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Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

F. E. Mayer

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Theological Observer

Louisville Convention of the U. L. C. A.—At this convention, which met in October, important business was transacted. One ought not to overlook that in connection with it the two hundredth anniversary of the arrival of Henry Melchior Muehlenberg was celebrated. A centennial which was given recognition was that of the departure of Father Heyer for India, which meant that he became the first missionary of the Lutheran Church in America to India. The convention was particularly important because it was confronted with the question whether the invitation of the Federal Council of Churches to accept full membership in its midst should be acted on favorably. As we reported last time, the convention voted negatively on this question. It must not be overlooked, however, that the U. L. C. A. voted to increase its membership on Council committees from two to fourteen and to contribute annually \$4,000 instead of \$2,000 as in the past. Hence the U. L. C. A. by no means showed a tendency to cancel its present relations with the Federal Council of Churches. That it did not accept the invitation for full membership was largely due to the wish of the delegates not to take any action which would hinder the consummation of union with other Lutheran bodies. President F. H. Knubel, it is true, voiced a note of warning when he spoke against "dangerous entanglements" and of being "shackled" to the Federal Council. There were other men, one is glad to note, who pointed to the doctrinal issue involved. Thus, the secretary, Dr. W. H. Greever, "raised doubt concerning the orthodoxy of the Federal Council." According to the reporter in the *Christian Century* Dr. E. P. Pfatteicher asserted that the Federal Council "had overstressed comity and had laid the basis of totalitarianism in its emphasis on the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man." When Dr. Em. Poppen came as the representative of the American Lutheran Church and stated that his church body was willing to establish church fellowship with the U. L. C. A. on the wholehearted and full acceptance of, and adherence to, the Pittsburgh Agreement, he was greeted with much applause, and it was resolved that the presidents of the two bodies should take action to bring about the consummation of this union. May the conservatives in the A. L. C. be granted grace to adhere manfully to their convictions! A.

More Mergers Planned.—According to the *Christian Century* of October 28 the Evangelical Church decided in its meeting held in October, 1942, to approve a plan of union with the United Brethren in Christ. The United Brethren are expected to take similar action at their next quadrennial conference in 1945. The Evangelical Church (not to be confused with the Evangelical Synod) was organized by Albrecht, a former Lutheran who accepted Methodist principles and practices in the latter part of the eighteenth century. They were formerly known as Albrechts-Brueder and were known for their emotionalism and pietism. The United Brethren are really of German Reformed extraction and were organized under Otterbein and Boehm about 1760. Both church

bodies are Methodistic in doctrine and tried to affiliate with the Methodist Church around 1800. Because of the language question they were compelled to effect separate organizations. It seems but natural that these two groups would now unite, since their racial, historic, and religious antecedents are so much alike. It is not unlikely that they may ultimately join with the Methodist Church, a merger of the Northern and the Southern Methodist Episcopal Churches and the Protestant Methodist Church.

The Evangelical Synod has also been active in effecting a merger. In 1934 the Evangelical and Reformed Churches consummated a merger which brought together the Evangelical Synod, a fusion of Reformed and Lutheran elements, and the Reformed Church in the United States, formerly known as the German Reformed Church. The doctrinal position of both the Evangelical Synod and the Reformed Church is Reformed as defined in the Heidelberg Catechism. True, the Evangelical Synod formerly accepted the Lutheran Confessions and the Heidelberg Catechism in so far as they agreed, but the predominant theology in this merged church body is Reformed and definitely unionistic. It seemed but natural that these two bodies effected a merger. But we are somewhat surprised that this Evangelical and Reformed merger would now pass a resolution to bring about a merger with the Congregational and Christian Churches. The Congregational Church, as is well known, has been very liberal, because its basic principle is that no ecclesiastical organization may in any way determine creeds for the local congregation. Each congregation is autonomous and responsible to no one for its doctrinal platform. The Christian Church, with which the Congregational Church has united, is one of the groups which grew out of the Great Revival at the beginning of the last century and which was opposed to all denominational names and creeds. It seems, then, that these four churches are related in so far as they are all more or less indifferent over against a doctrinal position.

