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Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

From the Intersynodical Sphere.—In the *Lutheran Companion* of February 6 an editorial and an article, the latter by Dean Sebelius of the Lutheran Seminary in Rock Island, appeared dealing with the conference in Columbus, O., on January 20, which was called to discuss especially the case of the "orphaned" missions. We quote the second half of the editorial:

But what did the Columbus Conference accomplish? As usual, the secular press gave a distorted account of what happened. A press-association dispatch emanating from Columbus carried the news to the far reaches of the country that "the Missouri Synod, its membership heretofore distinctly a separate unit," had "pledged cooperation to the National Lutheran Council to further church unity in the face of the international crisis," adding that spokesmen for the Missouri Synod had "expressed willingness to cooperate in foreign-mission enterprises, aid in Army camp work, and suggested future conferences to establish a basis for Lutheran unity."

What actually happened is well told in the account of the conference written by Dr. S. J. Sebelius, which appears elsewhere in this issue. We would merely add here that the traditional Missouri position that there can be no cooperation in externals until inner spiritual unity has been achieved was eloquently presented by the President of that body, Dr. J. W. Behnken. However, he did express himself as "intensely interested" in relief work among the distressed Lutheran foreign missions. "We want to give relief," he said, "but we believe that the relief must and should be confined to physical and personal relief.

Out of the discussion which followed came finally the adoption by unanimous vote of a resolution stating that the Missouri Synod was willing to take over a part of the responsibility for the care of Lutheran orphaned missions and calling for "such coordination of effort" or "allocation of fields" as are agreed upon by the Committee of the American Section of the World Convention and the Committee of the Missouri Synod.

Then came a second resolution, also adopted unanimously, asking Dr. Ralph H. Long, Executive Secretary of the National Lutheran Council, and Dr. Behnken to confer with one another concerning the possibility of coordinating efforts in caring for the spiritual needs of the men in the Army and Navy "and to report to their respective bodies."

Finally there came a third resolution, which expressed the hope that "as occasion may demand and specific common tasks and problems confront us in which coordination of effort is desirable, similar conferences be held for mutual consultation" and that eventually a conference may be held "to consider the whole problem of the fundamentals of Lutheran unity."

It will be noted from the foregoing that "coordination" rather than "cooperation" was the principle which the Columbus Conference tried to establish in intersynodical relationships. In other words, it was felt

that in the present emergency every effort should be made to avoid unnecessary duplication and competition, which might lead to clash of interests and further misunderstandings. And surely, in such a time as this, when the Church is confronted with such desperate problems crying for solution, it should be possible for all of the Lutheran Church to find a method by which its united strength might be brought to bear against the forces of evil and iniquity rather than to dissipate its resources and power in unprofitable and even hurtful dissension.

We are not unmindful of the implications of the final resolution adopted at Columbus. We, too, believe that inner unity is most important of all, although we may not be altogether agreed with some of our brethren in the faith as to the method by which it may be demonstrated or achieved. We welcome, however, the proposal adopted at the Columbus Conference that a future conference be held "to consider the whole problem of the fundamentals of Lutheran unity." May it be pleasing to the Lord of the Church that such a conference be held very, very soon! —

Thus far the editorial, written by Dr. E. E. Ryden, President of the American Lutheran Conference, who presided at the Columbus meeting. Needless to say, members of the Missouri Synod endorse the stand taken by their President, to the effect that cooperation in externals does not mean a surrender of the principle that there must be unity in doctrine before we can establish fellowship with each other. The editorial does not state the Missouri Synod position entirely correctly in the words "There can be no cooperation in externals until inner spiritual unity has been achieved." The sentence ought to read thus: "There can be no cooperation in definitely religious work (such as mission endeavors) until inner spiritual unity has been achieved." Unity? Yes, may the day soon come when it is a reality—that is our heartfelt prayer. But what is the use of talking about "united strength" when we are not united?

A.

These Plaguering Theses. — In *The Lutheran* of Nov. 20, 1940, Dr. A. J. Traver "passes on remarks heard at Omaha." We shall pass on to our readers the last section of his article. "The confusing action on the Pittsburgh Articles had everybody more or less dizzy. Seemingly the delegates all had a bone to pick with at least one of the three articles as it stood. But practically all the delegates could vote for the articles as they were interpreted by the president. All are now agreed that the relationships between the general bodies of Lutherans in America can best be cultivated by cooperation in the fellowship of service. It was interesting to note the agreement between the representatives of the United Danish Lutheran Church and the Augustana Synod on this point. President Carlson of the Danish Church said in his greetings: 'We already have pulpit-fellowship without official authority. We are not interested in theses.' President Bersell of the Augustana Synod said: 'They wrote enough theses in the sixteenth century. . . . Now the question is, What can we do together?'"

