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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

I. Amerika

Is Agreement in the Doctrine of Inspiration Necessary for Church-Union? — Dr. W. H. Greever, secretary of the United Lutheran Church of America, says that such agreement is necessary. In his essay on "Union of the Lutheran Church in America," published in the *Lutheran World Almanac, 1934—1937, p. 91 ff., he writes: "Though many particular doctrines which have been under discussion from time to time in the past may now be considered as settled, there yet remain certain subjects of a doctrinal character upon which there is not sufficient agreement to furnish the basis for a hearty, an honest and an unconditional Lutheran union. At the head of those particular subjects of greatest interest at this moment is the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures."*

This fine statement, however, loses its force when Dr. Greever proceeds to state in the next sentences that the question of the nature of inspiration is immaterial and irrelevant. "We refer to this as a doctrinal 'subject' rather than as a 'doctrine.' One may have a doctrine of inspiration, but he cannot have such a doctrine drawn and supported by specific statements from the Scriptures themselves, and a true Lutheran knows no other source for a doctrine which has legitimate place in his confession of faith. The Scriptures declare the fact of inspiration, with its tremendous significance in the authority of the Scriptures, but make no explanation concerning the issues involved in the 'theories' of form and degree which furnish the material for present-day controversies on the subject. The particular theories which men hold on this subject at the most are but deductions from the Scriptures, which, however rational and logical, cannot be demanded legitimately as articles of faith by which one is to be judged. It is significant, too, that, while the Lutheran Confessions emphasize the acceptance of the fact of inspiration and cite the Scriptures explicitly and exclusively as the 'sole rule of faith and practise,' they nowhere define the nature, degree, or character of divine procedure in inspiration. In other words, they present no statement of doctrine or theory of inspiration beyond the explicit recognition of the fact. . . . Compared with the eternally significant revelation of God's mind, heart, and will, essential to man's relation to God through salvation, even the fact, to say nothing of the nature or degree, of the inspiration of the record of the revelation is incidental, as the means, however important, are incidental to the end. This approach and view allow neither indifference nor license in the treatment of the text of the Scriptures and are no menace to the authority or power of recorded revelation, but they do guarantee the liberty of the evangelical spirit against the enslaving legalism of the letter." That is to say: you must teach that the Scriptures are given by inspiration, but the question of what inspiration is and involves must be treated as an open question. In effect, Dr. Greever is saying that agreement in the doctrine of inspiration is not necessary for church union.

We are wondering why, then, Dr. Greever should at all insist that

"sufficient agreement" on the doctrine of inspiration must be brought about in order to establish a Lutheran union. The Synodical Conference, the American Lutheran Church, and the United Lutheran Church are agreed on the fact of inspiration, that is, on the statement that the Bible is inspired. If the question of the nature of inspiration (verbal inspiration) is ruled out, what need is there for further discussion?

An ominous statement, by the way, is made on page 95: "A Church is not to be judged by private teachings, even though the teachers be theologians, but by its official utterances. It judges and disciplines its own teachers, in its own time and its own way." That brings up the question what the *doctrina publica* of a Church is.

We are in hearty agreement with the leading thoughts of the concluding paragraphs: "There is a universal conviction among Lutherans in America that all of them should 'get together.' There is almost as much of menace in that conviction as there is of promise of good—according to its ground. With many, the masses in the membership of the Church, this conviction is based on little more than a pious sentiment. They do not know, and therefore do not appreciate, the matters of doctrine and principles involved. They do not believe that present divisions can be justified. They are disposed to consider those who are responsible for the integrity of the Church in faithful adherence to the truth of revelation as wilful obstructionists to a desirable union. Their sentiment is so strong that their conviction is impelling, and they threaten to make their will compelling. That would be no less than a calamity, as a forced union would be a false union. With those who are in positions of leadership this conviction, that all Lutherans ought to get together, is no less impelling, and in that rests our real hope for general fellowship. With these, however, the impelling force is on a different course. It impels to earnest, conscientious deliberation and discussion, and to the formulation of actual agreements." These are forthright, honest, and honorable words indeed. E.

Baptist Reassertion of the Plenary Verbal Inspiration of the Scriptures.—The Rev. G. W. McPherson, D. D., in the *Watchman-Examiner* (Oct. 14, 1937), in defending the doctrine of inspiration as set forth by him in an earlier issue, has many apposite things to say on this great and important doctrine, which also we in our defense of the doctrine against rationalists in Lutheran and other circles may justly consider and apply. A few quotations will suffice to show the fine stand of the writer on the issue. He says: "When God speaks to man, He must speak in the speech, the language, of man, and the words used by His inspired writers possess the element of inerrancy, perfection, and finality." "While all this is true, nevertheless, the question of the inspiration of the Bible must be decided not on the above scientific basis nor on the ground of man's theories and their conflicting interpretations of Greek terms but on the basis of the all-inclusive claims made by the Lord Jesus and the inspired writers." "These and similar plain statements (John 10, 35; 2 Pet. 1, 21; 2 Tim. 3, 16) have always been viewed by the greatest minds in the churches of Christ as placing the stamp of inspiration, and hence of supreme authority, upon the Bible, and to deny them, even inferentially, disqualifies any individual to serve as

a minister of Jesus Christ." "The Scriptures present a picture of God in Christ, redeeming a lost world and reconciling it to Himself. But if the picture as presented is erroneous and contradictory, why should men accept Jesus as Savior and Lord, and why should the preacher pretend to call upon sinners to receive Him as such? We should at least be inconsistent. If we deny the plenary verbal inspiration of the Scriptures, we repudiate that which is necessary to a rational basis for faith." "The knowledge of the incarnate, living Word is transmitted to men through the written Word. God's truth is mighty in cold type. That is why the Scriptures energize men today as the words of Jesus transformed them in the first century. Luke refers to God's words as the 'lively oracles.' Jesus said: 'The words which I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.' Words are 'spirit,' words are 'life.' This one passage is sufficient to warrant our referring to the Bible as the Word of God. God and His Word cannot be divorced, as men cannot be separated and judged and known apart from what they say. God and His truth are one. This is the essence, the heart, of the Bible, and this is why it cannot grow old and die like other books. Life, power, inspiration, are here." Both in his *a-priori* and in his *a-posteriori* proofs of the divine inspiration of the Bible the writer substantially argues along the same lines which also we use; namely, first, the Bible claims to be inspired; and, secondly, the Bible proves itself God's inspired Word. The doctrine of the plenary verbal inspiration of the Bible is indeed no "fanciful construction of later Lutheran dogmaticians." Every true Christian knows and holds it on the basis of Scripture's own claim and proof.

