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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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**Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches**


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**Lutheran Professor Buried at Sea.**—Professor August William Edwins, D.D., was one of the repatriates to leave China at the end of June, but he died at sea after but three days and early on the morning of the fourth day was lowered to his watery grave.

Dr. Edwins was a pioneer missionary of the Augustana Synod in Honan Province, having come to China at the age of 34. He served 37 years. From 1919 to 1942 he was teacher of systematic theology at the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Shekow, which is near Hankow. He was honored with the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the Rock Island Seminary some years ago. He is survived by his wife, Elfrieda Edwins, and by nine children.

The writer met Dr. Edwins for the first time on a river boat that took Americans out of Central China to Shanghai to await the vessel to take us to South Africa. He was a very cheerful man and liked to speak on doctrinal and church matters, in which he took a very conservative stand. On June 19 while waiting for the day we were to leave he suffered a stroke in Shanghai in the night. Kind friends cared for him and placed him in a hospital, where he seemed to be gaining strength. The Swiss and Japanese authorities very kindly consented to let him continue on his journey, and on June 29, as the *Conte Verde* left Shanghai with her 636 passengers from the interior of China, Dr. Edwins was among them, although brought aboard on a stretcher. It was thought better for him to be among friends on the boat than among strangers in Shanghai. But God considered his labors on earth finished and on July 2 gathered his soul unto Himself. At 4:30 A.M. from the stern of the ship after brief services in charge of his fellow worker in China, Dr. Gustav Carlberg, his remains were committed to the care of his Maker and lowered silently to the mighty deep.

Thus passed the beloved seventy-one-year-old confessor of faith in the Far East.

E. C. ZIMMERMANN

**The Christian and Fraternal Orders.**—The report of Synod's Lodge Committee (Rev. O. F. Engelbrecht) in the *Fiscal Conference Minutes* (Aug. 4—6, 1942) occupies eleven pages in the mimeographed publication produced by our *Publicity Bureau*. The writer of this article believes that the report should be carefully studied by our pastors and presented in outline or summary to all our congregations. It is clear and sober, and attacks the problem with good common sense and in an evangelical way. Our *Publicity Bureau*, we are happy to announce, is willing to send out the report to pastors asking for it, and this is a service which deserves grateful acknowledgment. We dare not become indifferent on the lodge problem. The following editorial, which under the heading given above, appeared in *The Calvin Forum* (August-September, 1942) supplies many reasons. We read:

"We have just entered upon the diamond jubilee year of the one American magazine devoted to the militant *exposé* of secret fraternal organizations. That magazine is now known as *Christian Cynosure* (850 West Madison Street, Chicago, Ill.), but was founded under the name



the *Christian Banner*. The committee of Christian men which in June, 1868, resolved to issue this paper consisted of thirteen men, of whom J. Blanchard and Ezra A. Cook are possibly best known. The latter became the first editor of the proposed paper, the former was undoubtedly the leader in the movement. The Blanchard name has for decades been honorably associated with Wheaton College and with the *Christian Cynosure*. It took courage publicly to throw down the gauntlet to the lodge, that idol of the American Protestant people. But these men knew what they were doing. There was no malice in their hearts toward any persons. Volume I, Number 1, of the *Christian Banner*, issued July 5, 1868, quoted resolutions passed at the Pittsburgh Convention against Secret Societies, held in May of that year, as follows: 'Resolved, That whilst we declare our determination to maintain decided and continuous opposition to all Secret Societies as deistical, antagonistic to Christianity . . . we regard a large portion of the members as well-meaning, but mistaken persons. Toward them all we cherish the most kindly Christian feeling and ask them calmly to consider the exceptions we take to their Orders.' No personal animosity, but deep convictions of Christian truth and morals prompted these men to take their stand against the growing evil of lodgism. How deeply entrenched this evil is even today among Protestant Christians, anyone who has his eyes open can know. It is not that these organizations do not accomplish a great deal of good. They do! No one will cast reflections upon their charitable activities. But whatever good they may do in a social way in the world at large, no man of Christian convictions can join them. For years it has been felt by many churches in our land that the obligations involved in church membership and those imposed by lodge affiliation are incompatible. Nor is this an old-fashioned prejudice, as those who have succumbed to the powerful influence wielded by the secret empire often like to make themselves believe. Christian repudiation of lodge membership stands on sound Biblical ground. The secret, oathbound character of these fraternal organizations cannot be harmonized with sound Christian ethical conduct. Not only does this involve an unjustifiable use of the oath, but no Christian has a right to swear secrecy before God in the matters transacted within the precincts of the lodge. And no less serious is the indictment which the orthodox, Bible-believing Christian makes against the creed of the lodge. For the lodge has a creed, the denials of its devotees notwithstanding. The lodge stands for the deistic, Unitarian, moralistic conception of the Christian religion. With blissful inconsistency many people belong to a church that professes to believe the deity of Christ, the vicarious atonement and salvation by faith in Christ's sacrificial work on Calvary, and likewise to the lodge, which in its liturgy and other religious utterances is frankly deistic, Unitarian, and autosoteric. If anyone doubts the essential harmony between a Unitarian view of Christianity and the American secret societies, let him treat himself to a free copy of the pamphlet distributed free by the American Unitarian Association (25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.) entitled, *The Relation of the Liberal Churches and the Fraternal Orders*. Secretism and Modernism are spiritual twins."