Some men do not like to be confronted with doctrinal theses. They have been protesting for years against this method of establishing and

demonstrating unity in doctrine. They have protested in these words: "Specific statements (theses) must be prepared, setting forth, logically and completely, in concise phrases, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Subscription to these theses constitutes the narrow gate through which one enters into pulpit- and altar-fellowship." (See *Conc. Theol. Monthly*, 1939, p. 384.) The man who said at Omaha: "They wrote enough theses in the sixteenth century, . . ." told the A. L. C. convention at Detroit the same thing: no additional theses for him. What is back of this horror of theses? Cannot these men of the American Lutheran Conference understand that, unless the churches agree on up-to-date and clear-cut theses, there can be no true Lutheran unity? Lutheran union becomes impossible when leaders of the Church declare: "We are not interested in theses."

These theses, statements, "Agreements," must of course be clear-cut, unambiguous, complete statements. It does not sound right when we are told that most of "the delegates could vote for the articles (the Pittsburgh Agreement) as they were interpreted by the president." Doctrinal statements which need to be interpreted and which can be interpreted in different ways cannot bring about Lutheran unity.

Note, by the way, that Dr. Traver and the men whose remarks he passes on are aiming at bringing the Lutherans together on the unionistic platform. "All are now agreed that the relationship between the general bodies of Lutherans in America can best be cultivated by *cooperation in the fellowship of service*." "We are not interested in theses." "Now the question is, What can we do together?" E.

The Recent Federal Council of Churches Meeting.—Early in December, 1940, the Federal Council of Churches held its biennial meeting in Atlantic City, N. J. One thing featured prominently in the report concerning this meeting is that the Protestant Episcopal Church entered as a member. In discussions of the situation it is brought out that the bodies which are not affiliated with the Federal Council are chiefly the Southern Baptists, the Southern Presbyterians (Presbyterian Church in the United States), and the three large Lutheran bodies, or federations, the United Lutheran Church of America, the American Lutheran Conference, and the Synodical Conference, although the U. L. C. A. maintains a consultative relation to the Federal Council. Among the subjects considered three loom particularly large: Religious Education, Home Missions, and Foreign Missions. There are three commissions which give attention to the enterprises just mentioned: the International Council of Religious Education, the Home Missions Council, and the Foreign Missions Conference of North America. It seems that the leaders believe that through cooperation in these endeavors the denominational walls will be broken down and unity will progressively be achieved. It was resolved that a special commission be created to study the problem of unemployment. A second new commission is to give study and attention to the question of a new world order resting on Christian principles. A good deal of attention was focused on a document presented by a Christian layman, Mr. John Foster Dullas, a lawyer, which voiced the conviction that a difference of opinion concerning the course

we should follow with respect to the European war must not become a divisive factor in American Christendom. Whether the position taken in the document in all respects is the correct one, we are unable to say, not having seen the paper. But the statement that a difference of opinion with respect to the course we should follow concerning the war should not make it impossible for people to fellowship each other has, of course, our approval. Luther Allan Weigle, dean of the Yale Divinity School, was elected president of the Federal Council and Albert Edward Day, pastor of the First Methodist Church of Pasadena, Calif., vice-president for the present biennium.

Thus this unionistic organization continues to do its work. Instead of making loyalty to the old Gospel as given us in the infallible Scriptures the aim which is to be achieved, outward union is sought. A.

Dr. Buttrick and the Bible.—*The Christian Beacon* (Jan. 9, 1941) writes editorially: "People must be informed. The record should be clear. In 1893 the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. ousted from its ministry Dr. Charles A. Briggs, teacher in Union Theological Seminary and member of the Presbytery of New York of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. Dr. Geo. A. Buttrick, a minister in the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in 1935 prepared a book in which he went far beyond the position of Dr. Briggs in denying the Scriptures and attacking the truth of God's Word. But Dr. Buttrick, instead of being ousted from the Church, has been elevated to a position of leadership. He is a member of the Board of National Missions of the denomination, a prominent conference speaker among young people and ministers. At the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia in 1938, at the observance of the 150th anniversary of the Church, Dr. Buttrick was invited to give the key address. The Presbyterian delegation of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. represented on the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, which included Dr. Wm. B. Pugh, supported and voted for the election of Dr. Buttrick as President of the Council for 1940 (italics ours). His views are well known. Without dispute here is a prominent minister, elevated and honored in the Church, who openly rejects the historic position of the Christian faith. This is for the record. We trust that it will help God's people who truly love the Bible and are still in the Presbyterian Church, to see the true condition which prevails. May they realize that this concerns them and that they are in communion with a Church and with men who honor and exalt unbelievers. This Church at the very time when Dr. Buttrick was writing his book—for it was published in 1935—was taking action to oust from its fold faithful men who believed the things which Dr. Buttrick denied. These men in 1936 were actually put out of the Church because they would not support a missionary program on which men with Dr. Buttrick's views were the leaders and the determiners of the policy. The Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, is most assuredly blasphemed in this situation. He is calling His own to come to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach."

