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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

A Voice from the Suomi Synod on Verbal Inspiration.—In the *Gospel Messenger*, published in Hancock, Mich., the paper of the Finnish Lutheran body connected with the U. L. C. A. (the Suomi Synod), there appeared an article by Prof. Saarnivaara which has the title "Verbal Inspiration." The author endeavors to be fair and to be loyal to the Lutheran Confessions. The article is important, and we have to ask ourselves whether the position it sponsors is right or not. Since it is not long, we here reprint it.

"The question of the verbal inspiration of the Bible is one of the issues which continuously trouble the Lutheran churches of America and also, in some instances, keep them apart.

"I believe that all Lutherans agree in the conviction that the Bible has been written by the inspiration of God and that it is the highest and only decisive standard and rule for our faith and life, as our Confessions state. All Lutherans desire to be Scriptural in their teaching and faith.

"The dissension pertains to the kind and extent of the inspiration of Scripture. I believe there is some agreement also in this point: all Lutherans believe (or do they?) that there is some difference between the 'homologumena' and 'antilegomena' books of the Bible. Only those books regarding the authenticity and canonicity of which the early Church was unanimous are in a full measure the rule and standard of our faith. We base doctrine on them and explain the rest in accordance with them. So, e. g., we explain the Epistle of James, which belongs to the 'second-rate' books of the New Testament, in accordance with the teachings of the Epistles of Paul, and not Paul according to James.

"We believe also that all Lutherans, even the Lutherans of the Synodical Conference, admit that there are at least some smaller 'external' discrepancies even in the fully canonical books of the Bible (see J. Th. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 111). But, we think, all Lutherans agree that these discrepancies do not affect any vital doctrine of Christianity and are of no real significance.

"Thus we have a rather large agreement as to the inspiration and value of the Bible, and it seems to us that the whole controversy which we have had among us is somewhat 'foolish.' What good does it do to our souls and to the work of our Church to take a microscope and to examine and re-examine these non-significant 'defects' of the Bible? Is it not about the same as if one were to see a very fine piece of furniture, a masterpiece of carpentry, and then were to take a microscope to determine whether some small flaws may be found in it? Of course he will find some, but is he not foolish if he speaks of them again and again and at the same time forgets the beauty and excellency of that masterpiece?

"Those who prefer to pay all attention to the excellencies of the Bible can find a great number of statements in the writings and sermons

of Luther in which this Reformer presents his conviction that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that we should put our whole trust in it as the Word of God. But at the same time those who prefer to pay attention to the 'discrepancies' and 'defects' can easily find many statements in Luther's writings in which he presents some criticisms, especially regarding the 'antilegomena' books.

"But is there any sense in doing this? If we continue in this manner, is there any hope of agreement and unity of spirit?"

"It seems to us that the whole controversy is due to the fact that vital religion is at a low ebb in our churches: *since we are not very busy in saving souls, we have much time for such controversies.*

"The history of the Christian Church shows that when there have been spiritual awakenings people have not paid attention to the problem of the inspiration of the Bible and much less have they had time to make investigations into its possible 'defects.' They have simply *believed* in the Word of God and *proclaimed* it for the awakening and salvation of souls. All attention has been paid to the contents of the Bible, to what God says in His Word to sinful men, not how the Bible was written or, what was the relationship between the divine and human factors in it, or is it the inspired Word of God in every word and sentence, etc. In such times people have been busy in studying what the Bible says in its plain and clear statements, and in believing, obeying, and proclaiming them. They have followed the advice of Luther to 'lift one's hat and pass by' the obscure and troublesome passages.

