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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church Insists on Confessional Loyalty.—The *Lutheran Standard* of June 21 reports on the meeting of the Minnesota District of the American Lutheran Church. A few paragraphs from that report, since they are of special interest to members of the Missouri Synod, should be quoted here.

"Dr. Poppen's emphasis on certain points in his address on 'The State of the Church' was noted. A lively discussion followed on the Synod's relationship to the American Lutheran Conference, especially as it affected the position of the Minnesota District. The District favors some form of immediate action. The District greeted with joy the news of the 100th anniversary of the *Lutheran Standard*. Timely papers discussed involved the question, Has unionism a Biblical basis? and the problem of psychology and cure of souls. Rev. R. Lechner in his paper on Unionism replied to the question raised with an emphatic 'No' Because unionism has as its two chief characteristics indifference to doctrines of Scripture, and separatism, which permits each Church to interpret formulas in a different manner, genuine unionism has no Biblical basis. 'In order to secure unity,' said the essayist, 'each Christian must be willing to sacrifice non-essentials and to submit to the restricting powers of true Christian reality.'" We hope that these earnest men, valiantly contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, will not grow weary in their efforts and that their endeavors will lead to tangible results.

A.

The Triumph of Inclusivism.—The term "inclusivism" means about the same thing as our better-known word "unionism." In an editorial the *Christian Beacon* (July 17, 1941), under the heading "Inclusivism," writes the following: "The Triumph of Inclusivism," reproduced from the final issue of *Christianity Today*, which ceased publication for lack of readers, presents a very interesting picture, though not as sharply drawn or as sharply painted as we believe the situation actually to be. However, on the basis of this presentation the picture is dark enough to cause those who truly love the Word of God and the authority of the Bible to come out and be separate from such fellowship. Inclusivism is the binding together of those of opposing views and beliefs in the name of Christ. This the Word of God forbids. The picture of Modernism, Buchmanism, Barthianism, being joined in fellowship about the Communion table with those who would hold the great historic doctrine of the Christian faith just is not in the Bible as a true Christian Church. Inclusivism has brought its peace and harmony. Those who would stand for the intolerance of the Gospel that there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby men must be saved have taken down their banners. The presentation of such a case clearly requires of God's people separation. 'Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers,' is the command of Scripture. Those who consider themselves faithful ministers of the Word of God find themselves in

a strange predicament. They are face to face with the commands of the Word of God."

One can fully appreciate the import of this editorial only after reading the article "The Triumph of Inclusivism" (by Rev. E. Edwin Paulson, S.T.M.), a truly masterful indictment of the horrible situation in which the Presbyterian Church finds itself after its surrender to Modernism. A few paragraphs will illustrate what we mean: "For more than a quarter of a century a fierce struggle raged within the Presbyterian Church. Unfortunately the issues involved in this conflict have not yet been understood by the rank and file of either the ministers or laymen in our Church. As in the case of political conflicts, the real issues have been largely obscured behind personalities. Instead of examining critically the ideological basis for the difference, it was charged that members of the protesting groups were suffering from temperamental idiosyncrasies, introversion, and other personality maladjustments. Today many of these men are either dead or they have left our Church." "The question was not whether one belonged to the old or new school of Calvinism, although some believed that the conflict had its beginnings in that struggle. It was rather a struggle between those who endorsed the five points of faith, set forth by the Assembly of 1923, as the absolute minimum doctrinal basis for evangelical Christianity and those who by either adhering to, or by tolerating, the tenets of the Auburn Affirmation showed that they refused to be bound by any objective standards of faith." "As we look back on these past few years, it becomes increasingly evident that inclusivism has triumphed even beyond the fondest hopes and expectations of its advocates. This victory for the proponents of inclusivism has resulted, among other things, in the expulsion or voluntary exodus from our Church of many conscientious men and women who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Such fearless defenders of historic Christianity have been objects of scorn and derision, but history must honor them as those who dared to place principle in precedence to policy, valuing the praise of God above the praise of men." "Many ministers remained within the Church because they felt that they could not desert thousands of true believers who did not, and perhaps could not, grasp the full significance of the subtleties of theological controversy. . . . The sad thing is not that we have remained within a Church which has sinned grievously, but that we have been content to remain silent and have been willing to subscribe to a policy of appeasement which in the end must inevitably rob us of strength or character and any distinctive Christian testimony." "It is true that no one in our denomination is in any direct way hindered in preaching the Gospel. Conservative Calvinists and premillenarian dispensationalists are unquestionably allowed free course in preaching the Gospel in our Church. Equal privileges are afforded those who do not proclaim the vicarious atonement but who preach pleasant-sounding moral essays and a form of sentimental idealism. Truly, a denomination which has espoused a policy of doctrinal latitudinarianism presents an ideal situation to individuals who are churchmen first and theologians secondly. But to men who are intellectually honest and who are troubled with certain conscientious scruples it spells a different