In a lengthy indictment bearing the heading "Charges and Specifications against the Rev. Geo. A. Buttrick, D. D.," the *Christian Beacon*,

in the same issue, lists nine formal charges of extreme false doctrine against the liberal president of the Federal Council, based on his book *The Christian Fact and Modern Doubt*, published in 1935 by Charles Scribner's Sons. Some of the quotations may interest our readers since they are directed against the vital Scripture teaching of divine inspiration. We read: "The second besetment was the discovery of contradictions in the Bible. These need not be pursued from Dan to Beersheba. If only one self-refutation is found, the doctrine of literal infallibility is slain and pursuit is needless. There are two accounts of creation, and they do not agree. There are two accounts of David's census-taking: in the Book of Samuel we are told that God instructed him to number the people, and in the Chronicles, that Satan 'moved' him. . . . If the Bible is God's explicit Word, does He contradict Himself or offer to mankind mixed counsel? It is no use our evading or trying to hide Bible inconsistencies." "The accompanying legacy of an 'infallible' theory of Scripture was no great gain. Inevitably Jesus joined issue with the letter of the Law. How could God, so radiant and vital in His own life, be imprisoned in the past? And what is this doctrine of an inerrant Book but the assertion that God spoke then and cannot speak now, the avowal that the Everliving is the captive of antiquity?" "Having dethroned an allegedly infallible Church, men dared not make vesture with the 'Beyond that is within.' Craving external supports, they raised an infallible Book to the vacant throne. From that false move and its tyranny we now break free; but with what throes of spirit and what strife of tongues!" "In retrospect it seems incredible that the theory of literal inspiration could ever have been held. The Bible itself makes no claims to be infallible, save in one passage whose meaning is open to dispute." "Literal infallibility of Scripture is a fortress impossible to defend; there is reason in the camp. Probably few people who claim to 'believe every word of the Bible' really mean it. That avowal, held to its last logic, would risk a trip to the insane asylum. Meanwhile we should frankly admit the bankruptcy of 'literal infallibility' and, under guidance of the facts, set out on the long hard quest for truth." "This swift survey of the Bible as reverent scholarship has revealed it, confirms our contention that literal infallibility is an untenable dogma, which we should frankly disavow. If the Book were inerrant, we would still fall short of certainty." "But to Israel was given a strange, vigorous, redeeming sense of God. That consciousness was at the first primitive and vague. It grew, for revolution is the pattern of our life. Its early record was a mythology. The Scriptures of Israel to this day bear traces of a time when, so men thought, 'the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair.' God did not grow. But Israel's thought of Him grew. To them He was many. Then He was one. Then He was power. Then He was stern holiness; and then He was love." "The Old Testament is a collection of their [the early Israelites'] religious writings. In Genesis are their myths and legends, more rich and deep by far than those of Greece or the Norseland. A myth is not a fabrication, despite our misuse of the word. At its best it is the reverent attempt of a primitive mind to explain in story form the encompassing and indwelling Mystery."— "Recently we heard a sermon from the 'Word of God' that 'Christ had

redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us.' Its primary thesis was that we are all cursed in Adam's sin." Dr. Buttrick then narrates that he had four children with him in the pew, and that to spare these children the "clouding of their mind," he left the church, returning later "to apologize to the preacher and to explain." The orthodox minister accused Buttrick of being tainted with Modernism, who thereupon relates his reply: "We retorted, as gently as a fast-ebbing patience would permit, that, though it might have been Adam's sin, it was God's responsibility, who had so ordered His world that all the children of history should be trebly cursed for the wrong of one man, thousands of years ago, whose name perchance they had not heard. Such a God, we suggested, had earned the verdict of the French sceptic: 'Your God is my devil.'" These are only a few of the excerpts from Dr. Buttrick's book which aroused the impassioned editorial of the *Christian Beacon*. In the light of the quotations let the reader once more study the editorial, in order that he may fully understand how far the Federal Council has drifted from the truth to permit so blatant an unbeliever to serve as its head. Churches certainly have a right to ask: "Can Christianity survive?" as they consider such outspoken, unmitigated ungodliness of the leaders of the Federal Council.

