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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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**Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.**


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**Notes on the Question of Lutheran Union.**—1. The Lutherans of America are far from agreed on the fundamental doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The doctrine of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, confessed, taught, and believed in various Lutheran synods, is assailed and repudiated by leading theologians of other Lutheran synods. Leading theologians of the United Lutheran Church have been attacking it regularly in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*. The *Lutheran*, too, has opened its columns to these attacks, setting the minds of the laymen against verbal inspiration (Prof. Kantonen's articles). And it is inoculating the young people of the U. L. C. against this same doctrine. In "The Young People" section of the issue of January 23 it publishes an article entitled "Why Is the Bible God's Word?" in which the writer, Amos J. Traver, D. D., states: "When we speak of the Bible as God's Word, we mean that it reveals to us what God is thinking. . . . The Bible is His gift to men who had lost the way, a guide-book to help them to the high road to heaven. The Bible is inspired because the writers were inspired. 'Men spake from God, being moved by the Holy Spirit.' The expression 'being moved by the Holy Spirit' is only another way of saying that they were inspired. The word *inspired* comes from 2 Tim. 3, 16 and means inbreathed. In that verse the word *God* is added, God-inspired. God breathed into the hearts of the writers of the Bible, giving them the power to reveal Him as He is. God moved them to discover and record the truth about God's loving plan for man's eternal salvation. God inspired the Bible-writers in many ways. 'Inspiration helped one man to be a historian; another, to be an editor of old documents; another, to be an architect and designer; another, to sing soul-stirring hymns. It touched a prophet's lips with fire to rouse a nation from its sins; it directed an apostle to write letters of wise counsel for the Church. Applied to the whole Bible, it is the special influence of God, which so guided all who took part in producing it that they made it the book God designed it to be, unique in its religious value, authoritative and final in its religious teaching.' Quoted from Prof. H. C. Alleman. The Bible-writers claimed this inspiration. The Old Testament writers are constantly affirming that the Word of the Lord had come to them, while in the New Testament the same refrain is repeated by writers of gospels and epistles. They do not claim always to know *how* they were inspired. By its very nature, inspiration is spiritual. There can be nothing mechanical about it. God did not dictate to the writers of the Bible as to a stenographer. The fact of their inspiration we accept. The method by which they were inspired we leave in the realm of mystery. . . . Much of the difficulty men have with the inspiration of the Bible is due to an attempt to broaden the scope of inspiration to cover all fields of human knowledge. Inspiration includes only the knowledge essential for knowing God and His plan for man. It would seem absurd to turn to the Bible for knowledge of electricity, or biology, or chemistry, or any of the sciences. In this field of human knowledge men can discover truth by searching after it; inspiration of the kind necessary for the knowledge of God is



not necessary for scientific knowledge. All together, each writer adding his own peculiar vision and skill, the writers of the Bible give us a saving knowledge of God's grace."

What the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* has been telling the pastors in learned language is here offered to the youth of the U. L. C. in simple language. These young people are warned against believing in the plenary inspiration of the Bible. Inspiration covers only that portion of the Bible which deals with the doctrines of salvation. It does not extend to those statements of the Bible which deal with historical and scientific facts. A thousand statements of the Bible may be erroneous. Scientists tell us that many of them are erroneous. The first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," may or may not be true. The young people within the U. L. C. are being nurtured in the belief that the Bible is not verbally inspired. Inspiration simply means that the holy writers wrote under a special, guiding influence of God. It does not mean that the Holy Spirit supplied the very words which make up the Bible. 2 Tim. 3, 16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" does not mean that *Scripture* is inspired, that the words which make up Scripture were breathed into their hearts and minds, were given them to write down. St. Paul used a wrong term in 2 Tim. 3, 16. He should have applied the term *inspiration* not to Scripture, but to men. (And then of course the term "God-breathed" is out of place. The holy writers were *θεόπνευστος*, God-breathed?) So also the word *all* is not to be understood literally. It refers only to the doctrinal portions of Scripture. "Some Scripture is given by inspiration." The young people of the U. L. C. are being taught the wisdom of Higher Criticism. Some of these holy writers were merely "editors of old documents," etc.—Certainly there is a deep gulf separating the Lutherans of America with regard to the doctrine of inspiration.