"It is our conviction that if a God-sent revival removes the dead and formal churchliness from us Lutherans and makes us very busy in the question of the salvation of our own souls and the souls of others, the inspiration controversy will cease by itself and we will listen to and proclaim only what God says in His holy inspired Word. The important thing is to believe and obey it, as Luther did."—

Now for a few comments. The author does not quite understand the position of our esteemed colleague Dr. Mueller as it is stated on p. 111 of his *Christian Dogmatics*. The words read, "External contradictions, or seeming historical discrepancies, occur in Scripture, especially in quotations from the Old Testament, 1 Cor. 10:8 and Num. 25:9. The variants in the manuscripts, owing to faulty transcription, add to the number of these seeming contradictions. The wonder, however, is not that such seeming contradictions do occur in the Bible—for we must not forget that the copyists were fallible men, who were subject to error in transcribing the sacred text—but rather that, relatively speaking, there are so few of them and that in most cases they can be satisfactorily adjusted." There is, at first sight, an ambiguity here, because the existence of external contradictions is apparently admitted, although in what follows the modifier "seeming" is always used where the term "contradictions" (or its synonym "discrepancies") occurs. In writing the paragraph Dr. Mueller in his own mind affixed the modifier "seeming" to the opening expression and did not think of it that some reader might fail to do the same thing. In future editions of the book, so he informs the writer, the modifier will be supplied, or the ambiguity will be removed in some other way. As to Prof. Saarnivaara's general position,

that we are to preach the Word rather than trouble ourselves with seeming difficulties contained in it, we are in full agreement with him. That the Word be proclaimed, the Law in its severity, the Gospel in its full sweetness, let that be the function of the pastor, and let him not spend his time in the pulpit or in his private ministrations in discussing critical questions. But while this is true and needs to be emphasized again and again, we must at the same time not permit anybody to throw doubt on the full authority and plenary inspiration of our sacred volume. The attacks made on the credibility of the Scriptures have to be answered. The majesty of the Word must remain unimpaired. We think the history of Protestant theology has shown that the position which permits attacks on the inerrancy of the Scriptures to go unchallenged leads to the gravest results. The Andover theologians once upon a time battled for the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Gradually they gave up the struggle. Where is Congregationalism now? In the arms of Modernism and the social gospel; of Bible theology very little is left. *Vestigia terrent.* A.

Religion in State Schools.—The question of religious education in state schools is one that is being studied in many countries. It is facing the people in England, in Canada (Ontario), in Australia, and in the United States. In Canada the 1945 regulations for the public schools in Ontario have been adopted, which, as the *Lutheran* (April 11, 1945), quoting from the *Ontario Teacher's Manual*, reports, provide "a teaching of the Bible as thorough and serious as that which the teacher gives to social studies or to science." There are to be daily devotional exercises to "consist largely of Scripture readings, prayer, and music. . . . Special consideration should be given to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer. . . . The children should be carefully taught its structure, content, and range. . . . Two thirty-minute periods per week are set aside for systematic study of the Scriptures. . . . Perhaps the finest service the teacher can render to the child in school is to help him to love the Bible." Other excerpts read: "If the child is to be taught well, body, mind, and spirit must be taught together. . . . The whole ordering of the school can and should contribute to religious growth. . . . The religious and spiritual side of education is thus a function of immeasurable importance in the formation of individual character as well as in the building of a healthy body, thus contributing to a finer citizenship and a better world." Of course, there are limitations. The *Lutheran* adds: "The Roman Catholics, of course, are not involved to any great extent, because they have their own separate schools. . . . If pastors object, they may teach the children of their own congregations at the school. If teachers have conscientious objections, the school boards shall make other arrangements. . . . All honest scruples are to be respected." In England, as the *Australasian Theological Review* (Dec. 31, 1944) reports, there was passed a "new Education Act with its provision that the schoolday in every state primary and secondary school shall commence with a corporate act of worship, and that there shall be religious instruction given by teachers who are part of the staff of the school." Referring to this Education Act, Mr. L. C. Robson, Headmaster,