It is difficult to foretell what will happen to the Evangelical and Reformed Church doctrinally if and when the merger with the Congregational and Christian Churches is effected. It seems that the only point on which they really are all agreed is their indifference over against doctrine, in other words, their unionistic principle.

The only point that seems to be causing some difficulty in effecting a merger is the question of financial obligations of the various groups, particularly the ministerial pension. No doubt, the proposed merger of the United Brethren and the Evangelical Church as well as the larger merger of the Evangelical and Reformed Churches with the Congregational and Christian Churches will be effected if satisfactory arrangements can be made regarding the financial obligations of each group.

F. E. M.

As Seen by a Convert to Catholicism.—In our *Sunday Visitor* of September 6 a person who formerly belonged to the Lutheran Church and now has become a Romanist mentions the reasons why Lutherans should be favorable to the Roman Catholic Church. He dwells on the conservative Reformation which Luther inaugurated as distinct from

that of Zwingli and Calvin, which tended to sweep aside everything that reminded one of Romanism, and in this conservative character he finds arguments for the position that Lutherans should be willing to turn Catholic. In this connection he dwells on the aloofness of Lutherans, especially of the Missouri Synod, when relations to other Christian bodies come into consideration. He states, "As has already been pointed out, the Lutheran is a distinctly doctrinal Church—a fact which is a help as well as a hindrance to conversion. The average non-Catholic is accustomed to say that 'one Church is as good as another.' To him the doctrinal strictness and the aloofness of the Catholic Church seems very hard to understand, not to say positively un-Christian, but the Lutheran would have no difficulty here, for most of them stand more or less aloof from other denominations. In fact, the powerful Missouri Synod is even stricter than the Church [that is, the Roman Catholic Church. A.]. A Missouri pastor is not allowed to take part in any assembly, even of a civic or patriotic nature, where prayer is offered. They will not permit any '*communio in sacris*' even with other Lutherans. And most of the others hold to the view 'Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants, Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran ministers.'"

We are glad to see that this person acknowledges that the Lutheran Church is a doctrinal Church. Whether he really understands why Lutherans practice aloofness we doubt. Does he realize that according to Lutheran teaching there are children of God in all denominations where the means of grace are still in use? Does he know that this aloofness is due to the conviction that a person cannot be for and against a divine truth at the same time and that in the Holy Scriptures there is contained the warning that a little leaven will leaven the whole lump? What he says about the Missouri Synod's aloofness must be taken with a grain of salt. It is here where his language is not definite enough. If he were to prove that a Missouri pastor is "not allowed to take part in any assembly, even of a civic or patriotic nature, where prayer is offered," he would face a difficult task. But as far as he ascribes strictness to us, we gladly accept the compliment. A.

Successor of Christ or Antichrist.—In Rev. F. C. Streufert's *Report on the Survey of the South American Missions*, published in the *Minutes of the Fiscal Conference* (Aug. 4–6, 1942, River Forest) there are two paragraphs which we wish to present to our readers for special study. The first pertains to the educational program of the Roman Catholic Church. Pastor Streufert writes: "Not until we are active in the education of children the Catholic Church, as a rule, gets busy, and then it tries to offset our efforts. It will erect a much larger and better-equipped school than we have. Forty per cent of Brazil's population is illiterate, and for sixty per cent of Brazil's children there are no schools." What a contrast between Roman Catholic educational work there and here! Rome becomes active in educational work only under pressure of Protestant competition.

The other paragraph touches on the important question of Antichrist. We read: "In their Catechism the Catholic Church openly states that they need not fear the Protestant churches, since, as a whole, they have

long ago forsaken the doctrines of the Reformation. *But they point to the Missouri Synod as the one church to be feared, since Missouri Synod Lutherans still cling to the teachings of Luther.* [Italics our own.] In another article Catholic writers state that the Missouri Lutherans are the only people that still believe and teach that the Pope is the Antichrist. With a sigh, as it were, they add: *'They are logical indeed! For if the Pope is not the successor of Christ, he must be the Antichrist.'* [Italics our own.] Here is a conclusion worth pondering. J. T. M.