J. T. M.

A New Theological Seminary of Fundamentalistic Profession.—*Faith Theological Seminary*, at Wilmington, Del., was founded last summer "to carry on (as the *Sunday-school Times* of August 21, 1937, declares) the type of work that was done by the late Professors Robert Dick Wilson and J. Gresham Machen." The *Times* gives, in addition, the following particulars: "The institution is being founded to meet a great need—that of an interdenominational institution in the East which shall stand true to the great Christian fundamentals, including the pre-millennial return of our Lord. Faith Theological Seminary is to stand also for the highest scholarship. In these days there is an impression in some circles that a man cannot be truly intellectual and truly Christian at the same time. Such is not the belief of the founders of this seminary. . . . The institution is founded in prayer, and prayer is to have a vital place in every phase of its life. Practical Christian work is to be a part of the work. The faculty is to be headed by the Rev. Professor Allan A. MacRae, Ph. D., who was trained under the late Professor Robert Dick Wilson and for a year was his assistant. Faith Seminary is interdenominational and seeks to provide Christian leaders for the entire Christian world. It will present the great system of doctrine contained in the Scriptures and set forth in the historic Westminster Confession of Faith and catechisms. All students will be required to have college degrees before coming to the seminary and upon graduation will be given the regular theological degrees." The seminary is to be a sort of counterpart to Dallas Theological Seminary in Texas. Among the mem-

bers of the board of directors are such eminent Fundamentalists as President Buswell of Wheaton College, Rev. P. B. Crawford of Philadelphia, Graham of Richmond, Jamison of Los Angeles, MacPherson of Philadelphia, Bennet of New York, and Laird of Wilmington, Del. Faith Seminary opened on October 4 in a fine residential section of Wilmington, convenient to leading universities and adequate library facilities. There are no tuition charges for students desiring to become ministers and missionaries.

J. T. M.

Dr. C. F. W. Walther Appraised.—The article on Walther by Pastor William H. Cooper, published in the *Lutheran* of September 22 and October 6, states in the concluding paragraphs: "It is a well-known fact that Doctor Walther was the chief protagonist on the Missouri side in the great controversy on predestination which shook the Synodical Conference in the seventies and eighties of the last century and which resulted in the withdrawal of several constituent synods from that Conference. The issue which was at first sharply drawn between certain theological professors soon became an issue between the synods. But the controversy was not purely personal nor synodical. It was also theological. The consequence was that the lay people of the churches who could not follow technical arguments became bewildered by the tremendous stir of events. It is greatly to Dr. Walther's credit that he did not confine himself to the theologians in his controversial pamphlets and articles. He also preached and wrote for the common people. In this popular teaching he avoided all the technicalities until he had first laid in the minds of his hearers and readers a foundation for the thorough understanding of the Lutheran doctrine of predestination as drawn from the Scriptures and set forth especially in the Church's latest confession, the Formula of Concord. Two of these pamphlets for the laity are good illustrations of his method: *Der Gnadenwahlstreit (The Controversy on Election)* and *Die Lehre von der Gnadenwahl in Frage und Antwort (The Doctrine of Election Set Forth in Question and Answer Form)*."

"Two controlling principles determined Doctor Walther's position. He desired to give God all the glory for man's present and final salvation. At the same time he refused to ask or to answer all the questions which human reason raises in its effort to bridge the gaps of its own ignorance. The first principle was opposed to *synergism*, or the doctrine that an unconverted man can in any way contribute to his own salvation. The second principle was opposed to *Calvinism*, which has attempted to make a consistent rational scheme out of the Scriptural data on the subject of predestination. For Doctor Walther the consistency and righteousness of an electing God were to be *trusted* but not to be demonstrated by argument.

"We close this article by expressing the wish that more of the pastors and people of the United Lutheran Church may become acquainted at first hand with the writings and the influence of C. F. W. Walther. That influence has undoubtedly built up thousands of our fellow-Lutherans of other synods in faith and knowledge and good works through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Under that same guidance we shall gradually come to see eye to eye with them on questions which still divide and agitate the Church."

A prior statement reads: "The rest of Doctor Walther's life, from 1841 to 1887, was spent in the most unremitting activity and unselfish service, and in so many lines of endeavor as to render him by common consent the most prominent American Lutheran leader of the nineteenth century."

One more quotation: *Kasualpredigten und -reden (Occasional Discourses)* was published in 1889 after Doctor Walther's death and was reviewed by Prof. Henry E. Jacobs in the *Lutheran Church Review* of that year. Doctor Jacobs wrote: "These occasional discourses . . . are the warm and living utterances of one who, while learned in the literature of theology, knows far more of theology as an eminently practical wisdom than as a technical science. They are not simple repetitions of what has been said very well a hundred times before; but the individuality of the preacher and the peculiar character of the relations of both preacher and people constantly color the sermon.' It may be well to remind ourselves at this point that Doctor Walther's sermons read much like Luther's sermons. While Walther is more formal and precise than Luther and excels him in clarity of arrangement, he has also something of Luther's pithiness and driving force; he has the same insistence as Luther upon the centrality of justification by faith and the same rare skill in distinguishing between Law and Gospel. These similarities are not at all surprising when one remembers that Doctor Walther had steeped himself in Luther's writings and had imbibed their inmost spirit."

E.

The Tragic Unbelief of a Doting Modernist.—The *Sunday-school Times* (July 25, 1937), in its special historico-apologetic department, "A Survey of Religious Life and Thought" (Ernest Gordon), takes up anew, for analysis and criticism, Dr. Shailer Mathews's autobiography *New Faiths for Old*, in particular his blatant repudiation of the efficacy of Christian prayer. It writes: "Dr. Mathews has for long been head of a theological school of the Baptists and leader of the Chicago end of the Federal Council of Churches. He often writes poorly, as poorly as that master of incoherent jargon Prof. John Dewey, atheist, who started in life as a Sunday-school teacher in a Congregationalist church in Burlington, Vt. Thus says Dr. Mathews: 'My training as a historian has made me dubious as to any explanation or justification of Christianity, indifferent to its nature as a religion conserving permanent values in patterns susceptible to historical evaluation.'" That means that Dr. Mathews rejects historic Christianity because it fails to approve of the modernistic vacuities to which doting Modernists like Mathews are so devoutly given. "Of prayer Shailer Mathews then writes: 'Prayer is the asking of favors from a definite personality who, it is hoped, can be induced to do favors to the petitioner. One has only to read any prayer-book to realize how far religion has found expression in flattering cries for mercy and security.' Then follows this enormity: 'But such an attitude is quite impossible for one *who in any way* is acquainted with the forces of the universe and the laws which describe their operation. The belief in cosmic reason and will does not yield itself to pleas for forgiveness. It is not strange, therefore, that many have felt little warmth in the scientific approach to religion. If prayer cannot effect changes in actual situations,

