Concordia Theological Monthly

Volume 9 Article 57

8-1-1938

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

W. Arndt
Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Dr. Knubel's View of the Significance of Utrecht. — In the *Lutheran* of June 15, 1938, the editor publishes an interview which was granted him by President Knubel upon his return from the meeting at Utrecht, where he represented "his own general body and also the other Lutheran general bodies in this country, the Synodical Conference excepted." When Dr. Knubel was asked whether the statement was true that an attempt was being made to form a superchurch which would endeavor to influence the policies of 300,000,000 of the 500,000,000 Christians of the world, he replied: "No; nothing of the sort. Such an idea was not discussed at any time during the deliberations in Utrecht; so far as I know, there was not even a thought of so radical a step in the minds of those present as delegates." Asked about the significance of this meeting, at which there were representatives of most non-Roman Catholic churches, he said: "You might say that this is an adventure into new relationships so far as Lutheranism is concerned, including, of course, the United Lutheran Church in America. We have come to a fork in the road. It is not an occasion in which we think back into the past in search of mistakes that have been made, but one in which we examine the conditions of the present time with regard to the future. It is realized that we are now at the point when a choice must be made between relationships with fellow Christian bodies and a policy of separation from them. What makes the time one of choice is the situation that has developed in the world in the midst of which the Church is commissioned to labor. This demands that our relationships and responsibilities be subjected to a process of careful rethinking."

Dr. Knubel continued: "It has become very evident to those who are called upon to give thought to the relationships and policies of Christian churches that Christianity everywhere is conscious of confronting new problems, or perhaps one should say the sharpening of old problems. This situation has arisen from two sources. One is the manifest secularism of the world. By this one means the expulsion of whatever is concerned with spiritual forces and the destinies of man when his spiritual attributes are given consideration. The philosophies of materialism or of opportunism have had freedom to circulate and impress themselves upon the minds of people everywhere, and thus the Church everywhere has become conscious of the problem it must solve.

"The second phase of the situation is that which becomes evident when one observes the new activities assumed by various governments. There is very evidently a tendency of the State to assume obligations to society hitherto left largely to the Church and to undertake to acquire for itself obvious indication of this attitude of the State toward the control of whatever resources and associations it considers necessary to meet these obligations. In America the most people are found in the movements toward what we have come to call 'social security.' But what is engaging attention under that title in America has long been thought of in many portions of Europe and in recent years has been

developed into definite forms of government. That is what I mean by the sharpening of an old problem. Of course the Church has always had to think of its work in regard to the status of the people to whom it took the Gospel; but at this particular time one finds its two sources of disturbance to be secularism and the absorption by government of control of the social order."

"Do you consider," the editor of the *Lutheran* asked, "that the men who assembled at Utrecht were outstanding churchmen?"

Dr. Knubel replied: "Yes. Many of them have been in the forefront of the investigation of the questions that were in conference at Utrecht. They are trusted by the various churches from whose membership they were chosen and are very serious in their desire to have the Church take the part which is proper for it to have in this present social crisis."

A further question was: "Do they consider that a way of solving the problems that confront the churches was reached by them during this conference last month?"

Dr. Knubel replied: "They are not yet at the stage of forming conclusions as to the future. They are, however, convinced that there will be value to the entirety of Christendom as the result of conferences following this one which has just been concluded. Because of the unanimity of discernment amongst those in attendance, plans have been drafted that will result in the formulation of a Constitution for a World Council of Churches. This will be submitted to all the churches, asking them to send official representatives to a general assembly to occur probably two years hence. Then and there a final constitution will be adopted, and an organization will come into existence. It is agreed that as a part of this proposed constitution there will be a doctrinal basis which will state that only such churches are eligible to participate as accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior. The purposes of the organization will grow out of previous ecumenical conferences, such as that of Faith and Order and Life and Work. These have already forecast possibilities of productive conferences."