S. C. E. G. S. (i. e., probably, Sydney Church of England Grammar School), North Sydney, has expressed himself in favor of the act in the *Australian Christian World* (Dec. 22, 1944), suggesting especially three "great principles" of religious education: 1. That children in all schools should be brought up to faith in God and allegiance to Him; 2. that they should be taught that Jesus Christ presented to us the perfect example of the good life, and should be instructed concerning His life and teaching; 3. that the life and work of the school should be directed primarily to inculcating the simple Christian virtues and to training character in approximation to the Christian ideal. In a discussion of Mr. Robson's plan Dr. H. H. Hamann points out that the religious education in state schools, following the "great principles" just quoted, involves considerable danger. He writes: "If Australia follows the lead of Great Britain in the matter of introducing corporate worship and religious instruction into state schools, Mr. Robson's plan is perhaps a foretaste of what we may expect. The 'religious' instruction dished up to school children will be something from which everything specifically Christian will have been carefully and rigorously excluded. This is plain from Mr. Robson's 'great principles.' Children are to be brought up to faith in God—i. e., to the belief that there is a God—and to allegiance to Him—just as every Sivaite Hindu child begins the day's work at school with an invocation to Ganesa. They should be taught that Jesus Christ presented to us the perfect example of the good life—Mr. Gandhi and innumerable other non-Christians have said the same thing. Schools are to inculcate the simple Christian virtues and to train character in approximation of the Christian ideal—here Mr. Robson forgets and disavows his previously maintained thesis that 'an ethic demands a faith.' He would have Christian ethics without anything remotely resembling the Christian faith. Well-meaning men like Mr. Robson do not see that, while attempting to advance the cause of religion and to make people religious, they are in reality degrading religion. For, quite apart from the things that are of paramount importance to the true Christian—the doctrines of sin and grace and salvation through Christ—these people regard religion not as something between man and his Maker, but as a tool for achieving what they conceive to be national unity. Religion has become an instrument of statecraft. The next step—short and fateful and perhaps inevitable—will probably be the hardening of this religious instruction into a form of state religion." Dr. Hamann, however, sees "another very serious aspect of the question." He continues: "By thus assuming or usurping functions that do not essentially and properly belong to it, the State treats all those subjects and citizens who hold their religion to be divinely revealed and divinely fixed, and hence not to be interfered with by men in any manner, with a discrimination which can easily become tyranny. To be sure, there is a conscience clause. But the very appeal to a conscience clause by what may prove a small minority tends to place upon that minority a stigma, an odium, which is both undeserved and unjust. Religious teaching that is embodied in a prescribed syllabus comes very close to representing the official teaching of the State; and since the avowed

purpose of such teaching is largely the fostering of common ideals and a common purpose, conscientious dissenters will increasingly be regarded not merely as religious isolationists, but as disturbers of national unity. Clergymen who claim the name of Christian are in the forefront of those who would rob Christ of His glory as the divine Redeemer by advocating religious teaching that is essentially pagan, though adorned with the name of Christ. Are they trying to atone for their notorious neglect in giving sound and persistent spiritual instruction to their people by a corresponding zeal in striving to make the State do the work of the Church? Evidently they do not realize that they are endeavoring to re-introduce some of the evils of state-churchism; just as evidently, they have forgotten the words of the Master 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.' The problem of religious instruction in state schools is obviously one of great complexity. But it has its advantage, too; for it reminds us very impressively of the sacred duty which both the Christian church and the Christian home have in this matter and, above all, of the almost absolute necessity of the Christian parish school.

J. T. M.

The Christian Faith in the Land of the Reformation.—Dr. Lawrence Meyer, after having returned from his visit to Europe, placed into the hands of the undersigned a number of documents for proof that the Christian faith is still alive in the Land of the Reformation and that the almost unspeakable tribulations experienced by believers there have not been able to destroy the evangelical faith. One document, entitled "Circular Letters to Christian Friends and Students," is written by a "34-year-old theologian" who was asked by the Bishop of Wuerttemberg to take up theological work at Stuttgart on October 1, 1942. The letters were composed in the fall and winter of 1943. He writes: "The latest, and perhaps the most important, part of my work is a course on 'Dogmatics for Laymen,' at Stuttgart, entitled 'Fundamental Principles of the Christian Faith. A Course of Lectures for Friends and Opponents of the Church.' We meet every Thursday, and I hope to be able to complete the study of Luther's Short Catechism in one year. St. Mark's Church soon proved to be too small, and we were obliged to move to the 'Stiftskirche,' the cathedral of Stuttgart. This church, too, is always filled to overflowing, the congregation often numbering over 4,000. What gives me even greater happiness than the size of the congregation is the fact that it is made up of members of every class and calling. By far the larger number are young people, and men and women who lead very busy lives. Many of them are soldiers of every rank. The attendance is entirely voluntary, and it is not easy for the people to come. Many of them arrive long before the time; many come by train, most of them straight from work, very often without having had supper, and many cannot even find a seat. The way in which the young people respond is marvelous." Again: "My parents in Barmen have gone through a terrible time. In the last awful air raid they lost all their possessions and just barely managed to escape alive. The whole of my father's large and precious library is lost. The town that was my home

