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Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

The Potsdam Agreement Declared Inhumane.—With the purely political features of the Potsdam Agreement, drawn up several months ago by the United States, Great Britain, and Russia, this journal does not concern itself; it leaves them to the statesmen and the political leaders and the voting citizens. But there are some matters involved which belong to the moral and religious sphere, because the Agreement gives rise to the question whether an enemy nation which has been defeated may be treated with cruel brutality. President Truman sent a special investigator to Germany, Mr. Byron Price, to determine the actual state of affairs, and his report has now been made public. On the basis of his findings, the *Globe-Democrat*, a St. Louis daily newspaper which cannot be accused of manifesting pro-German tendencies, in an editorial of December 12, entitled "Our Botched Job in Germany," roundly denounces the Agreement as having led to intolerable miseries. "It is estimated that fourteen million repatriated Germans have been returned to the fatherland from the areas in the East conceded to Russia and Poland at Potsdam, which incidentally include 25 per cent of all arable land in Germany. Here was created a housing problem alone, not to mention food, fuel, and disease problems. The calorie level for the normal German consumer has been set at 1,550 per day, which cannot be met by German production. The Colmer Committee of the House, which recently toured Europe, reports that in many cities the official ration runs as low as 800 to 1,300 calories per person. The medically approved ration to prevent starvation is 2,000 calories, as was pointed out last week by Mr. Price."

Since from the Russian-occupied zone no food is taken into the other sections, the supplies needed have to come from America, says the *Globe-Democrat*. Germany is supposed to furnish more coal to the liberated areas, but the mines are producing only a fraction of their capacity, "largely because of disputes over French and Russian controls which resulted from the Potsdam Agreement." Even in the British-controlled portion of the Ruhr, where conditions are more favorable than elsewhere in the occupied areas, the coal output is only 30 per cent of normal. The editorial submits some information on German locomotives, stating that 70 per cent of them are in repair shops. It quotes General Eisenhower to the effect that German industry is functioning from 5 per cent to 7 per cent of its capacity.

Gradually people arrive at the opinion that the Potsdam Agreement was dictated by feelings of revenge rather than by motives worthy of civilized, not to say Christian, people. Perhaps our President was not aware of the dread consequences the Agreement would entail. As church people we must express our deep regret that the policy followed by our Government and its Allies in this instance offends against the principles of right and

wrong which are deeply imbedded in the human heart. We recognize that a country cannot be governed by the lofty standards uttered by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount, but the Government should at least not flout the dictates of morality which even a heathen, if he is loyal to the knowledge of the law given him by the Creator, cannot fail to recognize as commendable, proper, and just. And if through a mistaken policy our representatives have entered upon a course that violates these mandates of the eternal Law, they should correct the error as quickly as possible. A.

Efforts to Provide Relief in Europe.—The correspondent of the *Christian Century* writes from Geneva: "So serious is the situation in Central Europe that world bodies of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews have united in an appeal to save the children of the continent. The World Council of Churches, The World Jewish Congress, and Caritas Catholica Internationalis jointly declare that 'Children by the millions are in imminent danger of starving and freezing' unless help comes. They pledge themselves to 'work together in meeting the needs without regard to nationality, race, or creed.' The International Committee of the Red Cross and the Save the Children International Union also signed this appeal. The organizations joined in sponsoring a press conference at Berne to launch the statement with a heavy factual documentation showing that infant mortality rates in some places already are 100 per cent. The thought behind the appeal was not that a common relief organization should emerge, but that the constituents of each agency should be stirred to greater effort. The appearance of the plea in the Swiss press produced immediate inquiries as to where money and goods could be sent. Almost simultaneously, the World Council went even farther in an appeal for churches to secure 'large quantities of food, clothing, bedding, vitamins, medicines, and other essentials' for general distribution. The signers, including W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the Council, Samuel McCrea Cavert, general secretary of the Federal Council, and all the other American secretaries said, 'What we have seen with our own eyes or heard from unimpeachable witnesses convinces us that the need in many parts of Europe is much more desperate than has yet been realized.' They declared, 'The churches must supplement the governmental program by special efforts of their own.' S. C. Michelfelder, American representative of the Lutheran World Convention, has been named acting director of the new Material Aid Division of the World Council. He asks that giving nations set up strong denominational committees, to work with an interchurch committee which will channel goods to the homeless and starving in the destitute countries. He calls on the American Christians to provide clothing, shoes, bedding, mules, cattle, cereals, and funds." A.

