

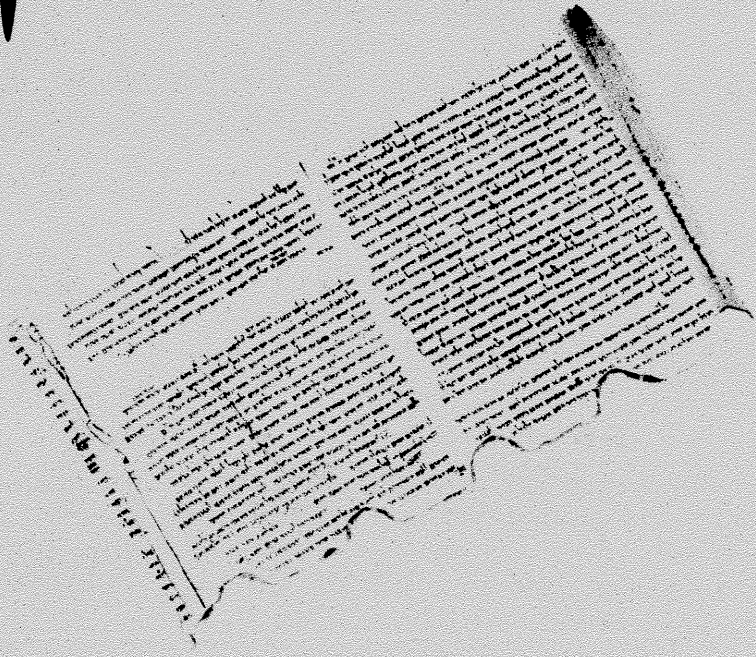


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### LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

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# 1971 REFORMATION LECTURES

Bethany Lutheran College  
Mankato, Minnesota  
October 28 & 29

by  
Prof. Dr. Hans Kirsten, President  
Lutheran Free Church, West Germany

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," Psalm 119:105.

## CONFESSIONAL LUTHERANISM'S ANSWERS TO TODAY'S PROBLEMS

### LECTURE I: "The Real Problem: Man Himself"

Prefatory Note: By Confessional Lutheranism we understand THE Lutheran Church, the genuine Lutheran Church, that is, the Church of the Pure notes, in qua evangelium pure docetur et recte administrantur sacramenta, the True Visible Church of Christ on earth.

Our question is whether the true Lutheran Church of today has answers to the problems of this world, above all of course, with regard to the problems that arise in our times.

Excuse me, dear friends, if at the very beginning of my lectures I give a very definite and clear answer, namely, the answer: YES, the True Lutheran Church does have answers to the problems of our time, also to the ethical and social problems which seem so complex and with which we are especially occupied here. That seems to be a very bold answer, in view of the general confusion about problems everywhere, considering that every day new problems are added to the many unsolved problems of the present; in view, finally, of the fact that also

the churches often are so helpless and are at their wits' end in finding solutions.

Nevertheless, I make bold to say, and I shall show and demonstrate, that the True Visible Church, our beloved Lutheran Church, doesn't forsake man even today and can help him; can help him to solve his problems. She can, if she continues to be what she is, and if she abides by what she has, namely: 1) The pure Gospel as God's message and help for a forlorn world, 2) the whole Bible as God's infallible, inerrant Word, and 3) the Lutheran Confessions as a true interpretation of Holy Scriptures.

Of what nature are the problems today? If one will classify them, then one will establish that there are two kinds: The old ones, which we carry along unsolved, and the new ones which arise nearly every day. For this distinguishes the situation of man and society in our days. It is as with the demons; for each problem which we believe to have a solution seven new ones immediately arise which are worse than the former ones (Luke 11:26).

For example, man believed it possible through technology and science to improve the living conditions of the masses in our large cities. The results were stupendous. But what has now happened? An abundance of new problems of which our fathers had not the least inkling: air pollution; water pollution; the world on the way to becoming uninhabitable. Some predict that the fate of men on earth will be death by poisoning. It is the same thing with epidemics; science has nearly eliminated plagues and diseases but the new problems of population explosion and world hunger appear to be virtually insoluble. Other examples: the bomb, the pill, the drug traffic, etc.

The problems of today are becoming immeasurable. So, if we are to seek answers to today's

problems, we must confine ourselves to some of the basic ones, chiefly the ethical and social problems. Especially some of the latter we shall deal with in the coming lectures. Today we grapple with the problem which in my view is the basic problem. On the correct answer to this problem depends the answer to all other problems. If we cannot find that answer, we shall be helpless over against all other problems.

Thus the real problem is MAN HIMSELF. Who and what is man? What is the significance of his appearance in our world? Whence does he come? Where is he going? What is his purpose here on earth?

So many questions, so many riddles, so many problems. And no one really has an answer. The world knows of no answer; not even science has an answer that will satisfy. That is the result of the world eliminating God from its conception of the universe. "God is dead" is a slogan even of modern theology. Modern science doesn't reckon with God as the First Cause and as giving meaning and purpose to life. Scientists act as if there were no God by explaining how world and life came into existence and developed to their present state. (And for their explanations they need fantastic and unbelievable theories with millions and billions of years which really don't explain anything.)

So it is no wonder that man no longer understands himself in this senseless background, that he becomes more and more an insoluble riddle to himself. Indeed also the universe remains a riddle; nature and life remain riddles, which, in spite of all science's endeavor, nobody will understand. But the riddle of riddles is man as a living creature who has no parallel, who can reflect on himself and the world and explore and rule the powers of nature; but with all his technology he never comes to grips with the world but rather

ruins and destroys it and brings misfortune and harm wherever he appears; and, finally, passes on and dies and nobody knows what his final end is.

Man, therefore, is the real problem for man, as he always has been and still is. And with man we not only have the problem of life and death but also, and especially, that of good and evil. The moral problem of good and evil is, more than the biological one of living and dying and the psychological one of body and mind, the real problem of just man alone. Other creatures may share the biological and psychological problems with him. But there is one problem that no other creature knows and shares with him, which is man's problem quite alone, that is, the moral problem. That is the fact that man alone is responsible for his actions and life; that he alone can discern between good and evil, right and wrong. Man alone has a conscience, so he alone is to be appealed to on the basis of good and evil; his conscience will accuse him when he is wrong and will defend him when he is right (Romans 2). No creature is comparable to man in this respect.

The basic problem of man therefore is that he must ask: What is good and what is evil? The problem makes sense if man knows that he is responsible to God, his Lord and Creator. But that is not the problem of modern man. The problem of modern man (atheistic man) who does not believe that there is a God to whom he is responsible is that he must also answer the question of what is good and evil, answers without which he cannot live. In this respect the problem of modern man is not made easier. On the contrary, it becomes insoluble. He cannot find an answer because the answers he gives by means of his ethics are not helpful. On the contrary, they only destroy man.