This same issue of the *Lutheran* contains a communication from Dr. J. A. W. Haas dealing with Professor Kantonen's articles. He takes issue with Professor Kantonen on some points. "If we take the problem of dogmatics, in which I also claim that we need some new statement in form, but not in content [our italics], he disregards some of the work done by Krauth, Jacobs, Voigt, Selmauek, and Stump." "There is abroad to-day a cry raised by a lot of radicals for academic freedom and for scholarship. If the cry for scholarship means the right for *speculative correction of doctrine clearly revealed*, then it is to be set aside." Dr. Haas evidently does not believe in development of doctrine. However, Dr. Haas agrees with Dr. Kantonen on the question of inspiration: "In the problem of inspiration the facts of course refute any mechanical theory of verbal inspiration in minute detail." That agrees with former utterances of Dr. Haas: "There must be a clear distinction kept in mind between the Word of God and the Bible. The Bible is the Word of God because it contains the Word of God." (*What Is Lutheranism?* p. 176.)—The doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible held by the conservative Lutherans is rejected by other Lutherans.

The report of a conference held December 3 and 4, 1935, between representatives of the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Augustana Synod, states: "The Episcopalians expressed preference for the statement



that the Bible 'contained the Word of God' in order to avoid the pitfalls of a possible theory of literal, verbal inspiration. The Lutherans preferred the simple statement that the Bible 'is the Word of God,' qualified by the understanding that all parts of the Bible might not be of equal significance. Both agreed that the Bible was the basis of all Christian doctrine." (See *Lutheran Companion*, Jan. 11, 1936.) That is good Lutheran doctrine: The Bible is the Word of God. Conservative Lutheranism repudiates the phrase "The Bible contains the Word of God." However, the next paragraph but one reads: "Both agreed that the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the canonical books, but that there was no need for any theory of verbal dictation." And the next paragraph: "In the end there was virtual unanimity regarding the Holy Scriptures." So it appears that the dispute as to whether the Bible really is, or merely contains, the Word of God was wasted effort. The Episcopalian commissioners stood out for the formula "The Bible contains the Word of God" in order to avoid the pitfalls of a possible theory of literal, verbal inspiration. But the Augustana men assured them later on that *their* formula: "The Bible is the Word of God," was not meant to express a literal, verbal inspiration. Both agreed that it is sufficient to say that the Holy Spirit guided the writers of the Bible. It is not necessary to discuss verbal inspiration. That contains pitfalls. (It is hard to see what the formula "The Bible is the Word of God" means if the Bible is not literally inspired.) — Some Lutherans are willing to agree with those who will say only that the Bible contains the Word of God. Other Lutherans will not tolerate that phrase in its historic significance. So there is no unanimity among Lutherans regarding the Holy Scriptures.

2. There can be no union without doctrinal unity. That goes without saying — among Lutherans, among Lutherans of the Old School. Said Dr. M. Loy long ago: "The only Scriptural way to labor for union is to labor for unity in the faith and agreement in its confession. That is divinely required and therefore essential." (*The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the General Bodies of the Ev. Lutheran Church* [1893], p. 16.) Said Dr. F. Pieper: "The union sought for must not be a so-called organic union only, but a union in faith and doctrine." (*Op. cit.*, p. 137.) And that applies to the doctrine of inspiration, too ("The Lutheran Church in America needs to bring about unanimity also with regard to the doctrine of inspiration"; Dr. F. Bente, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1904, p. 40), yes, particularly and primarily. For, in the words of Dr. F. Bente, "if once the doctrine of inspiration is abandoned, the last glimmer of hope for a Christian union of the American Lutheran synods is gone." (*Die Inspirationslehre in der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas, L. u. W.*, 1902, p. 130.) And only recently Dr. M. Reu declared: "I fear that the publication of these books" (by H. C. Alleman) "and their approbation and recommendation by the official board closes for other Lutherans the door to mutual recognition at the very moment when it seemed to be opening." (*Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1935, p. 383.) That is in line with his declaration at the Lutheran World Convention at Eisenach: "This fact of inspiration (*impulsus ad scribendum, suggestio rerum, and suggestio verbi*, the inspiration of the words) is, for me, a part of the confession upon which the true Lutheran Church must stand" (*L. u. W.*, 1923, p. 362.) That is the voice of confessional Lutheranism — union based on unity.