Schleiermacher, Moeser, List, Savigny, Ranke, Droysen, Sybel, Treitschke, Gneist — philosophers, men of letters, historians, jurists, economists, with one liberal theologian thrown into the bargain. Occasionally the lecturer referred to one or the other of these celebrities as Lutherans. When it was pointed out in the discussion that this was not borne out by the facts, he remarked: 'Perhaps we can compromise on the name Protestant.' But apart from this, the entire construction was highly artificial and therefore quite unconvincing. Frequently the points of contact and the similarities were names rather than realities. All this is not history but mythology, or, as one gentleman remarked to us when leaving the lecture hall, 'With such methods you can prove anything.'

For lack of space we could not quote the entire report of our esteemed colleague in Adelaide, but what has been cited is sufficient to show that supposedly scholarly men are still misrepresenting Luther as papistic writers have done now for more than four hundred years, and that the only way to smother such unhistorical abominations is to face those who perpetrate them. The ancient but pitifully lame excuse that "it won't do any good" is proved invalid not only by the Romanists themselves who, as is well known, quickly and slashingly reply to whatever they regard as false charges, but also by the very remonstrance reported by Professor Hamann. It is not difficult for any one to perceive how embarrassed Dr. Schechner must have felt after the friends of historical truth had called attention to his unhistorical approach.

J. T. M.

Quasi-Ecumenical Conference in Toronto. — For the sake of chronicling on the pages of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY all major religious and ecclesiastical happenings outside our own circles, we mention, although at a late date, the North American Ecumenical Conference held in Toronto, Canada, in June of this year. Not only the United States and Canada, but likewise Mexico, Central America, and several countries of South America were represented. The *Lutheran Companion* says the meeting "was attended by the most representative group of Protestant leaders that has ever come together on this side of the ocean to discuss problems of the Church." Of Lutheran bodies only the United Lutheran Church of America and the Augustana Synod participated. John R. Mott presided. Among the speakers Prof. Georgia Harkness advocated pacifism, while Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr manifested "flaming militancy," according to the *Lutheran Companion*. The editor of the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod), who was one of the delegates of his body, writes: "Theologically the Toronto conference was far beneath the high standards of the ecumenical meetings at Lausanne, Stockholm, Oxford, and Edinburgh. American Protestantism, as exemplified by its numerous Reformed divisions, found itself an impotent minority at those earlier European meetings. Moreover, it is no secret that it made the dismaying discovery, particularly at Edinburgh, that it was confessionally bankrupt. It had drifted so far from the main stream of Christian truth and thought that not even the Reformed Church of Europe could feel that it had much in common with its brethren from America. But the conservative leaven of the

European and Eastern Church was lacking at Toronto. American Protestantism was in the saddle. The few Lutherans who were there soon discovered that theology again was in disrepute. The means of grace were almost completely ignored. That the Holy Spirit uses the Word as a channel through which He transforms men's hearts seemingly was forgotten, except by Lutherans. The holy Sacraments were never mentioned. Instead of these divinely appointed instruments, which God has put into the hands of His Church to convict men of sin and to turn them to righteousness, American Protestantism apparently is trying to forge its own weapons. For the spiritual work of the Church it seems to have substituted a social program. Not to save men, but to reform society has become its objective."

