

WHAT IS NEW IN THEOLOGY?

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To one alert to history as dynamic the answer to the above question would be, "Everything." To one committed to the notion that history repeats itself the answer might well be, "Nothing!"

In fact, it might properly be observed right here, that recent philosophies of history, such as Spengler's *The Decline of the West*, or Toynbee's *A Study of History*, have contributed to the *Sitz im Leben* consciousness of theology. A few decades ago the *Sitz im Leben* emphasis sparked a fresh historical perspective for textual studies. Today, we note that theology *per se* reflects in its variant expressions from one generation to the next a responsiveness to the external world.

Whereas once men of faith considered themselves under compulsion to disavow any change of form in theological expression, (not to be confused with the truth being formulated), evangelicals as well as others today find a new challenge in the realization that changing forms of theological expression provide a means for communication with the contemporary world. And adequate communication is essential to an effective Gospel witness. Such adequate communication includes the 20th century promotional techniques of a Billy Graham Crusade as well as the perpetual struggle of theologians to make eternal revelatory truth relevant and intelligibly accessible to Main Street. Much contemporary theological literature, not to mention recent versions of the Scriptures themselves, breathes this desire to remove medieval garbs from 20th century Christian experience.

Paul Althaus in his systematic theology, *Die Christliche Wahrheit*, defines theology as the process of the church reflecting upon its Christian experience. To this we must add that Christian experience never occurs in a social, or political vacuum. Theology is not the invention of priests who wish to exploit and control a superstitious people, but theology in the 20th century represents the reaction of the Christian community to literally world shaking events outside the proverbial ivory towers of theologians. The two world wars, with an economic depression thrown between for good measure, determined the present theological trends more directly than the theological studies pursued in seminaries.

The fact that Fundamentalism has come off rather poorly in this current re-shuffling of theological perspectives may be due, among other things, to its mistaking of forms for substance in theological expression, thus attempting artificially to foist so-called "classical" or traditional forms on 20th century Christian life, and secondly, its isolationary view and behavior in the midst of a dynamic culture. This resulted in the breakdown of lines of communication. That men committed to a relatively low view of Special Revelation should be responsible for the production and tremendous impact of a new version of the Scriptures presents an embarrassing irony to theological conservatives.

When we examine the impact of recent world events upon the Christian community some of the most obvious results are the following: (1) a resurgence of biblical theology; (2) neo-orthodoxy and other re-alignments of theological schools; (3) a growing ecumenical consciousness; (4) a shift of emphasis in eschatological interests. Guided by the limitations of a brief statement such as this paper, let us look at each of these. It will be our aim to combine generalities with sufficient specifics so as to provide scope for perspective and also particulars for illustration.

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1. THE RESURGENCE OF BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

One of the most helpful brief surveys for recent New Testament studies may be found in A. M. Hunter's *Interpreting the New Testament, 1900-1950*.¹ But to begin at the beginning one seems always compelled to mention Barth's *Ramerbrief* of 1918 as the touchstone of new interest in biblical theology. In fairness one ought to recognize the work of Adolf Schlatter. *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament*, which preceded Barth's work. Also one ought to remind the present generation of the earlier work of Theo. Zahn, F. Delitzsch, B. B. Warfield, and even George B. Stevens. The fact is, however, that repentant liberals such as Barth and Brunner on the European continent, and Edwin Lewis and Walter M. Horton in the United States have caused a much greater theological stir than the sons of faith who never became prodigals in a far off country. A former convict turned evangelist draws a larger crowd than the home-town boy who never became notorious.

