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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

Eternal Vigilance Is the Price of Doctrinal Integrity.— Writing in the *Lutheran* of March 21 on the subject "Preserving Our Inheritance," Dr. J. A. W. Haas, after stating that "there are pastors who in making evangelistic appeals introduce Moody and Sankey hymns, when we have the most glorious evangelical hymn in all musical literature in 'O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,'" goes on to say: "We have another heritage which we must protect—our scriptural doctrines in their entirety. We have inherited noble and great confessions of the evangelical faith. There is a peculiar genius of our Church of which we ought to be conscious. It should fill us with gratitude without despising others. As a whole our Church has greater unity of faith than most Protestant bodies. But there are two tendencies to-day that must give us pause, and they threaten to destroy what we have attained in coming generally to a true Lutheran consciousness and practise. An active group is offering strange fire on Lutheran altars. By their excesses they are undermining our real liturgical inheritance. But there are signs of another danger. Some of our young men have become infected with the rationalistic virus of a few American preachers largely before the public. There is a tendency to deny the Virgin Birth and to cast doubt on other great evangelical doctrines by half-ignorant novices, who pride themselves on their independence. While there are still but a few such men, we fear that they will increase and that we, who so far have escaped Modernism, may find ourselves face to face with it shortly. I am no alarmist, but I want to warn against the little storm-cloud which I see on the horizon. Let us guard against divisions within our own ranks. To avoid harmful controversies, misunderstandings should be given prompt as well as tactful treatment." While we would have phrased a few of these statements somewhat differently, we fully agree with what Dr. Haas says in effect: a Lutheran synod which tolerates doctrinal aberrations in its midst is committing suicide.

E.

Turning Away from Modern Theology.—That apart from conservative Christians not only Karl Barth and his followers in Germany feel that modern Liberalism in theology does not satisfy is evidenced by an article in the *Christian Century*, written by a Canadian theologian, Gregory Vlastos, professor of theology at Queen's College, Kingston, Ontario, under the title "God of Wrath." Pointing out that the stern things in the Scriptures speaking of God's punishment are disconcerting to the liberal theologian, he emphasizes that the only right view of God is the one in which we describe Him not only as the God of love and mercy, but likewise as the God of wrath. When we survey this world and its many ills, we cannot escape the conclusion that God punishes sin. The numerous phases of social injustice which we complain of inevitably lead to penalties, to disaster for the whole nation. When people deify themselves or their loved ones here on earth, the punishment will come. For instance, a person who has practised idolatry (practically) with re-

spect to a loved member of the family will, when he is deprived by death of the companionship of the person he loved, stand there without hope, without help, a crushed being. He is reaping what he has sown. When we deprive our fellow human beings of their just deserts, enriching ourselves at their expense, the result will be an inner emptiness for ourselves, a curse which we have to hurl at our own inward being. While God is not the source of evil, He is the source of the destruction that comes in the wake of wrong-doing. A person might think that God would have to be called unjust because under His rule the innocent frequently suffer for wrongs committed by the guilty; but that is simply God's method. We human beings are all bound together as one big family. What the individual does reacts favorably or unfavorably on the multitude. That is the way God has ordered the universe. If you do not love, you will encounter hate, and while you may outwardly be successful through some form of wrong-doing which you are practising, you cannot escape the condemnation of your own self, of your conscience.

This message of course is leagues and leagues removed from the Gospel which Christ preached; but it is evidence that modern Liberalism with its picture of God as a condoning Father does not produce conviction.

A.

The Signs of the Times and Modernism. — That the signs of the times are making an impression on those who have hitherto been little inclined to observe them is clearly shown by Ernest Gordon in the *Sunday-school Times*. Of H. L. Mencken he writes: "Mr. Mencken of the *American Mercury* pretends to believe nothing, but he chides the theologians for their silence as 'one of the incredible phenomena of these dangerous days.' Then he adds: 'All I desire to point out is that the New Testament offers precise and elaborate specifications of the events preceding the inevitable end of the world and that a fair reading of them must lead any rational man to conclude that *these events are now upon us.*' He next quotes Dr. Coffin, the president of Union Theological Seminary, who recently declared that 'we live in a world which is falling to pieces internationally, racially, and industrially.' This pronouncement was made at a meeting in Carnegie Hall, where Dr. Edmund Chaffee said before the same assembly: 'A great sense of failure has come to all of us. God Himself has convicted us of sin. We have been glibly saying for years that this was a lost world, but the terrible truth of this statement has never been driven home to us. Now we know civilization for what it is — spiritually hollow, cruel, blind, literally sliding toward hell. Unless Christ's Gospel is preached quickly, fearlessly, passionately, ours is a lost world.'"

Just what vicious fruits Modernism, which Mr. Gordon aptly calls "the new paganism," begets, he illustrates by the case of Mary Austin, the well-known novelist. She was bred a Methodist, but departed from the Christian faith. When she died, she left as her will and testament a little book entitled *Can Prayer be Answered?* Of this book Mr. Gordon says: "It illustrates the pitiful futilities into which apostasy leads. Pray she must! So she goes to the Piute Indians and finds her models of prayer technique in the rhythm of the medicine-man with his drum and gourd rattle. I can believe in the miracle of healing which she recounts. Spiritists and others in touch with the world of darkness perform similar

cures. She speaks of 'Jesus' method of prayer' as 'the most modern and scholarly we have.' Her most amazing discovery, however, was that 'the card sense is located in the subconscious near the *prayer sense* . . .; that poker in particular is played with the deepest level of what is called card sense, with the aptitudes which lie almost altogether in the subconscious, that is to say, with the levels in which the *prayer sense is most easily established.*'"

As "incredible, but true" Mr. Gordon, moreover, reports the following sentence in *Women and Missions*, official organ of the women of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., widely read at home and abroad: "What does the agony in Gethsemane reveal except that *Jesus saw human existence so beautiful that He could not bear to leave it?*" As "incredible, but true" also he mentions the fact that, when the Rev. Henry W. Coray was on the point of sailing for China, the Presbytery of Lackawanna, Pa., erased his name from its roll of ministers. Mr. Coray's sole offense was that he was sailing under the auspices of the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions. Incredible, but true it is lastly that, when Mr. Coray and his wife reached China, the executive committee of the Shantung Presbyterian Mission passed a resolution stating that the various stations of their mission should not entertain missionaries of other boards without permission of the home authorities. Such is Modernism in its violent, aggressive aspect.

