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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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


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**I. Amerika.**

Der Kampf in der U. L. C. gegen die wörtliche Eingebung der Schrift. In der Besprechung des Lenskischen Kommentars zu den beiden Korintherbriefen greift Arthur C. P. Sabs (*Lutheran*, 20. Februar 1936) den Autor deshalb an, weil er sich einerseits in zweifelhaften Fällen „auf die Seite der Tradition gestellt hat“, andererseits aber auch in der Lehre von der Inspiration verbal literalism, eine wörtliche Buchstabenverehrung, vertritt. In der Rezension lesen wir: “When the obvious sense of a passage contravenes tradition, Dr. Lenski chooses to stand by tradition” und: “The verbal literalism of the author’s view of inspiration is hardly congenial in the atmosphere of most present-day theological schools, even of our conservative Lutheran institutions. The Lutheran Church has never formulated a theory of inspiration; it has merely stated its fact. Hence Dr. Lenski is not bound by any ecclesiastical view. However, the literalisms which suggest themselves at times in his treatment of the text may not be received everywhere in the Church with sympathy.” Wir haben nun Lenskis Kommentar zu den Korintherbriefen ziemlich gründlich durchgearbeitet, eben weil wir uns von Amts wegen schon über zehn Jahre mit diesen Sendschreiben beschäftigt haben. Was nun die Anklage gegen Lenski wegen Traditionsergebenheit betrifft, so trifft diese grammatisch nicht zu. Man kann hier allerdings kaum von Tradition reden; aber sollte es so etwas geben wie exegetische Tradition, so können wir nur konstatieren, daß Lenski die allerneuesten grammatischen und philologischen-exegetischen Werke benutzt hat, die oft mit Recht geradezu verdammen, was bisher über diese oder jene Stelle von der „Tradition“ gesagt worden ist (natürlich wegen sprachlich-historischer Unkenntnis). Eins aber ist wahr: Lenski bleibt der Tradition insofern treu, als er die aus dem Text geschöpfte lutherische Lehre gegen den modernen Rationalismus verteidigt. Aber das sollte doch den *Lutheran* mit Freude erfüllen an dem wirklich großen Lenskischen Werk. Oder ist der *Lutheran* nicht mehr lutherisch, sondern rationalistisch und modernistisch? Leider scheint es so; denn was nun der *Lutheran* über Lenskis verbal literalism schreibt, ist gerade der Art, daß man auf den Gedanken kommen muß, man habe es mit Feinden der lutherischen Schriftwahrheit zu tun. Dem *Lutheran* ist Lenskis Traditionsloyalität nicht congenial, und das gilt von allen Feinden der lutherischen Lehre. Dann schreibt der *Lutheran*, wie man das oft im Feindeslager der lutherischen Gegner liest, die lutherische Kirche habe nie eine theory of inspiration formuliert, sondern nur die Tatsache der Inspiration an sich gelehrt, das heißt, sie hat wohl das **D a s**, aber nicht das **W i e** betont. Diese Bemerkung ist aber historisch nicht wahr. Je und je hat nämlich die bekennnistreue lutherische Kirche gelehrt, daß die Bibel Gottes Wort ist und daß sie deshalb Gottes Wort ist, weil sie von dem Heiligen Geist wörtlich eingegeben worden ist. Da haben wir doch, was der *Lutheran* mit theory of inspiration bezeichnet, nämlich eine Erklärung der Tatsache, wie es kommt, daß sie Gottes Wort ist. Weiter ist es auch nicht wahr, daß Lenski an