what is the use of praying?' Dr. Mathews, however, is not optimistic as to the future of his 'scientific approach to religion.' He says: 'I can see no evidence that ecclesiastical conservatism is lessening among the rank and file of America. Churches without religious convictions are not apt to survive their eloquent pastors.'" This last statement certainly is true, though the unusual growth of Unitarianism last year proves how deeply the modernists during recent years have undermined the foundation of the Christian faith in many of our American church-bodies. To put Mathews's "godlessness to shame," Mr. Gordon next publishes proof of a "prayer-answering God" by quoting a part of the last report of the Liebenzeller mission, in Changsha, China, which reads: "Greater were the financial difficulties, and our hearts were nearly failing; yet it is a good thing to have the living God to reckon with. The restrictions in Germany allow only funds for the missionaries themselves but nothing for carrying on the work, and we have a staff of exactly two hundred Chinese fellow-workers to care for. But God has provided. We have been able to spend for their salaries \$34,000, that is, five thousand dollars more than during the preceding year. It has been interesting to see how God's special help, which we are bound to look for, comes from a different quarter each time. More important yet is the manifestation of God's presence in our work. Friends in the homeland hardly realize how great the darkness out here is, the fetters of sin, the fear of death, the bondage of evil custom. It is God who works, not we. All things are of God. He daily gives us the strength of His love. He supplies the medicines, yes, even the motor-car which bridges distances and saves precious time and strength." Two different kinds of language indeed! The last is that of believing Christians who in their arduous work have daily evidence of the goodness of the living God. The first is that of a pessimistic fatalist whom his own stubborn, perverse folly of infidelity has hopelessly soured and who has nothing to offer to his followers—no comfort, no optimistic outlook on life, no hope in sorrow or death. No wonder the rank and file of church-members find no satisfaction in the dotage of Modernism.

J. T. M.

A Modernist Concerning Sunday-Schools.—In a special editorial, in which under the caption "A God-centered Education" the present situation in our country with respect to religious education is discussed, the *Christian Century* editor, modernistic to the finger-tips, makes some startling remarks on the work done in the Sunday-schools:

"It will not be profitable to make a detailed examination of the Sunday-school in this connection. It can be estimated by its fruits and by its obvious limitations. No one will claim that its fruits are satisfactory. The Sunday-school is little more than a gesture, a futile tribute to a kind of ghostly ideal which still haunts the Church's conscience. To say this is no reflection upon the faithful teachers and officers who serve the Sunday-school. What could they be expected to do within the limitations of a half hour per week of casual instruction, under conditions without discipline or dignity? Such a system cannot be expected to produce churchmen and churchwomen, and no one should be surprised that the recruiting of church-members from the Church's own sons and daughters has to be accomplished by artificial methods of evangelism

and the appeal to secondary motives. Whether the reader agrees with the foregoing analysis or not is not important. Upon the gross fact there will be no disagreement. Protestantism has no adequate medium of communicating to its own children its concepts and convictions about God, its sense of the values of its own spiritual experience, its outlook upon both time and eternity, its sacred lore, its reverence for the Christian institutions and liturgies, and its appreciation of the poetry and art of the Christian faith. Its failure to transmit the elements and the spirit of the Christian culture has resulted in the emergence of a Protestant generation which may be Christian in its sociabilities and affinities, but is pagan in the furniture of its mind." Sad, but, generally speaking, all too true.

A.

A Return to the Old Ways.—A pronouncement made by President Hutchins of the University of Chicago has been given much publicity. He decries the tendency in divinity schools to make prospective pastors learn all about building management, community singing, church socials, religious education, and to neglect theology proper. Speaking of theology as a possible factor for unifying the modern university, Hutchins says: "Theology is banned by law from some universities. It might as well be from the rest. Theology is based on revealed truth and on articles of faith. And we are a faithless generation and take no stock in revelation. Theology implies orthodoxy and an orthodox Church. We have neither. To look to theology to unify the modern university is futile and vain." He thinks that philosophy will have to furnish the unifying center. Discussing these statements of President Hutchins, Dr. Adolf Hult, professor of Church History in the Augustana Seminary at Rock Island, submits these interesting remarks in the *Lutheran Companion*: "Has Dr. Hutchins not given the Church, a Church which will and must have theology and which most certainly, if it lives in Christ, must cherish 'revelation' and seek 'orthodoxy,' cause for thinking? For years and years it has seemed to me that tragedy must eventually befall the Church because of its loose thinking, its dread of hard doctrinal study, its toying with tiny things, its assuming that a pastor must be trained for his ministry by the 'cook-book method' concerning practicalities which a decent ordinary brain in a man will itself solve, if he has a brain. I also agree with the president of Chicago University that there has been a grievous degeneration of that power in the ministry of American Christendom. The calm, reasoned, energetic review by Hutchins at a time when theological faculties are besieged with still further 'cook-book' demands should contribute to an awakening. When a man is a man, has a mind of culture, knows life as life, thought as thought, faith as faith, the idea and the spirit of the ministry, God help him if he cannot go forth and, as Hutchins indicates, solve his every-day problems as a man should! When we had less 'cook-book' sciences in the theological schools, we trained men of far greater theological furnishment, had stouter and grander preachers, the ministry had an incomparably more powerful influence, and we did not hear the slight alibi: 'People are more educated today than formerly.' Are they more spiritually and more doctrinally educated? I wish to range myself with

Hutchins and hold: They are not. . . . The thing that most comes home to me is the fact that our older Lutheran theological education lies closer to his ultra-advanced ideas than our entire current education of the land. . . . If the Church of Christ shall be something else than a community center for the 'world' life and civic changes, it must constantly come back to its own inalienable rights and inescapable calling as the Church of the Gospel of Christ. There issues a big truth from his (i. e., Hutchins's) statement that our education needs to return to the Greek ideal of education: the strong culture of the mind. Only this would be my proposal: either the pagan Greek whole-souled culture or the complete, richer, fuller restoration of the Christian ideal of education, in which, as he says, 'theology ordered the truths concerning man and man.' Absence of that reality in modern culture is the profoundest cause of the world-collapse and of the inner decay of our modern culture and civilization. I take 'theology' in its unity of faith and life." There really seems to come an awakening. When others are beginning to see the error of their way, let us not in our attempt to be up to date adopt the methods which they are discarding. A.

"Practice-Year Losing Favor."—The ninth meeting of the Conference of Theological Professors of the United Lutheran Church in America was held at Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, O., on June 22 and 23. Members of the faculties of the Philadelphia, Gettysburg, Chicago, Northwestern and Western seminaries, together with representatives of the host seminary, spent a day and a half discussing the problems regarding the theological training of the future pastors of this synod. Reporting on the meeting, the *Lutheran* (July 14, 1937) has this to say on the "clinical work" to be done by theological students during the third year: "During the evening it developed that the proposal to add a fourth year to the standard seminary course, with the student doing 'clinical work' during the third year and returning to the classroom for the fourth year, is no longer being urged upon the seminaries with the enthusiasm of former years. Synods in which steps had been taken to assist in providing the 'clinical work' have either refrained from pressing the point or have shown a disposition to discard such plans. But even more decisive is the fact that congregations have not shown an enduring willingness to cooperate in applying the proposed plan, thus making consistent execution impossible; while present prospects indicate that in the not distant future some synods, if not all of them, will face a shortage of candidates for the ministry." The president of the conference for the coming year is Prof. Chas. M. Jacobs, D. D., LL. D., president of the Philadelphia seminary. J. T. M.