no longer exists. Can you imagine what it is like when all of one's friends and relatives are either dead or scattered, when the churches in which one was confirmed and in which one has held services oneself, are razed to the ground, and when the school one has attended is completely wiped out? But the Word of God and the hymns of our fathers help us to lift up our hearts, and they become more and more precious as time goes on. Whenever I enter the pulpit at the 'Stiftskirche' and see the crowds thronging the church, I cannot help thinking that perhaps by the very next day there will be nothing left but smoking ruins and that the huge congregation may be homeless—gone with the wind. In Barmen, Pastor Lilje spoke in the Gemarker Church just before the catastrophe. A few days later the beautiful old church was gone, and most of the worshippers at that last service were either dead or homeless wanderers. Experiences such as these teach us what St. Paul meant when he said, 'As having nothing and yet possessing all things.' Again: "Every morning when I go into my study and see the rows of books on the shelves, I feel so thankful that they are still there—that they have been given to me anew. Every time I see a church full of people, my heart swells with gratitude that God has called them once more and that it is still 'the acceptable time.'" The last of the circular letters closes with the words: "We do not know *what* is coming, but we know *who* is coming," i. e., the "coming Lord." In a lecture before the students of Concordia Seminary Dr. Meyer remarked: "When it will become known that it was largely the Lutheran Confessing Church that resisted tyranny and oppression, our opportunities for church work in the Land of the Reformation will be greatly increased."—A very detailed typescript, entitled "Reports and Documents Regarding the Effect of the Air War on the Churches in Germany" (*Berichte und Dokumente ueber die Auswirkungen des Luftkrieges auf die Kirchen in Deutschland*) contains overwhelming proof that the faith of many has been remarkably purified and strengthened by the very suffering which they endured. One paragraph reads: "A report sent to me closes with the words: 'It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness' (Lam. 3:22, 23). Indeed, the Lord's mercies do not fail! The Church which is faithful to its commission to preach the Gospel of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ in our time, with its special needs and its pitiless severity, may courageously and joyously say in faith: 'I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord' (Ps. 118:17)." The document is dated November, 1944. J. T. M.

Our Share in the War Guilt.—Writing in the *Christian Century* on the topic "War, Peace, and the Churches," Norman Thomas expresses these noteworthy sentiments: "I have no desire to deny the crimes of the Nazis and the Japanese war lords or the atrocities of which they have been guilty. Neither would I deny that the principal responsibility for starting this war lies on the Nazis and the Japanese imperialists. That, however, is not inconsistent with the conviction that war springs from the crimes of a social order for which all nations are more or less responsible. It is not true that the United

States was attacked as an innocent bystander by a thug. It is now pretty generally admitted that we virtually declared war when we passed Lend-Lease. And Winston Churchill told the British House of Commons that the President had assured him that America would go to war against Japan even if not attacked. John T. Flynn's *The Truth about Pearl Harbor* contains much food for thought. But for my present purpose the question, what government or governments started the war is relatively immaterial. I am interested in human beings. In varying degrees it is true that the people share responsibility for the governments they accept, but I confess to a feeling of disgust when, in conversation, a man tells me that there is no important difference in guilt between Hitler and the German people or between the Japanese war lords and the mass of the workers and peasants. They, he insists, are responsible for their governments. Almost invariably, in a few minutes, if I continue the conversation, he will proclaim his powerlessness to do anything about civic corruption in his own town or about those deeds of the Roosevelt administration which he dislikes. As a matter of cold fact, the number of heroes who prefer liberty or righteousness to death [life?] is small. What we demand of the German and Japanese people would likewise condemn the occupied countries of Europe and China, all of which have furnished workers for the conqueror and some of which have furnished soldiers for him. There is no biological or logical reason for justifying the wholesale slaughter of the women and children of the enemy peoples as if they were guilty of a peculiar sort of original sin. There is an ancient book on which today's preachers ought to comment more often. Let them consider a modern application of Jonah 4:11. God asks the sullen prophet, 'Should not I have regard for Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?'