A case in point is the New Morality, the new ethics of modern man that will replace the old

ethics, the Bourgeoise ethics ("Bürgerliche Ethik"), which it condemns as the hypocrisy of capitalism. The New Morality accuses the Old Morality that it was a "double morality", good only for lords and oppressors but bad for people and the exploited ones, and it accuses the churches of having been supporters of this "double morality".

To be sure, the Old Morality had many faults, but is the New Morality a better ethics? When we examine it carefully, it becomes apparent that it is much older than the Old Morality, because properly it is nothing else than the ethics of the "Old Man" of the Bible, the ethics of the man who will not only be free from the Ten Commandments but who wants to live "according to his lusts" and will obey no one but himself and will indulge in the works of the flesh. We have it before our eyes, where this New Morality leads to. That it does not free, as so many, mostly young people, believe, but enslaves them all the more when they, after they have fallen, realize that it leaves them helpless, abandoned to their lusts and the god of this world. It has become one of the greatest problems of our nations how to help the poor victims of these seducers, the victims of a false freedom and of the New Morality in its last consequence. God preserve us from all false morality, whether Old or New.

But now let us leave for a moment the problem of what is good or evil and who has to decide it, and let us ask about man himself. Let us ask whether man himself is good or evil, for here lies the heart of the problem.

All hope of modern man lies in the belief that man in himself is good and that he wills the good. Surely, the evidence speaks against that. Nobody can deny the existence of evil in the world. What good has man ever done in this world by himself? Modern man finds a good excuse for this lack: He blames former generations. He seeks and finds

faulty people -- other people; there are good ones and bad ones. The bad ones, mostly before our time, invented evil systems; for instance, capitalism, imperialism, colonialism, and other "isms", to obtain power over the good people and to suppress and exploit them. The problem of our time is to abrogate all these old "isms", if necessary by force, and to replace them by other "isms", a supposedly better system, by socialism, or communism, or fascism (or democracy or something else). Then the good may have a chance; and because man is good in himself, there will be a new world, a good world, a paradise on earth. So ideologists will construct a better world, a new and perfect society of men.

Maybe this is an over-simplification of the concept, but nevertheless it is a real picture of what is in the heads of the prophets of modern man -- or at least what they pretend to be. As you can see from the example of communism, where it is established, in Russia or China for instance, it will not work in the sphere of freedom and goodness. The leaders of these nations know very well what man in reality is, and that he will not do the good by himself, that he must be forced to do so, and that you cannot give up power to rule people. The system of these leaders is more harsh and more enslaving than any before them -- because they by experience know what man really is.

No, man is not good, although he knows in a way what is good and what is evil. But the good he does is not real good; it is only a "so-called good". He pretends to be good, he likes to seem good. He does so before his fellow men. He is a Pharisee at his best.

The truth, however, about man is quite different. The truth is that man is evil by nature. So God's Word teaches; so the Lutheran Confessions teach. And this is the only truth about man: "The



wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Genesis 6:5). Since the fall of man the evil is so deeply rooted in man's nature that one cannot separate them, man and evil, man and sin. It is not only a "so-called bad", as Konrad Lorenz, the famous behaviorist researcher, maintains in his famous book, a mere deficiency, that man is not so good as he should be, but that one could help him give up his bad habits by persuasion or education rather than by force.

The Bible and the Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord, Article I, "Of Original Sin") teach that evil does not belong to the nature of man from the beginning, the evil is not a part of the creation of man. On the contrary, this is the final verdict of the Creation Account: "And God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). And this is said immediately after the account of man's creation: "So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him" (Genesis 1:27).

So the evil doesn't belong to creation. Man has not been created to be evil. It is not God's fault that man is evil. He is evil by his own decision and fall. But now he is evil. He is flesh of flesh; that means from his ancestors and from the very day of his birth he is a sinner, under God's wrath and curse, condemned to death and eternal fire; for "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). So, there exists an insoluble, fatal, pernicious correlation between sin and the evil, on the one hand, and death and all evil on the other. So, evil is certainly no "so-called evil". It's no harmless imperfection, as Lorenz maintains.

This is without doubt what the Bible and the Confessions teach about man. And this is the only truth about man, the only answer, that is in accord with reality. That it is not a fiction, a mere

dogma of the church, you can see every day if you are honest with yourself and observe other men. You are a hopeless ideologist, a mere fool, if you will regard yourself or your fellowmen otherwise. You cannot live in this world, you cannot work, you cannot be a good citizen, you cannot really help people without considering the fact that man is by nature evil, without knowing your own nature and that of all men in this world. This is what not only Christians know from the Bible but what every man who is not a hopeless ideologist and fool, can learn by observing men and by considering his own experience. That is the secret of a good statesman and a politician, that he knows by experience what man is. And only insofar as he is aware of this is he capable of governing them and helping them -- if this is his honest goal. Frederic the Great, King of Prussia, told a man who was enthusiastic about the new ideas of J. J. Rousseau, namely, that man is good, and who would teach him to change his rules of government: "mon cher, vous ne connaissez pas la canaille". ("My Dear, you don't understand this wicked boy"). Frederic the Great was no Christian, but he understood how to govern people and to help them. Adenauer: "Sie muessen die Menschen nehmen wie sie sind; es gibt keine andre.

Recently there appeared a new book in Germany by a famous anti-Christian leader, a leader of the Humanistic Union, as they call it, Gerhard Szczesny, Das Sogenannte Gute -- Vom Unvermogen der Ideologen ("The So-Called Good -- Of the Impotence of the Ideologists"). This man hits the point. He turns himself explicitly against Lorenz' book, The So-Called Bad. In his view the good is not really good; it is "so-called good", a mere mask by which man tries to deceive himself and others. Szczesny sees that all ideologies suffer from this bias, that man is good, and because of this bias they are unable and impotent to help him.

So, the answer of the Bible on the basic problem of man is not only the answer of the Bible or the Lutheran Confessions or the true Lutheran Church. It is the answer of experience too, an answer that has been confirmed and is proved by all the history of man. Indeed it is not a flattering answer and that is one of the reasons that people who don't know history don't like this answer and oppose it. They will not admit its truth.

But why will they not? Because man feels what is good and evil; because he has a conscience that accuses and condemns him; because he feels that he is responsible for his deeds and for his life. And if he is not good but evil, he feels that he cannot stand before himself and his own conscience. And he feels that after all there is a judge on the bench, God Himself, who will judge him; and before whom he never can stand and to whom he must give account of his shortcomings, his life-long faults and failures. No, it is not good news for man to hear that he is not good but evil in the view of his judge; that he is so evil, in fact, that neither he himself nor any other man, that no system and no philosophy, no socialism and no communism, no humanism and no ideology whatever -- that nothing in this world can make him better or can help him before God. He remains what he is from his ancestors since Adam, and what he will be from the first to the last day of this life.