Two Reviews of Dr. M. Reu's *Luther and the Scriptures*.—In *Christianity Today* (November, 1945) there appears a very favorable review of Dr. Reu's well-received book *Luther and the*

Scriptures. While brief, it is objective and to the point and manifestly delights in the successful repudiation of the charge that Luther held a loose view of the inspiration of Scripture. However, with a note of sadness it adds: "It is interesting to note that the March issue (1945) of the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*, published by its trustees, contains a review of this book which implies, if it does not expressly assert, that it is an attempt to revive a view of Scripture which though it "may have served the cause of Protestant survival in the days of the Counter Reformation, can hardly do more than encourage obscurantism and party spirit in the churches today." This, the reviewer in *Christianity Today* remarks, is said "despite the fact that its author's conception of Scripture is essentially that of the Westminster Confession of Faith, to which they as well as the faculty of Princeton Seminary are committed by their subscription vows." The havoc which Barthianism, as represented by Dr. Emil Brunner, has wrought at Princeton Theological Seminary is apparent also from these Modernist remarks in the *Princeton Seminary Bulletin*.

J. T. M.

Canon versus Dean.—Under this heading Dr. H. Hamann, president of Concordia College, Unley, S. A., reports in the *Australasian Review* (Vol. XVI, Nos. 2 and 3; April-Sept., 1945) a fine defense of Luther made by the Rev. Canon T. C. Hammond, principal of Moore Theological College, Sydney, against the charges which some time ago Dean Inge preferred against Luther, in particular against the accusation that "the whole conception of Nazism emerged through the action of Martin Luther." The article is far too long for full quotation in this section of church news, but some of the citations from Canon Hammond's vindication of Luther are so good that they deserve a place here as a witness of the truth voiced by one who loves fair play. Here are a few: "In order to show the weakness of Dean Inge's position it is only necessary to remember Luther's famous saying at Worms, 'My conscience is bound to the Word of God.' Luther translated the Bible into German. Dean Inge is greatly indebted to him for the Prayer Book version of the Psalms which came from Latin into English through Miles Coverdale's efforts, but via the Lutheran German version. Any estimate of Luther's character that overlooks this emphasis on the supreme authority of God's Word is an entirely mistaken estimate. Luther made the Word of God supreme in the lives of princes and priests alike." This firm insistence upon God's Word as the sole standard of doctrine and life alone rules out Luther as the spiritual father of Nazi philosophy, which in its religious aspects is essentially pagan. Again, as Canon Hammond points out, Nazism with its emphasis of moral superiority of one race over another could never stem from Lutheranism since Lutheran doctrine so forcefully teaches the sinfulness of man by nature and the sinner's justification only through faith in Christ. Against the misrepresentation of Luther's attitude in the Peasants'

War Canon Hammond says: "Luther was himself a peasant and anyone who reads his Address to the Nobles of Germany cannot but perceive that he had an earnest desire to see their condition improved. But when they entered on a campaign of slaughter and pillage against his earnest entreaties his wrath burst out in fiery flame against them." Yet Luther did not concede to any ruler the power to override conscience: "He did not hold that any ruler was the author of religious experience. He held with a desperate tenacity that God had once for all revealed His will to man. When God spoke, we have no other course open to us in righteousness but to obey. . . ." Against those who would make Luther the originator of Nazism, the Canon says: "It is truer to say that the needs of Hitlerism in his absolute demands on men originated the same type of administration that served a former generation when Papal absolutism sought to crush the world"; and: "It is easy to erect a convenient theory that the 'Divine Right of Kings to govern wrong' lies at the base of Nazism and that Hitler only borrowed from such a distinguished Anglican as Laud, who supported the Court of Star Chamber." Finally Dr. Hamann quotes Canon Hammond as saying: "A man who elects to follow the Bible may make many mistakes, but he can never be a Nazi." To this Professor Hamann remarks: "That is certainly true, if by Nazi we understand one who accepts the entire Nazi philosophy or ideology, as elaborated by the leaders and prophets of that movement." These few quotations from a rather lengthy and complete report may suffice to show that Canon Hammond's defense of Luther was on the whole well executed. The connecting sentences are taken from Dr. Hamann's more detailed account but shortened to fit in with our abridged presentation. Dr. Hamann quotes a number of remarks of Canon Hammond to which (as he says) he cannot subscribe, and he points out at the same time the distinct cleavage between Lutheran theology and Reformed theology in regard to civil government, which is brought to light also in some of Canon Hammond's declarations. Nevertheless one must agree with President Hamann's general verdict that the reverend Canon has "earned the gratitude of Australian [and may we add: all] Lutherans by refuting in a broadcast address the noisome assertion of Dean Inge that 'the whole conception of Nazism emerged through the action of Martin Luther.'" J. T. M.