After this indictment of American theological teaching, the editor of the *Lutheran Companion* asks the important question "Should Lutherans, then, remain aloof from the ecumenical movement? Should we say that we have nothing to gain from our fellowship with other Protestants?" His reply is: "By no means! Lutherans who were present at the European ecumenical meetings discovered that their contact with the various historic churches of Europe was quite stimulating. It would be sheer bigotry to take the position that we have nothing to learn from others. The truth of God is unchangeable, but there is such depth of divine wisdom that the mind of man can never exhaust its content, and we sometimes find in others certain shades of emphasis of which we ourselves previously had not been fully aware. However, we are persuaded that in America the Lutheran Church needs to maintain contact with the other Protestant communions for an altogether different reason. We have something to give which they sorely need. American Protestantism is in desperate straits. It is groping for light. It is floundering about, seeking for something solid for its feet to stand on. It is yielding to a sense of helplessness and futility. To a large extent it has forgotten the divine character of the Church, the divine character of the message God has given the Church, and the divine power which is working through the Church. Said a prominent Reformed churchman to the writer on the closing day of the Toronto conference: 'We need you Lutherans. You have stuck close to the old Gospel of personal redemption. We know that you, too, have a passion for social justice; but you have not paid the awful price that we have paid in pursuing that ideal.' And that is why the Lutheran Church must not divorce itself from the ecumenical movement. It is the greatest opportunity that will ever be given to us to bear witness to evangelical truth. If we possess the light, we should be filled with gratitude and not pride. And may God save us from hiding that light under a bushel!"

Thus far the *Lutheran Companion*. The argumentation employed by the writer, Dr. Ryden, would be correct if these conferences were held to achieve unity of doctrine. But since they ostensibly take doctrinal agreement for granted and merely wish to discuss the question, How may the Church become a force in the world? we feel that the Lutheran Church should remain aloof. Its staying away is a strong protest against the course which is based on the iniquitous slogan "We want deeds, not creeds."

A.

The Christian Laymen's Crusade.—The *Sunday-School Times* (July 27) tells very enthusiastically about the work of the Christian Laymen's Crusade, which has headquarters in Room 1111, 120 S. La Salle St., Chicago, Ill. This new laymen's venture grew out of the highly successful work of three definite groupings: the Gideons, whose specialty it is to place the Bible wherever travelers or others (its mission has been extended to supply public schools with Bibles) may read it; the Businessmen's Evangelistic Clubs; and the Christian Businessmen's Committees, "which do the speaking and preaching," as the *Times* reports. Of the Christian Laymen's Crusade, in particular, it says: "Our message is the old-fashioned one—rounded out, full-orbed, without hobby, a living Savior for a dying world! It will be proclaimed with new zest and from new quarters. Properly and prayerfully done, it will redound to the glory of God and to the Bible-believing, Gospel-preaching Church." Again: "Evangelism, soul-winning, is the happy portion of all redeemed men and women. The Almighty never intended that the load be carried by just a few. Now, we, as laymen, know that it is our business. Facing that sobering but thrilling thought, we resolve to carry on with the strength He provides."

Of course, we must understand the movement from the standpoint of the non-Lutheran (Reformed) churches in our country. In its peculiar form of proclaiming the Word it is possible there only. For example, the report says: "The Christian Laymen's Crusade seems likely to bring in a still greater day for the layman. It will uncover man-power not heretofore unearthed. Men will come and let their colors fly. Think of the effect of a week's campaign, well-planned and advertised, with a different professional or businessman in the pulpit every night, glorifying God with a living, burning passion to see dying men come to Christ, without regard to label or creed. That will be a new sight in our country. It will attract men not ordinarily found in God's house. The full-time ministry will have cause to thank God for their revived allies—men from stores, offices, and workshops, the doctor, lawyer, employer, and employee!" These men indeed do not wish to take the place of the regular ministers of the Word. The informing article explains: "A call solely from laymen to laymen! By the way, that is not a Scriptural term. We merely use it to differentiate between the man who gives full time to the Lord's work and the one who is on part time. We are so thrilled over His work that we oftentimes have difficulty in gearing down to the paltry things of time." If we take into consideration that some of these laymen are university professors, doctors, surgeons, merchants of prominence, attorneys, statesmen, and the like, and all of them are filled with a keen consciousness of the sweetness and truth of the Gospel of Christ, it is easy for us to visualize the importance of the "Crusade." Now, when many ministers have become Modernists, prominent laymen testify on behalf of Christ.