Norman Thomas, it will be recalled, once upon a time (1911—1918) was a Presbyterian minister, and five times he has served the Socialist party as candidate for the presidency of the United States. On the historical and political details contained in the words quoted, we do not wish to pronounce. But it seems to us he is right when he asserts that we cannot escape a certain responsibility for the horrible butchery and indescribable suffering affecting a great part of mankind today. No one of us can view the great tragedies of Europe and the Pacific with feelings of self-righteousness. With penitent and humble hearts and with feelings of deepest sympathy for the sufferers in the war area we ought to approach the day when the news of final victory for our arms will be proclaimed. A.

What This War Is Doing to Chaplains.—With this matter the *Lutheran Companion* (April 11, 1945) concerns itself in an editorial on the basis of an article that appeared in the *Woman's Home Companion*, written by Lieutenant Jim Lucas, a combat correspondent with the United States Marine Corps (cf. April issue, *When the Chaplain Comes Home*). The writer suggests that "many of the chaplains will be difficult to recognize when they return to their parishes, though most of the changes will be for the better." In the editorial the second last para-

graph, which is not in quotation marks, has this to say: "A greater spirit of tolerance toward people of other faiths will undoubtedly be another of the by-products of the chaplain's war experience. Being compelled to minister to men of all religious beliefs, the chaplain finds that he must get down to simple, elemental truths. Even if he had the inclination to do so, there is neither time nor opportunity in the military service for a chaplain to draw sharp doctrinal distinctions. The chaplain knows that he is working on 'borrowed time' and there are many souls to save." Similar thoughts are expressed in an editorial in the *Australasian Theological Review* (Dec. 31, 1944), a paragraph of which reads: "Our source also quotes from the *Lutheran Standard* the following sentences, which originally appeared in the *Christian Century*: 'The rest (all denominations other than Roman Catholic) must work together as a unit. Such a thing as closed [close] communion, for example, is impossible. Chaplains who feel that they can not administer communion to all Christians alike are properly dropped from the chaplaincy during the training period.' The *Standard* is also reported as quoting the words of a chaplain: 'I served communion to men of 22 different denominations, and there was no question of creed or sect. It beats any church council you ever heard of. Let us take down the fences between ourselves and others.' No wonder the *Standard* asks the question: 'Will our chaplains come home Lutherans or inter-denominationalists?'" The entire editorial in the *Australasian Theological Review* was elaborated with special reference to an article which appeared in the *Presbyterian Guardian* and bore the title "Re-thinking the Chaplaincy." Very soberly Prof. H. Hamann comments on the quotations which he has offered his readers regarding chaplaincies (we print his remarks in part): "Without question, the situation is more difficult and complex than some good people would have it. It is just a little disquieting to find a Presbyterian journal raising the issues of Church and State, and even of religious indifferentism, where the voice of confessional and conservative Lutheranism is silent. However, one should not pass judgment on the strength of data that are insufficient and inconclusive; and it must not be forgotten that one reads also the most emphatic assurances that 'the Lutheran chaplain is not obliged to do one thing in violation of his conscience' (cf. CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, August, 1944; p. 573f.). Similar assurances have been given to and by the officials of our Church with respect to chaplains in the Australian army. Nevertheless, it would not be amiss to study the principles involved as well as the actual experiences of our chaplains once the end of the war has put us into a mood for calm reflection. When the war began, the only argument heard — if argument it can be called — was: 'Others have chaplains, why can't we have them?' Of course, we must look after the spiritual welfare of our members in the armed forces to the best of our ability; and the fact that the Government gives officer's rank and pay to chaplains is certainly very convenient. As long as it is clear that there is no sacrificing of principle to expedience, the need of 're-thinking the chaplaincy' will not arise." To us Dr. Hamann's comment seems very helpful. On the one hand, the principles involved in the matter of chaplaincies merit constant study; on the other, this is hardly the time to strike alarm as

