

9-1-1939

Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

J. T. Mueller

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mueller, J. T. (1939) "Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 10 , Article 72.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol10/iss1/72>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

Meeting of Augustana Synod. — The Augustana Synod held its 80th annual convention at Lindsborg, Kans. According to the *News Bulletin* of the National Lutheran Council the synod by unanimous vote "protested the gesture of President Roosevelt in sending a personal representative to the coronation of Pope Pius XII." It adopted the statement concerning labor which was submitted to the American Lutheran Conference last year and there given sanction. Since the statement last winter was reprinted with our criticisms in the *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, we need not advert to it here. It was resolved to meet biennially instead of annually in the future. However, before this resolution can go into effect, it will have to be voted on once more, and a two-thirds majority will be required to make the change. Dr. Bersell of Minneapolis, Minn., was reelected president. Wrong is the wording of the following paragraph: "The synod forbids its pastors to officiate at the marriage of persons who do not accept, or do not have the sincere purpose to abide by, the Christian ideal of marriage." Synod is not the master of pastors and congregations. The wording should have been: "We consider it contrary to the Word of God for our ministers to officiate at the marriage of persons," etc. A.

A Manifesto of Lutheran Presidents. — The presidents of the U. L. C., the A. L. C., the Norwegian Lutheran Church, the Augustana Synod, the Lutheran Free Church, the United Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church, and of the Danish Evangelical Lutheran Church issued a declaration intended to strengthen the faith of their fellow-Lutherans, troubled, as they are, in their minds by untoward world conditions. Ps. 46 is made the basis of their remarks. There is a strikingly apt description of affairs in the statement. "Instead of the delusions once passionately followed that we might see 'the evangelization of the world in this generation' and that men's social life might be controlled by a so-called social gospel, Christianity is now openly antagonized, ridiculed, persecuted. Instead of the aspiration and inspiration and venturesomeness of a free life, men and nations are running to cover, feverishly building legal walls of 'security'—social security, worldly security, armed security. Further to bewilder us, the 'worldly-wise men' deafen us with their analysis of conditions and their predictions. Some of them, we are persuaded, are deluded or are insincere, are propagandists. Press and screen and radio excite us, keep us emotionally upset, with their head-lines and spot-lights."

That in spite of what the phenomena seem to say God is at work is emphatically stated. In one of the concluding paragraphs a strange misunderstanding or misapplication of a Bible-passage occurs: "As we become conscious that a divine judgment is falling upon men, let us not shrink from the realization that judgment will begin at the house of God. He is cleansing His Church, purifying it as His own

possession, that it may be a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that it shall be holy and without blemish." In reference to this we have to say that the Church is a glorious body, without spot or wrinkle, through the work of Christ; that the apostle in the words taken over from Ephesians is speaking of the invisible Church, that temple of incomparable beauty described Eph. 2: 19-22. If it was desired to quote a passage speaking of the purifying of Christians from the dross which clings to them, Heb. 12:5-11 would have served admirably.

A.

Assembly of the Northern Presbyterians.—Northern Presbyterians held their this year's Assembly in Cleveland. Among the matters of special interest may be listed the election of a layman, who, however, is a missionary in the foreign field, Dr. Sam Higginbottom, as Moderator. Concerning the discussion of church union a reporter in the *Presbyterian* writes: "Much was heard about church union, especially with the Protestant Episcopal denomination. Some influential Presbyterian ministers and several Episcopal bishops urged it. No action was taken, and the status continues what it had been, committees of each Church negotiating and action to be taken by a future Assembly. Many of the commissioners were opposed to the union. A much stronger desire was expressed for union with the Presbyterian Church U. S. [Southern Presbyterians], and an invitation was sent that body to consider union." Concerning pensions the reporter states: "After a thorough discussion it was decided to change the Pension Plan of the Church, so that a minister who has reached the age of 65 will receive his pension only when he retires from the active ministry and not, as formerly, automatically on reaching the age of 65, whether or not he remains in the active ministry. It is interesting to note that there was general concurrence in the wisdom of this action, even by those who had come prepared to oppose it." The report says that Dr. Homrighausen was confirmed as professor at Princeton "largely on the basis of his recent statement in the *Presbyterian*, which, at least in its implications, retracts the denial of the infallibility of the Scriptures contained in his former publications." CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY fears that this is too optimistic a view of the stand of Dr. Homrighausen. With reference to the study of doctrine in Princeton Seminary the reporter says: "The sale of nearly a hundred sets of Calvin's *Institutes* at Princeton Seminary may have a great influence if the work is read, as it is intended to be read, in connection with the Word of God." With respect to ministerial candidates we read: "The question of an adequate supply of ministers remains to be solved. The present Presbyterian seminaries do not seem to meet adequately the need. Is it not the call of seminaries to base their courses more definitely on the Word of God as authoritative and to work definitely toward the one end of training preachers who will proclaim the Gospel of the grace of God in the power of the Holy Spirit? Courses of study that do not definitely contribute to this end could well be dropped." No one will deny that there is much wisdom in the last remark. The reports of missionaries, so we are told, show that there are great openings in India because millions of lower-caste and outcaste

