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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

"Do You Believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to Be the Word of God, the Only Infallible Rule of Faith and Practise?"—The *Presbyterian* of December 26, 1935, refers to this portion of the Presbyterian ordination service in an editorial headed "Dr. Chaffee's View of Scripture." The editorial deals with the matter discussed on page 308 of our magazine under the heading "The God of the Modernists." Replying to a sermon by Cardinal Hayes against birth control, 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. . . . If the cardinal chooses to accept the literal interpretation of the 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 time." Quoting the paragraph in its entirety (as given on page 308 of our magazine), the *Presbyterian* goes on to say: "At the beginning of Dr. Chaffee's career as an ordained Presbyterian minister he declared before God, in the presence of a presbytery, that he 'believed the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practise.' Now he writes the above statement. Quite seriously and with entire friendliness we ask Dr. Chaffee: 'How, sir, do you reconcile those two statements?' We believe this very practical item of public testimony from a Presbyterian minister brings out in a rather striking way some of the great fissures which divide our whole Church from end to end. Is the God of Sinai 'a Deity of myth and legend'? Is God revealed 'in the endless sweep of evolution' and not in the Old Testament? Is revelation something that 'is being slowly translated by science into the accents of the human tongue' as contrasted with the 'Thus saith the Lord' of Holy Writ? Does man have to 'give sight and intelligence to what in nature is a blind and groping impulse' and thus be God to the 'God of endless evolution,' otherwise impotent, incoherent, and ignorant? *Is the Roman Catholic cardinal to be humored in his choice of 'accepting the literal interpretation of the Old Testament statements as infallible doctrine,' while he must permit his emancipated correspondents 'if we choose, instead, to base our faith upon the evidence, the knowledge, and the experience available in our own time'?*" Dr. Chaffee can do one of two things. He must either demand a reordination, in the course of which he will declare that he no longer believes the Scripture of the Old Testament to be the inspired, infallible Word of God, or he

will have to interpret his old oath of ordination to mean: "I believe the Scripture of the Old Testament to be the Word of God *in a certain sense.*"

We are constrained to put the same question: Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God? to those Lutheran pastors and professors who find the Old Testament to contain, to some extent, myths and legends. Discussing a recent book, *The Old Testament — a Study*, written by a professor of the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, May, 1935, p. 271, quotes the author as declaring that the episodes of Gen. 3 "all are pictures that belong to the naivest folk-lore period of primitive culture." "Primitive tales are thus retained and transformed [in the Old Testament]. They are given a new interpretation in the light of the teachings of the prophets." "We have encountered plenty of traces of the existence among the Hebrews of the same nature-myth as is revealed in the various Babylonian versions." This means that in the United Lutheran Church a theological teacher can deny the inspiration of parts of the Old Testament and declare that in our early Old Testament stories we have nothing but the vague and vapid Hebrew tradition which, in turn, ultimately owes its origin to kindred Semitic tradition. We are not putting the Gettysburg professor (and those who agree with him) in the same class with Drs. Chaffee and Fosdick. He does not, of course, characterize Jehovah as "a Deity of myth and legend." But he finds himself in the same situation as Dr. Chaffee with regard to the question of the *Presbyterian*: Do you believe the Scripture of the Old Testament to be the inspired Word of God? As a teacher in a seminary of the United Lutheran Church in America he subscribed to Article II, Section 1, of the constitution of this body: "The United Lutheran Church in America receives and holds the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and as the only infallible rule and standard of faith and practise, according to which all doctrines and teachers are to be judged." "The constitution of the theological seminary [Gettysburg] is a product of his [S. S. Schmucker's] own pen and contains, along with the general doctrinal position, the professorial allegiance: 'Part I . . . Article III . . . 2. Every professor-elect of this institution shall on the day of his inauguration publicly pronounce and subscribe the oath of office required of the directors and also the following declaration: 'I solemnly declare, in the presence of God and the directors of this seminary, that I do *ex animo* believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God and the only perfect rule of faith and practise. . . .'" . . . 3. The preceding declaration shall be repeated by each professor at the expiration of every term of five years, in the presence of the directors, and at any intermediate time if required to do so by a vote of the Board of Directors. And no man shall be retained as professor who shall refuse to make and repeat this declaration in the manner and at the times above specified.'" (V. Ferm, *The Crisis in American Lutheran Theology*, p. 78 ff.) We do not know whether these provisions are, in detail, still in force at Gettysburg. But Article II, Section 1, of the constitution of the U. L. C. is certainly in force and under these provisions the professors at Gettysburg, as members of the U. L. C., certainly are held to affirm solemnly every five years, every year, every day, that they believe the Scriptures

of the Old Testament to be the inspired Word of God. What do those men who believe that the Old Testament contains in part myths and legends make of their ordination vow and professional oath? Do they mean to say that the Old Testament is inspired *in a way*? E.