The republication of Stevens' *New Testament Theology* by Scribners, and publication of E. F. Scott's *The Varieties of Religion in the New Testament*, and F. C. Grant's *An Introduction to New Testament Thought*, Burrow's *Biblical Theology*, present specific examples of a resurgent interest in New Testament biblical theology. Along with these must be mentioned the *Theology of the New Testament* by Rudolf Bultmann,² and Ethelbert Stauffer's *Die Theologie des Neuen Testaments*,³ as well as the 1950-9th edition of Paul Feine's *Einleitung in das Neuen Testament*.⁴

Richardson's *Theological Dictionary*, Kittel's *Theologisches Worterbuch*, and Bauer's *Griechisch-Deutsches Worterbuch des N. T.*, Freiderich Torm's *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments*,⁵ and Ernst Lerle's *Voraussetzungen der Neutestamentlichen Exegese*,⁶ also deserve mention here as expressions of contemporary concern for New Testament biblical theology.

Certainly we must not overlook the outreach and influence of the various theological commissions of the World Council of Churches, the Baptist World Alliance, and similar bodies. The World Council of Churches especially has sponsored theological and biblical studies through the co-operation of biblical and theological scholars on a word-wide scale probably unprecedented. The conservative theologian cannot but be impressed by some of the results. Wolfgang Schweitzer and Alan Richardson serve as chairmen and editors of these studies.

Among the theological topics we find the questions of Baptism, Revelation, the Church, and Eschatology most prominent. We cannot deal with all of these studies in this paper, but recent and continuing searching of the Scriptures in connection with these subjects already furnishes a fermenting activity in Christian communities throughout the world.

As evidence for the revival of theological studies witness the reorganization of Schools of Divinity and of seminary curricula. Theology may never regain its medieval claim of being the "Queen of the Sciences," but biblical studies and doctrinal interests have once again become important in the education of ministers of the gospel.

Systematic theology always closely related to, but not always properly disciplined by biblical theology, also is in ascendancy. Just to enumerate a few names and recent titles must suffice: Barth's *Dogmatik*; Brunner's *The Christian Doctrine of God*, and *Creation and Redemption*, Horton's *Christian Theology*, Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man*; Ferre's *The Christian Understanding of God*; and *Christ and the Christian*; Paul Tillich's *Systematic Theology*; Berkhof's *Systematic Theology*; Wiley's *Christian Theology*; Thiessen's revision of Strong's *Systematic Theology*; Karl Heim's series *Der Evangelische Glaube und das Deuten der Gegenwart*,⁷ and Paul Althaus, *Die Christliche Wahrheit*.⁸

Then, too, we are confronted with the phenomenon of multitudinous republications of works such as Shedd's *Dogmatics*, Seeberg's *History of Christian Doctrine*,

works of B. B. Warfield, Machen, etc., etc. This appears to be good business. One wonders, however, whether 20th century theology should rest so heavily upon the props of those who served a by-gone generation. Is it proper to assume that *these* men of former eras would express themselves *today* as they did yesterday? (The same should be said of liberals of a former period.)

II. NEO-ORTHODOXY AND OTHER SCHOOLS

To discuss neo-orthodoxy in less than five minutes obviously is preposterous. All we are attempting to do, is to list it as a potent factor in contemporary theological trends.

Influence-wise, neo-orthodoxy probably sits in the theological saddle today. Even to take position against it means to be affected by it.

Following Barth's *Romerbrief* of 1918, Edwin Lewis' *A Christian Manifesto* looms as the first American public confession of the rejection of liberalism. Perhaps this aspect of Neo-Orthodoxy deserves noting. In its inception, Neo-Orthodoxy stems from a revolt against theological liberalism, especially humanistic liberalism. The original men identified with this movement, Barth, Brunner, Lewis, Reinhold and Richard Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, W. M. Horton, etc., all reached their present theological orientation by the route of liberalism. Right now, however, we are witnessing the transition to young men being initiated into neo-orthodoxy without having traversed the detours of liberalism. At Princeton, Union, and the University of Edinburgh, to mention but three schools, students for the ministry come as theological virgins into the encounter with neo-orthodox theology. *Theology Today*, published by Princeton, and *A Scottish Journal of Theology*, published by Edinburgh by men like F. F. Torrence eager to out-Barth Barth, represent the theology offered to these students.

