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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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


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**I. Amerika.**

**An Article in the "Lutheran Sentinel" on "An Invitation for Cooperation and Union."**—In its issue of May 20, 1936, the editor of the *Lutheran Sentinel*, the Rev. J. E. Thoen, writes as follows:—

"In our *Lutheran Sentinel* we have reported on an invitation from the United Lutheran Church of America and the American Lutheran Conference extended to the synods constituting the Synodical Conference. The invitation requests that committees be elected to confer concerning cooperation between the different synods and approachments for the purpose of forming a union between all Lutheran bodies in America. It is not a request to confer concerning doctrine in order to attain unity of faith and confession, but a request to confer concerning arrangement of the work in missions and other fields in order that there may be a better cooperation and understanding between the churches. This sounds fine and friendly, but it is, nevertheless, an invitation to begin cooperation before unity of doctrine is attained.

"As our readers know, our synod belongs to the Synodical Conference. Our synod has not as yet answered the invitation except a preliminary answer by its president. The two largest synods of the Synodical Conference replied to the invitation at their last conventions. We published their answers in the *Lutheran Sentinel* and added a few remarks. The Missouri Synod accepted the invitation and elected a committee to confer with committees from the churches extending the invitation, while the Wisconsin Synod refused to elect a committee to confer at present under the prevailing circumstances. It may seem that there is disagreement between these two synods because the one has accepted the invitation and the other has refused. We believe, however, that there is no essential disagreement. When we read the Missouri Synod's answer to the invitation, it appears clearly that it does not think of any union or even cooperation before unity of doctrine is attained, but it is willing to confer by committee in order to come to an agreement in doctrine. The Wisconsin Synod is not willing to confer by committee now, since there as yet is not sufficient agreement in doctrine and practise to carry on conferences concerning union and cooperation. It points to different things which the inviting body must correct before there can be any talk about such conferences as the invitation proposes.

"It is our opinion that the Wisconsin Synod has acted with the right wisdom and care in this matter. We know from sad experience what doctrinal discussions by so-called union committees may bear. When committees are chosen to confer with the purpose in view to unite the churches which they represent, they are tempted either to yield to one another in the discussion of doctrinal questions or to use ambiguous and diplomatic expressions or terms for the purpose of leading the opposition to adopt their presentation of the doctrine. The result becomes an agreement which may be understood in two different senses, and the two parties may with some right claim that they have defended the doctrine of their Church

and persuaded the opposition to adopt it as right doctrine. The agreement thus becomes a compromise, and both parties stand as before without having attained true unity. When the results of the discussions are published, it is very difficult for one who was not present and heard the discussions to know just what was intended by the expressions used, and he is obliged to cast his vote in reliance on the statement of the committee which represented his Church that it has persuaded the opposition to discard its false doctrine and adopt the right. But he who votes for union in that way does not do so because he is convinced that true unity is attained. He votes for union because the committees claim that unity is attained, not because he himself knows that it is so. If the committee of the opposition reports to its Church that by the discussions it has been convinced its Church has hitherto taught false doctrine contrary to the Word of God and earnestly seeks to win its Church for the true doctrine, it would prove that the committees have come to a true agreement, but it does not prove agreement between the churches before the opposition has rejected its wrong doctrine and adopted the right.

"When we consider this and other things which it may become necessary to contemplate, it is not difficult to understand that doctrinal discussions by committees is not the right procedure in order to obtain unity of faith between church-bodies. There is a different way which is the natural one and brings true unity. That is public testimony in speech and writing. The people in a church-body must also be persuaded, and that is not done by persuading a few men in a committee to give up their false doctrine. When the public testimony has borne fruit, so that it appears that two church-bodies which were disagreed teach and practise the same, then it is time to confer by committee concerning cooperation and union. As far as we are able to understand, this is the view of the Wisconsin Synod, and we are convinced that that is right. It is dangerous to experiment with committee conferences concerning union before it is apparent that there is unity between the church-bodies. That history shows us."

We feel that this is not the place to debate the question whether the policy championed above is wise or not. It is our wish, however, to acquaint our readers with the views expressed by the *Lutheran Sentinel* on the important matter with which the reprinted article is dealing.

A.

**A Major Unionistic Venture.** — In the *Lutheran* of April 23 we find an open letter signed "P. E. S.," which reports as follows: —

"For years the National Preaching Mission now projected for the fall of 1936 has been in the hearts and minds of a group of men who have earnestly felt the need of a revival of religion throughout our country and the world. The plans have at last taken definite shape, and from September through November twenty-five cities will be visited by the mission, with a three- or four-day program for each center, including not only public mass-meetings in the evenings, but also seminars for ministers and church leaders, addresses and groups in colleges, factories, among business men, etc. The names of those who have definitely agreed to participate are:

"The Rev. E. Stanley Jones, India; Miss Muriel Lester, England; the Rev. John S. Whale, England; Dr. T. Z. Koo, China; the Rt. Rev. Richard

Roberts, Toronto; the Rev. George A. Buttrick, New York City; the Rev. Lynn Harold Hough, Madison, N. J.; the Rev. Albert W. Beaven, Rochester; the Rev. Hugh T. Kerr, Pittsburgh; the Rev. R. H. Miller, Washington, D. C.; the Rev. George W. Truett, Dallas; the Rev. Ivan Lee Holt, St. Louis; the Rev. Paul E. Scherer, New York City; Bishop Arthur J. Moore, San Antonio; the Rev. Merton S. Rice, Detroit; the Rev. John A. Mackay, New York City; Bishop Henry Wise Hobson, Cincinnati; the Rev. Douglas Horton, Chicago.

"The purpose of the mission has been stated as follows: —

"An authentic Christianity is a perpetual act of judgment. It shall be the object of this mission to understand and apply that judgment in respect of the individual, the Church, and contemporary life, with courage enough to accept it when it comes to us as condemnation and humility enough to appropriate it when it comes to us as grace.

"The mission shall therefore seek to teach and preach in its fulness the Gospel of our common Lord and Savior Jesus Christ; to confront, through group contacts and public meetings, as well the clear thought and courageous will of the American people as their finer feeling and best tradition; in a world which irreligion is on the verge of destroying, to stress once more the reasonableness of the Christian faith, its aptness to the deepest needs and the highest aspirations of human life, and its creative power in the organizing and shaping of a bewildered society toward the standards and ideals of the kingdom of God.

"And, finally, wherever counsel is asked or assistance needed, the mission shall lend itself to the continuance of such a program within local communities, in order that changed lives, ever the result of God's working, may be enabled through the Church of Jesus Christ to make their lasting impact upon a changing world."

"Here is a move not toward high-powered organization, but toward cooperation in the preaching of a whole Gospel. Instead of standing idly by to judge, may we not as Lutherans, in so far as possible, give the mission the support of our presence, what encouragement we have to offer, and surely the courtesy of a hearing? Personally I have believed in its possibilities because I have believed in the spirit of the men who are responsible for it. It is not a 'great preacher series' nor any such thing; it is an earnest and honest attempt concertedly to focus the pressure of the Gospel of Christ at strategic points in our national life, hoping that from these points will spread whatever power and influence can be brought freshly into being under the added impetus of united effort. It is our privilege at least to pray that in God's own fashion the mission may prove a blessing in this time when our common Christian faith needs the accent of both voice and life."

That this venture, which is altogether unionistic, will have largely a modernistic complex is asserted by Dr. Frank Norris, the militant Texas Fundamentalist among the Baptists. A.