But thank God, this truth is not the whole truth. This answer of the Bible on the real problem of man himself is not the only answer. The real answer of God Himself, and thus also the real answer of Confessional Lutheranism, of the true Lutheran church, is that God's wrath over man is not the last word, but rather the last word is Christ, by Whom grace and truth came. If man will recognize his desperate situation and his helplessness then there is help, help that God Himself has pro-

vided in His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

The Bible presents this answer fully. For example, throughout all the Bible and throughout all revelation since the fall of man, God says: "but when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Galatians 4:4), and again: "To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:19-21). Many, many passages of the Old and the New Testament make us sure that God in Christ does not will the death of a sinner but that the sinner should repent and live. The main question, therefore, is only one, that is the question of the jailer at Philippi: "What must I do to be saved?" And thank God, there is an answer to this chief question and chief problem of man and humanity; the answer is Christ: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thine house."

So nobody can say that Confessional Lutheranism, the true Lutheran church, has no answer to the chief problem of all time and also of today: Man Himself. But as we have seen, there is no other answer; without Christ there is no hope and no help for man and humanity. But Christ "is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" (I Corinthians 1:30b).

LECTURE II: "Authority and Freedom"  
(The First and Fourth Commandments)

In 1936 Herbert Marcuse wrote his famous sketch: *Studie Über Autorität Und Familie* ("Essay on Authority and Family"). This essay is still authoritative today for the non-authoritative thinking of a new generation. Here we have the program for revolution and anarchy developed where modern evolution distinctly sets its goal. Here for the first time freedom is set up against authority, against any authority, and therewith outdoing the French Revolution and the Communist Manifesto. According to Marcuse, freedom dare never be permitted to be connected with authority, but can be achieved only by breaking with all authoritative ties.

Marcuse's essay was explicitly written against Martin Luther, especially against his freedom tract of 1520: "The Freedom of a Christian" ("Von der Freiheit Eines Christenmenschen"). Luther's tract, the 450th anniversary of which we celebrated last year, also proclaimed freedom as Marcuse does; Luther, however, proclaimed not everyone's freedom but the freedom of "the Christian man". It was freedom, not against every authority but against the wrong authority, the authority of a false, enslaving church system; it was a call to establish the true authority of God and the Neighbor.

Of course, Marcuse here cannot understand Luther, because as an atheistic non-Christian philosopher he cannot know what this is: "A Christian Man" ("Ein Christenmensch"). Luther says: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." Only a Christian is simultaneously a free and bound person; no one else. The true Christian has his freedom by belief in Christ, and in no other way. Only a Christian is a free lord of all things, and no one else. This

freedom shows and proves itself in free obedience against the true authorities, God's authorities, and God Himself as the highest authority above all authorities. But this obedience is freedom, not slavery, which Marcuse does not and cannot understand.

It is to the credit of Werner Elert that he in his Ethics has explained how the new obedience (See Augsburg Confession, VI) of the Christians is freedom. It is a fruit of the new creation that takes place in him through the Holy Ghost by faith: "He experiences by faith liberation from the law." Whereas he previously was under the law, so now Christ has freed him not only from the curse but also from the burden of the law (Galatians 4:4,5). We are now children of the free woman (Galatians 4:31). In contrast, a freedom that knows no authority, a freedom which Marcuse and the New Morality proclaim, is no freedom at all. What is the fruit of a freedom without authority? What results from it? It is evident to all of us, and I do not need to describe it; read Galatians 5:16 ff. and you have a true picture, not only of heathendom at times of St. Paul but also of our day (Compare also Romans 1:26 ff.). Freedom without authority degenerates very quickly into the worst slavery; it is the slavery of the Old Man, "which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians 4:22). (Remarkable is the fact that the New Morality always very quickly bumps up against one point, that is, the Sixth Commandment. Free love and sexual excesses seem to be the real meaning of morality and of life. We shall hear more of it in the next lecture.)

In comparison with that, a true Christian is truly a free man. A Christian has freedom and Christ can always free him all his days, also from the slavery of his lusts for a service of love to God and his neighbor. Hence, Luther proceeds to say: "A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant

of all, subject to all." He is subject by love. Faith awakens love, and love is nothing else than a recognition of God's and the neighbor's authority.

The New Morality, too, appeals to love. Joseph Fletcher even makes love the last and only principle in his Situation Ethics. His book is a hymn of praise on love. Of course, Fletcher refers to Christendom in this connection, to Christ and St. Paul, and claims that the church has misunderstood Christ and St. Paul and St. John as if they had put new rules of behavior and life in place of the old. Fletcher puts it this way: There is really only one law: Love; and all commandments, rules, laws, traditions may be broken for love's sake. According to Fletcher, neither the thief nor the adulterer is sinning if love was the motive of his deed.

Over against this, one must say that indeed the new obedience is placed under the command of love and is obligated to it as the highest of all Commandments. The new obedience stands indeed under the order of Christ's own words: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

But the new obedience in freedom nevertheless is and remains obedience. First, obedience over against the Word. God's Word is not to be separated, neither from belief, nor from the Lord, nor from His Word (John 8:31). Therefore, neither belief nor obedience can be separated from the positive commandments of the Lord and His Apostles. The Commandment of love does not militate against the individual Commandments of the New Testament nor supersede them, but operates in them and through them. "Love is no blank sheet upon which everyone may write what he wishes." But, further, if the new obedience is obedience it yet remains freedom, namely, obedience in freedom. This is

Luther's point in his pamphlet. A true Christian fulfils God's Commandments, practices love towards God and all men, not because he must, but because he wants to. God's commandments, also every single positive commandment or word of the Holy Scriptures, the Christian acknowledges as the commandments and words of his God and Savior. In so far as a Christian is a new creature, it is a real delight to him to do God's will, and if he acts against it ("for we daily sin much, and indeed deserve nothing but punishment"), he recognizes it as sin and wrong and is grieved over it and repents.

In any case, we must emphasize once more that only a Christian can do this: "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). And it is also impossible to serve God and the neighbor in freedom without faith. Man without faith, the heathen and the apostate Christians, are still "under the law." To be sure, Christ has also fulfilled the law for them, and the freedom of God's children is ready for them too, as it is for everybody. But they will not accept this gift but rather despise it. So it comes that they don't see this wonderful opportunity for true freedom that God offers them, and so they feel God's Commandments as a burden; moreover, they hate God's law (and finally every authority) in the depth of their heart because it hinders them from living according to their lusts.

So the natural man, the unbeliever, cannot understand freedom as freedom in obedience, or obedience as obedience in freedom, but only as freedom from law and as freedom from every authority. Psalm 2 depicts this situation of the world: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? . . . Let us break their bands assunder, and cast away their cords from us" (Psalm 2:1,3). Revolution is the trademark of the natural man and his world.