Next it may be noted that although neo-orthodoxy includes great variations of emphasis, in general we see here a reaction against *humanistic* liberalism, a reaction against humanistic optimism of a previous era. To note this helps us to understand why aspects of *theological* liberalism, such as the acceptance of higher criticism, rejection of the Virgin Birth, and bodily resurrection of Christ has been retained by some so-called repentant liberals. The major thrust of neo-orthodoxy to date is seen in its re-discovery of man's insufficiency as the result of his sinfulness. Man is not a god, he is a sinner. It should be noted, too, that in this assertion some representatives of this group, especially Niebuhr and Barth, have been exceedingly effective. In its view of Scripture, Neo-Orthodoxy walks hand in hand with much of earlier higher criticism and much of contemporary Form Criticism.

One of the most helpful analyses of the differences in individual systems of theology and metaphysics as found in a group of neo-orthodox men is Soper's *Major Voices in Am. Theology*, Westminster, 1953. (See also William Hordern's *A Layman's Guide to Protestant Theology*, Macmillan, 1955.) Here is an analytical and comparative study of the metaphysical presuppositions and doctrinal emphases in the thought of Edwin Lewis, Reinhold Niebuhr, Nels Ferré, Paul Tillich, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Robert L. Calhoun.

To summarize neo-orthodoxy in a sentence or two: the sinfulness of man; the transcendence of God; dialecticism; paradox as norm; social pessimism in some of its representatives, especially Barth; weak in its Christology; confusing in its use of Scripture and views on Revelation.

Over against neo-orthodoxy Unrepentant Liberalism must at least be mentioned. *Liberals Reply* voices liberalism's answer to neo-orthodoxy. This group seems to be fighting for its very life. Its mood has become militant.

And now a brief look at trends in Fundamentalism. A growing awareness of an abundance of strange bedfellows seems to be growing here. One can no more point to a single man or school as the totality of Fundamentalism than one could in the case of neo-orthodoxy.

Fundamentalism, finding its greatest cohesion in Christology, also contains many contradictions within its ranks: Arminianism (numerically perhaps the strongest) vs. Calvinism; sacramentalism vs. non-sacramentalism; paedo-baptists vs. anti-paedo-baptists; dispensationalists vs. non-dispensationalists, not to speak of pre, mid, or post-Tribulation rapture ruptures!

One notes that the very term "Fundamentalism" has come into disrepute among theological conservatives. John Ockenga has proposed the discarding of the term and "New Evangelicalism" as a new appellation. This writer has been suggesting the term "Critical Conservatism." By Critical Conservatism we mean to emphasize the *self-critical* open-mindedness of science at its best, as over against the spirit of some types of Fundamentalism in which criticism and suspicion of *others*, nursed by an attitude of self-righteous, unteachable arrogance, spells the essence of being orthodox.

Fundamentalism no longer presents the unified front of a few years ago. Nor must we dismiss this recognition with the accusation that some evangelical conservatives have been too much influenced by neo-orthodoxy. Probably a more truthful evaluation of the present situation would note that: (1) some evangelical conservatives have developed a social conscience; (2) some Fundamentalists today refuse to equate orthodoxy with dispensationalism or even pre-millennialism; (3) that some conservatives reject the wooden literalism in Scripture interpretation and have greater appreciation for the spiritual dynamic of God's Special Revelation; (4) that some Bible-believing thinkers insist on the admission that biblical *interpretation* must be equated with the *Scriptures* themselves, and, that a given *theory* of inspiration must not itself be put on a par with *inspiration* itself.

As of now, it would appear that increasing rifts are developing between those theological conservatives who believe in cultural and theological isolationism and those who see themselves as participants in the contemporary life of society, and even of their own denominations! It appears to this writer that Fundamentalism which rejects the dynamic view of history will through continued factionalism, isolationism, and peripheral concerns, (as in some questions of eschatology) reduce itself both in numerical adherents and as an effective witness in the contemporary world.

