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EDITORIAL

WHY LIBERAL ARTS AT COLLEGE?

Several years ago the Canadian M.B. Conference accepted the recommendation to expand and strengthen the liberal arts in our Bible College and to affiliate this department with Waterloo Lutheran University. Yet after all these years of operation according to Conference decision one still hears the occasional yet persistent voice of doubt and suspicion concerning the need, value and desirability of a liberal arts department in conjunction with the Bible College. Moreover, some seem to feel that the arts department is merely a concession to some unwholesome pressure and a stepchild of the college at best; and those who are asked to justify its existence are often driven by these critics to apologies and defence. Which, of course, undermines all efforts of presenting the Christian liberal arts program positively and enthusiastically to our young people who are in need of it.

That there was a need for liberal arts courses in our College, was and is being recognized by our brotherhood. We need not dwell on this need at length at this time, but a few things perhaps could bear mention. The so-called moral revolution or better the breakdown of morals in our society in general and on the campuses of our secular institutions in particular, is well known to all; the meaninglessness, pessimism and despair that pervades modern literature and the arts, and the philosophy of life that this can instill in our young people when taught by skeptics, agnostics and the like, need not be laboured here; the "new theology" with its "death of God" gospel that sweeps the intellectual world with its terrifying consequences, is more real to our youth than we may wish to admit; and the unprecedented claims of modern science and technology, with its threat to the very dignity and soul of man, is even recognized and warned against by non-Christian literary figures, but so often forgotten or ignored by those of us who should really be concerned.

Not only is there a need for a Christian liberal arts department, but it is of utmost importance that our young people receive a Christian liberal arts training. Our efforts in Bible Schools and Christian high schools have been admirable and the envy of other denominational groups, and we certainly want to continue to do in these areas and levels of education as much as we can. No Christian education program in our conference should feel that it has to compete with other similar endeavors, for example, high school against Bible School, or Bible School against College. They all have an important function in the education of our youth and

in the building of God's Kingdom in our Conference, with all of them deserving our active support.

It must, however, be recognized that no matter how good a program may be, it is designed to meet a particular need on certain levels of growth and maturity. For example, an elementary Sunday School training is not sufficient to meet the intellectual and spiritual problems of high school students; they need spiritual answers for questions on their level. Conversely, a Christian high school training is not adequate for the demands that a university education places upon the spiritual needs of young people. Thus Christian education must keep pace with and run parallel to secular training, for if one's religious training and development remain behind while the secular horizon continues to expand, the situation may lead to grave consequences.

Some of the most serious results of an education detached from religious training and influences are compartmentalization of one's knowledge and division of one's experiences. This simply means that a person having received a secular education only and that from a secular point of view, will hardly be able to integrate his knowledge and experiences with his Christian faith. The secular and the spiritual will remain two separate spheres for him, with the result that in his professional or academic life his religious experiences will count for very little or maybe nothing at all. What is worse, the problems that such a divided personality encounters are innumerable; he does not know how to reconcile the claims of, for example, science and his religious world view which has remained in its high school stage.

In a Christian liberal arts college a student studies his courses as thoroughly and attempts to be as "objective" as he would in a secular institution, but here he has the added advantage of also seriously considering the Christian answer to the enigmas of life and man's quest for meaning. But what is more important than anything else, he learns to integrate the secular with the spiritual, thus transforming the beauty, truth and knowledge, which he gains from the study of the liberal arts, into meaningful Christian experiences, for all these things come from God and are used in his service.

There is, moreover, a great value in having the liberal arts department side by side with the Bible College. The cross-fertilization between the instructors and students of theology, the arts and music; the friendly debates and fruitful exchange of ideas; the sobering influence of theology upon the arts and perhaps **vice versa** — all this provides an example of how all these disciplines can become meaningfully integrated.

The Lord has given us schools on all levels. Shall we in all sincerity cultivate and promote these lovely gardens, encouraging our sons and daughters to seriously consider an all-rounded, integrated education which a Christian College can provide.

Harry Loewen

ARTICLES

MENNO SIMONS' TEACHING ON AVOIDANCE

Recent years have seen a revival of interest in the rather small group of the left wing of the Reformation, namely the Anabaptists. After having been unpopular with the major parties of the Reformation and the Catholics alike through the centuries, they were suddenly hailed as the spiritual forbears of religious liberty and the modern free-church movement. How this has come about is not our present purpose to discuss, but it does point to the fact that we are in a new era of Anabaptism and that by and large we hail the principles they stood for in their life and teaching, even though the practical evidence of this revival seems strangely lacking in our communities. The three major points of emphasis of the Anabaptists, outlined by Harold S. Bender's address, **The Anabaptist Vision**¹, have at least received verbal endorsement.

The teaching and practice of some of the Anabaptists on at least one point of doctrine, however, has not received general endorsement among modern Mennonites. The teaching referred to is that on "shunning" or "avoidance". While it has been retained by such groups as the Amish and the Hutterian Brethren, the major groups of Mennonites have not retained it, except perhaps on some more insignificant levels. Yet for Menno and the Dutch Anabaptists this was an issue of considerable seriousness and not to be easily dismissed.

Definition

Avoidance refers to the practice of breaking social and religious fellowship with a dissident member of the religious community. It followed upon the ban or excommunication by which a person's membership in a religious community was terminated. Thus the ban and avoidance are two distinct practices even though in communities where this was practised the latter necessarily followed from the first. Our present concern is only with avoidance, however, and references to the ban will only be made in as far as it relate to avoidance.

Origin Within Anabaptism

The practice of shunning was not introduced to the Dutch Mennonites by Menno himself. Rather Menno probably received it directly from Obbe Philips who baptized and ordained Menno. Many of the "Obbenites", as the followers of Obbe Philips were called, were defecting to the revolutionary Münsterite wing, and it seems that here the practice first came into vogue. Menno him-

self had to deal with many who defected and fell prey to false doctrine, and seems to have adopted the practice from the beginning.

While the term "avoidance" is taken from the passage in Romans 16:17, where Paul appeals to Christians to avoid people who create dissensions and difficulties, there are a number of other passages which seem to call for some such practice and to which Menno and other Anabaptists particularly appealed. Among such passages are Matt. 18:17, I Cor. 5, II Thess. 3:14, and Titus 3:10. All these passages refer to people who have belonged to the brotherhood and then turned their backs on God and the brotherhood thereby bringing shame upon them. They do not refer to people of the world, who, though perhaps living in gross sin, have never been a part of the brotherhood.

Reasons for Avoidance

There were a number of reasons why Menno believed that shunning should be practised by the church. Not the least of these was an attempt simply to abide by scriptural teaching, regardless of whether this was associated with certain practical difficulties or not. Human considerations were not primary and if these were contrary to what the Scriptures taught, then Menno preferred to abide by Scripture. Therefore we find that in his treatise of 1550, **A Clear Exposition and Scriptural Delineation of Excommunication**, Menno devoted considerable attention to an exposition of Matt. 18:17, the last part of which he renders, "... but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee a heathen man and a public sinner."² His argument is based to a large extent on his rendering of the Latin word "publicani" as it appears in the Vulgate. Menno says that Christ refers to the Jewish practice in his own time of avoiding "manifest sinners" or apostate Jews, who according to the law of Moses should have been killed. This, however, was not allowed because the scepter had been taken from the Jews by the Romans.