You must know this, if you will understand modern man and the modern world. Marcuse's program is that of the apostate world, which cannot do otherwise than to emancipate itself from God and to surrender the last remnant of faith and the fear of God to lead men to destroy all authority among men, in order to pretend so to free them.

Every day we can see what the results are. (In general I speak of the German situation, but it seems to me that there is not much difference in America.) We recall that the real problem of modern man, as we developed it in the first lecture, is that man is not good but evil. But he will not believe it. He will believe, against truth, evidence, and experience, that man is good, that at least he himself is good. And so he cannot help it; he must misuse all freedom against authority. Freedom is not wholesome for him (by the way, the same is true with regard to too much prosperity), anyway not in the long run.

We in our country have had much experience with the opposite: loss of freedom, force, tyranny, as well as poverty and hunger. All of us remember very well how we suffered, that no one dared to speak publicly as he wished, even to speak for what he held to be right. And the change to the opposite which we experienced is unforgettable, with the result that we know very well how to treasure freedom, freedom of belief and freedom of conscience. We know that in relation to such bondage the freedom which we now enjoy is a wonderful acquisition and gift from God. But how long will it last? Therefore we must use it for God and the Gospel as long as it endures.

A certain degree of freedom is necessary for life. On the other hand, freedom, too much freedom (license?) is a real danger, at least in the long run. You surely know what that means in your country. And especially in our country a new gen-

eration has grown up which knows bondage, force, and mental anguish only by hearsay. (Not so in the Eastern Zone, where a terrible respression of opinion and a strict order of force is still reigning). For the new generation in our country, freedom is no more a hard-won acquisition but a self-evident way of life. And that means for many of them that they don't know what to do with it. They don't see in it an obligation to willing service to their fellowmen but only a plaything for idleness and self-indulgent pleasure. To such, freedom means that the evil lusts of the Old Man are now released, that everybody lives his life only for himself, earns money without a sense of responsibility for what he is doing, serves his self interests, knows no respect for elders and fellowmen, takes what he can get even if it belongs to someone else, desires his neighbor's wife, destroys his marriage if he wants to, and is even ready to kill him if he is in his way.

There is no doubt that people in our nations are well down the road; at any rate, this is the necessary consequence of the program of Herbert Marcuse: Freedom without law, freedom without any authority.

With reference to man as he really is, evil and revolutionary by nature, one who is not ready to do the good willingly, there is only one help: Place man where he belongs, that is, between freedom and authority or between freedom and law. To be sure, without any freedom life is not worth living. Freedom is part of the daily bread for which we pray. It was no Utopia to fight for freedom of men from slavery, from tyranny which by tradition belongs to this land. But it is a Utopia to claim and to fight for unrestrained freedom, freedom without law and authority. Even the wildest Wild West still knew the blessings of law.

Man cannot endure this limitless freedom be-

cause it ruins and destroys the world, because man is what he is, not the good fellow he believes himself to be but the selfish fallen enemy of God, and man who wants to live according to his lusts and for whom law is nothing else than a hindrance to unrestrained sin and free love.

So nothing remains if the world is to be preserved as long as God wills it, but to give and permit man as much freedom as he needs to be a human being; but at the same time to establish and to anchor law and all God's ordained authorities under the Fourth Commandment so deeply into public life that at any time wickedness and evil can be restricted, if necessary, by the most severe means, because the higher powers bear not the sword in vain (Romans 13:4).

Temporal authority ("Die Obrigkeit") -- this word comes out of Luther's vocabulary. Luther wrote another important tract: "Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should Be Obeyed" (1523). (See Luther's Works, Volume 45, II, pp. 75-129.) This writing is just as important and up-to-date as that of "The Freedom of a Christian". Here Luther has spoken decisively. He explains that Christians as Christians properly are not in need of government, just as they need no distinct authorities at all. For them the sword of force is not necessary because they are willing to do the good by free will and for conscience sake, for Christ's sake. But nevertheless they are "subject to all authority which has power over them", even to an ungodly or atheistic Authority so long as such don't demand anything from Christians which is contrary to God's command, or contrary to faith, for the sake of his neighbor and society, whether in community or state, so that discipline and order can be retained among people, so that right and justice can prevail in the nation.

And even if the church, as church, has nothing

to do with secular things, it is not her task to usurp power over men, or use force; it has only one means with which to operate, namely: The Word, the Gospel (Augsburg Confession, XXVIII, Non Vi Sed Verbo). Still the Christians, as Christians and as citizens of their respective countries, are obliged to serve their country, their community, as best they can. They should assume governmental offices and duties as long as they are not thereby forced to do wrong and to act contrary to the faith -- all for the neighbor's good and for God's sake. This all sounds convincing, and something a Christian endorses -- one, who for love's sake, is everyone's servant and subject to all. But, of course, there is a whole mass of incidental questions which are difficult to answer; there are borderline questions which are not easy to be answered, which are to be solved from case to case (casuistry), but in all of which love is the chief commandment. Nevertheless, as you have seen, there are answers, answers of the true Lutheran Church to these otherwise insoluble problems concerning Freedom and Authority.

With reference to the details, the many single problems, I think it is not possible to discuss all or even some of them just now. I hope that the discussion period will offer opportunity to raise some of these problems. Maybe there are questions you have just of me. I know whereof I speak from long personal experience. I have lived through times of restrained freedom in my country. I was a pastor in the Third Reich. In World War II I was also a soldier and an officer of the army under Hitler and Himmler. For years I belonged to the unit that manufactured armament, and to the staff of a man, Albert Speer (author of last year's best selling book, Inside the Third Reich), who was condemned as a war criminal in Nürnberg, and presently I am president of a church, the Lutheran Free Church in Germany, that is partly in West Germany and partly in Eastern Germany. It is my duty each year to go into the DDR to visit those congregations

that now live under a socialistic, that means communistic and atheistic, regime, and to counsel them on what to do. In all these situations, I have tried to live and to act as a Christian ("Christenmensch") according to the principles I have here outlined. I must say that God has saved me -- often in a miraculous manner -- so that no problem was too difficult to solve and so that the temptation could be endured. I never had to kill men and came home healthy, a free man, after the war. But I have also experienced into what dilemmas a true Christian again and again comes under an atheistic government when he has to be subject to two masters, but in all is allowed to serve only one Master, our Lord Jesus Christ.

But I have experienced, too, that the true Lutheran Church, that Confessional Lutheranism, has answers in situations like those and that the Bible and the Lutheran Confessions don't forsake a "Christenmensch".

I close this part with those words which Martin Luther closes his liberty tract:

We conclude, therefore, that a Christian lives not in himself, but in Christ and in his neighbor. Otherwise he is not a Christian. He lives in Christ through faith, in his neighbor through love. By faith he is caught up beyond himself into God. By love he descends beneath himself into his neighbor. Yet he always remains in God and in his love, as Christ says in John 1:51, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

As you see, it is a spiritual and true freedom that makes our hearts free from all sins, laws and commands, as St. Paul says, I Timothy 1:9, "The law is not laid

down for the just." It is more excellent than all other liberty, which is external, as heaven is more excellent than earth. May Christ give us this liberty, both to understand and to preserve. Amen.