By way of illustration as to what this writer humbly conceives to be the new and hopeful expression of biblical and critical conservatism he would refer to such books as Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and the Bible*,⁹ Ladd, *Crucial Questions about the Kingdom of God*,¹⁰ and *The Blessed Hope*, Henry, *The Uneasy Conscience of Modern Fundamentalism*,¹¹ and Carnell's *An Introduction to Christian Apologetics*.¹²

III. THE ECUMENICAL SPIRIT

Among present trends in theology the phenomena of "unionism" in many areas of life and reflected in the religious life, deserves a summary observation or two.

Youth For Christ and the National or World Council of Churches immediately come to mind as examples of the desire to aggregate. The support given to Billy Graham Crusades not merely by the general populace but by widely divergent ecclesiastical bodies points up this contemporary phenomenon. The United Nations and the Internationalist perspective of Communism may serve as further illustrations.

When the Ecumenical Movement is mentioned in some circles, a vigorous shaking of heads, not to mention wagging of tongues, immediately ensues. Perhaps this is due to the failure to recognize the same basic ingredients of social necessity as well as many divergent theological orientations whether one considers the National Association of Evangelicals, the International Council of Churches, Youth for Christ, or such bodies as the World Council of Churches. All we can do in these few paragraphs is to caution one another against the blindness that would write off a gathering such as the Evanston meeting of the World Council of Churches as totally insignificant, not to say unfortunate. Likewise one should not underestimate the nu-

merical or dynamic impact of "sects" and groups outside the World Council — as Henry Van Dusen recently observed. He went so far as to suggest that the New Reformation in Protestantism may possibly come through these neglected, but most vigorous groups.

Rather than yield to the temptation to be side-tracked into a too lengthy discussion of the significance for all Christendom of ecumenical attempts of understanding, permit me merely to suggest two fairly recent surveys of this present trend.

For a carefully documented discussion of the *One World* idea, read Wilbur Smith's chapter X in *This Atomic Age and the Word of God*.¹³ Here you find a survey of the development and growth of the *One World* idea, in its philosophic, political and social roots, beginning with Kant and leading to the present day. Smith's conclusions seem to this writer somewhat *non sequitur*. He fails to give due recognition to the cosmopolitan and international perspective of primitive Christianity, one of the major departures from relatively nationalistic Judaism. The cosmopolitanism of Hellenism and Stoicism made their contribution to what we sometimes call "The Preparation of the World for Christ." The isolationist, self-sufficient nationalism of recent world history stands in opposition to the primitive Christian insight of one humanity, one world, one Creator, one Redeemer, and one *TELOS*. For some reason Smith makes no reference in this chapter to Christianity's basic internationalism.

The other one-chapter survey which might be helpful to a student in trying to understand the present trend toward various types of religious coalition is McNeill's "The Ecumenical Movement in Historical Perspective," Chapter V in his recent book: *Modern Christian Movements*.¹⁴

McNeill's historical analysis concerns itself in the mentioned chapter with the various efforts toward acknowledging the headship of Christ since the days of the German Reformation up to the present World Council of Churches. In early Protestantism the primitive Christian concept of the headship of Christ over all believers was set over against the papal claims of ecclesiastical headship. Even Luther had dreams of uniting the Greek Orthodox Church and other church bodies under the headship of Christ as a challenge to the papal headship.

Suffice it to state here that Communism's appeal to man's inherent sense of human brotherhood and basic oneness of humanity (whether promulgated in honesty of purpose or not), must not be discounted too easily. In the contemporary drawing together of many groups, whether in international finance, trade, or intrigue, Christianity's oneness in the headship of Christ, under whatever Christian auspices it may seek articulation, deserves honest appraisal and constructive support.

IV. A SHIFT OF EMPHASIS IN ESCHATOLOGICAL INTEREST

Not long ago Emil Brunner confessed: "This is no time for eschatological agnosticism." In other words, every theologian, every preacher, must be able to say something on this subject.

Not too many years ago eschatology could be seen under two major reactions: (1) indifferent disavowal of interest in it, or (2) the elevation of a specific eschatology to a norm for orthodoxy. Today we note constructive progress in both camps: renewed interest where indifference was the "respectable" attitude, and a better sense of proportion and more cautious biblical exegesis where individualistic chartism held sway.