Besides such an attempt at careful exposition of the Scriptures, Menno appeals to other more general principles in favor of the practice of shunning. One of the most prominent concerns seems to be for the purity of the church. He appeals to the words of Paul in I Cor. 5:6 where Paul states that "a little leaven leavens the whole lump". He says, "There is nothing better to do with such than to cut them off with the knife of the divine Word, lest the others be corrupted and the ugly scurvy be transmitted to other sheep."³ While excommunication itself partially effected this purpose, Menno believed that outward actions were also necessary to prevent further social contacts which the offender might use to seduce other members of the church.

A further reason for shunning was related to the good of the offender himself. Menno frequently emphasized that shunning was not meant to be punitive in character and that no ill will

was intended. While it may be difficult to see how such a practice could be interpreted thus either by the excommunicated member or the world, yet Menno insisted that in its deepest signification it was a work of love. It was intended to bring the individual to repentance. Sometimes he says that the erring brother or sister is to "be made ashamed and won back", or again he says that the person is to be "frightened" and so brought to repentance. It seems, however, that Menno himself had difficulty in conceiving of the means themselves as a work of love, but always pointed to their intent and motivation as love.

While the above reasons were the major ones which Menno gave for shunning he also sometimes stated or alluded to other reasons. He believed that it was a testimony to the world that the individual was no longer a member of the community of faith. Menno also believed he had seen the adverse effects of a lack of shunning. He says, "I have known not much less than three hundred spouses in my day who did not observe between them and their mates the ordinance, counsel, doctrine, will, and command of the Lord and His apostles concerning shunning, and have so run together into perdition."⁴ Whether or not this was the actual reason, Menno at least believed that it was.

Objections

Many were the objections which Menno encountered to his doctrine and practice of avoidance. Perhaps the strongest of these arguments was that the practice was only meant to apply to such "evangelical" or spiritual transactions as the breaking of bread and the kiss of peace. Perhaps this is also more true of Mennonites today; that if an individual is excommunicated, he is denied access to the communion table and to participation in the normal business of the church, but that otherwise normal relations are carried on. But Menno argues that this was not the scriptural intent, for it says "have no fellowship". He also states that if only spiritual fellowship were meant then the Greek word used would be Koinonia and the Latin would not use "cibum capere".⁵

Another argument of a similar nature was that one should not shun people but only their false doctrines and offensive lives. Or again they would point to the fact that Christ ate with sinners and did not shun them the way the religious leaders did. Menno answers that Christ ate with **believing** sinners, for they soon forsook their sinful ways.⁶ In this way, he says, contact is permissible, but if we do not shun ordinarily it means that the first table of the commandment in Christ's kingdom has given way to the second—our spiritual love and marriage have been replaced by natural love and marriage.⁷

Extent

The extent to which shunning should be practised was one of the most biting issues which Menno had to face and which was

never really solved. As stated earlier, Menno insisted that this was to be a work of love, and yet it threatened to disrupt the unity of home and community alike.

In keeping with Menno's desire for peace and good will he taught that good manners, politeness, respectfulness and friendliness were becoming for all Christians. Rudeness, impoliteness and disrespect could never be redemptive but were always destructive of fellow man. "A true Christian will serve, love, help, and pity everybody, even his most bitter enemies."⁸ Even as our Father in heaven makes the sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust so ought we also to minister to all men alike. Menno also permitted that certain "necessary business" be carried on.

It appears, however, that the restrictions were quite severe. "Commercium", Menno said, was not to result from our dealings with the apostate. This meant that most kinds of business dealings were not to be carried on. He comments,

*My understanding, therefore, of "commisceri" or "commertium habere", of which Paul speaks here, is that it points to communion, company, walk, intercourse, presence, usage, conversation, and dealings. It does not refer to an occasional word spoken, or to necessary business, such as dividing a legacy, paying debts, and similar incidental matters.*⁹

Generally buying and selling were not permitted, therefore, unless the apostate individual himself were in danger of being ruined because of the resulting pressure. Normal family relations were likewise interrupted since it was within this context that the greatest dangers existed.

Consistency demanded further that Menno apply his teaching with equal stringency to the marriage union. Menno could find no scriptural ground for making any exceptions here. If one of the mates of a marriage union became apostate and the other still remained true to the faith and consented to the expulsion of the mate from the church, then Menno felt that it was the faithful individual's duty to shun the unfaithful partner. If one of the major reasons for shunning was that the leaven should be prevented from spreading, then it would seem to apply most of all to the marriage union. Therefore he states that if liberty should be granted to husband and wife then it ought to be granted to all, and that "none under heaven can practise his faith while living with his apostate consort."¹⁰

Menno reveals considerable unease at this point, however, and allowed for some freedom of individual conscience on this matter. He does not exclude the possibility of some being able to live out their faith while living with their excommunicated mate. Menno realized further the inducement to adultery and fornication which

shunning might prove to be as well as the adverse effects on the children. Thus it was a situation fraught with a great deal of danger and we can readily understand why Menno tried to be a little more lenient in this matter. Yet it was something to which no ready solution could be found.

Controversy

There were several incidents which proved to be particularly troublesome for Menno and which seemed to mar his life of service more than practically anything else. Menno sincerely desired unity in the church and strove desperately to avoid controversy between the brethren. Nevertheless it was his lot to have to witness bitter strife and controversy. He was disillusioned in most of his attempts to bring the contentious sides together.

One of the incidents concerned a Dutch woman, by the name of Swaantje Rutgers, who was a member of the congregation at Emden. Her husband had been excommunicated from the church but she refused to concur with the Church in the practice of marital avoidance. As the issue grew more intense Menno was drawn in also. Letters were sent to him asking him to commit himself. Leonard Bouwens himself was in favor of strict shunning and thus Menno came under considerable pressure. When Menno finally did take a stand in a letter of Nov. 12, 1556, he protested vigorously against extreme views and practice. He wrote, "My heart never shall consent to such indiscreet extremism or agree to such plans."¹¹ He felt that the circumstances should be carefully taken into account in such cases. He made a trip to Franeker where he met with some success and then to Harlingen where Leonard Bouwens and Dirk Philips were. The latter meeting seems to have been less successful although Swaantje was never excommunicated.

Difficulties also arose in the relations of the Dutch Anabaptists with the Mennonites in the Rhineland and in South Germany. In 1556 Menno was visited by two brethren named Syllis and Lemke from the Rhineland. The issues of greatest concern were the ban and shunning. They felt that Menno was too strict in his interpretation and appealed for moderation. They could not agree with the position outlined by the Wismar Articles of 1554 which a conference of Dutch elders and ministers including Menno had drawn up. After some discussion Menno presented them with a written statement of his position which was to be presented to the South Germans.

In 1557 an important conference was held in Strasburg at which the strict position in regard to shunning was rejected. The South Germans appealed to Menno and the brethren in the north for moderation, but their appeal was in vain. Menno published a tract, entitled **Instruction on Excommunication** in 1558 in which

he reiterated his strict position. The controversy became more heated and apparently Syllis and Lemke made some very bitter personal attacks on Menno. Menno replied with a final tract, **Reply to Syllis and Lemke**, in which he responds to their attacks and in turn attacks them, saying that they are about to suffer shipwreck.