diesem Punkte nicht an any ecclesiastical view gebunden ist. Will Lenski wirklich Glied der bekennnistreuen lutherischen Kirche sein und bleiben, so muß er beides, die Verbal- und die Plenarinspiration der Schrift, lehren. Eine fälschlich tolerante Kirche, die keine Lehrgucht mehr treiben sollte, könnte ihn dann allerdings nach Herzenslust wirtschaften lassen, aber eigentlich hätte er dann doch seine Mitgliedschaft in der bekennnistreuen Kirche verwirkt. Er wäre mit seiner Leugnung der Inspiration der Schrift zum abgefallenen Lutheraner geworden. Wir reden hier natürlich nur rein hypothetisch. Schließlich sagt dann der *Lutheran* noch: "The literalisms in his treatment of the text may not be received everywhere in the Church with sympathy." Das stimmt wohl. Denn es gibt leider "in the Church" Bekämpfer der Verbalinspiration, und denen sind wir Altlutheraner, die wir bei Schrift und Bekenntnis bleiben, nicht sympathisch. Diese Kreise und Gegner wollen nämlich keine Verbalinspiration mehr. Zum Schluß wollen wir noch dies sagen: Daß Lenski in seinen Kommentaren und andern gelehrtheologischen Werken den Weg eingeschlagen hat, den der *Lutheran* hier verdammt, macht ihn in der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas auf Jahrzehnte zum Segen. Alle Nationalisten werden ihm widersprechen; alle, die zu Gottes Wort und dem lutherischen Bekenntnis halten, werden ihm für seine Darlegung der Wahrheit Dank wissen und nachfolgen. J. L. M.

**Conference of Episcopalians and Augustana Synod Lutherans.** It is quite an amazing report which the *Living Church* and the *Lutheran Companion* publish on this conference, held December 3 and 4, 1935, at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary at Evanston, Ill. The Episcopalians were represented by Bishop Wilson of Eau Claire, Wis., Bishop Keeler, Coadjutor of Minnesota, Dean Frederick C. Grant of Seabury-Western Seminary, and Mr. C. P. Morehouse, editor of the *Living Church*. On the Augustana Synod side of the table sat Dr. G. A. Brandelle, retired president of the Augustana Synod, now deceased, Dr. O. J. Johnson, president of Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minn., Dr. C. Bergendoff, president of Augustana College and Seminary, Rock Island, Ill, Dr. C. A. Lund, president of the Superior Conference, Escanaba, Mich., and Dr. E. E. Ryden, editor of the *Lutheran Companion*, Rock Island, Ill. The body of the report follows: —

"A preliminary discussion showed an agreement that the final objective of organic church unity could be reached only by gradual steps. The present conference was not qualified to make commitments from either side, but to explore the possibility of finding common ground for future progress.

"To indicate the general Lutheran point of view, a statement was read which had been prepared by the House of Bishops of the Church of Sweden in 1922 for transmission to the bishops of the Church of England. This was followed by the reading of the section on the Church of Sweden taken from the Report of the Lambeth Conference held in London in 1930.

"The ensuing discussion centered around four points — the Holy Scriptures, the Historic Creeds, the Christian Sacraments, and the Historic Episcopate.

**"The Holy Scriptures.** — Both groups were agreed as to the authority of the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament. The Episcopal Church also makes use of the books of the Apocrypha for purposes of instruction, but not to establish any doctrine. The Lutherans stated that this was the position accorded the apocryphal books also in their Church, though in practise the Augustana Synod seldom used them.

"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.

"The position of the Episcopal Church was that the Church preceded the New Testament and that the New Testament was to be interpreted in the light of church practise. The Lutherans did not view the Church in quite the same terms, but considered the oral tradition to be the substance of the Gospel even before it appeared in written form. Both agreed that Christ was to be found in the Scriptures and that this was the object of all Christian search.

"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.

"In the end there was virtual unanimity regarding the Holy Scriptures.

**"The Sacraments.** — Both groups were at one on the sacramental principle, which finds its supreme expression in the incarnation of our Lord.

"Both recognized the binding importance for Christian people of the two great Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

"It was further agreed that the significance of Baptism as the instrument of spiritual regeneration was deserving of greater emphasis than is commonly accorded to it.

"Though different phraseology was used, there was substantial agreement on the real presence of our Lord in the Holy Communion. The Episcopalians explained that reservation of the Sacrament was practised in the Episcopal Church, but not enjoined and that it carried with it no possible suggestion of any doctrine of transubstantiation. The Lutherans explained that they were opposed to the practise of reservation, but stood firmly for the divine presence in the Sacrament, laying greater stress on the actual reception on the part of the communicant.

"Allowing for some difference of emphasis, there was found to be substantial accord on the whole subject of the Sacraments.

**"The Creeds.** — The Augustana Synod accepts and uses all three of the ancient Creeds — the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian. The Episcopal Church makes no use of the Athanasian Creed (accepting it only in support of the other two), but makes greater use of the Nicene Creed.