**Economic Cooperation, Modernism's Newest Substitute for the Gospel.** — From an address delivered in the Glen Echo United Presbyterian Church, Columbus, O., by its pastor, Rev. Wm. E. Ashbrook, which the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* published in its April issue, we quote the following: "The Ohio Council of Churches through its

annual pastors' convention makes audible the voice of Modernism in Ohio. . . . In order that we might brush up in our understanding of the social gospel, we have again attended most of the sessions of the pastors' convention. . . . In the light of what we have heard the past week, just what does Modernism have to offer to a sin-cursed and troubled humanity to-day? First of all, it offers an attack on the person of Jesus Christ. One of the early speakers informed us that 'orthodox Christianity has never said that Jesus was God. That idea originated about the fourth or fifth century. The idea that Jesus Christ was God would have been obnoxious to the apostle Paul, and Athanasius would have denied it. Those who say that have no standing in orthodox Christianity. It is not that Jesus was God, nor even like God, but that God, the Power behind the universe, was Christlike.' . . . Now that leads us to consider the second thing that Modernism as represented by the Ohio Council of Churches has to offer. It presents a program of social reform to take the place of individual salvation through the precious blood of Christ. . . . Two lengthy addresses were given by Dr. Fred Fisher of Detroit, who set forth with elaborate eulogy the progress in social reform that is being made in Russia to-day. 'It is a new country where man is brought into his own.' . . . Dr. Fisher was followed later on the program by Mr. E. R. Bowen, general secretary of the Cooperative League of the United States of America. He is one of the leading advocates of Consumers' Cooperative. And the Consumers' Cooperative, in case you haven't heard, is the new Messiah of Modernism. 'The Church was founded to heal the diseases of selfishness,' he said. 'Plenty awaits us if we will just reach out and take it. As long as the Church stays with capitalism, it should die.' . . . So it was throughout this convention. Here was a great organization of churches sponsoring a program that placed no emphasis upon the need of telling lost sinners of a Christ who died to save them, silent on the subject of the new birth and sounding no call to prayer or repentance. This council says nothing about sin and salvation. Apparently the modern mind is done with such old-fashioned things. Instead it offers crusades against military training and schemes for redistributing wealth. It adopts, as our newspapers have reported, a portion of the Communistic scheme, and it does this in the name of what they term the 'kingdom of God.' . . . To what follies will churchmen not give themselves when they lose their faith in Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of men! For in all this we could discern no salvation for the soul and no need for cleansing from the guilt of sin."

E. Stanley Jones insists that this gospel of Modernism in its newest form is the real Gospel, is what Jesus meant when He declared that He was anointed "to preach the Gospel to the poor," Luke 4, 18. In *Christ's Alternative to Communism* Dr. Jones writes: "All we can say now is that the first item of the program—good news to the poor—would mean, according to the total teachings of Jesus and according to the results of that teaching and that spirit in the lives of the early Christians, the creation of a new kind of society, spiritual in its basis, but issuing in a collective economic charity and cooperation in which each would have material goods according to his need—poverty would be banished. The only good news to the poor that would be adequate would be that

there are to be no poor" (p. 83). "We can prepare for the public ownership of public resources and utilities, to which society must come if we are to stop selfish exploitation, by training the group mind in the handling of collective projects through cooperatives. Kagawa of Japan is making the forming of cooperatives among various types in various occupations a part of the Kingdom of God Movement. He is improving the economic and moral condition of vast numbers and at the same time training them for the new cooperative society—the kingdom of God on earth" (p. 280).

The *Christian Century*, the stalwart advocate of Modernism, is of course heart and soul for Modernism's newest interpretation of the Gospel. "The cooperative movement which Toyohiko Kagawa will preach to Americans and Canadians will include consumers' cooperatives, to be sure, but it will also point out the necessity for at least seven other types of cooperative organization. It will call for producers' cooperatives, credit unions, utilities' cooperatives, land cooperatives, insurance cooperatives, and many forms of mutual-aid cooperatives—social insurance in all its phases, including medical and educational insurance. Entered upon voluntarily, those who live in the social enclave set up by practise of this fully rounded cooperative program will find themselves in a society approximating mutuality. They will have at least a fair chance to develop and display a way of life which will attract others because its rewards are larger, mean more to the human spirit, and last longer than the rewards offered in a dog-eat-dog struggle for survival. . . . Kagawa has come under the belief that he has a word of divine revelation intended for the Christian intent on achieving a Christian world—a world of brothers relieved of a brutal obsession with the insensate pursuit of private gain. Can such a world be brought into existence? Kagawa declares that it can be and that he has discovered how." (Dec. 4, 1935.) "The cooperative movement has now come into the focus of the Church's attention and is making a far more potent appeal than any concrete program has ever made as a plan of Christian activity on the economic level. Awareness of the Christian aspect of this movement has been greatly intensified by the presence in America of Dr. Kagawa, who has inspired an extensive development of cooperation in Japan and who sees the cooperative movement as an integral part of the Christian Gospel." "There are grounds for real hope that we are about to witness in this country a new and vital fusion of personal and social religion such as Kagawa himself typifies, which will impart new reality to the religious life of the churches. At the same time, through the awakened interest of church people, an added impetus is being given to the actual growth of cooperatives and, it is to be hoped, to those other forms of political and economic action which look toward a righteous society." (March 11, 1936.) E.

**The Inspiration of the Gospel according to Mark, according to the "Lutheran Church Quarterly."**—This periodical published in its April issue an article by W. P. Bradley, "The 'Cursing' of the Fig-tree," from which we quote the following: "As told by Mark, the so-called cursing of the fig-tree is perhaps the strangest incident in the life of Jesus. It is more than strange. It is shocking. The tree was in leaf, and Jesus hoped to find figs upon it. Disappointed in this, He cursed the tree, and it died. The condition of the story is singularly and significantly chaotic.

Some of its details are out of harmony both with the main theme of the story and with each other. Such a condition is by no means uncommon in Mark. . . . Shortly after they left Bethany, Jesus 'hungered.' Why was that? Had He eaten nothing there? If not, why not? . . . The words used by Jesus would seem to enjoin barrenness, not death. But death was what happened. Now its death doubtless put an end to the fruitfulness of the tree; but if Jesus really wished the tree to die, he could easily have said so. . . . Jesus, who had been considerate enough the day before, when borrowing an ass's colt for use in the triumphal entry, to assure its owner that He would send the animal back promptly (Mark 11, 3), is now said to have deprived this owner of his tree, not only without due process of law, but apparently without a thought. . . . According to Mark a period of incubation intervened between the curse and its consummation. Nothing happened at first. Nothing seems to have happened all that day. At any rate the disciples noticed nothing in the afternoon when they returned the same way to Bethany. It was not till the morning of the next day that they saw the result. Then they saw that the tree had 'withered away from the roots,' and Peter calls the attention of Jesus to the fact: 'Rabbi, behold, the tree *which Thou cursedst* is withered away.' . . . Jesus is represented by Mark as saying in effect . . . that with faith in God not only can you *accomplish* anything you wish, but you can also *obtain* anything you wish and which you pray for. These undoubtedly genuine words of Jesus, so vital and inspiring in almost any other connection, are inexpressibly degraded by being uprooted and transplanted hither to serve as suitable (!) comments on the cursing of a fig-tree. . . . Such is the story as Mark tells it." How could such a story have originated?