These incidents and others did much to create disunity in the brotherhood and therefore to advance the cause of Satan. Menno seems to have become increasingly stringent with regard to the problem. He was never to have the joy of seeing real unity come about. He was caught between the two striving parties and seems often to have yielded to the pressure of the strict party, particularly Leonard Bouwens and Dirk Philips. Nevertheless Smith relates that, "Near the close of his life it is said the he regretted having agreed to the strict interpretation of the ban; and to have advised his close friends not to be a 'slave of men' as he had been.¹² Horsch, however, does not believe that this report is grounded in fact.¹³

Conclusion

A person of the twentieth century evaluating Menno's position on avoidance has difficulty understanding and appreciating it. Yet a study of Menno's writings and the circumstances surrounding them, reveals Menno's good intention and even a certain flexibility and moderation. As he so often states, he dearly loved the church and wanted her to be the pure bride of Christ. He hated all sin and tried to be scriptural in dealing with it. The church needed both discipline and love. There can be little doubt that Menno had both. Yet Menno seems to have been too strict in this regard and his actions were interpreted as actions of hatred. He also allowed himself to be unduly swayed by others. We need more of Menno's concern for genuine discipleship today without endorsing the extremes to which Menno was led by this concern.

A. Dueck

¹ Printed in **Mennonite Quarterly Review**, (April, 1944) 18:67-68.

² **Complete Works**, p. 459.

³ **Ibid.**, p. 414.

⁴ **Ibid.**, p. 972.

⁵ **Ibid.**, p. 473.

⁶ **Ibid.**, p. 467.

⁷ **Ibid.**, p. 1009.

⁸ **Ibid.**, p. 480.

⁹ **Ibid.**, p. 474.

¹⁰ **Ibid.**, p. 1007.

¹¹ **Ibid.**, p. 1051.

¹² C. Henry Smith, **Menno Simons**, Berne, Indiana, 1936, p. 50.

¹³ John Horsch, "Menno Simons' Position on Avoidance", **Gospel Herald**, Jan. 18, 1940, p. 903.

IM KAMPF FUER DEN GLAUBEN

Unsere Mennonitische Bruderschaft "unter dem Kreuz des Südens".

Es war mein Vorrecht im verflommenen Sommer etwa elf Wochen den Gemeinden unserer Bruderschaft in Uruguay, Paraguay und Brasilien zu dienen. Der Dienst geschah im Auftrage etlicher Behörden unserer M.B. Bundeskonferenz. Das Fürsorgekomitee ersuchte mich die Konferenz zu vertreten bei den Sitzungen und Veranstaltungen des Präsidiums der Mennonitischen Weltkonferenz. Die Wohlfahrtsbehörde bat mich, den Gemeinden mit Vertiefungs- und Evangelisationsversammlungen zu dienen, sowie auch spezielle Vorträge zu geben auf Predigerkonferenzen und Kursen für Gemeindeführer. Die Missionsbehörde bat mich, wo immer möglich, erbauliche Versammlungen für Missionsarbeiter abzuhalten, und in Gemeinschaft mit Bruder Jakob H. Franz, auch einige Missionsprobleme zu studieren. Der Herr gab Gnade zur Reise und zum Dienst. Wir möchten den Brüdern und Schwestern, die diese Arbeit in treuer Fürbitte unterstützt haben, herzlich danken.

Mein Dienst in diesem Sommer bot eine besondere Gelegenheit Vergleiche anzustellen zwischen "einst und jetzt". Es war im letzten Halbjahr von 1951 (also gerade vor der Gründung von **The Voice**) als ich auch einen verlängerten Dienst von sechs Monaten in den Mennonitischen Kolonien Südamerikas tun durfte. Damals befanden sich Neuland und Volendam in Paraguay, sowie auch El Ombu in Uruguay, im Pionier-Stadium. Nach fünfzehn Jahren muß man doch feststellen, daß auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet große Fortschritte zu verzeichnen sind: bessere Wohnungen, bessere Schulen und Kirchen, bessere Wege und Verkehrsmöglichkeiten in allen Siedlungen.

Durch mancherlei Kontakte mit Predigern und Gemeindeführern habe ich die Gelegenheit gehabt, mit den Sorgen, Nöten, und Kämpfen des Gemeinschaftslebens näher bekannt zu werden. Diese Einblicke in „den Kampf für den Glauben“ unserer Brüder im Süden dürften auch für manche Leser dieses Blattes wertvoll sein. Zu den strategischen Kampfgebieten zählen vor allen Dingen die Schulen, Gemeinden und Missionsbestrebungen.

I. In den Schulen.

Eine Glaubensgemeinschaft kann das tiefere Wesen ihres Glaubens nur festhalten durch gründliche und beständige Belehrung. Gemeinden ohne eigene Schulen und Lehranstalten werden früher oder später ihr geistliches Erbe verlieren. Die ernste Sorge um die Erhaltung und Stärkung der Privatschulen fand ich stark ausgeprägt bei allen führenden Männern unserer Bruderschaft. Ein Bruder in Brasilien drückte sein Bedauern darüber aus, daß man

die mennonitischen Privatschulen während des Zweiten Weltkrieges hatte schließen müssen. Als Folge davon sei eine Generation junger Leute den Gemeinden entfremdet worden, und man spüre diesen Verlust auch heute noch im Gemeinschaftsleben.

In Sarandi, Uruguay, eine Pionier-Siedlung von etlichen Jahren, hat man bis heute noch keine eigene Schule. Das sittliche Niveau vieler Landesschulen ist recht niedrig, und Eltern schauen besorgt in die Zukunft. In Brasilien (Bage, Curitiba) arbeiten die „Ginasios“ (Junior High Schools) mit sichtbarem Erfolg. Meines Erachtens sind diese Schulen von strategischer Bedeutung für die Zukunft unserer Gemeinden in Brasilien, besonders auch darum, weil nur ein kleiner Prozentsatz der totalen Schülerzahl später eine Bibelschule besucht. Die positiv-christliche und täuferisch-mennonitische Lebensanschauung der Lehrer dieser Schulen ist anerkennenswert.

Dasselbe könnte auch von den Zentralschulen in Paraguay gesagt werden—von der Schule in Fernheim, in Neuland, in Menno, in Friesland, oder Volendam. Der christliche Idealismus und die selbstverleugnende Arbeit der Lehrer dieser Schulen hat mich tief beeindruckt. In diesen Lehranstalten wird der Grund gelegt für das zukünftige Gemeindeleben. Hier treffen viele Jugendliche die großen Gebetsentscheidungen. In einer größeren Evangelisation in Fernheim, die in jüngster Zeit von Missionar Albert Enns, Asuncion, durchgeführt wurde, verzeichnete man etwa 80 Entscheidungen für Christus, und unter diesen waren etwa 50 Zentralschüler.