Amillennialism.—The *Calvin Forum* (August-September, 1942) offers the following noteworthy editorial on Premillennialism. We read: "Many sincere Christian people believe that our Lord will sit upon an earthly throne in Palestine to rule on this sinful earth for a period of one thousand years when He returns at the time of His second coming. The great historic stream of Christian Bible study, preaching, and theology has never accepted this view, though there have always been individuals and smaller groups who did. In recent decades this view has been propagated widely and enthusiastically not only by certain sects, but also by leaders in a large sector of the conservative wing of the larger historic denominations. It is our firm belief that the Dispensationalism rampant in our day is but the consistent application of this unbiblical view of an earthly thousand year reign of Christ in Palestine. Possibly this Dispensationalist development of recent Millennialism in American conservative circles may serve to clarify the issue that is at stake on this score. That issue has surely not been clarified by the introduction of the triplet of terms: Premillennialism, Postmillennialism and Amillennialism. These three terms are not objective designations of three co-ordinate views on the question of a millennium. These terms, coined by those who hold to an earthly thousand year reign of Christ (though later often taken over by their opponents) are freighted with the prejudices of that viewpoint. This also accounts for the fact that two or three decades ago one only heard of the alternative 'Pre' and 'Post' when the issue was argued or defined. It also accounts for the peculiar fact that some 'Pre's' speak of Amillennialism as a recent novelty, whereas the view which that term designates is as old as Scripture and the beginnings of Christian theology. It is not only that, but it is also the prevailing view of the Reformed Theology. This is indirectly granted by those Premillennialist writers who speak of the age of the great Reformers as the period in which the real light on the word of God had not yet dawned. The use of the term Amillennialism may serve to clarify the real issue, provided it is not co-ordinated with the other two terms. The real issue is not a 'Pre' and 'Post' issue. The real issue is whether there will be a millennium in the sense of a physical, literal, earthly thousand year reign of Christ on this sinful earth with Palestine as its center. In other words, it is Millennialism (Millenarianism, as the older term went) versus Amillennialism. The Millennial literature is quite profuse, easily accessible, and freely distributed. The Amillennial or historically Christian position has repeatedly in recent decades been placed in a false light by certain Fundamentalist writers. The need for fair, objective, and dispassionate

study of this subject is exhibited by the disappointing way in which Dr. J. Oliver Buswell writes on the subject in the May 2, 1942, issue of *The Sunday School Times*, apparently attempting to refute the articles of Dr. Pieters, which appeared on the subject in our columns a few years ago. For reading on this subject we would call attention to the fine series of fifteen articles under the general title *Amillennialism in the New Testament* from the pen of Dr. Robert Strong, which have been running from January to August in *The Presbyterian Guardian*. This series ought to be preserved in more permanent form and placed on the market." We may add that also Rev. Floyd E. Hamilton's recent book *The Basis of Millennial Faith*, published by Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., will prove helpful to our pastors in their witness against Premillennialism. It contains a number of statements with which the reviewer could not agree, but on the whole its arguments against Premillennialism are unanswerable. J. T. M.

Religious Conditions in Germany.—On account of the present war it is difficult to obtain authentic information on religious affairs in Germany. In the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* for October, 1942, a speech of Dr. Wurm, Bishop of Wuertemberg, is quoted as it had appeared in *Schweizer Evangelischer Pressedienst*. The address was made as long ago as September 2, 1941. Dr. Wurm complains bitterly of interference on the part of the State with matters belonging to the sphere of the authority of the Church. He mentions the alarming degree to which religious instruction is done away with. According to his statement the Church in Wuertemberg was deprived of its four lower seminaries. While in other countries, as he points out, in times of war the attempt is made to preserve peace between the various groups of the population, in Germany apparently the very opposite is striven for. The Church more and more has been forced to abandon its work. At the beginning of the war religious instruction was with one stroke eliminated in the upper classes of the secondary schools (Oberschulen). The providing of Christian literature for the soldiers was forbidden after it had gotten a good start. The Christian papers were suppressed. The request of church authorities to permit at least a little printing for the sake of the sick and the old people who could not attend church services was not granted. Inner mission work in hospitals was made difficult, and baptisms in the female clinics were forbidden. Prayer in school was abrogated. Dr. Wurm asks whether the Government really thinks that it can help the achievement of victory by offending the 95 per cent of the population which still claims to be Christian.