people turn from Hinduism. The Church in India is said to have an annual increase of thirty per cent. This sentence bears quotation: "Dr. Good's almost Pentecostal story of the thousands in the Kameruns who are coming into the Church every year and are baptized only after a course of study lasting several years urges us to a new dedication to the task." In China thirty million people are said to have migrated westward, a movement which assists in bringing the Gospel to provinces that had not yet been evangelized. The opening address of the retiring Moderator had a good text, "Ye must be born again." If the report before us is fairly complete, the social gospel was kept in the background.

A.

Convention of Northern Baptists.—Northern Baptists this year met in a city which geographically rather belongs to the South, Los Angeles. One reporter surmises that the almost absolute absence of bickering and controversy was due to the climate. Prof. Elmer A. Fridell of the Berkeley Divinity School was elected president. He had become well known through long service as chairman of the National Social Service Committee. The convention voted to join the World Council of Churches, stipulating, however, among other things, that it does not intend to be bound by any legislation or action of the World Council to which it does not give its approval. By a large majority a resolution was adopted urging the Government to declare an embargo on munitions and raw materials with respect to Japan. Another measure having a political complexion was the endorsement of the view calling for the repeal of the Oriental Exclusion Act. The body declared its opposition to anti-Semitism. It likewise issued a sweeping condemnation of war, though, as the reporter in the *Christian Century* somewhat cynically remarks, more than three hundred delegates visited the United States warships at Long Beach. The joint Communion service, which had been scheduled for the closing exercises, was dropped because many of the Baptists of Los Angeles felt it would be wrong for them to commune with some of the Liberals belonging to the Northern Baptists—a stand for which they must be given sincere commendation.

A.

"Leading Theological Seminaries Back to the Real Reformation by Denying Verbal Inspiration."—Such is the theologico-historical fallacy which Dr. Brunner of Princeton Seminary arrogantly defends. (Cf. *Christianity Today*, Vol. 9, No. 3, Spring Number.) Dr. S. G. Craig, editor of *Christianity Today*, had among other things, written to Professor Brunner as follows: "According to my correspondents you stated among other things that you do not accept the covenant theology of Charles Hodge and the Westminster Standards. According to the same correspondents you also stated that one of the purposes of your trip through the South was to gain support for the present administration at Princeton Theological Seminary in its effort to get that institution away from the 'uncritical' position represented by the late Benjamin B. Warfield, whose view of Biblical inspiration you are reported to have characterized as 'pagan' and 'antichristian' and as a part of the 'dead orthodoxy' against which President Mackay is making a fight at Princeton at the present time. I shall be glad to be advised as to whether my correspondents

have unintentionally borne false witness against you in alleging that you made the above or similar statements concerning Hodge's covenant theology, Warfield's doctrine of inspiration, and the aim of the present administration at Princeton Theological Seminary." In his reply Dr. Brunner says in part: "I do not reject the Westminster Standards at all, neither the covenant theology of Dr. Hodge. I have no quarrel with Hodge's covenant theology nor with the Westminster Standards. *What I am attacking in the most decided manner is the theology of Warfield, especially his theory of verbal inspiration, which, as you know, is very different from that of Hodge and which I call subchristian. This theology is the reason of the decline of scholarship in the Presbyterian Church during the last generation. I think it is no news that President Mackay, while differing in some points from me, has the intention of leading Princeton Seminary back to the real Reformation theology, the real Biblical theology, of which Warfield's theology is a decided deviation. This statement (as far as I am concerned; I am not invited to speak for President Mackay) you may give as much publicity as you want. I am glad about every one who gets a chance to hear it.*" (Italics our own.)