There are other voices heard in Lutheran circles. The commissioners of the Augustana Synod say there is virtual unanimity between them and the commissioners of the Episcopal Church regarding the Holy Scriptures, even though the Episcopalians speak of "the pitfalls of a possible theory of literal, verbal, inspiration." The Augustana men took a most liberal attitude. The report contains this statement: "Allowing for some difference of emphasis, there was found to be substantial accord on the whole subject of the Sacraments"! Again, and finally: "It was further agreed that a truly reunited Church would be neither Lutheran nor Episcopalian, but something greater than either and inclusive of both." And this agreement (which, we venture to say, will not be adopted by the Augustana Synod as a body) is heralded as a creditable achievement. The *Lutheran* of January 30 finds space for a letter signed by J. M. Andersen, which states: "Certainly the Augustana Synod has stated its position clearly, and the declaration can be accepted by almost any fair-minded Lutheran. Of course it must be realized that reunion between the Anglicans and the Lutherans will be an event of the distant future. What should concern Lutheranism more is union of all Lutheran bodies in this country into one united American Church. After that union, reunion with the Anglicans is the next logical step." And this Lutheran union is to be patterned on the Episcopal-Augustana Agreement: "The union of Lutheranism must be just that—each group bringing its own contribution with all sharing." The Old-school Lutherans will bring into the union their peculiar doctrine of the verbal inspiration and the New-school Lutherans their views of the Bible—partly God's Word, partly the word of fallible man—"with all sharing." That can only mean that each party will tolerate the views of the other. It cannot, in reason, mean more. It cannot, by all the laws of sound and sane reasoning, mean literal "sharing."

Let it be understood that the conservative Lutherans will not be parties to such an arrangement. There can be no union without agreement on the doctrine of verbal inspiration. The task before us is not to give expression to a fancied unity through an external union and cooperation, etc. What we must labor for, in the fear of God, is to effect a unity in faith, which will at once express itself in cooperation and other forms of union.

3. In some cases the disagreement on a certain doctrine is due to misconception, and all that is necessary to bring about an agreement is to remove the misconception. It may be that some refuse to accept the doctrine of verbal inspiration because the meaning of this term has been misrepresented to them. Somebody has told them that there are, say, four theories of inspiration: the intuition theory, the illumination theory, the dictation theory, and the dynamic theory, the dictation theory meaning that the writers "became passive instruments, or amanuenses, pens, not penmen, of God; this theory holds to the perfect passivity of the human instrument. Representatives of this view are Quenstedt. . . ." And that is, they are told, the doctrine of verbal inspiration; it reduces the holy writers to mere machines. It may be that some reject the doctrine of verbal inspiration because of this false definition. Is that what Dr. Traver means when he says: "There can be nothing mechanical about inspiration. God did not dictate to the writers of the Bible as to a stenographer"? or when



Dr. Haas rejects "any mechanical theory of verbal inspiration"? or when the Episcopal-Augustana Agreement states "that there was no need for any theory of verbal dictation"? Then let it be stated here, once more, that we do not hold the "dictation theory," as described. In fact, we do not set up any theory. We hold with Dr. Traver: "The fact of their inspiration we accept. The method by which they were inspired we leave in the realm of mystery." We do not presume to *explain* miracles. We cannot explain how the miracle of inspiration took place. And we do *not* say that they wrote mechanically or after the manner of the pythoness of Delphi, in a state of ecstasy or unconsciousness. When we are asked if the Holy Spirit "dictated" the words to the holy writers, we say no — and we say yes. When we say no, we mean that the holy writers were not mere stenographers, who, like hired secretaries, took down, dreamingly, thoughtlessly, what struck their ears. When we say yes, we mean that they set down the exact words which the Holy Spirit supplied, that the words they wrote are not mere human words, subject to human fallibility, but the very words of the infallible God. So no one need reject the doctrine of verbal inspiration on the score that it involves a mechanical process.

The trouble with most men, however, is that they cannot accept what "verbal inspiration" stands for. They know that verbal inspiration means this, that the words of the Bible are God's words. And since they believe that the Bible, as some scientists hold, contains errors, they will not say that the Bible is God's Word, but only that it *contains* God's Word. And some of them, refusing to accept *any* miracle, reject verbal inspiration because it certainly does involve a stupendous miracle. — So this is the question which those who are laboring for a true Lutheran union will have to discuss in the fear of God: Do the Scriptures and the Confessions teach, or do they not teach, the plenary, verbal inspiration?