"The authority of the historic creeds as an authentic summary of Christian doctrine was recognized by all, allowing for a distinction between the creeds themselves and theological elaborations of them.

"In the Apostles' Creed the Augustana Synod has substituted the phrase 'the holy Christian Church' for 'the holy Catholic Church.' It was explained that this had been done in order to avoid any suggestion of Ro-

manism, but that the change had no further significance. The Episcopal Church considered the word 'Catholic' too valuable to be surrendered and found no undesirable suggestions to be involved.

"Agreement on the creeds offered no difficulty.

*"The Historic Episcopate.* — The formularies of the Episcopal Church cling to the apostolic ministry in three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. The Episcopal Church finds this to be the rule of the primitive Church (with certain temporary irregularities in the subapostolic age) and the undisputed practise of Christendom for fifteen centuries. Without questioning the spiritual reality of non-episcopal ministries, the Episcopal Church cannot envisage a reunited Christendom without the inclusion of the historic episcopate. It was explained that this was not to be considered the sole criterion for church unity, but that over and above a subjective unity of faith there must be an objective center of unity in any visible society known as the Church. No unity could be satisfactory without a universally recognized ministry, and the historic episcopate with its long record and its present acceptance in 90 per cent. of modern Christendom was the logical means for achieving such a ministry.

"The Lutherans laid greater stress on the 'unifying power of the Gospel.' They did not consider any church order to be an essential, but an open question of organization. The Augustana Synod has no bishops and no order of deacons. They ordain their candidates simply to the ministry of preaching. They would not accept the historic episcopate as an essential for a reunited Church or as a necessary basis for reunion. However, it might be acceptable as an element in reunion so long as it did not seem to imply any repudiation of their present ministry.

"Both groups agreed that a reunited Church of the future could not be one of minimums, but of maximums. Reunion is not a question of subtraction, but of contribution; not an effort to discover the least common denominator which would be harmless, but a willingness to incorporate and harmonize the fruits of Christian experience from all sides. It was suggested that the question of the ministry might find a possible solution in a mutual commissioning which could provide a common ministry recognized as such throughout the entire body. It was further agreed that a truly reunited Church would be neither Lutheran nor Episcopalian, but something greater than either and inclusive of both.

"A second conference was projected for next year, to which representatives of all the Lutheran synods could be invited."

We shall not repeat the remarks of Dr. Engelder on the above report. We merely wish to say that the conservative Lutheran is filled with amazement. Knowing that the Episcopal Church permits Modernism to lodge within its walls, that the Reformed leaven has vitiated its Thirty-nine Articles, that, for instance, the Scriptural doctrine of the real presence in the Lord's Supper is there rejected, he cannot but marvel at the appearance of unity which the above document reflects.

In the *Lutheran Companion* of February 22 Prof. Conrad Bergendoff, president of Augustana College and Theological Seminary, submits a defense of this meeting with the Episcopalians which we must not withhold from our readers. He says in part: —

"In this spirit, too [that of willingness to meet with Christians of

other denominations. — A.], there is justification for the conversations held recently by the Augustana Commission on Comity with a similar commission from the Episcopalian Church. No thought of organic unity is implied. Neither body intends to give up anything of its faith. A friendly interchange of explanations as to the stand of each Church is all that was contemplated and all that was achieved. It ought hardly be a novel conclusion to any one acquainted with Reformation history that a good deal of agreement would be found in this interchange. For did not much of the English Reformation in doctrine derive from the Lutherans? A comparison of the Thirty-nine Articles and the Augsburg Confession ought to prepare any one for agreement as well as disagreement between two bodies. And if the report points out agreements, ought not Lutherans rejoice that the Episcopalian commission agreed to Lutheran statements as well as *vice versa*? That not all the members of any Church live up to the doctrines of the Church does not vitiate the importance of the doctrines. Any part of the Church ought be ready to give not only a reason for the faith that it possesses, but a statement as well. That, and only that, was involved in these conversations. And if, in addition to a strengthening of the faith of each, the conference also led to an extension of sympathy and interest, would the Lord of Christian love be disappointed?