In his able rebuttal of Dr. Brunner's claims Dr. Craig writes on the point of verbal inspiration: "Dr. Brunner is very explicit in rejecting verbal inspiration, especially as advocated by B. B. Warfield. And yet, if he has no quarrel with the Westminster doctrine of Scripture, he has no right to disparage Warfield's doctrine of inspiration. For what Warfield did was to state and defend, with unusual clarity and cogency, the Westminster doctrine of Scripture. Dr. Brunner's allegation that Warfield's doctrine of inspiration is 'very different from that of Hodge' has no basis in fact. Hodge taught the doctrine of verbal inspiration as truly, even if not as fully, as did Warfield,—the doctrine was not so widely disputed, at least not in church circles, in Hodge's day. Moreover, Hodge taught the inerrancy of the Scriptures in *all their parts*. 'The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments,' he wrote (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 152), 'are the Word of God, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and are therefore infallible and of divine authority in all things pertaining to faith and practise and consequently free from all error, whether of doctrine, fact, or precept.' (Italics ours.) . . . It is as clear as day, it seems to us, that Dr. Brunner's doctrine of Scripture is very different from that of the Westminster divines. Probably Dr. Brunner will retort that, even if it be true that the view of Scripture held by Hodge and Warfield is that of the Westminster Standards, it is a 'thoroughly unbiblical view' and hence to be rejected. As a matter of fact, however, it is, as Warfield points out and as he has abundantly shown, but 'the careful and well-guarded statement of what is delivered by Scripture concerning itself.' In other words, it is based on a grammatico-historical study of the Scriptures themselves, more specially on the exegetically obtained fact that it was the view of Scripture held by our Lord and His apostles. Nothing is more amazing than the persistency with which advocates of loose views of the inspiration of Scripture ignore this fact. If we reject the testimony which the Scriptures offer in behalf of their own trustworthiness, how can we accept their testimony on other matters? We are dependent on the Scriptures for our knowledge of all

the distinctive facts and doctrines of Christianity. If we cannot trust them in what they say about themselves, can we trust them in what they tell us about the deity of Christ, redemption in His blood, justification by faith, regeneration by the Holy Spirit, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting? How one can successfully establish the authority of the Scripture while rejecting the testimony it bears concerning itself we are unable to see."

We quote this controversy between the editor of *Christianity Today* and Dr. Brunner chiefly because it is precisely the same that is now carried on in our country between orthodox Lutherans and Lutheran Liberalists who have placed themselves squarely and solidly on the rationalistic ground on which Brunner stands. His fallacies concerning verbal inspiration are advanced in the same way by liberal Lutherans, who contend that verbal inspiration is not taught by Scripture itself nor by the Lutheran Confessions nor by the great Reformer, but that it is an invention of later theologians. Every argument which Dr. Craig advances against Brunner may be advanced also by us against our Lutheran liberal opponents. In view of this fact the controversy on verbal inspiration in Presbyterian circles becomes extremely interesting. Also our Lutheran Liberals claim to go back to the real Reformation by denying verbal inspiration. But how unreasonable is this claim!

J. T. M.

"The Sunday-School Times" Takes Issue with the Federal Council. Ernest Gordon, writing in the *Sunday-school Times*, offers the following interesting and timely comment: "The Federal Council of Churches again illustrated its unerring capacity for doing the wrong thing when it sent to the Vatican a cablegram, signed by Messrs. Buttrick, Mott, and Cavert, expressing to 'sorrowing Catholics its deepest sympathy in the loss of devoted *spiritual leadership* of His Holiness, Pope Pius XI.' There followed Dr. E. R. Clinchy with a cablegram, in which he characterized the Pope's death as a loss to America and the world. He said: 'All Americans have recognized the Pope as an outstanding champion of the natural rights of the individual man, foremost to protest against persecution and the ruthless use of force. His advocacy of peace has aroused the gratitude of all peace-loving Americans.' Has this Rip Van Winkle never heard of the Italian raid on Abyssinia? Did not Pius XI covertly support it? Did it not fit into his plan of foreign missions? Did not priests and laity in Italy make voluntary contributions to the war expenses? Did not Pius XI announce that he was praying for the success of the butcher armies of Franco? Did not he and the entire Church of which he was head use every lever to overthrow the Spanish republic? Why should Dr. Mott talk of the late Pope's devoted *spiritual leadership*? Does he not know that this organizer of Catholic Action was primarily a political leader? Catholic Action is a threat against a free press and free political life. Does Mr. Mott not know that the late Pope's foreign-mission policy, far from being spiritual, has been coercive in its use of underhanded repression on the Congo and elsewhere? I cannot speak for 'all Americans,' as Dr. Clinchy does, but I am satisfied that a prodigious number of the most far-seeing feel nothing but chagrin that, at a time when General Franco sent to the new Pope 'filial felicitations

in the name of a Catholic Spain fighting against the enemies of the faith,' the President of the United States should also cable, 'It is with true happiness that I learned of your selection as Supreme Pontiff.'"