Educated Men are Needed to Fight Modern Paganism.—With this plea the *Lutheran Herald* (March 30, 1937), in various articles and editorials, inculcates upon its readers a matter deserving their ardent, constant attention. Writing editorially, it says among other things: "In our church-work here in America we are at the present time facing chaos and confusion. Those who have read Dan Gilbert's *Crucifying Christ in Our Colleges* will learn something about what is going on in some of our State institutions. While we know that there are many Christian teachers

at our State universities, we also know that there are many infidels, who not only ridicule the Bible and reject the Christian doctrine, but even reject Christian morals as outmoded. The pagan evolution philosophy dominates. The trend in our non-Christian State institutions is toward secularism. The atmosphere in these institutions is quite generally anti-Christian. To make conditions still worse, we have a new flood of rationalism within the churches with compromising modernist preachers who have rejected parts of the Bible, are teaching a spotted inspiration, and neglect to preach the Gospel of salvation through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. Many of them spend their time with what they call social gospel, which has reference to 'by-products' of Christianity and which very often simmers down to a mere petty manicuring of diluted morals. The result is that we have sixty million people unchurched, they being not even nominal members of any religious organization, and millions of children that grow up without any religious education whatsoever. The result is a most appalling ignorance of Biblical truth. It is quite evident from this that our greatest mission-field is here in America. Our most important Home Mission centers are the cities where we have State universities. To stem this tide of infidelity and rationalism, we need more than ever Christian higher institutions of learning. We must have educated leadership in the Church and educated laymen in the congregations to wrestle with, and combat, modern paganism. Our nation needs a rediscovery of the Christian religion, a knowledge of the transcendental God and His supernatural revelation. We need men of prayer, men of faith, who believe in the Word of God, in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who believe in the Holy Spirit and are endued with power from on high. We need men who will put on the whole armor of God to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." In his article on a related subject, entitled "A Scholarly Ministry," Dr. T. F. Gullixson of Luther Theological Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., has several fine quotations, which are worth heeding also in our own circles. The first is from Faunce's *The Educational Ideal in the Ministry* and reads: "On the one side of the minister is the world's scholarship, whose method he must understand, whose growing results he must keep close at hand. On the other side is the human group committed to his charge, souls struggling, sinning, aspiring, crying for a clew to life's maze and a lift in its burden-bearing. Between these two stands the minister, not as a middleman,—a timorous and commercial designation,—but as constituting in himself the higher synthesis of knowledge and sympathy, of scholarship and character. He sees that the world of scholarship is sometimes given to extremes, that it may become arrogant or reckless. He sees that the human group before him are sometimes blind and deaf to the truths they most need. The care for truth and the cure of souls meet in the heart of the minister." Again: "Any man can secure attention for a few Sundays; but can he hold it for twenty years? Any man can secure absorbing interest by sensationalism in speech or garb or action; but the penalty of using strong spices is that the quantity of spice must be constantly in-

creased to stir the jaded palate. Mere exhortation soon becomes wearisome to him that gives and him that takes. Physical fervor will not long serve as a substitute for ideas. Pulmonary eloquence soon exhausts itself and its audience. A hortatory pulpit is futile except as based on *constant instruction*." Equally apt and timely is this quotation from C. E. Jefferson: "The high priests of science are all of them without exception dogmatists. Tyndall, Huxley, Spencer, and all the rest of them have been as dogmatic as the apologists of the second century were. That has been characteristic of all the mightiest opponents of the Christian Church. When we are met on every side by ideas as sharp as lances and solid as spears, we cannot conquer with hands filled with mist or with mush."—Dr. Christensen of Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis, Minn., closes his fine article on "The Christian Student and the World Crisis" with the stirring words: "To the world crisis now upon us there is no real answer save the message of Christ. And the message of Christ can be transmitted only by hearts which His love has touched and minds which His truth has illumined. In the Christian student of today lies the brightest hope of the world tomorrow." Here certainly there is much food for thought also for us as we contemplate the crying needs of our time and our divinely imposed duty to answer it with the truth sent down from heaven.

J. T. M.

Delirium Chlilasticum.—Mussolini and Schuschnigg in prophecy. Anything is possible in the theology of premillennialism. The conclusion of an article in the *Defender* magazine for April, with the caption "Recent Prophetic Trends," reads: "Students of Bible prophecy have long thought what a remarkable link it would be in the chain of prophetic events if Mussolini should some day grant permission for Schuschnigg to restore the old Roman House of Hapsburg by returning Otto to the throne of Austria. This would mean that Schuschnigg, as dictator, would occupy the same position toward Otto that Mussolini holds toward the King of Italy. So, when the following Associated Press dispatch came over the wires from Vienna a few days ago, the average reader saw in it only a piece of front-page news; but persons possessing spiritual illumination saw in it a most significant prophetic trend: 'Chancellor Kurt Schuschnigg today openly committed his government party to support of propaganda for restoration of the Hapsburg dynasty in Austria. He stated, increasing official support would be given to the campaign to place the twenty-four-year-old Archduke Otto of Hapsburg on the throne.'" The opening sentence reads: "The only way to keep step with the progress of international events is to have your Bible open while you read the newspaper," and this is the theme of the article: "Accompanying the restoration of Rome to its imperial power and glory, a proud, haughty man stands up like a black specter on the horizon of the end-time. *This man is the Antichrist*. As the curtain drops at the climax of the age, he will be the most powerful figure in the world. His tragic reign will be followed by the inauguration of a theocratic form of world government, over which Jesus Christ will personally preside." The theme is carried out in statements like these: "The revived Roman Beast of the end-time, alluded to in Rev. 13, 2, is now taking form before our eyes. Both the nondescript creature of Dan. 7, 7 and the Roman animal of Rev.

13, 1. 2 possesses ten horns. This refers to the fact that the Antichrist empire of the age-end will be governed by ten puppet dictators, who will be under the control of one superdictator. 'There came up among them one little horn.' We read: 'Premier Mussolini shouted, "We rear on the sea, in the sky, and on land."' The beast which John saw, Rev. 13, came 'up out of the sea.' In all probability this part of the vision refers to the rise of the Antichrist and his age-end kingdom out of the Mediterranean Sea. Mussolini's jealousy of the Mediterranean knows no bounds. . . . It is impossible to forecast specific details as to the impending European conflict, but of this we may be certain—out of the melter the ancient Roman Empire will be awakened. One man, described by Daniel as 'a little horn,' will then rule supreme, while the whole world stands in awe, spellbound by his magic." And here is where Schuschnigg comes in: "It must be noted at this point that the Roman Empire has never really ceased to exist. . . . With the passing of the centuries this emblem [the double-headed eagle] was officially retained by Austria under the ruling dynasty, the Hapsburg House. Thus we find, broadly speaking, that the seat of the Holy Roman Empire was in Austria-Hungary as late as the year 1918. . . . Austria, a most important part of the old Roman Empire, passed under dictatorship. Dollfuss ruled until 1935. Then came the present dictator, Kurt von Schuschnigg. Schuschnigg bears much the same relation to the Italian superman today that the ten puppet dictators will bear to the Antichrist when the empire is finally revived." "The attempts to arrange a marriage between Prince Otto and Princess Maria, the youngest daughter of the king and queen of Italy," also figure in this chiliastic phantasmagoria.

