouring which has prompted me to write. There are many of you who are far removed from all brethren in the office, and you very rarely experience the encouragement of gathering with any of them. And many of whom this cannot be said, are nevertheless by demands made upon them by their office, forced through the greater part of the year to bear the burdens of

their work and their problems all alone. And even if this were not the case, I had thought that a word of encouragement would perhaps not be unwelcome to one or the other, who under the constantly recurring burdens and problems of the office have experienced how easily carelessness and weariness or even dejection may find its way into your soul.

Who of us is there that has not experienced this? Who has not often felt himself indisposed to his sermon preparation and his instruction of the young? careless of his own personal practice of godliness in his daily life, dull to prayer and to intercessory prayer for the congregation and for individual souls? tempted to postpone or neglect such activities which should serve to the awakening of the congregation, its development and advance in its knowledge of and the truth of its acceptance, as for instance the proper preparation for Communion, meetings of various kinds, work for the dissemination and use of good books and the like? Who has not felt himself tempted to impatience and carelessness about those things which should further the establishment and promulgation of the truth in the affairs of our synod and the welfare of God's kingdom as a whole? Yes, who has not experienced, that he not only has been tempted in these matters, but also more or less has given in to the temptation and has neglected many things which he should have done?

It would not be so difficult to remain vigilant in watchfulness, if there were not so many things that divert the mind, so many things which want to remove our objective. To divert is the opposite of gathering. But it is a united heart that we stand in need of. "Unite my heart to fear thy name," we pray in the 86th Psalm. For "a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways," we are told by James. It is a united will that our Saviour wants to inculcate when He says: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9,62.) Absent-minded we become, when we, instead of having our mind centered on the objective of our calling, and letting everything center in that, we busy our-

selves with such things which in themselves might be permissible, or useful, or even noble, but which for us become a snare, which binds us to interests which have nothing to do with our calling, and which will tempt us to forget it or give it a secondary place. "All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient." Paul makes this statement twice in his first epistle to the Corinthians, and in the latter instance he adds: "All things edify not."

That which serves for rest and refreshment of the body and soul can be both useful and edifying, when it serves to make you stronger and more willing to carry on your work. Thus to occupy yourself with music, gardening, the supervision of farming and the like. But if we were to spend as much time on these things which a conscientious pastor would devote to his office, we would then divert our mind and thus make it unfit and callous to our life's calling. It is not to the credit of any pastor that his lawn is well kept, when his congregation has been by-passed and neglected.

The same is true of reading. There are indeed many things beyond what can outrightly be designated as edifying reading, which we both can and ought to read. Such reading will have to be classified with those things which may serve as rest or recreation. It may also partly, in another way, indirectly serve our calling. If we are to know our times and discern its signs, we shall have to make use of the occasions afforded us through our reading to discover what effects our age both in the church and among the enemies of the church. But that which it is necessary to watch carefully is, that such reading is used in the service of your office. There are those who are so intent in their keeping in view their objective, and who are so filled with the thought of their office, that they can make use of all things with which they meet to serve them, and thus also make use of all manner of reading as fruitful for their work. But this gift only a few enjoy. Still more common is the danger that all manner of reading may tend to divert instead of steadying your

mind. Even learned theological reading may be misused in this way, let alone reading of other matters.

The conditions under which we live do not in the meantime endanger us in our studies of becoming "book-worms." The greater danger is that we, by an unwise choice of what we read, lead ourselves into temptation. The old maxim: "Tell me with whom you associate, and I will tell you who you are," has also here its application. He who constantly and, as a rule, seeks out Reformed authors, for whom what is distinctly Lutheran, that is the biblical, is a stranger, will easily become a stranger to it himself. He who seeks his development and spiritual nourishment in such modern teachers who in more than one sense, or in a pregnant sense, are children of their time, and on whom the spirit of the times has set its all too evident mark, will with difficulty find himself at home in those teachers' writings who are far above the ephemeral writings of their day, those teachers which God has given to the church to be a light for all times, and for whom faithfulness to the unchangeable word of God is the essential mark, while the traces they bear of their times, though they be ever so evident, are nevertheless accidental, external and unessential. That miserable stuff which was read during the past century, which was consumed and praised by many otherwise intelligent theologians, and the wretched caricatures of Christianity into which they were led, gives a striking example of the necessity of being on your watch in this matter. In many respects it is not much better toward the end of this century.