Die Bedeutung der Bibelschulen für unsere Gemeinden im Süden ist kaum zu überschätzen. Ein leitender Bruder teilte mir mit, daß faßt alle Gemeindeglieder, die heute in führender Stellung sich befinden, die Bibelschule besucht haben. Viele Anerkennung gibt man den Pionieren auf diesem Gebiet—C. C. Peters, Gerhard Sukkau, Nikolai Siemens, Peter Klassen, Viktor Toews, Jakob Franz, u.a. Man ist auch sehr dankbar für den Dienst, den die Bibelschule heute in Paraguay tut, und dasselbe gilt auch von der Arbeit des Bibelinstituts der Südamerikanischen Konferenz in Curitiba. Die Bibelschule (Fernheim-Friesland) kämpft mit ähnlichen Problemen wie die Bibelschulen Kanadas. Das Bibelinstitut hat es mit einem besonderem Sprachproblem zu tun. Die mennonitischen Studenten von Paraguay und Uruguay wünschen neben der deutschen Sprache als zweite Unterrichtssprache die spanische, um auch der Landesbevölkerung besser dienen zu können. In Brasilien erfordert die Vorbereitung für diesen Dienst eine gründliche Kenntnis der portugiesischen Sprache. Also haben es unsere lieben Lehrer im Institut nicht nur mit einem Zweisprachenproblem zu tun (wie wir bis heute in Kanada), sondern mit einem Dreisprachenproblem! Ob sich dieses zufriedenstellend wird lösen lassen, bleibt abzuwarten. Vergessen wir nicht in unserer Fürbitte und Unterstützung die christliche Schulen unserer Bruderschaft im Süden.

II. In den Gemeinden.

Biblischer Gemeindeboden ist und bleibt Kampfesboden. (Vrgl. Judas V. 3 und Hebr. 12, 1). Für jemand der vom Kampfesboden in Nordamerika nach Südamerika kommt, ist es zum Teil tröstlich, daß „dieselben Leiden über unsere Brüder in der Welt gehen.“ Was mich besonders beeindruckt hat ist der Umstand, daß die Probleme im Süden und Norden fast dieselben sind. Dieses war vor fünfzehn Jahren nicht der Fall, weil die meisten Gemeinden in Südamerika damals mehr isoliert, und aus dem Grunde auch mehr geschützt waren vor Einflüssen von außen als die Gemeinden in Kanada und in den Vereinigten Staaten. Heute steht die Sache ganz anders. Nicht nur in Brasilien und Uruguay, sondern auch im entlegenen Chako, hat man heute enge Beziehungen mit der Außenwelt. Zeitschriften, Radio, verschiedene Besucher — bringen geistliche sowie auch sekuläre Zeitströmungen in die Kolonien und in die einzelnen Heime.

Man hat es mit neuen Problemen zu tun auf dem Gebiet der Lehre. Ich könnte dieses vielleicht am besten illustrieren mit einer Angabe von Themen, über die ich auf Wunsch der Brüder gesprochen habe. Auf der Rüstzeit für Prediger im Chako sprach ich über „Religiöse Zeitströmungen und ihre Gefahren“. In Curitiba gab ich eine Serie von Vorträgen über „Kirche und Staat.“ Auf einer Gemeindeversammlung in Asuncion gab ich auf Wunsch einen Vortrag über „Neue Schläuche für alten Wein“. In Fernheim, wo wir zwei sogenannte „Gemeindetage“ hatten, diene ich mit Vorträgen über „M.B.G., Woher und Wohin in Lehre und Wandel“? und „M.B.G., Was sagst Du zur Ökumene?“ Auch im Süden haben die jungen Theologen schon gehört von der „Neuen Moralität“, und von der „Gott ist tot“ Theologie. Diese Konfrontation mit neuen theologischen Strömungen braucht nicht notwendigerweise ein Hindernis zu sein für unser Gemeindeleben; sie könnte sogar Veranlassung geben zu einer Neubesinnung über biblische Grundwahrheiten. Der periodische Austausch mit den Brüdern vom Norden über theologische Fragen könnte sich für die ganze Bruderschaft befruchtend auswirken.

Man hat es jedoch auch mit neuen ethischen Problemen zu tun. Der Zug vom Lande zur Stadt, der Sprachenwechsel (von deutsch auf spanisch), die Annahme einer latein-amerikanischen Kultur — alles sind Faktoren, die auch die ethischen Ansichten unter unserm Volk beeinflussen, besonders in der jüngeren Generation. In den Großstädten (Montevideo, Asuncion, Curitiba, Sao Paulo) kommen unsere jungen Geschwister in große innere Konflikte. Im Geschäftsleben Lateinamerikas fehlt es vielfach an einer grundsätzlichen Ehrlichkeit; auf den höheren Schulen des Landes fehlt es vielfach an sittlicher Reinheit. In meiner Seelsorge mit jungen Leuten habe ich etwts gemerkt von der „Hitze“ des Kampfes, den manche zu bestehen haben.

Jedoch auch die Chako-Kolonien sind der Welt näher gerückt.

Der Trans-Chaco Hochweg hat nicht nur den Kolonien die Möglichkeit gegeben, ihre Farmerzeugnisse auf den Markt zu bringen: derselbe Weg gibt auch der Landesbevölkerung die Gelegenheit, allerlei Sachen in die mennonitischen Kolonien zu bringen. Manche dieser neuen „Importationen“ machen den Gemeindevorständen ernste Sorge. Man versucht auch auf dieser Linie mit geistlichen Waffen für den Glauben zu kämpfen.

III. In den Missionsbestrebungen.

Die Entstehung von Missionsgemeinden und Missionsanstalten in allen Kreisen unserer mennonitischen Bruderschaft in Südamerika sollte unsere Überzeugung stärken, daß die Emigration unserer Glaubensgenossen nach Paraguay, Brasilien, und Uruguay nicht Folge eines blinden historischen Schicksals war, sondern die Folge gnädiger göttlicher Vorsehung. Missionsboden ist jedoch auch Kampfesboden, und dieses kommt unsern Gemeinden im Süden mehr und mehr zum Bewußtsein. Die Bekehrung der Indianer im Chako hat soziale und kulturelle Folgen von ungeheurer Tragweite. Die Annahme des Evangeliums bedeutet für diese „Kinder des Urwaldes“ eine radikale Veränderung ihrer ganzen Lebensweise. Auf dem Abschiedsfest der Mennonitischen Weltkonferenz in Filadelfia brachte „Johann Giesbrecht“ (eine Erstlingsfrucht der Lengua Mission) dieses zum Ausdruck in seinem Zeugnis vor einer Massenversammlung von etwa 1200 Menschen: „Die Mennoniten haben uns nicht nur das Evangelium gebracht, sondern auch eine ganz neue Lebensweise gezeigt!“ Für beides war der alte Indianerbruder dankbar. Auf letzterem Gebiet entstehen aber auch manche Probleme, denn Mission bedeutet Indianerschulen, Indianersiedlungen, soziale Fürsorge, usw. Das geistliche Erwachen, und die Betonung der Bedeutung der einzelnen Persönlichkeit, weckt manche soziale, ökonomische und kulturelle Hoffnungen bei diesen Leuten, die in absehbarer Zukunft nicht werden zu erfüllen sein. Kommunistische Propagandisten versuchen solche unerfüllte Hoffnungen für ihre Zwecke auszubenten. Diese Möglichkeit macht manchen Gemeinden Sorge.