Concerning this future gathering Dr. Knubel explained: "When the conference at Utrecht was concluded, those in attendance had reached the understanding that there is to be a General Assembly meeting every five years, constituted of not more than 450 members, all of whom are to be official representatives of churches. In the interim a Central Committee of 90 shall meet ordinarily every year. In both the General Assembly and the Central Committee an effort will be made whereby approximately one third of those selected will be from the laity, both male and female. The allocation of members is as follows: 17 from the orthodox churches; 22 from the continent of Europe; 12 from Great Britain and Ireland; 18 from the United States and Canada; 10 from Asia, Africa, and Australasia; and 6 representing ecclesiastical minorities not otherwise granted adequate representation above. Multiply each of these constituencies of the Central Committee by five, and the number of delegates from each group eligible for the General Assembly is obtained."

Dr. Knubel is right when he says: "We have come to a fork in the road." We are glad to see him make that statement. He is aware that

he and his church-body are facing the necessity of making a far-reaching decision. With respect to the Federal Council of Churches the U. L. C. undoubtedly feels that membership in it would not be entirely proper, and hence it maintains merely a consultative membership in that organization. Should it not be clear to the U. L. C. and its officials that the proposed alliance with churches which spurn what Lutherans hold sacred is not in keeping with loyalty toward the Word of God? If we are convinced that our teachings are right, how can we form a league with denominations that have been, and are still, opposing these teachings? The glamor which adheres to large organizations is threatening to blind people to the sinfulness of the course which union with those who reject vital parts of divine teaching entails. A.

Antagonism to Verbal Inspiration. — In a review of the book of Prof. Martin Graebner entitled *The Lord's Prayer and the Christian Life* a writer in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, issued by the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Gettysburg and the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, both institutions of the United Lutheran Church, says the following: "While the clarity and tone of writing are beyond criticism, one may question the adequacy of some of the demonstrations offered. The Bible is used as a source for proof in a quite literal sense. 'The Word of God came to prophets, evangelists, and apostles of old in the form of direct revelation from God on high. God spoke to them directly and gave them messages to transmit.' . . . '(The person who prays the Lord's Prayer sincerely, thoughtfully, and devoutly) will read the Bible with the determination of learning what God desires to teach him and not with the idea of comparing God's Word with the so-called results of historical criticism or of scientific investigation. . . .' The convictions which any reader may derive from Professor Graebner's book will depend to some extent upon the degree to which the point of view here enunciated is acceptable to him." It is evident that the reviewer refuses to accept the position sponsored by Professor Graebner, that of humble submission to the Holy Scriptures. He evidently is not willing to give such an *a-priori* allegiance to what the Scriptures say, but insists on the right of first investigating whether what is stated in the Scriptures is true or not. If what the reviewer contends for were merely the duty of first establishing the correct text before we accept a passage of the Scriptures or that of making sure that we have the correct translation, we certainly should not at all criticize his view. But his position evidently is that, even after the text has been correctly fixed and all questions of interpretation have been settled, one has not the right to demand that every word of the sacred text be looked upon as divinely given and authoritative. Such a position is not in keeping with the testimony of the Bible about itself. A.

Debate on Christianity and the Social Order. — In the *Living Church* of May 18 there is printed a letter, written by William Allmand Robertson of East Orange, N. J., in which he takes issue with a pamphlet issued by the Forward Movement Commission of the Protestant Episcopal Church having the title "A Better Economic Order — a Christian Approach." Having pointed to the deplorable fact that the followers of our

Lord have seldom been content to confine themselves within the limits which Christ imposed on Himself and having referred in proof to the episode when Jesus said to the man who wanted Him to judge between him and his brother, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" he discusses what he considers the errors of this pamphlet. He feels that the commission should not have entered this sphere, "where its observations are as rash and doubtful as they are weak and disappointing." He states that the pamphlet itself admits the view to be wrong that the Church's main task is to help in bringing in happier material conditions for poor people.