Perhaps more common in our circles is the temptation to make use of reading as a "pastime." The very word contains its judgment. That he who admits that he never "gets time" to do more than a small part of what he ought to do - and that every pastor would have to admit - nevertheless day after day discovers something with which to "pass away the time!"

Yet, even if we do not let ourselves be "diverted," and even if we are ever so zealous in our many

doings, it is not a proof of our being faithful servants and wise servants, both of which Christ admonishes us to be. Matt. 24:45. Luke 12:42.

It belongs to faithfulness that we serve the Lord, not ourselves. It belongs to wisdom that we do our service such that it can bear as much fruit as possible, and that we do not deceive ourselves with good intentions whose carrying out is postponed.

How many there are who have borne the name of servants of the "word," but who have simply served themselves, I need not remind you. There are many who like a Demas have learned to love the present world, without therefore leaving their office. There are many who have sought their own honour, and especially among those to whom the greatest "gifts" had been entrusted. They have already received their reward. We will be surprised when we shall see how our heavenly Father has blessed just those small gifts, in the eyes of men, when those gifts were used with faithfulness in His service.

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(The foregoing translation of this letter to pastors in the Norwegian Synod by their newly elected president Dr. V. Koren has been translated for us by Dr. N. A. Madson, and is only part of the entire letter. The remainder will follow D.v. in our next issue. Ed.)

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# P A I D E I A

## The Exceptional Child

We are speaking of those children who for one or more reasons deviate considerably from the central cluster on the typical bell curve of normal distribution of abilities related to learning. The abnormal child can as likely be supernormally bright as sub-normally dull, and the deviation can cause equally great, and sometimes similar teaching-learning problems. We will not in this paper discuss the unfortunates who differ because of deafness, blindness, cerebral palsy, or even extreme subnormal mentality.

As we understood the assignment as originally stated, it called for help in the religious instruction of those who are slow to come up to "standard" in mastering the requirements for confirmation in the faith and the ability to examine themselves whether they be in the faith, penitent and believing.

Accordingly, we wish to offer some suggestions for the more effectual teaching of religion. We take it that a sense of ineffectiveness, sometimes acute almost to the point of guilt, bothers us with respect to our failure to get through to the seemingly normal as well as to the exceptionally slow children.

We are not sure that philosophy of education, interpreted as method in relation to "how things go," is any one-shot part of the answer. But we do believe that our way of teaching can be such that children, especially the unusually slow, will respond with adience or abience, or, more simply, with attraction or repulsion. We cannot enhance the power of the Spirit in the Word, but by our foolishness we can get in its way. We can, by taking thought, get out of the Spirit's way. And in saying this we are aware of the deep division among men that is caused by the mysterious workings of grace as well as by the

mystery of iniquity. "And there was a division among them, some believed and some believed not" runs like a refrain through sacred history.

To repeat, we can, in our lack of wisdom and in our lack of understanding of the growth and development of children, do things that retard their learning and create a distaste for the subject matter. This is as true of religion as it is of other studies. The more one studies the history of education the more he sees that learning has perhaps suffered most at the very hands of those most anxious to promote it. It is a truism that the great discoveries and inventions did not come out of the established schools. The very zealous teachers in Israel did not succeed in teaching the way of God, but hid it from the people, as Jesus said. A much more effective way was given earlier to Israel--a methodology we shall soon return to in this essay as ideal. The long line of reformers in education did not come out of the schools at all, but from the ranks of thinking men who saw that schoolmastering had gone wrong. Alfred North Whitehead touched the sore spot when he wrote in his Aims of Education: "The vitality of religion is shown by the way in which the religious spirit has survived the ordeal of religious education."

Do we seem to be straying from our topic? Not at all. And why not? Because the way of doing things in teaching that most stimulates the normal and the fast learner and the slow is all of a piece. There are differences in the patience of the teacher, the time allowed, the amount of repetition, and the higher goals to be attained, but the general idea of "the way things go" is fortunately very much the same for all. Those who have studied remedial reading will attest to this. Audio-visual aids are for all, though they help the slow learner a little more. Many of history's improvements in the schools started with the poor and the slow and moved up to the so-called normals.