"It would seem more reasonable to suppose that originally the story had a quite different meaning from the present one and that not long before Mark's gospel was written something happened which changed that meaning completely. In such a case, and in the absence of suitable editing, the original details of the story, which of course would have been in harmony with its original meaning, would become inappropriate under the new one. It is this view which we shall assume to be the correct one and by which we shall be guided in our attempt to solve Mark's puzzle. . . . We shall reach our goal most directly by attacking the problem at its stronghold, so to speak, by examining again the very peculiar wording of the 'curse.' '*No man (no one) eat fruit from thee henceforward forever.*' This wording puts the emphasis upon the *people* who shall never again be permitted to find pleasure or profit from the tree. Now, all that is needed to bring simplicity out of the chaos is to suppose that Jesus used the future indicative and that there was nothing mandatory in His thought. In the English translation this would require the insertion of the auxiliary 'will': '*No man (no one) will eat fruit from thee.*' Let us see how this change works out. According to this reading, which from now on we shall assume to have been the original one, it will have been something peculiar about the appearance of the tree which attracted the attention of Jesus, from a distance. And since the tree was in leaf, it will have been something peculiar about the appearance of the leaves which did it. A nearer view showed that the tree was dying, — indeed, that it was already far gone. Then Jesus will have said in effect, Your usefulness is over. Thus, so

far from dooming innocent people to loss and the tree to barrenness, Jesus really will have voiced His regret at the condition which He found. . . . To be specific, not only is Jesus now absolved from the charge of vindictiveness arising from disappointed hunger, but there is no longer any need of speculating as to the nature and origin of that hunger. Instead of having to explain the hunger, we now see that the hunger was introduced to explain the curse! . . . As to the matter of ownership, there is now no need of invoking the eminent domain of the Son of God in order to legitimize His behavior towards the property of other people. For Jesus did not kill the tree, and He had no thought of so doing. . . . Doubtless the disciples repeated the original words of Jesus just as they had heard them. Those who got them from the Twelve would repeat them in the same way to others, and so on down the years until some day some brother with the gift of insight, as he would probably put it, and with singular zeal for the authority of the Christ, would sense a far more intimate connection between the words of Jesus and the death of the tree than had previously been thought of. For the first time it would seem to this person that the tree must have died not merely as Jesus saw and said that it would, but because He said it should, in short, because he cursed it. . . . It is a fair question whether we may not infer that it was precisely Mark himself who first detected the 'curse' in the kindly words of Jesus. If the discoverer were not Mark, but some predecessor of his, that predecessor must have been a person whose method of literary composition was just like Mark's. He also must have left the resulting chaos just as he made it, without a thought of editing out the incongruities, just as Mark would have done—and did." There is a lot more, but we do not care to transcribe anything more.

By no stretch of language or imagination could the term "inspiration—given by inspiration of God" be applied to Mark's gospel under the premises set down by this critic. He certainly does not believe in any sort of inspiration; otherwise he would be guilty of blasphemy in penning the above words.

But having finished with Mark, he will have to deal with Paul. He will have to charge Paul with making an overstatement in 2 Tim. 3, 16. Paul made a serious mistake in failing to add a note to the statement "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God," a note to this effect: This statement does not cover the sorry piece of fiction which Mark produced.

And the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* uses its facilities to bring this sorry piece of higher criticism into the studies of the pastors of the United Lutheran Church.

**Modernism Wrestling with the Bible.**—A writer in *Christendom*, the new modernistic quarterly, in the course of a long article entitled "Sincerity and Symbolism" expresses these thoughts: "The account of the Creation in Genesis, the anthropomorphic descriptions of God throughout the Old Testament, the Christmas-story of the Incarnation, the resurrection of the body of Christ, the empty tomb and the watching angels, the coming of the kingdom of God upon earth 'with power and great glory,' the descriptions of heaven in the Revelation, the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, the doctrine of the virgin birth and the divinity of



Christ, Transubstantiation and the miracle of the Eucharist,—all these conceptions, intended at first quite literally, have for many devout Christians to-day only a symbolic function. To many a deeply religious Christian who cannot accept their literal intellectual meaning they are full of emotional power, and the emotion, the total attitude of the soul which they express to the liberal Christian of to-day, is probably not very different from that which they have expressed and helped to nourish through all the Christian centuries. Hence they are still scrupulously retained, lovingly cherished, but considered as poetic expressions of some profounder or larger truth than that which their formulators realized. Thus an originally literal definition of religious belief by a gradual transition often loses its strictly scientific values and takes on during the process an emotional or conative value as the symbolic vehicle of some conception much more profound than that which it at first expressed, yet which, if reframed in the logical terminology of our day, would be largely lacking in those emotional overtones which constitute an essential part of what we really mean and need to say.

"I wish, then, to raise the question whether such a use of ancient symbols as I have suggested be really dishonest or insincere. When an expression no longer believed to be literally true, but standing in the individual's mind as an expression of some larger truth which he firmly believes is found to be a helpful means for rousing the confidence, the peace, the joy, the aspiration, the loyalty of religion, may it not still be rightly and sincerely used? It may at any rate be argued that, just as there is no insincerity in saying that the conclusion 'depends' upon the premises, although we know that in the case at issue nothing *hangs* from anything else, so there is nothing untruthful or insincere in using a religious symbol to mean something quite different from that which its originators intended. The Fatherhood of God may have been asserted originally in a thoroughly anthropomorphic sense. But there is no reason why a modern man who has long since given up anthropomorphic views should not use the phrase with all honesty to express an emotional belief with its overtones and its coloring, with all that it means to him,—something which no scientifically cold terminology could express. When religion seeks to indicate and suggest larger cosmic relations of the sort indicated, or a sense of ultimate loyalty, or an entire attitude of the whole self, hallowed and traditional phrases, poetic, musical, or plastic formulations may be even truer than conceptual definition."

The Lutheran reader will not expect that we pillory every misconception and error which appear in the above extract. We have submitted it to show how Modernism in spite of itself is endeavoring to cling to the Bible or, to look at it from the opposite point of view, how Modernism in spite of the Bible's condemnation of its tenets is seeking to justify sponsoring them.

A.

Can "Friendly Calvinism" Appreciate Lutheranism? — Dr. Lorraine Boettner, Professor of Bible, Pikeville College, Pikeville, Ky., writing in *Christianity To-day* (April, 1936) under the title "Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, and Methodism: Our Common Heritage and Our Differences," proves that he belongs to the "friendly Calvinists," that is

to say, to those defenders of the Reformed faith who try honestly to appreciate Lutheranism both historically and doctrinally. And yet even "friendly Calvinists" cannot rightly estimate Lutheranism and truly appreciate its message and mission. The point deserves careful watching since, especially of late, quite a number of Calvinistic theologians have been very pronounced in their praise of confessional Lutheranism. The praise is accorded to Lutheranism in so far as Lutheranism and Calvinism stand upon common ground in their opposition to Romanism and Modernism. However, as soon as the old differences between the two denominations enter into the discussion, then the Reformed of to-day stand precisely where their forefathers stood at Marburg or where the *Consensus Tigurinus* or the *Admonitio Neostadiensis* stood. A few quotations may show how orthodox Calvinists to-day view the rise, development, and mission of the Lutheran Reformation. Dr. Boettner writes: "To Luther, the destructive leader, it was given to slay the medieval monster Sacerdotalism, or priestcraft; to Calvin, the constructive leader, it was given to clarify and systematize Christian theology." Here certainly we have a most untrue and unhistorical antithesis posited between the two groups of Protestants. Really the contrast between Luther and Calvin is not that the one destroyed, while the other developed and crystallized Protestant thought. In his opposition to Romanism, Calvin in many respects was as destructive as was Luther; however, Calvin was destructive not only over against the Papacy, but also over against Biblical truths which the German Reformation so clearly and beautifully brought back to light. In the final analysis Calvin was an ally not of Wittenberg, but of Rome, for the "rationalistic axioms" upon which he built his rationalistic system of theology ultimately had to lead him back to the Romanistic camp. What Calvin taught with regard to predestination, the communication of attributes, the Sacraments, the means of grace in general, Church and State, etc., is as far removed from Scriptural truth as are the errors of the Council of Trent, though, of course, Calvin's rationalism produced a different type of error on these points than did Romish rationalism. Hence Dr. Boettner is decidedly wrong in his statement of the antithesis between Luther and Calvin. But he is wrong also when he continues: "Calvin had the great advantage of building on the foundation which Luther had laid. At the time when Calvin came upon the scene, it had not yet been determined whether Luther was to be the hero of a great success or the victim of a great failure. Luther had produced new ideas; Calvin's work was to construct them into a system, to preserve and develop what had been so nobly begun. The Protestant movement lacked unity and was in danger of being sunk in the quicksands of doctrinal dispute; but it was saved from that fate chiefly by the new impulse which was given to it by the reformer in Geneva." What Dr. Boettner here says means that it was Calvin who largely saved the cause of the Reformation from utter destruction. As a matter of fact, however, Calvinism, especially after Luther's death, attacked the Lutheran Reformation as fiercely as did the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation. Any one who has read Dr. Bente's thorough introductions to Articles VII, VIII, and XI (cf. also that to Article II) of the Formula of Concord must agree with this verdict. These masterly introductions, with their

many quotations from Calvinistic sources, certainly bear close study to-day, when orthodox Lutheranism and conservative Calvinism again consider their "common heritage and their differences." J. T. M.