long as we are assured by our chaplains that there is "no sacrificing of principles to expedience." There are, no doubt, indifferent chaplains whose Communion practice is as reprehensible as that reported by the *Lutheran Standard*, but very likely their Communion practice was no better in peace time. Again, it is to be expected that many of our soldiers returning from the war will come with vexing questions that are suggested by the very unscriptural practice of careless chaplains, and such men must be rightly instructed from the Word of God. In general, however, we believe that faithful chaplains and soldiers will return pretty much the same as when they entered the war service. Obviously the dangerous times in which we live demand conscientious watchfulness, but the situation does not find its remedy in undue alarmism.

J. T. M.

A Frank Admission as to the Plight of Present-Day Protestantism. A long editorial in the *Christian Century* in which the much publicized anti-creedal remarks of Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., are criticized contains in its closing section this striking paragraph: "Nothing is so pathetic in modern Protestantism as its confusion over its own faith. It stands hesitant and uncertain in the presence of a society which has become indifferent to its appeal. The Church has passed out of the consideration and even the respect of vast numbers representing the sophisticated portion of the community. It confronts this condition with two competing strategies: that of an opaque and wooden conservatism against whose preachments the ears of the 'emancipated' are scornfully deaf; and that of a sycophantish liberalism which is engaged in adjusting and adapting Christianity to the 'religious values' which it pretends to find in the prevailing secularism. It is hoped thus to make 'religion' respectable and palatable. One cannot say which of these strategies is the more inept. Both are illusory and sterile. The hope of Protestantism lies in the possibility that a new intellectual leadership is emerging whose faith is anchored in historical Christianity and whose thought has been rendered flexible and lucid by the discipline of liberalism without succumbing to its illusions. Such leadership will be able to use the weapons of liberalism to expose its pretensions, to explain Christianity without explaining it away. Thus, we may believe, the way may be cleared for Christian unity and the hearts of men opened to the precious proclamation of the Christian Gospel. The modern man is not yearning for the kind of church which imperialistic liberalism offers. What he is yearning for is a faith—the faith which he once had and has lost." What sad and saddening words! The confessional preaching which is found in Lutheran pulpits undoubtedly would be classified by the editor as belonging to the "opaque and wooden conservatism" which he says the modern, sophisticated mind will not listen to. And still he realizes that a real faith will have to be offered to people if they are to continue to pay attention to work done by the representatives of religion and to co-operate with them. Our comment is simply the word of St. Paul, 1 Cor. 1:23f., "We preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block and unto the Greeks foolishness, but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

A.

Moscow on Top.—Perhaps our readers will appreciate the opportunity of perusing a paragraph from an article in the *Christian Century* having the title "Stalin and the Orthodox Church." The article is written by an authority on matters pertaining to Russia and the Balkans, R. H. Markham, who once upon a time edited a daily newspaper in Sofia. After having stated in the opening paragraph that "the Kremlin is again the political head of about 150 million Christians; the powerful, self-appointed defender of 13 million Orthodox worshipers in Rumania, 5,250,000 in Bulgaria, 6,500,000 in Greece, 7,500,000 in Yugoslavia, four million in Poland, and other millions in other places," he in one of the final paragraphs presents this general picture, "Sweeping events, grand military triumphs, and remarkable diplomacy have placed Stalin in a position never even approached by a Russian tsar. Four mighty currents merging in a stupendous stream, carry him forward. One is the steadily mounting Russian nationalism, nourished by the most resplendent victories in Russian annals, supported by the largest land army of all time, and stimulated by the acclaim of the world. Another is a flaming secular religion of apocalyptic social reform, inspiring furious fanaticism, unrolling visions of millennial prosperity, eliciting boundless sacrifice and drawing toward Red Moscow the devotion of millions in almost every land upon the globe, from China through Europe to America. A third current is pan-Slavism, which tends to draw every Slav group toward Mother Russia, who, the Slavs say, is leading them all into the Slav epoch of human history. And the fourth current is the revived Holy Eastern Orthodox Church, encouraging and sanctifying a Russian messianism as natural and dynamic as America's own 'manifest destiny.'" Let all who are optimistic about the future carefully read and ponder this paragraph. A.