Re-enters Modernism.—Modernism in recent years appeared somewhat as an angel of light, the expressions of liberalists showing a tendency toward orthodoxy. But now has appeared a small but significant book, *The Christian Answer*, edited by Dr. H. P. Van Dusen, in which Modernism, in its former, entirely negative aspect, reappears. The book pretends to be the "Christian answer" to the spiritual, moral, and social needs of the world today. It contains five chapters entitled successively "The World Situation," "Christianity and its Secular Alternatives," "Central Christian Affirmation," "Christianity and Society," and "Christianity and the

Christian," which are written respectively by Professors Tillich (Union), Greene (Princeton U.), Thomas (Princeton U.), Aubrey (Crozier), and Knox (Union). But the articles were submitted to a group of liberal theologians who examined and re-examined them and whose corporate thinking (though there may be differences with regard to details) finds expression in this book. Among these are (to name only a few): J. C. Bennett, Georgia Harkness, W. M. Horton, John A. Mackay, Reinhold Niebuhr, H. R. Niebuhr, Wilhelm Pauck, and others. In *Christianity Today* (November, 1945) Samuel G. Craig, known for his moderation in passing judgment upon liberalism, submits the contents of the book to a searching analysis, supporting his final verdict with numerous quotations. There is in the book much that is helpful to the student of modern religious and social conditions, in particular, the graphic description of present-day religious confusion and spiritual perplexity. The writers agree that Christian theology needs must enter into the picture to save the modern world from utter ruin, but that theology is not to be Christian orthodoxy (wrongly called Fundamentalism). Perhaps the most important chapter in the book is the one entitled "Central Christian Affirmations," in which the theology which the world today is said to require is re-stated. But that theology does not recognize the supernatural in the form of the miraculous. Dr. Greene identifies the "supernatural" merely with "belief in God and the human soul." The book therefore endeavors to provide us with a nonmiraculous Christianity, as did ancient Modernism. Again, the "Central Christian Affirmation" rejects the deity of Christ, though it speaks of the Redeemer in lofty, though subtle terms, e. g., as "the redemptive power of God incarnate in a perfect man." It says expressly: "The exaltation of Christ by the early Christian was not meant as a speculative dogma about a second God but as a solemn and grateful affirmation that the one and only 'God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself.'" The statement from 2 Cor. 5:19 is of course understood in the sense of Ritschl and Harnack, i. e., in the sense that Christ was a mere man in whom God, in a special way, revealed Himself. This is proved by the fact that while the personal pronouns when referring to God are always capitalized, they are never capitalized when referring to Christ. Denying the deity of Christ, the book, moreover, teaches a purely modal Trinity, or Sabellianism: "There are not three centers of consciousness in God, but there is one Personal Being who exists and manifests Himself in three eternal aspects or functions." With the deity of Christ and the Holy Trinity there is repudiated in the same breath the vicarious atonement. Christ's sufferings are spoken of as vicarious, but we are told that they have "an analogy in countless lives of sacrificial love which had redemptive power over others." In reality there is no need of a substitutionary atonement, for "God is willing to forgive the sinner if he will only repent." This really is a repetition of what Harnack taught long

ago when he said that Christ does not belong into the Gospel, but that it is sufficient for the sinner merely to think of God as being gracious and forgiving. *The Christian Answer* of course has no use of an infallible Scripture as the sole source and rule of the Christian faith and life. Biblical revelation is not different in kind from "general" revelation. While God has revealed Himself in "the individual and corporate experiences recorded in the Bible, culminating in man's encounter with the historical Jesus and continuing in the recorded testimony of the Christian Church," God is continually guiding the Church into new truth. But let this suffice. The book is certainly not a Christian answer in any way to the religious needs of today. What the world needs today (as always) is the proclamation of the Law and Gospel, and no *ersatz* is able to rescue it out of its moral and spiritual perdition.