Confessional Lutheranism in the Way of Unionism. — The *Christian Century* of March 25 discusses this matter under the heading "The Retreat to Dogma." The editorial says: "With the two great world conferences, 'Life and Work' and 'Faith and Order,' scheduled to meet within a little more than a year, it is important for Americans to appreciate the volume and vigor of this retreat to dogma and, if possible, to understand its meaning. A pamphlet recently issued by the continuation committee of 'Faith and Order' contains, among other materials, an article by Professor Sasse of Erlangen, which presents this point of view with uncompromising clarity. The first wide departure from proper stress upon orthodoxy, says Professor Sasse, began with the Edinburgh missionary conference of 1910. After that the German and other Continental groups fell into a common error, though with different terminology. 'Both were about equally remote from the confessions of the sixteenth century; both were influenced in roughly equal measure by the ideas of the eighteenth and nineteenth. On both sides the Christian message was interpreted in terms of that pitiful residue of ancient *credenda* which Pietism, Methodism, rationalism, and idealism had retained in current use.' He holds up to scorn such weak and spineless ideas as these: 'that the task of the Church was . . . to educate men as moral and religious personalities and so . . . "to make the world a better place to live in" (a naive American expression); 'Christianizing the social order'; 'saturating national life with the spirit of the Gospel'; 'the ideal of a Christian world.' All this 'was not merely an Anglo-Saxon belief; it was, below the surface, the ideal of modern Christendom as a whole.' . . . Meanwhile the American Federal Council was trying to find a way to catholicity through the unifying influence of common service. But 'that council, so excessive were its claims and so inadequate its theological basis, had failed to secure the adhesion of the three confessions having a dogmatic basis, namely, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Lutheranism.' The omission of the trinitarian formula from a preamble of the Federal Council's constitution damns it, in Professor Sasse's eyes, as 'a denominational coalition based merely on practical necessity.' 'Suppose the Federal Council's principles had been transferred to the mission-field. What is missionary work if it ceases to proclaim the "one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made . . ."? If the work of missions ceases to proclaim Christ *in these terms*, . . . it is no longer the forward movement of the Church of God.' And so, thinks Professor Sasse, it was the function of Lausanne to summon to a conference on unity 'only those churches which stand fast upon the basis of the ancient creeds.' And now, nine years after, 'it is recognized that a real union of the churches will only be possible if oneness in the Creed of Nicaea is presupposed. The recognition of this

principle was the most important result of the world conference at Lausanne in 1927."

"That being settled, then, to the satisfaction of this observer, an equally important and even more delicate task remains for Edinburgh. It is to arrive at a uniform and unanimously accepted decision upon all the doctrinal issues that have arisen since Nicaea. 'It is certain that there can be no union apart from the basis of the ancient creeds; it is equally certain that these alone do not suffice. They do not answer the questions which have stirred the mind of the Church from Augustine to Luther.' Some of these questions are specified. They have to do with the nature of grace, the relation of faith to justification, the distinction between Law and Gospel, the real presence of the body and blood of Christ in Holy Communion. Upon these and other topics different Protestant creeds state different doctrines. Whatever churches wish to unite, says Professor Sasse, it is above all things necessary that they decide which creed is right. Whatever Church would unite with the Lutheran Church must decide that the Lutheran Confession is right or else convince the Lutherans that it is wrong. 'The contribution, then, which Lutheranism has to make to the ecumenical movement at this time is its confessionalism.'"

We can well imagine the amazement of the editor of the *Christian Century*. Men in this day and age still harboring such strange, outlandish ideas! He compliments Professor Sasse indeed, saying: "It may be doubted whether a more adequate or more scholarly statement of the position of a German Lutheran can be found or one more completely free from sectarian contentiousness. There is not a quarrelsome or bitter note in it." But the queer notions the man has! "Professor Sasse, with what he doubtless hopes will be accepted as a realistic approach to the world situation, presents Lutheran confessionalism as a contribution to the ecumenical movements and hopes that agreement will be reached, among all the Christians that matter, upon all the doctrinal puzzles that have teased the brains of theologians for centuries. There must linger more than a trace of Luther's calm assurance that 'the Holy Spirit is the all-simplest Writer' and that the meaning of Scripture is perfectly clear and unmistakable to any honest man — in spite of which he felt it necessary to write a shelf of books to expound its meaning." That is a rather cheap sneer. We shall not waste space in pointing out its cheapness. But we shall take time to point out that a theological writer who characterizes the doctrines of grace, of justification, and of the distinction between Law and Gospel, matters upon which the sinner's eternal salvation depends, as "doctrinal puzzles that have teased the brains of theologians for centuries," has no conception of what Christian theology means. He should keep out of theology. He should stick to the discussion of economical and political questions. The harm he might do there would be only temporal.

The *Christian Century* next voices its objections to Professor Sasse's plan of Christian unity. It raises "the objection that the program excludes at the outset all who do not accept a view of Biblical authority and textual infallibility to which a great part of the Christian world

no longer adheres. This is a plan for the union of Fundamentalists, not of Christians." — The editor is right in his statement that confessional Lutherans will have no church-fellowship with those who deny the verbal inspiration and the absolute infallibility of the Bible, but he is wrong in stigmatizing that attitude as Fundamentalism, a sectarian aberration. It is the Christian attitude, demanded by the Bible of all Christians.

Next: "It is not that we practical and 'naive' Americans would minimize the importance of right thinking about the great doctrines of faith. It is that we deny that the Church, as the agency for doing the work of Christ in the world, is the company of those who think aright and think alike about the metaphysics of the nature of Christ, the procession of the Holy Spirit, the nature of grace, the technique of justification, and the manner of Christ's presence in the Eucharist." — Why should the editor of the *Christian Century* and those of his persuasion protest that they do not minimize the importance of right thinking about the great doctrines of faith? They know that they do that. The very next sentence proves that. The important thing is not the saving doctrine. The important thing for the Church is her "agency for doing the work of Christ in the world," meaning "the making of the world a better place for those who live in it." Again, it is evident that the *Christian Century* and the confessional Lutheran cannot think alike. There will be no union as long as confessional Lutheranism has a voice. We do insist that all Christians must think alike on grace and the person of Christ and justification. (Just drop the reference to "metaphysics" and "technique." These terms are used only in order to becloud the issue.) We do insist, we and the old-school Reformed churches, that one who does not believe in the God-man Jesus Christ and in justification by grace alone is not a Christian. And we know that all Christians do think alike on this matter. *Omnes Christiani "de evangelio consentiunt"* (Apology, *Trigl.*, p. 228). As to the Real Presence, all Christians should think alike. As long as they do not, there can be no union. And why should they not be able to think alike? It is not the Bible, but the sinful flesh which stands in the way.