"Organic union with any body of Christians with which we are not in full harmony as to both faith and order would be a violation of the Lutheran Confessions. But we need not be in organic union with every one in Christendom whom we acknowledge as Christians. There is a place where Christians of deepest convictions can meet together occasionally and pray together and be edified together, a place even where the Holy Spirit continues 'the distribution of forgiveness.' There may be a place where occasionally Christians of varying confessions can work together. I believe that such a place is not outside the 'Church.' I am not convinced that 'unionism' should be chalked up on the walls of such a place nor that it involves any compromising 'platforms.' I am opposed to union worship and services and know quite well the history of Lutheranism in this country. But I long for a day when Christians of different denominations will respect each other, will know a language wherein they can speak to and of each other in Christian charity, a day where the different families in the community of faith will seek to bring each other to a fuller comprehension of the immeasurable truth of God, but each acknowledging its shortcomings as well as remaining faithful to its trust."

This again is strange language and reasoning. Pray, where are we told that "organic union with any body of Christians with which we are not in full harmony as to both faith and order would be a violation of the Lutheran Confessions," while some other kind of union, presumably one that manifests itself in sporadic, unofficial, occasional acts, would not be such a violation? One is unable to see why, if, as a consistent Lutheran, one may not become a member, let us say, of a Methodist church, it would be permissible to join in the services and the work of this church. Is not one a denial of the truth as well as the other? Professor Bergendoff is "opposed to union worship and services." If that is his heart's position, he cannot be satisfied with opposing merely an organic union with heterodox churches.

A.

**Unions without Unity (Foreninger uden Enighed).**—The following very timely and enlightening article was written by the Rev. J. Reini, pastor of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church (Merger), for his church-paper, *Lutheraneren*. When it was refused by *Lutheraneren*, *Evangelisk Tidende* gave it space in its columns. Rev. Thoen remarks in connection with the article: "When one stands at the twilight of life and reflects that his activity in the Church is soon to end, he will gladly sound a warning to his church-body concerning the dangers that beset it and thereby awaken it to a greater zeal for the truth of God's Word." Pastor Reini writes:—

"In speaking of union of many or fewer churches, it is often emphasized that unity of doctrine must be a self-understood premise. When we think thus of the Norwegian Church or of the American Lutheran Conference, some would definitely assure us that these unions rest on such a basis. As concerning the Norwegian Church, most of us certainly believed that with the adopted *Opgjøer* a unity was really reached in the controverted doctrinal question discussed at the formation of the American Lutheran Conference. Rev. Dolven says in his treatise *The American Lutheran Conference* that its constitution declares that this organization is founded with the object of giving testimony to the unity of faith among the participating church-bodies. The president of the Norwegian Church, in his reports to the annual conventions both before and after its formation (i. e., the American Lutheran Conference), has also named as its goal 'to testify before each other and before the world its common faith and confession.' The presidents of the Conference, both past and present, find the most desirable unity of faith and harmony within the union. (Dolven, *A. L. Conference*, pp. 5. 6.)

"For those who do not intimately know the conditions within the Conference it will seem self-evident that, when one and all of the representatives of church-bodies accept the Scriptures and the Lutheran Symbols, there must be unity. Still the formal approval of the Confessions does not always prove that they are followed. The United Lutheran Church, for example, acknowledges the Symbols of the Lutheran Church, and yet, according to its own explanation, the acceptance of the Lutheran Confession means only that it is recognized as a correct historical document of the Reformation. (Cf. *Lutheran World*, Nov. 13, 1934, p. 1005, and Jan. 8, 1935, p. 31.)

"Now, it is very certain that it is not in this way that any of the churches within the Conference have acknowledged the Lutheran Symbols. But a sound knowledge of the position will show us that it is certainly not a recognized fact that there is unity of faith within the American Lutheran Conference. Dr. L. Boe, president of St. Olaf College, discloses an entirely different view of the circumstances than do the above-mentioned leaders: 'Any one who has any knowledge of the membership in the American Lutheran Conference knows that in each case, of its synods and members, some lean to the one and some to the other side.' (*Skandinaven*, Jan. 3, 1935.) 'Some are inclined (*naermer sig*) to the Synodical Conference, others to the U. L. Church, the two extremes of the Lutheran Church in America.' And with regard to the Norwegian Church Dr. Boe

informs us that he still finds the same parties represented as there were before the union. In every case it is now clear to us that many, perhaps the majority, of our churches still hold fast to the synergistic error in the doctrine of conversion and election. The Synod's representatives together with its president had the wool pulled over their eyes (*blev foert bag lyset*) by the ambiguous *Opgjoer* of the synergistic leaders. (Cf. *Report of Synod, 1912.*)

