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Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

D. Saffes Kampf gegen die „lutherischen“ Zeugner der lutherischen Abendmahlslehre. In der „Kirchlichen Zeitschrift“ (Januar 1930) druckt D. Neu einen Reformationsfestartikel aus der Feder D. Saffes, der die Überschrift hat: „Sind wir noch Kirche der Reformation?“ und für die „Lutherische Kirche“ geschrieben wurde. Wir können uns nicht versagen, einige Abschnitte dieses trefflichen Artikels unsern Lesern vorzulegen: „Es gibt ‚evangelische‘ Kirchen in Deutschland, in denen kein Theologe mehr Pfarrer werden kann, der das glaubt, lehrt und bekennt, was Luther geglaubt, gelehrt und bekant hat. . . . Nein, man braucht wirklich nicht erst bis zu dem Deutschen Christentum gehen, um den vollen Verfall evangelischer Lehre im deutschen Protestantismus mit anzusehen. . . . Aber man handelt so, ‚als ob‘ man in den Bahnen des Reformators wandelt, wenn man das Gegenteil von dem tut, was er getan und gelehrt hat. . . . Es kann sein, daß jemand zu der Überzeugung kommt, Luthers Abendmahlslehre sei, um mit den Worten des Halleischen Theologen Voofs zu reden, ‚eine der grandiosesten Verzerrungen christlicher Glaubensgedanken‘. Wir achten jeden, der auf Grund ernster Bemühung um das Verständnis der Bibel zu andern Ergebnissen kommt als Luther und die Augsburgerische Konfession. Aber was wir dann aus Gründen menschlichen Anstands und christlicher Wahrhaftigkeit von ihm erwarten dürfen, ist dies, daß er sich ehrlich zu der Tatsache bekennt, daß er anders lehrt als Luther. . . . Wenn schon der menschliche Anstand es verbietet, einem Lebenden das Wort im Munde umzudrehen und aus seinen Worten das Gegenteil von dem zu machen, was er gesagt hat, wie viel mehr gilt das von den Vätern, die sich nicht mehr verteidigen, die nicht mehr anders zu uns reden können als durch ihr geschriebenes Wort! Wir möchten das nicht nur für Luther sagen, sondern für die Väter unserer Kirche überhaupt, von den vielgeschmähten Verfassern der Konfessionsformel bis zu den ‚Neulutheranern‘ des 19. Jahrhunderts, die gewisse Theologen unserer Zeit mit Hohn und Spott zu übergießen pflegen, nachdem sie ihre Werke auf gelehrte Zitate hin geplündert haben, und bis zu den Lehrern und Führern unserer Kirche, die noch bis in unsere Tage gelebt haben. . . . Die Undankbarkeit gegen das Werk der Reformation, die Verleugnung der Lehre Luthers, ist die tiefe Not der evangelischen Kirche Deutschlands. Sie ist die eigentliche Ursache für den offenkundigen Verfall unsers Christentums. Es hat keinen Sinn, daß wir uns über das beklagen, was die Gegner der Kirche uns antun. Sie vollstrecken ein Gericht, das kommen mußte und das diejenigen, welche ein wenig tiefer in die inneren Zustände unserer Kirche hineingesehen haben, längst haben kommen sehen. . . . Die einzige Rettung des evangelischen Christentums in Deutschland besteht vielmehr darin, daß wir endlich mit der furchtbaren Unwahrhaftigkeit ein Ende machen, in der der deutsche Protestantismus nun seit Generationen lebt. . . . Seit Schleiermacher besteht bei vielen Theologen die Theologie in der Kunst, mit den Worten des kirchlichen Bekenntnisses das Gegenteil von dem zu lehren, was das Bekenntnis sagt. Diese, aus einer tiefen weltanschaulichen Not erwachsene Unwahrhaftigkeit liegt wie ein Fluch auf der theologischen Wissenschaft und hat, indem sie von der Wissenschaft in die Praxis einbrang, das

kirchliche Leben vergiftet. Das ist die Krankheit, an der die evangelische Kirche leidet. . . . Der Durchschnittspfarrer von heute hat kein Gefühl mehr dafür, daß es eine Verfündigung an der Wahrheit ist, wenn er das fünfte Hauptstück [unser sechstes Hauptstück] in Luthers Erklärung lernen läßt, diese Erklärung aber wieder calvinisch erklärt. . . . Es war der große Irrtum des Protestantismus im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert, daß er meinte, der modernen Welt den Weg zum Christentum durch die Preisgabe der kirchlichen Lehre erleichtern zu können. Er hat damit nur erreicht, daß niemand mehr seine Verfündigung ernst nahm. Denn wer soll eine Kirche ernst nehmen, die selbst nicht mehr weiß, was sie glaubt, lehrt und bekennt? . . . Man meine auch nicht, daß eine Heringschälung des kirchlichen Bekenntnisses die Autorität der Heiligen Schrift steigern könnte. Es ist eine ganz unumstößliche Tatsache der Kirchengeschichte, daß die Autorität der Bibel mit der Autorität des die Bibel auslegenden Bekenntnisses steht und fällt. Das größte Beispiel dafür ist die Reformation selbst. Ohne das Bekenntnis der Kirche mit seinem „Dienst am Wort“, mit seinem Respekt vor dem Wort wird die Bibel zum Spielball willkürlicher, sektiererischer Auslegung. Oder gibt es eine tiefere, demütigere, dem Wort gehorsamere Auslegung der Heiligen Schrift als die Bekenntnisschriften unserer Kirche? Niemand behauptet, daß sie alles sagen. Niemand bestreitet, daß es Wahrheiten der Schrift gibt, die noch tiefer, noch besser verstanden werden müssen. Niemand nimmt Unfehlbarkeit für ihre Aussagen und Formulierungen in Anspruch. Das aber glauben wir, daß der Kirche neue Erkenntnisse und ein tieferes Verständnis der Schrift nur dann geschenkt werden können, wenn sie die Wahrheit, die ihr in der Reformation Luthers einst für alle Zeiten geschenkt worden ist, nicht vergißt und nicht verachtet.“