LECTURE III: "A Third Problem:  
Life and Marriage Under God"  
(The Fifth and Sixth Commandments)

Faith and love are different concerning obedience. It is true that both are free in themselves. No one can be forced to believe, and good works can be done only in free willingness. Both are a fruit of the Gospel, in the course of which surely faith stands before love. First conversion and faith, and afterwards sanctification and love, but so that necessarily love follows faith (Franz Pieper: Nexus Indivulsus).

But there is one more difference. Faith can be stated and comprehended in propositions, in dogmas. The great confessions of the church are statements of this kind, and we are certain that these comprehended statements explain the Word of God correctly and agree with it. That is the reason why, in ordaining our pastors, we pledge them to these confessions of the Lutheran Church, not quatenus but quia; that means not insofar as but because they agree with God's Word and will.

But you cannot codify answers to moral problems in the same way once-and-for-all in a moral code so that mankind and each generation knows once-for-all how to behave in a certain context and how one should conduct his life (so Rome and the natural law, so the Talmud of the Jews and its casuistry).

That will not do, not only because life is so

different and complicated and ever changing and producing ever new problems, so that you cannot gather all those differences in a perfect system, in a helpful casuistry, but also, and this chiefly, because as Christians we have the command of love which as Jesus says is the first and great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40). Christ says further: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:34,35). That is the basic norm and rule for Christian life, and whatever transgresses this rule, is a priori against God and His commandments. Paul declares: "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (I Corinthians 13:3).

But nevertheless the new obedience in all its freedom and in all its commitment to the love-command, remains obedient to the Word and to the Commandments of the Lord. Though the Commandments of the Holy Scripture, for instance, the Ten Commandments, are regulated by the love-command, nevertheless they are not removed or abrogated but remain in force and are binding even to this day.

There is no special love ethics for a Christian in the sense that love annuls God's Commandments. On the contrary, St. John says: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: And His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). There is also no mere "Situation Ethics", as Joseph Fletcher puts it, by which in a given situation love could disregard the positive commandments of

God or even that love could purposely justify any means of action with regard to God and one's neighbor. And much less can man himself replace God, which is what it comes to with Fletcher and the New Morality when life or humanity or compassion or some other values of this world which have nothing to do with God, could be the deciding norm of acting instead of God's Commandments. (Fletcher: "Everything is good that maintains and nourishes life." In this way man puts himself in God's place; man is the judge, not God. "Man's mind is the measure of all things." *Ἀνθρώπινος μέτρον πάντων*)

No, the love-command doesn't abolish the positive commandments of God. This can be easily demonstrated by the whole New Testament, also when it interprets the Old Testament. Jesus and St. Paul both sing the hymn of love and let love be the fulfillment of the law (Romans 13:10). But no holy writer of the New Testament, no apostle of the Lord, not to mention the Lord Himself, spares words in admonishing the Christians also concerning the Second Table of the law, and particularly those commandments which are today the subject of our deliberations, that is, the Fifth and the Sixth Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill," and "Thou shalt not commit adultery."

(We pick out these two commandments, not as if we could not take other ones. But we do so for example and illustration, because the problems that come up in this context, life and marriage, are the most timely and controversial ones just now, and because answers to these problems are the most urgent ones of all.)

"Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13. Compare Matthew 5:21). This is a short, clear-cut, unequivocal commandment, at least for the man who acknowledges God as the Creator and preserver of life in general. And it is clear from the very beginning: Where people disregard this commandment today



and always, they do it only because they no longer acknowledge God as master of life but appoint themselves to be God.

Jesus Himself has interpreted the Fifth Commandment for us Christians in His Sermon on the Mount. He thereby confirms the validity of the Fifth Commandment as He emphasizes just before He repeats the commandment (v. 21): "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill" (Matthew 5: 17).

It is true, Jesus teaches us not to interpret the commandments in the way the Jews and the Rabbis did at His time, who stated that the Fifth Commandment would be a matter for the court: "Whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:21), and that a man who could not be condemned for murder before a court would be innocent also before God. In this way, one young man in the Gospel could say: "All these things have I kept from my youth up" (Matthew 19:20).

Jesus teaches that God examines the heart, not what strikes the eyes, and that "out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19), and that therefore everyone, all mankind, is before God guilty of breaking all the commandments, also guilty of breaking the Fifth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." He teaches further that wrath and hatred, evil thoughts against the neighbor, invectives like "Raca" and "Thou fool" (Matthew 5:22), make one guilty of murder in the same way, and that if God would proceed with us according to His law all would be deserving of "hell fire" (v. 22).

There is no difference with the Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Matthew 5:27 and Exodus 20:14). Also this commandment

Jesus emphatically reaffirms in the Sermon on the Mount. Also here Jesus turns Himself against the Rabbis' misunderstanding that only an accomplished deed is a punishable sin before God, and He sets against this interpretation His own as the one of the Lord God: "But I say unto you that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Here, too, Jesus teaches that God sees the heart and judges the bad desire, the lust of the heart, not differently from the accomplished deed, and thus condemns all of us as sinners with respect to the Sixth Commandment.

In these instances (we could multiply them out of the whole New Testament, also out of the Letters of the Apostles) we see that these problems are not to be solved by ethical standards which we make and apply and which may be changeable from generation to generation or even from person to person. They can be solved neither by the Individual Ethics of one's conscience (conscience can err and is easily to be influenced by the easier way or by one's own advantage) nor by a Social Ethic of purely current values (they change as the times change). They can be solved only by abiding in the Word, the written Word of God, that of the apostles and the prophets through which the Holy Ghost speaks to us, as we continue searching them for wisdom and knowledge.

And though the Bible is something different from a moral code or from a book of law in itself, or from a collection of casuistry, we shall learn that the Word of God does not forsake us even in the problems that confront a Christian in our days, also in the problems of life and marriage under God.

We pray: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path" (Psalm 119:105); "Wherewithall shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to Thy Word" (v. 9); "Open

Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things  
out of Thy law" (v. 18). Amen.

But now some more questions about the wording of the two commandments. First, we may ask how do these commandments still concern us today, particularly in the form in which God gave them to the Jews through Moses on Mt. Sinai more than three thousand years ago (Exodus 19 and 20). Luther has taught us in case of ethical problems in the Bible first to ask: to whom God gave a commandment. Not all that God has commanded in His Word concerns everyone of us. Luther explains this in the case of Abraham when God orders him: "Get thee out of thy country, and far from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee" (Genesis 12:1). Luther is right in saying this is spoken to Abraham and to no one else. And so we are not concerned with this command. Luther concludes that the Ten Commandments are first directed to the Jews, an order of laws for the Jews in the Old Testament, and so demonstrates that, for instance, the Sabbath, the celebration of the seventh day, is no more valid in the New Testament, because the Sabbath belonged to the Old Covenant and is explicitly abolished in the New Testament (Colossians 2:16,17). What is decisive with regard to the Old Testament commandments is whether the New Testament, especially Christ Himself, confirms them and so makes them valid for Christians. This is evidently the case with the Fifth and Sixth Commandments, as not only in our passages from the Sermon on the Mount but also in the manifold references and the letters of the Holy Apostles, as we will see later.