While touring through Indiana, we had occasion to listen to such a layman's witness. Our auto radio brought in very clearly the morning's report of the first session of the Winona Conference. The special feature of this convention was a testimony by a Christian layman, a certain Dr. Brown, "famous surgeon and physician from Vancouver, British

Columbia." He said some things to which we could not agree, as, for example, that the Old Testament prophets predicted the coming of the modern automobile, the modern airship, and the like. But what he said of verbal inspiration was truly Lutheran. He said (and we quote from memory): "I am one of the few that still believe in verbal inspiration. God did not give to the sacred writers merely the thoughts and then told them to look for words to express those thoughts. In that case I would not be sure if, after all, they found the right words to express the divine thoughts. In that case I could not say that the Bible is God's Word. But God, while giving the sacred writers the sacred thoughts, gave them also the sacred words, the words and thoughts going together, as the Bible teaches, so that the Bible from beginning to end is the Word of God in the fullest sense of the term. I believe the whole Bible is given by divine inspiration; I believe every word in the Bible is given by divine inspiration; and there is no one in the world who can show me that to believe this is unscientific." The address was so absorbing and vitalizing that long after we had wanted to stop for dinner we parked our car in the shade of a huge tree and listened with rapt attention till the speaker had finished his enthusiastic address. It is a remarkable thing that now, when sectarian ministers are failing to preach Christ, interested, believing laymen are taking their place to tell the world about "salvation through faith in Christ." J. T. M.

Prayer Is Power.—In the *Reader's Digest* (March, 1941) Dr. Alexis Carrel, brilliant biological research worker at the Rockefeller Institute, is quoted under this heading in an article, which greatly favors prayer for health and strength. In the excerpts there occur such expressions as these: "Prayer is not only worship; it is also an invisible emanation of man's worshiping spirit—the most powerful form of energy that one can generate. The influence of prayer on the human mind and body is as demonstrable as that of secreting glands. Its results can be measured in terms of increased physical buoyancy, greater intellectual vigor, moral stamina, and a deeper understanding of the realities underlying human relationships." "Prayer is a force as real as terrestrial gravity." "The triumphant hosannas of a great oratorio or the humble supplication of an Iroquois hunter begging for luck in the chase demonstrate the same truth: that human beings seek to augment their finite energy by addressing themselves to the infinite Source of all energy. When we pray, we link ourselves with the inexhaustible motive power that spins the universe. We ask that a part of this power be apportioned to our needs. Even in asking, our human deficiencies are filled, and we arise strengthened and repaired." "Properly understood, prayer is a mature activity indispensable to the fullest development of personality—the ultimate integration of man's highest faculties. Only in prayer do we achieve that complete and harmonious assembly of body, mind, and spirit which gives the frail human reed its unshakable strength."

We quote this mainly because the paragraphs, in general, seem to fit in so very well with the Christian minister's own program of prayer inculcation. If a brilliant student of biology thus speaks of prayer, there certainly must be a definite value in praying. Here, then, we have

a powerful appeal to reason. But Christians do not speak of prayer as does Dr. Carrel. To them prayer is not "the most powerful form of energy that one can generate." That is the modernistic view of prayer, not the Christian view. According to the Modernist prayer is essentially self-stimulation toward the performance of a difficult task, or a sort of autosuggestion by which one's powers are aroused to supreme action or the mind is calmed down to becoming resignation. There is, of course, a form of pseudoprayer which is both soporific and autohypnotic, somewhat similar to the war-dance which the Indian performs to receive courage to attack the enemy. But all this is not true prayer, not Christian prayer; and the difference between the two must be constantly pointed out to our hearers lest they mistake something for prayer which is not prayer. We need not describe here what Christian prayer is and how it should be wafted to God's throne of grace. But what seemed essential to us is that Dr. Carrel's article contains both truth and error and that our Christian people are not always able to distinguish between the two. Certainly, there is hardly a subject today which demands greater emphasis than that of Christian prayer. J. T. M.

On Theological Seminaries of the Northern Presbyterians.—An editorial in the *Presbyterian* gives the outsider an insight into the financial situation pertaining to the theological seminaries of its church-body.