Das ist ein erschütterndes, aber auch herrliches Zeugnis, dem man es wünschen möchte, daß es in jeder lutherischen Studierstube beachtet und unter Gebet erzwungen würde. Freilich geht dieser teure Bekenner zu weit, wenn er meint, ohne das Bekenntnis der Kirche werde die Bibel „zum Spielball willkürlicher, sektiererischer Auslegung“. Das hätte etwas eingeschränkt werden sollen. Das Bibelwort ist mächtig und klar genug, sich auch ohne das Bekenntnis der Kirche zu behaupten. Wenn er davon redete, was gewöhnlich geschieht, dann hätte er recht. Es hätte am Schluß auch noch gesagt werden können, daß bekennnistreue Lutheraner, während sie allerdings die Bekenntnisse nicht als unfehlbar und inspiriert ansehen, doch glauben, daß darin die goldreine Lehre des göttlichen Wortes bekannt wird, daß sie darum auch nichts mit der sogenannten Lehrentwidlung zu tun haben wollen.

Schließlich sollten wir noch die Worte hinzufügen, mit denen D. Neu diesen Artikel Saffes einleitet. Er sagt, daß D. Saffe endlich einmal die Frage aufwirft, die längst hätte aufgeworfen werden sollen. „Ich nenne nur eins: Kann eine Kirche noch den Namen ‚lutherisch‘ beanspruchen, wenn zum Beispiel die erdrückende Mehrzahl ihrer Theologen die lutherische Lehre vom Abendmahl entweder offen bekämpft oder doch subjektiv umdeutet und die Kirchenleitungen entweder dazu schweigen oder selber ebenso handeln? Was soll unter diesen Verhältnissen der ‚lutherische‘ Weltkonvent?“ U.

American Delegates at the Lutheran World Convention. — According to an item that appeared in the *Lutheran* of December 28, 1938, forty delegates will represent American Lutheran churches at the Lutheran

World Convention to be held in Philadelphia in 1940. According to the allocation made by the committee the United Lutheran Church is asked to send 17 delegates, the American Lutheran Church 6, the Norwegian Lutheran Church 6, the Augustana Synod 4, the United Danish Lutheran Church, the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Free Church, and the Icelandic Synod each one. The item states: "Three places were held open for the possible use of the Suomi Synod, the Eielson Synod, and the Church of the Lutheran Brethren. It was furthermore agreed that the heads of the respective bodies are entitled to be delegates *ex officio* in addition to the number of regular delegates." A.

Is the Christian Ministry No Longer Attractive? — The *Presbyterian*, January 5, contains an article in which we read this paragraph: "A recent editorial in a great newspaper, commenting on the choice of professions of a college class of nearly 1,500, states that 8 per cent. chose medicine, 4 per cent. law, 15 per cent. accounting, 14 per cent. engineering, 6 per cent. business, over 25 per cent. teaching; but the ministry is not even mentioned, nor any percentage given. An inquiry of the institution reveals the fact that of the 1,500 only 3 chose the ministry, 2 the Roman Catholic priesthood, and one the Jewish rabbinate. In 77 years, of 8,000 alumni of this institution only 3 per cent. have entered the ministry. Of course, the story of our denominational colleges is very different, and yet less and less are students thinking of the ministry as a profession. . . . During the last five years, candidates for the ministry under our presbyteries' care have steadily dwindled: 1,464, 1,314, 1,274, 1,160, 1,128. During the same five years our 12 theological seminaries graduated every year fewer men, namely, 246, 228, 220, 208, 198. And of these seminary graduates, for years, the proportion who actually become pastors of churches grows ever less, falling from 93 per cent. in 1894 to 80 per cent. in 1928. . . . Last year 255 of our ministers died, and we ordained only 178. In 1935 it was much the same: 252 died, and we ordained only 176, and last year, with 255 dying, our seminaries produced, to take their places, probably not 160 men." Concluding his remarks, the writer of the article makes mention of the closing of Auburn Theological Seminary on account of lack of funds, the second oldest seminary of the Presbyterian Church. A dark picture! A.

State Aid for Parochial Schools. — Catholics won their fight for State aid for parochial schools in New York. By a narrow margin the voters at the November election approved Amendments One and Eight to the constitution, authorizing the State Assembly to pass legislation providing taxes for the transport of children to parochial schools and to furnish social services to the pupils of these schools. The whole power of the Roman Catholic hierarchy was used to influence the voters, and, as usual, the opposition was divided. But the chief blame for this breach in the principle of separation of Church and State must rest on the politicians; they were afraid of alienating the Catholic vote and had little to say on the matter. As was brought out by the Lutheran protest during the campaign, the matter of bus transportation for children attending parochial schools is not so much to be feared; but the "joker"

in the amendment is the other phrase: to furnish social services to them; anything from dental inspection to the building and equipping of new schoolhouses may be made to hide behind this. Besides, it is the first wedge; and, mixing my metaphors, you know what happens after the camel gets its nose into the tent.