But more alarming to us Lutherans is an account of the spread of Modernism in Lutheran circles in the East. This report comes from Dr. Herman A. Preus of Minneapolis, and it is printed in an article entitled "Recent Developments and Trends within the Church," published in the *Lutheran Herald* of February 26, 1935. Dr. Preus writes: "Before we leave Modernism, let us awaken from our peaceful, smug satisfaction as we tell the world that the Lutheran Church is free from the disease of Modernism. It is only a few days ago that a well-known scholar and theologian from the East told the writer that the Lutheran Church of the East is more advanced in its modernistic tendencies than is the Presbyterian Church itself. That, friends, is something for us to think about. Instead of thanking God that there is no controversy in the Lutheran Church, let us ask ourselves if that theological professor spoke the truth when he said that that was exactly our peril and our weakness. For the forces of Modernism are marching on unchallenged in the Lutheran Church, while the Baptists and the Presbyterians have faced the issue squarely and put up a fight for Scriptural truth that puts us to shame. This is an age of tolerance. Our Church has seen her period of controversy. And our generation has sat back with a sigh of relief for the past decade, while peace has reigned. Friendship and understanding have grown between Lutherans. And we all rejoice. But here is something else than a fight between synods or nationals. Here is a call to arms to the forces of truth against error, of Lutheran Bible-Christians against Lutheran Modernists. It is a battle in which synodical lines will eventually be forgotten. The battle is hardly begun, because we have been too blind and too slow and too satisfied to identify our Lutheranism with Bible-truth, not realizing that many bear the name of Luther who no longer bear the name of Jesus Christ and therefore are not worthy of either name. When

that battle is under way and pressing toward its decision, there will be a new alignment of Lutherans. Old synod lines will give way to new borders, and then, by the grace of God, the Lutheran brothers in Christ, of whatever nationality and whatever synod, will find themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder for truth against error, for an infallible Bible against a human book, for a divine Christ against a mere human Christ."

We are heartily glad that Dr. Preus has the courage to lay his probing finger on a spot which he regards as a festering sore in the body of the Lutheran Church. Unfortunately he does not specify his statements, and simply to make sweeping assertions hardly suffices to direct the fight against Modernism properly. We do not wish to deny that what he says is true; but where is the enemy? Who are the ones that advocate or practise Modernism in the East? And just *how* does Lutheran Modernism manifest itself in the East? All these are questions that must be answered squarely and minutely. If there are Modernists, let them be pointed out and their errors be mentioned. Again, if Modernism in the East is so vital an issue, why press the question of union with that very synod where Modernism reigns and destroys? Will not the whole Lutheran Church be injured irreparably if Modernists by the wholesale are received into Lutheran bodies that are still sound? We are certainly in sympathy with Dr. Preus's appeal to faithfulness against Modernism; let us *all* attack that vicious enemy! But let us not forget that *unionism* also is *Modernism* and that, unless we fight unionism, that subtle, but pernicious foe which has wrought so much havoc in the sectarian churches of our country, we are unable to fight gross Modernism effectively. Unionism is the loyal ally of Modernism, which attacks the churches in the rear even as they are rallying their forces to advance against the enemy in front.

J. T. M.

Lutherans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians Negotiating a Union?—The following item, reported in the *Living Church*, was news to us. "Progress toward a better understanding between Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians, looking toward ultimate union, was reported to the convention by the Rev. Dr. George F. Dudley, of Washington, D. C., on behalf of the Joint Committee for Conference between the bodies. Overtures from the Episcopal committee to the three other communions were cordially received, he said, and the way has been opened for further considerations of the problem of unity. The status of the ministry has been the particular subject considered by the conferees during the past three years, while minor differences were found in the attitudes of the bodies on the ministry. Dr. Dudley said on the whole there was a general agreement on the basic principles involved. The committee suggested regional conferences to bring about closer cooperation and better understanding between the Methodists, Presbyterians, Lutherans, and Episcopalians and cooperation in the field of service through the Federal Council of Churches. A unification of the efforts for church unity was also proposed by the commission. The report was placed on the calendar for future action."

Information leading to the identification of those Lutherans who have come to a general agreement with the Episcopalians, etc., on the basic principles involved in the doctrine of the ministry should be transmitted

to the headquarters either of the United Lutheran Church or the American Lutheran Church or the Synodical Conference, etc., as the case may be. We are pretty sure that the information contained in the above report laid before the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of 1934 is incorrect. We do not see how a Lutheran and an Episcopalian can come to an agreement on the status of the ministry, that is, a confessional Lutheran and a confessional Episcopalian. The case would be different if unionistic Episcopalians and unionistic Lutherans had been negotiating. They would have no difficulty in coming to a "general agreement." They could easily agree on the basic principle that the ministry is a divine institution and agree to call all other differences, for instance, the matter of the Episcopal succession, "minor differences." That has always been the unionistic formula: Agree on some essentials (these essentials being the things on which you agree), and treat all other matters as minor differences.

E.