Evanston has come and gone. Published appraisals of this ecumenical discussion of "Christ — the Hope of the World" are available in many reports and reviews. All we wish to say here is that we were much gratified and greatly strengthened by the spectacle of discussions of The Second Advent of Christ making the front of many of our metropolitan newspapers. Also, it should be noted that some

of the preliminary studies by the Theological Commission of the World Council of Churches such as "The Meaning of Hope in the Bible," and "Eschatology and Ethics" — came out of the co-operative work of biblical scholars of many nations. If any area of theological study can profit by the discipline of world-wide thinking to guard against the vagaries of individualistic, subjective systems, it might well be eschatology.

Time does not permit a review of the rebirth of eschatological interest. Usually we think of Albert Schweitzer's work *The Quest for the Historical Jesus* - 1906. Actually, we must remember that some men had kept the eschatological consciousness awake even before then. One could mention Richard Kabish — *Die Eschatologie des Paulus in ihren Zusammenhängen mit dem Gesamtbegriff des Paulinismus*, published in Göttingen in 1893.

Before summarizing some of the contemporary emphases in eschatology it may be well to call the roll of so-called "schools" of eschatology.

(1) CONSISTENT ESCHATOLOGY—identified with Schweitzer and Werner. According to this perspective the Gospels and the Testament are saturated with eschatology. Eschatology is made to be almost the very essence of the Gospels. But Jesus was deluded in His expectations. The disciples faced the problem of adjusting to the fact that events did not transpire as Jesus had thought and taught they would. The Sermon on the Mount and other teachings of Jesus must be seen in the framework of His eschatological expectancies. So seen, these teachings become known as "Interim Ethics."

(2) REALIZED ESCHATOLOGY. C. H. Dodd probably looms most prominently here. His *The Apostolic Preaching and its Development* (1936) serves as a guide to this approach. In this "school" the parousia occurred at Pentecost. However, we should note here that Dodd has more recently added a further expectation of the return of Christ, still another advent beyond history. He presents this view in *The Coming of the Lord* (1951).

(3) TRANSCENDENTAL ESCHATOLOGY, of which Barth is the spokesman. Neo-orthodoxy in various representative expressions tends to this view with its bifurcation of history and supra-history, or "beyond history." Somehow this approach reduces history and the historical by an emphasis on the transcendent, that *beyond* history. The transcendent is basically unknowable as of now. Any attempt to spell out a series of events "beyond history" would be considered fantastic. Eschatological events are not rejected — the Judgment, the Resurrection, the Second Advent, — but Scripture accounts must not be interpreted in the framework of the "historical."

Brunner's treatment of Eschatology, published in 1954 under the title of *Eternal Hope* and offered as a fore-runner of his third volume of systematic theology, also majors in the emphasis on transcendence. Here, too, the various events of resurrection, judgment, consummation, etc., are discussed as actual occurrences. But the detailed description is always in terms of the "spiritual," transcendent, and non-historical.

(4) DE-MYTHOLOGIZED ESCHATOLOGY. Bultmann, who places great emphasis in his *New Testament Theology* on the early church as "the eschatological congregation" serves as the most vocal proponent here. F. Būri has suggested that the next project for biblical scholars is to *de-kerygmaticize* what Bultmann has de-mythologized. Anyway, according to Bultmann, the early Christian church saw eschatology as limited to the present without any reference to future expectations. Brunner has characterized this approach as "the Christian faith without any hope." This writer, Brunner, in his *Eternal Hope*, suggests that the two things to be avoided in the story of eschatology are 1) *Schwärmerei*; and 2) de-mythologizing.¹⁵

(5) REALISTIC ESCHATOLOGY. Karl Heim and Paul Althaus find their place here. Karl Heim presents it in *Weltchopfung and Weltende*.¹⁶ Althaus, in addition to his *Die Christliche Wahrheit*, made his contribution to eschatology in *Die Letzten Dinge*, the fifth revised edition published in 1949. (This book, incidentally, is dedicated to Adolf Schlatter.) A prominent scholar (Brunner) recently called this the major contribution to eschatology in recent years.