Striking evidence of the above is the work of



Maria Montessori who started her educational work with defectives. She wrote: "While everyone was admiring the progress of my idiots, I was searching for the reasons which could keep the happy, healthy children of the common schools on so low a plane that they could be equalled . . . by my unfortunate pupils." In commentary on this, Luella Cole wrote in her A History of Education (New York: Rinehart and Company) p. 564: "The conclusion she came to was that the training of defectives stimulated them to the best possible use of their powers, while that currently given children in public schools so inhibited their development that they were unable to use more than a small proportion of their native capacity." You remember who it was that entered first into the Kingdom of God when Jesus taught. It wasn't without some reason that a cynic once said that it seems that one has to be a bad boy to get a good education.

Now what are those procedures, those methods, those attitudes, those insights, skills and understandings that make for a better way to reach the slow learners as well as the others? In finding them we can do no better than to start with God's own Word, Deuteronomy 6, the whole first portion but especially verses 6 and 7: "These words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

The way of salvation is to be a subject of conversation, fit for the times we are at home, retiring and rising to face a new day, going and coming--in short, whenever families or Christians are together. In the Lutheran school this is as applicable to the whole session of the school as it is to the religion period. We might do it in confirmation class as well as we set about to "learn" some Bible passages and Catechism portions.

The art is communication, conversation, the rubbing of minds, hearing and asking questions. The

quest is for meaning, for insight, for what educators sometimes call the "aha! experience," "why, that is true!" The result is "that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge" (I Cor. 1:5). As Phillips puts it, "He has enriched your whole lives, from the words on your lips to the understanding in your hearts." Lenski refers "utterance" to "any and every form of expressing the saving truth." This implies an individualistic "getting to know" that tends to get lost in our traditional instruction.

As much as possible we must let the slow-minded absorb from us by way of osmosis, so to speak, as in Deuteronomy 6. Pestalozzi wrote: "The best way for a child to acquire the fear of God is for him to see and hear a true Christian." His visits to his Christian grandfather, he said, became an important element in his education; there he got the inspiration to become a student of theology. He later said of the pupils in his first school, "The thing was not that they should know what they did not know, but that they should behave as they did not behave." This was the Pestalozzi who slept with the orphans and talked them to sleep with the things that they should know, repeating many Bible passages. It was the Pestalozzi who irritated the schoolmasters with his success and earned their great displeasure. He did not get along with the scholars of his day any more than he would have pleased the rabbi who is reported to have said regarding the reception of children into the synagogue: "From that age (6) you can accept them and stuff them with Torah like an ox."

Above all there must be communication. That is basic in Deuteronomy 6. Remember how Jesus taught. Think of the incident at Jacob's well, and the many other conversations in John's Gospel. Not that even the Master Teacher always succeeded in the consummations so devoutly to be wished, but His teaching was the kind that should succeed. We mentioned earlier the mystery of iniquity that prevents it; and we learn the important truth that education can as easily go wrong as right.

Conversation that leads to communication is based on mutual acceptance of the teacher and the taught. It has been well said that the true teacher is the one who makes the student accept him, after he accepts the student. "We know from our own experience that one of the keys to understanding the failure of communication lies in the phenomenon of rejection. The teacher who won't listen to the student's ideas, who is insensitive to the student's feelings and concerns, or who, worse still, seems to the student to have rejected him as a person has lost the battle of learning. Some students are easy to accept, but there are others, and these are the ones who most need acceptance. They are the difficult ones. If in the face of this kind of situation the teacher can give his students the certainty that they are accepted in spite of all that seems unacceptable about them, a new quality can enter into the teaching-learning process." LeFevre: The Christian Teacher (New York: Abingdon Press) p. 153. We refer you once more to the teaching at Jacob's well.

This means, too, that the learners, slow and fast, must somehow be impressed with the deep earnestness of the teacher, seeing something of the tears of Jesus weeping over Jerusalem, of Paul, with the same in his eyes, going from house to house. It is well summarized in the word commitment. The importance of being earnest is not lost upon any child, save, should we say, upon the one who "will not."

Also, we must not fear getting beyond the elementary. Lutheran teachers in the first eight grades often meet the reaction in children that they already know all those stories. Again, it has been well said by LeFevre, that "through failure to be confronted by the most profound religious thought, the student may, like so many of his teachers, have his religious life and thinking arrested at their childhood level." Ibid., p. 31. The work of the Spirit through the Word seems to be quite careless of people's I.Q. Profound spiritual truths are often seized by rather slow people.