"We have eleven theological seminaries under our Church. They are all now in need of strenuous financial support. A century ago the instruction of young men for the Christian ministry was a leading cause for the local interests of the various congregations. Then came a day when some very generous Presbyterians provided large sums as endowments and foundations, and the Church straightway forgot about the seminaries as objects of its benevolent support. Now those endowments are no longer capable of carrying the load of present-day needs. The Church once again must return to the cause. The seminaries, together, graduate about 200 men each year. Aid to students is furnished by the Board of Christian Education to the amount of \$28,000. The annual cost of educating the students is about \$800,000. Five eighths of this sum comes from endowments. Three eighths is required from gifts. The cause of our seminaries has been under consideration by the General Council for a year or more. Certain things need still to be done by certain seminaries as they set their fiscal houses in order before the Council will commend them to the Church as recipients of a part of the benevolent budget. When these steps have been completed this fall, it is expected that the Council will take steps to the end that in the budget plans of 1942—43 the theological seminaries will be found as regularly enrolled objectives." A.

Calvinism and Politics.—That Calvinism is not satisfied with merely preaching the doctrines and precepts of the Word of God but endeavors through its religious organizations to dictate the political course of events has often been pointed out. We call this one of the iniquitous features of the Calvinistic system. Calvinists, on the other hand, glory in this characteristic. It is very true that religion should profoundly influence

those who profess it in their political activities. But Lutherans holding to the principle that Church and State must be kept separate have always opposed the view that it is the Church's duty to chart a country's history. This may sufficiently introduce some remarks taken from an address of the famous Presbyterian minister Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney of Pittsburgh on the subject "Our Presbyterian Heritage." The address was published in the *Presbyterian* of May 22.—

Theoretically it might be thought that Calvinism with its doctrine of predestination would have had a restraining effect upon political revolt and would have influenced men to acquiesce in unjust government as their appointed lot. But practically, historically, it has had the very opposite effect. Wherever they have taken root, the principles of Calvinism and Presbyterianism have made men the relentless foes of ignorance, superstition, and despotism. In the words of James Anthony Froude: "It [Calvinism] has been able to inspire the bravest efforts ever made by man to break the yoke of unjust authority. When all else has failed, when patriotism has covered its face and human courage has broken down, when intellect has yielded with a smile or a sigh, when emotion and sentiment have become the handmaids of superstition and have dreamt themselves into forgetfulness that there was any difference between truth and lies, the slavish form of belief called Calvinism has borne an inflexible front to illusion and mendacity and has preferred rather to be ground to powder like flint than to bend before violence or melt under enervating temptation."

Of the truth stated by Froude, what a magnificent illustration and demonstration we have today in the sublime stand of the British people against the threat of tyranny and subjugation! The secret of that magnificent and heroic stand is undoubtedly religious faith.

The majority of the early settlers were Calvinists. It is estimated that two thirds of the three million inhabitants of the Colonies at the outbreak of the Revolution were Calvinists and nearly one third of Scotch or Scotch-Irish descent. Thus we understand what Ranke meant when he said that John Calvin was the virtual founder of America.

In the great crisis of the Colonial period, when the terrible news drifted back from the frontier of the disaster which had befallen Braddock's well-appointed army on the banks of the Monongahela in July, 1755, it was the voice of a Presbyterian minister in Virginia, Samuel Davies, afterwards president of Princeton, which more than any other stirred the Colonies to a victorious contention for the dominion of the American continent and its preservation for Anglo-Saxon and Protestant civilization.

A.

Camps for Religious Objectors.—The National Service Board for Religious Objectors, in a bulletin released from Washington under date of July 7, states that there are nineteen civilian public service camps now in operation. "More than 1,200 conscientious objectors are now engaged in work of national importance under civilian direction" in the centers. The civilian direction is supplied by the American Friends Service Committee, the Brethren Service Committee, and the Mennonite Central Committee. There is also the camp, of which the name is the

Association of Catholic Conscientious Objectors. It is stated that "nearly a third of the total registrants certified by local boards as sincere conscientious objectors are Mennonites, with Brethren having the second-greatest number. Friends, Methodists, and Jehovah's Witnesses each have about the same number. Eighty-six different religious groups are represented among the 1,850 registrants now assigned or awaiting assignment to civilian public service camps.

"Two of the nineteen approved camps are working with the National Park Service; ten are operating in conjunction with the U. S. Forestry Service; and the remaining seven are working with the Soil Conservation Service."