The pamphlet, so he avers, contains strong denunciations of "the motive of gain." What it favors are "a partnership relation between employer and employee and collective bargaining, unemployment insurance, and adequate provision for old age." It quotes a pastoral letter of the House of Bishops as saying: "Inequalities of wealth must be lessened. Christ demands a new order, in which there shall be a more equitable distribution of material wealth. The motive impelling economic activity must be altered. Above all else [Christ demands] an order which shall substitute the motive of service for the motive of gain." Mr. Robertson holds that our Lord never laid down any such rule. To prove his position, he refers to the parables of the Talents, of the Pounds, and of the Householder who wished to hire laborers for his vineyard.

Mr. Robertson's position may be outlined as follows: In itself the desire for gain is not an unholy thing. It is only when the love of money is made the great end and object of life and wealth is exalted into the place of Almighty God that the love of money becomes the root of all evil. Cf. the case of Zacchaeus. "The merchant who engages in trade and commerce, hoping thereby to provide for his wife and family in the present and for the future as well as to benefit others is not to be condemned because he seeks for large rewards in return for his labor and skill and anxious thought as well as the risk of his investment." Compare the words of Paul on the man who does not provide for his own.

With respect to the partnership relation between employer and employee Mr. Robertson complains the language of the pamphlet is very vague. He inquires whether the sharing that is contemplated is to have reference only to gains or to losses as well. "Sharing in gains is one thing and is popular; but sharing in losses is quite another thing and is most unpopular." He holds that no body of workers would be willing to enter upon an agreement of sharing both gains and losses with the employer instead of the present system whereby wages are regularly paid when pay-day comes around. He likewise submits that, if the workmen are to share in the gains, that would come pretty close to working for the motive of gain.

He inquires furthermore, What of competition? "Is the partnership or competitive spirit to be confined to those only who stand in relation of employer and employee, or is it to be extended to individuals, corporations, and other concerns that now exist side by side in trade and commerce as competitors? Is the competitive principle, which has done so much to eliminate incompetence, laziness, and unprogressiveness in

the world of business, to be thrown into the discard?" He complains that the pamphlet does not answer the question.

Speaking once more of the motive of gain, he urges consideration of the fact that this motive "has impelled many thousands of men to devote years of anxious thought and labor as well as to risk their private fortunes toward achieving new discoveries and inventions and setting on foot new business undertakings." What great advantages have come through this motive! How much employment has been provided through it! What great enterprises owe their origin to this very factor! Mr. Robertson fears that, if the motive of gain is done away with, then it is doubtful that there will be a continuation of such efforts. He feels that, if hard work, ingenuity, courage, and foresight are not given large rewards, they will not be cultivated.

The editor of the *Living Church* wrote a long reply to Mr. Robertson's letter, which he printed in the same issue. Taking up the first point emphasized by the correspondent, namely, the contention that the motive of gain has produced a great many fine things for the world and that it should not be removed, the editor says that, while the material goods and services have been increased by this means, this is not a good basis for judging a civilization. One should rather inquire, What has the profit motive done to promote truth, beauty, goodness? "The workman's pride in his work has been destroyed by the boss's attitude that the worker is to be worked as hard as possible, in as mechanical a way as possible, for the swiftest production of the greatest number of units, and by the worker's own attitude that he is to get the greatest possible gain for the least possible effort." This motive has played havoc with Christian love. Greed has been cultivated.

With respect to the second point in Mr. Robertson's letter, namely, that the ideas of brotherhood, production for use, etc., are visionary dreamings, the editor says: "So far have we sunk in the mire that a Christian dare not believe in the 'vague generalizations' preached by Jesus of Nazareth, about loving our fellow-man and being servants of each other." He criticizes Mr. Robertson for stating dogmatically that the Christian motive will not work and for not producing arguments except generalizations about human nature. He asks, Why not at least make an attempt at an order based on the good impulses which men have as well as the selfish ones?