T. H.

The "New York Times" recently quoted an advertisement that appeared in a Southern city: "Lost or strayed — an undetermined number of Baptists from services of First Baptist Church. Hope to find them at church. Dr. J. A. Stewart, pastor." To this the *Watchman-Examiner* remarked: "If Dr. Stewart will come to New York or any other large Northern city, he may find some of his 'lost' or 'strayed' members roaming among the crowds. Not only from Mississippi but from almost every other State in the Union there are thousands upon thousands of Baptists in urban centers who have failed to notify their home churches where they are and have never affiliated themselves with a 'church of like faith and order' in their new communities. Here is an evil which ought to be corrected." Reading this, I was reminded of an old farmer from the Ozarks who visited an acquaintance in a certain section of Kansas and, after viewing his farm, exclaimed: "Gott sei Dank, andere Leute haben auch Steine!" It is a sad consolation that the above-mentioned evil is not limited to Lutherans. — The situation is aggravated by the fact that there still are preachers who fail to report removals of members to the pastors in their new location even when they know about them or could easily find out.

T. H.

On Gambling. — Asserting that the situation in the Christian Church as far as gambling is concerned fills one with shame, the editor of the *Lutheran Companion* presents these facts gathered by the American Institute of Public Opinion, Dr. George Gallup, director. "The survey has revealed the fact that more people gamble in church-conducted lotteries and raffles than in any other form of game." The figures he (Dr. Gallup) gives are as follows: "Church lotteries, 29%; punch boards, 26%; slot-machines, 23%; playing cards for money, 21%; betting on elections, 19%; sweepstake tickets, 13%; betting on horse races, 10%; numbers games, 9%. The survey revealed the fact that more than five persons in every ten in the United States indulge in some form of gambling, and most of them freely admitted that they came out 'on the losing end.' Those who are in the lower-ring group were found most frequently among the losers, and 45% of all those who gambled confessed that they are 'on relief.'" Continuing, the editor says that in Cincinnati the chancellor of the Roman Catholic diocese defended gambling "as a legitimate amusement or recreation because it is intended as a necessary relaxation of the mind." This utterance was made in criticism of the order of the city manager, who endeavored to restrict gambling practises in that city. There is no doubt that here attention is drawn to a sore spot in conditions as they obtain today in outward Christianity. A.

The Situation in Korea. — "One long resident in Korea" draws a disturbing picture of the situation in the Presbyterian missions in Korea as he discusses the situation in an article appearing in the *Presbyterian*. We quote a few of his sentences. "Due to strict censorship, it is difficult

to inform the Church in 'sending-lands' of the most amazing period of trial the Korean Church has ever known. It is so insidious and subtle that it would be hard to prove that it is persecution, and yet it is undermining one of the greatest churches in mission lands, a Church of 500,000 Protestant adherents. This period of trial began three years ago by the government's requiring all schools to do obeisance at the shrines of the sun goddess Ama-terasu O-mikami, the grand ancestress of the imperial family of the late emperor Meiji. To most missionaries and Korean Christians this seems nothing more or less than paganism, than ancestor-worship, even though officials insist that they are not requiring it as a religious rite but only as an act of patriotism. Several missionaries and Koreans were removed as principals and teachers in schools because they refused to comply. Three Presbyterian missions, representing by far the greater part of the work in Korea, finally decided that they would withdraw from the field of secular education. They do not want to oppose the government in its educational policy, and they feel that, regardless of whatever stand the Korean can or will take, the missions must take the stand that to comply with such an order is to compromise Christian witness. Many mission-schools have been closed. From other schools the missions are withdrawing and the schools are being carried on by the presbyteries or boards of control. The Korean Christians in such cases, although sympathetic with the missionaries, were faced with the dilemma of having no schools for their children, or compromising. The government officials naturally encouraged, or put pressure on, the Koreans to continue schools. Indeed, they know the alternative for them is arrest and torture." In addition, the government has sought to compel the native Christians to go to the shrines and bow there. At church meetings, through the pressure exerted by the presence of police officials and the action of plain-clothes men, resolutions were passed condoning such "going to the shrines."

In speaking of what has resulted, the writer says: "Some churches have been able to 'get by' by silent prayer at the beginning of the services, singing the national anthem, repeating the oath of allegiance, bowing to the East, raising the national flag in front of the church-building—things which most Christians (but not all) think they can do without a compromise of conscience."

The following information is likewise to the point: "With the present war in China the denationalization of the Korean people has been carried on in earnest. The use of Japanese by all officials and in all the schools is required. It is predicted that in a few years preaching in the churches will be allowed only in Japanese. . . . Many of the best Korean church-leaders are, or have been, in prison for two reasons. First, because they refuse to go to the shrines. They have been tortured by beatings, by the 'water cure,' by being dragged by the hair, by being forced to sign statements, by being released for a few days and then called back to endure more torture. . . . Other church-leaders and Christian teachers have been imprisoned because of political suspicion. . . . Extreme nationalism has put them under suspicion, and their future at this moment seems hopeless." These are terrible conditions. May God have mercy on His little flock!

A.

