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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

F. H. Brunn

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

The "Christian Herald" on Lutheran Union.—Its May issue has this item: "We reported two months back that there was a doctrinal hurdle between the American Lutherans and the United Lutherans, keeping them apart in their discussions on joining their forces. Now we report that they have taken the hurdle and find themselves a long step nearer union. The question was one of Biblical infallibility. The statement on which they agree is this: 'By virtue of a unique operation. . .'" (Our readers are familiar with this statement in the Pittsburgh Declaration.) "Three large bodies of Lutherans—the United, American, and Missouri Synod bodies—contain more than 3,500,000 of the 4,800,000 Lutherans in the United States. They stand in a fair way now, with this agreement of doctrinal statement to work on, to overcome the open disagreement which has separated them. We look for big Lutheran news in 1939."

Not so fast! We fear that it will take more than half a year to get the United Lutheran Church to accept, as a body, a statement which might be understood as teaching the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of all Scripture. Compare what a reviewer in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* (U. L. C.) says on the booklets of Drs. Klinck and Arndt in the *S. S. Teacher-Training Series*: "In both books the Bible is assumed to be the verbally inspired, absolutely infallible revelation of God. Accordingly, its statements are taken to be final, not only in matters of faith and life, but also in matters of history, geography, science, and the like. Of scientific, critical study of the sources there is not a trace. Nor is there any indication that the philosophical, theological, historical, sociological, and psychological researches of modern times have made any contribution whatsoever to our understanding of life and its problems. Perhaps the type of treatment was necessitated by space limits or by a consideration of the needs and abilities of the persons for whom the books were prepared—present and prospective Sunday-school teachers; perhaps dogmatic presuppositions had something to do with it. Whatever the reasons for the type of treatment, the fact remains that this treatment is limited to uncritically interpreted Biblical materials. Here lie both the strength and the weakness of the books. For those who accept the fundamental thesis that the Bible is infallible in every detail, the treatment will prove, in the main, highly satisfactory; for those who do not, it will not. It may probably be assumed that the persons for whom the books were specifically written do accept it. For them, therefore, the books could hardly be better."

We doubt, too, that the American Lutheran Church will, as a body, be satisfied with a declaration which does not explicitly declare for the inerrancy of all parts of Scripture. And we do not know why the Missouri Synod is mentioned in this connection. "They," U. L. C., A. L. C., and Missouri, "stand in a fair way now, with this agreement to work on, to overcome," etc. We cannot well "work on" this agreement. Besides, it is not only the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture which is here

involved. The *Christian Herald* should not speak of "a doctrinal hurdle," which is keeping the Lutherans apart. There are differences in other doctrines, just as important as the one mentioned, which keep the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference apart from the United Lutheran Church. E.

Un-Lutheran Teaching in the U. L. C. A.—The article by Dr. A. J. Traver on "The Means of Grace," published in the *Lutheran* of May 10, contains some good Lutheran doctrine. "Our part is *only* to accept what Jesus Christ offers. *Grace is a gift. . . .* How do we receive this grace? We believe that God uses *means* by which He sends His grace upon us. . . . Suppose there were no Word and no Sacraments. This would make us depend on our own human reason. . . . As we need grace, so we need the means by which grace is made available for us." The article, however, presents also some un-Lutheran teaching. We read: "Lutherans have not been satisfied with the statement that the Bible contains the Word of God. This is of course true, but not all the truth. It might mean that the Bible contained a great deal that was error. Then it would mean that we would have to select the true from the false in the Bible, a most dangerous liberty. Naturally, we would be influenced by our own desires. We would accept what we wanted to accept and reject what we did not want. The Bible is the Word of God in the statement of our faith. *It is true in all matters that pertain to religion.*" (Italics our own.) "It is not a text for biology or for chemistry. It knows nothing of electricity or of airplanes. There is no reason that it should. These are matters for the investigation and discovery of the human mind. But man by his own wisdom cannot know God. *The Bible is the revelation of God to us, the gracious gift of salvation comes to us through the Bible.*" (Italics in original.) The *Lutheran* is repeating here what it has been emphasizing the last few years. It wants the Church to know that it rejects the teaching that *every* statement made by the holy writers is true. "It is true in all matters that pertain to religion," but in all other matters, scientific and the like, its statements need not be accepted. That is un-Lutheran teaching. The Lutheran statement "The Bible is the Word of God" means nothing because of the restriction "It is true in all matters that pertain to religion." Our readers will remember that a layman found the U. L. C. Declaration on the Word of God and Scripture unacceptable because of its contradictory teachings. He wrote: "In Section 5 this declaration says: 'We therefore accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.' What as to matters that do not pertain to His revelation and our salvation? Are some portions of the Scriptures not infallible? Is not that a plausible inference? It would appear to this writer that in Section 6 this position is contradicted when it is asserted: 'Therefore we believe that the whole body of Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God.'" We can sympathize with this layman. We must confess that our theological mind works just like the layman's mind. We do not know how the minds of those theologians work who can say in one breath that Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God and that some portions of Scripture are not true. Least of all can we understand how *Lutheran* theologians can thus speak of the Bible.

Dr. Traver then goes on to utter some most un-Lutheran thoughts on the Lord's Supper. "Bread and wine are the earthly elements. The body and blood of Christ are the heavenly gifts promised in the Sacrament. We must not place a crass or unnatural interpretation on these gifts of the Sacrament. They are the life of Christ, freely given for us. As the bread and wine become a part of the body through eating, so the Christ becomes a part of our souls through faith." That is a denial of the real presence of the body and blood of Christ. Any Reformed theologian would subscribe to the teaching that what Christ gives us to eat and to drink is "the life of Christ, freely given for us." The Reformed have always taught that the words "body," "blood" mean the efficacy and benefits of Christ's death.