Finally the editor speaks of the Scripture proof of Mr. Robertson and maintains that what he submits does not prove his point. The parables which Mr. Robertson adduces are declared not to be pertinent. He thinks that "our Lord claimed the whole allegiance of man — and claimed that allegiance in the form of citizenship in a divine society. Of course, He did not support this or that movement of Roman imperialism or Palestinian nationalism. He was advancing the claims of a kingdom in open conflict with both. All four gospels testify unmistakably to this fact, that of St. John with the utmost explicitness. Nothing that a man does can be separated from his religion. If voting, for example, is non-Christian, it is unchristian, and churchmen should not vote. If Christianity has nothing to do with business, a Christian should not be a business man. On the contrary, if his religion does have a bearing

on these things, it should be the dominant force." The editor then remarks that Christ did not develop these principles to their utmost application. His followers, guided by the Holy Spirit, were to carry out His teachings. His final sentence is: "But it is only through straightforward, peerless judgment of all human affairs by the divine standard that genuine and spiritual — as opposed to illusive and material — progress can be made.

In surveying what has been said in the above, one feels that this thought should have been made prominent: the Church's message is concerned with its own members. It, of course, should preach the Gospel to all creatures for their conversion. But as far as teaching sanctification is concerned, the Church's duty appertains to those who belong to it, not to the outsiders. One great mistake of the social gospel is that it strives to produce good results in the lives of people without first bringing them to the cross of Christ and making them His disciples. Mr. Robertson should have insisted on this truth when he spoke of the motive of gain, and the editor of the *Living Church* should likewise have emphasized this very important teaching. A.

The Presbyterian Assembly Meeting. — The feature of the 1938 meeting of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern Presbyterians), held in Philadelphia, which figured prominently in the head-lines, was the declaration that war is a "manifestation of sin in the world." One of the sentences adopted reads: "It is the duty of the Church to uphold the civil and religious liberties of all citizens and to support the policies of Government when they are in accord with the standards of righteousness revealed in the Word of God and to bear witness against such policies as depart from these standards." Here we evidently have a confusion of the Church's function and that of the individual Christians considered as citizens. The declaration that every war is unchristian did not receive unanimous approval. The committee in charge had a majority report which was adopted, but there was a minority report presented by Dr. Clarence E. Macartney of Pittsburgh, which recommended for adoption the declaration that "on occasions, when all peaceable means have been exhausted, the Government may find it necessary to employ force for the maintenance of public order and justice." The papers state that the majority report was adopted in very decisive fashion. Here, too, one must say that the Assembly went too far, adopting a statement which at least can be interpreted to brand even a legitimate war of defense as unchristian action. The moderator elected for the next year is Dr. Charles W. Welch of Louisville, Ky. The selection of a Southerner is interpreted by some as a gesture of friendship toward Southern Presbyterians, inviting them to establish union with their brethren in the North. A.

What Are the Special Characteristics of "American" Theology? — Writing in the spring number of *Christendom*, Prof. E. E. Aubrey, professor of Christian theology and ethics in the divinity school of the University of Chicago, says among other things, his subject being "The Promise of American Theology": "No American who was at Oxford or at Edinburgh could doubt that European Christians assumed that American delegates needed to be brought back to their senses in Christian

thought. The stock criticisms were that we cling to an ill-founded confidence in man, that we neglect theological reflection for practical and immediate programs, that we lack any appreciation of tradition, and that our pragmatic bias blinds us to the *a-priori* character of Christian faith. This indictment completed, American thinking could then be ignored, though in certain practical matters the American leaders could be given some latitude. Confronted by this indictment, American Christians tend to take one of two attitudes: either they concentrate more than ever on 'practical' matters to the deliberate exclusion of theological 'vagaries,' or they concede the European criticism and attempt to conform to a European pattern of theology — if they can decide which one." The drift of the article may be learned from this question, which the author addresses to his readers: "May we not insist that American religious experience is just as real as any other; that, where it does diverge from the European pattern, it may well embody creative insights as its contribution to ecumenical Christianity?" Then he goes on to say: "To be creative, American theology must maintain continuity with the Christian tradition which it seeks to modify; it must base its contributions on significant experience; and the situation must be ripe for these contributions to enter in and fertilize thought." How far removed the author evidently is in his thinking from real Bible theology, where the deciding factor is, "It is written"! God be praised that Professor Aubrey's theology, after all, represents but a small segment of American religious thinking. A.