The Low Spiritual Condition of Churches.— Under this heading a layman, writing in the *Watchman-Examiner*, voices a protest against the unchristian preaching of such pastors as are too indolent and too cowardly to uphold the confessional truths of their churches. He writes: "The low spiritual condition of our churches is due largely to the neglect of our ministers to preach the Gospel. There has been a preponderance of discussion of debatable questions and preaching on all sorts of 'subjects,' but little to force upon the minds of men the fact that they are responsible beings accountable to God. In New England, not long ago, men knew something about God and the Gospel. They believed the Bible to be God's Word and Christ to be the Savior of the world. They understood when one spoke to them of these things. This great advantage has been lost. I had thought of saying that 'religious education' is another factor detrimental to our work. But some one will ask if the Sunday-school is not a great school of religious education. It is provided God's Word is given the place it ought to have in the lesson. But for apparent results I refer the reader to a not very old report of the Northern Convention. It said, in these almost identical words: 'We have won a great many young people to our churches, but we have failed to win them to Christ.' I believe that the Sunday evening union services have done us irreparable harm. Christian fellowship and church union, not the Gospel, have been the things emphasized. These services were a disintegrating factor in our church-life, from which we have never recovered. Another thing that has weakened our influence and gained us some contempt is the use of the large bulletin-board on our church lawns. Instead of the inviting and arresting words of the Bible they have been used largely for the sweet-sounding words of such men as Emerson and Ralph Waldo Trine. Modernism is another 'drag.' It has made a mess of things. It is true that our work is different from what it was, but it is not true that it is more difficult. In spite of all our difficulties the very worst of our cities is a 'flowery bed of ease' in comparison with Corinth and Ephesus when Paul went to them with the Gospel, where heathenism was at its worst, morally rotten, wholly given over to pleasure-seeking, dangerous to the life of the preacher; and yet multitudes were won to the Lord Jesus. It was not Paul, but the thing he preached by the Holy Spirit's help, that won them. Have our ministers

lost faith in the Gospel? I now come to a thing that I hate to even suggest, but think it ought to be said. I do so only after much careful and sympathetic consideration. Many of us [laymen] believe that a good number of our ministers have not the courage of their convictions when it comes to preaching the truth. Some of them seem to be timid even about reading the Scriptures. Not long ago I heard a minister reading Matt. 7, 13. 14. 'Narrow is the way,' he read; then with a great spreading of his hands he loudly declared, 'But it is broad enough for the whole world to walk in.' That neutralized the whole passage. Instead of so many debatable questions let us agree to a campaign of more faithful and thorough preaching. Let us disown the Unitarian and Trotty Veck stuff and post on our church bulletins: 'Ye must be born again'; 'God now calleth on all men everywhere to repent'; 'For we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' Come to hear about it! We cannot interest men very deeply in many social questions until we have interested them in Christ. The love of Christ must motivate men for that. The Gospel of Christ is a safe Gospel — the only one. Let us begin at the right end of our task, putting first things first."

We have quoted only a small portion of the splendid article, in which this enlightened Christian layman so strikingly points out the pernicious causes that have brought about the present-day low condition of so many churches in our country. Yet even these few sentences forcibly remind us of our great mission to hold high the Gospel-torch of salvation in a land where the utter darkness of the impending Judgment is settling rapidly and irresistibly upon millions. Loud and clear confession, and well-planned, intensive missionary action — that must be our response to the call of the crisis.

J. T. M.

What the Unionist Makes of the Truth. — *All unionists make little of the truth. There is, however, this difference: the moderate unionist is willing to tolerate the untruth; the radical unionist treats the untruth as truth.* Says E. Stanley Jones: "We have discovered that there are two ways to find truth. One is to put forth your truth, press it to a decision, and the majority rules [?]. . . . The other is to *pool our truth* and see if we cannot come to a common mind. In taking that attitude, we usually find ourselves emerging with a larger truth than the one we brought to the group. But we have not only discovered a larger truth, we have also discovered a larger fellowship. . . . In that way the truth that each holds will be preserved and added to the common store. We should say to each denomination: 'We do not want you to give up your special truth; we want you to give it to the rest of us. Out of these differing types of Christianity would grow a larger Christianity. . . . I spoke in a Presbyterian college in North India and at the close the Presbyterian chairman said: 'The speaker to-night has emphasized God's side in conversion, but I don't think he has sufficiently emphasized man's side.' He proceeded to emphasize it. At the close I went to him and said: 'My brother, the battle is all over. We have changed sides. You, a Calvinist, emphasize man's side in conversion, and I, an Arminian (whatever that is), emphasize God's side in conversion. The battle is all over.' We had taken each other's truth and won the better for it. These battles must cease by our taking the other man's truth and out of it all growing something

that is more akin to the kingdom of God." (*Christ's Alternative to Communism*, p. 219 f.)

This unionist has gotten himself into a state of mind whereby he can no longer distinguish between truth and error. As an Arminian (Methodist) E. S. Jones believes that man contributes much towards his conversion. As an Arminian he used to abhor the teaching that God does all in man's conversion. But since he became a unionist, he accepted that as the truth. He took over the other man's truth. To an ordered mind that would mean that he now abhors Arminianism. But no; he accepts both statements as true: God does all, and God does not do all. If he is to be taken seriously, it means that he, the thorough-going unionist, has lost the faculty to distinguish between truth and error. And he is proud of this state of mind. E.