About all that can be said here by way of summary is that Heim and Althaus take modern science seriously and attempt to spell out the eschatological concepts of Scripture, rejecting all dispensationalism and wooden biblicism, as well as extreme Barthian transcendentalism. It seems to the writer of this paper that much evangelical eschatology would be in rapport here.

(6) APOCALYPTICISM, MILLENNIALISM, DISPENSATIONALISM. The approach of men like Chafer, Scofield, Bauman, etc. would come under this heading. Today, it appears to be primarily an American phenomenon and on the wane. It appears to be totally ignored by the other schools of eschatology.

Now, for a brief listing and description of major eschatological interests today. To mention what to this writer appear as the most obvious, we find (1) a new appraisal of Time Concepts; (2) cosmic redemption emphasis; (3) judgement as basic and essential; (4) Adventism displacing Millennialism; Non-dispensational pre-millennialism.

Let me say a word concerning each.

I. THE NEW APPRAISAL OF TIME CONCEPTS. Oscar Cullman's *Christ and Time* probably ranks first here in influence. Karl Heim, also most deeply concerned with modern physics makes many contributions as he sets the *biblische Osterglaube* over against *Naturwissenschaft*.

It is recognized in these treatments that *Time per se* is not an absolute, and that, on the other hand eternity is more than timelessness. The biblical time references such as "the last days," the "ages" *aion*, hour *kairos*, time *chronos*, etc. are scrutinized. All history is seen as redemptive history (*Heilsgeschichte*). At the center of history stands Christ. Christ's resurrection (for some His incarnation) is the midpoint of history. The "last days" began with the resurrection. The Incarnation, to quote Hunter, may be represented as D-day; the Resurrection means V-day.

According to Cullmann there are three time periods to history (1) before Creation; (2) from Creation to the end of the present age; (3) the coming age in which the *telos* will be achieved in the eschatological drama. Althaus also asserts that history and eschatology are inseparable; history has meaning only in terms of the *telos*. Revelation gives us actual history in process, not merely things of the future, so that both the Old Testament and the New Testament — "*sind also streng zeitgeschichtlich auszulegen*."

According to Althaus, the Day of the Lord is a last point of time seen from one side; it is eternity seen from the other side. The Parousia "*ist Ende der Geschichte, aber End-geschichte geht dem Ende voraus*." *End-geschichte* has to do with the millennium, the "signs," etc. He also emphasizes that the "*Jetzt*" and "*noch nicht*" go hand in hand in the New Testament.

It must be noted here that great emphasis is placed on the differences between the *eschaton* or *finis*, and the *telos*. The "last things" bring us not to a *finis*, but a *telos*.

2. COSMIC REDEMPTION EMPHASIS. Heim, Althaus, and Brunner place great emphasis here. This world, cosmos, will not be destroyed, even though Heim speaks of the *Warmetod* of the world, but it will be transformed. Brunner believes that the "real" of the present cosmos, the spiritual element which holds it together, will then come into its own. In fact, heaven itself, God's dwelling place, since we cannot

identify it within our planetary system, may be the spiritual essence behind this material universe.

Althaus stresses the cosmic aspect of redemption as of equal significance as individualistic redemption. He suggests that the hymns of the early Post reformation Period (16th and 17th century) are misleading.

When eschatology is applied to the *telos* of the cosmos, eschatology is seen as beginning with Creation, not as coming in the future. The "last days" are actualities; Althaus insists on a "*Tag und Stunde*," but eschatology does not begin there. *Weltende* really means *Weltvollendung*, the consummation of Creation.