In view of the present developments in Church and State the study of our Confessions becomes increasingly timely and important. Especially do we recommend a careful study on the part of our pastors and teachers of Melancthon's "Tract on the Power and Primacy of the Pope," which is Lutheranism's never-changing challenge of the arrogance of the Papacy. The "Tract" appeared four hundred plus two years ago, but the issues involved are just as important today as they were then. Its opening paragraphs are truly classic in their defiant challenge: "The Roman Pontiff claims for himself that by divine right he is above all bishops and pastors in all Christendom. Secondly he adds also that by divine right he has both swords, i. e., the authority also of bestowing and transferring kingdoms. And thirdly he says that to believe this is necessary for salvation. And for these reasons the Roman bishop calls himself the vicar of Christ on earth. These three articles we hold to be false, godless, tyrannical, and pernicious to the Church." (Cf. *Triglot*, p. 503 ff.) There is no pussy-footing in the Confessions of our heroic fathers; nor should there be any on the part of their children today.

J. T. M.

"The Revival of Theology in the Roman Catholic Church and Its Significance for Us."—Under this heading the Rev. Dr. S. G. Craig, editor of *Christianity Today*, prints an address which he delivered before the Board of Christian Education at the last assembly of the Northern Presbyterians. Our chief interest in the article attaches to the fact that it advocates a deeper appreciation on the part of Protestantism for Neo-Scholasticism or Neo-Thomism, and this on the grounds that Neo-Scholasticism shows a remarkable comprehensiveness of grasp and outlook, that it derives its main content from the metaphysical or supersensible, that its solution of the relation between faith and reason, or theology and philosophy, assumes the existence of an *external authority* (the Church) and that it represents organized, substantial opposition to the anti-intellectualism rampant in the modern world. Neo-Scholasticism, according to Dr. Craig, contains important values for Protestants, the fundamental similarity of the two consisting in this, that both "recognize the cross as the symbol of Christianity and sing the praises of the Lamb that has been slain." Dr. Craig is a mediating Presbyterian, formerly connected with Dr. Machen and his confessional group, but at present he is on his way to return to the Presbyterian regulars, though personally he is opposed to Modernism. To the casual observer it may seem strange that middle-road Presbyterianism today should look to Rome for steadying its troubled church course. But after all, Calvinism and Romanism, in the last analysis, are not *contradictoria* but astonishingly identical in basing their fundamental theological tenets on rationalistic axioms. In externals both desire and seek organization, and in economics and politics both stand for a kind of sublimated totalitarianism. However, not only Reformed conservatives but also Reformed liberalists are seeking in Neo-Scholasticism new religious canons of judgment. Even the well-known columnist Heywood Broun recently

joined Romanism, and when (as the press reports) he expressed surprise at the fact that so outspoken a "progressivist" (Communist) is welcome in the papistic Church, Father Dowling, his personal friend and converter, replied: "Don't you realize that you are a little naive, Heywood? You like to call yourself a radical, but the doctrines of the Church to which I belong imply so many deep changes in human relationship that, when they are accomplished, — and they will be, — your notions will be nothing more than outmoded pink Liberalism."

For us Lutherans this trend toward Rome is significant and should receive our careful study. Broun's religious instructor will be Mgr. Fulton J. Sheen of the Catholic University, Washington, D. C., who for many years has delivered radio sermons which have aroused the deepest interest among the intelligentsia of our country. We dare not ignore such misleading movements as Neo-Scholasticism but must study them and reveal to the world their intrinsic falsity and sham. Neo-Scholasticism is no cure for the religious troubles of our time, for it does not lead any one to the *sola Scriptura* and the *sola gratia*, just as little as did medieval Thomism. Luther, who studied the works of Thomas Aquinas very closely, said of him: "St. Thomas, with all Thomists and other scholastic teachers, has never understood rightly and truly even only one chapter of Holy Scripture." (Cf. Vol. 23 of the St. L. edition of Luther's works for other expressions of the great Reformer on Thomism.)