Therefore we must be careful that we do not rely too much on intellectualization. Remember that the great issues of life are settled less in the mind than in the heart. As Whitehead said, "The difficulty is just this: the apprehension of general ideas, intellectual habits of mind, and pleasurable interest in mental achievement can be evoked by no form of words, however accurately adjusted. All practical teachers know that education is a patient process of the mastery of details, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day. There is no royal road to learning through an airy path of brilliant generalizations."

The Aims of Education (New York: New American Library, 1929) p. 18. Consequently, we must turn over those old truths, not always according to a pre-determined aim, but letting them speak for themselves as we "talk of them." Repetition is a mother of learning, but it is a repetition that puts old truths into new settings, that turns the gem of the manifold grace of God to show its sparkling sides in many different lights. This the slow child needs more than the fast learner, simply because the fast learner will be more able to do this for himself.

Another way of putting some of these things is to say that there must be dialogue, the inclusion of the learner, slow as he may sometimes be. Such procedure makes the learner a party to the learning procedure, not an object or a passive being who is to "learn," in the sense of repeat, what is "taught." There will be little doubt as to who should do most of the talking in such dialogue, but the principle of it must be retained. Jesus did most of the talking to the Samaritan woman, but she had her part in the dialogue. Both minds have to move when any given two minds are to achieve a meeting.

Before saying something about one of the most painful experiences of a teacher, yet one from which every teacher is doomed to suffer (it was the one that made both Jesus and Paul weep), we want to give you two paragraphs from Findley B. Edge in Teaching for Results (Nashville: Broadman Press) p.8f:

"In an authoritarian type of education the subject matter is considered so important that independent thinking is discouraged or forbidden; passive acceptance is encouraged or demanded. In contrast, although Jesus had the most important subject matter education has ever known, the message that would lead to the establishing of right relations between man and God, he left the individual free to think for himself and to choose for himself. This of necessity must be true if religion is to be experiential. Although authoritarian education may force conformity on the part of the individual, external authority can never force belief or experiential religion upon a person. When the rich young ruler came to Jesus inquiring how he might inherit eternal life, Jesus explained the implications it would have in his personal life. The young man rejected it and went away. Jesus looked after him sorrowing, but no matter how much Jesus desired that this young man conform to his teachings, he would not force that conformity.

"After the feeding of the five thousand, Jesus was perhaps at the peak of his popularity. Great multitudes followed him, and he gave the discourse which explained the spiritual nature of his kingdom. This was so out of line with Jewish expectations that many of his followers 'went back, and walked no more with him' (John 6:66). Then follows Jesus' momentous question to his disciples, 'Will ye also go away?' (John 6:67). Humanly speaking, the success or failure of his mission on earth, the future of the kingdom, hinged upon the answer of the disciples to this question, yet they had to be left free to accept or reject, to choose for themselves."

In reading these paragraphs we will not forget that it is God's grace that gives us the very act of acceptance; and it is the blindness of unbelief that gives men the horrible act of rejection. But we must remember that, in the midst of our teaching activity, children choose. Adults choose. Bright persons choose. The average normals choose and the slow learners choose. "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." (Joshua 24:15).

Whatever the fate of truth, we teach it hopefully. We strive to have the memory carry the maximum. We talk of these things. We relate them to life. We want quality as well as quantity. We use dialogue, we strive to commune with the spirits of children, we use these participating experiences in the spirit of permissiveness and acceptance. Our work is a beseechment. We pray God to bless it.

M.G.

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# PREACHING THE WORD

Editor's Note: In the following we present an excerpt from a sermon preached by the sainted Pastor F. Kuegele, whom many of us know from his "Country Sermons," and which has been supplied by the kindness of his grand-daughter. The sermon was preached at the opening of the meeting of a small group which then organized itself as the "Lutheran English Synod," which existed for some years as an affiliate of the German Missouri Synod, until in 1911 it became the English District of the Missouri Synod. We found the sermon most interesting because of the many places where the experience of these Fathers has been parallel to the issues and actions of our day.

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## SETTING UP THE BANNERS

Psalm 20:5

"We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners: the LORD fulfil all thy petitions."