When the Pittsburgh Statement (on Inspiration, etc.) was accepted, the church-papers stated: "All controverted points of difference between the United Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church have now been amicably adjusted so far as the two commissions are concerned." All controverted points of difference? Within the U. L. C. body the Reformed doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper is publicly proclaimed. (See also *C. T. M.*, VIII, p. 544, on an article in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* of October, 1936.) The A. L. C. teaches the Lutheran doctrine concerning the Lord's Supper. Surely not all controverted points of difference between these two bodies have been amicably adjusted.

Then there is the doctrine of conversion. Dr. Traver does not touch on this in his article, but our subject is: Un-Lutheran Teaching in the U. L. C. A. U. L. C. theologians have written the following: "Others, after the manner of Missouri, have been so cautious lest they should claim for man any credit for his salvation—a very laudable desire—that they have, in order to give all the glory to God's grace, failed to recognize that man's part in the work of salvation is essential, even though it is not meritorious." "Conversion is largely one's own act. God first makes it possible; but then the responsibility rests upon ourselves to determine whether or not we will comply with the truth brought to our understanding." "If we inquire what it is that influences men one way or the other when the Spirit of God brings them face to face with Christ and urges them to accept the Savior, the answer is that they are influenced by the motives, good or evil, which stir in their hearts and which they finally put first." These and many other similar pronouncements appeared in official organs of the U. L. C. and in text-books published within this body. We need not indicate the sources here,—the U. L. C. men will readily admit that synergistic teaching is tolerated by their Church. We cannot understand why editors of Lutheran papers will say that *all* controverted points of difference have now been amicably adjusted.

E.

The Editor does Not Agree with the Contributor.—In the article "Some Thoughts on Inspiration," published in the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, May issue, Dr. Hjalmar W. Johnson of the Augustana Synod uttered several un-Lutheran thoughts. He said: "You sometimes hear conscientious Lutheran pastors make the statement that unless you accept the verbal inspiration theory, you are not a con-

sistent Lutheran." "The human element appears also in certain discrepancies which the student of the Scriptures will observe. . . . The human element appears also with sad realism in the imprecatory psalms. . . . In these passages (Ps. 69:24; 58:6-10; 109:8, 9, 10; 137:9) the human — or shall I say inhuman? — element is sadly evident." "Christ Himself affirmed that Moses was not correct on the subject of divorce. If Christ felt free to take issue with Moses on the subject of divorce, which concerns *human* beings, must we insist that Genesis is a source book in geology, which deals not with human beings but with *inanimate* reality?" "With specific reference to one theory widely prevalent among many earnest Christians, it may be noted that even so theologically conservative a Church as the Roman Catholic does not teach the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. . . . In the well-known Catholic weekly *Our Sunday Visitor* (Nov. 4, 1934) this paragraph appears: 'The Church has never taught the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures. All that we are bound to believe is that every book, and every part of every book, in both the Old and the New Testament is the Word of God. In the many translations of the Bible which we have today it would be impossible to hold that every word was inspired, because that would mean that the translator as well as the original writer, of the Scriptures had the special assistance of Almighty God.'

The editor of the *Journal*, in an addendum, takes the contributor severely to task. "There are a number of points at which I find myself at variance with the learned author of the foregoing article." We have space for only some of the points repudiated by Dr. Dell. "What the Catholic Church teaches or does not teach can hardly be a criterion for the Lutheran Church." As to the statement of the contributor "You sometimes hear conscientious Lutheran pastors make the statement that, unless you accept the verbal inspiration theory, you are not a consistent Lutheran. What can be done to help such brethren realize that such statements are by no means a defense of Lutheranism but, on the contrary, constitute a lapse from it?" the editor says: "As I am one of 'such brethren' who have lapsed from Lutheranism by stating that belief in verbal inspiration is truly Lutheran, I rise to defend my position once more. 'Verbal inspiration' and 'inspiration' are the same thing. If the Bible is inspired, it is verbally inspired. If it is not verbally inspired, it is not inspired at all. . . . When our synodical constitution says that we accept the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as our authority, they are breathing a faith in verbal inspiration; for Scriptures are words. If they are words of men, they have no authority. If they are the Word of God, they are inspired words. When the Missouri Synod states: 'We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called "theological deduction," but it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3:16; John 10:35; Rom. 3:2; 1 Cor. 2:13,' there can be no doubt that this large body of Lutherans 'officially' teaches verbal inspiration and does not consider it a theory. . . . If only men are inspired and not the words which they wrote, how can we say in our synodical confessions that the canonical Scriptures are our authority? How can we say that the Bible 'as a whole and in all its parts' is the Word of God? The Bible in all its parts is words, nothing

but words. If there is no verbal inspiration, the Bible is not inspired. When we, therefore, speak of verbal inspiration, we are speaking of the fact of inspiration and not of some 'man-made' theory as to the method of inspiration." "The Holy Spirit used the words of Scripture to convince us that the words of Scripture are reliable. And you say that Lutherans do not 'officially' believe in verbal inspiration? Pardon me if I say that I am unable to follow you." "What was Jesus' attitude toward the Old Testament? He said: 'The Scriptures cannot be broken.' He quoted the Scriptures as reliable truth, 'beginning at Moses and all the prophets' (Luke 24). He evidently thought that Moses was inspired. But Dr. Johnson says: 'Christ Himself affirmed that Moses was not correct on the subject of divorce.' . . . The question here is: Did Moses write what God gave him to write at that time? Jesus does not condemn Moses for writing what he wrote. He condemns the Jews for the hardness of their hearts, which made an inferior law necessary." "Toward the end the author quotes from Dr. Sodergren: 'If some other brother should insist that physical death came into the world with the fall of Adam and Eve, — as Milton does in *Paradise Lost*, — when God has written into the strata of the earth a record of death long before Adam, we have no right to blame the Bible for this brother's interpretation.' I see here, and elsewhere in that last part, a surrender to the theory of evolution. If the fact of verbal inspiration must be called a theory in order to make room alongside it for another theory, which even men of science vigorously dispute, our faith is in a bad way. You not only condemn Milton, but you condemn St. Paul, who wrote: 'As by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.'"