This criticism is true also of Neo-Thomism, which basically is nothing else than rationalistic enthusiasm, denying in its major premises both the *sola Scriptura* and the *sola gratia*. One thing is certain: if we wish to benefit our religiously very unstable age, we must not permit ourselves to be misled by modern emotionalism in religion but, true to Scripture and our Confessions, preserve the proper balance between intellectualism and emotionalism taught in these norms of our faith. The crisis of our time calls for ministers who are *theologians* in the truest sense of the term.

J. T. M.

Mas Poder para Ti (More Power to You). — Thus reads the title of a bizarre periodical published in Mexico City. Its editor is L. G. Leguz, the advertising of whose book *Facing Reality, Cold Facts of Human Life* (\$5 for six copies) seems to form the chief objective of this extremely unchristian and undemocratic propaganda sheet. Since it may be sent to some of our church-members, especially such as attend colleges or universities (judging from certain expressions, the mailing-list seems to be very large), we shall supply our readers with a few samples of the ungodly "individualism" which this paper inculcates. Mr. Leguz writes: "Individualism is the corner-stone for a sound foundation of one's destiny. Now more than ever egoism and individual action, necessary for a steadfast mastery in any walk of life, are laudable." — "The old Biblical saying 'Love thy neighbor as thyself' is a beautiful sentence. Alas, it is mere words on paper. To be truly deserving of praise, it should read: 'After thou hast loved thyself as much as possible, then love thy neighbor as thyself.'" — "Be stony-hearted if you intend to conquer the world. Harbor in your inner self courage and egoism. Any so-called love for

your neighbor is but a stupid love for yourself. Altruism is the virtue of the mean. Humility often exhibits lack of ability. Self-denial and pity, virtues for the cradle, make races of cowards, of sickly moral dwarfs, unworthy of living.' Thus spoke Nietzsche, who wrote for the select few and not for the narrow-minded horde."—"Be manly by facing reality! Be brave in understanding that the defeat of oneself by forces beyond one's control is not so shameful as failure due to one's own inability and kindness of heart by refusing to fight like a beast, if possible, for one's own welfare. Egoism is a noble virtue. Now and then it is an excellence of character. Perhaps even in heaven egoists get their reward. Worship any god you please. The mental world is a 'free country.' But do not forget: your first duty in life is to worship yourself above all. Think yourself a king. Thus you will not have to envy the king. Think yourself a god. Thus you will not have to ask much of God."

If this atrocious blasphemy will fall into the hands of our already very dissatisfied and restless American youth, incalculable harm may be done to both the Church and the State. Destructive periodicals like *More Power to You* must therefore not be overlooked by our pastors and teachers, who are in a position effectually to warn our Christian young people against them. The brutal "individualism" of Leguz differs, of course, from the sane and sound "individualism," a philosophic doctrine which defends the prerogatives of the individual against the fallacies of collectivism as this is represented both in Communism and Fascism. (Cf. *The Lasting Elements of Individualism*, by Wm. E. Hocking, Yale University Press, New Haven. Price, \$2.00. 1937.) The latter individualism stands for the intrinsic rights of democracy, which are now being threatened by the very individualism which Leguz advocates and which therefore ought to be studied anew also in our own circles. As ministers of the Gospel we cannot do our work successfully unless we thoroughly know the underlying destructive trends of our times.

J. T. M.

The Cult of E. Stanley Jones and the Adulation of Kagawa.—Writing under the heading "The Need of a Twentieth Century Revival," Dr. J. R. Graham, in a lengthy article in the *Christian Beacon* (April 13, 1939), castigates the "cult of E. Stanley Jones and the adulation of Kagawa." The article is far too long to be quoted here even in part, but a few paragraphs may show the reader how well the Bible Presbyterians understand the "utter depravity" of modernistic Protestantism. We read: "Nothing could demonstrate more conclusively this appalling perverseness of the present-day Protestant clergy North and South than their unqualified endorsement of Dr. E. Stanley Jones. It is far more than an endorsement; it is an adulation that approaches worship. We doubt if there is a better touchstone of the utter depravity of Protestantism. We presume not to condemn any man unheard. We have heard him, read him, talked with him, followed over his trail in the Orient, and we are persuaded that Dr. Stanley Jones is an instrument more completely satisfactory to Satan than any other whom the Father of Lies has in the world today. He has subverted and prostituted his great talents to preach a hypothetical Christian communism to be superimposed upon a Christ-rejecting world. That the careless worldlings who compose the