. . . But why for this purpose organize a new synod? Why not unite and labor with some already existing English speaking Lutheran Synod? Have we a reason to offer to them that ask us: why do you not unite with others, why will you stand for yourselves? Indeed, we have and our reason is this: because we fully and freely endorse the words of our text when it says: "We will rejoice in thy salvation." We believe and confess that salvation is the Lord's, that it is from God and in no way from man, that it is God's free gift which he does not bestow on account of man's good conduct and behaviour, nor through man's works, exertions and contrivances, but freely through

his own appointed means. St. John writes of the sons of God that "They are born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," and St. James writes that "Of his own will" God begets his children "with the word of truth." We believe and confess that our Lord's salvation is laid down wholly and alone in his Word and we have that salvation only if we have the word of salvation and therefore, we can have nothing in common and can in no way sanction teachings, contrivances, and expediences which men devise without and aside from the Word of God, but whatever the Word of God does say, be it great or small, to that we are ready to submit and that we are sincerely and earnestly minded to carry out in practice.

Therefore we plant ourselves fully, fairly and squarely on the Confessions of our beloved Evangelical Lutheran Church. Not indeed as though the Confessions were the foundation of our faith; the foundation of our faith is alone the inspired word of the apostles and prophets. We do not hold that the Scriptures shall be explained according to the Confessions, but contrary-wise the Confessions are subject to the Scriptures. But we do hold that the doctrine of the Confessions is nothing else than the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures. We hold that what is Lutheran is scriptural and what is scriptural is Lutheran. That is just the very reason why we are Lutheran, because we are persuaded and know that the Confessions of the Lutheran church are a faithful expression of the teachings of the revealed Word of God and are in no point at variance with that Word. And we hold that whatever doctrine is against the Lutheran Confessions is also against the Scriptures and is destructive to the soul. Hence we adopt the Confessions of our church in full, without reservation, and in an unqualified manner.

From this it clearly follows that we as Lutheran ministers and Lutheran churches can only belong to a Synod which is truly Lutheran both in doctrine and practice. Now, only that synod is truly Lutheran in doctrine which teaches the doctrine of the



Confessions in full, and only that synod is truly Lutheran in practice which carries out the Lutheran teachings in its practice. We can therefore not belong to a synod which adopts the Confessions but not in full, which advances the theory of "open questions" and declares that some things in the Confessions are not binding, which therefore throws away or grants liberty to throw away a part of the Confessions. We cannot belong to a synod which adopts the Confessions only in a qualified manner whatever that qualification may be. Such a qualification is to adopt the Confessions "in as far as" they agree with the Scriptures - which is from the outset expressing doubt if the Confessions in all points do agree with the Scriptures and is granting liberty to reject any article under the pretense that it did not agree with the Scriptures. A similar qualification is to adopt the Confessions with the declaration that they must be understood in a certain way; as the fathers explained them, or as the various doctrines developed in the course of time - which is subjecting the public-symbols of the church to the private writings of individual men and goes to destroy their confessional character. Why does a church adopt Confessions? Certainly, to lay down in them its faith, what it believes. And if that is to be a changeable thing then the Confessions cease to be standards of faith, and liberty is granted to go with the times as the wind of doctrine may happen to blow. Finally, we can also not belong to a synod which verbally and on paper puts forth the right confession, but in which it is understood that unscriptural doctrine and practices will be tolerated. These principles are surely so clear as to need no further proof.

And now, brethren, considering this, where should and where could we go? There are chiefly two bodies to which our thoughts might be directed and they are the Joint Synod of Ohio and the United Synod of the South. From the former some of us seven years ago withdrew, because that synod in order to shield a false doctrine laid down the principle that the Confessions should be adopted in the so-called historic

sense, namely as the fathers explain them, and for us to return to it is out of the question. The latter, The United Synod of the South, indeed adopts the Confessions straightforward, but allows many of its ministers publicly to preach and to practice the Calvinistic doctrine of the sacraments and to hold fellowship with all manner of sectarians unrebuked; to it we could not go without making ourselves part-takers of modern liberalism. Could we then unite with those of whom we know beforehand that we could not be perfectly joined together with them in the same mind and the same judgment as the Scriptures require it? Every wise and prudent man knows, if those unite together who are not of a kindred spirit, peace cannot abide there and rupture will come; they will part again and they will not part as friends. But if those unite together who are of the same mind and the same spirit, they will grow together and though they be but a handful, good will proceed from them.