J. T. M.

A New Laymen's Inquiry.— Writing in the *Sunday School Times* (Nov. 17, 1945), Ernest Gordon offers the following very interesting remarks: "Mr. Rockefeller's Laymen's Inquiry on foreign missions made a great stir in the press of the time, but otherwise was unimportant. A committee was formed in Chicago to urge upon the churches the conclusions of the Report. '*Re-Thinking Missions* is potential leaven,' it explained. 'To do effective work, it must be embedded in the local churches.' A national committee with a long list of well-known names was formed. Commissioners were appointed to visit the major cities of the country, 'their expenses being provided for.' A résumé of the 'monumental report' was prepared for laymen by Mr. Stanley High. The Modern Mission Movement, designed to continue the Laymen's Inquiry, applied to sixty-seven mission boards for co-operation. Only five consented to experiment with it, to three of which Mr. Rockefeller had been a contributor. A year passed; nothing happened. The project was treated by the Christian public with complete indifference. *World Christianity*, its organ, suspended publication for lack of financial support! The more probable explanation is that nobody cared to read it. An interesting sequel has at this late day appeared. Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, president of Union Theological Seminary, has gathered from all points of the war compass the observations of soldiers and laymen on missions as they have come across them. This has now been published by Scribners under the title 'They Found the Church There.' In the concluding chapter Dr. Van Dusen makes this statement: 'Just fifteen years ago a small group of wealthy American philanthropists devised and financed an elaborate Laymen's Inquiry into certain areas of missionary work in India, China, and Japan. Their Report, *Re-Thinking Missions*, conveyed the impression that there were a few, probably a very few, individual instances of Christian work abroad which merited continuance, but that missions by and large were of dubious value. Today another Laymen's Inquiry is in process. It embraces the whole world. It is fortuitous, not carefully or-

ganized. It is being conducted not by college professors and scholars, but by hard-bitten soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines of the nation.' The book gives their conclusions and they are very different from those of the earlier survey." What Mr. Gordon's report shows is that Liberalism failed also here because it has nothing to give. Those who reject the Gospel of Christ have no bread of life for perishing souls.

J. T. M.

An Important Matter for "Co-operation in Externals."—Reporting on the Rhenish Mission in Southwest Africa, which in spite of the second World War was able to carry on its work, thanks to the permission granted by the South African Government, Dr. H. Hamann in the *Australasian Theological Review* (April-Sept., 1945) adds some remarks which are worth considering by all who cherish Christian missions. He writes: "All honor to the Government of the South African Union for its enlightened and humane treatment of these missionaries, and for the consideration thus shown to the cause of religion and to the heathen native population. If this policy has a parallel anywhere in the world, we have not heard of it. Yet absolutely nothing, no reason worth while examining, on any grounds whatsoever, can be urged in favor of the policy followed by the governments charged with the care of large native populations, both in 1914 and again in 1938—the obsession that the outbreak of war must be the signal for the internment, and perhaps later the repatriation, of all missionaries who happen to be of enemy nationality. The untold harm that such a policy works to native Christians in heathen lands is so obvious that nothing need be said on the point. That such a policy does not tend to increase confidence and affection toward their government on the part of these Christians, but rather has the effect of creating distrust, discontent, and disaffection among them and among others, should be equally obvious to thinking men. This effect has been observed by many missionaries, the present writer among them, when the Government of India followed a similar policy during the first World War. We have heard a great deal of late on 'co-operation in externals' among churches. The matter just mentioned is one where such co-operation is long overdue. Let there be united representation by all churches to all governments concerned that the internment of missionaries in case of war be not resorted to except for cause, *i. e.*, misconduct on the part of the one interned. Christian missionaries in heathen lands are in the highest sense of the term Christian and religious idealists. One cannot find anywhere men and women with a keener sense of honor, a higher sense of responsibility, over against the government under whose hospitality and by whose permission they carry on their noble work. There is something inexpressibly shameful and abhorrent in the thought that such missionaries, who are at the same time the friends and benefactors of native populations sadly in need of their ministrations, should be treated as criminals or suspects or undesirables."