overwhelming bulk of the membership of Protestant churches, who have not the remotest idea what the way of salvation is and who feel that Christianity is an ethical code, should be carried along with the eloquent earnestness of Dr. Jones is not surprising. But that many men and women who seem to have an understanding of what the Gospel is and who actually look for the coming of Christ can fail to see that Dr. Jones's idea of the kingdom of God on earth is simply the figment of his own imagination and has not the slightest basis in Scripture, but is the complete reverse of the principles and purposes of God in Christ, is a monument to the inconsistency and increasing senility of the human mind. That Dr. Jones is the supermodernist and the idol of present-day Protestantism cannot be denied. We have discovered that to take issue with his form of dogmaticism or publicly to declare him to be in error will stir up more anger than any number of aspersions that can be cast upon the name of the only-begotten Son of God. Toyohiko Kagawa, the Japanese Socialist, who declares Jesus Christ to be 'the summit of evolution,' is another modernist idol. He does not have the qualities to inspire the Anglo-Saxon peoples as does Dr. Jones, but he is lauded by the leaders of apostate Protestantism as the 'greatest living Christian' and is deemed to exemplify in practise what Dr. Jones sets forth in theory." Speaking of Protestantism, the writer says that "among the rank and file of Protestant churches now the only 'protest' that one is able to discover is that against the Gospel of salvation alone through faith in the shed blood of the only-begotten Son of God." He concludes with the words "Since Protestant ecclesiasticism is superstructure and not foundation, the inevitable result of it all is a return to the bosom of Rome. Novices in the science of Nicolaitan clerisy must eventually succumb to the old masters. The Church of England clergy are leading the trek back to Rome. The frantic stampede to church union in the United States, already consummated among the Methodist Episcopal bodies, definitely planned among Presbyterian bodies, and projected between the Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches, all is part of the movement to unite all the harlot bodies into that great religio-ecclesiastical Babylon that will be presided over by the false prophet of prophecy." Dr. Graham's keen analysis of the modernistic crisis in renegade Protestantism certainly contains much food for thought. His descriptions of Jones and Kagawa are entirely correct; and what he writes of the ultimate triumph of Romanism, after atheistic Protestantism shall have spent itself, may well serve as a warning to such true Protestants as still esteem the *sola Scriptura* and the *sola gratia*. Even now subtle Thomistic rationalism is finding favor with many who can no longer stand the extreme, superficial, rationalism of modernistic Protestantism.

J. T. M.

"Wacht und Weide." The reason why we direct the attention of our readers once again to this theological journal of our enterprising brethren in South America, is that we believe their venture deserves our hearty support. The periodical evidently is published under great difficulties, since the last number sent to us is Vol. 3, No. 3/4, 1938, and bears on its last page the peculiar remark: "In dieser Nummer erscheinen

keine kurzen Nachrichten und Bemerkungen, weil dies Blaettchen verschiedener Umstaende wegen fuerf Monate lang in einer staedtischen Druckerei lag." The reference perhaps is to the anti-Nazi movement of the Brazilian government, which especially papers and periodicals published in the German language felt keenly. The present volume contains a homiletico-exegetical study of John 3:1-21, an article on the present church-union movement in the world, another on the polity of the "Rio-grandenser Synode," with special comments by Professor Schelp, an outline on Christian ethics as suggested by the Sixth Commandment, an appeal to teachers and ministers to increase the mission spirit among pupils by means of Bible History, a timely description of the teacher in his capacity as *Seelsorger* and missionary, an article on "what persons may be baptized" (based on Dean Fritz's *Pastoral Theology*), a radio sermon in Portuguese, and a fine series of sermon outlines in Spanish. While some of our brethren in South America read the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY and other publications of our Church, they must have a periodical of their own, adapted to the needs of pastors and teachers, and it is our privilege to assist them in this worthy but arduous enterprise. Studious pastors who are able to invest a few spare pennies in *Wacht und Weide* will not only do our South American brethren a great favor, but also enrich their own ministry by the wider vision which this periodical will give them. In passing, we may add that recently *Life* brought some fine pictures of *Blumenau*, where our Brazilian Church, too, is represented and where the Brazilian government laid a heavy hand on Nazi sympathizers.