A second question is important: Is our translation right or perhaps to be misunderstood? In the Sixth Commandment there is no doubt whatever about the translation: "Thou shalt not commit adultery"; this hits the nail on the head. Here is correctly meant what we understand by this word

today. It is, however, a trifle different with the Fifth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." The word "kill" is too wide in meaning to be clearly understood today. The Nebrew word is better interpreted as "murdering". A better translation therefore would be, "Thou shalt not murder," or "commit murder".

So the Fifth Commandment is misused if one with it calls every form of killing murder. Also here the opinions someone has of a matter -- opinions that change -- are not valid. Only God's written Word is valid. Thus, for example, St. Paul in Romans 13 states that the government does not "bear the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil" (Romans 13:4), so here "the sword" is not only an illustration of her power and right to punish but without doubt also that she has the right of capital punishment. Not that she necessarily must act so and exert her right (in my country capital punishment is abolished), but that she has the right and prerogative to do so if the law grants it in special cases; and if she does use the sword for valid reasons, she is no murderer even if she is involved in killing a man.

The same thing applies to policemen who carry weapons and in emergency make use of them. They are no murderers if they remain within the limits of their prescribed duties, for it is one of the means to make our cities and homes safe.

Also self-defense is no murder; if danger to life, and if one is not able to resist an attack in any other way than by killing the aggressor, then this is not forbidden by the Fifth Commandment.

This is also the reason why our Confessions do not condemn war in general: "Of civil affairs they teach that lawful civil ordinances are good works of God, and that it is right for Christians

to bear civil office, to sit as judges, to judge matters by the Imperial and other existing laws, to award just punishments, to engage in just wars, to serve as soldiers, to make legal contracts, to hold property, to make oath when required by the magistrates, to marry a wife, to be given in marriage" (Augsburg Confession, XVI).

War may be fought in self-defense of a land or of a nation, as has happened in many cases, making killing of aggressors necessary. Luther once said (loosely translated), "If someone, for the Gospel's sake, threatens my body and life, I will say, 'take it'. But if someone otherwise threatens my wife and child, I will take my sword and say, 'God help me.'"

Whether a war is one of self-defense or mere aggression is sometimes hard to decide, especially for the common citizen, and in a given situation (e.g., Germany). Here a Christian cannot do otherwise than to trust his government. But it is more critical if, during the war or after the war breaks out, one learns he has been deceived. As the case of World War II has taught us, we were duped. Propaganda and other lies play a fatal role, and if a nation loses, it must pay for all and bear all the consequences. *Vae Victis!* (Woe to the losers!) (The same thing seems to me to be the case with Vietnam -- Compare the Pentagon papers.)

But in every case it is an Utopia to believe that wars would ever cease in this world (Compare Matthew 24:6,7). This goes with the original sin of man. Many people believe that modern wars will be outlawed by themselves, and that sound reason, e.g., balance of power, and terror, will make war impossible. And, indeed an atomic war could and would likely destroy earth and humanity. But human reason is no argument against war. This wonderful gift of God (reason) is so totally depraved by sin, that it will not work if some fool one day will

press the trigger of the big bomb. And new generations ever forget what their fathers experienced.

Well, all this is no new problem; in a sense it is old stuff. They are the same problems which already our fathers had and about which we learned in our own catechisms. Maybe they have a different face now, but they didn't really change. So the answers which God's Word gave and gives are in force and of value also today.

On the other hand, there are problems pertaining to the Fifth Commandment which first came up in our times (They play partly into the Sixth Commandment also). I call to your attention euthanasia (mercy killings) and genocide (murder of nations), abortion and the pill, misuse of drugs and tobacco and alcoholic beverages, and so on.

Euthanasia and genocide were a special problem of our German situation for a time under Hitler. Hitler proclaimed the right of the strong one, the one who extirpates the weak and the inferior. He wanted to raise, by selective breeding, a Super Race ("Herrenrasse" -- "Race of Lords"), which should rule the world. So he took to himself the right to destroy the "lebensunwertes Leben" ("The Life Not Worthy of Life"). He killed the insane and cripples; they were eradicated and gassed. This happened partly already before the war. During the war, Hitler did more. In his eyes certain nations of Europe, as the Russians and the Poles, were inferior nations. And so their life was circumscribed. They were kept as slaves, even partially eradicated, not to mention what Hitler and the SS did to the Jews, whom he regarded as outcasts of humanity, the special enemy of the Teutonic race whom he tried to extirpate wherever he met them throughout all of Europe.

The world's verdict on those shameful crimes was unequivocal. After the German breakdown a hard,

and in many respects just, judgment was passed over the guilty ones. Also our nation, particularly our youth, is still shuddering before the abyss which gaped before our eyes. Today we understand that man transgressed the boundary line. That here man made himself lord of life, a lord of his own, and lord over his neighbor, which he is not indeed.

But how are things now, twenty-five years later? What about euthanasia today? In Germany no one dares as yet to speak in favor of this crime; but how is it in this country? It sounds so plausible and indicates feeling to speak of mercifully killing. Is there not danger in this country too that wars again degenerate into genocides? How about Vietnam? It is respectable and honorable that during this war (for the first time, I think, in history) a court was convened to judge in this matter. But how about the judgment?

And what about abortion? I think here is a problem that is the same in all civilized countries, in even "Christian" nations. Here is a test as to how we regard life in our time, whether it is God's wonderful creation and gift entrusted to our hands or a mere thing that we can handle as we want, whether the Fifth Commandment is binding on us or not. You may twist the matter as you wish: Abortion is murder, not only killing, murder not of the fully developed person but of the potential person, taking of the life of the unborn person. There seem to be many reasons to justify these crimes -- we know them very well: That man is not yet complete in the woman's womb, that it belongs to the self-determination of a woman to dispose of the body ("I can with my belly do as I wish"), and so on. But all this cannot hide the fact that here, too, the boundary is transgressed by the option of man, the boundary line between life and death, which the Fifth Commandment draws so clearly. And what will the result be if this boundary line is once transgressed?