Modernism and Morality. — *Christianity Today* (April, 1938) writes: "The *Church Times*, in commenting upon the statement by a priest of the Church of England, at the recent modern Churchmen's conference, that he did not believe in the resurrection of the Lord, says: 'As the matter stands, nothing could be more plainly self-condemned than a public denial by a priest of a dogmatic fact which he affirms to be true whenever he recites the Creed, which, moreover, he is expressly commissioned to teach, and on which his own right to retain his official position depends. Denials of the faith by those commissioned to be its advocates are simply demoralizing and deadly to belief in the reality of religion. It is neither intellectually consistent nor morally defensible for a man to continue an official exponent of a faith which he is conscientiously unable to teach, which he is persuaded to be no better than a mere illusion, and which by his denial he undermines.'" This rebuke is well deserved. But just that is the nature of false prophets, that they come in sheep's clothing, as Christ has warned us. The recitation of the Creed and other outward conformance to orthodoxy in word and deed belongs to the sheep's clothing by which they safeguard their hold on the flock which they deceive. Of course, nothing will come of the reproof if no drastic measures follow it or, to speak more plainly, if there is no church discipline for manifest perverters of the divine truth. And here lies the chief weakness of those churches that are infested with Modernists. J. T. M.

„Darum: christliche Lehre." Das „Kirchenblatt" der Amerikanisch-Lutherischen Kirche zitiert Dr. Hanns Lilje, den Sekretär des „Lutherischen Weltkonvents", in der folgenden Aussprache, der auch wir mit Nutz und

Segen weiter nachdenken könnten. Dr. Lilje schreibt: „Daß die Orthodoxie bei dem Intellektuellen seit geraumer Zeit in schlechtem Ruf steht, bedarf keines Belegs. Es gab für ihn kaum ein abfälligeres Urteil über ihre christliche Verkündigung als dies, daß sie *orthodox* sei, was immer das sein mochte. Und andererseits war seit über einem Jahrhundert sein Wunschbild eine undogmatische Religiosität. Aber dieser Gedankengang ist aus mehr als einem Grund falsch. Zunächst schießt er als *geschichtliches Urteil* über die Orthodoxie weit über das Ziel hinaus. Was immer man auch von der Theologie des 17. Jahrhunderts kritisch sagen muß [?], so kann das alles doch nicht die große Tatsache aufwiegen, daß die Orthodoxie mit einer fast beispiellosen Entschlossenheit ein aus den Fugen geratendes Denken wieder gesammelt und in Zucht genommen hat. Das mächtige Streben jener Männer am Ausgang des Dreißigjährigen Kriegs, die Wahrheit Gottes in Christo neu zu erfassen [so?] für ein Geschlecht, das überhaupt keine Direktiven im Leben und Denken mehr zu haben schien, ist eine geistesgeschichtliche Großtat. Der geistige Wiederaufstieg Deutschlands nach jenem großen Krieg, die Blüte des deutschen Idealismus und manche andere Großtat der Geistesgeschichte leben auch von der Treue jener energischen Einseitigkeit des christlichen Denkens. Es besteht kein Anlaß, diese Erinnerung gering anzuschlagen oder sich jener Männer zu schämen. Worin lag ihre Wirkung begründet? Darin, daß diese Männer etwas von Überzeugungstreue und strengster Wahrheitsliebe wußten. Überzeugungstreue ist immer etwas anderes als stumpfsinniges Nachreden von toten Formeln. Wahrheitsliebe ist immer etwas anderes als Disputiersucht und Weltfremdheit. Ein Volk lebt überhaupt nur von Treue der Überzeugung. Und mit einer Kirche ist es nicht anders. Gewiß, die Orthodoxie ist dem ‚modernen' Menschen jeder Epoche auf die Nerven gegangen. Aber wollte heute auch nur *einer* behaupten, daß die saloppe ‚Gegenwartsgemäßheit' in der Verkündigung, die mit Liebenswürdigkeit und Eilfertigkeit alle Hindernisse des Verständnisses aus dem Weg räumen wollte, der Kirche etwas anderes als Schaden und Substanzverlust eingetragen hätte? Es ist Zeit, daß unsere Kirche sich der Aufgabe der Lehre wieder mit gesammelter Kraft zuwende. Lehre ist niemals ein intellektualistisches Geschäft, sondern jenes große Gut der Kirche, in dem die Glaubenserfahrung der Väter, ihre Treue in Bekenntnis und Wandel, aus der Tiefe biblischer Erkenntnis geschöpft, der Gegenwart weitergereicht wird. Dazu braucht man Menschen, die es wagen, die großen Grundlehren der Offenbarung selbständig denkend zu erarbeiten und bekennend festzuhalten. Eine Kirche der Unmündigen ist eine verlorne Institution. Eine Kirche, die die Predigt des Evangeliums durch Randbemerkungen zur Zeitlage oder gar durch karitative Geschäftigkeit ersetzt, hat aufgehört, Kirche zu sein, und ist auf die Ebene eines religiösen Vereins herabgesunken. Solche Kirche gibt dem Zerrbild recht, das [seitens der Spötter] von der Kirche verbreitet wird: eine harmlose Gesellschaft, deren Überzeugung von der eigenen Wichtigkeit ebenso peinlich wie unbegründet ist. Darum: christliche Lehre!"