Next: "One immediate effect of this type of confessionalism is to exclude from the category of the faithful all Liberals of whatever degree." — Most assuredly.

The closing paragraph reads: "It will be asked by those who make doctrinal agreement a prerequisite to fraternity and cooperation: Can two walk together except they be agreed? The answer is, Certainly they can. They must be agreed about the direction in which they will walk and at what speed and by what route. But they need not be agreed upon all the topics of which they may talk by the way." (Is the editor talking to the point?) "We should be glad to walk with Professor Sasse and with all the others who hold the creeds that he holds and to talk with them as we go of these high matters about which we do not agree. It might be, if they did not too soon cast us from their company for that lack of agreement, we might together make some progress toward the goal which we naively seek and which they also must at least desire as a station on their pilgrimage — the making of the world a better

place for those who live in it."—There it is: the chief thing, the first and last thing, on the program of the liberal churches is this-worldliness—the very thing against which Professor Sasse has been holding out from the beginning. E.

Men, Masters, and Messiahs.—Under this striking heading *Time* (April 20, 1936) presents a variegated, if not formidable, array of cultists and fanatics that recalls to one's mind the somewhat severe, but nevertheless true line of the old German Reformation hymn: "*Viel Sekten und viel Schwärmerci auf einen Haufen kommt herbei.*"—In Calumet, Mich., during the week of Easter, Father Joseph Alderic Paquet of St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, having unlocked the tabernacle of his altar and uncovered a ciborium to distribute the consecrated host, discovered to his amazement three fresh roses, all "moistly spotted with what appeared to be blood." Father Paquet called the occurrence mysterious, if not miraculous.—At Ohio State University a Jewish Rabbi, a Catholic priest, and a Methodist minister jointly conducted Holy Week services designed to allay the wide-spread Christian conviction that Jews alone were responsible for crucifying Jesus Christ. Certainly all three were crucifying Christ anew during the Holy Week of 1936.—On Good Friday, near Albuquerque, N. Mex., Los Hermanos Penitentes reenacted their bloody version of Christ's Passion with increased attention from sightseers and the Press.—In Quebec, Can., Good Friday was celebrated as a national holy-day, Mayor J. E. Gregoire ordering all theaters, public buildings, shops, etc., to be closed for the day. The citizens were directed to observe at four o'clock in the afternoon a minute of holy silence, while the city fire alarm pealed nineteen times.—In Rome, where Pope Pius XI remained in ailing privacy, Easter was the quietest in years.—In Moscow sixty thousand staunch Christians, mostly old men and women, packed the city's twenty-eight surviving churches to celebrate the feast of Christ's resurrection in spite of the fury and mockery of atheistic propagandists.—At the same time, on the morning of Easter Day, in Ollerup, Denmark, the Rev. Dr. Frank Nathan Daniel Buchman lay abed for an hour in the Hotel Gymnastik "to receive the orders of the day from God." Afterwards, in the private stadium of Physical Culturist Niels Bukh, he held what he expected would turn out to be the Oxford Group's "greatest house party." Bad weather, however, cut the attendance to about fifteen thousand persons. In the spacious stadium the United Lutheran Church pastor, inventor and promoter of what is commonly known as Buchmanism, preached to his large audience: "I challenge Denmark to be a miracle among the nations, her national policy dictated by God. . . . Denmark can demonstrate to the nations that spiritual power is the first force in the world. The true patriot gives his life to bring about his country's resurrection. All those who oppose God's control are public enemies." To his "first-century Christian fellowship" Buchman found the Danes very receptive. Among his converts he could count Dr. Hans Fuglsang Damgaard, primate of the state church (Lutheran); Dean Brodersen of the Cathedral of Copenhagen; Director Gunnar Gregersen of the National Technological Institute, the world-famous physical culturist Niels Bukh, etc. Buchmanism's prime idea is that the world needs a "moral and spiritual awakening," on the basis of absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute

unselfishness, absolute love. Frank Buchman was born fifty-eight years ago in Pennsburg, Pa., of a Pennsylvania Dutch distilling family. He studied at Muhlenberg College, at Mount Airy Theological Seminary, became a Lutheran pastor, did welfare work for Lutheran boys at Overbrook, Pa., quarreled with the trustees of his hospice, went to England with a bitter heart, had a "stirring, heart-warming religious experience" in 1908, in a rural English church, received new spiritual powers, which enable him to "probe" souls and "cleanse" them by extracting confessions, invaded British and United States colleges, became famous for his "house parties," persuaded people publicly to "share" their sins, — mostly, as *Time* remarks, misdeeds of a sexual nature. Buchmanism "radiates good fellowship." The founder laughs a great deal, often signs his letters "Yours merrily, Frank," declares the letters P-R-A-Y to stand for "Powerful Radiograms Always Yours." Buchmanism, now about twenty years old, still rallies around one man. Rom Landau in his book, just off the press, *God Is My Adventure* (Doubleday, Doran) calls Frank Buchman "the most successful and shrewdest revivalist of our time," but condemns the Buchman movement as "theologically frivolous." — Besides Buchman, Author Landau, a thirty-seven-year-old Pole, lists in his new book also Shri Sadgaru Meher Baba, a "long-haired, silky-mustached Parsee," who four years ago came to the United States. He is addressed by his followers as the "God-man," the "Messiah," the "Perfect Master." Fanatic Meher Baba never speaks, has been silent since 1925, professes himself to be in an "infinite state," into which he fell when he kissed an ancient holy woman named Hazrat Babajan, an act which threw him into a coma that lasted nine months. — Every Easter Monday large posters in front of the Albert Hall in London announce Easter services of the Elim Four-square Revivalists (not connected with Sister Aimee Semple McPherson's Four-square Gospel Church in Los Angeles), led by Welshman George Jeffreys, who knows how to whip up to hot fervor his praying, swaying, singing, shouting audience. Jeffreys professes to be a literal Bible-believer, practises baptism by immersion, has healed his own facial paralysis by prayer, and now heals patients who suffer from paralysis, blindness, tumors, cancers, etc. In the past nine months more than one hundred and fifty persons have solemnly sworn that Jeffreys has cured them by prayer from ailments such as those just mentioned. — Twenty seven years ago Mrs. Annie Besant and Rev. Chas. Leadbeater, famed theosophists, declared Jiddu Krishnamurti, Brahman Hindu, to be the "Vehicle of the new World Teacher," the Lord Maitreya, whose last incarnation on earth was Jesus Christ. Krishnamurti, at that time a twelve-year-old moppet, calmly accepted Annie Besant's announcement; but in 1929 he renounced the enforced godship, though he is still a practising theosophist seer, living near Ojai, Cal. Lecture tours in Mexico, South America, Holland, and elsewhere have during the last years occupied much of his time. — An unaccountable modern mystic is the "Harmonious Developer," George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff, a "Levantine with a huge, shaved head, piercing eyes, walrus mustache, and a bull-muscled frame." He is the strange head of an odd cult, which such people as the late novelist Katharine Mansfield, the late editor Alfred Richard Orage of the *New English Weekly*, and others have at one time or another espoused. At Fontainebleau, France,