Die Missionsarbeit unter Paraguayern und Brasilianern hat auch ihre besonderen Probleme. Die traurigen Verhältnisse im Ehe- und Familienleben der Bevölkerung im allgemeinen zeigen sich auch im Gemeindeleben. Weit über die Hälfte aller Kinder (nach der Aussage mehrere Missionare) werden unehelich geboren. Manche Männer leben mit mehreren Frauen gleichzeitig. Wenn solche Personen dann zum Glauben kommen, ist es nicht einfach, eine biblische Lösung des Problems zu geben. Man ist einfach gezwungen „ein Neues zu pflügen“ und einen ganz neuen Anfang zu machen. Der Kampf um die Reinheit einer Missionsgemeinde unter solchen Umständen ist kein Kinderspiel. Unsere Missionsarbeiter kämpfen ritterlich für ein biblisches Gemeindeideal. Es war für mich ein Vorrecht, diese Streiter an der Frontlinie des

Kampfes zu besuchen, und einige Tage Freud und Leid mit ihnen zu teilen.

Im Auftrage meines Herrn und unserer Bruderschaft habe ich versucht im Süden eine „Barnabas-Mission“ zu tun. Von ihm lesen wir in Apg. 11, 23: „Dieser, da er hingekommen war und sah die Gnade Gottes, ward er froh und ermante sie alle, daß sie mit festem Herzen an dem Herrn bleiben wollten.“

J. A. Toews

MISSIONS AND ESCHATOLOGY IN THE HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF CHRISTIANITY

I. MISSIONS AND THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC PERIOD

In our former articles we tried to show that there is a close relationship between eschatology and missions in the Old and New Testament. We must now make a sweep through the centuries to see how the most intriguing chapter of the history of the Christian church, namely, her mission effort, reflects the close relationship between eschatology and missions. Apostolic missions were activated and strengthened by the deep conviction that with the coming of Christ, and the outpouring of the Spirit, the last days had begun, and that between Easter and the Parousia the church had but one great task to perform: the evangelization of the world. The completion of God's purposes for this world they believed was bound up with the mission of the church. This gave the apostles the more urgency to carry out the command of their risen Lord, and they scattered over the Empire to tell all men that Christ had conquered sin and death. In Paul, this expressed itself in his eagerness to reach the borders of the Empire. Toward the end of his ministry it was his passionate hope to reach Spain, the farthest western limit of the Empire. He seems to have been reluctant to remain too long in one place; there was always urgency in his efforts. In this faith of the apostles, the followers of these pioneers of the Christian mission continued to proclaim the good news.

In the centuries preceding 500 A.D. the Christian witnesses advanced into three continents: Asia, Africa, Europe. It was a kind of spontaneous advance, for we have very little of organized efforts. The word spread from mouth to mouth against tremendous odds. But the expansion of Christianity had begun on two notes: a note of triumph (Christ had conquered), and a note of challenge (to complete the task),¹ and in this faith they continued through suffering and success. They were not moving blindly forward without purpose; they labored with the deep conviction that at the end of their labors was the triumph of God. In the words of Latourette: "In that faith the early Christians had gone forth... The seemingly incredible had happened. Although beginning as

one of the numerically smallest of hundreds of competing religious groups in the Graeco-Roman world, within five centuries, Christianity, the religion which arose of their faith, had won the professed allegiance of the vast majority within that world...² This is his judgment in reviewing the first 300 years of Christian expansion.

Although in the centuries following the Apostles there was no general agreement on the precise sequence of events that would characterize the days preceding the Parousia, the great teachings of the New Testament on the Resurrection, Rewards and Punishment, and the Return of Christ, played an important part in Christian thinking. Although heretical emphases cropped up again and again, the majority of Christians in the first centuries held to the main lines of New Testament eschatology, and saw in the increase of their number a sign of the imminent return of Christ. In their missionary preaching, the coming judgment and the promise of bliss play a large part. "What served to make the eschatological appeal all the more compelling was the thought, often insisted upon, that the time during which repentance was possible was strictly limited."³ God, it was said, was deliberately postponing the day in order to allow time for all to hear and repent of their sins.

Although the kingdom of God in its fullest expression, was generally believed to be a future reality, Chiliasts taught that this kingdom would be realized here on earth after the return of Christ (Justin and Papias held this). An interesting branch of these beliefs in the earthly kingdom of Christ appears in the teachings of Montanus, who regarded the establishment of the kingdom as imminent.⁴ Some Christians even thought it possible to calculate with some degree of accuracy the time of the end. Irenaeus believed that it would come when the number of souls predetermined by God had been saved. What such a view implies for missions we can readily see. With Origen we come to more 'spiritual' interpretations of the Kingdom, but the Coming of Christ continues to be regarded as one of the most cogent truths by which to urge pagans to adopt Christianity. It is quite obvious that in the early centuries of the Christian era, the mission of the church was closely bound up with its living hope.

II. MISSIONS AND THE COMING KINGDOM IN THE MEDIEVAL CHURCH

With the passing of the age of persecution and the eventual downfall of the Roman Empire, the church emerged as the one enduring institution, "the City of God." However, during the period when the church became popular, in the post-Constantinian period, there appears to have come a gradual waning of the strong expectancy of a coming kingdom, and the church settled down to a more 'this-worldly' kind of existence. The church was the kingdom of God. And so it appears as if the sense of urgency which

had driven the early witness on into every corner of the known world was now flagging because of the diminishing hope of the Parousia. In the millennium of Roman missions during the Medieval Age, missions, often against a background of political strength, had but one great goal: the extension of the Corpus Christianum.

Whereas in the early Church, whether millenarian or not, there was a note of expectancy in all Christian expansion, a working and waiting in the light of the dawn of a new day, this eschatological attitude was now replaced by a strong ecclesiastical motive. This is not to say that the Medieval Church did not know its moments of eschatological fervor. There is a record of Pope Gregory III asking Boniface to proclaim the Gospel with urgency in view of the fact that the end of all things was approaching, "But a dynamic eschatology was only to be found on the margin of medieval thinking: much of the future was already deemed present in the glory of the Church."⁵ The **eschaton** was domesticated and housed within the church. This does not mean that there was necessarily less urgency on the part of many of the Roman missionaries to expand the domains of the church, only that they were motivated by a new kind of eschatology: the Kingdom came as the church expanded. The empirical church and Kingdom of God were co-extensive. At bottom, missions were thoroughly ecclesiological in character. Occasionally eschatological thinking resembling the earlier period of the church manifested itself. Amedeo Molnar tells of great missionary enthusiasm that came out of the Hussite revival of the 14th century that set for its goal the evangelization of the whole world.⁶ But such outbursts of apostolic enthusiasm and eschatological thinking were quite on the periphery of medieval missions theology. The Reformation cut deeply into this pattern of thinking.

III. NEW FOUNDATIONS FOR EVANGELICAL MISSIONS IN THE REFORMATION

A. Eschatology and Missions in Luther's Thought. While the Reformers cut new paths in Christian thinking, the Roman Church entered upon the heyday of her expansion. With her well-developed missionary forces she was prepared for the new day of advancement beyond the confines of Europe. The monk had been the great medieval missionary, assisted by the preaching friar. Now the Jesuit became the devoted soldier of the church, and found himself faced with a world-wide campaign. So, while the Protestant world was taking shape, the centuries between 1500 and 1700 were the golden era of Roman expansion. But, although the churches of the Reformation were not yet ready to go to the ends of the earth, they were being given a new foundation upon which to launch out somewhat later. Later developments of Protestant missionary thinking show that the germs of a combination

of eschatological and missionary ideals were present in the soil which had been prepared by the Reformation. The relation between eschatology and missions received a special accent in the chiliastic circles of Protestant Christianity, and it may be that the presence of such views made Luther so cautious. We must, first, say a few things about Luther's view of eschatology.