J. T. M.

Die „andere Seite.“ Ein verehrter Amtsbruder, Pastor unserer Synode, schreibt über die Lage in Deutschland: „So viel ist doch gewiß, daß diese sogenannten Bekenntnisschriften vor allen Dingen eine Volkskirche wollen. Darum sind sie gegen ein klares Bekenntnis, gegen Lehrzucht und Kirchenzucht, gegen Trennung von Staat und Kirche, wie die deutsche Regierung das anstrebt. Warum soll es in Amerika verkehrt sein, daß Religion in den Staatschulen gelehrt wird und nicht auch in Deutschland? Ich bin in Deutschland zur Schule gegangen und weiß, wie die gottlosen Lehrer in den Religionsstunden den Glauben zu unterminieren sich bemühen. Ich weiß, wie diese Bekenntnisschriften früher unsere freikirchlichen Pastoren schikaniert haben, wo sie nur konnten, z. B. bei Beerdigungen als Kirchhofinspektoren; ich weiß, wie diese Bekenntnisschriften noch jetzt die Freikirche unterdrücken würden, wenn die deutsche Regierung das zuließe.“

Wie Hitler sich über seine Stellung zur Religion ausgesprochen hat, ist aus den Mitteilungen unserer Presse bekannt. Es sollte aber doch wohl dieser Paragraph aus seiner großen Reichstagsrede auch hier abgedruckt werden: „Der nationalsozialistische Staat hat weder eine Kirche geschlossen noch einen Gottesdienst verhindert noch je einen Einfluß auf die Gestaltung eines Gottesdienstes genommen. Er hat weder auf die Lehre noch auf das Bekenntnis irgendeiner Konfession eingewirkt. Im nationalsozialistischen Staat allerdings kann jeder nach seiner Fassung selig werden.“ Fast unmittelbar vor diesen Worten gab Hitler die Erklärung ab: „Wenn aber wirklich die deutschen Kirchen diese Lage für sich als unerträglich ansehen

sollten, dann ist der nationalsozialistische Staat jederzeit bereit, eine klare Trennung von Kirche und Staat vorzunehmen, wie dies in Frankreich, Amerika und andern Ländern der Fall ist." Welch ein Segen für Deutschland, wenn es wirklich zur Trennung von Staat und Kirche kommen sollte! A.

The Theological Faculties of Heidelberg, Leipzig, and Rostock Liquidated? — Press dispatches from Germany report that according to an order issued by Bernhard Rust, Minister of Education, Protestant theological schools forming part of the universities of Heidelberg, Leipzig, and Rostock must be closed by October 1. The press dispatches state that no official explanation accompanied the astounding order, that, however, an article in the Nazi magazine *Nordland* appearing at this time declares the study of theology to be "without value and unnecessary." The dispatches inform us that this year 873 theology students matriculated at German universities. The article in *Nordland* is quoted as saying: "We cannot believe that boys with a natural and healthy instinct see their life-work as theologians instead of working for the resurrection and greatness of Germany in jobs fit for them." It was stated likewise that the authorities of Protestant churches would try to have the order withdrawn. From the point of view of a pagan nationalistic philosophy one can understand the closing of these theological departments. Perhaps the order will help Protestants in Germany more generally to see that the still obtaining union of Church and State, though becoming more tenuous all the time, is not the relation which the New Testament teaches. If this is accomplished, lasting good will result. A.

Brief Items. — Harry A. Ironside said, as quoted in the *Presbyterian*: "He, then, who would be accepted as an expository preacher must give much time in private to the reading of the Word of God. He must not neglect careful study and meditation. If not familiar with the original languages in which the Bible was written, he will be wise to avail himself of all possible helps to get at the actual meaning underlying the English translation. But, as a rule, it is not wise to include too much that savors of the study in public exposition. Good, plain English, unspoiled by pedantry, is appreciated by most hearers in this country. 'Great swelling words' may draw the admiration of a few who attach undue importance to apparent scholarship, but the Bible explained in the language of the people, yet free from vulgarity and anything tending to irreverence, is what is needed if men are to be attracted to a teaching ministry."

Church and State Are Still United in England. — In view of the serious indifference of Londoners toward attendance at divine worship, only five per cent. of them going to church, Sir Charles Marston asks the clergy of the Church of England to have their parishes petition the king for the issuance of a proclamation reminding his loyal subjects of their duty toward God. Few of us have realized that the religious situation is so alarming in London, the largest city of Europe.

A survey reveals that 1,500 rural Iowa churches have been closed. Reasons alleged for these distressing conditions are financial difficulties, unattractiveness of a country charge, changing methods

of transportation, competition of the radio and the movies, a general change in social conditions, and a shifting of the rural population. One wonders whether the people that formerly were served by these churches now are without church connections.