Wir geben Dr. Lilje nicht in allem, was er hier schreibt, recht. Seine Darlegung z. B. hat einen besonderen Hintergrund, der uns fremd ist, den der modernen Theologie. Wenigstens ist es diese Theologie gewesen, die sich eingebildet hat, die Wahrheit Gottes in Christo „neu erfassen" zu müssen, die auch an der Theologie des 17. Jahrhunderts vieles zu kritisieren gehabt

hat und die sich endlich auch für eine „Blüte des deutschen Idealismus" zu begeistern wußte. Immerhin ist es wertvoll, daß hier Dr. Lilje die orthodoxen lutherischen Theologen des 17. Jahrhunderts aufs neue verteidigt und die christliche Lehrbesprechung wieder als absolut nötig ins Zentrum stellt. Sein „Darum: christliche Lehre!" muß auch uns zur Anspornung dienen, daß wir in Zukunft noch mehr, als dies in letzter Zeit bei uns geschehen ist, wieder die Lehre studieren und besprechen. Lassen wir es hierin fehlen, so werden wir fürwahr gar bald zu einer „harmlosen Gesellschaft, deren Überzeugung von der eigenen Wichtigkeit ebenso peinlich wie unbegründet ist". Nur muß dann die Lehre auch im Leben Anwendung finden. Es muß ein „Gehet aus von ihnen und sondert euch ab!" erfolgen von denen, die die christliche Lehre nicht wollen. J. T. M.