J. T. M.

Nazi Antichristian Fanaticism in the Federal Council of Churches. — Ernest Gordon, always thoughtful and stimulating in offering his "encouragements and warnings from all the world" under the departmental head "A Survey of Religious Life and Thought," in the well-known and widely read *Sunday-school Times* justly and vigorously strikes back at Federal Council hypocrisy, which would have it appear as if the Council were very much alarmed at Nazi antichristianism (cf. Vol. 82, No. 50; Dec. 14, 1940). As Mr. Gordon reports, the Federal Council instructed a certain Stanley High to issue a pamphlet bearing the title "Watchman, What of the Night? Can Christianity Survive?" Reviewing this pamphlet, Mr. Gordon writes: "It is a compilation of Nazi antichristian fanaticisms from the writings of Alfred Rosenberg, Ludendorff, and others. Much of it is old material. For some of it one can easily find parallels in the literature of liberal-theology seminaries. Thus on page 6 are words that could well be taken from the writings of Harry Emerson Fosdick of Union: 'A religion which bases its very existence on revealed fact totters on its foundations when its facts become no more than legends. The facts of atoning death, assumption [that is, ascension], resurrection, in which the sixteenth century childishly believed, can no longer be taught as historical fact.' That is in Dr. Fosdick's best style. — 'Jehovah has lost all meaning for us Germans,' is a general sentiment among American modernist theologians. — 'The hideous legend of Isaac' is the description of the lovely story of Isaac's experience on Moriah. In Modernist literature the same narrative is put on a level with the child-sacrifices of Baalism. Even the revolting words used in the Nazi writings of the Virgin Birth find implied similarities in the teaching of those who deny Christ's miraculous origin. — Commenting on the newly published and atrociously 'purged' People's

Testament of the 'German Christians,' the *Junge Kirche*, of April 6, 1940, declared: 'All versions of the Nativity are simply legendary and should be suppressed.' Compare Fosdick again. — 'The account of the empty tomb has been omitted.' Compare Fosdick. — 'Evil spirits are no longer cast out in this Testament. That is mere superstition.' Compare Fosdick. — 'Sinners are no longer saved.' 'Jesus appears stripped of all that is secondary and non-essential and thus His messages are made attractive to thoughtful Germans.' Almost literally Dr. Fosdick. The declarations of the Sunday afternoon orator of the Federal Council thus can be seen point by point to coincide with opinions which their Mr. High thinks forecast the end of Christianity."

Mr. Gordon lets the reader draw his own conclusions regarding the liberal ultraism of the Federal Council, which in its suppression of the divine truth and its ceaseless attempts at de-Christianizing the American churches outdoes in many cases even the Nazi extremists. The German antichristian fanatics at least admit that they are not Christians in the traditional sense of the term; but this very claim has been made time and again by the Federal Council through its spokesman Dr. H. E. Fosdick. The ancient anguished cry of the Christian Church "Watchman, what of the night?" is well in place here in America in view of the fact that the Federal Council is doing all it can to keep Christianity from surviving. We have no brief for pagan "German Christians"; but the Federal Council is the stamping-ground of our own antichristian "German Christians," who are trying to dethrone Christ and abolish the Gospel, and the Christian world owes Mr. Gordon an expression of thanks for directing its attention to that fact.

J. T. M.

E. Stanley Jones and Clarence E. Macartney. — E. Stanley Jones, Methodist missionary among higher-caste Hindus, is again touring the country in the interest of the National Christian Mission, sponsored by the Federal Council. In Philadelphia he addressed, on January 12, 1941, a "crowd filling Convention Hall to two thirds of its capacity," as the *Christian Beacon* (Jan. 16, 1941) reports. The purpose of the "mission" is the "revival of spiritual life and the emphasis of the Christian Gospel in all phases of life." To gain this end, "more than 350 programs, union church services, conferences, *seminars*, and public addresses have been scheduled." But, as Dr. H. M. Griffiths of Faith Theological Seminary (Bible Presbyterian) shows, would-be Revivalist Jones has no message by which to bring about a true revival. At Philadelphia, Modernist Jones spoke on the topic "Is the Kingdom of God Realism?" Said Emotionalist Jones, among other irrelevant things: "A great surgeon said to me, I have discovered the kingdom of God in the end of the scalpel. It is written in the tissues; the right thing is always the healthy thing. The psychologists have discovered that there are four great enemies of the human personality — resentments, anxieties, self-centeredness, and a sense of guilt. These four things are not merely spiritually disruptive but mentally and physically and sociologically disruptive. Now, Christianity itself is the opposite of these four things: good will, faith, other-centeredness, freedom of guilt. Take resentments. We know now that resentments are physiological poison. Dr. Stanley Cobb of the