What of "Religious Education"? — The *Theological Forum* has indebted us by reprinting an article written by Edith Quick, the executive secretary of the Syracuse Council of Churches, on the subject "Do We Hear the Death-knell of a Young Profession?" The authoress points out that of late so many schools and departments of religious education have been dismantled that it seems the profession of religious teacher which arose in recent years has been nipped in the bud. It is, so our writer holds, the financial and economic collapse which is responsible. While laymen have come to feel the need of work of this kind, they do not generally see that the divided state of Protestantism is the chief obstacle which must be overcome, is the opinion of the article. The view is advanced that the only measure now open to the Church is to improve its present voluntary teaching force so that more effective work can be done. To aid in this effort, it is suggested that colleges give some courses which will help in fitting young people for the important work of teacher in Sunday- and week-day schools of religion, not in order to lead them to embrace the teaching of religion as a profession, but to qualify them in a measure for voluntary work in this field. It is a well-meant suggestion. Unfortunately the courses the authoress speaks of, on account of the Modernism which is taught, often are more of a curse than a blessing to the student. For the same reason one need not shed many tears because of the closing of the schools and departments mentioned above. A.

An Episcopalian Church Eliminates Bazaars. — Concerning an Episcopalian congregation, St. Gabriel's Church, Hollis, Long Island, the report is published that it has banned all entertainments, bazaars, and parties for raising money. A communication in the *Living Church* states that about a year ago the congregation started out on a new course with respect to its finances, the chief features of the new plan being the following: "1. No entertainments of any kind would be given for the purpose of raising money. 2. Members of the congregation would be urged to contribute to parochial support the money that ordinarily they would have spent for parish entertainments during the year. 3. The vestry (i. e., board of elders) would appropriate ten dollars per month for such social activities as seemed desirable." The correspondent states that "the results have been most satisfactory. 1. In one year the income of the parish has been increased by one-third. Individual pledges have been in-

creased and regularly paid. 2. The need of raising sums of money by means of bazaars, card parties, etc., is never mentioned during the church service. This has tended to attract some people who rightly feel that such matters have no fitting place in the services of the Church. 3. The plan has further enhanced the social life of the parish; for since no charge is ever made for social affairs, the lack of money is no obstacle to any one's attendance. 4. Energy has been diverted from secondary to primary ends. The spiritual life of the parish comes first, and you can feel this in everything that is done at St. Gabriel's." A.

Should the Preachers Preach Economics?—The *Living Church* of June 1 says editorially: "In 1932 Calvin Coolidge summarized his views of the social and political activities of the ministry in these words: 'I think most of the clergy to-day are preaching Socialism. None of us knows much about economics anyway, but some of the preachers seem to know nothing at all.' The statement was made in an interview with the Rev. J. Richard Sneed and is included in the last instalment of the series on 'The Real Calvin Coolidge,' edited with introductory comments by Mrs. Coolidge and published in the June issue of *Good Housekeeping*. Asked what he thought about clergymen who try to influence legislation, the former President replied: 'I recall a sentence by an old writer to the effect that Jesus Christ never spent any time in the lobby of the Caesars. In other words, Jesus did not depend for the advancement of His kingdom and His principles upon such means.' After a bit of further discussion the interviewer asked Mr. Coolidge what value he thought there was in prayer. 'Oh, I don't know,' he reverently responded as he looked out toward the heavens. . . . 'Do you pray in every crisis?' I asked. There was no verbal reply, but an effective affirmative nod. The ticking of the front-room clock alone interrupted the silence. We sat looking out and up. I had forgotten that I was in the presence of a man. I thought only of God.

"So much for Calvin Coolidge. In the May 25 issue of *Today*, Dr. Guy Emery Shipler, editor of the *Churchman*, presents a diametrically opposite point of view under the title 'Revolt in the Pulpit.' Dr. Shipler feels that the clergy know a good deal more about economics than Mr. Coolidge gave them credit for. 'The ministers of to-day—especially the younger ones—are alert and well educated. Trained both in college and seminary in economics, sociology, and Biblical analysis, they are far better equipped than the average member of their congregations to deal with current social and religious problems. They keep abreast of the times, and it is only wisdom for them to strive to mold their teachings to fit the times.' Dr. Shipler takes as his most shining example Bishop Parsons of California, who recently vigorously defended the right of free speech and freedom of assemblage in an attack upon his State's criminal syndicalism law and denounced 'disgraceful mob violence coupled with official lawlessness.' We are afraid that Calvin Coolidge would not approve of Bishop Parsons, but then probably Bishop Parsons would not agree with Calvin Coolidge. Which is right?"

We would say that Calvin Coolidge is certainly right in his cautious statement "Some of the preachers seem to know nothing at all about economics." And certainly he is right in stating that "none of us knows much about economics anyway." The story of the last few years proves

that. And certainly Bishop Parsons was right in defending the right of free speech and freedom of assemblage, etc., — if he was doing that at the proper time and place. Every American citizen has the right and duty to defend the right of free speech wherever and whenever American citizens assemble. But Dr. Shipler is wrong when he insists that, when the preacher is exercising the duties and rights of his office, the office of the ministry of the Gospel, he may exercise his rights and duties as an American citizen. We shall not discuss the question whether many of our preachers are equipped to speak authoritatively on economic and related questions. Even if there are many such, they are called to preach the Gospel and not economics and social and political reform. If they do that faithfully, they will not have the time to solve the nation's economic problems. As to the "current religious problems," let them study and preach the great subjects of Sin and Grace, and of Grace and Sanctification. *There* is the solution of our religious problems. E.

The Duties of a Navy Chaplain. — Chaplain C. M. Sitler, U. S. N., furnishes the *Lutheran Standard* with an interesting summary of a chaplain's work in the Navy.