3. JUDGMENT AS THE BASIC ESSENTIAL OF ESCHATOLOGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS. Neo-orthodoxy often speaks of Judgment; man and the world are always under the Judgment of God. To quote Brunner in his book on eschatology: "The last judgment is a disclosure in which man becomes exposed to the searching light of God." It is primarily a disclosure, a manifestation, of what we really are. To quote: "We shall stand naked and exposed, according to the truth of our being, with no concealing raiment." Judgment essentially means discrimination, crisis. It may be the source of joy as well as fear. One is reminded here of an illustration used by C. S. Lewis in describing "The World's Last Night." He says it is like a woman buying a piece of colored goods under artificial light and hoping that daylight will not prove her in error.

It is suggested that the fact of Judgment provides a more stable eschatological consciousness than anything else in Christian experience, such as joy or hope, which may fluctuate.

Also we must note that several contemporary thinkers, including Brunner, not to mention Ferré, tend to universalism. Brunner leaves the question open, but believes that Scripture teaches both—a last judgment and also universal redemption.

4. ADVENTISM VERSUS MILLENNIALISM. Time and space permit only a reference or two. But it appears to this writer that non-dispensational pre-millennialism should present a live option to all evangelicals. The functional result is a vigorous assertion of the *fact* of the Second Advent without destroying such witness by dispensational wranglings over the *when* and other peripheral matters.

In May, 1954, the *Baptist Chronicle* published an article by J. C. Masee, for many years a militant Fundamentalist, entitled "Thirty Years of War in the A B C." (American Baptist Convention). His thesis and confession is that the controversies were over millennialism rather than adventism, and that disputes over millennialism are unwarranted.

A-and-pre-millennialism seem to be in ascendancy among evangelicals. Murray's *Millennial Studies* seems the guide for many. Southern Baptist and Reformed theology following Calvin, have taken their stand here. Surely the blessed hope must not become a bone of contention. Whenever it divides God's children we ought to recognize the devil at work. To the extent that the Church of Christ is truly a fellowship in expectancy, our working and waiting for the coming Lord will become a bond of strength and union. Christian fellowship stems from expectancy of the *Lord's* coming, not in the waiting for the coming of a *dispensation*. Even Moody warned the people of his day against confusing the two. Christ unites; charts divide.

The writer must confess great indebtedness to Ladd's *Crucial Questions Concerning the Kingdom*. A better understanding of Jewish apocalypticism, a more faithful interpretation of the Old Testament according to the example and discipline of the New Testament, a more biblical preaching on the kingdom as present as well as future, should enable us to restore the evangelical witness to a place of effectiveness. It would seem that the witness of Fundamentalism, which has much to offer

in other areas, has become ineffective in our own day largely through its distortion of eschatology into chartism. The rejection of "Fundamentalism" as a name seems to be largely due to the fact that in the eyes of the Christian world Fundamentalism has become equated with quarrelsome dispensationalism. The writer believes that among evangelicals there is a definite trend away from this approach to eschatology.

CONCLUSION

In closing this brief survey of contemporary theological trends permit me to quote McNeill in his recent book — *Modern Christian Movements*.¹⁷ Reflecting on what has happened in recent years, he states:

Controversy tends to shut us off from our opponents as by an iron curtain. It is left to a later generation to see in the light of history how much has been lost because of these barriers — and how much overt or clandestine trade across them has been carried on. While we repudiate one another's view-points, we silently interchange spiritual goods. (p. 11).

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Westminster Press, 1951.
- 2 Scribners, 1951.
- 3 4th & 5th ed., Stuttgart, 1948.
- 4 Leipzig.
- 5 Gottingen, 1930.
- 6 Frankfurt am Main, 1951.
- 7 Hamburg, 1952.
- 8 Gutersloh, 2nd ed., 1949.
- 9 Eerdmans, 1955.
- 10 Eerdmans, 1952.
- 11 Eerdmans, 1947.
- 12 Eerdmans, 1948.
- 13 W. A. Wilde, 1948.
- 14 Westminster, 1954.
- 15 Emil Brunner, *Eternal Hope* (London: Lutterworth Press), 1954.
- 16 Hamburg, 1952.
- 17 Westminster, 1954.