"It is well known to most of our members that chiliasm is expressly rejected in the Augsburg Confession, and yet it has many adherents in the American Lutheran Conference. All the churches in the American Conference have accepted the Bible as the only certain and complete norm of doctrine and life, and still, when the discussion is about woman's position in the congregation, many congregations and pastors treat it as if they were not at all acquainted with the apostle's clear instruction in that matter. As children we learned that the entire Scripture is inspired by God; in the American Lutheran Conference are found not a few who deny this truth. Insistence upon the old doctrine of verbal inspiration is termed 'Bibliolatry' (a sort of idolatry or worship of the letter). To believe that 'holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' does not register with our advanced, enlightened age. In *Folkebladet*, the organ of the Free Church (1926, No. 17), is found the following expression of the doctrine of inspiration, or, more correctly stated, of its rejection: 'There are changed views concerning the question of inspiration. There was a time when that view of the inspiration now held by a majority of the orthodox theologians in Norway would have been regarded as a digression from the doctrine of the Church and, in a sense, been considered Liberalism. Now, however, there are very few theologians, and, assuredly, no eminently learned ones, even of the conservative school, who hold the old doctrine of verbal inspiration.' (Graebner, *The Problem*, etc., p. 92.) Is not this a daylight apostasy from the childhood instruction?

"In this familiar book by Dr. Graebner, *The Problem*, etc., it is observed also that in the Augustana Synod there are divided opinions concerning the inspiration of the Bible. Augustana has undoubtedly acknowledged the Holy Scriptures, as have the other churches of the Conference; nevertheless we find prominent men who ridicule the discussion of verbal inspiration; but we do not hear its officials and conferences reprimand them. (*The Problem*, p. 54.) With that kind of confession before our eyes, it seems that it is undeniably daring to declare that there is the most desirable unity in the American Lutheran Conference.

"Many will perhaps ask: Is it, then, of such importance that there be unity within the Church? Did not the church controversy in the old days turn entirely upon unessential questions? When you hear such discussions, you had better find out who it is that leads it, whether they who are accustomed to follow Scripture or they who depart from it. In each case it will be understood that they who find this or that 'unessential,' e. g., the doctrine of the certainty of faith, conversion, election, Christ's second coming, woman's position in the congregation, Scripture's testimony of God's works, of the creation of the world in six days (many would rather believe that each of these days signifies a longer period of time,



perhaps a million years. How strange it seems that there was only one morning and one evening in a million years!),—when we remember Scripture's testimony of itself, it will in all cases be confirmed that they who find some of these questions 'unessential' forget that it is the Lord who has spoken.

"Now, in the American Lutheran Conference there are doubtless many that would gladly follow the old paths and who consider it of highest importance to be in the truth; but there are notoriously not a few who in many respects depart from it and approve doctrines which are in conflict with Scripture and the Confessions; yes, there are still those who venture to touch Scripture itself and thus undermine the Church's foundation. What testimony, then, can the Conference give of unity and common faith? The fact that it is declared time and again that all is well does not alter the circumstances. The Church cannot be built on untenable assertions. It seems clear also that a true understanding of its position and difficulties cannot be detrimental. It must be better to know its dangers and to be on guard against them than to be blind to them.