The chaplain's primary duty is to minister to the spiritual needs of the officers and enlisted men and to their families on stations where the Church of their preference is not available. Navy Regulations (Art. 1245) specify the following duties: —

"The chaplain shall —

"1) Perform divine service aboard his own ship when prescribed by the commanding officer;

"2) Perform divine service aboard other ships and at shore stations and navy hospitals when directed by the senior officer present;

"3) Facilitate performance of divine service of clergymen of churches other than his own as directed by his commanding officer;

"4) Form voluntary classes for religious instruction as directed by his commanding officer;

"5) Supervise instruction of those deficient in elementary subjects, reporting regularly in writing to his commanding officer on the character, hours, and progress of instruction given each individual so instructed;

"6) Visit the sick daily or oftener, unless their condition renders these visits inadvisable;

"7) At quarters report to his battle station as directed by the commanding officer, who shall assign the chaplain a station whereat he may attend the wounded;

"8) At daily quarters report his presence to the executive officer;

"9) As required by Section 1398, Revised Statutes, report annually to the Secretary of the Navy (via official channels) all official services performed by him;

"10) As provided by Section 1397, Revised Statutes, conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of his own Church;

"11) Before ship reaches port, he shall ascertain the names of the men on board whose families reside in the immediate neighborhood of said port, and after conference with the men, if they so desire, he shall pay

an official call on their homes with the object of establishing a feeling of good will between the ship and the home;

"12) He shall report to the commanding officer the names of the families visited."

In addition to the above duties a chaplain is generally assigned additional duty as librarian and welfare officer in charge of recreation and athletics. One of his most valuable duties is to act in his pastoral capacity in holding private interviews with men who have family or social problems to solve.

The common service has been introduced at the Naval Home (Philadelphia) church service and is greatly appreciated. A weekly Bible class has also been started. Through the courtesy of the American Bible Society, Bibles, New Testaments, and tracts are distributed among the beneficiaries of the Naval Home.

Continuing its discussion, the *Lutheran Standard* emphasizes the great mission opportunities afforded a Lutheran chaplain in the Navy. It says that at present there are only four Lutheran chaplains in the United States Navy, three of whom are members of the American Lutheran Church, while the fourth belongs to the United Lutheran Church.

If the question is asked why not more Lutheran ministers are holding chaplaincies in the Navy, the Lutherans being the third-largest Protestant denomination in the United States, the reply undoubtedly is that one reason which has operated to keep Lutheran clergymen out of this field of activity is the fear that, serving a heterogeneous group of men, they might be required to do something prohibited by their conscience. Another consideration which has exerted an influence here is the conviction of Lutherans that Church and State must be kept strictly separate. Many loyal Lutherans have felt that the institution of chaplaincies in the Army and Navy is violating this great principle. Whatever a person may hold on the two points mentioned, these views have been prominent factors responsible for the small number of Lutheran chaplains in the United States Army and Navy.

A.

The Bachelor's Degree.—In the *America* of April 20 we read: "Once upon a time the bachelor's degree in arts, conferred by a liberal-arts college, meant that the young man had completed satisfactorily a course of studies resting chiefly upon philosophy and the humanities. For at least three years the classics of Greece and Rome had been his daily fare. In his senior year he had given most of his time to the study of philosophy. History, his mother tongue, and one foreign language rounded out the program of the humanities. Prescribed courses in religion extended through the four years. Of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and perhaps biology he knew enough to know that he knew very little, but also enough to permit him later, should his bent lie in that direction, to specialize in one or the other of these subjects. At the end of his college years he might well be styled a bachelor of arts.

"In very few American colleges is it possible to-day to obtain a training based upon this old program. With the intrusion of 'practical subjects,' planned to help the student later to make a living, the humanistic studies which tried to teach him how to live, not only later, but now, began to re-

cede, or, more correctly, to be thrust out. To-day no American liberal-arts college requires both Greek and Latin for the degree of bachelor of arts. Very few, perhaps none, make even Latin a required subject. To complete the picture, however, it may be said that the movement for a college course in philosophy and the humanities is beginning to find favor in some of the richly endowed institutions."

We are much concerned that our young men who are being prepared for the ministry be given that training which will serve them best in their work as ministers of the Gospel. The courses given at our colleges, including the study of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, were outlined by the fathers of our Synod, who themselves were university men, with this end in view. We ought not to lower our educational standard for the ministry in order to conform to a wrong tendency in the educational world of our day.

J. H. C. F.

Destruction of Food and Famine. — According to a new statistical report of the Relief Committee for the alleviation of universal distress, 2,400,000 people in the world died of starvation in 1933. The number of people who as a result of the depression committed suicide is estimated at about 1,220,000. At the same time, in order to maintain stability of prices, there were destroyed 568,000 car-loads of grain, 144,000 car-loads of rice, 267,000 bags of coffee, 2,560,000 barrels of sugar. 423,000 car-loads of grain were used for heating purposes. The committee computed that with the provisions that were destroyed 67 out of every hundred could have been saved from starvation. — *N. B. N. L. C.*

II. Ausland.

Theologendentsch und Schlimmeres. Der Erlanger Professor D. W. Bollrath ermahnt seine Zunftgenossen dringend, verständliches Deutsch zu reden und zu schreiben. „Es scheint, als ob die Gebildeten auf der Hochschule ihr Deutsch verlernt hätten. So unbewandert sind sie in der Muttersprache und haben die Freude an ihr verloren. Nicht nur an der unleserlichen Schrift, sondern an der Mundart, an ihrem Undeutsch und Stauderwelsch sind sie zu erkennen, auch als Stand, Klasse oder Zunft, die sich abgesondert und Verbindung mit der Volksgemeinschaft eingebüßt hat. In welchem Maße ihre Eingliederung gelingt, darauf darf man gespannt sein. Die sogenannte ‚dialektische Theologie‘ vollends — ihr Verdienst steht nicht in Frage — erscheint als ein ‚Dialekt‘, der sich nicht eindeutschen läßt. . . . Und zu allem Überfluß reden sie von einer ‚Sprachnot der gegenwärtigen Theologie‘ — nur um den Wechselbalg noch länger zu füttern. Ich habe deutsch, nicht lateinisch noch griechisch, reden wollen. Wer mein Dolmetschen nicht will, der lasse es anstehen, so klingt es bei Luther. . . . Wer Vater und Mutter ehren will in Gedanken, Worten und Werken, der rede und schreibe deutsch. Freilich, mancherlei Unarten muß man sich abgewöhnen. Das verlangt Selbstzucht, und Bedachtsamkeit mag das Schaffen etwas verlangsamern. Dafür aber werden die Früchte reif und köstlich. Denn ‚gut Ding will Weile haben‘, und Eile hat keine Verheißung. Geschwind zu arbeiten und Bücher machen in ‚jüdischer Hast‘, das ist ein eiteler Ruhm. Wer sich wie Luther die Mühe macht, einen Gedanken in deutsche Rede und Schrift zu stellen, der fängt den Dienst am Volkstum wirklich an:

er ehrt das Vaterland mit seiner Mutter Sprache. . . . Es wurde der Vorschlag gemacht, jedem Studenten vor dem Abschluß seiner Studien noch einen Lehrgang in Deutsch zu empfehlen, das er mittlerweile vergessen habe. Dem Theologen insonderheit wäre schon geholfen, wenn er auch während der ersten und mittleren Semester mehr, als es geschieht, mit Luthers Bibelübersetzung und Sprache vertraut und bekannt gemacht würde." (Vom Rittertum der Theologie, 1934, S. 45—49.) In Deutschland ist z. B. in einer Vierteljahrschrift für Kontroverstheologie neulich folgendes gedruckt worden: „Wenn man die reale Vereinigung von Seinsgegründetheit oder Substantialität und Begründungsbedürftigkeit oder Seinsrealität in einem und demselben konkreten (sich hierin eben ontologisch konstituierenden) Phänomen der Kreatürlichkeit nicht zu vollziehen vermag, so scheint uns das an einem Mangel an ontologischer Durchschauungs- und Konzeptionskraft zu liegen. Und eben dieser Mangel scheint uns einer der Gründe zu sein für die immer neuen Versuche, die ja in der Tat komplexe Sachlage durch Ansetzung einer abstrakten Synthese aufzulösen usw." (Es fehlt uns die Energie, den ganzen Paragraphen abzuschreiben.) D. Neu, der ihn für die „Kirchliche Zeitschrift“, 1932, S. 490, abgeschrieben hat, macht diese Offerte: „Sollte ein Leser das verstanden haben, so bitten wir ihn, es uns freundlichst mitzuteilen. Für die drei besten Umsetzungen dieser Chinesensprache in verständliches Deutsch haben wir Bücherpreise ausgesetzt.“ Seit 1932 lesen wir zu Rezensionszwecken an einem solchen Buch. „Die Menschheitsbedeutung Jesu bei Martin Kähler. Eine Untersuchung unter dem Gesichtspunkt: Offenbarung und Geschichte. Von Heinrich Petran. Druck und Verlag von E. Bertelsmann in Gütersloh, 1931.“ Da lesen wir z. B.: „Die Ablehnung einer Vorordnung der Offenbarung in der Veröhnungslehre begründete Kähler selbst damit, daß dann ja zwischen uns und Christum die Kunde von ihm treten würde. Dann wäre ihre Vermittlung auch nicht der zueignenden Wirkung des Geistes Christi, sondern der Kirche, auch wenn sie ihrer ‚hierarchischen Anstaltlichkeit‘ entkleidet sei, allein überlassen, das heißt, dem ‚Objektivismus‘ außerhalb der besonderen Offenbarungsgeschichte Einlaß gewährt und gleichertweise dem ‚Subjektivismus‘, da dann auch dem einzelnen Menschen die Fähigkeit zugemutet würde, nach Behebung seines Irrtums über die Stellung Gottes zu ihm von sich aus in das richtige Verhältnis zu Gott einzutreten usw.“ „Kähler vertritt mit dem Gedanken der Langmut Gottes und seiner erziehenden Gnade ‚die Fülle der Zeiten und der Lenkung der Menschheitsgeschichte auf die des Christentums hin‘ und mit seiner Auffassung der Parusie, daß sich das Schicksal jedes einzelnen vor Christus entscheiden wird, ganz deutlich die Anschauung von einem ‚Dualismus‘, nicht einer ‚bloß menschlichen und einer spezifisch göttlich influenzierten Entwicklungsreihe‘, sondern zweier ‚gesonderter Linien‘, auf denen Gott seine Heilsmittelung geschichtlich vorbereitet.“ (S. 180. 187.) Diese Sätze sind getreue Proben. Das ganze Buch redet von der ersten bis zur letzten Seite eine ähnliche Sprache. Und es wird noch manches Jahr dauern, ehe die Rezension geliefert werden kann.

Die Unart der schwerverständlichen Sprache ist aber nicht das Schlimmste an diesen Theologen. Ihre Schüler werden sie doch wohl meistens verstehen. Und wir Amerikaner könnten schließlich einen Kursus im Theologendeutsch durchmachen — wenn es sich der Mühe verlohnte. Aber das ist das Schlimme: sehr vieles von dem, was uns als Theologie dargeboten wird,