1. **Luther's View of the End.** Luther's eschatology has not interested Luther scholars very much, and the studies on this topic are few. A few years ago, George Hall, in an article on this topic, complained about the paucity of studies in this area.⁷ Missions historians of the past have criticized Luther sharply for his apparent indifference to missions, and most of them have found the reason for this in his eschatology. Gustav Warneck contended that Luther's eschatology cut the missionary nerve of early Protestantism. He writes, "As is the case with many great theologians down to our own time, Luther's view of missions was distorted by his eschatology. To him 'the last day was at hand'; he expected no further extension of the Christian church among non-Christian peoples; and for this reason he naturally had no eye for the mission-thought of the Bible, and manifestly also no impulse toward the conversion of the heathen in its proper sense."⁸ Luther did hold that it was late in the history of mankind. The papal rule—which he identified with Antichrist's rule—was the sign of the End. He was concerned about heathens, Turks and Jews inside of Christendom, and being burdened with the tremendous responsibility of the establishment of the Protestant cause, we must excuse him for his apparent lack of vision in this area. Forell points out that just as it was impossible for Luther to give a solution to the problem of church and state within the framework of his eschatological thinking, so he could not develop new missionary thinking. He says, "the relatively small interest in world missions which plagued Lutheran orthodoxy for centuries to come was another unfortunate result of Luther's foreshortened eschatology."⁹

2. **Modified Criticism of Luther.** Lately the criticism of Luther's apparent lack of mission interest has been somewhat modified. Johannes Van Den Berg points out, "There is no sufficient proof that eschatology in itself is the cause for the missionary vacuum. However, in combination with the circumstances in which Luther lived, the nature of his eschatology... may have strengthened Luther's pessimism with regard to the actual possibility of missionary work."¹⁰ Gensichen would go even farther. He says, "The Reformers knew their Bible, and Christ's promise that the end would not come until the Gospel of the kingdom had been preached throughout the whole world (Mt. 24:14) strengthened rather than weakened their endeavor to work for the renewal of the Church and the propagation of the true faith."¹¹ There we must leave it. Complete agreement will probably never be at-

tained. We will have admit that there is some validity to what the critics have said about the lag in missionary interest due to a particular view of eschatology, but the criticism will have to be made mildly. It could be that Luther's eschatological conservatism was his reaction to the apocalyptic rash of his period. We should say a word about that, for here, too, history has had to do some correcting.

B. **Missions in Apocalyptic Circles.** Of the radical and extreme left wing of the Reformation we need not speak here, but we must not cast out the child with the bath, and overlook the saner streams of thinking. No less an authority than Latourette has pointed out that the **Täufer** were the fore-runners of the modern missionary movement in that missions was the duty of the total membership of the church. This missionary enthusiasm was rooted in strong eschatological hopes.¹² Franklin Littell who has done much to uncover some of the healthier strains of the Anabaptist movement says, "Not only was the missionary mandate obeyed most seriously, but it was given sweeping application... Moreover they bound this command to preach to all creatures to the conviction that the kingdom was about to come."¹³ Van Den Berg, who has made an extensive study of missionary motivation, points out that the millenarian ideas found among the sects of the time of the Reformation later obtained a foot-hold in the churches (albeit in a chastened form), and we shall see presently how such eschatological views played into the great missionary awakening preceding the modern era.¹⁴ To this period we must turn our attention in the next issue of **The Voice**.

D. Ewert

¹ John Foster, **Beginning From Jerusalem**, 1956, p. 9.

² K. S. Latourette, **A History of Christianity**, 1953, p. 374.

³ C. J. Cadoux, **The Early Church and the World**, 1925, p. 226.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

⁵ J. Van Den Berg, **Constrained by Jesus' Love**, 1956, p. 181.

⁶ A. Molnar, "The Czech Reformation and Missions", **History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission**, pp. 128-136.

⁷ G. F. Hall, "Luther's Eschatology," **The Augustan Quarterly** (XXII, 1944) pp. 13-19.

⁸ G. Warneck, **Outline of the History of Protestant Missions**, 1884, p. 19f.

⁹ G. Forell, **Faith Active in Love**, 1954, p. 162.

¹⁰ Van Den Berg, *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹¹ D. H. W. Gensichen, "Were the Reformers Indifferent to Missions?" in **History's Lessons for Tomorrow's Mission**, p. 123.

¹² K. S. Latourette, "New Perspectives in Church History," **The Journal of Religion**, (XXI, 1941), 438f.

¹³ F. Littell, **The Anabaptist View of the Church**, 1952, p. 95.

¹⁴ Van Den Berg, *Op. cit.*, p. 182.

A SERMON

GIVE YE THEM TO EAT

Text: Mark 6:30-44.

Proposition: In the "feeding of the 5,000" Christ's just demand upon His disciples to meet the needs of men, provides the occasion for teaching the proper relationship of resources of men to the ultimate Source of all things, in Christian service.

Introduction.

The story of the little girl who replied to her Sunday School teacher's innocent question about her future by saying, "I want to be a returned missionary", is both humorous and indicative of an attitude. There is a thrill in returning to one's "home" community after a period of service overseas. But there is also a responsibility to share with the Church how the task of service and witnessing is being carried on in another part of the world. However, this sharing must not be only a retelling of facts and a re-interpretation of impressions. For the concerned Christian in a concerned Church there is a shared searching for answers to that probing question of goals and guiding principles.

Here are representative three questions which we have been asked in encounters since our return:

1. Why is MCC in Jordan, and what does it hope to accomplish by remaining there?
2. How can one really help when the available material resources and the needs of the people are so far apart?
3. What responsibility does the Christian and/or Church have (as a member of an affluent society) toward those in need?

It is our conviction that a careful reading and proper interpretation of our text provides a basic truth which is applicable as the disciple encounters men in need. The application of this basic truth can provide an answer to these questions.

I. The Needs of Men

The ordinary pilgrim to the Holy Land seeing the sites usually does not have the extra time to see the people. So while he has "done" Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho and all the rest, and even perhaps meditated at the Garden Tomb, he has hardly seen, as Jesus saw, the crowd of men. His seeing somehow went beyond the outward appearance to the immediate need and life situation of those whom He judged to be as sheep without a shepherd. All of this within the context of compassion.

For one who deigns to live and serve in this land the so-called

Holy Places soon become everyday name-places. We lived in Jerusalem within sight of the Mount of Olives and a half-hours drive from either Bethlehem or Jericho. While a constant stream of tourists did not let us forget these places, a concern for today's crowd of men took precedence. For they too had immediate needs and a life situation, and could be judged to be as sheep without a shepherd. However, the problems of language and cultural adjustments made it necessary for us to include a prayer for Christ-like compassion along with that for our daily bread.