Famine Conditions.—As in many other parts of the world, food conditions in India are appalling. A report of Eric W. Johnson of the American Friends Service Committee states: "Acute, war-caused distress exists today in India. Epidemics are raging. Tens of millions are destitute. India needs America's help. If you were to go today into a typical village of Bengal—and ninety per cent of the people of India live in villages—you would probably find two people in every family of five suffering from malaria. A year ago the families were larger than they are now, since from one to three million Indians, depending upon whether you accept government or official estimates, died directly from starvation during 1943 and 1944. . . . Almost every child still bears the marks of famine and disease. Again, if the village were typical, you would find no facilities for medical care—not even the simplest dispensary. In normal times life in India is not easy, and we should certainly never accept such standards here. But the war has greatly lowered this level of life. The famine was largely war-caused. Because of the war India's people are today desperate."

We take these sentences from the *Christian Century* of March 14. The correspondent reporting on the work Mr. Johnson's committee is doing states: "The work of the American Friends Service Committee includes setting up milk canteens, distributing over thirty million multi-

vitamin tablets, over two million tablets of sulfaguandine, sulfathiazole, sulfapuridine, fourteen million tablets of alabrine for malaria, and certain amounts of cash for the purchase of supplies locally for quick emergency food relief in India."

Brief Items.—The publishing house of Fleming H. Revell Company has observed its 75th birthday. The well-known evangelist D.L. Moody was married to the sister of Mr. Revell, so that beside the spiritual kinship there existed a bond of physical relationship connecting the two men. The firm of Fleming H. Revell became known as "publishers of evangelical literature."

Thomas Campbell was recently ordained as New Jersey's first Negro Catholic priest. Church records, according to the *Los Angeles Tribune*, show that there are now nineteen Negro Catholic priests in this country.—*Christian Century*.

The new Army Chief of Chaplains is the Rev. Luther D. Miller, an Episcopalian. He succeeds the Rev. William R. Arnold, a Roman Catholic, who has been given an overseas inspection assignment. Chaplain Miller has served as army chaplain for twenty-six years.

In England the Rev. Alfred E. Garvie, a well-known leader of the Congregationalists, died recently. One of his chief interests was "the ecumenical movement."

Members of Free Churches in Great Britain may now be buried in all Church of England cemeteries with rites by their own ministers, a recent issue of the *British Weekly* announces. . . . Since 1880, Non-conformists have been granted the right of burial in such cemeteries. However, the intent of the law has often been defeated because donors of land for burial purposes have specified in the deeds that only the Anglican service could be used on the premises, and rectors have in some cases insisted on conducting rites not desired by families of the deceased.—*Christian Century*.

26,000 Negro men and 6,000 Negro women are now employed in Cleveland industry, as compared with 5,000 men and 400 women in 1940, reports at the 27th Annual Meeting of the Urban League of Cleveland revealed.—*Christian Century*.

In the past nine years more than 200 of the 1900 churches serving rural communities in South Dakota have closed their doors. In Iowa the rural population has declined by one-sixth since 1941.

Christian Century

A correspondent, sending a letter to the *Christian Century*, says, "Catholics consider the Gospel a proclamation of truth about God, man, and man's redemption. Protestants consider the Gospel an irenicon. (Passages like Matt. 10:34 can always be disposed of somehow!) Or the issue can be stated even more briefly: Catholic zeal for truth versus Protestant zeal for tolerance. Protestants were not ever thus. There was a time when Protestants took seriously the truth which is in Christ. All they seem to care about now is 'ecumenicity.'" This criticism is justified with respect to a large part of Protestantism. But as for the

Catholic zeal, it strikes us that it is like the zeal which St. Paul speaks of Rom. 10:2.