gewährt keinen geistlichen Gewinn. Diese Theologie beschäftigt sich eben nicht mit Gottes Wort, sondern mit — Problemen. Und sie macht aus den Schriftwahrheiten Probleme. Und sie will nun diese Probleme mit der Vernunft lösen. Das Resultat ist Ungevißheit, Ungevißheit in den allerheiligsten und allerseiligsten Heilswahrheiten. D. Bollrath schreibt darüber folgendermaßen: „Die Gottheit Jesu, das Gebet, göttliche Allmacht und menschliche Verantwortlichkeit — das alles sind ihr [der Bibel] keine Probleme, während sie unter unsern Händen zu einer ‚Problematik‘ werden, wie das unmögliche Fremdwort heißt, das aus deutschen Hörsälen endlich verschwinden muß. Dafür sage man lieber: Ich sehe nicht durch.“ Die Begriffe, an denen und mit denen diese Theologen arbeiten, „verflüchtigen leicht zu Allgemeinheiten, entarten zu Begrifflichkeiten, gleiten zwangsmäßig in Gegensätze, versteifen sich zu Widersprüchen, geraten in eine Spannung so hoch, bis sie reißt. . . . Das ist Laune der Logik, die gewaltsam in Verlegenheit führt. Sie wirkt wie eine Befangenheit, die auch den Hörer verwirrt und ratlos macht, so daß er sich nicht mehr auskennt noch weiß, woran er ist. Auch alle Gewißheit fährt zum Teufel, sobald der Verstand das Pendeln anfängt und die Vernunft sich überschlägt oder Kreuzsprünge macht. . . . Wer aber, ewig von Mißtrauen geplagt, nach Sicherungen sucht, der kann nicht Vertrauen predigen, das Gewißheit gibt. . . . Das Wort selber laufe, wachse und werde mit aller Zuversicht gepredigt, wie sich's gebührt!“ (S. 5. 14. 24.) Ähnlich spricht sich D. W. Laible aus: „Und die theologische Ausbildung? Sie ist vielen eine Last; das strenge, solide Studium liegt ihnen nicht mehr; lieber wälzen sie ‚Probleme‘ unter sich, erfreuen sich am Streit der Meinungen. Kommt das Examen, stauen sie, um welche ‚Bagatellen‘ man sie fragt.“ (M. E. L. N., 13. Januar 1933.) Was Wunder? — ihre Lehrer machen es geradeso. D. P. Althaus beschreibt ihr Theologisieren in den Worten: „So ist es denn wirklich auch in unserer Frage fruchtbarer, dem Geheimnis der Liebe nachzuspüren, als sich an der formalen Dialektik von Zeit und Ewigkeit müde zu rennen und wund zu stoßen.“ (Die letzten Dinge, S. 321.) — Es ist selbstverständlich, daß ein Theolog, auch wenn er das verständlichste Deutsch (oder Englisch) beherrscht, sich nicht verständlich machen kann, wenn er das, was alle menschliche Vernunft nicht verstehen kann, was ihm selber nicht klar ist, andern klarmachen will. E.

Bringen wir unsern Missionaren in den Tropenländern die rechte Teilnahme entgegen? Wir schicken unsere Missionare, und meistens ganz junge, unerfahrene Männer mit ihren ebenso jungen, unerfahrenen Frauen, nach Indien, China, Südamerika und vielleicht bald auch nach Afrika. Bedenken wir aber auch immer genügend, welche große Schwierigkeiten sie zu überwinden haben und wie viele Opfer ihr hoher Beruf von ihnen fordert? Wir dürften im großen und ganzen wohl bedeutend mehr hierauf achten, als es geschieht. Das „Hermannsburger Missionsblatt“ bietet in einer der letzten Nummern (April 1935) eine treffliche Schilderung dessen, was ein Missionar in den Tropenländern auf sich zu nehmen hat. Zunächst beschreibt es sehr fein die Universalität des Christentums. Wir lesen: „Ob einer ein nordischer oder ostischer, ein westischer oder alpiner Mensch ist, für die Gliedschaft der Kirche Jesu Christi ist das belanglos. Die Botschaft Gottes an die Menschen [das Evangelium ist gemeint. — R e d.], die den wesentlichen

Inhalt der Bibel bildet, findet überall da, wo Menschen nach Gott fragen, verstehendes Gehör. Daher auch die Übersehbarkeit der Bibel in alle Sprachen der Erde. Damit ist zugleich die Allgemeingültigkeit des Christentums gegeben und der weltumfassende Auftrag der Mission. Für die Mission gibt es keine klimatischen Schranken. Wo es eine Lebensmöglichkeit für Menschen gibt, da hat auch die Mission einen Auftrag. Die Sendung „in alle Welt“ duldet keine klimatischen Schranken.