The same article in the *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* culls important information from the *Basler Nachrichten* of last spring. There it is reported that while the Storm Troopers ordinarily have no chaplains and always have considered it a matter of pride not to whimper in the face of danger and difficulties, the almost unbearable deprivations and sufferings of the Russian campaign last winter made many of them desire to have the services of a chaplain, and they sent requests to other divisions that were provided with spiritual advisers for help in their indescribable anguish and peril. To us it seems that the Nietzschean

philosophy which has been ruling the German leaders has almost run its course and will soon be abandoned. Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, General Secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, has just returned from Switzerland, and he points out, according to the daily press, that throughout Germany there is much dissatisfaction with the Nazis. Quite interesting, too, and significant is the information contained in the following sentence: "Reports reaching London said that last May 6,687 ministers of the German Evangelical Church out of a total of 18,047 were at the front; up to last April 689 ministers, assistant ministers, and theological students were in action." A.

Honorary Divinity Doctorates. — Under this heading the *Calvin Forum* (November, 1942) offers an editorial which confirms the present-day tendency among reputable schools and in learned circles of our country to discourage the conferring of honorary divinity doctorates upon men in the liberal and often unreasonable manner in which this has been done in the past. The editorial reads: "Recently Hope College, of the Reformed Church in America, located at Holland, Michigan, dedicated its new quarter million dollar science building. We rejoice with the friends of Hope in this new acquisition to their academic facilities and trust the commodious and beautiful structure, with its fine Dutch architectural design, will prove a real asset to the college founded by Western Michigan's great Dutch pioneer Van Raalte. The dedication of the new building was celebrated in a dignified service held in the beautiful Hope Memorial Chapel. In connection with this dedication the papers report that 'honorary degrees were conferred on three of Hope's alumni who did outstanding work in the campaign which raised \$250,000 for construction of the edifice.' The names of the three men so honored are then given, together with the information that one of them received a doctorate of letters and the other two a doctorate of divinity. We cannot suppress the question what may be the connection between the raising of funds for a college building and becoming a doctor of divinity — or of letters for that matter. We wish in no way to underestimate the fine services which these three alumni have undoubtedly given unselfishly to their Alma Mater. They undoubtedly deserve recognition for these unusual labors. Much less would we begrudge them any honor that someone may wish to award them. As it chances, each one of the three is an acquaintance and personal friend of the writer, and he holds them in the highest esteem for their abilities and achievements. But why should doctor of divinity degrees be passed out as bouquets of 'thank you' for financial services rendered to an educational institution? We know there are inferior schools in this country which indulge in this hawking of degrees, but we cannot think of Hope College with its fine academic standing and reputation as wanting to be placed in that category. We know that schools of no standing in this country have greatly cheapened the doctor of divinity degree both in its honorary and in its 'earned' form. But we refuse to believe that so fine a school as Hope College belongs to this class of institutions and would have part in making the fair name of doctor of divinity a mockery in this fashion. It would be a credit to a school of the standing of Hope College if it

would discontinue this practice and give a degree either when it has been academically earned or, in honorary form, when the recipient so honored has achieved unusual distinction in the field of scholarship in which the degree is awarded." Let pastors bear in mind that there is no more honored, no more worthy, and no more fitting title than that which is conferred upon them by their calling—the Biblical and ecclesiastical title of *pastor*, which stands for far more than any doctor's title can ever stand.