**The Appellation, "Holy Roller," Objected to.**—The subjoined letter, which appeared in the *Christian Century* is self-explanatory. "Finding the phrase 'Holy Roller' in Reinhold Niebuhr's article 'Sunday Morning Debate' in the April 22 issue gave me the same feeling as would finding a worm in an apple I was eating. It is a phrase of derision, which has more than one meaning. By some it is used to designate a member of the Pentecostal Church, a denomination which believes in the gift of tongues. By some it is applied to any one who has been converted. It is entirely possible that, if Mr. Niebuhr had occupied one or more of the bunk houses which I have occupied, he would have found himself bearing the nickname 'Holy Roller Niebuhr,' especially if he had been caught reading the Bible, irrespective of what views he might hold on speaking in tongues. In such a bunk house contemptuous nicknames like 'Holy Roller Smitty,' 'Psalm-singing Brown,' 'Jerusalem Jones,' and 'Come to Jesus Johnson' are likely to be applied indiscriminately to any man who is converted. Apparently Mr. Niebuhr and the *Christian Century* both very tolerantly refrain from speaking of a Catholic by the disdainful nickname of 'Mary-worshiper.' Nor do they call a Jew a 'sheeny.' Such tolerance is commendable. Some time, perhaps, they will extend their tolerance to include the Pentecostal people. The most saintly Christian I know is a member of the Full Gospel, or Pentecostal, Church, that is, a 'Holy Roller.' Presumably he suffers when that scornful epithet is applied to him. But he can take it. For he believes that, 'if we suffer' with Christ, 'we shall also reign with Him.'" A.

**The Anniversary of the New York Ministerium.**—It was in 1786 that the New York Ministerium was founded in Albany, N. Y. The United Lutheran Synod of New York, formed through the merger of several bodies, one of which was the New York Ministerium, observes the 150th anniversary of the founding of the latter synod this year. An informing article by Dr. G. L. Kieffer, secretary of the 150th anniversary committee, is published in the *Lutheran* of May 21 and May 28. In addition to sketching the history of this synod Dr. Kieffer enters upon the early history of Lutheranism in New York, giving valuable data, mentioning, for instance, that Heinrich Christiansen, who came from Cleve on the Rhine and who in 1611 "began to open up the Hudson Valley to the commerce of the old world," in all probability was a Lutheran. Those interested should obtain a copy of this article. A.

**Cooperatives and Christian Virtue.**—Under this heading the *Living Church* of May 23 discusses the Cooperative Movement as to its economic worth and as to its claim of being a sort of means of grace. We submit the following extracts. "The potency of Dr. Kagawa's message about cooperation may be seen by the distinctly discourteous reception accorded him by business organizations in several of our cities. Coming, as he does, just when the Cooperative Movement is gaining its greatest headway in America and traveling mainly under religious auspices, many

journals of Christian opinion are carrying news and comment in which cooperatives seem to receive a special Christian blessing and the accolade of Christian virtue. . . . Usually under the Rochdale plan, a group of consumers organize with each member subscribing for one or more shares of stock at \$5 (yielding the prevailing rate of interest), to be paid for from dividends or by instalments, but none with more than one vote regardless of the number of his shares. 'Patronage dividends,' or rebates, are paid to members in proportion to the amount of their purchases. Price wars with private stores are avoided by selling at the prevailing market price. This is of course a means whereby the consumer seeks to eliminate the middleman's profit and thereby to benefit in the form of lower prices by a direct movement of goods from producer to consumer. . . . So far as we can discover, there is nothing economically 'unsound' about cooperation. Its success as far as it has gone in the United States and its much greater success in Europe provide the practical test. Our interest is rather in its importance as a spiritual and moral force. . . . Frankly, we cannot whole-heartedly endorse the claim made for cooperation by Dr. Kagawa, that it is 'the love principle of economic action.' Cooperation is a readier expression of the Christian attitude than unrestricted competition, of course. But just as cooperation among workers, as seen in labor unions, is ultimately for the sake of more effective competition with employers, so is cooperation among consumers aimed ultimately at coercion of the producer and the total extinction of the middleman. In other words, cooperative enterprise is still after profits of a sort (although admittedly more 'social' in their nature) and directed to a group interest. We have in mind the very possible case of a conflict between a farmers' marketing association seeking to maintain the highest possible urban prices for butter and eggs and a city dairy cooperative trying to drive them down. If there is any truth in the claim that the Christian ethic is better served in the absence of competition, then cooperation (short of owning producers' good as well as consumers') differs from *laissez faire* only in degree, not in kind. . . . It does not follow by any means that cooperation is no 'better' than uncontrolled distribution. We are inclined to believe that it has considerable merit. Indeed, it would be hard to prove it otherwise to the \$1,200-a-year man who can buy a week's groceries at his 'coop' for \$7 instead of \$8 at the 'corner grocery.' At the least it permits cooperative people to live more easily on the income allowed them by the present distribution of wealth. . . . Unless cooperatives control the capital goods market as well as consumers' goods, building and selling dynamos and blast-furnaces along with shoes and cans of peas, they will be in no position to affect the consumers' share of profit in business as a whole. And if their control did embrace purchasing power at its source, it would not be 'cooperation.' It would be revolution!

"To put it all very bluntly, we dissent from the popular attempt to tie a special Christian blessing on the cooperatives. There is too much self-interest in them for that. It is a legitimate self-interest in the struggle between wages and prices, certainly. But let's recognize it for what it is and not claim too much for the movement." E.

"Jehovah's Witnesses."—That every knock is a boost is a homely proverb, the truth of which the Russellites, or, as they now prefer to call themselves, "Jehovah's Witnesses," experience at present. An eight-year-old boy, Carlton Nichols of Lynn, Mass., whose father belongs to this sect, refused to join his schoolmates in saluting the flag and in singing patriotic songs. When the case was investigated, it developed that the father had taught the boy this attitude and that the former regarded the salute to the flag as homage to the devil's kingdom. The boy thereupon was expelled from school. Incidents of a like nature are reported from several other places in the United States, involving members of the same sect. In one of them the principal was a teacher, who explained her opposition to the saluting of the flag as follows: "As a Christian I am opposed to militarism, to the taking of human life. We cannot salute the flag of love and peace without saluting as well the flag of horror and hate and destruction, for they are one and the same." These incidents have given more publicity to "Jehovah's Witnesses" than any flood of pamphlets issued by them could have procured. The *Christian Century* devotes a long article to the sect, and it is from there that these notes are taken, intended to supplement the material offered on Russellism in *Popular Symbolics*, p. 411 ff. The number of the people adhering to this sect is given as 20,000 for the United States, and an equal number is said to profess this faith in the eighty-three foreign countries in which they are represented. In the United States they are incorporated as the "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society," in England as the "International Bible Students' Association," and they are "under the leadership of a zealous and forceful former Missouri judge, 'Brother' J. F. Rutherford." While they themselves wish to be called "Jehovah's Witnesses," other names by which they are designated are "Bible Students," "Associated Bible Students," "Russellites." We are told that Judge Rutherford was among the "conscientious objectors" that were sent to prison in 1917 because they opposed our participation in the World War. When he, on May 26, 1919, had been dismissed from the Atlanta prison, he and others arranged a national convention of their sect at Cedar Point, O., where they revised their teachings. Of Judge Rutherford we read: "The distinction gained by prison sentence, his legal training and convincing voice, and above all his prolific pen brought Judge Rutherford rapidly to the fore, despite the fact that the 'pastor' (i. e., Charles T. Russell) did not appoint him as his successor. He has written fifteen volumes, interpreting various books of the Bible as 'types' and allegories of present social, political, and religious conditions, thus providing authoritative Scriptural sanctions for 'revelations.' Although the books are characterized by an indiscriminate and unceritcal use of proof-texts, they are attractively made up with illustrations and caricatures. The French versions won first prizes for religious literature in 1933 and 1934 at expositions sponsored by the Ministry of the Interior. They are printed in forty-nine languages and dialects, and last year twenty-six million copies were distributed. Thirty-one pamphlets containing short speeches and polemical essays have also been released by the judge."