J. T. M.

Native Control of Church on Fiji Islands Attempted.— On the Fiji Islands the Methodist Church has conducted a successful mission. A new constitution has been drafted for the native church, which provides that the control is no longer to rest with white ministers, but with natives. The work heretofore was organized in three synods constituted along racial lines: European, Indian, Fijian. The two latter synods will remain, because each one of these two groups has its own problems. When questions that affect all will arise, then the whole Church will meet in what is called the United Synod. In this move one sees illustrated the tendency prevailing throughout the world that churches as well as nations strive to become independent of foreign control.

Why Do Not Fortunetellers Reveal Something Worth While?— The following remarks by Julius F. Seebach in the *Lutheran* are much to the point. "Fortunetellers are doing a land office business in the wrecked buildings of downtown Berlin. Their dupes are chiefly the wives and relatives of missing men. While they are carrying on their business of deception, they refrain from putting their alleged powers to work on a matter of extremely practical import all around them. Their revelations are given in the midst of the explosions of hitherto unexploded bombs or mines, which are constantly being set off by clearance workers, by people gathering firewood from the ruined buildings, and by children playing in the rubble. Here would be a grand chance for the fortunetellers to apply their alleged mystic powers in disclosing dangers." A.

Dr. Poling on Modernism.— In the *Christian Herald* of January, 1946, the editor, Dr. Daniel A. Poling, submits an article having the title "The New Evangelism," where a decided stand against Modernism is taken. Some of the paragraphs are so valuable that we reprint them here. After speaking of the decline in Sunday school attendance in many quarters, he says:

"It is affirmed that in this same decade Roman Catholic Sunday schools have *increased*, as have the schools of newer evangelical communions, such as the Church of the Nazarenes and the Assemblies of God. Also, there have been numerical gains among churches of conservative theology, notably the Southern Baptist churches, as well as in Southern Baptist student groups. The *Christian Herald* believes that in these and other gains made by the definitely evangelical communions there is a clear-cut significance. Christianity is an experience to be known even more than it is a lesson to be learned. Today too many 'Christian churches' and 'Christian colleges' neglect or starve the vines that bear the tender grapes. Within the year a young man now attending one of America's older Christian colleges, writing to a distinguished leader in the field of international relations, said, 'I want to go into manhood holding a faith like Dad's and yours, but I am bound to say everything here is against you.' In another letter to this same man, a father, describing experiences of his daughter, who is now a junior in one of our famous colleges for women, writes,

'She is getting a course in atheism.'" . . . Dr. Poling quotes a successful publisher in the secular field as saying, "I am inside the Church. My criticism is the criticism of a churchman. Where today is leadership that compares with that of John R. Mott, Robert E. Speer, Sherwood Eddy, E. T. Colton, Arthur Rugh, Fred B. Smith?—leaders when I was in college. They 'took' the cream of university life, top-flight athletes and students, first-rank personalities. They pledged men and women to Jesus Christ—that was exactly what they called it. I do not hear this in the American pulpit today. I do not find it in denominational or interdenominational religious gatherings. The Y. M. C. A. has no Fred B. Smith. Name me one youth leader of the churches who has, whatever his talents, the fervor and faith of Smith."

Dr. Poling continues, "Forty years ago this same Smith, who also captured me in my college days, spoke in Park Street Church, Boston. He was dealing then with some of the things that I am writing about now. He said, 'If you believe in a miracle-working God, then you have no trouble with the Person, the passion, and the saving power of Jesus Christ.' The speaker made it clear that to him God was law as well as love, but that the God he worshiped was something infinitely more than a test-tube demonstration. Recently, the *Sunday Visitor*, most widely circulated Roman Catholic weekly, wrote an article reminding America of the spiritual foundations of her most famous colleges and universities. Harvard was founded in 1636 to save churches from an illiterate ministry; William and Mary for the same purpose; Yale declared its aim was to prepare young men 'for public employment both in church and civil state'; Columbia was established with the chief objective to teach and engage children to know God in Jesus Christ.' Of 246 institutions of higher learning founded before 1860, only 17 were state universities. The academy, precursor of our high schools, which had its highest development by 1850, was definitely religious in character. The *Sunday Visitor* continues: 'Very few of these early colleges and universities have retained religion as an integral part of education,' and adds: 'An investigation made several years ago recalled that some colleges had reduced the number of students believing in God from one in five at entrance to one in twenty at graduation.'"