The concluding paragraph reads: "I could say a great deal more, but I desist. The article by Dr. Johnson is being printed because pressure was brought to bear by his brethren. But I could not let it go as an expression of the faith of the American Lutheran Conference. I could not pass by without challenge the condescending statement that brethren who believe in verbal inspiration — who believe, in other words, that the Bible is a reliable record of revealed truth — should be corrected in their Lutheranism." E.

D. Neu über Walther und die Schrift, betitelt "Walther and the Church". Die eben genannte Schrift hat bekanntlich als Verfasser die Doktoren Dallmann, Dau und Engelber. D. Neu schreibt darüber in der „Kirchlichen Zeitschrift“: „[Das Buch] ist als Festgabe gedacht zur Erinnerung an die Einwanderung der Sachsen vor hundert Jahren. Es hätte dem Gedächtnis an dies folgenreiche Ereignis etwas gefehlt, wenn nicht ein Buch wie dieses erschienen wäre; denn die drei Schriften, die hier in gedrängter Form dargeboten werden, waren von grundlegender Natur für die Missouri-Synode und weit über diese hinaus. Und sollten sie in ihren Hauptgedanken weiterwirken, so mußten sie in englischer Sprache dargeboten werden.“

„Bei der Lektüre der drei Beiträge, die zur Würdigung Walthers hinzugefügt werden, möchte man vielleicht einmal den Eindruck haben, als griffe die Würdigung zu hoch. Aber auch Männer, die Zeitgenossen, ja Gegner

Walthers gewesen sind, schlugen bei seinem Tod kaum geringere Töne an. Die Luthardtsche „Kirchenzeitung“ schrieb: „Mit ihm ist einer der Großen in der Kirche Christi heimgegangen, ein Mann, der nicht nur in der kirchlichen Geschichte Amerikas eine epochemachende Persönlichkeit und dort der hervorragende Führer und Sammler der Lutheraner war, sondern dessen Wirksamkeit in der lutherischen Kirche aller Weltteile als eine mächtig anregende empfunden wurde. Der Erfolg seiner Arbeit ist in der neueren Geschichte unserer Kirche fast beispiellos und kennzeichnet ihn nicht nur als einen Mann von großen Anlagen, eisernem Fleiß und seltener Energie, sondern läßt in ihm eine providentielle Persönlichkeit erkennen, wie der Herr seiner Kirche sie sendet, wenn er sie besondere Wege führen will.“ Und Dr. Siegmund Fritschel schrieb (Kirchenblatt, 1. Juni 1887): „In dem Heimgegangenen verliert die lutherische Kirche einen ihrer mannhaftesten Streiter, ihrer gesegnetsten Zeugen, ihrer mannhaftesten Theologen. Seit dem Jahre 1839 hat er die reichen Gaben seines Geistes in den Dienst der lutherischen Kirche Amerikas gestellt und an ihrem Aufbau innerhalb der Missouri-Synode mit ganzer, voller, rüchhaltloser Hingebung ohne Ermüden, mit freudiger Begeisterung bis an sein Ende gearbeitet. Und Gottes Barmherzigkeit hat auf das Werk seiner Hände Gedeihen gelegt und ihn die Frucht seiner Arbeit schauen lassen, wie es wenig Menschen vergönnt ist. Die Missouri-Synode mit ihrer gewaltigen Ausbreitung, ihrer festgefügtten Organisation, ihrer rastlosen kirchlichen Tätigkeit, ihrer eigenartigen, die lutherische Bekenntnislehre mit ihren Sonderlehren zu fester Geschlossenheit zusammenfassenden Theologie ist im eminenten Sinn sein Werk, der er den Stempel seines Geistes in allen Beziehungen aufgedrückt hat und in der ihm die Verwirklichung der Gedanken seines Lebens noch mit seinen eigenen Augen zu sehen beschieden war. Sie selbst hinwiederum, die von ihm gegründete und geführte Synode, sah in ihm ihre Macht gleichsam verkörpert, und es dürften sehr wenig Fälle sich nachweisen lassen, in denen eine hervorragende Persönlichkeit in der von ihr geleiteten kirchlichen Gemeinschaft einen gleich tiefgreifenden und alles beherrschenden Einfluß ausgeübt hat.“ — Es wird uns auch wiederholt bezeugt, daß Dr. S. Fritschel die Hoffnung auf eine künftige Verständigung mit der von Walther gegründeten Synode nie aufgegeben hat.“ A.