Massachusetts Hospital, in examining hundreds of cases suffering from arthritis and other ailments, found ninety-five per cent. of them had resentments. Take anxieties. We now know that worry and anxiety react into various diseases. For instance, the incidence of stomach ulcers goes up and down with the stock market. Anxieties and resentments can stop digestion. As long as there is a sense of guilt, life suffers from an inner disruption. Anything that can lift that sense of guilt gives wholeness and harmony in the life. We are now discovering that the kingdom of God is written in the constitution of our own beings. The laws of our beings are the laws of the kingdom of God. They are the way life works when it works well and harmoniously." In another address, Kingdom-of-God-mistaking Jones said: "If we are going to be disciplined the way we should be, we must first of all have group discipline; second, self-discipline; and third, God discipline [?]. It may cost much to be Christians in the future. Our heads may be cracked for holding Christian ideas; but if we stand up for the crack, people will respect those ideas in the cracked heads." What distresses Dr. Griffith is the fact "that the whole world of ideas in which his (Jones's) thought moves is something other than traditional Christianity." "It is not a question of taking a phrase or an idea here or there and saying, 'This or that denies or contradicts some article or basis of historical Christianity'; but now that Modernism has taken the bastions and citadels, it is no longer necessary or desirable to emphasize 'theological differences.' A new universe of ideas has been substituted for the old, in which a younger generation is being trained while the old folks grow old and die off." What distresses him still more is that former Fundamentalist Clarence E. Macartney is now taking part in the National Christian Mission, and this together with George E. Barnes, outspoken liberalist and "Auburn Affirmation" signer. The *Christian Beacon*, under the heading "N. C. M.," laments editorially: "Six years ago the Rev. Clarence Edward Macartney, D. D., wrote an article 'Presbyterians, Awake!' in which he summoned Presbyterians to arise and take a stand against Modernism within the Church. This week Dr. Macartney is serving on the National Christian Mission in the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, as it conducts its sessions in Philadelphia. Presiding at the meeting, where he will be one of the speakers, is Dr. George Emerson Barnes, prominent modernist leader of the Philadelphia area, signer of the Auburn Affirmation. We doubt very seriously whether Macartney would for one moment have considered doing such a thing six years ago. Princeton Seminary was once a great banner against Modernism. Now its president, Dr. John A. Mackay, joins with some of the rankest liberalists in the churches of America in the publication of a new paper. Reinhold Niebuhr and Henry P. Van Dusen, professors in Union Theological Seminary, are his associates in this new undertaking. Men once standing for the faith have taken down their banner and are working in the closest of ties with those who oppose the Gospel." There is more than one sermon for us Lutherans in this interesting report of the *Christian Beacon*, especially when one recalls page 8 of *The Lutheran* (Jan. 8, 1941), where "our foreign missions executives" are grouped around Federal Council's close friend, modern-

istic and unionistic John R. Mott, "who bears a name that commands the affectionate regard and gratitude of Christians everywhere." The title above the biographical sketches of the men and women there given in picture and description reads: "These Keep the Great Commission before US." But then, United Lutheran Church ministers are taking part also in Jones's "National Christian Mission." So why say more?—The new liberal periodical, by the way, which prominent Modernist Reinhold Niebuhr, Union Theological Seminary, will be editor of, is to bear the title *Christianity and Crisis*. It is sponsored by nineteen renegade ministers and twelve agnostic laymen, among them Sherwood Eddy, Ivan Lee Holt, Francis J. McConnell, John R. Mott, Robert E. Speer, a rare combination of Modernists, which will make German Christianity look like orthodoxy.