Gurdjieff used to conduct the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man, where he taught his followers intricate dances, for which he composed more than five thousand pieces of music. Six years ago Harmonious Developer Gurdjieff came to Manhattan, where he wrote a monumental work, *Tales Told by Beelzebub to His Grandson*. — In Los Angeles the local ministerial association discovered a huge swindle concern which for a small sum (ca. \$10) conferred on applicants such titles as Doctor of Divinity, Bishop, etc. Among those who received an ordination certificate, together with the Doctor title, was also the Rev. Drake Googoo, who upon investigation turned out to be none other than Funnyman Joe Penner's famous duck. — Indeed "*viel Sekten und viel Schwaermerci*," together with much mockery and blasphemy, which *Time* has most skillfully presented in its interesting and instructive article "Men, Masters, and Messiahs"! And what about our dear Lutheran Church in this dreadful inundation of spiritual delusions? The old command "Preach the Gospel" still stands and still must be followed. J. T. M.

Attitude of the Roman Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches toward the Bible. — In a review of Dr. Machen's recent book *The Christian Faith in the Modern World* the *American*, a Roman Catholic weekly, says: "In popular language Dr. Machen develops the Scriptural proofs for the fundamental Christian doctrines of the nature and existence of God, the blessed Trinity, and the divinity of Christ. Painfully aware of the doctrinal chaos in the various Protestant churches, he meets and refutes from the Bible the chief forms of error or skepticism that for years have been sapping the vitality of Protestantism and have brought it to its present state of helplessness and indifference. As a modern, courageous, and able defense of the essentials of faith, his book deserves sympathetic reading. Its great fault is due to the original sin of Protestantism in rejecting the authority of Christ's Church and proclaiming the Bible as the only rule of faith and conduct. . . . The most potent fact in the modern world and in religious history since the days of Luther is that the attempt to get along without the infallible guidance of the true Church leads only to heresy and disunion. In true Protestant style Dr. Machen cheerfully claims to solve every spiritual problem by the Bible."

From the words just quoted it is evident that the Roman Catholic Church does not accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and conduct, but subjects it to the interpretation of the Church, meaning thereby the Roman Catholic Church (the traditions and the Pope speaking "*infallibly ex cathedra*"). This wrong attitude of the Roman Catholic Church toward the Bible is of course well known. But the Roman Catholic reviewer of Dr. Machen's book is not so well acquainted with the attitude which many Protestants take toward the Bible as he thinks he is. He attributes the "doctrinal chaos in the various churches" to the acceptance of the Bible on the part of the Protestant churches as the only rule of faith and life. But this is exactly what many Protestant churches, all those in the Reformed group and some others, are not doing; they are making essentially the same mistake that the Roman Catholic Church makes. While the Roman Catholic Church subjects the Bible to the interpretation of the Church, always meaning thereby the Roman Catholic Church,

the Reformed group of churches among the Protestants subject the Bible to an interpretation of their own human reason. In the final analysis both the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed churches are doing essentially the same thing: they are subjecting the Bible to the judgment of human reason. In theory the Reformed churches accept the Bible as the only rule of faith and life, but not in practise. We should rather say that they did this years ago; many are not even doing that much now. Over against the Roman Catholic Church and the Reformed group of Protestants the Lutheran Church, wherever she has remained true to her Confessions, is the only Church which accepts the Bible *both in theory and practise* as the only rule of faith and life. And we do most emphatically insist that the Bible needs no interpretation, but that its statements are clear and can have but one meaning. When Paul wrote his epistles to the Christian congregations of his day, he expected the members of those churches to whom his letters were addressed to read and understand them. The psalmist says: "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," Ps. 119, 105.

J. H. C. FARRZ.

New Ten Commandments.—At a recent meeting the Philadelphia Methodist Conference accepted a report of its social service commission which embodied ten social commandments. On account of the frequency with which sociological topics are discussed nowadays, we submit these commandments to our readers.