This therefore remains for us to do, that we who are of the same mind and faith unite together and that small as our number is, let us cheerfully do and gladly say with our text: "In the name of our God we will set up our banners." These our banners are none other than the Lord's banners. It is His truth over which we joy, which we confess and which we desire to sow broadcast over the land and this is our trust, this the assurance of our heart that the Lord will own as His own what is His own. This we know that what we do is pleasing unto the Lord; for it is nothing else than setting up His banner, the ensign of His revealed truth. Many indeed, I know whereof I say, many will hate and will denounce us for the work which to accomplish we have met together. But what are men? It is sufficient unto us that it is the Lord's work to which we put our hand and we trust that He will graciously look upon it and will prosper it. "In the name of our God we will set up our banners;" and with a believing heart let us offer up the prayer: "The Lord fulfil all thy petitions."

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# PANORAMA

WHAT PRICE  
ECUMANIA?

The proponents of the present day ecumenical movement are afflicted with a mania which leads them on such a wild scramble for formulae that it reminds one of the confused attempts of the Athenians who sought to please everyone with their multitude of gods, goddesses, and altars. The result is the same today as it was then. Those who proclaim the everlasting truth receive the same kind of greeting as Paul received at the hands of the Epicureans and Stoics who said: "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods:" because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. The Jesus Christ of Holy Scripture is a stranger to the theology of the "ecumaniac." The old doctrines have been discarded and replaced with the "new" and yet they are not new, for they are as old as the devil who placed the big "if" before all the sacred truths upon which our faith is founded.

As an example of what is taking place, the apostasy of Dr. James A. Pike may be cited. This Episcopal bishop tells of how his mind has changed. Before he accepted the virgin birth of Christ as historical, but now he has come to the conclusion that Joseph was the father of Jesus. He finds it possible to confess the doctrine of the virgin birth at the same time as he insists that the record of the virgin birth is the recording of a myth. He finds it possible to chant the Apostolic Creed with its phrase "born of the virgin Mary" because then he regards it as poetry, but finds it impossible to recite it for then it becomes an affirmation in literal prose. What madness! And still we find that men even in Synodical Conference circles are saying that they believe in the doctrine of verbal inspiration but at the same time rule out its absolute inerrancy.

Dr. Pike has been mentioned because he has been so closely associated with Dr. Eugene Blake who last December occupied his pulpit to set forth his proposal for the union of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the United Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A., the Methodist Church, and the United Church of Christ. Aside from the fact that the sermon on Rom. 15:5-7 was not a Gospel sermon nor textual, it was a typical symptom of the disease called "Ecumania." While this sermon has received much more attention than it deserves, it may not be amiss to call attention to the ingenious device which it proposes for settling the troublesome question of "apostolic succession." Here it is: "The reunited church shall provide at its inception for the consecration of all its bishops by bishops and presbyters both in the apostolic succession and out of it from all over the world from all Christian churches which would authorize or permit them to take part." This is not supposed to suggest any doubt about the reality of any previous ordination but is to insure a visible and historical continuity with the Church of all ages. In this way the age-old obstacle is to be removed. All should go away satisfied! The sermon freely admits that if the wording sola Scriptura is required then there will be no bridge between the two opposing sides. But Dr. Blake says: "It is now clear in ecumenical conversations that Protestants generally have come to recognize the right place of tradition, just as Catholics have generally become aware of the rightness of judging all tradition by the Scriptures as interpreted to the Church by the Holy Spirit." With that all should go away satisfied! That there is no thought of holding anyone to agreement in doctrine even in such fundamental articles as those of the virgin birth of Christ, the verbal inspiration the Bible, etc. is clear from the fact that the above-mentioned Dr. Pike has joined hands in sending out this proposal, giving Dr. Blake's sermon the response, "Glory be to Thee, O Lord; Praise be to Thee, O Christ." One would expect that in Lutheran circles, at least in Synodical Conference circles, the response would everywhere be the very opposite. But this is not the case. While indeed the Lutheran Witness has presented an article

which is set forth as refutation of Dr. Pike's heresy, Missouri Synod man Martin Marty in the Christian Century, speaks of the proposal with measured approval. And all this is taking place in the year set aside to honor Dr. C. F. W. Walther. It is a pity! It is fair to say that Dr. Walther would not recognize the Missouri Synod of today as the Synod he was along in founding. This we must say in all honesty to the memory of this honored father.