Ein einzigartiges Werk. Das Urwaldspital Lambarene besteht jetzt fünfundzwanzig Jahre. Es liegt im französischen Kongogebiet und ist eine Gründung Albert Schweitzers. Zunächst eine Art Feldlazarett gegen Schlafkrankheit, Dysenterie, Aussatz und Frambösie, wurde es allmählich ein geräumiges Hospital mit mehreren weißen Ärzten und Ärztinnen und einer Schar schwarzer Helfer. Es hat in diesen Jahren schon Tausenden von Menschen Hilfe gebracht. 1928 erkannte die Stadt Frankfurt Albert Schweitzer den Goethepreis zu und ehrte damit einen wahrhaft hilfreichen Menschen, der zugleich ein anerkannter Gelehrter und ein bedeutender Musiker ist und diese seine Gaben in den Dienst der leidenden Menschheit stellt. Er sagt einmal selbst: „Was wir den Eingebornen Gutes erweisen, ist nicht Wohltat, sondern Sühne. Für jeden, der Leid verbreitete, muß einer hinausgehen, der Hilfe bringt. Und wenn wir alles leisten, was in unsern Kräften steht, so haben wir nicht ein Tausendstel der Schuld gesühnt." Eine Würdigung der Lebensarbeit Schweitzers in der „Frankfurter Zeitung" schließt mit den Worten: „Wir wissen nicht, was das Urwaldspital einmal bedeuten wird. Diese kleine Missionsstation ist der Außenposten eines Europas, das noch immer große Lehrer hervorbringt. Sie ist wie ein Leuchtturm am Rande eines dunklen Meeres, das wohl noch groß und ruhig daliegt, doch zuweilen von drohenden Windstößen gekräuselt ist." So weit die „Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung". Es sollte erwähnt werden, daß der vielgefeierte Schweitzer ein Erzmodernist ist. A.

Brief Items. — The Liberal Evangelicals of the Protestant Episcopal Church recently held a meeting at St. George's Church in New York. One of the topics of debate was the question of open communion. All, it seems, were in favor of practising open communion; some, however, wished to see this done occasionally only, whereas others contended for making it the normal practise.

In the Chicago area about eighteen Baptist churches have declared themselves willing to receive into membership people who have not been baptized by immersion. The practise which these churches stand for is called that of "open membership." The majority of Baptist churches, however, repudiated this position, and at a recent meeting the resolution was adopted that only those churches which insist on the immersion of their members can be received into the Chicago Baptist Association. The question now is whether the "open-membership" churches will remain in the association.

In Geneva there will be conducted this summer an international theological *seminar*, giving information on the chief theological currents in America and Europe. Among the lecturers are Prof. Martin Dibelius and Prof. Sommerlad from Germany and Dr. K. Barth and Dr. Thurneysen from Switzerland.

In May the Southern Presbyterians, when the General Assembly met in Meridian, Miss., voted on the question whether the old Calvinistic dogma teaching that some men and angels are predestined to damnation should be kept in their confession of faith. The dogma reads: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestined unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. And their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." When the count was taken, it was found that 150 favored that these words be taken out while only 130 voted for their retention. Hence they will be removed from the confession. One argument mentioned in the debate was that the dogma is an overstatement, "which keeps our ministers constantly on the defensive." This is true; one would like to know, however, what the debaters had to say on the question of the Scripturalness of this Calvinistic shibboleth.

With respect to the oaths of loyalty to Hitler which the pastors of the State Church in Germany are ordered to take, a correspondent in the *Christian Century* states that the so-called German Christians are responsible for this development. The Confessional Synod is said not to have sponsored the idea.

Southern Baptist Convention. It was a large meeting which was held in Richmond, Va., when the Southern Baptists met there for their annual convention. About five thousand delegates had come from the eighteen States and the District of Columbia which constitute the territory of this body. The new president is Dr. L. R. Scarborough, president of the Southwestern Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, Tex. The retiring president, Dr. Sampey, of the Baptist Seminary at Louisville, Ky., stated that Southern Baptists "will make their greatest contribution to the Christian cause by majoring on evangelism and missions and that they may well hesitate to join in national or world councils with legislative functions." This body has 136 missionaries in China. Several who are now home on furlough will return to China this summer. Among the noteworthy resolutions is one which approves the enactment of State Child Labor laws but condemns the proposed Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution and congratulates those State Legislatures which have refused to ratify it.

At the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va., in May, Dr. J. H. Rushbrooke of London stated that the Edinburgh Conference has done positive harm by urging that the various Christian denominations unite. This insistence, the speaker said, had merely widened the cleavages which divided Christians. It is a correct observation that unionism does not tend to unite the Church but rather causes more divisions and parties.