Ireland also. Quoting Rev. M. Baxter, our article states: "Dr. Tregelles and Dr. Kelsall in 1846 and B. W. Newton in 1849 pointed out in their prophetic treatises that Ireland, never having belonged to the Caesar's Roman Empire, would have to be separated from England before the Ten Kingdoms are formed."

The "special *Defender* correspondent in Palestine" writes in the same issue: "It is highly significant from a prophetic standpoint that coincidentally with the disintegration of the Gentile system in Europe a baffling international situation should arise in the Near East. Today the ending period of the 'times of the Gentiles' has come into full view. . . . Italy's program of 'silent penetration' continues on an increasing scale in the Holy Land and in all the contiguous countries of the Near East. . . . There are other Italian institutions in Beirut worthy of mention, but space forbids the itemizing of them all. Is there anything in prophecy that seems to even remotely fit the situation projected by Mussolini in the Near East? Dan. 11, 23, 24 declares: 'And after the league made with him he shall work deceitfully; for he shall come up and shall become strong with a small people. He shall enter peaceably even upon the fattest places of the province,' etc., etc. . . . If Mussolini is destined to become the Antichrist, as many Bible students have believed ever since his spectacular rise to power, there is some basis for understanding the amazing system of control which he is building up on all sides of the Mediterranean. John saw Antichrist 'rise up out of the sea,' Rev. 13, 1.

The ancient Roman Empire completely surrounded the Mediterranean Sea. It was for this reason that the Romans called this body of water their 'lake.' Mussolini is jealous of the same sea." E.

Mr. Rockefeller and Church Union. — Under this heading *Christianity Today* (April, 1937) comments on the recent pleas of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., for a united Church, called either the Church of Christ, or the Church of the Living God, "with all sectarian churches as branches, their individual and non-essential differences being preserved, while on the fundamentals of religion — God's love and Christ's living spirit — all would be united." This plea Mr. Rockefeller made on February 17 in connection with the "million unit plan of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the support of the world mission of Christianity," and he reiterated it on March 7, when, speaking in Tarrytown, N. Y., at a union Lenten service of the eleven Protestant churches of that community, he recommended that these eleven churches give up their individual existences and form a cooperative church center, or community church. In his appeal on February 17 he said: "Only a united Christian world can stem the rising tide of materialism, of selfishness, of shaken traditions, of crumbling moral standards, and point the way out." With this illusory ideal of Mr. Rockefeller and his friend the modernistic missionary leader in India, Dr. E. Stanley Jones, *Christianity Today* takes issue, commenting on the project as follows: "One big Church such as Mr. Rockefeller envisages is, in our judgment, not only impracticable and incapable of realization, but it is not even desirable. Such a Church as he proposes, if we mistake not, would not be a Christian Church at all. It would in fact lack all that is distinctive of the Christian Church, all that has made it a source of hope and strength throughout the centuries. For it would be a Church in which 'God's love and Christ's living spirit' would alone be regarded as fundamental. In such a Church belief in the deity of Christ and His atoning death, not to mention other matters, would be classed among the non-essentials. Unitarians and thoroughgoing Modernists could feel at home in such a Church, but not Christians in the historic meaning of the word. For the existing churches to disband in the interest of organizing such a Church would not mean a forward step in the furtherance of Christianity, but its abandonment. In making such a suggestion to the Christian churches of Tarrytown, Mr. Rockefeller — unwittingly no doubt — appeared in the role of their enemy, not their friend. It is not at all surprising that Mr. Rockefeller takes his stand with those who are so zealous for a union of the churches that they are willing to abandon the Christian religion in order to bring it about. It will be recalled that it was he who financed the Laymen's Missions Inquiry, which issued *Rethinking Missions*, perhaps the most widely publicized attack on historic, or real, Christianity to which it is possible to point. Having been instrumental in urging the abandonment of what alone has a right to call itself Christianity on the foreign field, it is not surprising that he now urges its abandonment in the homeland. The basic question raised by such proposals as Mr. Rockefeller's is the old, yet ever new question, 'What is Christianity?' If the essence of Christianity is to be found in belief in God's love and

Christ's living spirit, then there is much to be said in favor of Mr. Rockefeller's suggestion. But if the essence of Christianity is to be found rather in the fact that it offers us salvation from sin, conceived as guilt as well as pollution, through the expiatory death of Jesus Christ, the God-man, his suggestion has nothing to commend it. If Mr. Rockefeller had any adequate conception of what sort of religion Christianity is, it is hardly conceivable that he should expect *Christian* churches to take his suggestion seriously."—This clear and convincing argument against the Unitarian community church for which Mr. Rockefeller, an exponent of Fosdick's extreme Modernism, makes his ardent pleas, is in many respects a veritable masterpiece of sound and sanctified reasoning and so deserves the greatest possible support and publicity among those who still adhere to God's Word. Incidentally it also exhibits the intrinsic power of the Christian's position on this score and the utter weakness of Modernism. Really, there is nothing at all to commend this futile philosophy of syncretistic agnosticism in sheep's clothing.

J. T. M.

Latitudinarianism Praised.—In an interesting address delivered before the meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches Holding the Presbyterian System held in Montreal, Canada, in June and printed in the *Presbyterian*, the governor-general of Canada, Lord Tweedsmuir, while saying much that is true, lost his balance somewhat when he came to the question, What must be insisted on in religious teaching? Here are his words: "This is no new point of view. It was a point of view of Oliver Cromwell, who was always urging the extreme men of his party to remember the difference between essentials and what he called 'accidentals.' It was the point of view of John Bunyan, who was never tired of warning against disputes on what he called 'circumstantials.' Forms of worship and niceties of dogma seemed to him 'shadowish.' 'It is possible,' he says profoundly, 'to commit idolatry even with God's own appointments if we move them from the place and end where by God they are appointed.' It was the point of view also of the great seventeenth-century Anglican divines. Do you remember a passage in Jeremy Taylor's *Liberty of Prophesying* when he pleads that in what he calls 'questions speculative, undeterminable, curious, and unnecessary' there should be a wide latitude for believers? 'I would,' he says, 'that men would not make more necessities than God made, which indeed are not many.'" Here there is food for thought. It is a pity that the line between clear teachings of the Bible on the one hand and mere problems and adiaphora on the other hand is not clearly drawn.

A.

Growth of Christian Churches in the United States.—According to the statistical report on religious bodies in the United States, a report begun by Dr. George Linn Kieffer and completed by Mrs. Kieffer after the sudden death of her husband, the total membership of all denominations in the United States in 1936 amounted to 63,493,036. The year before the reported total had been 62,655,632. The Baptists gained 140,308 members, the Reformed Church 81,958, the Lutherans 43,905, and the Methodists 41,798. The total average per cent. of gain when all denominations are considered was 1.33 per cent., while the population gain of the entire

United States is said to have been only .71 per cent. One figure which astonishes us very much is that which represents the gain of the Unitarians, who are said to have won 38,026 members last year. Since the total membership for this organization is given as 98,600, the gain last year in membership was 62 per cent. plus. We are wondering whether this is one of the many instances where statistics "lie" by telling merely a part of the story.