In his syndicated article of April 7 'George E. Solkolsky, the well-known newspaper commentator, makes some observations which are just as depressing as apparently they are true. Speaking of the surprise which swept the country when the true facts about the secret agreement in Yalta became known, facts which in highest quarters, so it is asserted, had been reported with disregard of "literal truth," he maintains that nobody need have been surprised, because in most countries people no longer speak with an eye to the truth, but to expediency; and it is no longer the desire to fulfill their duties which actuates them, but the craving for power and position. He adds that lies, regardless of whether you place them in the category of the black or the white lies, no longer are regarded as a violation of honor and morality.—Our comment is: The world is becoming ripe for the Judgment.

Dr. Eric M. North, secretary of the [American Bible] Society, reported that 10,000 copies of Nestle's Ancient Greek Testament had been authorized to be supplied German theological schools immediately after the war. He said the American Society and the British Foreign Bible Society plan jointly to supply 700,000 Bibles, 1,776,000 Testaments, and 3,300,000 Gospels to liberated areas in Europe and the Far East in the near future.—R. N. S.

"An encouraging note for all who are concerned for the continuance—or perhaps I should say restoration—of what we used to call a 'classical education' is struck by President Seymour of Yale, in his annual report. With fine irony he quotes from the recent book on postwar education which expresses rejoicing over our having 'eliminated much that was dead and useless,' and concentrated 'on what can immediately be used, . . . having set aside classics, theology, and philosophy.' President Seymour's terse comment is: 'Yale disagrees. We plan not to eliminate, but to strengthen these studies.' Further, he says that experience has already proved that 'accelerated' courses of study give the student what amounts to mental indigestion and that a twelve months' college year wears out the faculty. It is to be hoped that other colleges will follow the same line."—Dr. D. D. Burrell in the *Presbyterian*.

Legislation providing for voluntary Bible instruction in the public schools was passed at the recently adjourned session of the State Legislature. The law followed the pattern of laws already in effect which call for the teaching to be done by clergymen of the various faiths on a special day during the week within the regular school hours. Though the new measure was proposed only after much study had been put on it and though it was passed by a large majority, Governor McWallgren vetoed it, saying that "the matter needed more careful study."

Correspondence from Seattle in the *Christian Century*

Speaking of the saddening conditions obtaining in the religious field in America, Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney of Pittsburgh in an address on the subject "Is America on the Road to Ruin?" said, "Among the contributory causes for this alarming and lamentable decline are: the increasing secularization of the sabbath day, the disloyalty of so large

a proportion of Protestants to the ordinance of public worship; the sweep of the moving picture business, with seventy-five million in attendance every week; and in the church itself the substitution of a general, social, and international preaching for the personal and individual message of redemption and salvation. As Norman Thomas, the several times Socialist candidate for President, formerly Presbyterian minister, put it: 'No church justifies itself by becoming a forum. For the minister a social conscience and some humanitarian enthusiasm are no substitute for a living message about a God whose love and power he has found not only his peace, but also his crown of hope for the victory of the kingdom of God and peace for all mankind.'"

The new Archbishop of Finland, successor of Archbishop Erkki Kaila († last December), is Bishop Aleksii Lehtonen of Tammerfors. The Norwegian government-in-exile in London appointed the Rev. Arne Fjellbu Archbishop of Liberated Norway. The latter was born in Decorah, Iowa.

Although the most violent phase of the outburst seems to have receded, acts of physical violence against Protestants have not altogether ceased. On January 21, in Concepcion Enyege, a village in the State of Mexico, a group of fanatics headed by one Estebon Hernandez stoned Lazos Hernandez, a Protestant minister, and three of his church members. Mr. Hernandez, whose head was badly bruised, was taken to a hospital in Mexico City. There is little hope of his recovery.

Correspondence in the *Christian Century* from Mexico, D.F.