How this enormous activity is carried on is in part described in the following paragraph: "This literature is distributed by local companies

of 'witnesses,' who are organized into bands, based on the number of hours devoted to the work; 'pioneers,' giving a minimum of 110 hours a month, and 'auxiliaries,' or 'company publishers' and 'sharpshooters,' serving less frequently. 'God's publicity agents,' Rutherford calls them. They go from door to door showing their 'testimony cards,' selling and giving away *The Harp of God, Reconciliation, Prophecy, Government, et al.* These companies also meet regularly for worship — prayer, song, and study of literature from headquarters, with occasionally a visit from one of the fifteen original directors or an 'ordained representative.'"

On the literature which these people are publishing the following paragraph contains enlightening information: "The Watch Tower Society publishes two magazines, the *Watch Tower* and the *Golden Age*. The former is a semimonthly organ containing Bible-studies written by Judge Rutherford, rebukes, exhortations, exposures of apostasy and heresy, notices of Watch Tower radio programs, and letters from companies and individuals. It is by far the most powerful integrating factor in the organization. The *Golden Age* is a vigorously written and well-edited weekly with sections devoted to Labor and Society, Big Business Bits, Educational Flashes, Political, Domestic and Foreign News, where, seasoned with a 'millenarian' interpretation, are some very readable cullings from the news. It plants vigorous and well-directed blows at commercial and military exploiters, is militantly anti-Fascist, and is spoiled mainly by its intemperate Catholic-baiting.

"One hundred and ninety-six 'witnesses,' living in Brooklyn on a cooperative basis, constitute the 'Bethel Family' and, for a salary of fifteen dollars a month each, they man Station WBBR, print and mail the literature, manufacture phonographs and transcription machines (used to play Rutherford speeches when the radio is not convenient), make the 34,997 pounds of ink used in printing, and keep books on the \$700,000 annual budget. Farms in Florida and on Staten Island supply them with a large part of their food.

"All of the literature and the speeches are based on Judge Rutherford's belief that these times demand 'a more strenuous witness' than in 'Pastor Russell's day. The 'Pastor' had advised, 'Let every soul be subject to the powers that be,' for God had permitted the Gentiles to reign. But the Gentile reign ended in 1914. The kingdom of God is here. 'The powers that be' have become the 'devil's kingdoms.' Many of the old 'Russellites' have found this metamorphosis to 'witnesses' rather trying, but this 'Elisha work' has prevailed over the former 'Elijah work' despite periodical intragroup disputes."

A.

**A New Tendency in Jewish Apologetic Argumentation.** — The *Christian Century* of April 29 contains a lengthy article with the caption "The Jewish Problem." After dwelling on the nature of apologetics employed by the Jews in the past, the editorial says: "But in our day, under the spell of a false tolerance generated, we have reason to fear, by the sentimentalism prevalent at a certain type of conference between Jews and Christians, there is emerging a wholly new kind of apologetic for Judaism. It abandons the claim of theological superiority; indeed, it rejects the concept of *truth* as applied to any religion, its own included.

Instead, it adopts the concept of what we may call cultural fatalism, the doctrine that the connection of religions with particular civilizations makes it impossible for one religion to understand another or for the devotee of one religion to cross over to another. There can be no such thing as interpenetration of faiths. Each religion, being the expression of 'the collective personality of a particular society,' is unique, equally divine with every other religion, and 'as non-transferable and incommunicable as is individual personality.' This position is taken by Prof. Mordecai M. Kaplan in his recent book *Judaism in Transition* and by many contemporary Jewish writers. Its practical application is stated by Dr. Kaplan in these words: 'Unless we can so interpret religious differences as to enable us to say, "My religion differs from yours, but yours may be as true for you as mine is for me although I cannot accept yours and you cannot accept mine," we have not attained that religious equality which is the only basis of true tolerance.' In an earlier book Dr. Kaplan proclaims the thesis that Judaism is more than a religion; it is itself a civilization, and he sees it existing within the body of Western civilization permanently unabsorbed, aloof, and culturally autonomous. . . . This new doctrine is put forward by numerous Jewish writers on the naive assumption that its effect will be irenic. In the interest of the growing spirit of friendliness between Jews and Christians the Jewish community should be warned of the opposite effect of such an apologetic upon the spirit of Christian and democratic tolerance. If the Christian community were once convinced that an impassable gulf is fixed between itself and the Jewish community, precluding any possibility of reaching a higher synthesis through tolerant discussion reinforced by the healing and reconciling forces in such a democracy as ours, its spirit of tolerance would shrivel up. The new apologetic for Judaism is not in the interest of better relations between Christians and Jews. It is a counsel of despair. And tolerance cannot live with despair. This apologetic turns the issue back into the hands of fate and holds 'psychological necessity,' or cultural necessity, responsible for a permanently unimprovable situation. A situation that is unimprovable by the interchange of ideas and the sharing of other spiritual goods is a non-rational situation, and as such, a society in pursuit of its own solidarity and integrity can hardly be restrained from resorting to non-rational measures as occasion may arise." That a Christian who believes in the power of the Gospel to change human hearts cannot subscribe to the view which is here attributed to recent Jewish apologists must be very evident. We were wondering, however, in reading the above whether the *Christian Century*, which is violently anti-Hitler, had unwittingly been absorbing some of the ideas sponsored by totalitarian-state advocates.

A.

**The Union of Northern and Southern Baptists Not Generally Favored.**—When the two large white Baptist denominations of the United States met in St. Louis in May, a number of the leading men were interviewed by reporters as to the likelihood of a merger of these two bodies. Dr. John R. Sampy, president of the Southern Baptist convention, is quoted as saying: "The war is over long ago, and there are many ways in which we can and do cooperate. In the Foreign Mission field, for example.

I do not favor merger, however, because I believe the division of the organization has tended to localize responsibility. If the headquarters of our Baptist organization had remained in the Eastern States, I do not think the Baptist movement would have made such remarkable strides in the South as it has when we Southerners have borne the responsibility. Division makes for efficient management, too." Dr. C. Oscar Johnson, a former president of the Northern Baptist convention, expressed his agreement with Dr. Sampy and added: "To enlarge the Baptist movement by merger would make it unwieldy. The Southern Baptist organization is very large now and faces plenty of administrative problems on account of its size." Dr. James H. Franklin, the president of the Northern Baptist convention, said: "An artificial merger would be useless. We can have the widest measure of cooperation now, but I do not see any rank-and-file demand for our groups to join. I believe all Christians should magnify their points of agreement. If there is ever to be a merger, let it be a natural development." Another prominent Baptist minister declared: "No well-balanced army would consist of infantry only or air corps only. We need spiritual unity, but physical union is unnecessary. And fellowship meetings will give us that unity." Dr. A. A. Shaw, president of Denison University, Granville, O., expressed a different view, saying: "The problem of merger is no longer an academic one. With the action of the Methodists recently, who, like ourselves, separated on the slavery question, and the growing consciousness of our common problems among laymen and ministers alike, it seems to me our two groups will eventually merge. It would of course make a very large organization, but administrative problems could be solved, I think, by some sort of mutual agreement." On the whole, the points submitted on the advisability of a merger strike one as being sensible.

A.