Dr. C. C. Morrison, when delivering the lectures on preaching on the Lyman Beecher Foundation, is reported in the *Christian Century* to have asserted that "the revelation of God is not primarily in the gospels or even in Jesus, considered as an isolated figure, or in an individual personal experience, but in the Christian Church." Readers of the *Christian Century* have noticed for some time that Dr. Morrison stresses the idea of the Church. At times his words had an almost orthodox ring. It is now evident that he intends to put the Bible on the shelf as our sole authority in religion and make the Church his basis. Will the process of evolution finally take him to Popery?

A Washington, D. C., paper reports: "The Senate has begun observance of the new rule requiring every session to begin with a prayer. Heretofore the Senate has prayed only on the day following an adjournment. This has resulted in prayer being called for but a few times during the course of a session." The incongruity of the practise under consideration seems to be beyond the power of the average American mind to grasp.

In spite of the war the sale of Bibles or of parts of the Bible continues in China. In 1938 140,000 copies of the Holy Scriptures or parts of them were sold. The money realized through these sales by the Bible societies amounted to more than one hundred and one thousand dollars. While the transportation difficulties were enormous, the distributing agencies succeeded in sending Bibles to all parts of the war-torn country.

Bishop Stewart of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Chicago, writing in the *Christian Century*, says: "The last decade, with its depression, its rise of the totalitarian state, its resurgence of paganism, its shallowness and silliness, its great tumultuous signs and demoniac powers abroad in the earth, has intensified my devotion to Jesus as the Great One, betrayed and crucified over and over again by His own followers, yet ever risen and renewing the earth through a faithful remnant of genuine disciples." Renewing the earth? No, but keeping the ship of the Church afloat till it reaches the harbor.

The Anglican diocese of London, which has received a new bishop, Dr. Jeffrey Francis Fisher, numbers four million souls, 600 parishes, 4 suffragan bishops, and 1,500 clergymen. We mention this to give our readers an idea of the size of at least one Anglican diocese.

Southern Presbyterians largely lack enthusiasm with respect to merging with Northern Presbyterians. They criticize the Northern branch for tolerating in its midst the signers of the Auburn Affirmation, furthermore for not adhering strictly enough to the old view of church government and for giving the Assembly authority over church property. Finally the Southern branch does not like to be swallowed up by the larger Northern division. These are said to be the reasons for the negative attitude of Southern Presbyterians.

On the drift away from religion an article in the *Living Church* says: "In America paganism is rampant. There is a marked drift away from the Church. Bishop Stevens, in a recent article, declared: 'The fact must be faced that fifty or sixty millions of people are untouched by religion. That means nearly fifty per cent. of our population.' The only part the Church plays in the lives of vast multitudes is to lend pageantry to a wedding or distinction to a funeral. A Christian church is as strange to them as a Shinto temple or a Moslem mosque. Even university classrooms are tainted with hostility to religion."

In deference to Seventh-day Adventists the State of Michigan has adopted a law recognizing Saturday as the legal Sabbath for those who conscientiously believe it to be so. — *Christian Century*.

Finding its work in Spain intolerably handicapped by the Franco régime, the American Friends Service Committee announces that after next month it will concentrate its efforts on aiding the 400,000 Spanish refugees now in France. This project takes on new importance since it has become obvious that repatriation would mean death or imprisonment for the majority of these people. — *Christian Century*.

The *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* (Leipzig), suppressed last winter, may now again appear. Pastor Laible of Leipzig is the publisher and Dr. Bergdolt of Wuerzburg the editor. How this reversal was obtained is not told.

According to a report in the *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* the theological faculty of Muenster, Germany, reversed its action of 1932 when it conferred on Prof. Karl Barth the degree of Doctor of Theology. The reason advanced is that "through his course he showed himself unworthy of possessing a German academic honor."

There is a committee of Catholics which has the name Committee of Catholics to Fight Anti-Semitism. It publishes a tabloid newspaper called the *Voice*. Undoubtedly it will have to grapple with the question whether Father Coughlin uttered anti-Semitic sentiments.

Bishop Denny, Richmond, of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, a man 85 years old, recently said, "I am, and by the grace of God hope to remain through all my life, a member of the M. E. Church, South." Whether the factors which induce him to take this stand are vital does not appear from the report to which we are indebted for the above.

The minority of Presbyterians which in 1925 did not join the United Church of Canada has now by the latter been granted the right to use the old historic name as its title — the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

The Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople are on speaking terms. We are told that recently when Pius XI died and Pius XII became his successor, a new leaf was turned in the relations between the East and the West and that as a result of condolences, congratulations, and other courtesies, for the first time since the separation of the eleventh century an apostolic delegate visited the Patriarch. We doubt that the cause of the true Gospel will gain through this *rapprochement*. A.