Bedeutung des Lutherischen Weltkonvents. Im „Kirchenblatt“ vom 20. Mai dieses Jahres schreibt Dr. Knubel, der Präses der Vereinigten Lutherischen Kirche Amerikas, in einem Artikel, betitelt „Schifflein der Kirche“, über den Lutherischen Weltkonvent. Er spricht sich unter anderem auch aus über die Bedeutung des Weltkonvents. Er sagt: „Endlich tauchte das bestimmte Bestreben auf, der tiefinnerlichen Einigkeit der Lutheraner in der Welt klaren Ausdruck zu verleihen. Diese Kundgebung der Glaubenseinheit besteht jetzt im Lutherischen Weltkonvent.“

Der Weltkonvent ist nach der Beschreibung Dr. Knubels also nicht eine freie Konferenz von Lutheranern zur Herstellung wahrer Glaubenseinheit durch Besprechung der bestehenden Lehrdifferenzen, sondern der Lutherische Weltkonvent ist „Kundgebung der Glaubenseinheit“. Wer aber die Lutheraner in der Welt kennt, der weiß, daß sie untereinander sehr uneinig sind. Nun kann man aber erst dann in Wahrheit der Glaubenseinheit Ausdruck verleihen, wenn sie bereits hergestellt und wirklich vorhanden ist. Wer einer Glaubenseinheit Ausdruck verleihen will, die nicht vorhanden ist, treibt Unionisterei. Davor warnt uns die Schrift. F. S. Brun

Aus Argentinien. Einem Briefe unsers Bruders P. A. L. Kramer, in Bahia Blanca, Argentinien, wohnhaft, entnehmen wir einige interessante Sätze: „überall wird zweisprachige Arbeit verlangt. In Rio Colorado wird man beim nächsten Besuch wohl auch um eine englische Predigt nebenbei bitten. Vorläufig rechne ich mit sechs Konfirmandenklassen für dieses Jahr; drei oder vier Tausen, wahrscheinlich in spanischer Sprache. Nächste Woche will ich deutsche und spanische Repetitionsfragen fertigstellen, um unsern Pastoren (vor allen Dingen aber mir selbst) diese Arbeit etwas praktischer und leichter zu machen. . . . Das Manuskript der spanischen Augsburgischen Konfession ist längst weg, das Manuskript der Agende ebenfalls. Jetzt kommt ein spanisches Gebetbüchlein und die Katechismuwiederholung. . . . Ich habe jetzt allen Ernstes einen zweiten Mann für dieses Gebiet verlangt. Soll ich meine Zeit der eigentlichen Stadtarbeit widmen, so kann ich nicht die Außenposten behalten. In Medanos allein könnte eine Schule von annähernd vierzig Kindern zustande kommen. Hier sind Kinder. Wenn ich wenigstens einen guten Lehrer hätte, der den Kinderunterricht an den beiden Stellen mir abnähme! Und die Ausdehnungsmöglichkeiten an der Bahnlinie nach Westen sind noch nicht abzusehen. Es ist alles Sammelarbeit an zerstreuten und nicht betreuten lutherischen Einwanderern. Das ‚lutherisch‘, bitte, etwas skeptisch aufzufassen; manchmal kennen sie nur den Namen.“

Von einer neuen Stelle, wo er deutsch predigt, schreibt Missionar Kramer: „Sofort mußte ich auch spanisch predigen, und für den nächsten Gottesdienst wollen sie auch ihre vielen englischen Nachbarn einladen. Leider, leider ist die Zeit nicht reif, um in e i n e r Sprache arbeiten zu können.“

Gott segne reichlich die Evangeliumsverkündigung im fernen Süden unsers Kontinents!

A.

Brunner, Lacy, and Union Seminary. — Under this heading the Rev. C. D. Whiteley, D. D., pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Albemarle, N. C., reviews Dr. Lacy's reply to the objections of the Mecklenburg and Concord presbyteries raised against Dr. Brunner's lecturing in Union Seminary. Dr. Brunner, as our readers know, is a modernistic Barthian. Dr. Lacy is president of the formerly orthodox Presbyterian Union Seminary in Richmond, Va. Dr. Whiteley is an orthodox Presbyterian graduate of Union Seminary. From now very liberal Union Theological Seminary Rev. J. Scherer, liberal U. L. C. pastor in Richmond, last summer obtained his supply speakers while he was on his protracted summer vacation. The two presbyteries represent 126 ministers, nearly one third of the ministerial membership of the Synod of North Carolina, one of the synods controlling Union Theological Seminary. Answering President Lacy, Pastor Whiteley (as reported in the *Christian Beacon*, March 2, 1939) says: "We would rather see its doors (Union Seminary's) closed than see its platform used as a springboard for modern doubt and unbelief, be that unbelief heralded by a theologian with world acclaim or by the proverbial crossroads skeptic." The reasons, he next shows, that led Dr. Lacy to allow Dr. Brunner to speak at Union Seminary "cast an ominous shadow across our Southern Church. Why invite a person to lecture at Union Seminary who denies the full trustworthiness of the Bible?" Dr. Lacy invited Dr. Brunner to speak at Union, first, because he "is regarded today as one of the great evangelical figures