C.M.G.

ENTRENCHED  
ECCLESIASTICISM

If members who joined the new church body, the A.L.C., (as they now prefer to be called rather than TALC), had any ideas that they would be free to oppose that church body's membership in the World Council of Churches, they have now been disillusioned. The mistake they made was in joining with the idea of purging the body of this affiliation afterwards. The very organization articles provided for application for membership in the WCC. But now the conscience-bound opponents of the WCC have received notice from the A.L.C. President that they are out of order and that all will be handled by the Church Council. If the members of the A.L.C. had any questions as to whether or not the new body would operate as a super-church, they have their answer now. And this is a warning example against what we may call "entrenched ecclesiasticism." The Church Council which was commissioned to supervise the review has decided that the question ought not be under continuous discussion from January 1, 1961, until October, 1962. It will conduct the review during the six months preceding the convention in October, 1962. It has decided to have the general secretary of the WCC present lectures on the Seminary campuses. It encourages district conventions to discuss the matter. It will sponsor a question and answer series in the Standard, the contributors for and against being selected by the Church Council. It has decided that one session of the general convention is to be provided for discussion and thereafter the voting on whether the A.L.C. will continue its membership in the WCC is to take place.

This is indeed a warning example against super-churchism and entrenched ecclesiasticism. Some indeed have maintained that the C.L.C. is opening the way for a super-church when it says that two or more congregations joined together to do the Lord's work may properly be called Church. Every discerning reader of our constitution will know that this is a false charge and a non sequitur.

C.M.G.

WAY STATIONS  
ON UNION ROAD

Discussions and dialogues through personal encounter together with articles appearing in Protestant and Roman Catholic periodicals are proclaiming what is called a new approach to understanding and possible reform. On the one side Protestant writers are calling attention to Roman moves in introducing the vernacular into its liturgy, while on the other side Roman Catholic writers are pleased to note the introduction of acolytes, prayers for the dead, elevation of the host, etc., among Lutherans and others. There is no doubt that the so-called liturgical movement is being regarded as a way station on the road to union. But here as always the trek is to Rome. Those who are aping Rome are identifying themselves with her not only in matters which may be classed as adiaphora but also in matters which are in themselves wrong. And even such innovations in the liturgy which in themselves are adiaphora cease to be matters of indifference when the confessional principle is involved which, under these conditions, it most certainly is. "Lutheran" writers are hailing certain changes in the Roman liturgy as an indication that a reform is taking place in Roman Catholicism. Cases are cited to show how the vernacular is substituted for the Latin and the reception of Communion under both kinds is practised by intinction. Aside from all other considerations we take note that these practices have been carried out in isolated instances only by permission thus making them exceptions. In these matters the Pope has the right to legislate and order matters in a way that may suit the circumstances for the benefit of Rome. And certainly

Roman doctrine remains the same whether it is set forth in Latin or in the vernacular. The practice of intinction, according to the custom of the Eastern Church, is used in administering the Sacrament to the laity and so the distinction is still made between the clergy and laity. But these instances are being used to indicate a promising reformation in Roman Catholicism. All the while the Pope knows that things are going his way while those who should be on the alert are being caught with their guard down. The whole Una Sancta movement, Roman collar and all, is a way station on the road to Rome.

Among Protestants the way station on Union Road is the deceiving proposition which declares that in some way a working together in missions and in other activities, sometimes called "externals," there will be a bond established which will draw opposing parties together. The Holy Ghost is thus being briefed on the most promising course for Him to follow. Meanwhile the unifying power of the Word is left on the roadside like an old cast-off shoe that has outworn its usefulness. One who has been especially vocal in this new theology of ecumenical advance is Martin E. Marty who has written of it in his article "Interim Ethics for Ecumenists." In arguing for the thesis that the degree of unity already at hand is sufficient for joint work, he says: "It means, as I have argued previously, that Christians now have enough recovered unity to resume missions and that a resumed mission will contribute to further recovery of unity." Christian Century, January 11, 1961, p.44. Further on in the article Marty says: "If we carry over our practice from war times, concentration camps and the like, from situations wherein mutual acceptance runs high, we will be telegraphing to the world what it is that really matters." This is the logic which naturally follows upon such arrangements as the chaplaincy. And we can well imagine what the effects have been upon the men in the service who return to civilian life and there carry over what they have experienced in military life. Men have been acclimated to a certain thing and who will de-climate them.