**Modernistic Jargonizers.** — In reply to the present demand made by liberal Northern Baptists to eliminate from the ministry all who have not had a thorough theological training, the *Sunday-school Times* (November 16, 1935) writes: "Now, when they perceived that they were learned and university men, they marveled at their English. The clique which is planning to eliminate from the Baptist ministry men who, whatever their abilities and consecration may be, have not had a certain routine training, might well use their pruning-hook elsewhere. Confused English is the mark of confused minds. The following sentence is quoted from Dr. Shailer Mathews's *The Atonement and the Social Process*: 'From such a point of view [that all doctrines are derived from the total social life of humanity] the death of Christ is not to be described as satisfaction of dignity or justice, but as an exponent of the forces inherent in the process through whose aid the loss of that which is good conditions the gain of that which is better—a personality more individual, less dependent upon its earlier stages, and more appropriative of the personality-evolving activity of God.' I am tempted to put alongside this [jargon] some extracts from Shailer Mathews's pupil Prof. Stewart Cole of Crozer Seminary, which lie before me, but will refrain out of mercy. But who are really desirable in the leadership of the Church, these jargonizers or the untutored Negro saint, Apolo Kivebulaya?" The reasons why Modernists resort to such theological jargonizing are of course clear. Modernism is only destructive,



never constructive. It has no substitute to offer in place of the precious doctrines which it takes away. Modernism does not want Christianity, but what it wants even its most prominent proponents do not know. Hence it must conceal its theological vacuity under so many empty phrases and expressions. Moreover, Modernism, though essentially pagan, must still parade as Christian; otherwise it could not retain its hold in the Church. Its theological duplicity therefore calls for ambiguity and duplicity in speech. For this reason our modernistic impostors can never measure up to the ancient Greek standard of rhetoric "Simple is word of truth," an axiom which supports our Christian belief in the Bible as the Word of divine Truth, since Scripture, in presenting the way to salvation, is admittedly clear and simple. Very alarming is another report in the same number of the *Times*, which relates that Union Theological Seminary in New York has nine missionary fellowships, held by missionaries in China, Japan, India, Egypt, and Turkey. They run from \$450 to \$750 a year, enabling missionaries to study in this unevangelical seminary. "This," the *Times* says, "constitutes one way of influencing missions in the wrong direction."

J. T. M.

**Dr. Morehead Deceased.**—The Associated Press reported that on June 1 Dr. John Alfred Morehead, who for the past twelve years was president of the Lutheran World Convention, departed this life. He reached the age of 69 years. In 1919 he resigned the presidency of Roanoke College, Salem, Va., to become the representative of the National Lutheran Council in Europe. He was elected president of the Lutheran World Convention at Eisenach in 1923. Last year he was made honorary president for life.

A.

**Some Religious Conventions of This Year.**—The quadrennial convention of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Northern Methodists) met in Columbus, O., the sessions beginning May 1. For the traffic officers it meant a rather considerable increase of work that the Freemasons held their annual meeting in Columbus at the same time. The Methodist Conference consisted of 614 delegates, of whom one-tenth were women. A Methodist paper discussing this conference tells us that on the platform sat the thirty-two regular bishops and several other bishops presiding over dioceses of a special status. Of the bishops one was a Negro and one had come from India and wore his turban. The meetings were held in the public auditorium, the spacious basement of which was used for displaying exhibits giving information about the various activities of the Church. We are told that at these conventions the bishops do not speak unless they are called on by the assembly to do so. One of them, it is true, is the chairman, and this important position rotates among them; but those that are not in the chair are not supposed to deliver speeches unless the request is made by the conference, which, so we are told, does not happen often. One point of debate was the question whether the appointment of the judiciary commission should not be taken out of the hands of the bishops and be given to the General Conference itself. The conservative attitude, which held that the bishops are better qualified to select the proper men than the delegates of the thirty dioceses, who meet only once in four years, prevailed.—Bishop Leonard is credited with a fine statement opposing the social gospel:

"I cannot conceive of the Gospel that Paul preached as having any word of encouragement for any system of philosophy or for any social order or economic theory that would first say that the vital and important thing is man's material welfare. I am not saying that the material welfare is not important. I am saying, however, that first and foremost Jesus Christ came into this world to save the world from sin, and whatever social passion is to have a permanent place in this world must grow out of man's spiritual passion."

One commentator on the convention says: "The hearty reception accorded the Episcopal address made the progressives in the Methodist ranks feel that the Church would not repudiate them in the long run. This much is clear: there will be no split in the Methodist Church over the 'social gospel' issue. And this for two reasons: 1. It is impossible to get any large majority of Methodists aroused over doctrinal matters. It may be because the Methodists are spiritually wise, or it may be that they are ignorant of theology. 2. The real heretic among the Methodists is the man who violates the eleventh commandment, 'Thou shalt not rock the boat.'"

On May 4 the Methodist General Conference approved the plan for unification of the three principal branches of American Methodism by a vote of 470 to 83. Opposition to the adoption was led by Dr. L. O. Hartman, editor of *Zion's Herald* of Boston; Dr. E. F. Tittle of Evanston, Ill.; and Negro delegates. The plan now goes to the annual conferences, where it must obtain the approval of three-quarters of these bodies.

The Southern Baptists and the Northern Baptists both held their large annual conventions in St. Louis. The Southern Baptists claim a membership of 4,389,417 and assert that they are the largest non-Catholic body in the United States. We are told that this convention is of the ultraconservative variety and the least socially minded perhaps within the eighteen cooperating States. This is the opinion of the correspondent in the *Christian Century*. He evidently was not elated when the convention voted to table the report of the special committee on the establishment of a Social Service Research Bureau. This committee had recommended that such a bureau be established and that its functions should be the following: "1. to investigate moral and social conditions as they affect Southern Baptist life; 2. to make available for our constituency accurate information concerning conditions and problems that we face in our churches and community affecting the spiritual, moral, and social welfare of our people; 3. by its approach to our people to seek to improve the moral life of our churches and bring the attitudes of our people on moral and social questions into increasing accord with the mind of Christ; 4. in other ways approved by the convention to seek to enlighten the public mind and arouse public conscience upon all important moral and spiritual issues." It will be agreed that these objectives are not nearly so radical and revolutionary as others that have been recommended. But, as stated above, they were tabled. Prof. John R. Sampey, president of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, was reelected president of the convention. In its three seminaries this denomination has 1,191 theological students; last year the number was 883. It supports 400 foreign missionaries. Moneys collected for foreign missions last year totaled \$1,294,613.71.

The Northern Baptist convention was attended by 1,406 regular delegates. The social gospel was given much prominence at these meetings. It was announced by the Commission on Christian Social Action that the peace plebiscite is not yet completed. It seems that the denomination is being polled to find out what the members think of participation in war. When 10,000 ballots had been received, a tabulation was made showing the following results: 42.54 per cent. declared, "I believe I can best contribute to the cause of peace by bearing arms in, or otherwise support, war only in defense of American territory against attack"; 27.02 per cent. stated that according to their view the best course to pursue in the interest of peace was to refuse service in any and all wars; less than 2 per cent. stated they thought it proper to do military service when the Government has declared war. We can well understand that one of the commentators on this convention declared, "Theological controversy has for the time being taken a secondary place." Twenty-one new missionaries, whose work will be financed by the women's boards and the Home Mission Society, were presented. Owing to a special gift from a Baptist church in Los Angeles, the General Foreign Board was enabled to continue its practise of one hundred years' standing, to send out at least one additional worker every year.

A.