of Continental Europe." But "does Dr. Lacy think one can be a great evangelical figure and at the same time elevate a heathen conception of the universe above the Word of God? Dr. Brunner is on record in these words: 'The Bible is by no means free of errors, notably the story of creation, which science has proved to be erroneous.' That statement does not commend itself to some of us as great or evangelical. It rather sounds like Satan's own language to the primal pair in Eden when he said: 'Ye shall not surely die' (Gen. 3:4), even though God had said: 'Ye shall surely die' (Gen. 2:17). It seems that the only difference is that Dr. Brunner denies the first chapter of Genesis, and Satan denied just part of the second." Dr. Whiteley continues: "There is one other thing wrong with Dr. Brunner's statement; namely, it is false. It is not true that science has 'proved' the creation story in Genesis to be erroneous. To remain within the bounds of truth, he should have said: 'I accept a hypothesis which, if proved, would prove the creation story of Genesis to be erroneous.' Dr. Brunner's statement is false for two reasons: first, because God's Word declares it to be false; second, because the majority of outstanding scientists declare it to be false [?]. Dr. Brunner says that he is an evolutionist, and, of course, evolution is the hypothesis which, as he claims, has proved the creation story to be erroneous. Many scientists accept this hypothesis, but no one worthy of the name 'scientist' will say it has been proved. Then there are many of the truly great in the scientific world who call this hypothesis a figment of the imagination, while others call it the product of a distorted mind." . . . "Again, Dr. Lacy says, 'Dr. Brunner is the guest professor this year of Princeton Seminary, an institution which for over a century and a quarter has been closely associated with our seminary' (Richmond Union Seminary). 'But is Dr. Lacy ignorant of what has happened at Princeton since its reorganization? Or does he know and yet mean to say that it makes no difference to him and the faculty at Union? Before he gives Dr. Brunner's connection with Princeton as a reason for bringing him to Union, he should recall that the name of a professor-elect of that institution was not allowed to come before the last Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. since it was generally believed that he would not be confirmed because of his radical views. When one remembers that this General Assembly was controlled and dominated by signers of the Auburn Affirmation and their sympathizers, it is certainly a questionable compliment which Dr. Lacy hands to Dr. Brunner, and is meaningless as a reason for having him lecture at U. T. S., unless Dr. Lacy intended to serve notice on the Southern Church that he proposes to direct Union along the 'inclusive policy' road, now the avowed policy of Princeton." . . . "What does Dr. Lacy mean by the following statement: 'From the founding of these lectureships it has been the policy to bring to our seminary certain outstanding religious thinkers without requiring that in every detail they reflect the opinion held by our own denomination'? Does Dr. Lacy and the faculty mean to say that Dr. Brunner's denial of the infallibility of the Bible is a mere detail? Is such a denial a contradiction of some particular 'opinion' held by our own denomination? If so, how things have changed, at least in certain quarters!"

The final shaft which Dr. Whiteley hurls at Dr. Lacy is this: "In con-

clusion, one is amazed to find that some feel that an 'intellectual hot-house' would result from keeping the testimony of a great school of prophets, both in class and on the lecture platform, true to the doctrine that the Bible is the Word of God." This comes as a reply to one of President Lacy's "reasons" for letting Brunner lecture at Richmond, namely, that without the "wider [liberal] culture of Continental scholars" his seminary would become a mere "intellectual hothouse" rearing pastors who are helpless against the rigors and cold blasts of facts and reason.

To us this whole controversy seems more than a mere incident in provincial Presbyterian history. In the first place, it shows very clearly Brunner's liberal position over against the Bible and Princeton's own tragic lowering of doctrinal standards. In the second place, it demonstrates how rapidly Modernism seeps through an entire Church after it has once gained a foothold in its scholastic centers. And finally, the courage of the little Mecklenburg and Concord Presbyterian groups, resisting its modernistic leaders, may be noticed with profit also in wider church circles.

J. T. M.

The Rationalism of Barthianism.—Dr. A. MacRae, professor of Old Testament, Faith Theological Seminary, in the *Christian Beacon* deplors the presence of Barthianism at Princeton Seminary, claiming that, with Brunner in a key position at this school, "the Word of Scripture is no longer the supreme authority in the theology taught there," for the "very chair from which Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield taught is now occupied by one who denies the verbal inspiration of the Bible." The attitude of Barthians toward the Bible is indeed altogether different from that of the old teachers at Princeton. "They make Scripture authoritative only in those matters which they consider involved in the personal religion of the reader, and rule out all else as unimportant. Anything dealing with matter, with the world, with history, and the like, they regard as non-essential and possibly as entirely erroneous. To them Scripture is no longer authoritative for anything but personal religion. And who is to say which statements of Scripture are a part of personal religion? The historic Christian belief in the Word of God is thus replaced by a vague attitude which keeps the historic terminology but robs it of its historic content. Human philosophy has become the source of knowledge, instead of divine revelation. God's infallible guide has been replaced by an extremely fallible substitute. It is the very similarity in outward expression which makes Barthianism so dangerous. Unbelief is easier to swallow in a sugar-coated pill than in a bitter-tasting powder, but its effects are no less harmful." Dr. Brunner denied his belief in verbal inspiration in his very opening address at Princeton Seminary. "This," Dr. MacRae says, "was no surprise to any who were familiar with Brunner's works, for he is one of that class of mediating theologians which tries to cling to some of the doctrines of historic Christianity while rejecting the final authority of that source upon which Christian theology has always been based."

While Barthianism thus holds forth at Princeton, the *Presbyterian Tribune* (March 16, 1939) rejoices at the fact that today "little is left to current Fundamentalism." "Fortunately," exults the periodical, "with

the exception of one or two minor skirmishes all is now quiet on the theological front." "Of course," it admits, "we cannot tell when the battle will break out again in all its ancient virulence, but it looks as though we are in for an era of theological good feeling. The conservatives are not so conservative, or at least not so militant, and the liberals are not so sure of themselves, as they were a few years ago, when Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney was the self-appointed knight of reaction. His occasional Cassandra calls may be as strident as ever, but they have lost their sometime magic, and in consequence his followers have been reduced to a weedy segment of their former battalions." The reference no doubt is to the Orthodox Presbyterians and the Bible Presbyterians, who have no large following.