The Difficulties of the "Godless" in Russia continue to multiply. In spite of their bland assurances (for foreign consumption) that religion will be thoroughly stamped out within a few years, their own papers have been publishing agitated accounts of a wide-spread and increasing interest in religion throughout the Soviets. Their editors are particularly exercised over the specially keen inquiry about religion among the young people and within the chosen ranks of the Komsomol, which includes nearly 6,000,000 of both sexes between fourteen and twenty-three years of age. The current purge of this organization, which was considered to be definitely committed to the godless ideology of the Soviet régime, has been attributed to the Soviet abhorrence for "the development of extreme moral laxity" in the Komsomol. That, however, is an excuse too often used recently by several governments to cover persecutions for other reasons objectionable to the authorities. Uneasy knowledge is taken of the fact that village churches are being more frequently attended by young women who bring their children to the services. Some groups on the collectivist farms (state-controlled) will not work on Sunday. At Berditchef the peasants placarded their meeting-houses with Bible-verses — "Consider the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin," and "Thou shalt not kill." The first text caused the peasants to be charged with sabotage of the collectivist farm spirit; the second convicted them as conscientious objectors. A growing group of Adventists have become so influential that atheists, and even their children, are being converted. Near Rostov another group, vowed to silence, will take no part in the government and follow only the precepts of the Bible. For all these the "Godless" ask the Soviet's condemnation as "Kulaks undermining the work of the Soviet régime." Russia is slowly on her way to learn that persecution of faith only vindicates it in the end. — *The Lutheran*.

Niemoeller Still in Prison. — In an article written by Dr. Turner, formerly pastor of the American Church in Berlin, the *Christian Century* submits interesting news on Pastor Niemoeller's condition. In spite of numerous efforts in his behalf his release has not yet been obtained. We quote Dr. Turner: "These delegations doubled in number as the Christmas season approached. Most moving and dramatic of all was the personal petition of Field Marshal von Mackensen to Hitler. This sole surviving war lord is a popular hero in Germany and has been much feted by the Nazis. He is an outspoken evangelical believer, as was Hindenburg. Mackensen, who is in his ninetieth year, stated his willingness to forego a military funeral and other public honor if only the Fuehrer would grant the request of one who might die any time, and stated that his sole and last request was for the liberation of Pastor Niemoeller." The plea was in vain. Niemoeller "is now allowed to write only his wife, and that but twice monthly. . . . Niemoeller's physical and mental health is noticeably suffering. An attack of intestinal gripe, an illness prevalent around Berlin this summer, further weakened his powers in August. During October a threat of pneumonia caused great anxiety throughout the Evangelical Church. . . . The cells at Sachsenhausen uniformly have full-length windows. The lower two thirds of

Niemoeller's window, however, has been boarded up, affording him inadequate light and no outside view. . . . As for his family, the Dahlem pastor has been nominally allowed to see his wife and one child monthly. This would ordinarily mean that he sees his entire family every seven months, for there are seven children. . . . Frau Niemoeller does not journey to the concentration camp for the monthly meeting with her husband. They see each other at Alexanderplatz, the Berlin city police headquarters. Dr. Niemoeller looks forward to the auto ride as a welcome break in camp monotony. The route lies through fifteen miles of beautiful Brandenburg landscape north of Berlin. Concentration camp Sachsenhausen lies at Oranienburg, and the camp is sometimes called Oranienburg. . . . So far as can be learned, the present demand is that Niemoeller promise to leave the Christian ministry as the price for his release. Earlier he was twice offered his freedom if he would promise not to attack the state. His reply was that during the war, if he saw a ship with the enemy's flag, he would send a torpedo at it; now if he hears any voice lifted against Christ and the Church, he will send a torpedo off, regardless of who the defamer is. Without promotion of any kind from the confessional leadership, a steady stream of delegations has poured in upon Berlin from all parts of Germany. . . . A delegation, composed entirely of militant Nazi party members, came from the mines to plead for Niemoeller's release. One gaunt miner rose and addressed the ministry official thus, 'I have the lung disease that we miners die of in Westphalia. My father died of it; his father died of it. My son has just entered the mines. If you radical fellows take our Christ away from us miners, what have we got left?'

It is difficult for us to judge of this case correctly at this distance. Since Niemoeller has become a world figure, we consider it proper to print the above excerpts.

A.

The President's Birthday Ball. — In the *Watchman-Examiner* Chaplain Henry W. Anderson of Roseburg, Oreg., calls attention to the President's "Birthday Ball," which seems to have become a national institution and, cleverly promoted as a benefit ball, with proceeds dedicated to fight infantile paralysis, has caught the interest of this dance-mad age. Rightly he points out that, however praiseworthy the end may seem, Christians can hardly (?) justify the means employed: "A day wherein sin holds high carnival is not sanctified by a philanthropic purpose, however worthy." The Baptist journal adds that this nationwide dance orgy is in many places associated with heavy drinking; that Christians can certainly have nothing to do with the present method of celebrating the President's birthday; that in view of the moral state of our country and the world it would be more proper to observe the day in prayer and self-denial.

T. H.

Evolution — Bible Skepticism — Is It Scholarly? — Robert Etheridge, F. R. S., distinguished Fossilologist of the British Geographical Survey and Assistant Curator of the Geological Department of the British Museum in South Kensington, says: "In all this great museum there is not a particle of evidence of the transmutation of species. Nine tenths of the talk of evolutionists is sheer nonsense, not founded upon observation, and

wholly unsupported by facts. This museum is full of proofs of the utter falsity of their views." W. Bell Dawson, M. A., M. E., D. Sc., M.-Inst. C. E., F. R. S. C., Laureate, Academy of Science, Paris, Gold Medalist in Geology and Natural Science, McGill University, says: "Evolution is a theory founded on ignorance." Sir William Dawson, M. A., LL. D., F. G. S., F. R. S., F. R. S. C., F. G. S. A. M., says: "I know nothing about the origin of man except what I am told in the Scriptures—that God created him. I do not know anything more than that, and I do not know of anybody who does. There is nothing in science that reaches the origin of anything at all." Quoted from tract by J. E. McKee (*Biblia Sacra*)