J. T. M.

Princeton Theological Seminary.—The writer of this article has read the *Calvin Forum* for a number of years and regards it as a trustworthy periodical, its articles being characterized by fundamentalist orthodoxy, soberness, and moderation in judgment. He is therefore all the more willing to publish the following editorial (though he is not personally able to vouch for Princeton's orthodoxy), in which the *Forum* (cf. November issue, 1942) denies the widely spread opinion in conservative circles that Princeton Seminary has become Barthian and liberal in its theology. The editorial says: "There was a time, only a few years ago, when it seemed that Princeton Theological Seminary was to become the American center for the incubation and propagation of the Dialectic Theology. The President of this distinguished institution brought Emil Brunner to this country and offered him a visiting professorship in the famous chair of Systematic Theology formerly occupied by Charles Hodge and Benjamin Warfield. But Brunner's stay was short-lived. Since that time it appears that the popularity of 'Barthianism' is definitely on the wane in Princeton. Dr. Kuizenga, who for the last two years has occupied the chair which Brunner held for a year, is definitely anti-Barthian in his theological position. The lectures which he recently delivered at the Institute of Theology in Princeton and at a Reformed Ministers' Conference in Western Michigan are in the finest tradition of the Reformed Faith. It may not be an easy matter to classify each member of the present Princeton Seminary faculty theologically, but one may be sure that it is quite misleading to brand the theological position taught at Princeton today as simply Barthian or as Modernist." We offer this quotation to our readers for careful consideration, since Christian love demands absolute fairness also when dealing with persons who are on the other side of the theological fence.

J. T. M.

Thoughts for Reformation Sunday.—In view of the fact that Reformation Day no longer has that significance in many Lutheran circles which it formerly had, it may be worth considering what *The Sunday School Times* (Oct. 10, 1942) has to say on this subject. The *Times* is an interdenominational periodical and must therefore exercise caution in making suggestions, since its readers are given to different kinds of attitudes and prejudices. But the *Times*, nevertheless, champions a *Reformation Sunday* in our American churches, and rightly so. It says: "Reformation Sunday is widely celebrated on the Continent of Europe. This is natural. Christians on the Continent are everywhere under the shadow of Romanism, now denser, now less dense, but always threatening. In Spain the spirit of persecution is approaching a new maximum. In France the Catholic reaction controls the Vichy Government. In

Austria and Belgium it is much the same. Protestants need to encourage themselves with the thought of the heroic past of Protestantism and God's past deliverances. They must train their children against the spirit of compromise. They must give them Passover instruction concerning the escape from a darker Egypt than that of the Jews. So they gather in German marketplaces to sing the 'Mighty Fortress' chorale of Luther. In Stockholm men's choirs assemble outside the old brick Ridderholm Church, in which Gustavus Adolphus' bones lie, and pour forth in mighty volume: 'Fear not, O little flock, the foe Who madly seeks your overthrow.' Gathered in French and Swiss chapels, the men of the Reformed Church chant the solemn chorales of the Reformation composer Clement Marot. At times young French Protestant women make pilgrimages to the Tour de Constance, where unyielding French Protestant heroines passed decades ago in weary prison confinement rather than to bow the knee to Rome and attend the single mass which would have meant their release. In New York is the grave of Elie Naou on the north side of Trinity Churchyard, within a hundred feet of Broadway. Few men in the Reformation endured so long and so heroically dungeon and hunger and chains as he. Indeed, one might wish that instead of the various special Sundays which have been imposed on reluctant Christians in America, we, too, might have a Reformation Sunday in October. Such a Sunday would suitably harmonize with the high days of the Christian Year." The *Times* then offers "some thoughts for Reformation Sunday (celebrated last year on October 31) from the pen of the gifted French pastor Paul Gounelle and published in the organ of French Protestantism *Le Christianisme au XXième Siècle*." It is the story of Huguenot faithfulness for over a hundred years despite Romish persecution so dreadful that it almost beggars description. While Lutherans now arise to deny that the Pope is the Antichrist, orthodox Reformed circles urge the time-old claim of both the Reformed and the Lutheran confessions that by its false doctrine and horrid persecution of those who believed and confessed the *sola fide* the Church of Rome has proved itself the Church of Antichrist.