J. T. M.

Methodist View of the Situation in Japan.—The Methodists in conference at Atlantic City (Dec. 5, 1940) were greatly exercised over the Nazi influence rampant in Japan. They saw in it a distinct threat to the continued existence of Christianity among the Japanese. That Nazi influence is quite strong in Japan and is actively applied is rather evident; but the reason for the Methodist agitation is not so clear, to judge by the measures the Methodists are pressing. They are working hard for the unification of all the Christian bodies in Japan, seeking "to break down secular barriers among denominations established there, in an attempt to prevent confiscation of church property, as in Germany." This action is being taken at the urgency of the Japanese Methodists themselves, though they claim to have worked for "native leadership in the Church as well as native ownership of church properties" for a long time. The explanation seems remote, inasmuch as Japan's totalitarian temper and her financial needs afford sufficient reasons for her planned expropriations. They need neither urging nor instruction from the Nazis.—*The Lutheran*.

Christian Science and Lord Lothian's Death.—The *Christian Beacon* (Dec. 19, 1940) blames Christian Science for the death of Lord Lothian, the popular British ambassador to the United States, writing editorially: "American newspapers and the newspapers of the world are full of the account of the death of the British ambassador to the United States, Lord Lothian. Three different news agency accounts of his death which we saw, said that he was a Christian Scientist, that he declined medical attention, and that a Christian Scientist healer was with him. He died of uremic poisoning. It is a real peril to one's life to turn back upon medical science. Christian Science does this and puts its trust in its own healer. We asked one of the finest kidney specialists in the East if the life of Lord Lothian could have been spared had he been under the care of a physician. He replied that if he had had a physical check-up with a physician from time to time, as all men should, then he would in all probability be alive today. We have known of other cases where people died because in their Christian Science faith they have refused medical attention. This is one of the errors of Christian Science which reveals its falsity. At an hour when Lord Lothian was needed by Great Britain as never before, his faith in Christian Science

led him to refuse medical attention and kept him away from medical doctors. What sensible medicine could have given him the Science healer was impotent to offer. A man's religious faith affects his country more than we realize." This very moderate and carefully worded editorial contains much food for thought in its subtle, but stirring warning against Christian Science as a danger even to the bodily well-being of those who fall a prey to its delusions, not to speak of the eternal woe which it brings upon its unfortunate adherents. Lord Lothian's case might be kept in mind by ministers who must combat in their parishes the deceitful claims and promises for health which Christian Science is using to deceive its members.—By the way, the "physical check-up with a physician from time to time" should not be neglected by any pastor who desires to give the Church long and useful service.

J. T. M.

Nubicula Est . . . Transibit. Quite interesting is Mr. Gordon's editorial which, under the heading in Latin "It Is a Little Cloud . . . It Will Pass Over," follows the one in which he compares Nazi antichristianism with Federal Council antichristianism to show that they are very much the same putrid fruit of the same bad tree of unbelief and hatred against the Gospel. He writes: "'Can Unbelief Survive?' is a ridiculous title. The reports of the Protestant Bible societies declare that never has the Bible had such a prodigious circulation in Germany as in the past year. But even more remarkable is the way in which the Word is finding entrance in German Catholic hearts. In *Schoenere Zukunft* (No. 31, 32) we are told that the Roesch Bible and the Keppler Bible, two Catholic translations, have sold to the extent of 1,600,000 copies. Other translations, as Riessler-Storr, the Kloster Neuberger Bible, Herder's Layman's Bible, and the translation of Henne-Graeff are having wider circulation. 'In many [Catholic] families the old custom of reading a portion of Scripture together in the evening is becoming more common. In many priests' homes, both in the city and in the country, Bible hours are being systematically held to ground Catholics in Scripture knowledge.'

Gordon's heroic "Nubicula Est . . . Transibit" is the believing Christian's noble, joyous challenge of whatever tribulation Satan may bring upon the Church in his attempt to destroy the kingdom of Christ; or, we may say: "It is the Christian reply to Christ's promise 'The gates of hell shall not prevail against it' (Matt. 16:18)." But so far as we are concerned who have been appointed apostles of Christ's holy message, we must show no lassitude or indifference in these troubled times when antichristian fanaticism is rising everywhere to destroy Christianity. It is ours "to fight the good fight of faith," and, as recently a well-known European leader has said, "we cannot survive if we remain on the defensive; we must take the offensive." The attacks of ungodly men call for aggressive evangelistic campaigns on our part by radio, press publicity, systematic opening of new mission-stations, wherever opportunity is offered, and whatever means God gives us to proclaim His Word and expose the hideousness of unbelief. The banners of our divine King will go forward only as we carry them forward.

J. T. M.

"Masons and Funerals."—**"TO THE EDITOR:** I am heartily in accord with the letter in the *Living Church* of October 23 in regard to lodges' taking part in funeral services. Once, at the grave of a deceased friend, I had said the Committal, when the chaplain of the Masons, there present, said the precise words I had used, as if the words of a priest of holy Church were not sufficient.