Current Crises and the Perspective of History.—Under this heading the *Catholic Historical Review* (Vol. XXIV, No. 3) prints L. J. A. Mercier's address before the eighteenth annual meeting of the American Catholic Historical Association held last year in Philadelphia. The essay reviews the two contradictory trends of Monism and Dualism in their historic perspectives to show how Monism, which in its present form is about a century old, is the deadly enemy of theistic Dualism upon which our present civilization is built. Describing the two contradictories, he writes: "Dualism recognizes other-worldliness and this-worldliness, God and the universe, with man the intelligent line between the universe and God. Monism merges God, man, and nature into one self-existing evolution. As these two conceptions are contradictories, no other can have appeared in history which is not reducible to one of them." Monism, however, as he goes on to point out, is bound "to destroy the civilization built on a foundation of Dualism, and, on its ruins begin to erect its opposite. . . . If there is only one order of existence, as the Monist would have it, then there is no God distinct from man and nature, their Creator and end. The idea of personal immortality must be given up and the religions of the Western world. The individual sacredness of the human person, with corresponding inalienable rights, likewise disappears, and the way is paved for the totalitarian state. If reality is purely a becoming, realizing itself through struggle, might makes right, and any means may be used to attain supremacy whether in the economic or political field or in international relations. If there is no antecedent righteousness in the mind and will of a God which we should aim to discover, we are left to make our own morality; and whether we say, with the pragmatist, that ideas are true when they work to our satisfaction, or, with the instrumentalist, when they work for the social good, our truth remains relative to the flux of total change in which we have immersed ourselves by merging God, man, and nature; and that flux includes the appetites, emotions, and fancies of the racketeer or atheistic Communist as well as of the liberal humanitarian. Monism must remain morally helpless in its subjectivism." . . . "The Monistic historian of our day hides this perspective as the Monistic philosopher hides the perspective of the history of thought. Both would have us believe that humanity was in thralldom till it caught the vision of a Monistic reality and a Monistic evolution. They both beg the question. . . . Today the Monistic naturalist tells the Protestant that even Modernism is outmoded, that civilization must be reorganized on an atheistic basis, here through

class struggle, there through race supremacy, while everywhere a subjective morality leaves every personal right at the mercy of the ruthless force." One readily agrees with these conclusions, though not with the author's implied and expressed suggestion that Romanism today offers a panacea against idealistic and materialistic Monism. He quotes "an eminent Protestant leader" as saying: "I believe with you that, if we lose the distinction between the human and the subhuman, in a pantheistic Monism, then all is lost. The Monism which blurs and finally banishes all the distinctions which give the moral and spiritual and esthetic life of man any real meaning, I regard as the foe which we must fight together. I find myself increasingly with the Neo-Thomists in a large number of matters; and I am sure that there are vast numbers of people in the Protestant churches who would agree with me in all these things." He also quotes a "prominent American philosopher" as saying: "I, too, feel the well-nigh desperate need of restoring the native American dualistic practical philosophy: objective standards with individual freedom, of course, in proper limitations, as against the socialistic-communistic-materialistic-instrumentalistic threat. I wish that we might have conferences clearing the air, giving at least mutual understanding of our positions. I wish, too, that we could diffuse a sounder knowledge of Neo-Scholasticism." But neither Neo-Thomism, in particular, nor Neo-Scholasticism, in its wider implications, can save our modern world from the destruction of the various Monistic forces; only the Bible and its divine religion can offer that salvation. Thomism, whether new or ancient, is rationalistic, is human speculation, and, after all, its difference from Monism is not so much in kind as in degree. What gave the world salvation four hundred years ago through the Reformation will still help it today — the omnipotent Word of God, which is His appointed power to salvation to every one that believes and which outlives all pantheistic and materialistic notions of unbelieving men. This Word, which we possess in its truth and purity, we must oppose alike to Monism and Romanism in their ably directed propaganda for recognition and victory.

J. T. M.

A Book that Comes to a Bad End.—Under this heading the Rev. Prof. R. B. Kuiper, in the *Presbyterian Guardian* (January, 1939), discusses Dr. Link's *The Rediscovery of Man* far beyond the scope and confines of a mere book review. As Dr. Link's *Return to Religion*, so also *The Rediscovery of Man* has received much praise also in the religious press of our country; and in the general field of *iustitia civilis* it indeed stresses important truths. Dr. Kuiper freely admits that this second volume of Dr. Link is much better than the first. It bitterly deplores present-day denial of man's responsibility in almost every sphere of human endeavor and is a powerful plea for renewed recognition of individual responsibility. After discussing this point at great length, Dr. Kuiper continues: "Dr. Link's emphasis on individual responsibility is beyond question one of the greatest needs of our generation and therefore deserves the warmest kind of commendation. But how is man to meet his responsibility? Where is he to get the strength to discharge it? Dr. Link's reply to that intensely practical inquiry is: by returning to