It is a bad thing if people, or even a nation, dissolves a boundary line like this. You cannot see where it leads to in future generations. But it is even worse if a church becomes more and more uncertain as to what is God's Word in this respect. Maybe we cannot help it that a fallen world goes to ruin more and more by abolishing the penal regulations of our laws, because the world will live according to its lusts. But the Christian and the churches must know what is at stake. They know God's Word and will and have no excuse. It is a necessary thing that the churches make it clear before God and the world where they stand, and it is good that the Milwaukee Convention of the LC-MS passed a resolution like 2-39 on abortion and approved an official declaration: "Human life is God's gift", all people are encouraged "to avoid perverting God's will by resorting to indiscriminate termination of life, either directly through such acts as abortion or euthanasia, or indirectly through the improper use of drugs, tobacco, and alcohol."

But there are other churches, even Lutheran churches, in our country and in your country who publicly take a different point of view.

A timely and modern problem (in our country it was rated number one by the government) is the misuse of drugs and narcotics of many different kinds, also alcoholic beverages and tobacco. At the moment one cannot see all the problems that arise here for our youth and for our nations. The epidemic has not yet reached its climax. In Hamburg, for instance, there are now five percent of the pupils of certain schools who are addicted to drugs, and that means as a rule that no one can help them any more. In Germany we now have about sixty thousand young invalids; that means young people who are no longer capable of following a profession or earning a living; there was a 600 percent increase in the number of this group over the last two years.



What will become of our nations if there is no longer any youth that will replace the older generation, that will maintain peace and order so that "we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."

Doubtless all this is going against the Fifth Commandment, a kind of "self-murder". And the convention of the LC-MS was right when it listed the improper use of drugs as sins against human life.

But now once more to the Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Here in the Sixth Commandment you may see very clearly that in the confusion of our times there is only one bright light that leads the right way: This is the inerrant Word of God, the Holy Scriptures. But first we must say that confusion and temptation is nowhere so widespread as in this area. It is significant that the New Morality, or whatever you want to call it, is nowhere so deeply involved and almost so totally concentrated as it is in sex, free love, and sexual intercourse. All this freedom for which the New Morality fights with all its vigor, also the battle about the Pill and about abortion, or whatever the New Morality is fighting for, is not freedom in itself. But it wants freedom for sex, to make room for the lusts of the flesh, to have free sexual intercourse with another without any physical consequences ("No sexual revolution without universal copulation, without free love"). He who does not see this is blind.

We are defenseless against this flood of sin and dirt which threatens all our youth and which may have swept them away already, if we are to fight against it with arguments of Reason. Nowhere can you see so clearly as here that Reason is no argument and that understanding of a problem, information about the consequences, cannot help a man in his sin. On the other hand, Reason is, as Luther says, "a whore" itself. Reason, also a

system of reason, as science and philosophy -- all wisdom of this world -- does not always act in the service of truth and of good, but very often it is also in the interest of lies and evil. Reason has it both ways; that means, it may demonstrate what it wants to demonstrate. With Reason you also can prove that marriage, the union of male and female into one flesh, is no inviolable institution of God Himself, and so no indissoluble order of this world. You may prove also that Free Love is a better order and makes for a better society and future. Reason may prove what you want, good will or bad intentions rules Reason, and so Reason, this wonderful gift, is "a whore" indeed -- like a waxen nose (as Luther says) you can twist it any way you wish.

On the other hand, nowhere in Scriptures are there clearer directions, also from the mouth of Jesus Himself and the Apostles, than on questions of marriage in general, and particularly concerning sex relations. I can here only give a hint of this, and I refer to my article: "Birth Control As Ethical and Pastoral Problem," in the Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly, January 1968, translated by Prof. Fred Blume. Holy Scriptures teach the indissolubility of marriage in the same way as the inviolability of life (Compare Genesis 2; Matthew 5:19; I Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2; etc.). In the same connection the Holy Scriptures (and Jesus Himself) teach that adultery is sin. And more, that divorce is adultery and therefore sin also. All this is stated so clearly and unequivocally in all Scripture that no one can doubt it except the one who will not take the Bible for what it is, God's infallible and inerrant Word. It is here that the roads part: You must know who you are and under whose Authority you live.

For us in Germany, divorce is a difficult controversy just now. In our country up to now the matrimonial law of the Third Reich, introduced by

Hitler, is valid, constructed on the "Guilt Principle". Up to now that means that a marriage could be dissolved only if one party could demonstrate the guilt of the other party, for instance, in the case of adultery. But now the "Zerrüttungsprinzip" (the principle of disorganization will replace the Guilt Principle; that means a marriage may be dissolved if one party will no longer live with his spouse and demonstrates that he was separated from his spouse for three years.

Maybe a government cannot help making such laws and allowances to avoid a worse situation, just as Moses did in Israel when he gave a bill of divorcement "because of the hardness of your heart" here concerning marriage and adultery.

The same thing applies to extra-marital sexual relations. For this, Jesus and the Apostles have a clear word: Fornication. And there is no doubt what is meant with that, not only public prostitution in whorehouses and the like but also and directly "Free Love", sexual intercourse of male and female outside of a marriage, a casual relationship. It is not sin that male and female love each other, have a natural attraction for each other, desire each other for matrimony or in matrimony -- but it is a sin to seek sexual satisfaction through pre-marital or extra-marital intercourse.

But now we have to conclude our discussion, we cannot go into more details. What we said is enough to bring us back to the beginnings of this series of lectures: Does Confessional Lutheranism, and does the true Lutheran Church have answers to problems of today? We were bold enough to give this answer in the very beginning: Yes, we have. The church has answers because the Bible has answers, clear answers, not only on old problems but also on problems of our time. To be sure, these answers cannot be codified in some moral code or in a casuistry; for this life is too complicated. There

will always be much room for counseling in the church, and the law of love reigns. But on the other hand, the Bible gives clear directions; the commandments of God are never out of date. If a Christian wants to do the will of God, he can know how to conduct his life, to be and to remain, under the Word of God, a faithful Christian in a decaying world.

And so Christ is and remains our only hope. It is true, Christ condemns sin, really and strictly, with no concessions to lust and flesh; but He does not forsake the penitent sinner, not you, if you are a sinner (and you are). He condemns adultery, but forgives the great but repentant adulteress. He condemns murder, but promises heaven to the penitent thief on the cross. "Jesus sinners doth receive." This is our hope. SOLI DEO GLORIA

## BOOK REVIEWS

### THE RELIGION OF ATHEISM

Lepp, Ignace, Atheism in Our Time -- A Psychoanalyst's Dissection of the Modern Varieties of Unbelief, Macmillan, 1963, 160 pages, paperback, \$1.45.

Micelli, Vincent P., S. J., The Gods of Atheism, New Rochelle, N.Y.: Arlington House, 1971, 490 pages.

Schilling, S. Paul, God in an Age of Atheism, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1969, 239 pages.

Strunk, Orlo, The Choice Called Atheism -- Confronting the Claims of Modern Unbelief, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968, 160 pages, paperback, \$1.95.