The Lutheran

Predestination as Taught in the Protestant Episcopal Church.— In the Protestant Episcopal paper called *The Living Church* (Laymen's Magazine for August, 1941) Bishop Wilson answers a question pertaining to one of the Thirty-nine Articles, the confession of faith of the Protestant Episcopal Church, "Does Article 17, of Predestination and Election, mean that there are some who are in God's will determined by Him beforehand to be saved and others to be lost? Is this inside the area of our faith or outmoded?" We quote in full the answer of the Bishop: "This question might call for quite a dissertation. The article was drafted at the time the Church of England was confronted with the rigid doctrines of Calvinism. The Church declined to accept these doctrines, as the involved wording of the articles indicates. What it says is that the grace of God is given not because we deserve it but as a free gift. Nevertheless, it is necessary that we should cooperate in order to benefit thereby. Those who are called must, 'through grace, obey the calling'; 'they walk religiously in good works, and at length, by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity.' The Church teaches the sovereignty of God and free will of man without attempting to reconcile the two. Calvinism, in search of a completely logical system, did attempt such a reconciliation—which resulted in the hard doctrine of foreordained election and damnation. The article expressly denies that God predestines any to destruction. It says that 'carnal persons' may be driven to desperation by the devil. The Church leaves it just where it is left in the Epistle to the Romans. The doctrine still holds good, though the cumbersome language of the Article is confusing and might be called outmoded."

The answer of the Bishop is not as clear as it should be. What he says about the necessity of cooperation might be regarded as a limitation of the grace of God, although his intention may be to point to the working together of the believer with the Holy Spirit after the new life has been engendered. In general it must be said that Article 17 of the Protestant Episcopal Church does not teach a double predestination, but merely a predestination to life, and in that respect represents the teaching of Luther and the other great Lutheran reformers. A.

Godless Propaganda Strengthened During Past Year.— A strengthening of godless propaganda in Russia during the past year is reported by Comrade Yaroslavsky, leader of the League of Militant Godless, in a recent issue of the magazine *Antireligiosnik*.

Comrade Yaroslavsky stated that the total number of godless cells in the 62 subdivisions of the league on January 1, 1941, was 115,477, as against 95,159 during 1939. Enrolled members of the league were reported as 3,450,182, as against 2,292,036 in 1939.

He attributed the strengthening of godless propaganda during the year to the fact that the Communist Party not only seeks to promote the league in a general way, but also exercises a direct control over its work.

Pointing out that the influence of the Church has been weakened less than is often thought, the atheist leader declared this fact "calls for increased efforts by the Godless League." He also cited as a reason for increased activity the "future special tasks abroad, where, except in the United States, England, and Switzerland, all free-thinking associations have now been dissolved. . . ."—*Living Church*.

The Breakdown of Church Unity in France.—Ernest Gordon, in the *Sunday-School Times* (Aug. 24, 1941), reports under this heading the following: "M. Antomarchi says of the movement which united evangelicals and Unitarians in the French Reformed Church: 'The people were not instructed in the matter. They agreed to it without knowing or comprehending. At the consecration of the kings of France, when the moment came to put the crown on the royal forehead, a herald stepped to the door of the church and cried: Are the people satisfied with the king now given them? The crowd cried, Yes! The herald then reentered, saying that the people approved. Such was the process of church union in France. In *L'Esprit et la Vie* one discovers the consequences. Article 26 of the Discipline of the United Church says expressly that at the installation of pastors the Declaration of Faith must always be read. Now, at the recent installation of the new pastor in the Temple of Montpellier no reading of the Declaration of Faith took place. Why on so solemn an occasion did they omit it? Did they fear the impression it might make on certain liberals present? Did the venerable pastor, himself a conservative, not dare to impose this reading in spite of agreements? One fact is certain: in the installation of a pastor in one of our largest churches the Discipline was defied and the Declaration of Faith not read. It was ever so. The pledges of liberal theologians are as undependable as Hitlerian treaties. Dr. Karl Barth truly says: *'The only desirable church unity is that which is concerned with the content of the faith. The advantages of the modern idea of church unity are purely social and political. Their triumph is an indication of the spiritual decadence of the churches. A union which simply camouflages irreconcilable differences is far worse than a frank and loyal separateness.'*" The italics are our own and should bring into prominence sentiments for which our Church has always contended with great earnestness. The story is everywhere the same, whether in France, or England, or America: the pledges of liberal theologians are as valueless as promises of politicians. They are designed to draw confessing Christians into a union in which truly Christian confessions are not tolerated. We do not know from what source Mr. Gordon has taken the Barthian quotation; but truer and more timely words could not have been spoken than these.