**Brief Items.** — Some Episcopalians are exercised over the statement made by Rev. James M. Gillis, Paulist Father, that King Edward VII died as a Roman Catholic. The story runs that a certain Father Vaughan received the king into the Roman Catholic Church when the latter was on his death-bed. A letter written by one of the secretaries of Queen Alexandra shortly after the death of King Edward and printed in the *Living Church* avers that the story is without foundation. "King Edward lived and died in the Protestant faith." — In a valuable article Dr. George Drach of Baltimore, Md., writing in the *Lutheran*, speaks of the externals belonging to church services. We were interested in the information he gave on the clerical robes used by the pastors of his body in Baltimore: "Only four of our United Lutheran pastors in Baltimore wear no gown at all. All others, thirty, or five-sixths of the ministers, wear the black robe, variously described as 'academic,' 'Lutheran,' 'Geneva,' 'clerical,' 'doctor's gown.' Three still wear white bands and four wear stoles." — This sentence uttered by Dr. Lynn Harold Hough, president of Drew Theological Seminary, and quoted in the *Lutheran* should be pondered by all who think that by means of the proper kind of social legislation they can bring about the millennium: "If the angel Gabriel would set up a perfect social order here on earth to-day, in ten days it would be shot through with the selfishness and greed of the individuals entrusted with its administration." — Another item from the *Lutheran*: "St. Peter's Lutheran Church, North York, held an Easter dawn service supported by congregations and pastors of two other churches, Bethany Moravian Church (the Rev. Theodore Reinke, pastor) and Trinity Reformed Church (the Rev. Allen S. Meck, pastor). . . . The leaflets used in the service were secured from the Moravian congregation at Winston-Salem, N. C., where this service had been conducted for almost two hundred years, a service which annually draws from 35,000 to 50,000 worshippers." — What is the trend of present-day

fiction? On this subject Prof. G. P. Voigt, professor of American Literature, Wittenberg College, using as his caption "From Dickens to Dreiser," writes: "Since the close of the World War our fiction, too, has told a dreary, sordid, and morbid story of disillusionment, disintegration, and even despair. The modern novel, writes one of its historians, has acquired 'the characteristic latter-day smell of decay' and has become 'an out-and-out denial of life.' Writers vie with each other in picturing 'a society disintegrating in crime, deception, and futility.' They sneer at ideals, hope, and the idea of progress. It is the heyday of the 'hard-boiled' fictionists, such as Dreiser, Hemingway, Faulkner, Caldwell, and O'Hara, who reject ideal value and reduce human life to mere sensation. Their stories are full of gin, prostitution, homosexuality, degeneracy, and even idiocy." Concluding his article, the writer thinks that a change has begun to appear in our American literature and that the depression has had a good influence in this respect. We agree with him when he says, "It is only the truth as it is in Christ Jesus that can set us free from the evils of our times."—When we have to deal with a Catholic who points to the many institutions of charity which Romanism supports and conducts, it will not be amiss to quote to him what, according to the *Lutheran*, the Chicago Association of Commerce, upon request, published. The statement is to the effect that in 1935 the Catholics spent \$1,450,600 on charities and welfare work, the Jews \$1,503,888, and the Protestants \$12,818,335. These figures have reference to the city of Chicago. We are told that surveys on charitable activities of religious bodies in New York and other cities indicate a like result.—When the Lutheran seminary at Gettysburg, belonging to the U. L. C., held its commencement exercises, it had among its speakers Prof. Gaius Glenn Atkins of Auburn Theological Seminary, belonging to the Presbyterian Church, who spoke on "Effective Preaching," and Dr. John R. Mott, who addressed his audience on "The Challenge Presented to the Christian Church in America by the Present World Situation." If this is not unionism, what is?—While the Northern Methodists met in Columbus, the African Methodist Episcopal Church held its quadrennial meeting in New York. The bishop who opened the meeting strongly spoke for a union of all the Colored Methodist churches. He also demanded justice for the Negro, complaining of disfranchisement of the people of his race at the polls, and bemoaned the fate of the share-cropper and the occurrences of lynching.—The famous Westminster Abbey is to have a new £20,000 organ, to be completed in time for next year's coronation. The organ now in use has been in service for more than two centuries. (*Christian Century*.)—At the meeting of the Southern Baptists in St. Louis in May a missionary of this denomination who is stationed in Spain declared that there are six thousand evangelical people in Spain, twelve hundred of whom are Baptists.—We note in the *Lutheran Standard* that a Minnesota conference of the A. L. C. "declared the trial sermon irregular and not in harmony with the order of the district." This is a good old Lutheran principle, of which we all had better remind ourselves now and then.—In Chicago a Congregationalist who is employed by the Congregational Council for Social Action was recently ordained to the "Ministry of Research." The social-gospel people have the gift of inven-

tion, it must be owned.—Norman Hapgood, formerly United States minister to Denmark and erstwhile editor of *Collier's Weekly*, *Harper's Weekly*, and *Hearst's International*, will be the editor of the Unitarian weekly paper *Christian Register*.—Princeton Theological Seminary, main stronghold of the Northern Presbyterians, has received a new head. President J. Ross Stevenson, who has resigned, is succeeded by John Alexander Mackay, member of the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. Prof. Charles R. Erdman, professor of Practical Theology at Princeton, likewise has retired.—A well-known Union Theological Seminary professor, who retires because he has reached the age of seventy, is Dr. William Adams Brown. He held the chair of Applied Christianity.—In the Church of Scotland congregational membership rolls are purged each December. During the last four years this process eliminated 100,000 names. When one is told that the total membership of this Church is not more than 1,250,000, one sees that the loss is alarming. A.

## II. Ausland.

**Spiritual Indifference in England.**—That religious conditions in England are more and more taking on an ominous aspect is brought out by remarks in the *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, a copy of which was kindly furnished us by the Rev. H. M. Zorn of Indianapolis, Ind. The writer uses the caption "Semiheathendom" and the subtitle "The Decline of Churchgoing."

"Figures showing how in many parts of the country people are lapsing into 'semiheathendom' were quoted by the Rev. T. G. Mohan, assistant secretary of the Church Pastoral Aid Society to-day at the Oxford Conference of Evangelical Churchmen which concluded at St. Peter's Hall, Oxford, on Saturday.

"We cannot be complacent when we are told that in London probably not much more than ten per cent. of the population is regular in its attendance at public worship," Mr. Mohan declared. "In the provinces the percentage is higher, but twenty-five per cent. would be a generous estimate. In Sittingbourne, it is said, only three per cent. of the population go to church. Ignorance and superstition abound, and those who minister in the poorer parishes could supply many parallels to the story of the woman who had her child baptized to "ward off God." Many of our young people, however, though better educated than their forefathers, are scarcely conversant with the main facts of the New Testament, and there is little hope that their children will know even as much.

"Seventy-five per cent. of the children in a Sunday-school in Oxford were stated to be without a Bible in their homes. It would, however, be a mistake to regard the millions who give no outward indication of religious convictions as either hostile to religion or impervious to its influence, but it has virtually no place in their lives. But perhaps an even more serious feature is what the Bishop of Leicester calls the sub-Christian life of many church-members."

"Mr. Mohan asked why the sincere efforts of their parochial clergy had left such a large number of people untouched and an even larger number unimpressed. It was certainly not due to any hindrance imposed by

the State. He thought that they might comfort themselves that it was due in part to the serious understaffing of many parishes throughout the country.

"Our inability to keep pace with the rapid development of the new housing areas and the rivalry of the motor-car and the wireless are creating a grave problem,' Mr. Mohan declared, 'and large areas of the country are lapsing into semiheathendom. Hard-pressed incumbents are breaking down under the double burden of a task beyond their powers and of the despair which failure breeds.'

"Among the real causes of their failure were the neglect of pastoral visitation, the lowering of spiritual standards, and the lack of Gospel-teaching and -preaching. 'The Church's message to-day is so often a curious mixture of heroic futility and mawkish sentimentality. There is no message for the plain man who knows he is not a hero, but knows he is a sinner.' What was needed was a campaign of house-to-house evangelism.

"The conference expressed regret at the publication of the Church and State Commission's report. 'It deprecates the dissipation of the energies of members of our English Church on controversies that must necessarily be barren at a time when the more urgent question of evangelization and intercommunion and ultimate home reunion call for unprejudiced consideration,' it was added.

"The conference is convinced that at the present time it would be impossible at a round-table conference to secure agreement on such questions as permissible deviations from the Order of Holy Communion and Reservation, and implores the Archbishops not to revive controversy by calling such a conference.