Who were the crowd of men? Religiously, the Arabs of Jordan are 90% Moslem and 10% Christian, with a minimal number of the latter group distinguishing themselves as "believers". Politically, the Kingdom of Jordan is ruled by a benevolent monarch and is still technically at war with those who drove them from the western part of Palestine at the time that the state of Israel came into being. Economically, the country is classified with the developing nations and as such is dependent on the U.S. for a sizeable amount of foreign aid. A low percentage of arable land in the midst of desert and rocky hills, combined with a variable rainfall during four months of the year and none during the other eight, and the complete lack of natural resources, moved the U.S. economic advisers to project tourism as industry number one. These critical problems take on a different perspective when one understands that forty percent of the citizens in Jordan are political refugees, and that along the entire border with Israel live thousands of economic refugees. The latter group includes those who live in their original villages while the demarcation line has robbed them of a percentage of their ancestral farming lands. It would seem that the only encouraging fact in this survey is the realization that this crowd of men numbers well under two million people.

What are their needs? While the goal of political neutrality is perhaps the ideal, one cannot live among men and ignore the realities of their situation. As members of a community with a high degree of refuge experience, it is not difficult for us to identify with others who have suffered the loss of home and land through war and political manipulation. The need of justice before men is one, which having shared as a fact, we leave the outcome to the Judge of all nations. Give us this day our daily bread, we pray. When the flour barrel is empty this prayer can become a cry — the anguish of a person who has not enough to eat and knows that some have too much. But the give-away and the hand-out are not what they really want. If only those with greater know-how and resources would be willing to stand alongside the needy in the creation of work opportunities. These are their physical needs. But this crowd of men also lacks a shepherd. To meet their whole need also includes sharing with them the story of the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep.

How are these needs met? Most simply stated 1) by the shar-

ing of the haves with the have-nots 2) through the willingness of disciples to serve and 3) under the gracious and merciful blessing of God upon all men. In Jordan the material aid program, self-help projects and educational institutions under MCC have served "in the name of Christ" since 1950. And as the first form of help becomes less important more emphasis is being placed on self-help and the relating of the secondary school program as mission through the local evangelical church. All of this is good to hear, but what of our text?

II. The Just Demand

A practical suggestion of the disciples at the end of the day provides the occasion for Jesus to lead them into a new understanding. They say, "Send them away", He says, "You give them something to eat". Again they say, "All we could buy wouldn't be enough," He says, "See how much you have." Our first need is to accept these statements as serious expressions of concern as Jesus and the disciples were face to face with men in need.

Underlying Jesus responses is the judgment that the disciples are making a false assessment of the situation. It is not true that once men in need are out of sight that they either no longer exist or that we are not responsible for them. Also, it is wrong to suppose that exhausting our economic resources is an adequate response. The truth of these statements for then, as for today, is apparent.

However, not quite so apparent is the justice of Jesus' demand that the disciples are to give them something to eat. If anything, the people themselves are to blame for their predicament! Since when can a disciple be charged with an impossible service? It is misleading to assign this dialogue to the area of rhetoric. Jesus' intent is that each disciple is to be willing to accept a personal responsibility for those in need. The justice of this must lie in the new understanding into which He would lead us.

However, there is already a warning here for us. Do we accept the fact that we are responsible... that Jesus rejects our plea to send them away, or our willingness to empty our pockets... and says, "You feed them". Are we not prone to define a narrower circle of responsibility, to follow an established program, and to let personal prejudices dictate how we help? But listen, Jesus speaks. You know you are responsible, now what are the available resources? Here is where we can be faithful. What is it that we have that others can use? The record of the Mennonite Church is enviable when compared with that of other denominations. We enjoy a good relationship with those of liberal and conservative theological convictions, so that in Viet Nam we head up the Church's relief operation. MCC volunteers are to be found in every kind of service around the world. And even if a recipient can't read the orange label he knows it stands for quality. But why did Jesus want those five loaves and two fish?

III. The Resource Related to the Source

Even though Jordan's population is under two million people, the number is still significant if one has to feed them all. During one year MCC distributed enough surplus flour to make 5 million loaves of bread. While this went to only approximately 14,000 recipients it still meant just 350 loaves per person. Hardly a significant amount when one realizes that a man can eat 4 such loaves easily at one meal. And after it was all finished they still became hungry. Here then is the problem of so little for so many. — the problem for Christ as he faces the more than 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish.

Every Sunday School pupil knows what happened next. The blessing of God is given and the Son of God satisfies them all. The power manifested in Cana of Galilee, at the Pool of Bethesda and before the tomb of Lazarus tells men again that God is with us, Christ shall be King. If only He would say the word then every belly would be filled!

But wait, the disciples didn't believe this. The gospel writer tells us that following this feeding they experienced a storm on the Sea and were rescued when Christ came to them, and then in verse 52 comments that they were astounded, "for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened". It is possible then to accept responsibility for those in need, to properly assess the available resources, and to witness the blessing of God as the needs of men are met, and not to understand! Oh how perverse the heart of man, to become hard in His presence and to remain unbelieving.

If only we could begin to understand that to have meaning, all resources must be related to their true Source, and that a softness of heart and understanding of His working comes as we trust Him. To those who ate, were filled, and then enquired, "What must we do, to be doing the work of God?" Jesus answered, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

H. Swartz

BOOK REVIEW

Theology and the Wesleyan-Arminian Tradition in Recent Works

Theological creeds and traditions are not the same thing as revealed truth itself. Fashioned and further ed by man, they are only provision- al representations, and approximate formulations, of Biblical truth. For that reason, they vary, in respect to details of both content and over-all

contour, from theologian to theologian, from church to church, and from generation to generation.

Because Christian theology, as formulated by men, is always relative — in a certain sense — and always subject to further modification or elaboration, some Christians have seriously questioned its validity and value. Such Christians feel that whenever Biblical truth is objectively and systematically studied and set forth — in theology or creed — it is degraded into something sterile or something heretical. It is degraded into something that smacks too much of the rationalistic meanderings of unredeemed man. They feel that Christian believers ought to confine themselves to a strictly pragmatic and devotional use of the Scriptures — to acknowledge the individual truths of the Scriptures as they are perceived and to apply them to personal life as directly as possible. Such Christians are convinced that the sustained and systematic (theological) study of Biblical truth is a pedantic pursuit that only confuses and confounds believers and unbelievers alike.

That the theological study and formulation of Biblical truth has taken some Christians into heretical byways, or — less serious — into exaggerated emphases upon subordinate elements of the Christian faith, none can deny. The intriguing story told by the history of dogma, and by the histories of individual denominations as well, testifies to the truth of this fact. But church history (even the history of our own church) tells us also that some errors and excesses in the understanding of Biblical truth have been spawned by Christians who were not theologians at all but naive and unlearned believers who — as they emphatically

declared — depended upon the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit **alone!**

The truth of the matter is that the very nature of the human mind is such that it instinctively strives, in some measure at least, to relate and to unify such knowledge as it possesses — whether that knowledge be of men, things, or God and His Word. And the fuller and more precise understanding of **individual facts** and truths, whether about God or about His universe, depends to a considerable degree upon an intelligent integration of these facts into a more **comprehensive and consistent whole**. And the best safeguard against mutilation or misrepresentation in Christian thought and teaching, A. H. Strong reminded us some sixty years ago, is “the **diligent study** of the several doctrines of the faith in **their relations to one another**, and especially to the central theme of theology, the person and work of Jesus Christ.”