A.

Deaths.—Scholarship suffered a grave loss when Canon Streeter, a New Testament scholar of world renown, known everywhere as the author of the work called *The Four Gospels*, met his death in an airplane accident in Switzerland. Though a student of Dr. Sanday, he could not be classed as a conservative. He was a professor at Oxford. — From New York comes the news that Dr. Charles E. Jefferson died. For almost forty years he was pastor of the Broadway Tabernacle in New York City. Through his numerous books and his lectures he has become widely known. — Lutheran scholarship suffered a heavy loss through the death of Dr. Leander S. Keyser, professor emeritus of Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, O. The author of twenty-four books, he the last years of his life battled ably and valiantly for the divine authority and the inerrancy of the Scriptures. He died in his eighty-first year.

A.

Deceased.— On April 25 Dr. George Lynn Kieffer, statistician of the National Lutheran Council and very active in its various endeavors, died suddenly of heart failure. He was well known throughout the United States as the man who did the work which Dr. H. K. Carroll had done before him, that of compiling the annual census of the churches of the United States for the *Christian Herald*.

A.

On Lodge Funerals.— Contributing an article to the *Christian Century*, a pastor speaks of improprieties which confronted him in connection with funerals. While his point of view is different from ours, we see that we are not the only ones who are shocked by certain kinds of funerals. He writes: "Sometimes these arrangements [that is, funeral arrangements made by the undertaker and the family] were surprising and disconcerting, to say the least. For instance, I had been told upon arrival for a funeral that, since the deceased belonged to both lodges, the Philanthropic Tribe of Hairy Apes and the Regal Syndicate of United Brethren were having funeral rituals also and that the Hairy Apes (who bungled their ritual atrociously) would like to have their service first. Then, when my turn came (which, you may be sure, I made noticeably brief), I had to climb over the knees of several people in order to get before a microphone hooked up to an amplifier that threw my words back at me as if I were having a green-apple war with the mourners up-stairs. Finally, after every one had 'paid his respects' to the deceased and the bereaved ones had been told what 'a wonderful funeral' it was, I might be informed that we were driving to a cemetery thirty-five miles away, where the American Legion were scheduled to bang their volleys into the air, each time having to wait for that nervous fellow in the middle who did not seem able to get his rifle reloaded."

A.

Darwin Again Discussed.—The London correspondent of the *Christian Century*, Dr. E. Shillito, writes as follows: "It was the turn of biology to provide the chief subject this year for the British Association's meetings at Nottingham. Sir Edward Poulton, the president, first attended the meeting of this society at York in 1881. He has lived in years in which evolution has been studied with amazing thoroughness, and he himself has played no small part in that study. There is no final agreement among scholars even now; but certain interpretations and the hopes based upon them have been tried and found wanting. The belief in 'progress' as it was understood in the latter decades of the nineteenth century has been abandoned, and a more sober concept is taking its place. We can certainly modify the struggle for existence by our deliberate planning. But there is little to encourage those who make Darwin into the prophet of a Marxian order, and the unwarranted application of biological science to the spiritual life of man has been largely abandoned. Sir Edward gave a valuable survey of evolution as it is interpreted today." Coming from the camp of Modernists, this is interesting testimony. A.

Mexican Mission-Work in San Antonio.—After having frequently expressed the wish that they might find a man able to minister to the Spanish-speaking people in their State, our brethren in Texas were able in 1925 to call Rev. Sergio Cobian, who joined our Synod, having for a number of years served as missionary of the United Lutheran Church in Puerto Rico. He began his endeavors among the Mexicans in San Antonio. His efforts were richly blessed. The first quarters of the mission soon became too small, and in 1927 a chapel and a school were built. A Christian day-school was started; and since the enrolment was very encouraging, a regular teacher was called, Mr. L. W. Meissner, who began his work in 1928. Pastor Cobian preached in other places besides San Antonio and started missions in Vanderbilt and Three Rivers. The San Antonio station remained the chief one, there being about 100,000 Mexicans in that city, forming about two-fifths of the entire population.

When Pastor Cobian in 1930 went back to Puerto Rico, Rev. Melendez was called to succeed him. Teacher Meissner had to be shifted from one place to another to hold the schools that had been established at various places. In the mean time the school in San Antonio had two different teachers in the persons of Mr. W. Kottmeyer and Candidate O. Naumann, the latter now pastor of our Three Rivers mission. On account of the transient character of the people served in this endeavor the congregations are not so large as they should be when one considers the number of those baptized and confirmed. In fact, their size would be three times as large if all those that were confirmed had remained with their particular church. A.

Brief Items.—The public press brings the news that the Protestant Episcopal Church, in convention assembled in Cincinnati, has asked the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern Presbyterians) "to join it in steps to achieve organic union." A commission was authorized to confer with representatives of the Presbyterian body to draft a concordat. What, according to the reporter, is hoped for is

not so much a physical union of the two denominations as "an early agreement on fundamental principles of doctrine," which will ultimately lead to greater unity. Besides, at this convention the proposed World Council of Churches was endorsed, and it was agreed to send delegates to a preliminary conference, to be held in Holland, May 9, 1938. A cynical bystander may say that he does not see any reason why parties that have carried on a more or less conspicuous flirtation for so many years should not finally get married. This is not our real sentiment. What causes us concern is the question whether this step will lead Christendom still further into the bog of indifference and doctrinal laxity. — The centennial of its foreign mission-work which the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern Presbyterians) observes this year was focused on October 31, because it was on that day in 1837 that, according to a resolution of the General Assembly, the newly appointed Board of Foreign Missions met in Baltimore to organize and begin its work. At that first meeting it was resolved to have an executive committee, which was to appoint an assistant secretary and a general agent. As seat of the executive operations of the Board, New York was chosen. — Stanley Jones was quoted as advocating that American Christians boycott Japanese goods as a protest against the war which Japan is waging in China. Frederick J. Libbey of the National Council for the Prevention of War published a letter addressed to Stanley Jones in which he asks the evangelist to withdraw his suggestion because if such a boycott were entered upon it might lead to war with Japan. A cablegram from Stanley Jones sent in reply states that he will comply with Mr. Libbey's request if an effective substitute is available or if Christians are not united on the proposal he made. These facts are reported by the *Christian Century*. — "The Church Situation in Germany" was brilliantly analyzed by Dr. Niebuhr. The Roman Catholic Church, he said, is fighting Hitler on a political level and would probably be satisfied with a concordat similar to that with Mussolini. "It is a case of two institutions, each concerned with self-glorification. The Lutheran Church, on the other hand, is fighting the Nazis on religious grounds. Their wish — just the right to preach their own Gospel — is a narrow one, but for that very reason is clear. In this country, if such a situation arose, the wish would probably be so broadened by the condemnation of social evils that it could not be so easily maintained. Though the Lutheran leaders are mostly Barthians, Dr. Niebuhr finds that they are beginning to develop a social gospel as a by-product of their experience in this struggle." We pass on this paragraph, written by the New York correspondent of the *Christian Century*, without comment, not being able to judge whether the facts are correctly reported or not. — The well-known U. L. C. A. seminary at Mount Airy, Philadelphia, has added a new professor to its faculty, the Rev. Paul J. Hoh, who is to establish a chair of Missions in the seminary. Incidentally it may be mentioned that the undergraduate student-body in this seminary numbers 78, while the graduate school, in which many pastors of the vicinity are enrolled, has during the last two or three years had an average enrolment of 75. — In Russia, as the A. E. L. K. reports, the leader of the propaganda of the godless admits that the movement of which he is the head has failed