"I believe in lodges for sociability and for help in times of illness but feel that they should have no part in a funeral where a clergyman is in charge.

"Kings Park, L. I.

(Rev.) G. WHARTON McMULLIN"
The Living Church, Dec. 4, 1940

The Roman Catholic Church appears to be an English as well as an American problem. This is evident from this account of the situation in England, as given in *Revelation*:

In England the Roman Catholic Church is pressing on in a way parallel to that in which she is working in the United States. The United Protestant Council, in its forty-first annual report, told of the efforts to combat this growing movement. The outstanding activity of the year was the dissemination of a booklet entitled *Rome and the Attempted Conquest of Britain*, which contained details of the Council's protest to the Foreign Office on the setting up in England, for the first time since the Reformation, of an "Apostolic" Delegate. A copy was sent to every member of both houses of Parliament, to all ministers and newspapers in England. Other protests of the year were in respect to Prime Minister Chamberlain's visit to the Pope early in the year, the appeal by the Archbishop of Canterbury for the leadership of the Pope in prayers for peace, the practice of the British Broadcasting Company in broadcasting on certain Sunday mornings during the year exclusive Roman Catholic services in a predominant Protestant country, and the appointment of Lord Perth, a Roman Catholic, as the first head of the Ministry of Information.—*The Presbyterian*.

The Orthodox Eastern Church, historical representative of Christian churches of the East, has decided to abandon the old calendar in order to make its Easter celebration fall on the same date as that of Western Christendom. Under the Julian calendar, which was supplanted in most of the world by the Gregorian calendar of Pope Gregory XIII in the sixteenth century, the Orthodox Church Easter fell from eleven to thirteen days behind the date which was celebrated elsewhere in the Christian world.—*Methodist Recorder* (quoted in *Lutheran Standard*).

About Mexico.—Mexico's new president, Avila Camacho, has reaped a prompt and generous harvest for his earlier declaration that he was a Catholic and that he would not, as president, tolerate any antireligious agitation nor recognize any antireligious influences in the affairs of government. Archbishop Martinez issued an appeal (December 4, 1940) to all Mexican Catholics to cooperate "sincerely and effectively" with Camacho's government. Commenting favorably on the progress of religious peace and freedom of conscience during the Cardenas régime, the Archbishop expressed his conviction that these noble principles

would be "consolidated and perfected" in the "new presidential period." The antireligious and communistic elements in Mexico are in distinct retreat, for which rapid reversal of fortune they have chiefly to blame their own excesses. If the religious forces now moving to the front in Mexico are wise, they will remember that it was very similar follies of their own that brought about their difficulties and consequent persecutions. — *The Lutheran*.

Brief Items. — In response to a request Attorney-General Harry McMillan of North Carolina has handed down the opinion that "all persons who shall deny the being of Almighty God shall be disqualified to hold public office." — *Christian Century*.

From the *Christian Century* we learn that the sect of the Shakers, who call themselves "United Society of Believers in Christ's Appearing," will soon come to an end. If we understand the respective correspondent correctly, he states that on a Shaker estate at Lebanon, N. Y., a small remnant of this sect is left, consisting of 12 aged women and one man. Two other colonies will soon merge. This is a sect founded by Mother Ann Lee. It practiced strict celibacy, and its accessions came from converts and orphans that were adopted.

A vacant canonry at Westminster Abbey was filled by the appointment of Dr. H. Hensley Henson, retired bishop of Durham. It was the English prime minister who made the appointment. According to the *Living Church* the choice cannot be called a happy one, not only because Dr. Henson is a man of 76 but because he has been a strong champion of the disestablishment of the Church of England. If Dr. Henson had his way, Church and State would become separated in England.

It was stated in the House of Commons, September 19, that up to the end of August 51,261 men had been provisionally registered as conscientious objectors in Great Britain. — *Christian Century*.

The Pope has given permission to celebrate Christmas Mass on Christmas Eve — so reports *America*. That Christian people are having their religious affairs regulated by a person living in Rome to whom they blindly submit surely is evidence that the message of the Reformation is still needed.

Concerning the situation in Korea the *Presbyterian* reprints from a contemporary the following alarming paragraph:

"Old denominational organizations embracing some 60,000 Korean Christians were dissolved recently, and a new organization was set up in keeping with Japan's policy of placing religious associations under government supervision and eliminating foreign influence. A new program for the organization stipulated that it would be free of foreign influence and would condemn Communism, individualism, democracy, and doctrines inconsistent with Japanese national policy. Military drill will be enforced in schools, and Christians will be encouraged to volunteer services during emergencies and to visit Shinto shrines."