"We ought to be grateful to Dr. Graebner for his book *The Problem*. It gives us a clear perspective and insight into the conditions in the American Lutheran Conference and shows what it really is that hinders the gathering of the American Lutheran churches into one body. Friendly relations with the Missouri Synod ought to bring great results. That this synod does not recognize them as true brethren whose doctrine and practise do not agree with the accepted Confessions ought not to be made a ground for refusal. By a free and kindly comparison of the controverted questions unity could perhaps be reached not only within the American Lutheran Conference, but even among all the Lutheran churches in America. Their mouths should be stopped who mumble about Missouri's lack of love and accuse it of pharisaism. There are also those who recognize the Missourians as true heirs of the Reformation and with praise and thanks greet their fearless and undiminished testimony of sin and grace. May it be permitted to name several of the most trusted and respected leaders in the American Lutheran Conference who have publicly expressed their admiration and thanks to the Missouri Synod for its work: Dr. R. C. H. Lenski, Dean Emeritus of the Ev. Luth. Seminary, Columbus, O., and Dr. Adolf Hult, Professor at Augustana Seminary, Rock Island, Ill. They cannot fully express the happiness and animation over the noble radio services of the Missourians: 'God bless all your work!' (Lenski). 'God bless the Missouri Synod and its important center in St. Louis and the excellent work of the Lutheran Laymen's League in carrying on the Lutheran Hour. This is a time when America needs strong witnesship and consecration' (Hult)."

J. T. M.

**The Minister's Education.**—In an exceedingly timely and readable article in the *Sunday-school Times* (March 7) President Lewis Sperry Chafer, D. D., founder and president of the Evangelical Theological College in Dallas, Tex., makes an earnest plea for better seminary training of the future ministers of the American Christian Church. In particular, his plea is for more thorough work in systematic theology, in the original languages of the Bible, and in the English Bible, the latter a course,

weak and often neglected now, but one that should be so strong that the candidate of theology will know his English Bible in and out and be able to interpret it not only upon the whole, but also in its various parts. Among other things Dr. Chafer writes: "Obviously the time-honored, standard three-year seminary course with its ever-diminishing emphasis upon vital subjects is as inadequate for a minister's training as the same restricted time would be for the training of a medical doctor or engineer. In view of these facts and upon my recommendation, the seminary in which I am now serving has adopted a minimum four-year course leading to the Master of Theology degree. Every pastor should be training his flock in the knowledge of God's Word to the end that they may be proficient in their life and service. Because of failure at this point on the part of many pastors, Bible institutes have been located in various centers with a view to supplying this very need; but Bible-institute training should not be confused with standard ministerial education. It is the work of the pastor in his church and of the Bible institute to teach people the Bible; but it is the work of the seminary, when true to her trust, to produce Bible-teachers that speak with authority because of their own exegetical study of the Scriptures, who are accurate in doctrine, because of their knowledge of Unabridged Systematic Theology, and who are able, because of their right relation to the Spirit of God, to exercise a true and worthy spiritual leadership. Inferior or short-cut courses of preparation in any field of education are perhaps better than nothing, but should never be adopted by those who have time and strength for a fuller undertaking. An indefensible fallacy is that because of the soon coming of Christ there is no time for adequate preparation. As though He would not be pleased with the man who is undertaking great things for Him even though that man is taken to be with Christ before the educational courses are completed. A similar fallacy is that missionaries do not need extended training. Missionaries are required to run on a storage-battery so far as educational surroundings are concerned, and it is serious indeed if the battery is not charged. In reply to the student who was seeking a short-cut course of study the aged professor said: 'When the Lord makes an oak-tree, He takes a hundred years, but He can grow a squash in three months.' At no time in the history of the Church has there been so great a call for devoted men who because of their true scholarship are authoritative teachers of the Scriptures and have nothing to fear from the modernistic controversy." J. T. M.

... **Dispensationalism and Higher Criticism Strikingly Similar.** — That dispensationalism, rankest outgrowth of millenarianism, despite all the differences of the two, is, in one respect at least, strikingly similar to it is the contention of Dr. Oswald T. Allis in an article entitled "Modern Dispensationalism and the Doctrine of the Unity of Scripture," published in the *Evangelical Quarterly* (Edinburgh, Scotland). In quoting the contribution, *Christianity To-day* (March, 1936) describes it as one "fitted to provoke wide-spread discussion." Two groups to-day, Dr. Allis affirms, deny the unity and harmony of Scripture, viz., the higher critics and the dispensationalists. True, higher criticism is the error of the Bible-disbeliever, while dispensationalism is that of the Bible-believer. Higher crit-