J. T. M.



**Relations between the U. L. C. A. and the Federal Council.**—It was in 1922, in its convention at Buffalo, N. Y., that the U. L. C. A. adopted resolutions pertaining to its connections with the Federal Council. At that time it resolved, "The relationship shall be of a consultative character by which the United Lutheran Church may have a voice but no vote, thus securing to it entire autonomy from beginning to end in regard to the decisions and actions of the Federal Council of Churches, and at the same time the privilege of co-operating in such tasks and problems as it may elect." According to the minutes of that meeting the committee which prepared the resolutions stated that (1) the Federal Council in its confessional declarations ascribes too little importance "to the faith and its confession"; (2) the Council exhibits a too strong tendency to set up much machinery in the effort to have the world in its organisms follow Christian principles, even though the world in these organisms has not been converted to Christian principle; (3) the Federal Council "does not clearly, definitely, and specifically set forth the things in which the churches may co-operate without anyone of them being let into an acquiescence with what it regards as error or into the suppression of its testimony to the truth which it holds." According to an editorial in the *Lutheran* from which the above points are taken, the Federal Council was willing to have the U. L. C. A. join it on its own terms and appointed members of the U. L. C. A. to the following four commissions: Administrative, Washington Committee (Army and Navy), Christian Education, and International Justice and Good Will.

A committee of the U. L. C. A., appointed to make recommendations on the question whether the U. L. C. A. should offer to become a regular member of the Federal Council, has published its recommendations, which are negative. A.

**The State and Conscience.**—From an editorial in *America* (Roman Catholic) we take over these sentences, "Said Reich Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels: The German people must acquire a considerable amount of 'a sound national egoism that overrules the desire to be unbiased and just and unconditionally backs national interests, unaffected by any sentimentality.' He went on: 'The bourgeois era of false ideals about humanity is past, and a hard century has come into being. It is not mastered by squeamishness, but only by manliness and strength. . . . We hate the British from the depth of our feelings.'" Here is a high government official inculcating hatred in the people whom he is supposed to lead. (It should be stated that the teaching of hatred is not confined to the Axis countries.) If we were living in Germany and were citizens of that country, what would have to be our reaction? Certainly we should have to say that when the government commands us to do something that is sinful, we must not obey. It is true, we should not expect the civil government to be guided by the Bible. The civil government is a government for all the people, Christians and un-Christians, and to have a common basis for its laws and ordinances, it must simply rely on the principles of the moral law implanted in every heart and on common sense or reason. In this case, of course, even the moral law implanted in man's heart will condemn what Herr Goebbels demands. For the



Christian, however, the Bible will be the guide even in matters of a political and civic nature. He will, for instance, recognize that the government in its divorce laws will not be as strict as the Scriptures are, but he himself will seek to observe what the Scriptures say on this subject. The Christians throughout Germany will have to reject the remarks of Minister Goebbels as contradicting the highest law which exists for them.

A.

**The Church in Norway Triumphs.**—According to very recent dispatches the Lutheran Church in Norway has successfully withstood the onslaughts of the Quisling government; it is reported now that whatever unfavorable action had been taken has been canceled. It seems that Berlin, reversing itself, brought pressure to bear on the Norwegian government, demanding that the friction caused by invasion of the Church's sphere by the civil authorities be removed. The *Christian Century* in its issue of September 9 publishes an editorial on this change of front on the part of the Quisling government and says, "The revelation of the Church's courage and integrity has proved a shocking discovery for many of Europe's 'intellectuals.' They had written it off as decadent decades ago, and it had become a matter of habit among them to scoff at the idea that any moral vigor might remain in religion. Now they find out how wrong they were and how important a part the Church will have a right to play when the madness of Hitlerism has spent its force. The calm heroism with which Norway's bishops and pastors have maintained the freedom of their Church has written one of the brightest pages in modern Christian history." This is a glowing tribute. Assuming that the news on which it is based is true we rejoice that the Lutheran Church in Norway, numerous though its imperfections may be, has preserved its independence of foreign control and has been victorious in its resistance to attempts to make it a servile creature of the state.

A.

**Brief Items.**—The following communication in *America* (Roman Catholic) will be of interest to our readers: "The statement that 'the working classes are lost to the Church' was made in 1925 by Pius XI in a private audience with Canon Joseph Cardijn of Brussels. It was made when Canon Cardijn came to interview the Pope about the J. O. C. (Young Christian Workers) of Belgium. It was about 1925 when Canon Cardijn officially founded the J. O. C. It is a form of specialized Catholic action adapted to working youth. His Holiness, Pius XI, has pointed Jocism out as a model of accomplished Catholic action for the workers." How about "the working classes" and the Lutheran Church?

According to one of our exchanges our nation's forces lost 24 chaplains on Bataan or Corregidor, who either were captured by the Japanese or killed. The report on which this information is based was issued by Chief of Chaplains W. R. Arnold on August 29.

Presbyterianism has reached a new peak as far as numbers are concerned. In 1941 there was a net increase of 27,245 new members. At the end of the year the church numbered 2,040,492 members. Last year 8,764 Presbyterian churches contributed \$44,758,104.

A.