J. T. M.

A Presbyterian Opposed to Strict Separation of Church and State.— Writing in the *Presbyterian*, Dr. A. T. Allis opposes acceptance of a proposed revision of chapter 23 in the Westminster Confession. The old version, in its American form, is as follows: "As nursing fathers it is the duty of civil magistrates to protect the Church of our common Lord, without giving the preference to any denomination of Christians above the rest, in such a manner that all ecclesiastical persons whatever shall enjoy the full, free, and unquestioned liberty to discharging every part of their sacred functions, without violence or danger." It is now proposed to change this to read: "It [the civil government] may not assume the functions of religion. It must grant equal rights to every religious group, showing no favor and granting no power to one above another." Dr. Allis offers this comment: "There are two important phrases here. The first is 'every religious group.' It is particularly to be noted that it does not say 'Christian group.' This phrase, consequently, represents not merely the surrender but the direct repudiation of the recognized principle that this is a Christian nation. Jews, Mormons, Mohammedans, Buddhists, Confucianists, and Hindus, all constitute 'religious groups,' but they are not 'Christian groups.' The second important phrase is this: 'showing no favor and granting no power to one above another.' It will be observed that nothing is said here about the recognized democratic principle of majority rule. Let us take a concrete illustration. A certain community is made up almost entirely of Christians, members or adherents of Christian churches. There is one Jewish merchant in that community. According to the above declaration, it would be improper for the municipal authorities to pass a Sunday closing law or to permit the voters to decide the question by popular vote. Not merely this, it would be the duty of Presbyterians who took the statement of their confession of faith seriously and felt it their duty to comply with its teachings, to strive to prevent the passage of such an ordinance or, if such an ordinance were on the statute books, to work for its repeal, on the ground that it showed favor and granted power to one religious group above another."

The proposed revision stands for strict separation of Church and State. The reasoning of Dr. Allis is faulty. The submitted version does not exclude the possibility of a Presbyterian's working for a Sunday closing law. It merely makes it wrong for him to work for the passage of such a law on *religious grounds*.

A.

Methodist Union.—When in May of this year the representatives of the Northern Methodists, the Southern Methodists, and the Protestant Methodists met in Kansas City, the amalgamation of these bodies, which had been under way for several years, was consummated. Having stated after the reading of each one of the five declarations of unification: "We do so declare," the assembly made this affirmation: "To the Methodist Church thus established we do solemnly swear our allegiance, and upon all its life and service we do reverently invoke the blessing of Almighty God." The vote for union, reports say, was unanimous. When it had been given and announced, the choir sang Haendel's "Hallelujah Chorus," doubtlessly expressing the feelings of the delegates, who can well be imagined to have been in a high state of spiritual exultation.

We have but few comments to make. The Methodist Church, the name by which the denomination will be known, the second-largest Protestant body in our country, has 46,255 congregations, 21,687 ordained ministers, 15,969 local preachers, 7,856,060 members, 5,926,155 Sunday-school pupils, and property which is valued at \$656,474,867. The body is divided into six jurisdictions. "The bishops are no longer to be elected for the entire Church by representatives chosen from the entire Church; instead they are to be elected for service within jurisdictions by the jurisdictional conferences." (*Christian Century*.) A sort of supreme court has been formed, with authority to pronounce on the constitutionality of whatever any Methodist conference may resolve.

If these Methodists were really one in faith, it was not wrong for them to unite in one organization. Whether Modernism, which to a frightful extent had affected the Northern Methodist Church, will now be checked or whether it will merely be given more opportunity for expansion will have to be seen. A.

Southern Methodists Plan to Fight Union.—Under this heading the *Christian Beacon*, organ of the Bible Presbyterian Church (the millennialistic group that separated from the Machen division) some time ago reported that leading lay members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South were taking steps to forestall any union with the Northern Methodists or with any other organization in which the rightful owners would have a very small voice and vote. "There has been organized," it says, "in Atlanta, Ga., the Laymen's Organization for Preservation of the Southern Methodist Church to accomplish just what its name implies. This organization plans to engage the services of competent legal talent to represent it in such litigation as may be entailed to secure to them their rights and interests in the various church properties. It is expected that many of these lawyers will serve in an advisory capacity in cooperation with the Legal Committee. The intense feeling against union appears to be quite spontaneous, and is evidenced by individual actions taken in various States and communities by small as well as large congregations." The report next quotes the *Southern Methodist Layman*, the official publication of the above-mentioned Laymen's Organization, as saying: "We are at the crossing of the ways and must make an early decision to do one of three things: (1) decide—as many have—that the Church is not worth saving and not criticize those members who

follow thousands of others and withdraw from it; (2) aid and assist all of those members who feel that it is best to organize independent Methodist churches now; (3) request our legal committee to employ paid attorneys, who shall immediately take steps in the United States or other civil courts, to protect the rights of three million Southern Methodists, who were ignored and were denied their rights through the aid of an ecclesiastical conspiracy of silence." Other excerpts from the report read as follows: "I am not in favor of surrendering the name Methodist Episcopal South if there is a possible chance, legally, of retaining and using it. I cannot believe that any court of the United States after the presentation of our case, showing the Machiavelian tactics employed by the bishops to suppress the discussion of their plans, and the secrecy actually surrounding their every move, will hesitate to enjoin the Uniting Conference." Quotation by C. J. Steward, Augusta, Ga., one of the original members of the Laymen's Organization.—"Why has unification come about? No one knows. It came from the top and is supposed to have been originated by the bishops, elders, and a few preachers."—"How did unification get passed? It was kept almost a secret, not being discussed but in a few churches by the pastors, and was not at all discussed by the elders. Only preachers and a few hand-picked laymen voted. In other words, the majority of the members of the Southern Methodist Church do not realize what is going on. Most of them have great confidence in the bishops, elders, and preachers of our Church and cannot believe what they are doing, and I am afraid it is going to be too late in many churches when they wake up to what has been pulled over them."—"What will be the effect? The Northern Church is twice as large and therefore will have the majority, and we shall have to take the consequences."—"What do we gain? Nothing! What do we lose? Control of our Church and \$350,000,000 worth of property." When the history of the Methodist Church union will be written in the future, this comparatively unknown side of the picture ought to be shown, too. And readers acquainted with church-union movements will not find it extraordinary; just so unions have been engineered before. J. T. M.