Dr. Poling next dwells on the sad truth pointed to by the *Sunday Visitor* that many Protestants reject the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. He continues: "And from quite another source the Protestant pulpit has been searchingly criticized—if not condemned—by educators and scholars who insist that during the war period, while a whole generation of youth fought and died for the cause of freedom, while they and their families were hungry for confirmation of their belief that theirs was a worthy cause, the pulpits generally preached no pride in this sacrifice, or frequently so preached as to make man ashamed. Dr. Lloyd W. Taylor, professor of physics at Oberlin, in stating this position,

wrote: "The clergy seems to have lost its sense of proper timing. Let it resume its ancient role of comforter and champion of the oppressed. Only in this way can the gap between the pulpit and pew be closed." What are we Protestants going to do about these criticisms? Unfortunately, what a good many Protestants are doing does not help very much. In a summer course conducted by a New York theological seminary in the summer of 1945, attended by more than one hundred clergymen from various parts of the country, one lecturer said, "The only way we can see Jesus is through reporters who wrote the four Gospels." . . . "Did Jesus make a mistake? . . . We cannot believe that Jesus was misquoted. We must interpret the promises of the second coming on the basis that Jesus had the *limitations* of his century." Speaking of the sacrifice of Christ, this professor said: "The death of Christ was not a sacrifice. The sacrifice of Jesus was his entire life, of which his death was the climax. He made a sacrifice of himself through moral self-giving." The brilliant and dynamic president of an old and distinguished theological seminary, in the course of his lectures, as recorded in the notes of one member of that class, had these things to say: "Mary must have been a woman who had hallucinations.—The sermon on the mount was pretty good, as sermons go.—I do not believe in the historicity of the resurrection. The resurrection was an idea born in the minds of the disciples that Jesus' way of life could not be destroyed.—Jesus had to be saved. He saved himself by overcoming his ego and living unselfishly.—Even God has to be saved. God became good by denying Himself and by taking up His cross. He became good, like everybody else, by self-denial." With regard to John the Baptist, the seminary president offered this: "John was the neurotic cousin of Jesus." And this about salvation: "Salvation is the fulfillment of the personality, or the enrichment of the ego." And this on the flight into Egypt: "It may have had a bad effect on the mental life of Jesus."

Dr. Poling comments thus: "We do believe in free speech; but also in certain long-established Protestant institutions of higher learning there seems to be a free and easy treason behind bulwarks of economic security. The lectures from which we have quoted are false, not only to the founders of the institutions in which these distinguished clergymen are professors, but they directly deny and contradict the faith in which these professors still teach. But even more important, we cannot imagine any soul being inspired to seek forgiveness of sin and salvation in Jesus Christ by these lectures or their kind."

Referring to the late Shailer Mathews of the University of Chicago as a Modernist, Dr. Poling says that he at least always spoke with reverence, while the Modernist quoted speaks "as an intellectual snob." Stating his belief that churches which adhered to the old Gospel outnumbered the apostate ones, Dr. Poling quotes the well-known Dean Charles R. Brown, who said quite correctly

that "There are two views of Christ's person — the lower and the higher. The first claims that Jesus was a great man, a matchless leader, but not to be ranked above purely human category. The higher view insists that in a sense unique Jesus was also the Son of God, the express image of God's person, very God. Dean Brown goes on to declare that he holds to the higher view and considers it essential in the Gospel."

Here is much food for thought. Some of the ideas expressed must be received with a grain of salt; but there is no denying that the views of Modernism marching hand in hand with the principles of secularism have laid hold of the American public, and especially the young people, to an amazing degree. The faithful pastor will not fail, when he prepares his sermons and lectures, to take the onrush of this wave of unbelief into account. A.

The Presbyterian on Church Unions.—A few months ago there appeared an editorial in the *Presbyterian*, which is an organ for conservative people in the Presbyterian Church U. S. A. (Northern Presbyterians), that calls for comment. We reprint it here.

"We believe the rank and file of church members wish for a union, or reunion, any way a uniting, of denominational groups as rapidly as may be, and with a full acceptance of essential Christian doctrine. The obvious places to begin this process are along the lines where the least differences already exist. Presbyterians and Reformed Churches are religious groups with almost identical formularies of doctrine and very similar habits of worship. The Church government used among them changes very little from group to group. For years now the joining of branches of our Presbyterian Church family has been going forward (is it forward?) at a snail's pace. Committees and commissions have labored through endless conferences and protracted committee work with much erudition and little animation. There is always something the matter when success seems likely to come from all the efforts. It is time for the laymen in the Churches to take a hand in it."