It is the moral and spiritual frailty of man, of course, that has especially hampered him and often prevented him from setting forth Christian truth and doctrine in more truly authentic and consistent terms. But while individual believers and individual churches and councils have often fallen short of the ideal in their study and systematic statement of Biblical doctrine, they have, in the very course and context of their imperfect attempts, helped to correct and complete the Church's overall presentation of Biblical truth. By emphasizing certain doctrines of the Scriptures, and focusing upon them from a certain theological point of view, they have counteracted and corrected existing emphases that were excessive or distorting in relation to other elements

of the Christian faith. This is a fact of considerable importance that is often overlooked by those who disparage the study of theology — especially the theology of churches or traditions **other than their own!**

The old, and still unresolved debate between Calvinists and Arminians is a case in point. While this debate has, on occasions, degenerated into a furious fray between intolerant and spiteful opponents, there is no doubt that it has, in the end, served to remind the Christian Church at large that Biblical truth provides for both of their characteristic emphases — the emphasis upon divine sovereignty and selection and the emphasis upon human response and responsibility — and provides for some higher (though seemingly paradoxical) integration of these two emphases. And this is a necessary reminder, the significance of which we are compelled to appreciate again and again as we face difficulties and dilemmas in personal life as well as in the witness of the Church to the world around it.

In recent years, the one side of this continuing debate has found strong expression, once again, in and through the churches connected with the National Holiness Association. The National Holiness Association has come to be recognized as the national voice of Wesleyan-American theology, and in anticipation of its centennial year in 1967, has sponsored several important seminars on the campuses of its own colleges and seminaries (during 1961-63) as well as a study conference in Winona Lake, Indiana (during 1964).

One of the participants in the Study Conference of 1964 described it as “perhaps the most significant event of our generation for the spread of Scriptural holiness. The

Conference came at a timely hour in the history of the church and of the world. With the forces of evil making unprecedented strides, new concepts are being moulded today out of dire necessity. A realization is dawning in many areas of the churches that the conventional Christianity of the past fifty years will not answer today's needs. The church must break camp and blaze new trails if she is to meet the challenge of the present age?”

Three new books which contain most of the papers presented and discussed at these Seminars are: **Insights into Holiness; Further Insights into Holiness;** and **The Word and the Doctrine** (all edited by K. E. Geiger and all published by the Beacon Hill Press). Another recent book which is closely linked to these, and was written by one of the most prominent scholars from among those who participated in these seminars, is Delbert R. Rose's **A Theology of Christian Experience** (Bethany Fellowship, 1965).

A closer study of the history of the churches of the National Holiness Association and of their recent literature suggests that the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition represented therein has been a needful addition and corrective to other theological traditions in America. The Wesleyan-Arminian tradition, while it has sometimes pressed the matter of crisis experience in sanctification (“perfect or entire sanctification”) a little too far, has in **general** promoted a very wholesome emphasis upon Christian holiness in both theology and life.

In their theology, Wesleyan-Arminians have tended to stress the central importance of the doctrine and ideal of holiness in the Christian life, as did John Wesley him-

self, and have sought to relate it meaningfully to other doctrines of the Christian faith. John McClintock, for example, one of the early Methodist leaders and the first president of Drew Theological Seminary, dramatically described a distinctive feature of Methodist theology in these terms:

"Methodism . . . takes the old theology of the Christian Church, but it takes one element which no other Christian Church has dared to put forward as a prominent feature of theology. In ours it is the very point from which we view all theology . . . Knowing exactly what I say and taking the full responsibility of it, I repeat, we are the only church in history from the apostle's time until now that has put forward as its very elemental thought — the great central pervading idea of the whole book of God from beginning to the end — the holiness of the human soul, heart, mind and will. Go through all the confessions of all the churches; you will find this in no other."

And about Joseph H. Smith, that great expositor-evangelist of nineteenth-century American Methodism, Delbert Rose writes (in **A Theology of Christian Experience**), thus:

In their pervasive concern with holiness in the Christian life, Wesleyan-Arminians have attempted to do full justice to the doctrine of sin in human life, to the doctrine of salvation from sin (now and ultimately), to the doctrine of the Trinity and of the Holy Spirit especially, to the doctrine of the Church of Christ, and to the doctrine of the Christian's social responsibilities in a world of unrighteousness. The books cited above present various facets of these doctrines. **Insights into Holiness** and **Further Insights**

into Holiness are both more or less concerned with the first four of these doctrines, and provide theological, practical, and also historical insights which are largely absent, or else inadequately presented, in older texts and treatises of theology outside the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition.

To illustrate, A M. Climenhaga's chapter on the "Involvement of the Trinity in the Doctrine and Experience of Holiness", for instance, indicates clearly how "what the Father willed, and the Son made possible, can become an actuality, in the life of the believer through the Spirit's quickening agency." Again, I. L. Brown's chapter on the "Relation of Knowledge to the Experience of Holiness" explains, in exciting fashion, how growth in the knowledge of God and His Word promotes growth in holiness, and how the individuality of knowledge, however, permits Christians to express holiness of life in somewhat varying forms.

F. F. McCallum, in his discussion of "Psychological Orientation in Spiritual Discernment," boldly takes up specific problems and indicates how a knowledge of the laws of human nature can also help a believer to discern and decide upon the will of God in personal life. F. B. Stanger, in still another chapter of **Further Insights into Holiness**, distinguishes between the "church of authority" and the "church of the Spirit" (theologically and historically) and points out the true marks and possible sins of a "Church of the Spirit."

Another essay by G. E. Failing traces out "developments in holiness theology in America (after Wesley)." In his brief survey, Failing touches on Adam Clarke's theology, the work and witness of the Palmers

and reactions to them, the National Holiness Association movement, the Keswick movement, and the modern Pentecostal movement. These are facets of American church history which, it will be found, are not or inadequately, covered in some widely-used histories of American Christianity. Indeed, Delbert Rose, in the opening pages of his work, **A Theology of Christian Experience**, goes so far as to contend that "most of the current writers on the philosophies of religion in America are acquainted with Calvinistic Fundamentalism, but seem unaware of an Arminian, orthodoxy which does not share all the views of Fundamentalism against which liberal philosophers and theologians so strongly protest." (p. 17).

The essays contained in **Insights into Holiness**, and **Further Insights into Holiness**, are not all of equal worth, however, some being clearly less probing and less illuminating than others. Moreover, they are not organized according to any discernible principle or pattern and some overlapping and duplication of subject matter, therefore, mar these collections of essays.

The other book referred to earlier, **The Word and the Doctrine**, in contrast to these, is a much better organized collection of essays. The

essays are arranged under four main heads — (1) "The Concept of Sin", (2) "The Content of Salvation", (3) "The Life of the Christian", and (4) "The Church and the World". — and, taken together, constitute what is almost a text in systematic theology, although it was not the express intention of the editor, or of the Association, to produce such a text herein.

In **The Word and the Doctrine** it is even more apparent than in the other two books how fundamentally important the concept and ideal of holiness are in Wesleyan-Arminian theology. And how thoroughly refreshing and rewarding it is to read a treatise that views the familiar doctrines of the Christian faith from a new vantage point — a vantage point quite different from those usually assumed in standard texts of theology! The sympathetic study of such a treatise as **the Word and the Doctrine**, or of such collections of essays as **Insights into Holiness** and **Futher Insights into Holiness**, can only help to extend our theological horizons and to deepen our appreciation of the manifold richness of Biblical truth — that truth from which all valid theology is ultimately derived.

Herbert Giesbrecht.