„Das macht aber den Weg der Mission zu einem Opfergang. Die Zahl der Missionare, die von den ‚wilden Heiden‘ hingeschlachtet worden sind — man kann sie an den Fingern abzählen —, ist verschwindend klein gegenüber denen, die das mörderische Klima fremder Zonen dahingerafft hat, hier durch einen plötzlichen Fiebertod, dort als Opfer langjährigen Siedetums. Mag man die Opfer der Kannibalen als die Blutzengen der Mission ehren, sind die geringerer Ehre wert, in deren Blut das tödliche Gift der Malaria langsam die Kraft verzehrt? Wer vermag abzuwägen, welche Anforderungen an die Geduld und Tragkraft und den selbstverleugnenden Willen die Arbeit in den Tropen täglich stellt? Dieser tägliche Opfergang fordert oft größeren Opfergeist als die Bereitschaft zum Sterben in schwerer Krankheit oder in Zeiten der Verfolgung. Und dann vergesse man nicht die Opfer, die das Tropenklima dem Familienleben unserer Missionare auferlegt. Der erste Abschied von der Heimat, so schwer er manchem fallen mag, ist ein Geringes gegenüber dem Abschiedschmerz der zweiten Ausreise, wenn es gilt, sich von den Kindern zu trennen, die wieder in das tropische Klima zurückzuführen sowohl aus Gesundheitsgründen als auch um der Erziehung willen nicht möglich ist. Das wird nie überwunden und legt auf das Leben der Eltern und der Kinder einen lebenslänglichen Schatten, und man mag daran er-messen, was es in sich schließt, wenn wir singen: ‚Es ist kein Preis zu teuer, Es ist kein Weg zu schwer, Zu streuen dein Lebensfeuer Ins weite Völkermeer.‘ Dazu kommt ein anderes: die mancherlei Hemmungen innerer und äußerer Art, Verkehrs-, Wohn- und Ernährungsschwierigkeiten, Belastung mit so vielen äußeren Arbeiten, die man in der Regel andern über-lassen kann, hier aber notwendig selbst verrichten muß. Wieviel Kraft wird da scheinbar unnützlich verbraucht! Vor allem aber die mancherlei inneren Hemmungen! Das Klima in den Tropen erschläfft und ermüdet nicht nur den Körper, sondern schwächt und lähmt auch die Kraft des Willens, die Beweglichkeit und Widerstandsfähigkeit und Ausdauer des Geistes, drückt das Gemüt und zerstört die Lebensfreude, greift an die Nerven und zermürbt wohl auch die Kraft und Freudigkeit des Glaubens. Das Klima birgt auch schwere innerliche Versuchungen in sich. Es macht verbittert, streitsüchtig, kleinlich, rechthaberisch, herrisch, selbstsüchtig. Ich nenne das Wort ‚Tropentoller.‘ In Kolonialkreisen gilt das als eine Entschuldigung für Ausschreitungen. In der Mission gibt es dafür keine Entschuldigung. Hier gilt es, in der Stunde der Versuchung sich zu wappnen mit Kraft aus der Höhe, damit die eigene Seele und das Werk des Herrn keinen Schaden leide. Wer es damit nicht ernst nimmt, muß zusehender werden, und es ist auch in der Mission schon mancher zusehender geworden, wenn nicht äußerlich, so doch innerlich. Es gibt auch in der Mission draußen lebende Leichen.“

J. L. M.

Die Bedeutung des deutschländischen Pressegesetzes. Darüber berichtet die uns von Pastor G. Hübener zugestellte „Grenz-Zeitung (Lübscheener Nachrichten)“ vom 22. Mai: „Der Präsident der Reichspresselammer, Reichsleiter Amann, sprach sich in einer Unterredung mit dem Leiter des Reichsverbandes der Deutschen Presse, Hauptschriftleiter Weiß, über die Anordnung vom 24. April so aus: Der Zweck der Anordnung sei, allen gutwilligen Kräften im Zeitungsverlagswesen die Erreichung des Zieles zu ermöglichen, das darin besteht, die gesamte Presse zu einer in sich gleichberechtigten Gemeinschaft zusammenzuschließen. Das Gemeinwohl erfordere die Beseitigung der Anonymität des Zeitungsbesitzes. Jede Zeitung habe dem deutschen Volke zu dienen; sie sei in ihrem Gewissen nur ihm, nicht aber irgendwelchen Interessen und Interessenten, verantwortlich. Hauptschriftleiter Weiß fragte den Präsidenten, durch welche Umstände er sich dazu veranlaßt gesehen habe, in seiner Anordnung auch die verlegerische Tätigkeit beruflicher, ständischer oder konfessioneller Organisationen auszuscheiden. Präsident Amann antwortete, daß die Aufgabe jeder politischen Zeitung gefährdet wird, wenn Organisationen ihre Verleger sind, die Aufgaben besonderer im Staat bestehender Gemeinschaften vertreten. . . Die konfessionelle Presse hat die Aufgabe, die Angelegenheiten der Bekenntnisse in rein religiöser Beziehung zu behandeln. Politischen Charakter dürfen diese konfessionellen Blätter keineswegs tragen. Soweit eine konfessionelle Angelegenheit Bedeutung für die große Öffentlichkeit besitzt, kann darüber selbstverständlich in einer Form berichtet werden, die der Bedeutung des Ereignisses für die Öffentlichkeit entspricht. Unzulässig ist dagegen eine Aufmachung, die erkennen läßt, daß sich eine politische Tageszeitung nicht an die Öffentlichkeit als solche, sondern an einen nach konfessionellen Gesichtspunkten begrenzten Leserkreis wendet.“ Der Erlass vom 24. April ist also vornehmlich gegen die im Dienst einer Kirchengemeinschaft stehenden politischen Blätter gerichtet. Die Kirchenblätter bestehen weiter. Sie dürfen aber keinen politischen Charakter tragen. Das versteht sich. Dürfen sie aber Verordnungen der Regierung, die nach der Meinung des Redakteurs die Kirche betreffen, besprechen?

Beunruhigende Zeichen. Laut „Christlicher Volksfreund aus Basel“ (10) berichtet das Blatt *Le Chrétien évangélique* aus Bordeaux von einer statistischen Erhebung in London: Die Kirchen durchweg halb leer, die Kinos und Bars dagegen gefüllt, die Vereine und geselligen Anlässe der Weltleute und der Antireligiösen weisen beide wachsende Teilnehmerzahlen auf, die Zuhörerchaften bei Verkündigung des Evangeliums werden immer kleiner. In einem Quartier wiesen die 18 Kinos zusammen eine größere Besucherzahl auf als die 132 Kirchen zusammen. Höchstens fünf Prozent der Bevölkerung besuchen noch eine Kirche. Von der ganzen englischen Bevölkerung könne man sagen, daß 80 bis 90 Prozent keine Gottesdienste mehr besuchten. Der *Chrétien évangélique* meint: „Wir sind schon so daran gewöhnt, uns nur um unsere religiösen Kreise zu kümmern, daß uns gar nicht mehr bewußt wird, wie die Massen ohne Gott dahinleben. Unsere Zeitgenossen im Abendlande gehen, ohne der Religion den Krieg zu erklären, ganz einfach über sie zur Tagesordnung über.“ (Lutherischer Herold.)