"We can remember the words of Christ: 1) 'Give ye them to eat.' 2) We can cultivate a social conscience, so that any social injustice done to a brother man may instantly be recognized as a sin against the heavenly Father. 3) We can refuse to recognize any one as converted to Christ until he has been converted to a passion for righteousness and to a willingness to suffer for the emancipation of the oppressed, among whom are the Negro, the unemployed, sweat-shop slaves, and dwellers in the slums. 4) We can more carefully measure all human relationships by the teachings of One who said: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' With those much-disturbed Methodist laymen of Chicago we believe that there should be a Scriptural basis for the Church's position on economic questions. But we also contend that the social gospel is an inevitable development of the message of Jesus. Unless we proclaim it, we are disloyal to the Christ and are expediting the ruin of civilization. 5) Believing with Kagawa that 'the love of Christ must be expressed through economics,' we can engage in a sympathetic study of the cooperative movements, especially the Rochdale system, as a method of rebuilding the social order by democratic processes rather than through methods of force. 6) Proud of that select group of Methodist young people who think it nobler to go to prison as a Christian pacifist than to go to the battle-field as a national hero, we can teach that 'the moral equivalent for war' is found in being 'continuously and dangerously' engaged in rebuilding the social order in accord with the Sermon on the Mount. 7) We can actively promote constructive social legislation. 8) We hold that war is not only a sin, but 'the most colossal and ruinous social sin that afflicts mankind to-day,' since it involves not only the slaughter of human beings, but fosters lying instead of truth, breeds hatred instead

of love, substitutes military necessity for the Moral Law, and nullifies in a few months that which has taken the Church a generation to develop in human character. 9) International wars must be forestalled by the readjustment of national laws, tariffs, and resources, so that congested populations may have the necessities of life through the Christian method of international sharing. Civil wars must be forestalled also by a process of sharing the fruits of toil with the toiler as well as with the investor. 10) The labor question is more than a problem of economic organization, because it deals with the coronation of the common man and the construction of a social order which includes 'bread, brotherhood, and freedom.' Of these three, Communism offers only the bread, but 'man cannot live by bread alone.' Fascism repudiates brotherhood. Socialism in practise may evolve into a denial of freedom. Our hope is in democracy in every area of human life. This civilization cannot endure permanently half autocratic and half democratic." A.

Brief Items. — How much the race question is still a live issue became evident in a declaration of John J. Cornwell, former governor of West Virginia, with respect to the resolutions of the Episcopal Church League for Industrial Democracy, advocating not only rejection of the antisedition bills which have been introduced in Congress, but likewise equality between whites and Negroes in the official positions of the Church. As the *Living Church* reports, he said: "If that is going to be the doctrine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, I am going to do what Al. Smith said he'd do — I shall take a walk." — From the East comes the unusual news that Dr. Archey D. Ball, minister of First Methodist Church, Englewood, N. J., has been requested not to return when his present year of service is ended. The conservative members of his congregation, so we are told, are dissatisfied with the liberal preaching and the social gospel of their pastor. The papers describe him as a strong crusader against war and Fascism and other matters which advocates of the social gospel have put on the black list. — Dr. Kraeling of Yale Divinity School has published the text of a little parchment fragment found in Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates, in 1933. According to the editor this fragment belongs to Tatian's *Diatessaron* and gives a part of the account of the burial of our Lord. It seems the fragment belongs to the first half of the third century, and we have evidence now that the *Diatessaron* was originally written in Greek, not in Syriac, as was held by many experts in former years. Recent discoveries in the field of manuscripts having to do with the New Testament almost lead a person to hold his breath and ask, What's next? — Quoting from a pamphlet which has the title *The Mob Still Rides*, the *Christian Century* informs its readers that of the eighty-four persons lynched from 1931 to the close of 1935, forty-one per cent. "were either not even accused of crime or were charged with only minor offenses; that of the other fifty-nine per cent. many were certainly innocent of the crimes with which they were charged; that only a fourth of the victims were so much as accused of actual or attempted assaults on women, — the usual cause alleged to justify mob killings; and that in a number of these cases the commission's investigators could find no convincing evidence of guilt." The commission in question is the Commission on Inter-

racial Cooperation.—The *Allgemeine Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* reports a notice which appeared in a Russian paper, that recently again ten priests were exiled or shot. In Siberia the authorities have prohibited Christian burial or the reading of masses for the dead. People who accord a Christian burial to their deceased are disfranchised.—In the *Lutheran* of April 9 Dr. J. L. Neve of Hamma Divinity School sounds a very clear note on the meaning of the death of Christ, setting forth the teaching of the vicarious atonement. "He, the Holy One, tasted death in our place. His death has a vicarious significance; it has the significance of the One dying for all men." We hope that this is the teaching on the meaning of the Cross which obtains in the U. L. C. in general.—A campaign against atheism and Communism in the United States was decided upon at a conference held recently at Richmond, Va., attended by religious and lay leaders. Significantly the place of meeting was old St. John's Church, where Patrick Henry uttered the famous sentence "Give me liberty or give me death." The movement is to be called America for God. Several bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church and one of the Methodist Church are among the clergymen sponsoring this endeavor.—*Svenskyr-kotidnig* reports the following: "The Roman Catholic Church again lifts its proud head in Bohemia. The World War brought on a revolt against the Catholic Church, and some two million Catholics became Evangelicals. The Catholic Church, nothing daunted, began in a quiet way to regain its lost territory. Able priests were appointed; a Catholic party was organized in politics; Catholic diplomats found their way into the administration and in every position of vantage. Last year there was held at Prague a general Catholic Day, in which the Roman Catholic Church celebrated its come-back. A Catholic laymen's movement has been organized. A bitter and merciless fight against the Evangelicals is on. Marriages, for example, are broken up by Catholic interference. Christian toleration is daily receiving a blow in the face. Bohemia is getting a whiff from the Middle Ages." *N. L. C. N. B.*—"The second precept of the Church—to receive the blessed Sacrament three times a year at the least, of which Easter is to be one—is embodied in the English and Canadian prayer-books in the rubrics of the Communion office. The Roman Church demands once only. The first part of the precept (the reception) is a divine law, and wilful disregard is a mortal sin; the rest of it (the number of times) is ecclesiastical law, disregard of which is a grave sin." So writes an Episcopalian rector in the *Living Church*. A passage which is *apropos* is Matt. 15, 9: "In vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."—Liverpool Cathedral in England became somewhat of a storm center when on a certain Sunday in March one of the canons drew the attention of the audience to the omission in the prayers of the invocation of blessings on what the ministers of the state were proposing to do. According to the canon the government officials were not pursuing a course dedicated to truth and peace, and therefore the Church would only stultify itself if it offered prayer for the success of the government in its undertakings. What strikes us is that the church dignitaries were not satisfied with suppressing the customary prayer, but felt they ought to comment on it before the assembled congregation, which made the whole affair take on a theatrical aspect.—While