"The conference denies that there is anything in the existing relations between Church and State that prevents the Church of England from doing the work which is at present being left undone. It is an obligation of a national Church to cooperate with the State in matters concerning the character, conduct, and welfare of its people. The relations between Church and State in England are not matters of purely local concern, but have an influence upon Christian communities throughout the world."

Pastor Zorn finds the first part of these remarks "a timely introspection," but justly complains about the second part that it is "so hide-bound."

A.

**Elimination of English Tithe-Rule Plan.**—On this topic the *Living Church* submits the following information:—

"The Tithe Bill, which the government has promised to introduce, is the outcome of a Royal Commission report, which recommends a comprehensive scheme for the complete and immediate extinction of tithe rent-charge. To the general principle of the scheme proposed no great objection can be raised. It seems at first sight to embody a reasonable compromise between the rights of the tithe-owning clergy and the present distress of a number of land-owning farmers.

"The N. C. J. C. News Service summarizes the background of the British Tithe Bill as follows:—

"The government has adopted the report of a Royal Commission on the tithe rent-charge. Complicated by a flood of cryptic British terms,

such as 'Queen Anne's Bounty,' 'Benefice Rent-charge,' 'Welsh Church Commission Benefice Tithe Rent-charge,' and other categories of church taxes unfamiliar to Americans, the report boils down to the fact that the centuries-old tithe rent-charge will be eliminated over a period of eighty-five years.

"According to the plan of the Royal Commission the amount of the existing liability of those subject to the tax has been substantially reduced. Since this automatically cuts the revenue of the Church or some lay institution which was beneficiary under the old plan, the state will undertake to make up on a predetermined basis a portion of the loss, which is estimated to be about \$67,000,000 for the Church alone. The Exchequer is issuing what it calls 'tithe redemption stock' to facilitate this protective arrangement.

"*Ancient Land Tax.* The tithe rent-charge referred to was a tax to the value of some two pence (four cents) an acre collected in produce from agricultural areas until 1836, when the fee became payable in cash. Although called a 'tithe,' it was apparently very seldom equivalent to ten per cent. It applied only to certain lands, the income from which was thus taxed for the support of the Church (ecclesiastical tithe rent-charge) or of lay institutions—schools, colleges, hospitals, asylums, etc.

"For centuries the tax was locally collected by the bishop, parish priest, or administrator whose institution was concerned. In 1737, however, it was mainly concentrated in a fund which came to be known as 'Queen Anne's Bounty'—collected nationally and dispensed by a central authority.

"*Many Oppose Scheme.* Many in England oppose the new scheme, particularly the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, which will be seriously affected. The *Church Times* believes it an unwise and inequitable plan since it 'is for the benefit of the landowners from whose land the tithe is [now] payable.' The economic cause of the trouble, asserts this journal, 'has arisen from the fact that during the period immediately after the War a large number of farmers, many of whom had been tenants on the land, bought farms at inflated prices and are to-day heavily embarrassed.' To have helped these men, it continues, would have been justified, but they will not be aided by the plan until the expiration of from forty to sixty years.

"The plan, says the *Church Times*, is 'confiscation.' It adds further, 'If conservatives to-day apply it to the clergy, Communists may hereafter use it to justify land nationalization without adequate compensation.' Even so, it does not want to see the Church agitate against the proposal, but to secure certain modifications by lifting the amount to be guaranteed the Church by the government." A.

**Mohammedanermission.** Die Fortschrittsbewegung des Islam ist noch lange nicht zum Stillstand gekommen. Freilich, die Ausbreitung mit Feuer und Schwert hat längst der friedlichen Durchbringung Platz gemacht. In Ostafrika ist der indische Händler, in Westafrika der kluge Haussa-Kaufmann, in Niederländisch-Indien der malaiische Hausierer und Zaubrerlehrer der geschickte Wegbereiter des Islam unter den heidnischen Stämmen. Die paar Bewegungen des Körpers für das notdürftig ausgeführte tägliche Gebet, das Glaubensbekenntnis, die Gebetsformeln und allenfalls ein paar Verse des Koran sind bald gelernt, freilich in einem entsetzlich verstümmelten Ara-

bisch, von dem der Veter nichts versteht. Aber das schadet nichts. Einen mächtigen sozialen Aufstiege bringt jeder Übertritt zum Islam. Der Buschneger wird ein geachteter Mann, der sich mit dem reichen indischen Kaufmann an einen Tisch setzen darf. Der kastenlose Indiens hat durch den Islam die Möglichkeit, in eine höhere Klasse von Menschen vollberechtigt einzutreten. Der Urwaldbewohner des holländischen Archipels gewinnt durch den Anschluß an den Islam Fühlung mit der modernen Weltkultur.

Ist für die christliche Mission die Lage hoffnungslos? Statistisches Material läßt uns hier im Stich. Wer kann mit Sicherheit in den gefährdeten Grenzgebieten sagen, wer Moslem und wer Heide ist? Der Eifer in der Ausübung der religiösen Pflichten, die Kenntnisse der moslemischen Lehre mögen noch so gering sein, in einigen Jahren wird es sichtbar, daß alle auch nur leise vom Islam angelegten Gemüter im Ernstfall entschlossene Moslems sind. Hier und da leistet das Heidentum wirklich Widerstand. Wir kennen in Afrika und Niederländisch-Indien heidnische Bezirke, die über ein Jahrhundert von moslemischer Bevölkerung eingeschlossen sind und im letzten Augenblick das Christentum dem Islam vorziehen. Aber im ganzen ist das durch das Eindringen der weltlichen Kultur in seinem Lebensnerv getroffene Heidentum kein beachtlicher Gegner der islamitischen Vorwärtsbewegung.

Bei alledem ist es keine Frage, daß die Mohammedanermision zu den schwierigsten Aufgaben der christlichen Kirche gehört. Würde sie den Versuch machen, an den islamitischen Völkern vorbei zu den heidnischen von Afrika und Asien zu gehen, so würden diese ihr mit Recht entgegenhalten, daß sie von der Siegeskraft des christlichen Glaubens erst dann überzeugt werden, wenn sie sich an den nächsten Nachbarn der Christen, den Mohammedanern, bewiesen hat. Dabei steht die Mission immer wieder vor der Frage, wie und wo sie eine Tür zu den Herzen der Mohammedaner finden könne. Der Islam hat seine Anhänger mit einem ähnlichen Überlegenheitsgefühl ausgerüstet, wie es den Christen gegenüber dem Judentum beherrscht. Ihr Prophet hat über das Christentum hinaus die letzte, abschließende Religion, die vollkommene Gottesoffenbarung, gebracht. Der Islam hat seine Anhänger obendrein mit einem leicht erregbaren Fanatismus ausgerüstet, der nur zu leicht in Verfolgung und Gewalttat ausartet. Dabei hat er in erstaunlicher Weise für die verschiedenartigsten religiösen Bedürfnisse gesorgt. Er bietet dem stumpfen Fellachen einfache religiöse Übungen und einen wild wuchernden Aberglauben. Er hat für die hochspannendste Geistigkeit große theologische und philosophische Systeme. Er hat für tiefinnerliche Gemüter eine mannigfaltige, hochentwickelte Mystik. So ist die Mohammedanermision noch heute geradezu das Kreuz der protestantischen Mission; möge sie dereinst ihre Krone werden! (Der Pionier; im Luth. Herold zitiert.)

Graf E. Reventlow, der bekannte Herausgeber des „Reichswart“ und bisher Stellvertreter des Leiters der Deutschen Glaubensbewegung, Prof. W. Hauers, gibt in Folge 13 seines Blattes vom 26. März seinen Lesern bekannt, daß er „aus nationalsozialistischen Gründen und religiösen Motiven“ aus der Deutschen Glaubensbewegung ausgeschieden ist. Der „Reichswart“ trug bisher den Untertitel „Organ der Deutschen Glaubensbewegung“. Dieser Untertitel ist weggefallen. Statt dessen erscheint die Zeitschrift jetzt unter dem neuen Titel „Religion und Leben“. (Ev.-Luth. Freikirche.)