of success. The reason, he holds, is that the godless people have been too confident and have believed that interest in religion would die by itself. There is still, or there is again, to be seen great interest in religious services. A law of the Soviet government says that, if a congregation is to be registered, it must have at least twenty members. We are told that there are today thirty thousand such congregations in Russia. The leader of the movement of the godless, however, admits that the number of churches is far larger, because many congregations have not registered. "Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?"—In Italy recently a priest was deposed because he had stated that, when he celebrated Holy Communion July 26, 1936, and broke the sacred wafer several drops of blood squirted from it, a "miracle" which he interpreted to be a warning to the evangelical Christians in his village to drop their errors and come into the fold of the holy Mother Church. The matter was investigated, and the priest was proved to have made a blasphemously false statement. His punishment consists in being given again the status of a layman with the provision, however, that the law of celibacy will continue to be binding for him. How about such supposed miracles in the past? is our query.—The Privilegierte Wuertembergischer Bibelanstalt observed in September, 1937, the 125th anniversary of its founding. That we are much indebted to it will be acknowledged gratefully by all who are using Nestle's edition of the New Testament, because it is issued by this society.—In the *Presbyterian* of October 21 an interesting description is submitted of a Christian chapel the ruins of which have been found in Dura-Europos on the Euphrates River. The chapel was built at least as early as 232 A.D., because that date is given on the wall. But since this inscription may have been made when repairs had become necessary, the chapel perhaps is of far earlier origin. It is held that this is the oldest known Christian chapel. It was located in a house and may in periods of persecution have been used as a secret meeting-place. The paintings represent Adam and Eve, the Good Shepherd, the healing of the paralytic, the stilling of the storm on the sea, sinking Peter, the women at the sepulcher, David and Goliath, the Samaritan woman at the well. There is here valuable confirmation of the fact that our New Testament books were accepted as Holy Scripture at this early date.—According to the *Lutheran Companion* a strange find was made recently at Vestonice, Czechoslovakia, by Dr. Carl Absalon. Amid the bones of extinct mammoths this scientist discovered the image of a woman carved in ivory, the origin of which he thinks must be placed thirty thousand years ago. He holds that we have here a production of the Stone Age. The astonishing fact is that the image does not represent a person with a brutish, expressionless face, but a being which is said to have had "a noble and sensitive face with arched ridges over the eyebrows, a long, slightly upturned nose, and a long chin." The *Lutheran Companion* writer says, "Although striking likenesses of animals have been found painted on the walls of caves in Spain, this is the first true face of a human being to be discovered, and it does not resemble an ape."—*Der Jesuitenorden veröffentlicht zur Zeit 26 Zeitschriften allgemeiner Art, 152 wissenschaftliche Zeitschriften, 77 Missionszeitschriften, 296 Erbauungsblaetter, 261*

Vereinsblaetter, insgesamt 1,112 Organe in 50 verschiedenen Sprachen in einer Gesamtauflage von 144,206,769 Stueck mit 13,340,060 Beziehern. Die Ordensuniversitaet in Rom, die *Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana*, zaehlt 75 Professoren und 2,198 Studenten aus 53 Nationen. (A. E. L. K.) A.

II. Ausland

The Edinburgh Conference.— Soon after the big Oxford meeting, which discussed the Church chiefly in its attitude toward the world and the State, a similar conference was held in Edinburgh, where doctrine held the place of prominence. A number of Lutherans were present. A writer in the *Lutheran Companion* says, writing from Edinburgh: "Lutherans form a large group of delegates to Edinburgh, in spite of the fact that the forced absence of a delegation from the Lutheran churches of Germany has lessened their numbers. We have enjoyed a stimulating fellowship with our brethren here that has been most refreshing. Besides the American Lutherans from the United Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod, and the Norwegian Church representatives are here from the Lutheran churches of Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Latvia, France, Hungary, Bohemia, Poland, Roumania, Slovakia, Alsace-Lorraine, and India, numbering about fifty in all." The Conference had been called "to discover and assert the underlying unity which binds us together through our common loyalty to our one Lord and Master, Jesus Christ." Furthermore it was hoped the meeting and the work done there might "help the churches to realize in things both outward and inward the full unity of the body of Christ." The assembly was divided into four sections, which studied respectively the following topics: "The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ"; "The Church and the Word of God"; "The Church of Christ: Ministry and Sacrament"; "The Church's Unity in Life and Worship." The writer in the *Lutheran Companion* avers that a remarkable unity in the fundamentals of our Christian faith became manifest. Some of his sentences should be quoted: "The liberal, humanistic innovations that have so largely characterized much of American Protestant thought of the last half century have fared badly here in Edinburgh. The historic faith of Christendom is not outmoded. The revelation of God in Christ is the only light for our generation. We must be modern to the fingertips in presenting Christ to our age, but it must be the Christ of the cross and the resurrection, the ever-living Savior who is contemporary with every generation." This reporter does not seem to feel that the differences in doctrine between the various church-bodies must be stressed. He says: "The discussions had revealed the many-sidedness of the interpretations of Christian faith. Historical circumstances, racial characteristics, national isolations, as well as varied temperaments have all had their influence in the shaping of Christian thought. At times the classifications of the Continental, the Oriental, the British, and the American mind have suggested themselves as typical of the cleavages in the thought of the churches. But it has been reassuring to discover behind all this how eager the opinion of all the churches has been to reproduce the classic, Scriptural pattern of Christianity." That this reflects a

unionistic attitude, which, if it became general, would stifle all Scriptural Christianity, ought to be apparent to all discerning observers.