Reading an educational philosopher (John Stoops, Dean, School of Education, Lehigh University), I was struck when he gently chided the clergy for not making a serious study of atheism as it manifests itself today. It did strike me that very little has been written in our circles on "Atheism". Dean Stoops pretty well demonstrated that "Atheists believe something which stands in their thinking where the Biblical God stands in the thinking of godly men." (Religious Values in Education, p. 32) He asserts that "one of the central ideas in his treatise is that a distinction (between "non-religion" and "religion") is a distinction that is fallacious and harmful because on both sides there is belief and commitment. Therefore instead of 'religion' and 'non-religion' we may have polarized religious positions." (p. 82) Dean Stoops also declared that the legal crusade undertaken by the atheist in preventing wherever possible the development of a public environment wherein theism is a prominent influence "is actually a religious crusade in the fullest and most classical sense of the term." (p. 78)

Our church has been noted for its concern about the various kinds of false doctrine found among churches; we know about the aberrations with regard to the Lord's Supper, Pede-Baptism, Millennialism, Enthusiasm, etc. But we ought to be as concerned about the various kinds of atheism that surround us today, because their influence upon our people is more pervasive and more subtle than that of the sectarian churches.

Any one of the books listed above could be of help to the busy pastor who is meeting atheism at its cutting edge, that is, where his people are absorbing it without being fully aware of it. It must be said, however, that none of these four books would be completely satisfactory in every respect.

Taking them in alphabetical order, Lepp's might be the most useful one, and it is the cheapest. The author had been, until he was twenty-seven years old, one of those people who had "always been atheists." He joined the Communist party when he was fifteen, and he received an excellent education in the French universities. When he began searching for a more satisfying meaning of life, he was ultimately converted to the Catholic faith and today he would probably be classified as a sort of liberal Catholic. He later became a psychotherapist, and as a result his book carries quite a few case studies of the varieties of atheism. He has chapters on "Neurotic Atheism", "Marxist Atheism", "Rationalist Atheism", "Existentialist Atheism", "Freudian Atheism", "Atheists in the Name of Value" (Nietzsche, Malraux, Camus), and then he concludes with an interesting chapter on "The Unbelief of Believers". I would urge all of our pastors to get this book, since it is extremely informative and interesting, with its case histories of "Erman, the Neurotic Atheist", "Alfred, the Existentialist Atheist", etc.

Father Micelli's book has a striking title which points up that atheism is a religion: "The Gods of Atheism," and it's a formidable book of 490 pages. He gives excellent background on the fathers of modern atheism: Marx, Feuerbach, Nietzsche, Sartre. And he includes Bultmann and Tillich too. He begins by declaring that "atheism . . . from the dawn of creation has been the great temptation for intelligent creatures." The book is probably somewhat uneven in that, as one reviewer suggested, he places some third rate thinkers. He writes from the more traditional Roman Catholic viewpoint, but there is a tremendous amount of well-documented information which would be helpful to anyone interested in this area of thought.

Paul Schilling's book suggests answers to the atheists which are of a neo-orthodox stripe and

therefore not too helpful. But the first half of the book is probably the best summary of the 19th and 20th century atheists. All the authors of these books discuss Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), but it appears to me that Schilling's was the most helpful discussion to a novice. Pastors should be much more aware of the influence of Feuerbach's thought than they are. Schilling correctly says that "he foreshadowed the shape of much of the atheistic thought of the 19th and 20th century." (p. 23) Feuerbach's two books, The Essence of Religion and The Essence of Christianity, have as their essential thesis that what religion and theology call God "or gods" is a reflection of man's own characteristics; hence the real object of theological investigation is man himself.

Schilling's third chapter ("Major Bases of Unbelief") is almost a "must" reading, for pastors ought to familiarize themselves with arguments offered in colleges and universities and intellectual writings against theism: Belief in God can easily be explained as an objectification of human ideals; belief in God is inconsistent with the scientific method and the scientific view of reality; "theistic faith is irreconcilable with the extent and intensity of human suffering" (The Problem of Evil); belief in God is inconsistent with the recognition of the worth, freedom and responsibility of man; belief in God produces passivity in the presence of injustice and social evil, etc. (Compare my article on "Humanism and Its Effects Upon the Church", the Lutheran Synod Quarterly, Summer 1970.)

Orlo Strunk, as Academic Dean of West Virginia Wesleyan College, has written a paperback popularization of these varieties of atheism. He makes some use of Lepp's work, but it is not as interesting nor as profound. But it could be of help to translate some of the material into popular discussions at youth societies, men's clubs, etc.

These authors were unanimous in insisting that besides the professing atheists today quite a few who profess Christianity in word live atheism in deed. This same conviction has no doubt troubled many of our pastors also. Father Micelli effectively quotes Renan's (a contemporary of Feuerbach) judgment, which appears so strikingly true today, one hundred years after it was spoken: "It is possible that the collapse of supernatural belief will be followed by the collapse of moral convictions and that the moment when humanity sees the reality of things will mark a real moral decline. We are living on the perfume of an empty vase." Some of the recent political platform planks amply demonstrate this.

B. W. Teigen

All books reviewed in the Quarterly may be ordered from the Lutheran Synod Book Company, Bethany Lutheran College, Mankato, Minnesota 56001.

An Introduction To Source Analysis of the Pentateuch.

By Robert M. Montgomery. Nashville and New York. Abingdon Press. 1971. Price not given.

This booklet is one in a series entitled "Auxiliary Studies in the Bible." Using the programmed learning approach, it aims to indoctrinate the reader in the higher-critical approach and method of the study of the Pentateuch. The goal of the unit is given on the first page of the text: "Having completed the unit and then answering questions and inspecting materials selected from the Pentateuch, the student should be able to identify the evidence supporting the theory that the Pentateuch is the work of at least four different schools of thought." The four schools are named and dated as follows: Jahwist, before 850 B. C.; Elohist, by 750 B. C.; Deuteronomist, by 622



or 621 B. C.; and Priestly, later.

In 50 lessons the author then takes the reader on a tour of the first five books of the Bible via a number of selected passages that purportedly set forth the various characteristics of each of the four documents that are assumed to underly the text of the Pentateuch. By their use of the divine name, style, and basic theological or philosophical concepts these four sources are set in contrast to one another, and by reading them the student is hopefully made to see and realize the various ingredients that make up each of the sources. It is then assumed that he can gain a better understanding and mastery of the Pentateuch.

In spite of the many clear passages in both the Old Testament and the New Testament that attribute these five books to Moses, the author arbitrarily ignores them and dogmatically maintains the multiple authorship. Like most other higher critics, he is committed to the theory with a religious zeal that borders on fanaticism, and would no doubt be most reluctant to yield his position even in the face of the most cogent evidence. Most writings are not subjected to such an arbitrary and artificial procedure. Why should the Bible be handled in this way? As one looks through this study, one might be tempted to see a certain humor in it; but the matter is much too serious to treat lightly. The book is of value only in setting forth the higher critical method.

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