J. T. M.

The American Sunday-School Union. — The American Sunday-School Union last year celebrated its 125th anniversary, as *The Sunday School Times* (Nov. 14, 1942) reports. It began as the Sunday and Adult School Union, started in May, 1817, in Philadelphia "for the establishment of schools giving gratis instruction on the Sabbath." Its growth was immediate and remarkable. By 1831 about 70,000 teachers and 700,000 pupils had come into its membership, and this despite the fact that it never received the general approval of the churches and that even an attempt was made to prevent it from getting a charter from the Pennsylvania legislature. It was distinctly a laymen's movement. For a hundred years previously John Cotton's New England Primer, with questions and answers, had been the standard source of Christian training for children. The Sunday-School Union emphasized Bible study and not catechetical work. In the early days it was necessary to teach reading in most of the Sunday schools, and the reading book was the Bible. Memorization of Scripture passages has always had an im-

portant place in its scheme of instruction. Among the champions of the American Sunday-School Union were such men as Daniel Webster, Frederick Theodore Frelinghuysen, Attorney General Wirt, and Francis Scott Key. Mr. Justice McLean and Mr. Justice Strong of the Supreme Court were at one time presidents of the organization. In 1941 the association maintained 3,500 Sunday schools in 40 States, with over 144,000 in attendance. More than 400 new schools were established. J. T. M.

The Christian Education of our American Youth.—In the *Watchman-Examiner* of October 29, 1942, Dr. Talmadge C. Johnson publishes an important article having the title "Education for Godlessness." The subtitle indicates the drift of the article, "Does Separation of Church and State Mean Separation of Christianity from the State?" The article is largely concerned with the material printed in a book by Dr. W. S. Fleming with the title "God in Our Public Schools." Discussing the contents of this book, Dr. Johnson writes, "Dr. Fleming charges that the secularized public school is destroying religion and wrecking the nation through crime. That is a terrible indictment. But if it be true that 'the schools make the nation,' it follows that they cannot escape the responsibility for the present decline in religion and the growth of crime which has certainly accompanied it. The American people have a capital investment of six billion dollars in their public schools and annually expend in operating them two and a half billion dollars. They have a right to judge them by results. Prominent educators from Horace Mann to Nicholas Murray Butler and Luther A. Weigle have said that without religious instruction in the schools the nation will become pagan. It is not necessary to teach paganism; it is sufficient to omit positive Christian teaching. The present state of the nation proves that they are not false prophets, but far-sighted statesmen. It is claimed that in order to preserve the separation of Church and State, religion cannot be taught in the State system of education. In my own previous article I pointed out that our Baptist forefathers, who perhaps did most to establish this doctrine in America, never called for a bifurcation of life nor advocated separation of Christianity and the State. Dean Weigle of the Yale Divinity School, in a forceful introduction to Dr. Fleming's book, takes the same position and says that the doctrine means just what the phrase implies—that Church and State are mutually free. And he adds: 'It means a separation of control, so that neither Church nor State will attempt to control the other. But it does not mean that the State acknowledges no God or that the State is exempt from the moral laws where-with God sets the bounds for nations as well as individuals. There is nothing in the status of the public school as an institution of the State, therefore, to render it godless.' Dr. Fleming shows positively that early public education was decidedly religious and that, as a matter of fact, religion was its dominant chord. Such textbooks as the *New England Primer*, *Murray's Grammar*, *McGuffey's Readers*, and others in general use devoted much space to religious and moral precepts. Religion was also prominent in the institutions of higher learning used by the State. It was not until 1870 that it began to leave the schools. The author maintains, and rightly so, that it was never legislated out of the schools

nor dropped by the will of the people; it was quietly crowded out by alien influence and indifference. Certainly it is now out, and we now have education for godlessness! But there are no constitutional or legal reasons why it should remain out."

The author rightly maintains that religious education cannot be given in homes that are irreligious. Looking at church schools, that is, Sunday schools, he finds that they are entirely inadequate. Unchurched children are not likely to go to church schools. The same difficulty obtains with respect to religious instruction given on released school time through the week. "Nor," says Dr. Johnson, "is it possible to teach morality without religion, as some are advocating." Having looked at all the possibilities that suggest themselves to him, he concludes that the only remedy lies in a return of the teaching of religion to the public schools. "To deny that the State has a right to do this is to deny it the sovereign right of preserving and protecting its own life."

Continuing his discussion of this point, Dr. Johnson thinks that we have an analogy in what the State is doing for its armed forces and for penal institutions by providing chaplains for them. "The right of the State to employ chaplains is not challenged," he says. "Why, then, should it be impossible for the State to introduce religious instruction in the public schools?" A vital point is touched on by him in the following words: "This is no plea for the teaching of any sectarian doctrine. Churches and parents may well teach whatever sectarian doctrines they may believe. But Christian doctrines ought to be taught all the youth of a Christian nation. And only the public schools reach all."