Harvard University is celebrating its tercentenary, Union Seminary in New York is observing its centenary. The latter occasion is to be made memorable by the raising of a fund of \$403,000 for the maintenance of faculty members who retire. A friend of the school has promised \$150,000 if the remaining amount will be raised by others by June 3. It is surprising to see what funds people will provide to assist in the preaching of a gospel which refers mainly to the present life.—The Episcopalians lost a famous missionary bishop, the Right Reverend John McKim, who gave fifty-four years to the work of his Church in Japan. He died in Honolulu at the age of eighty-three.—The Presbytery of New York has refused to obey the Presbyterian General Assembly, which in 1934 and 1935 ordered that ecclesiastical proceedings be instituted against members of the Independent Board of Foreign Missions, one of whose members belongs to this presbytery. The motive does not seem to be endorsement of the stand of the Independent Board, which opposes Modernism, but a desire to avoid controversy. Will the Assembly now include the powerful New York Presbytery among the rebels of whose disloyalty it complains?—Sherwood Eddy, while maintaining that the Soviet government is "seeking to give equal justice to all the poor, to all the masses, to end unemployment, poverty, and injustice," nevertheless says that for him acceptance of the position of this government is morally impossible because 1. its denial of political and civil liberties; 2. the violence of its continuing revolution; 3. its harsh dogmatic atheism. (Abridged from *N. L. C. B.*)—From August 30 to September 4, under the auspices of the National Conference of Jews and Christians, the National Seminar will be held for Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish leaders at Hartford, Conn. Discussing general subjects, such as "The Religious Issues Presented by Science," "The Issues Presented by the Totalitarian States of the World," "Methods of Training the Clergy," selected at random from a formidable list, the debaters undoubtedly will valiantly endeavor to avoid stepping on each other's toes.—In 1928 the contributions received in Protestant churches of the United States amounted to \$532,368,714. In 1935 the total was \$304,672,999, which means there was a decrease of forty-three per cent. If all of the work done by the Federal Council of Churches, whose secretaries and clerks are responsible for this information, were of such an enlightening type, we could regard its activities with more complacency.—At the convention of the National Education Association held recently in St. Louis, the statement was made that of the twelve million Negroes in our country eighty per cent. are literate and that Negro colleges last year had an enrolment of twenty-five thousand. A.

II. Ausland.

Böhmans „Bekentnis, Bekentnisstand, Bekennen“ noch einmal. Unter der Überschrift „Verkehrte Urteile über Schrift und Bekentnis“ haben wir bereits in den Spalten des „Theological Observer“ (cf. Vol. VII, No. 5, Mainnummer 1936, S. 385 ff.) auf die falsche Stellung aufmerksam gemacht, die die modern-rationalistische Theologie, wie immer sie sich jeweilig nennen mag, der Schrift und dem Bekentnis gegenüber einnimmt. Noch klarer als in dem vorigen Artikel kommt diese falsche Stellung in

Fortsetzung III des Pöhlmannschen Aufsatzes zum Ausdruck. (Vgl. „A. E. L. R.“ Nr. 5, 69. Jahrg., 31. Januar 1936, S. 98.) Gegen Schluß des Artikels schreibt Pöhlmann nämlich: „Auch der Theolog hat, sofern er ein echter und rechter Theolog ist, Gottes Geist und hat darum die Vollmacht, alles, was an geistlichem Erkenntnisgut sich auf dem Weg von Menschenmund und Menschenhand in den Sinnbildern, in den Symbolen von Schrift und Befehnis [Man bedenke, was es damit auf sich hat, daß man die Bibel ein Symbol nennt!] Ausdruck verschafft hat, geistlich zu beurteilen und geistlich zu richten. Aber freilich, indem der Theolog sich auf solchen Höhenwegen ergeht, befindet er sich in einer unheimlichen, furchterregenden Lage. Während er die Schrift eben als Schrift seiner kritischen Beurteilung unterwirft, ruft ihn aus ihr heraus das lebendige Wort Gottes an, das kräftig und schärfer als jedes zweifelsneidige Schwert ist, und kritisiert die Erwägungen und Gedanken seines Herzens mit einer Helllichtigkeit und Klarheit, daß nichts vor ihm verborgen bleibt, vielmehr alles bloß und aufgedeckt vor seinen Augen liegt, Hebr. 4, 12 f. Die in den relativen Strom menschlichen Erzeugnisses hineingezogene Heilige Schrift steht als lebendiges Wort Gottes wieder in aller absoluten Größe und Herrlichkeit, in aller majestätischen Eingeborenheit vor ihrem Kritiker und verweist ihn zur tiefsten Demut. Der Theolog darf und soll die Schrift und ihre Bücher daraufhin kritisch prüfen, ob und wiefern sie Christum treiben. [Von uns unterstrichen.] Aber er kann das nur, wenn und sofern er selbst von Christus getrieben wird. Kann dann — von Christus und seinem Geist getrieben! — solche Kritik überhaupt zu Hochmut führen und in Hochmut geübt werden? Sie kann ja nur in die tiefste Demut führen und in tiefster Demut geübt werden. Und ähnlich wie es mit der Beurteilung der Schrift steht, steht es mit der Beurteilung der Symbole durch den Theologen. Während er sich ansieht, sie zu kritisieren, ruft ihn aus ihnen heraus das Theologengeschlecht der großen Kampfzeiten der Kirchengeschichte an, sie so zu üben, daß sie von tiefster Ehrfurcht vor den Vätern der großen Epochen getragen wird. Das quatenus, mit dem die jeweilige Theologie an Schrift und Symbole herantritt, um sie keinesfalls nach und in dem jeweiligen Zeitgeist, sondern an Christus und in seinem Geist zu prüfen, besteht zu Recht; aber es ist seinerseits wieder bestimmt durch das quatenus einer demütigen und ehrfürchtigen Haltung.“ Wir zitieren diese Sätze zumeist, weil sich Pöhlmann mit seiner Forderung, die Schrift kritisieren zu dürfen, auf Luther bezieht, und zwar an der Hand der bekannten Stelle, die D. Pieper in seinem großen Werk „Christliche Dogmatik“ gegen Rationalisten von der Art Pöhlmanns so trefflich in Schutz genommen hat. (Vgl. Christl. Dogm., Bd. I, S. 353 ff.) Sich auf Luther beziehend, schreibt Pöhlmann: „Hat nicht der große Theolog D. Martin Luther in seiner Vorrede auf die Episteln St. Jakobi und Judas 1522 gesagt: ‚Auch ist das der rechte Prüfstein, alle Bücher zu tadeln, wenn man siehet, ob sie Christum treiben oder nicht. . . . Was Christum nicht lehret, das ist nicht apostolisch, wenn's gleich Petrus oder Paulus lehret; wiederum was Christum predigt, das ist apostolisch, wenn's gleich Judas, Annas, Pilatus und Herodes tât.'“ Daran knüpft Pöhlmann die Bemerkung: „Ob die biblischen Bücher Christum treiben oder nicht! So gilt denn ein quatenus, und zwar ein höchst wichtiges, auch für die Schrift und infolgedessen erst recht für das Symbol.“ Aber Pöhl-