icism is naturalistic and largely dominated by the theory of evolution, whereas dispensationalism is intensely supernaturalistic and even catastrophic in its view of human history and destiny. Higher criticism reduces Scripture to a merely human book, while dispensationalism assigns to it a unique inspiration and authority as the very Word of God. Nevertheless the two radically different groups agree strikingly in this one respect, that both divide the Bible up into documents which differ from, or even contradict, one another. And so radical is this difference as viewed by the extremists that the Christian of to-day who accepts the dispensational view finds his Bible (the part directly *intended for him*) shrunk to the compass of the Imprisonment Epistles. In conclusion Dr. Allis writes: "The writer has been speaking of consistent dispensationalism and its implications and has appealed especially to the express statements of the *Scofield Bible*. Doubtless many of the dispensationalists will say that they do not draw these conclusions. But if we are to have a distinct dispensation of Law, grace, and the Kingdom, and if the dispensation of grace, or the Church age, is to be regarded as merely an interlude in God's dealings with Israel, a parenthesis in the history of redemption, the inferences and conclusions which have been stated are logical and inevitable. The slogan of dispensationalism, 'rightly dividing the Word of Truth,' is itself a misinterpretation. This exhortation does not mean to divide up Scripture into dispensations and set each one at variance with the others, but so to interpret it that by a study of each and every part the glorious unity and harmony of the whole shall be exhibited and the correctness of the exposition of the one part be established by its perfect agreement with every other part of Scripture as the God-inspired Word." To this *Christianity* adds that recently Prof. John Murray of Westminster Seminary spoke of "modern dispensationalism as 'heretodox from the standpoint of the Reformed faith' and said in effect that those who hold it are precluded from giving an affirmative answer to the second question in the formula of subscription of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A."

J. T. M.

## II. Ausland.

**A Page of the Gospels from the Days of Hadrian.** — This is the translation of the title of an article which Dr. A. Deissmann of the University of Berlin wrote for the *Deutsche Allg. Ztg.* and which was reprinted in the *A. E. L. K.* and the contents of which we briefly summarize here. To the remarkable Bible finds procured in Egypt the last years, *e. g.*, the Chester-Beatty Papyri, which belong to the third and in part even to the second century, and the Egerton Fragments of an unknown gospel from the middle of the second century, there must be added a small, but still older document, a sheet from the Gospel according to St. John from the days of Emperor Hadrian (117—138). This precious witness is kept in the John Ryland's Library in Manchester, England. In 1920 B. P. Grenfell, well known as the partner of A. S. Hunt in epoch-making excavations in Egypt, acquired in Egypt a number of papyri for this library, and examining them, Mr. C. H. Roberts of Oxford found this sheet, which once upon a time belonged to a codex containing John's gospel. The fragment is much injured,

but still sufficiently intact to permit its being identified and dated. It is now given the number 457 among the Greek Ryland's Papyri. The document of course does not bear any date. Dating was not customary at that time. But an investigation of the character of the writing used settles the question pertaining to the date. Owing to the large number of papyri that have been found during the last decades, our methods for dating manuscripts coming from Egypt have been much improved and enable us to arrive at fairly accurate conclusions. Mr. Roberts consulted with Sir Frederick Kenyon and Dr. H. Idris Bell of the British Museum and Dr. W. Schubarth of Berlin, director of the papyrus collection of the *Staatliche Museen*. All three experts are agreed that the fragment must be placed in the first half of the second century. It is possible that it was written, not in the days of Hadrian, but even earlier, during the reign of Trajan, who died 117.

When we ask about the significance of this interesting find, much can be said. It proves that the theories assuming a late origin of John's gospel (some Tuebingen-school representatives dated it 170 A. D.) were as wrong as believers in the Scriptures always said they were. From this document we see that John's gospel not only existed in the first half of the second century, but that copies of it had already come to Egypt. The origin of the gospel hence must be placed quite a number of years before this time. Furthermore, we here have the oldest proof for the existence of Christian congregations in Egypt. How Christianity came to that country has till now not been explained. Paul did not come there on his extensive journeys, probably because Claudius had forbidden immigration from Palestine. Now we see that Christian congregations had arisen in Egypt by the first half of the second century. Dr. Deissmann finally mentions that the itacisms occurring in the document show that it was written at a time when the Atticistic suppression of itacisms had not yet become very pronounced and scribes still wrote as the people spoke, in which feature he sees another proof for the early origin of the fragment. A.