Infidelity in Various Manifestations.—"The German Church at Auburn, N. Y.," as the *Christian Beacon* (April 6, 1939) reports, "was the scene of a church dinner when Jews and Germans sat down together in fellowship. President Roosevelt sent congratulations to the Rev. Ralph A. Philbrook reading as follows: 'This coming together of Jews and Christians in common worship of the ever-living and true God exemplifies in a striking way the highest teachings of the Old and New Testaments.'" In an editorial, "Unbelief," the *Beacon* writes of such flagrant unionism: "When a Protestant minister permits an unconverted Jew to come in and administer in his pulpit, you do not have brotherhood or the felicitations of religious union but an abomination of the Lord and apostasy. Such procedures also will never lead the Jews to be saved, and we want them to be saved, because we love them and want them to receive the true Messiah and accept the gift of eternal life."

In Mercer University, at Macon, Georgia, the students sent a letter to thousand Baptist ministers, stating that the instructors had asserted: "The Bible is not divinely inspired; Adam and Eve are myths; the Bible

is contradictory; it was not necessary for Christ to die in order that man might be free from sin, and it is unnecessary for any one to believe in Christ to be saved."—In Russia, at Easter, the Godless League urged all antireligious workers to redouble their efforts during the Easter week-end. Christianity, it was said, fosters war, and in the conclusion of the announcement it was claimed: "In the U.S.S.R. Easter is one of the most harmful traditions of the past. To begin with, Easter each year attracts many believers away from the urgent work connected with the spring sowing campaign and revives drunkenness." In Cleveland, Ohio, "national leaders of Protestant and Jewish faiths" recently held symposiums in various Jewish synagogues, Dr. E. D. Jones, president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, and Rabbi Silver discussing "War"; Dr. R. W. Sockman, director of Union Theological Seminary, and Rabbi Freehof debating on "The Crisis in Civilization"; and Bishop Francis J. McConnell and Rabbi Lazaron feeding foolish listeners on a similar subject. The *Christian Beacon* remarks on this: "The Federal Council of Churches claims to speak for twenty million Protestants and to be the voice of Protestantism in America; but in this announcement we find one present and one past president of the Federal Council appearing publicly and making common cause with the leaders of Judaism, who hate the person of Christ and teach that He was an illegitimate son of Mary by a Roman soldier. They have gone in the way of Cain, the error of Balaam and the gainsaying of Korah."

But Modernism is asserting itself also in the Lutheran churches of our country. The *Lutheran* (April 12, 1939) publishes without any comment or criticism a letter, "Soul Relief, Not Creeds, Called For," signed by one John R. Strevig, who writes among other things as follows: "Dogmas may come and go, but Jesus' word shall go on forever. The old theological phraseology gives way to the new. Instead of the 'new birth' we speak of 'remaking human nature.' Instead of 'vicarious suffering,' or 'vicarious atonement,' we speak of 'man's responsibility to man.' Instead of 'propitiation for sin,' we speak of 'spiritual bankers' or 'indebtedness to God.' Instead of 'reconciliation with God' we think of 'Man finds God,' or 'Can Man Find God?' The old dogmas and phrases pass away, but the Gospel-truth goes on forever. . . . What we are trying to say, Mr. Editor, is that creeds and dogmas have little place in this day and age. They are not vital to Christian living. To know the Gospel-message is good; meditating upon it is better; practising it is best. To know the Bible and live it is more valuable than to theologize about it. Creeds and dogmas appear to one as externals about the Bible and not truths in the Bible. . . . The early days of creed-making are over. The day served its purpose in the Church, but the common people, which includes most of us, are not stirred by reading or hearing worn-out ideas rejuvenated." Just how the *Lutheran* could print this modernistic abomination without proper criticism we cannot understand. Does the *Lutheran* share the modernistic views here expressed? Or does it perhaps wish to make propaganda for them? Grosser Modernism than this even the grossest Modernists in sectarian circles have never published. The stupid letter itself disproves the claim that creed-making days are over, for the writer himself here states

a rationalistic creed, very similar to those of Tom Paine and Ingersoll, viz., that all Christian creeds must be discarded and that the Christian theology expressed in the phrases "new birth," "vicarious suffering," "propitiation for sin," and the like, in short, the theology of redemption by Christ and salvation by faith in Him, must give way to the modernistic way of salvation by "remaking human nature," "man's responsibility to man," "finding God," and the like. The theology of faith is here replaced by the theology of works, grace by Pelagianism, the divinely revealed Gospel-truth by indefinite, meaningless phrases.

In the same number of the *Lutheran* one August Schneider questions Article XVI of the Augsburg Confession, in particular, that Christians may "engage in just wars and serve as soldiers." This statement of our confession, the writer holds, is "not in agreement with the teachings of the New Testament." Of course, he adduces no Scripture-proof to maintain his position, but he writes: "I am persuaded that the principle of even a 'just' war is the very antithesis of the principles of Jesus Christ," thus hopelessly commingling the two spheres of the temporal and the spiritual and suggesting a Ritschlian conception of Christ's redemptive mission, while basing his belief not upon Scripture but upon his own subjective speculations. "I can visualize Jesus on a cross dying for mankind, but I cannot picture Him in a soldier's uniform, dropping bombs on the very children He came to bless." It is the Modernistic mist that accounts for such confusion in logic and theology. J. T. M.