Quite interesting and instructive, even though reflecting the views of a Modernist, are the remarks of Charles Clayton Morrison, editor of the *Christian Century*, on the discussions at this conference. To our amazement he reports that the section which discussed "The Grace of Our Lord Jesus" adopted a statement on God's sovereignty and man's free will which sounds remarkably orthodox. He says that there was incorporated in the report of this section "a statement of God's sovereignty and man's free will, both of which are affirmed, while it is declared that all attempts by theologians 'on philosophical lines to reconcile the apparent antithesis of God's sovereignty and man's freedom are not part of the Christian faith.'" We are of course aware that the term "man's freedom" is ambiguous. If instead of that phrase the term "man's responsibility" had been used, we should have the desired clarity. Dr. Morrison furthermore reports that, when the concept "Word of God" was looked at, the term was not regarded as synonymous with the Bible. It seems the conference was satisfied with the declaration that the Word of God is in the Bible. On the number of the Sacraments, he says, no proclamation was made. However, "the point at which Sacraments become a barrier to unity is in their administration. Who may celebrate them? This raises the question of ministerial orders." As to efforts to unite the Church he reports: "There was every evidence of a deep desire for unity. . . . The American Episcopalians especially won praise for the breadth of view which they displayed." Dr. Morrison thinks that, if the conference had lasted three months instead of merely two weeks, there would have resulted "the constructive reconciliation of many differences and misunderstandings." Let misunderstandings by all means be removed, we say, but above everything else let us remain faithful to Him who has said: "If ye continue in My Word, then are ye My disciples indeed."

In the *Lutheran Companion* of September 23 Pastor C. A. Nelson of St. Paul, Minn., who attended both the Oxford and the Edinburgh conference, says: "It might be said that we American Lutherans who were present found ourselves usually closer to the continental outlook than that which was represented from America. May it not be our mission in our land to insist always on the priority of Scriptural thinking even when it concerns practical measures? . . . The cleavages here (i. e., in Edinburgh) seem to be between churches of the center, the right, and the left. In the center group are found the large bodies of Lutherans, Anglicans, Reformed, and great numbers of others who think along similar lines in regard to the Word and the Sacraments and the Ministry. In the right group are the Eastern Orthodox and the Anglo-Catholics, whose emphasis is more sacramental, and on the left those of the free churches, such as Quakers and Baptists, who would be free from any sacramental or Scriptural means of grace. On the surface of things one goes away from such a meeting with little enthusiasm for any dream of an organically reunited Church. But that is beside the point. Far more important it is to learn concretely that in the face of the present chaotic world situation Christians of every Church are supremely anxious to

reveal to the world the mind of Christ. To me it seems important that we in American Lutheranism should think clearly through the issues of ecumenical Christianity. The Lord has given our Church a large place in American life. If we are to fulfil our destiny, we must be prepared to witness to our age with a united voice. Not only must we face the problems of ecumenical Lutheranism, but we must learn how to live side by side with our brethren in other churches in a spirit of friendship and yet without surrendering that which is native to our Church's genius." Having "a united voice" is of course the ideal which we must all work and pray for. "Living side by side with our brethren in other churches in a spirit of friendship" is another important matter. Whatever is done, however, let it not be vitiated by the infusion of disloyalty to our divine Savior and indifference to what He has revealed.

A.

Britain's New Marriage Law.—The *Churchman* for August writes editorially: "In the face of the effort to secure at the coming General Convention an addition liberalizing the canon on divorce of the Protestant Episcopal Church, the passage of the marriage bill by the Parliament of England is of special interest. The new law adds to the present single ground for divorce, adultery, the grounds of cruelty, desertion, and insanity, procedure to be instituted after three years of marriage. This measure marks the first change in divorce practise in the British Isles since 1857. The debates in the House of Lords aroused deep interest, and the sessions were not without color. On at least one day, according to the parliamentary correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, 'there was a large attendance, and the afternoon sun poured down upon the gay sleeves of the bishops and the gay frocks of the peers in the galleries.' The alinement in support of, and opposition to, the bill on the part of the bishops was what one would expect. The Archbishop of Canterbury, while admitting that the bill proposed some timely and valuable remedies against certain abuses, said that 'divorce, and certainly remarriage after divorce, are inconsistent with the principles laid down by Christ and accepted in its own laws and formularies by the Church.' The Archbishop of York, Dr. Temple, though he declared that he did not think it appropriate for an occupant of the bishops' bench to vote for the bill, expressed the conviction that the bill ought to pass, because he believed that it would improve rather than damage public morals."

This is a clear case showing that often the State has to adopt laws different from those of the Scriptures. Dr. Temple seems to understand the words of Jesus (Matt. 19, 8) "He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives, but from the beginning it was not so." While the Church could not adopt as its own the new British law to govern the conduct of its members, the State cannot be faulted for passing legislation of this kind because its laws are intended not only for Christians but for non-Christians as well.

A.

Professor Karl Barth's Gratifying Frankness.—In the *Sunday-school Times* (Vol. 79, No. 7) Ernest Gordon, in his church-review department "A Survey of Religious Life and Thought," quotes Prof. Karl Barth as

speaking very frankly to a conference of theological Liberals assembled recently at St. Gall, Switzerland. He said: "Friends I wish to call you, but brethren in Christ, no! For that is just what we are not! We are not only disunited on single points, but we are entirely so, even on fundamental and final truths. We owe it to one another, out of a discerning charity, not to mask the open opposition between us. With our 'no,' the clean-cut 'no,' which we oppose to the doctrine of our adversaries, we really take them much more seriously than if we used toward them the 'tolerance' which they desire." To this the *Sunday-school Times* adds editorially: "Professor Barth is anything but clear on the inspiration of the Bible; his views on this and on some other foundation doctrines are not Scriptural; hence these utterances of his are significant." We might strengthen this remark by saying that Karl Barth himself is a religious Liberal and that his unscriptural views differ from those of more extreme and, let us add, more inconsistent Liberals only in degree. Nevertheless his frankness in making the issue clear between himself and his opponents is most gratifying in this age of all but universal dissimulation.

In its report on Barth the *Sunday-school Times* has also the following: "Again, at the recent international theological conference in Geneva, Professor Barth described the Virgin Birth as an essential sign of the incarnation and denied that one who disbelieved miracles could be a Christian."—"Of the heroic resistance of the German churches to state tyranny, their mobilization of thousands of congregations, their establishment of three new theological schools, he says: 'This was possible only because a theology was awakening which was able to say yes or no and to stand resolutely on the great truths of the Reformation.'" Professor Barth, while praising and upholding the confessional groups in Germany, has not identified himself with them, but has chosen to oppose Nazi tyrannical state opposition as a sort of "lone wolf." In the theological world of today Karl Barth is still an unsolvable enigma, his own rationalism being just as pronounced as his opposition to the common Liberalism prevalent in continental Europe.

J. T. M.

A World Council of Churches.—Those who participated in the Oxford and Edinburgh conferences are anxious to see the work they were engaged in continued. It is proposed to establish an agency which will carry on the work represented by both conferences. In May, 1938, a meeting is to be held in Holland at which sixty people representing the various denominations that cooperated in Oxford and Edinburgh will gather, twelve of whom are to come from America. At that time the constitution is to be drafted for the so-called World Council, and then it is to be submitted to the various churches for ratification. At present there is a committee of fourteen persons, seven from the Oxford Conference on Life and Work and seven from the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order, which is to make all necessary arrangements. What the ultimate outcome of all these negotiations will be no one can at present foretell. It looks, however, as if unionism were about to celebrate one of its greatest victories.

A.