"A revised Roman Catholic Bible, the first revision in English since 1750, will be made available to the Roman clergy and laity some time

in April, it was announced at the recent meeting in Washington of the [Roman] Episcopal Committee on the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine held in conjunction with the annual meeting of the American Catholic hierarchy.

"The new edition is a product of five years' study by 26 scholars of the Catholic Biblical Association and consists principally of modernizing phraseology to facilitate reading. For example, 'ye' has been discarded in favor of 'you,' and inverted phrases have given way to sentence structure more in line with current usage."—So reports the *Living Church*. We take it that this has reference to a revision of the Douay Bible.

The *Living Church* reports that Trinity Parish, Princeton, N. J., voted to discontinue the policy of renting pews. The rector is said to have termed this step evidence that his church believes "in the true democratic Christian principle." We are wondering whether any Lutheran church still has the system of renting pews to its members.

The American Bible Society reports that the Scriptures in the depository of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Madrid, Spain, have been confiscated by the Spanish government and removed from the office. Negotiations for the return of the Scriptures have proved fruitless.—*News Bulletin N. L. C.*

Evidence of the vitality of religion under war conditions is emphasized by the annual report of the British Foreign Bible Society. This shows that 12,000,000 volumes were circulated during the past year, 750,000 more than in the previous year. The secretary for Central Europe reports that sales were up by nearly 200,000 and says: "Everywhere in their sorrow men and women have been turning to the Word."—*News Bulletin N. L. C.*

From Hartford, Conn., comes the news that Dr. Charles Thomas Paul has died. He played an important role because for a while he taught in the University of Nanking, China, and afterwards served as the president of the College of Missions in Indianapolis, Ind., a school which later was taken to Hartford, Conn.

The Board of Foreign Missions of the U. L. C. A., according to the *Lutheran*, has cabled its missionaries in China that it believes for the sake of the work the men should stay at their posts, while the women and children may return.

In Upper Burma there is a section inhabited by the Lahu and the Wa peoples. The *Watchman-Examiner* says: "Dr. William Young labored for thirty years among these primitive hill tribes. Now his two sons continue the work. Over 40,000 converts have been baptized. There is Burma-China border in this area, but the Lahus and Was do not know it, and the Gospel has crossed with them from Burma to China."

Dr. Buker and his brother work among a million and a half of Buddhist Shans of Upper Burma. For thirty years Baptists have tried to win the Shans to Christianity, but there were less than one hundred

Christians at the end of that period. Now, however, the Buker twins have baptized over one hundred each year for the past three years. There are scores of villages waiting to hear the Gospel "if only some one will come and tell it." — *Watchman-Examiner*.

A belated correction is herewith submitted. In the learned article of Pastor W. Georgi which appeared in the October, 1940, issue of our journal (pp. 784 ff.), a misprint occurred which renders the statement where it appears unintelligible. On p. 787, in the eighth line from the bottom of the page, "Jesu" should be changed to "jedem," and after "Jahr" the expression "des Zyklus" should be inserted, so that the whole sentence reads: "Man kann durch sorgfaeltige Zaehlung zeigen, dass in jedem sechsten und achten Jahr des Zyklus der 15. Nisan auf Freitag fiel."

"The missionary exodus [from Japan] continues. The *Asama Maru*, sailing last Friday, carried a host of repatriating families. In addition to the missions and missionaries evacuating from Japan and Korea, it is now reported that all members of the two mission bodies which have been working for decades in Formosa have departed or will soon be going. In Japan perhaps the most distressing news is that the Methodists in Hiroshima have had to leave their schools, churches, and social settlement work because of local agitations and a desire to save the Japanese Christian movement from embarrassment. It begins to look as though the missionary *personnel* in Japan may be fifty per cent. reduced by early 1941. Some, however, will remain regardless of various pressures, and it is worth noting that in Japanese church circles there is increasing reaction in favor of keeping the missionaries in places of organized service and of protecting them from unjustified hardship." — Correspondence in *Christian Century*, Jan. 15, 1941.

According to the *Christian Century* the leading members of the Chinese government today are Christians. "A committee of the government chaired by H. H. Kung, finance minister, consulted with missionaries and presented formal invitation to missionaries in occupied China to go to free China. This gesture is supported by the government, which has placed free transportation by postal trucks over all Chinese roads at the disposal of incoming missionaries." A.