4. Other doctrines, too, will have to be discussed. The doctrine of inspiration is not the only point of disagreement. We have been mentioning this one point because of its great importance and because it has lately, somehow or other, been brought to the front. But there are other disputed doctrines, doctrines of great importance, such as the doctrine of conversion and of election, which call for attention and most serious discussion. We cannot discuss these differences with those who speak of them as "trivialities," "petty divisions," as matters of mere "*reine Lehre*." We want to discuss them with those who love the Lutheran Church as the Church of the *reine Lehre*.  
E.

**The Non-United "United Norwegian Lutheran Church."** — The *Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende*, the official organ of the staunch little Norwegian Lutheran Synod, affiliated with the Synodical Conference, reports a most interesting incident within the United Norwegian Church, which shows that, after all, the United Norwegian Lutheran Church is not so very much united on at least one important issue. It relates the incident under the heading "A Bishop Visits Augsburg" ("En Biskop besøger Augsburg") as follows: —

"We have previously called attention to *Folkebladet's* position with respect to unionism. This paper has often declared that there is no such a thing as 'sinful unionism' (*syndig unionisme*), and it must be said that it openly and nobly maintains its stand. Humanly speaking, it is indeed



praiseworthy that people openly speak their minds and adhere to their convictions until they are convinced that they are wrong, and it is not for this reason that we call attention to the occurrence which is reported in the issue of *Folkebladet* of November 13 [1935]. There it is reported that Bishop Maroni of Norway paid a visit to Augsburg Seminary. What strikes us as very singular is the fact that *Folkebladet* is so carried away (*sacaten falder i staver*) because of this visit. The bishop indeed, according to his position, is a representative of the *high-church tendency*, and it is one of the Free Church's main objectives to oppose the High Church and to free congregations from its formalities, bishops, and priests. What appears so extremely self-contradictory to us is that *Folkebladet* is now so enthusiastic over a visit from a representative of the High Church.

"However, we shall not for this reason accuse *Folkebladet* of unfaithfulness to its stand on unionism, because, if we understand the matter correctly, *Folkebladet* maintains that it cannot be regarded as unionistic to foster fellowship with a person who appears to be an earnest Christian, no matter what his affiliation may be or what Church he may support or what faith he may confess. Because *Folkebladet* holds this principle, it regards not the doctrine, but the life, of a person.

"There was nevertheless a point of connection which awakened enthusiasm in *Folkebladet*, and that is this: Bishop Maroni holds the same view with respect to the Oxford Group Movement which *Folkebladet* holds. To prove this, we reproduce a portion of the report. We read:—

"One of the questions directed to the bishop was that regarding the spread of the Oxford Group Movement in Norway. The question was asked with some hesitation; for we knew of course the standpoint of the Home Mission people, in particular that of Hallesby and Wisloeff, not to mention that of Representative Bjerkreim; also we knew that Bishop Maroni was close to the Home Mission people (*staar indremissionsfolket nær*). But the friendly mien of the bishop lighted up when he answered, and not many words were uttered before we understood that he was in full sympathy with the movement. He was of the opinion that thousands in Norway had been brought to Christ by it; for it *reaches those whom other means have not awakened*. [Italics ours.] It is a renewing spiritual power among the Norwegian people." The talk that the movement was opposed to the Cross and the atonement, he said, originates in a misunderstanding of the movement and its system of working. Peculiarly enough, he showed the same feeling toward the movement which also many of us have, *viz.*, that it has its peculiarities, which work uniquely (*at den har sine saerregnheder, som virker uvant*). But he believed nevertheless that it was being "Norwegianized" (*fornorskes*) and that it wished itself to be incorporated in the Christianity of the Norwegian people.

"The bishop's open declaration is all the more welcome to us in our country since it may be adapted to help us ascertain the right relation to this remarkable movement, which also among us has become a *sign that is spoken against*. From the communications in our paper for and against the movement we note that opinions here differ.

"But now when Bishop Maroni, Dean Skovgaard-Petersen in Kjoebenhavn, Bishop Berggrav, Ludvig Hope, Parish-priest Ivar Welle, Dr. Sigurd Norborg, Dr. Brunner, Hambro, the president of Parliament (although he



certainly cannot be said to be a representative of the Norwegian church people), Roland Fangen, author (of whom the same must be said), in short, when jurists, medical students, professors, bishops, and many others who are well versed in Scripture and who know in what true Christianity consists, when, we say, these men look upon the movement with favor, then those have much to overcome who maintain that it is an antichristian movement, which has been invented by the foes of men's souls to bring them to damnation. This is insisted upon by a number of Christian people.