religion. Again our author is right, and once more we express enthusiastic assent. One crucial question remains. Of the many religions of mankind, which is it that will enable man to do his duty? For the Christian but one answer is possible. It is: the Christian religion. Does Dr. Link agree? Seemingly so. He expresses emphatic agreement with Christianity as the 'philosophy of personality,' and he adores Jesus as the 'Supreme personality.' And yet, sad to say, at this very point Dr. Link's argument breaks down, and the breakdown is so complete as to vitiate the whole book. Dr. Link's Christianity is not the Christianity of the historic Church. It is not the Christianity of the Bible. In short, Dr. Link's Christianity is not Christianity at all. After the manner of the liberal preacher the author brushes aside Christ's bodily resurrection and exclaims: 'Truly no personality who now walks the earth begins to be alive compared with the living influence of Jesus!' (P. 245.) That sounds suspicious. Our author is much more outspoken when he defines his 'rediscovered man.' Religion, he tells us, 'can give the individual a faith in the universe and in himself that will move mountains. The great religions have insisted on this truth, which psychology now scientifically confirms, that the individual is a creature of infinite possibilities. This conviction and the power which it gives is the final solution to the individual's conquest of himself, his environment, and his fears.' (Pp. 109, 110.) 'I see the soul,' says Dr. Link, 'as a unique power which enables the individual to say: I do not have to remain as I am, I can be something better. I have faith in my powers as a free-will agent, able to choose between right and wrong. I have faith in a moral and spiritual order higher than any comprehended by science or reason. By faith I can accept a superhuman concept of personality which gives me confidence in my own potentialities. I will not accept defeat; I will struggle to achieve. I may fall, but I will rise again. I may not win wealth, but I will win mastery over myself.' (Pp. 131, 132.) Can that evaluation of man be squared with the Scriptural verdict that unregenerate man is 'dead in trespasses and sins,' Eph. 2:1? Dr. Link bids man have faith in himself. But the Son of God said: 'Ye believe in God, believe also in Me.' John 14:1. Dr. Link would have man save himself. Christianity insists that salvation belongs to God, to God alone. Dr. Link's view of man is the exact opposite of the Christian view of man, so ably expounded by the late Dr. Machen under that very title. *In brief, the religion advocated by Dr. Link, far from being Christianity, is the baldest kind of humanism.* [Italics his own.] Dr. Link was running well on the path of human responsibility. But the devil had a trap waiting for him. The great deceiver had shrewdly set it at the precise spot where so many have been caught before Dr. Link. And Dr. Link landed squarely in the trap *when from the sound premise of full human responsibility he jumped thoughtlessly to the utterly false conclusion of plenary human ability.* [Italics our own.] The trap sprang with a vengeance. William E. Henley once boasted: 'It matters not how strait the gate, How charged with punishment the scroll, I am the master of my fate: I am the captain of my soul.' The author of *The Rediscovery of Man* sings with him. But their song is Pelagian, pagan, even blasphemous."

We read both of Link's recent works with deep interest, and Dr. Kuiper's critique of his last coincides with our own criticism of it in a remarkable way. And yet the religious press of our country has largely praised and recommended it as a *Christian* book, not noticing its Pelagianistic viewpoint. Dr. Kuiper's opinion on the volume is very valuable, showing, as it does, that there are still men in our country who can recognize Pelagianism also in its more refined form. In our own Church we must keep on studying diligently and persistently Articles I and II of the Formula of Concord; for Christianity's greatest enemy is, after all, Pelagianism in its various forms. J. T. M.

An Englishman Warns Congregationalists. — Bernard Manning, professor of history at Cambridge, England, is reported to have spoken the following frank words to a meeting of Congregationalists in England: "A Congregationalism which thinks lightly or coldly about the Word and the Sacraments will surely, however slowly, set itself outside the communion of Christendom. . . . That has already happened to what was once a sister church as evangelical and orthodox as our own. English Presbyterianism, at first the most splendid of the three dissenting bodies, clung only to the negations and abandoned the affirmations of the Reformers. In the eighteenth century it wilted in Arianism and perished in Unitarianism. To a hostile or a pessimistic eye Congregationalism in the twentieth century might appear to be in danger of repeating that pitiful and shameful story. It is a path which some of us seem not loath to tread. May God in His mercy preserve the Church which He purchased with His own blood! The peril is real. It will not abate until we have learned afresh the majesty of the revelation of God in Christ in historic time, until we have seen the Word breaking through to a world that is lost." (Quoted in *Christian Century*.)

Aus Rom. Das Ablasswesen soll neu geordnet werden. Cardinal Lauri hat dem Papst einen 700 Seiten starken Band vorgelegt, der alle Gebete und Frömmigkeitsübungen enthält, die mit Ablässen ausgezeichnet sind. Ebenso sind alle Bedingungen genannt, die zur Gewinnung eines bestimmten Ablasses zu erfüllen sind. Vorangestellt sind die Bestimmungen des kanonischen Gesetzbuches über die Ablässe, die Dekrete der Päpste und Kongregationen und andere grundsätzliche Ausführungen. Als Zweck dieser Neuausgabe nennt das Vatikanische Blatt *Osservatore Romano* die Notwendigkeit, die "delicatissima materia" der Ablässe in einer der Zeit zuzugewandten Form darzustellen. Nach Veröffentlichung dieser Sammlung sollen nur die darin enthaltenen Ablässe noch gelten. Gebete und Werke, die nicht enthalten sind, verlieren die Ablässe. (Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung)

Das neue Eherecht in Osterreich. Katholische Zeitschriften schlagen gewaltigen Lärm darüber, daß durch den Anschluß Eheschließung und Ehescheidung in Osterreich den Händen der Kirche entzogen und in die Hand des Staats gelegt worden sind. Ehe man überhaupt darauf hört, sollte man wissen, daß in dem katholischen Osterreich in bezug auf das Eherecht einfach mittelalterliche Zustände herrschten. Die „Kirchliche Zeitschrift“ berichtet so: „Von besonderer Bedeutung für die Ostmark ist es, daß das neue Eherecht des Reiches auch dort durchgeführt wird. Dort war das kanonische Eherecht Rechtsgrundlage für den Staat gewesen, nur daß zuletzt für die