J. T. M.

"The Dispensations."—In its issue of August 21 the *Presbyterian* brought an article by Hugh R. Munro, LL. D., having the above caption. The writer seeks to give his readers an idea of what is meant by "the dispensations" in modern Bible-study and endeavors to defend the Scripture interpretation represented by that term. He tells us that the respective scholars divide the history of the world into seven epochs, or dispensations. They are indicated by the terms: Innocence, Conscience, Government, Promise, Law, Grace, Kingdom. Every one will understand at once what these people mean when they speak of the age of Innocence, which ended when Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden of Eden. The age in which Conscience "became the guiding principle" was ended when the Flood destroyed all human beings excepting Noah and his family. The era of Government, which then ensued, ended with the confusion of tongues with which God punished the proud, self-sufficient world. When God called Abraham, the era of Promise was inaugurated, also called that of the Covenant Promise. It likewise was concluded by a severe judgment, the bondage in Egypt. With the call of Moses began the epoch of the Law, which extended to the time when our Savior was born. It, too, was marked by a terrible judgment, that of the captivities of the ten tribes and of Judah and Benjamin. The era of Grace, in which we are living, will last till the voice of the archangel sounds (1 Thess. 4:13-18). The last dispensation, that of the Kingdom, is the age of the millennium. In it "the predicted Kingdom will find its full manifestation upon the earth, with Christ exalted to the seat of authority and power. In this coming era the dreams of prophets concerning a perfected human society will be realized, and the Covenant of Blessings through Abraham and David will reach fulfilment."

No unprejudiced person can read this article without noticing at once the arbitrary character of the division of time here presented. With the exercise of a little ingenuity a person might discover the dispensations to have been ten in number instead of seven. Again, the whole system with its premillennialism runs counter to the teaching of the plain passages of Scripture which tell us that the present era will be completed when the final Judgment will take place. In the clear utterances of the Scriptures there simply is no room for the millennial dreams submitted in the description of the so-called Seventh Dispensation. What fills one with sorrow is that this dispensationalism is championed by people who wish to cling to the full authority of the Scriptures and who accept the teaching of verbal inspiration. In their case it is the friends of the Scriptures who misunderstand them. One cannot close without voicing the prayer that many of those who are misguided by their fancies to accept millennial teachings may in spite of these vagaries fully accept Jesus as their only Savior and base their hope of everlasting happiness solely on God's love and Christ's atonement. A.

Japan. Nach der letzten Statistik gibt es in Japan 210,348 evangelische Christen mit 1,759 ordinierten japanischen Pastoren; dazu kommen weiter 168,477 evangelische Christen in Korea mit 1,050 ordinierten Pastoren, 14,859 evangelische Christen mit 12 ordinierten Pastoren auf Formosa und 49,164 evangelische Christen mit 61 Pastoren in Mandschurien. Die

Zahl der Kinder, die evangelische Sonntagschulen besuchen, ist etwa noch einmal so groß, so daß sich rund eine halbe Million Erwachsener zur evangelischen Kirche bekennen und dazu gleichfalls eine halbe Million Kinder, die von den gottesdienstlichen Einrichtungen der Kirche erfasst werden. Bei dieser gegenüber der Gesamtbevölkerung kleinen Zahl ist es erstaunlich, daß anlässlich der Reichsgründungsfeier ein evangelischer Gottesdienst unter freiem Himmel in Tokio mit über 20,000 evangelischen Christen gefeiert werden konnte; ein Massenchor von über 500 jungen Sängern sang in japanischer Übersetzung „Wie schön leucht' uns der Morgenstern“ und „Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott“. — Das japanische Innenministerium hat den Zusammenschluß der evangelischen Kirchen aller Schattierungen zu einer großen japanischen Kirche veranlaßt, deren Name auf alle Kirchen übertragen wird, auch wenn diese als Unterorganisationen weiterbestehen. Einmütig ist man der Meinung, von den Missionsgesellschaften keine Gelder mehr entgegenzunehmen, da dies des japanischen Volkes unwürdig sei. Einer der Pastoren wies auf der Jahresversammlung der Domei-Kirche, die der Liebenzeller Mission nahesteht, darauf hin, daß die Evangelisation eines Landes am besten durch Einheimische vollbracht werden kann. Er danke den Missionaren aller Missionsgesellschaften für ihre bisherige Arbeit, meinte aber, daß das Christentum in Japan jetzt stark genug sei, sich selbst zu tragen und im eigenen Volke neue Kräfte zu gewinnen. Es würde auch den Japanern am besten gelingen, ihre Missionsarbeit der volksgebundenen Art anzupassen.