"It will perhaps be best for men *not to speak too harshly against the movement in the future.*" [Italics ours.]

"Thus far the report of *Folkebladet*. Much indeed could be said with regard to this matter, but we cannot go into it too far at present. However, we call attention only to this, that *Folkebladet* does not need Scripture to try the spirits, to ascertain if they are of God. It is satisfied when it finds that great men express their opinions as to what is true and Christian. These are no small matters which are here involved; for they concern the questions how and by what means a person is converted to God. The Church in Norway has the means of grace, instituted by God Himself for the sinner's conversion; but now these are found too easy (*for lette*). It is not the Law and the Gospel that bring sinners to Christ, but new methods, which will be far more powerful. New prophets have arisen with new methods, and these are able to convert more sinners than God's Word. Bishop Maroni has indeed said, according to *Folkebladet's* statement, that the Oxford Group Movement reaches those which other means have not awakened. The Church of Christ, then, shall not be built upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, but upon an other. It is, then, without Christ!

"In the last issue of *Tidende* we called attention to what *Lutheraneren* said about the Oxford Group Movement. In its opinion the movement is both unchristian and un-Lutheran. Will it now be silent with respect to the outbursts of *Folkebladet*? *Folkebladet* and *Lutheraneren* are brothers in the faith (*troesbroedre*). It is quite evident that *they are not united in the fundamental truths of Christianity*. Where, then, is their fellowship (*broderskabet*)?"

Pastor Thoen, writing in *Ev.-Luth. Tidende*, is certainly right. Both the *Lutheran Herald* and *Lutheraneren* have condemned the Oxford Group Movement in no unclear terms as un-Lutheran, unchristian, and modernistic. *Folkebladet* defends the movement and challenges its sister periodicals "not to speak too harshly against the movement in the future." Hence the question is fully warranted: "*Hvori bestaar da broderskabet?*"

J. T. M.

**The Church and Its Catechism and Other Religious Text-Books.**  
We reprint the following editorial from *America*, a weekly journal of the Roman Catholic Church: —

"Most of us who have turned the interesting age of fifty were taught religion in the primary school in the form of question and answer. The zeal for the teaching of religion which is manifest in all of our schools has led to study, research, and the preparation of new texts, many of them based upon new methods. As the Archbishop of Cincinnati said in his learned and admirably critical address at the National Catechetical Con-



gress held in Rochester last month, 'I confess that I am perplexed and even bewildered by the multiplicity of fundamental text-books of religion now in use in this country.' And he added, 'A cursory examination of them suggests the need of some action by authority.'

"Those who, like the Archbishop, have examined a shelf of these texts will certainly share his perplexity and bewilderment. Some, beautifully printed and illustrated, with a wealth of interesting examples to point every instance, seem well calculated to hold the interest of the youthful pupil. Yet we of an older generation may ask ourselves whether the discursive text has a power to imprint the truths of religion in the youthful mind superior or even equal to that of the old catechetical method. As the Archbishop remarks, authors primarily interested in methodology are apt to place too much emphasis on the arrangement of the matter and the manner of its presentation. We are glad to note that the Archbishop holds that, while memory work is certainly not sufficient by itself, it is very important, and more important than many modern teachers are willing to admit.

"It is the Archbishop's conviction that we need a theologically accurate catechetical text 'that will not be subject to change,' but 'will become familiar to each generation from its earliest years.' That is a work for theologians laboring under the direction of the Church. May we soon have it! But in the interval we must improve the training of our teachers of religion. With good teachers, any text permitted by the Church will produce good results."

This editorial says a few things which also deserve our attention and consideration: —

1. Such texts as are intended for general use in the Church, as catechisms, hymn-books, and the like, should from the very outset not only be made theologically accurate, but should also be sufficiently well adapted to their purpose, so that in the course of years they need not be changed, but can serve each succeeding generation. Luther calls attention to this in his preface to the Small Catechism. He says, "First, the minister should above all things avoid the use of different texts and forms of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, etc. Let him adopt one form and adhere to it, using it one year as the other; for young and ignorant people must be taught one certain text and form and will easily become confused if we teach thus to-day and otherwise next year, as if we thought of making improvements. In this way all effort and labor will be lost. This our honored fathers well understood, who all used the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Ten Commandments, in one and the same manner. Therefore we also should so teach these forms to the young and inexperienced as not to change a syllable nor set them forth and recite them one year differently from the other.