nichtkatholischen Staatsbürger Sonderregelungen zugelassen waren. So bestanden schließlich vier bis fünf gültige Eherechte nebeneinander: für die Katholiken, die dem kanonischen Recht unterworfen waren; für die Burgenländer, die noch nach dem alten ungarischen Recht ihre Ehe geschlossen hatten; für Protestanten; für Konfessionslose und für die Juden. Es ist klar, daß diese Vielheit von Ehegesetzen zu einer Fülle juristischer Winkelzüge Anlaß bot. Die größte Rechtsunsicherheit herrschte auf dem Gebiet der Ehescheidung, zumal hier zu der Vielheit der Ehegesetze noch die katholische Dispensese hinzukam. Während nämlich nach katholischem Recht eine Ehe nicht geschieden werden kann, so daß auch Eheleute, die sich getrennt haben, nicht wieder heiraten dürfen, hatte der österreichische Staat sie von dieser Fessel des kanonischen Rechts dispensiert und zu ihrer Wiederverheiratung mitgewirkt. Solche Dispensese gab es über 50,000. Derselbe österreichische Staat, der sie geschaffen, erklärte sie durch Anerkennung des kanonischen Eherechts und der katholisch-kirchlichen Ehegerichtsbarkeit durch das Konfordat von 1934 für im Grundsatz ungültig. Die Folge dieser Rechtsunsicherheit war, daß unzählige Paare sich der kirchlichen Gerichtsbarkeit entzogen, indem sie die kirchliche Trauung nicht mehr begehren und in wilder Ehe lebten. Von diesen Zuständen wurde auch die evangelische Kirche berührt, weil sie im ganzen Volk die sittlichen Folgen dieses 'Rechtszustandes' sah und weil das kanonische Recht nicht nur für Paare galt, die beide katholisch waren, sondern auch für solche, bei denen nur ein Teil katholisch war oder zur Zeit der Eheschließung zur römischen Kirche gehörte, aber dann evangelisch geworden war. Aus einer Ordnung, welche die Ehe schützen wollte, war eine Quelle der Unordnung geworden. Das neue Ehegesetz ist einheitlich für alle. Gewiß, es faßt Ehe und Eheschließung wie Ehescheidung nur unter natürlichen Gesichtspunkten — wie sollte der Staat auch von einem andern Gesichtspunkt ausgehen können? Man drückt das so aus: Die Ehe ist nur in ihrer Beziehung zum Volksleben zu ordnen. So erklärt sich § 36, 1: 'Ein Ehegatte kann Aufgeben der Ehe begehren, wenn der andere ohne triftigen Grund sich beharrlich weigert, Nachkommenschaft zu erzeugen oder zu empfangen, oder wenn er rechtswidrig Mittel zur Verhinderung der Geburt anwendet oder anwenden läßt.' Und es ist Sache des Staates, sie zu ordnen. Luther sagte (W. A. 32, 377): 'Was die Obrigkeit und weise Leute in Ehesachen nach dem Recht und der Vernunft beschließen und ordnen, da soll man es bei bleiben lassen. Denn auch Christus hat in diesem Punkt nichts gesagt und geordnet als ein Jurist oder Regent in äußerlichen Sachen, sondern allein als ein Prediger die Gewissen unterrichtet, daß man das Gesetz vom Scheiden recht brauche, nicht nur zur Vöberei und eigenem Mutwillen wider Gottes Ordnung.' Daß daneben die Kirche eine Aufgabe hat, die Schließung wie Führung und Scheidung der Ehe bei ihren Gliedern unter das Licht des Wortes Gottes zu stellen, schließt das neue Eherecht nicht im geringsten aus."

Was man auch über die deutsche Regierung sagen mag, dies sollte ihr zugute geschrieben werden, daß sie diesen wüsten Morast trocken gelegt hat. Man ist versucht zu sagen: Mag das Heilmittel noch so schlimm sein, schlimmer als solche Krankheit ist es nicht. Ferner: Österreich war keineswegs eine Ausnahme, was die beschriebenen Zustände anlangt; so wüßt geht's überall her, wo Rom herrscht. Man beurteile doch die römische Kirche nicht nach dem, was man z. B. hier in unserm Lande an ihr sieht; hier hat sie Kon-

kurrenz und muß sich daher einigermaßen betragen. Osterreich hat mehrmals in seiner Geschichte Gelegenheit gehabt, das römische Joch abzustreifen. Um der leidigen Politik willen hat man dort immer wieder mit Rom geliebäugelt und Kompromisse gemacht; und iwer sich so mit Rom einläßt, erntet immer dieselbe Frucht. T. S.

Brief Items.—From England comes the news that the demand for the book of the late J. G. Machen entitled "The Virgin Birth of Christ" has been so great that a new British edition of it has been issued. That is cheering.

At a community Thanksgiving service in Albany, at which President Henry Sloane Coffin of Union Theological Seminary, New York, preached the sermon, Presbyterian, Reformed, Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist clergymen took part. What a grand exhibition of doctrinal indifference!—At Saranac Lake, on the same day, Jews, Presbyterians, and Methodists united for a joint service. No Jewish Rabbi being available, a member of the Jewish community center sang part of the ritual of the Jewish faith.—In Plymouth, Mass., a Rabbi preached the Thanksgiving sermon in the Church of the Pilgrimage, the church where the first Thanksgiving was marked. Syncretism is the order of the day.

The Northern Presbyterians have a committee studying the work of their theological seminaries. They have twelve of them, including one in Puerto Rico.

Concerning the action of the German authorities in withholding salaries from pastors, members of the State Church, who have encountered the ill will of the government, the *Christian Century* very correctly remarks: "But what we wanted to say was that stopping a preacher's pay as punishment for treason reveals the impossible position of the Church. Pastors ought not to be drawing pay from that kind of state, and the Church cannot expect to be free while they do."