So berichtet die „Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung“. Mit Frauen denken wir an den Indifferentismus in Glaubenssachen, der durch solche Verhältnisse erzeugt und genährt wird.

Brief Items. — “At its annual meeting in February, 1941, the International Council of Religious Education reaffirmed its commitment to religious education on released time. Experience of more than a quarter of a century has brought to light the sources of weakness or failure of the plan. These are the wholesale introduction of a plan without sufficient preparation, inadequate training of teachers and supervisors, inadequate curricular materials, insufficient financial support, and the lack of complete understanding on the part of church and public school authorities.” — *W. C. Bauer in Christian Century of August 6, 1941.*

Bishop Manning of New York has been at the head of the New York Diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church twenty years. Just to give our readers an idea of the extent of such a diocese, we submit the chief figures of his report for these two decades: 80,000 persons were confirmed, between 90,000 and 100,000 baptized, 142 candidates were ordained, 53 churches, chapels, and parish-houses were dedicated. The clergymen in the diocese number 421, the number of communicants, according to the last report, was 109,403. The contributions for all purposes amounted to about \$5,000,000 a year. The Cathedral of St. John the Divine belonging to this diocese is now about two-thirds built.

According to an exchange the United Presbyterian Board is launching a campaign to raise \$400,000 to complete its pension fund for ministers.

According to the church press five Protestant Episcopal bishops are in favor of our declaring war upon Germany at once: Bishops Hobson, Manning, White, Davis, and Budlong.

Myron C. Taylor, according to information submitted in the religious press, is still the representative of the President at the Vatican, although he now is in this country. His secretary, Harold Tittman, apparently still is in Rome.

A lamentable loss chargeable to the war is the death of Lord Josiah Stamp, a Christian economist of London, who with his wife was killed when on April 16 London was attacked in an air raid. His books on economics, written from the Christian point of view, have received wide recognition. Interesting is the notice that appeared in the *London Times* about him after his death: "Teetotaler, non-smoker, ethical teacher, he was a splendid example of British Puritanism at its best, and his modesty and keen sense of humor saved him from any touch of that unctuousness which sometimes spoils the effectiveness of a too earnest conscience." (Taken from *Christian Century*.)

The New Hampshire Supreme Court ruled in a sharply worded decision that school officials have no right to require salutes to the American flag by pupils. The decision reversed a verdict by the Nashua Municipal Court, which sent three children to the State industrial school for failure to salute the flag. Courts in other States have ruled differently, and the Supreme Court has refused to issue a Federal ruling.

Christian Century

The United Brethren Church voted unanimously in favor of union with the Evangelical Church (Albright Brethren). The plan will be submitted to both denominations. If it is approved by both, then the union will come about in 1947. The name chosen for the prospective merger is "Evangelical United Brethren." The United Brethren Church at present numbers somewhat more than 400,000 members. Its publishing house is located at Dayton, O.

Many years ago I wrote an article for a denominational paper concerning Diotrephes. The editor told me afterwards that twenty-five deacons had ordered the paper stopped as a protest against the personal attack in the paper. What I did in the article was to show that Diotrephes was a typical church "boss," who ruled the Church to suit his own whims. — *Dr. A. T. Robertson*, quoted in the *Watchman-Examiner*.

When Gov. Stassen of Minnesota (who belongs to the Baptist Church) proclaimed a State-wide holiday in honor of the Eucharistic Congress, meeting in St. Paul, he was criticized by the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod) for not observing the principle of separation of Church and State. One of its readers takes exception to the attitude of the *Lutheran Companion*. We hold that the criticism of the *Lutheran Companion* was justified. The governor of Minnesota had no right or authority to proclaim a holiday of this nature, thereby indirectly compelling all the citizens of the State to do homage to a particular Church, and, at that, a Church which has always fought the principle of religious freedom.

Free-will Baptists at their recent national convention decided to send five more missionaries to heathen countries. The workers are to go to India. Whether these people will be permitted to enter India is, of course, another question.

A.