Nobody can fail to be touched by the words of Dr. Johnson. What he points to is a most deplorable situation, a crying need. America is rushing into paganism; no one who has eyes to see and ears to hear can deny this. But is the remedy to be sought in the introduction of religious instruction in the public schools? Does Dr. Johnson visualize the difficulties that are involved? He speaks of Christian instruction to be given to the children of the nation. But many of the parents of these children are not Christian; they are Jews or atheists or agnostics. What right has the State to foist instruction which they abhor on the children of such people? The analogy of the chaplains is not quite applicable, because no one in the armed forces or penal institutions of the Government is compelled to listen to or at any rate, to accept the message of the chaplain and to use his ministrations. Another difficulty consists in the impossibility of teaching the Christian religion without bringing in denominational views. Dr. Johnson quite correctly says that morality cannot be taught effectively without religion, and he might go a step farther and say that religion cannot be taught effectively without reference to and emphasis on certain denominational views. As it appears to us, if the introduction of religious instruction in the public schools were attempted, before long in a majority of the classrooms lively religious debates would be conducted on a number of fundamental points of the Christian religion where the denominations clash. Why does Dr. Johnson not discuss at greater length the availability of private schools conducted by the various denominations, which schools would have to serve as a salt in the educational system?

A.

Your Income Tax and Benevolences.—*The Presbyterian Guardian* (Nov. 25, 1942) points out how Christians may take full advantage of the 15% allowed them this year on their income tax by contributing liberally toward the Church and her manifold needs. The underlying principle is this: "Income tax is calculated upon net income, that is, gross income after such items as business expenses, deductible taxes, losses from sale of securities, bad debts, and the like, are deducted. If you give up to 15% of this net income, not to individuals but to *bona fide* benevolent organizations, the amount you give may be deducted from your net income and is not subject to tax. A few examples are added to show how this principle works out for various income brackets. We quote the following two. Take a married couple with two children and a net income of \$3,124. If they give 15% (\$468.60) to benevolences, they may subtract this much from their taxable income. Their taxable income will thus be \$2,655.40. They may also take a credit of 10% (\$265.54) for earned net income which is not subject to the normal tax, but is subject to the surtax. They may also take credit for \$1900—\$1200 for themselves and \$350 for each child. This will leave them a total tax of \$127.59. If they had not given the \$468.60 to benevolences, their total tax would have been \$213.82. It will thus cost them only \$382.37 to give \$468.60 to benevolences or about 82% for every dollar they contribute, while the agencies to which they contribute receive the full amount of \$468.60.—Or take the example of a married couple with one child and a net income of \$4,200. They have already given \$280 to their local church and to missions. Their total tax would be \$437.88. If they were to give an additional \$350 to benevolences before December 31, 1942, their total tax would be \$362.98. They could thus give \$350 at a net cost to themselves of only \$275.10 or about 78% on the dollar." The writer adds: "These examples are not presented to display how legitimate income taxes may be avoided. The Government has wisely provided for deduction of 15% for benevolences, and this provision was made with the deliberate purpose of inducing individuals to make contributions to *bona fide* benevolent organizations. By taking advantage of this very legitimate deduction, you are enabled to assist your favorite benevolent cause even in these times of high income taxes. By taking advantage of this deduction, you may assist in the spread of the Gospel to a measure which possibly you could not afford if it were not for the deduction allowances. Of course, if you feel that you cannot afford to give as much as 15% of your net income, even with the liberal deduction which this would provide, you may make proportionate deductions from your income tax for smaller amounts which you contribute." Isn't the suggestion worth considering? The Church certainly needs the contributions which our Government so generously allows church members to deduct from their income tax.

J. T. M.

Brief Item.—At this writing there are 19 vacant congregations in 16 parishes in our District. Most of these are calling at this time. Calling congregations are urged to give also serious consideration to the matter of adequate salary for their men.

Southern Nebraska District Messenger