"Hence, choose whatever form you think best and adhere to it forever. When you preach among the learned and judicious, you may show your art and set these things forth with as many flourishes and turn them as skillfully as you wish; but among the young adhere to one and the same fixed form and manner and teach them, first of all, the text of the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, etc., so that they can say it after you word for word and commit it to memory."



2. The publication of such texts should not be a private undertaking, but be authorized by the Church.

3. A good teacher can well use any text that is at all acceptable and produce good results. A man who knows how to teach does not expect that all that enters into good teaching must be found on the printed page. A good teacher will desire to teach the subject-matter in his own original way, not ignoring, of course, good, sound pedagogical principles. In fact, only he who so teaches is a good teacher. That improvements can be made we do not deny; and if it is really necessary to make such, we ought not to hesitate to do so. But improvements should not be decided upon hastily; what to some may seem to be an improvement may be no improvement at all. The communication of thought is, after all, not an easy task.

4. We should not despise the old catechetical method of teaching. It still holds its own. A subject-matter may be very clearly presented in cold type; but whether the reader has understood it can only be known when in his own words he can reproduce it in answer to direct questions. The catechetical method compels people to think, that is, mentally to analyze the subject-matter so that they can understand it; and this the average person does of his own accord.

5. Memory work should not be dispensed with. Certain things, such as texts from the Bible, must be committed to memory. Of course, it is understood that this should not be done in a mere mechanical way, but with the correct understanding of the subject-matter that is being memorized.

J. H. C. FRITZ.

**The God of the Modernists.** — Replying to a sermon by Cardinal Hayes against birth control and the American Birth Control League, eleven modernist clergymen (among them Bishop Francis J. McConnell, Dr. Edmund B. Chaffee, and Dr. Harry E. Fosdick) and two Rabbis said, among other things: "The longest argument in the cardinal's sermon and the one upon which he ultimately bases his case is found in the statement that birth control is contrary to the commandment of the Deity. This is true if by the Deity we mean the *God that is found in ancient myth and legend*. This is not true, however, if by the Deity we mean the *God who is revealed in the endless sweep of evolution* and whose majestic message is being slowly translated by science into the accents of the human tongue. The lower down we go in the scale of evolution, the less limitation we find imposed upon the spawning process. The higher we rise, the more restriction and restraint is placed, we discover, upon the powers of reproduction. In other words, instead of violating the law of nature and nature's God through birth control, we are merely giving sight and intelligence to what in nature is a blind and groping impulse. If the cardinal chooses to accept the literal interpretation of Old Testament statements as infallible doctrine, we register no complaint; nor should he complain if we choose instead to base our faith upon the evidence, the knowledge, and the experience available in our own time."

*The Living Church*, December 28, 1935, commenting on this pronouncement, says: "We are concerned rather with the strange contrast made by these clergymen between the 'God who is found in ancient myth and legend' and 'the God who is revealed in the endless sweep of evolution,' etc. . . . Certainly this statement is an example of the absurd extremities



to which men will go in watering down the Christian faith in the name of Liberalism. In it one looks in vain for any recognition of the God 'who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary.' He is the only God that Christians know and worship." The editorial makes a concession to Modernism in stating: "That revelation (the record of Holy Scripture) is indeed a progressive one, in which the concept of God is gradually developed from the crude one in Genesis and Exodus to the fulness of the Incarnation and the New Testament record."

A letter published in the same issue says: "It was both interesting and illuminating to read, from the front page of the *New York Times* of December 16, the reply of thirteen Protestant, Jewish, and Anglican clergymen to Cardinal Hayes's recent sermon on birth control. I have had certain misgivings about the modern Liberals. But I would not have been so uncharitable as to have accused them of holding that the God revealed to us in Holy Scripture is a mere creation of myths and legends. But it is refreshing to have a group of such outstanding men among the Liberals come out and openly say so." E.