mann kann sich hier nicht mit Luther decken; denn Luther redet von einem angenommenen Fall und nicht von einem wirklichen. Die Schriften der Propheten und Apostel, also die kanonischen Bücher der Heiligen Schrift, hat Luther nie danach beurteilt, ob sie Christum treiben oder nicht. Für ihn trieben A PRIORI ALLE Christum, Apost. 10, 43. Der Unterschied zwischen Luther und Pöhlmann besteht darin, daß Luther die Heilige Schrift für Gottes eingegebenes Wort hielt, und zwar von A bis Z. Pöhlmann aber glaubt, daß die Heilige Schrift „sich auf dem Weg von Menschenmund und Menschenhand Ausdruck verschafft hat“ und daß sie „in den relativen Strom menschlichen Erzeugnisses hineingezogen“ worden ist. Mit andern Worten, die Schrift ist nach Pöhlmann ein halb göttliches, halb menschliches Machwerk, so daß es des Theologen business wird, sie danach zu kritisieren, inwiefern sie Christum treibt. Nach Pöhlmann soll dies allerdings mit der nötigen Demut und Ehrfurcht geschehen. Pöhlmann überieht aber, daß es so etwas wie eine demütige und ehrfürchtige Kritik des Wortes Gottes gar nicht gibt. Hier ist jede Kritik ein crimen laesae maiestatis, ein Majestätsverbrechen gegen den göttlichen Autor der Schrift. Übrigens hat es auch, wie die Dogmengeschichte bezeugt, noch nie einen rationalistischen Kritiker gegeben, der bei seiner Kritik der Schrift auch nur einigermaßen demütig und ehrfürchtig verfuhr. Im Gegenteil, sie haben alle den Mund sehr voll genommen und die Schrift auf Ungenauigkeit, Unwahrheit und Betrug hin angeklagt. So ist es denn auch klar, daß bei der Kritik der Heiligen Schrift nicht der Geist Christi den ungläubigen Theologen treibt, sondern der Geist Satans, Joh. 8, 44, des Vaters der Lüge. Pöhlmann stellt somit an diesem Punkt alles auf den Kopf. Aber auch bei dem, was er über die Symbole schreibt. Er sagt, bei der Kritik der Symbole ermahne den Theologen zur rechten Kritik „das Theologengeschlecht der großen Kampfzeiten der Kirchengeschichte“. Man könnte dies allenfalls stehen lassen. Aber der Gedanke, der sich in diesen Worten ausdrückt, ist durchaus nicht unschuldig. Was dem Theologen die unschuldige Kritik an dem Bekenntnis verwehrt, ist nicht ein altes Theologengeschlecht, sondern die Schrift allein. Was nach der Schrift am Bekenntnis recht ist, das bleibt bestehen; was aber nach der Schrift am Bekenntnis verkehrt ist (wir nehmen natürlich bei unserm lutherischen Bekenntnis kein quatenus an, sondern unterschreiben nur quia), das fällt dahin, und wenn es auch ein Luther, ein Augustinus usw. gesagt haben sollte. Menschlich will Pöhlmann die Schrift kritisieren, menschlich will er aber auch bei der Beurteilung des Symbols in Schranken gehalten werden. Und gerade auch an diesem Punkt zeigt sich bei ihm nicht etwa eine demütige und ehrfürchtige Unterstellung unter Gottes Wort, sondern ein hochmütiges Dem-Wort-Troßbieten, ein Weistern des Wortes, das mit dem der Schlange im Paradies blut- und knochenverwandt ist. Pöhlmanns Artikel dient nicht zur Klarheit, dient auch nicht dazu, daß die Schrift wieder nach ihrer vollen Bewertung zu Ehren kommt. Bei ihm findet sich kein „Zurück zur Reformation“, sondern nur eine Abwendung von der Reformation, und zwar nach Art des Tridentinums. J. T. W.