C.M.G.

INTOLERANCE BY THE "TOLERANT" It is a well known fact that there is scarcely any minority group so vociferous in its cry against discrimination as the Jewish minority in this country. When it feels that it is being persecuted, it organizes its Anti-defamation Leagues and raises a hue and cry that is heard from coast to coast. These people are extremely sensitive to anything which might be considered an encroachment on their liberties. In this country they have enjoyed a freedom not enjoyed in other lands where they have had some just cause for complaint, (although here too one wonders how much of ill will they have brought down upon themselves ). On the background of all this one would expect that in Israel of all places there would be freedom for others, with all discriminatory acts condemned by those in authority. But from the report of a free lance author who toured Israel and interviewed leaders in religion and education as well as people on various levels of society, one learns that the crassest forms of intolerance prevail. Thus Margaret Harmon Bro reports: "No Israeli to whom I talked attempted to disclaim the fact that Protestant churches have been closed and Protestant missionaries asked not to return, that such Protestant churches as remain are under close surveillance, that evangelistic services--whether in Hebrew, Arabic, or English--are prohibited." Again Mrs. Bro states: "Church and state are one where the law is concerned. For the non-Christian Israeli the marriage service must be performed by an orthodox rabbi in the complicated orthodox fashion--else there is no legal inheritance for the children." Of course, as was to be expected, a barrage of objections to this report ensued. But we have no reason to question the honesty of Mrs. Bro's report nor can it be shown that she was prejudiced for she made the visit with all good will toward the people.

This report points up a truth which can be observed in other areas of human relations. Those who early and late call for the practice of love and charity are often the most loveless and uncharitable when faced with a situation that calls for a great



measure of love, while those who have not been so loud in their protestations of "love and charity" are the ones we find practicing it without the ballyhoo of the exhibitionist. Those who are quick to label a faithful obedience to God's Word as legalism are often found to be the most legalistic when true evangelical practice is called for, while people who have been verbally tarred as "legalists" are often found to be the most evangelical. One learns to treat with reserve those who so loudly declaim their virtues and so quickly run to the attack of others.

C.M.G.

ANEMIC St. Paul by inspiration of the Holy  
REPORTING Ghost wrote to the Corinthians: "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine? And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle." I Cor. 14:6-8. These words come to mind as we consider a type of reporting which has become all too common in our day of doctrinal indifference and religious unionism. We call it "anemic reporting" which is a milder term than the prophets used as anyone can find out for himself by turning to Isaiah 56:10 and related passages. But those who have lost their way in the maze of liberal pronouncements on church fellowship have no other course left but to keep silent when a solid testimony is called for.

We have heard a great deal about our duty to testify and have been warned not to isolate ourselves lest our testimony be not heard. ("This 'pure' church has no room and no help for the weak in its own midst, nor can it exercise an effective ministry to the weak and erring outside its own organizational limits, because it shrinks from those contacts which would give an opportunity for such ministry." Missouri Synod

Principles Governing the Exercise of Fellowship). With the argument proclaiming an opportunity to testify and minister, engagements to preach, to lecture and to editorialize in strange places, have been excused and approved. But now what are the facts? What kind of testimony is being given in these various situations? One instance that can be cited to show how this works out in practice is found in the column written by Missouri Synod man L. Brose in the Lutheran Standard (official periodical of the A.L.C.). Commenting on the prayers offered at the inauguration, this is all he had to say: "There are conflicting opinions about the religious principles involved in public prayers on civic occasions. But referring strictly to their outward form, most people certainly will greet with a loud 'Amen!' the plea that inaugural prayers be limited to one minute--or two, at the most." Also without a word of comment the following incident was reported: "Mr. Kennedy also made a big hit with the ladies--wives of the congressmen meeting concurrently in a different room of Washington's Mayflower Hotel. After addressing their husbands, the President told the wives: 'It seems to me. . . that next year we should all sit down together, and that we should have gentlemen and ladies pray and reason together, and not confine them in different rooms.'" We call it anemic reporting. But what could the man do in the face of his synod's pronouncement on joint prayer now so recently circulated in Synodical Conference circles?

C.M.G.

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