**Back-to-Rome Movement.** — When twenty-nine Episcopalians under the leadership of Rev. Franklin Joiner, rector of St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia, issued a statement in which they denounced the Protestantism of this country as "bankrupt ethically, culturally, morally, and religiously" and advocated that Protestants return to the Roman Church, a bomb was exploded. The matter was given much publicity by the daily press, which is always on the lookout for what is extraordinary, bizarre, and startling. In the statement issued by this group an attempt is made, similar to that of John Henry Newman in his famous *Nineteenth Tract*, to prove that the break between Rome and the Anglican Church is not absolute, after all, and that the official pronouncements of Anglicanism have not departed so far from Rome as is usually believed. They say: "In none of the official formularies of the Anglican communion are we committed to a position of ecclesiastical isolation. The only reference to the Roman See appears in a document which is not canonically or dogmatically binding upon us. In one of the 'Articles' it is stated that 'the Church of Rome hath erred.'" To what lengths these people are willing to go, appears from the following sentences: "We must allow nothing to obscure the salient fact that Rome has been the heart and center of Christendom ever since the days of the holy apostles. . . . The conversion of the world depends upon the visible unity of the Church of God, for our blessed Lord prayed 'that they all may be one . . . that the world may believe,' and He provided the means for the maintenance of this unity by the appointment of a visible head of the visible body: 'Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.' History has shown that separation from this center of unity has always led the separated into further schisms. Reunion with it must result in the healing of all divisions."

What abysmal darkness these people are walking in who do not see that Rome by its doctrine of work-righteousness is poisoning the very fountain of Christianity! The group calls itself "The Church Unity Octave Council," because it advocates that every year eight days be set aside for earnest prayer for Catholic unity. Writing about this move, the Council



says: "The Church Unity Octave, initiated by two Anglican priests, one in this country, one in England, has come to be observed by Roman Catholics throughout the world. Last year its observance spread to the orthodox. There has been an increasing Anglican observance, until last year in England one thousand Anglican priests signed an agreement to keep it." In this year the days set aside as the octave in question were January 18 to 25. A.

**Dissension among Presbyterian Fundamentalists.** — Westminster Seminary at Philadelphia, a school at which Dr. Machen teaches, has lately experienced a severe storm. Of its twenty-nine trustees twelve resigned because they were no longer in agreement with the views of the majority of the faculty on the attitude to be taken toward the Independent Board of Foreign Missions, which board, it will be recalled, was ordered by the Presbyterian Assembly to dissolve. Of the faculty members Dr. Oswald T. Allis, a prominent Old Testament scholar and former managing editor of the *Princeton Theological Review*, likewise handed in his resignation. One of the men who resigned, Dr. Elder of Cincinnati, according to the *Presbyterian*, said in explanation of the step he and his associates took: "Briefly, the difference lies in this, that those of us who resigned continue to believe that we must labor within the Church to make the Church conservative." It is to be deplored that the people who are opposing Modernism in the Presbyterian Church weaken their position by disagreeing among themselves. The principle enunciated by Dr. Elder is right, but must not be held to mean that even when all efforts to improve the doctrinal position of a church-body have proved futile and the testimony of the truth no longer is received, the old connection may and must be maintained. A time may come when the direction given Luke 9, 5 must be followed. A.

**Dr. Brandelle Deceased.** — Both the secular and the religious press report that on January 16 Dr. Gustav Albert Brandelle departed this life. He was in his seventy-fifth year. In 1920 he became the president of the Augustana Synod, and as such he served till 1935. His birthplace was Andover, Ill. In his obituary we notice with interest that in his student days he served as parochial-school teacher. His pastorates were in Denver, Colo., and Rock Island, Ill. A.

**A Mohammedan Mission.** — In Pittsburgh, Pa., as the *Presbyterian* reports, there is to be observed "the continued activity of Mohammedans among Negroes in the city, proclaiming their doctrines on the streets and apparently having several preaching-stations. One leader declared that he could obtain five thousand copies of the Koran and that he would give a free copy to any who would join the mission. Some Negroes in America might be drawn away by the same features of Islam that have attracted many in Africa, a simple creed, social equality, or brotherhood, and polygamy." Satan offers his deadly pills not in unattractive form, but with a more or less thick coating of sugar. A.

**Korrektur.** — Die Feiern, die letzten Herbst zu Ehren P. C. S. Veders stattfanden, wurden veranstaltet anlässlich seines Eintritts in den Ruhestand, nicht seines goldenen Jubiläums. (S. 221.) über letzteres siehe IV, 145. K.