Todesfälle. Zwei bekannte Theologen sind kürzlich gestorben. In Berlin-Grunewald starb der dort im Ruhestand lebende Prof. D. Erich Schäfer im Alter von fünfundsiebzig Jahren. Er war Professor in Kiel, Greifswald

und Breslau. In Bonn starb der Alttestamentler D. Ed. König im Alter von fast neunzig Jahren. Er hat seine Lehrtätigkeit in Leipzig, Moskau und Bonn (seit 1900) ausgeübt und ist durch viele Schriften bekannt geworden.

(Ev.-Luth. Freikirche.)

Anglican Tendencies in Scandinavian Countries. — Dr. John A. Morehead, the former president of the Lutheran World Convention, feels he must say a word in defense of the Lutheran churches of Northern Europe, concerning which the statement was recently made that they seem to be favoring rather strongly union with the Church of England. He says in an article appearing in the *National Lutheran Council News Bulletin*: "In the first place, it is quite true that there is in Sweden and in other Scandinavian countries a small coterie of leaders who are interested in the possibility of affiliations with the Church of England because of their common possession of the so-called Apostolic Succession. But, using Sweden as an example, the powerful Pastors' Association of the Church of Sweden, including its bishops and clergy, as well as the congregations of the Church in that country, while they value, sentimentally, their historic church organization, are overwhelmingly one with their fellow-Lutherans in other lands in the conviction that external organization and ceremonies are not essential to Christian church unity, but solely agreement in the essential doctrines of the Christian religion according to the Scriptural teachings of Article VII of the Augsburg Confession. In the second place, it should be remembered that the approach to the Scandinavian Lutheran churches was made by the Church of England through official commissions appointed to these churches by the last Lambeth Conference. In the third place, I take pleasure in testifying to the fact that my own visits in recent years to Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland have established me firmly in the conviction that the churches of these Scandinavian countries are inwardly and truly Evangelical Lutheran in their faith; that they are anchored in this faith; that they are devoted to it; and that they are giving distinguished service to the establishment of this faith of the Gospel on the earth. . . . In the fourth place, the Lutheran churches of the Scandinavian countries reveal their inner faith, spiritual affinities, and purposed relationships by their records. The pastoral associations of these countries have officially invited the executive committee of the Lutheran World Convention to send representatives to their meetings in former years. Such invitations have been accepted with pleasure, and happy visitations and contacts have resulted."

After recounting the interest which the Lutherans of Scandinavian countries have manifested in the Lutheran World Convention and in Lutheran work in general, Dr. Morehead concludes this part of his essay thus: "In short, while the German professor through some apparent exercise of his creative imagination (disturbed, unfortunately, by his own ecclesiastical affairs and anxiety) has produced the generalization of some intellectual interest, it does seem perfectly clear that his conclusions are entirely out of harmony with the existing inner facts of the situation. Personally I am utterly convinced of the inner unity of the Lutheran churches of the Scandinavian countries with the historic body of world Lutheranism as well as with the agency of the Lutheran World Convention, which from

the beginning the Lutheran churches of Scandinavia have a noble part, under God's blessing, in creating and developing."

While it may be a far cry from Canterbury and Oxford to Upsala and Oslo, Dr. Sasse, the German professor referred to by Dr. Morehead, very properly pointed a warning finger to negotiations between the Anglicans and Scandinavian Lutherans which, even if not resulting in, or intended to result in, actual union or absorption, must help to promote the doctrinal indifference from which Christianity is suffering. A.

Religious Conditions in England Startling. — In the *Presbyterian* of April 2 parts of a letter written by an Englishman are published who paints a very gloomy picture of the religious situation in England. He writes: "Christian work becomes increasingly difficult. The Sabbath social habits of the masses have completely changed, and when the older generation has passed, the problem of the churches will be more difficult still. The Church is losing its hold, especially in the suburbs. Think of Beacontree, Essex! Population, 125,000. Total church accommodation, 10,000. It is said that there are 90,000 children on the Dagenham Estate, and 80,000 of them are outside Sabbath-schools. There is no room for them, even if there were the desire to attend. Viewing the present situation, I see things as follows: 1. Sabbath social habits are changed and fixed, and this is unrealized by the churches. 2. Churches and missions are content to go on in the same old grooves. 3. Open-air work is practically futile, for street noises have increased to such an extent that voices are drowned. I saw a fine band of open-air workers in London, and not a soul listening. The noise of the traffic was terrible. 4. I believe the Church, as presently organized, will have to change its methods. Smaller churches, with unpaid pastors, as in the early days, will need to be substituted for the present order of things. 5. The Church of England, and also of Scotland, have unbounded wealth in tithes and can therefore keep the old order going though no one attends. The vicar of the village here where I live complains that at Communion the sexton and himself are often the only communicants. (The vicar's salary is \$1,850 and manse.) 6. Non-conformist churches are going to have a struggle to exist because self-supporting, and worshipers are on the decrease. 7. Although the habits of the people are fixed, they were even worse before the evangelical revival of the nineteenth century and can be changed again as then. But I am convinced that education and scientific progress make the situation more difficult. If the vast masses outside are to be touched, then the Christian Church must outlive the world. All the preaching in the world will not move this present generation until there is that in the lives of ministers and members which will break through the thick crust of indifference and cause men to stop and think and wonder, as was the case with the pagans in the early days of Christianity. 8. The Gospel still has its ancient power, but Christians must prove it if the world is to be convinced and saved. 9. Possibly we are nearer the return of our Lord than we realize. Yet this is no reason why we should shirk the problem."

Very much of what is said here applies to conditions in the United States also and should be read and pondered by us with a prayerful heart. A.