In Cincinnati a Jewish Rabbi has lectured to the Sunday-school teachers of a Presbyterian church on the books of Genesis, Numbers, Leviticus, and Esther, and the Presbyterian who reports it with approval says that he is conservative. What are we coming to? Similar news is reported from Atlanta, Ga., and Des Moines, Iowa.

A news item from Philadelphia says that on Universal Bible Sunday the New Testament was to be read aloud from cover to cover at the Grace Baptist Temple. From 3 A.M. to 10 P.M. 72 people were scheduled to read, each for fifteen minutes, beginning with the pastor, Dr. Daniel A. Poling. The only interruptions provided for were to be at the time of the morning and evening worship. This venture might deserve recognition as a *tour de force*, but there seems to have been little in it of a truly edifying character.

Philadelphia, recognized as the largest Protestant city in the Western Hemisphere, with one thousand churches, 500,000 communicants, and 700,000 unaffiliated but nominally of the faith, is preparing for an advancement program of pastoral and congregational evangelism under the Department of Evangelism of the Federation of Churches, of which President Walter B. Greenway is chairman. Dr. Luther A. Harr, the city

treasurer, has become chairman of the Department of Finance for the Federation. — *Christian Century*.

The Episcopalians of New York are attempting to finish the cathedral of St. John the Divine in time for the World's Fair. The four hundred clergy of the diocese have been requested by Bishop Manning to solicit funds for the project.

At a Roman Catholic meeting in Washington the announcement was made "that there is now one Roman Catholic newspaper in the United States for every two Roman Catholic families." Roman Catholic papers are said to have a circulation of 2,631,807. Of seven European nations studied, only two, the Netherlands and Belgium, are said to have a better record. *Videant consules*, etc.

The new census of Greater Germany divides the population among the confessions as follows: Roman Catholics, 27 million, or 36 per cent.; Evangelicals, 41 million, or 54 per cent.; other faiths, 7 million, or 10 per cent. — *News Bulletin of N. L. C.*

A correspondent of the *Lutheran* writes: "Among the nine largest Lutheran congregations in America six are in the U. L. C. A. Now the Year-book lists six pastors and three assistants at our big six congregations. This means nine pastors for a total of 27,624 baptized persons, or one for every 3,070. Furthermore, nine pastors are 'spiritual advisers' to 18,041 confirmed members, or one for every 2,004." The correspondent correctly observes that the pastors in such large congregations can personally reach only a fraction of the whole number of those who require help in life's various needs. A pastor in Stockholm, Sweden, who has six associate pastors, is at the head of a parish of 45,000. He admitted "the plight of trying to reach even the interested minority of the parish, say 15,000." The correspondent voices the conviction that, generally speaking, "we need many more pastors and full-time lay-workers."

Macaulay's gloomy prophecy concerning the future of the United States is given much circulation these days: "Your Republic will be pillaged and ravaged in the twentieth century, just as the Roman Empire was by the barbarians of the fifth century, with this difference, that in the devastations of the Roman Empire the Huns and the Vandals came from abroad while your barbarians will be the natives of your own country and the product of your own civilization."

With respect to Protestant worship Dr. W. A. Smart, professor of theology at Emory University, Atlanta, is reported to have said: "The worship of God is a lost art among Protestants. . . . In place of the cathedral we have a meeting-house, the chief function of which is to bring people together to hear a religious address. The worship of God is secondary." It can hardly be denied that this describes correctly the services held in many sectarian churches, especially since the sermons to a large extent do not set forth the message of the Scriptures but political and social theories grown in the garden of man's own thinking.

Is Methodism Too Emotional? — Bishop Hughes, referring to the criticism of President Charles Eliot of Harvard charging Methodism with

this fault, is quoted as follows: "I told him that, as far as my Church was concerned, it did not have one fourth enough emotionalism. The great center of overemotionalism in America is not the Church but the college. If people's emotions were stirred in church as they are at football games, religion would get somewhere." To distinguish between truth and error in this statement would be an effort that might lead to an acceptable essay for a conference.

The *Presbyterian* quotes this interesting statement: "The International Christian Press states that 72,000 Jews accepted Protestant baptism during the nineteenth century. The number of baptized converts among the heathen and Moslems in the same period was two million, or one to every 525 of the heathen and Moslem population. The same degree of success among heathen and Moslems as among Jews, says this authority, would have shown seven million converts instead of two million. Three times as many Jewish converts entered the Gospel ministry as converts from among the heathen. A comparison of facts shows that no mission-field of modern times has been so fruitful as the Jewish."

American Quakers Aid Spanish Families.—The American Friends Service Committee will distribute 60,000 barrels of flour to the families of both sides in war-ridden Spain. Farmers have been appealed to give their surplus wheat to the committee that it may be used to feed the starving people of Spain.—*Christian Century*.

In Rumania, Baptists are subjected to persecution. One of our exchanges states that a decree which was to become effective December 15 closed ninety-five per cent. of the Baptist churches in that country. It is asserted that Rumania in the Treaty of Versailles, like the other signatories, pledged to give religious freedom to her minorities. The blame for the persecution is put on the Rumanian State Church.

Australia Bans Magazines Sold Freely in U.S.—Determined to put a stop to the flood of indecent American magazines pouring into that country, Australia has drawn up new customs regulations banning not only "indecent, obscene, or blasphemous works or articles," but also "literature which in the opinion of the minister, and whether by words or by picture or partly by words and partly by picture, a) unduly emphasizes matters of sex or crime or b) is calculated to encourage depravity." Seventy-two magazines published in America will be excluded by the new regulations.—*Christian Century*. A.