Baptists and the Social Security Act.—Appointed by the Boston Baptist Ministers' Conference to serve as chairman of a committee to study the proposal of the Social Security Board and to bring in a report for discussion and action by the Conference, the Rev. Dr. O. W. Foye reports his findings in the *Watchman-Examiner* (March 16, 1939) in a most interesting article. Among other things he writes: "This question is definitely before us. The Social Security Act, now effective, exempts religious bodies from taxation for old age pensions and from unemployment-compensation tax. But there are recommendations now before Congress, presented by the Social Security Board, that the present exemption of churches and other religious bodies be lifted and that they become subject to taxation under the existing legislation providing for old-age and unemployment compensation." Some things, he admits, are in favor of the Social Security Act as applied to the provision for the old age of its ministers and other employees; but there are also "things against our support of this Act." Among these are the following: "It would add heavy expense to some of our struggling churches. It does not wholly appear that the Government is so much concerned for our aged church employees as it is to get more money to direct toward payment for increasing war preparations. The number of employees of the Church other than the ministers is negligible. Sextons are mostly past the pension age, and the musicians depend upon other means for their support. The Church has already given over too many of its functions to other agencies, as, for example, healing to the hospitals [?], education to the state [!], and philanthropy to social agencies. If we give over the care of our aged ministers to the Government, it will be a cowardly

shame. If the Church is to be faithful to Christ by providing loving care for others, and if it is to set an example of justice before labor and capital, it must shoulder its own burden and take care of its own employees. It must not be compelled by any government to assume this responsibility. 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith and is worse than an infidel,' 1 Tim. 5:8. The inclusion of the churches under the Social Security Act would add an increasing number of inspectors to the government pay-rolls, thereby increasing taxes, and also add opportunity for political corruption. When we recognize that the Government can collect a Social Security tax from our churches, who can deny those greedy politicians who are already clamoring for a heavy property tax against us? Nearly all Protestant denominations now have trust funds and organizations, which will provide for our clergy larger provisions than that proposed by the Government. When we follow the steps of development of the totalitarian countries abroad, we can definitely trace some of those same steps which are being proposed here in America. Any attempt to give a government authority to receive and pass judgment upon church finances holds the possibility of bringing that country close to the brink of death to all democratic and free institutions. He who handles the money will also direct the policy of the Church and determine the gospel which we preach."

In the set of resolutions passed by the Boston Baptist Ministers' Conference, this body expresses its opposition to any inclusion of the churches of our country under the operation of the National Security Act and pronounces the Act subversive to the moral and spiritual welfare of the churches and contrary to the provisions of our National Constitution, guaranteeing religious liberty. The resolutions declare: "This is a matter of profound conviction of conscience with us, to which we cannot willingly submit." Copies of the resolutions have been sent to the President of our country, all State Representatives in both houses of Congress, while all members of the churches are encouraged to send personal letters to their Representatives in Congress expressing their disapproval of such inclusion of churches under the Social Security Act "as being a violation of our principles of religious liberty." The last resolution reads: "Resolved, That we invite other ministers' conferences to unite with us in preventing, if possible, the invasion of the fundamental principle of our government." The motion by which the resolutions were adopted "was passed by an enthusiastic vote of the conference." We represent this report as one worthy of study in our own circles, though we personally do not agree with every statement that is here made.

J. T. M.

Brief Items.—The French author Lavredan, long known as an atheist, when confronted by the horrors of the World War, made this gripping confession: "I laughed at faith and thought myself wise. Finally this laughter became hollow and vain, for I saw France bleeding and mourning. What would become of France if her children did not believe, if her women did not pray? Oh, a people whose fields are covered with the dead! How difficult it is to remain an atheist on this

national cemetery! I cannot, I cannot! I have deceived myself and you who have read my book. It was a delusion, a giddiness, an evil dream. I saw death and called for life. Hands equipped with weapons make death; folded hands bring life. France, turn back to faith! To forsake God means to be lost! I do not know whether I shall live tomorrow, but I must tell my friends, Lavredan is afraid to die an atheist. I am not afraid of hell; but the thought impresses me, God lives and you are so far from Him. Rejoice, my soul, that I have been permitted to experience the hour when on my knees I can say: I believe, I believe in God. I believe, I believe,—that word is the matin hymn of humanity. For him who does not accept it, it will soon be night."

National Lutheran Council Bulletin

Mississippi has the highest murder rate of all states in the world, civilized or uncivilized, according to a recent statement of L. F. Folsie of the State Planning Commission. The State leads the nation in homicides, around 500 a year in a population of two million. Its homicide rate is over twenty-six times that of New Hampshire. Bolivar County, with 71,051 people, had twenty-four homicides, while Maine, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island together had twenty-five. The 91,000 population of Washington and Tazoo counties had more homicides than Wisconsin. The Mississippi homicide rate is fifty times that of England, which occupies approximately the same area but has twenty times the population. Over 300 of the homicides were Negroes killed by Negroes; 50 were Negroes killed by whites; 100 were whites killed by whites; and 10 were whites killed by Negroes. 78 of the slayers were not indicted. Of the 146 convicted, two were hanged. . . . Chicago has half the murder rate of Mississippi, New York one fourth.—*Christian Century*.

An Episcopalian rector of New York, the Rev. Walter Russell Bowie, has accepted the position of Professor of Practical Theology at Union Seminary, New York. Union Seminary ceased long ago having a confessional character.

Canon Raven, Master of Christ College, Cambridge, a leading pacifist, is delivering lectures in our country. He holds that the three great problems of life are named in the words: property, sex, war. When he says that the Church as Church has no answer concerning these problems, he certainly misses the mark widely, because the Word of God has a number of things to say on these topics.

Rev. Emil Hannemann, headmaster of our seminary (A. L. C.) at Amron in New Guinea, now officially called "Lutheran Central School Madang," would be due for furlough and really needs it; but he will postpone it until 1940 in order to finish the first class of this merged seminary—"if his health holds out," as our informant writes.

Lutheran Standard

From the Gaspe area of New Brunswick comes the report that a Roman Catholic congregation of between 70 and 80 families, together with its priest (Abbé Real d'Anjou), has applied for membership in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The report says that these people have become displeased with the financial demands of their bishop during a time of great poverty.

A.