The idea of the writer seems to be that the way for church bodies to get together is simply to say that they wish to be united and then to draw up a statement which gives expression to this sentiment and to declare the matter settled. It may be that the differences between the various Presbyterian groups are not far-reaching, and we are not thinking of them now in particular. It is the principle which must be followed that we should like to stress. With our fathers we uphold the position that a mere uniting of church bodies without unity of doctrine not only has no value, but is contrary to the clear teaching of the Word of God, which tells us that if we wish to be disciples of our Lord Jesus, we must continue in His Word (John 8:31). Any church union which is based on the principle of expediency rather than on that of adherence to the truth and unity in faith is bound to do more harm than good. A.

Chiliasm in the *Watchman-Examiner*.—It is well known that the teaching of the Fundamentalists of today, generally speaking, is shot through with a great deal of chiliasm. Hence we were not surprised to find that an editorial in the *Watchman-Examiner* entitled "The Jewish Problem" contains a strong dose of this false teaching. It is not our intention here to present arguments against chiliasm. We merely reprint a section of the editorial in question so that our readers may see the manner in which millennial ideas are placed before the American public.

"For the Christian, the significance of the Jews returning to Palestine is a spiritual factor. The place of the Jews in God's economy was not brought to an end by the coming of Christ; it still waits to be accomplished. The Apostle Paul said: 'God hath not cast away His people which He foreknew' (Rom. 11:2). They remain God's elect people, in spite of themselves (Rom. 9:4). Though few understand this language, they are enemies of the Gospel for the Christian's sake (Rom. 11:28). 'Through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy' (Rom. 11:11). In the end, 'All Israel shall be saved' (Rom. 11:26), which means that Israel is to be saved nationally.

"Jewish sufferings of the past few years will in the end prove divine compulsions driving an apostate people out of their ghettos in order that they might ultimately arrive in the land which God originally gave to their fathers. While he is out of his own land and unconverted, the Jew is a stumblingblock to the Gentile. It is the purpose of God, and not any international act of the Jews themselves, which has made Israel—as the nation which has most definitely rejected Christ—a token to the other nations. If there is any significance to the language that 'judgment must begin at the house of God,' here is an illustration. Israel out of his land and unconverted, represents a nation which should have accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah but which has rejected Him. Their resistance to His power and name, their exclusiveness, singles them out as a people which is trying with the most intense human effort to build up a community without God as revealed in Jesus Christ. So 'as the eagle stirreth up her nest,' Jehovah has stirred up the Jews' nest in the ghettos of Europe in order to start them on a new march toward the dawn of a new day. They are yet to look upon Him 'whom they have pierced.' They are yet to kiss the Son and greet Him as their Messiah." A.

A New Eyewitness Account of Christ's Death?—The press of our country has been giving some space to an archaeological find in the neighborhood of Jerusalem which by some students is regarded as having special importance. The matter has not been studied sufficiently as yet to enable one to speak with certainty on the merits of the discovery. In the meantime we reprint a letter which our brother President Norman A. Madson of the Norwegian Synod sent to the *Minneapolis Star-Journal* and which appeared in the October 8 issue of that paper.

"To the Editor: On the very front page of your paper of October 3 you carry a story (INS) entitled: 'Eyewitness Story of Christ's Death Found.' It is supposed to have been found in the foundations of a house outside of Jerusalem. The article also states that 'the chief archaeologist of the Hebrew university at Jerusalem' has described it as a 'most important discovery.'

"But it is the closing paragraph of the story which most of all interests us. It says: 'The oldest previously known account of the death of Christ was written more than a century later. Its authenticity has not been proved.'

"Why call in question the accounts of Christ's death found in the Bible? Two of the Gospel writers were disciples of the Savior at the time of His death, and both (Matthew and John) have given us reliable records of His crucifixion. These records were most certainly made less than a century later. And the apostle John, in the midst of his account of the crucifixion, says this: 'And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe' (John 19:35).

"The chief archaeologist of the Hebrew university at Jerusalem may call it a 'most important discovery,' but it will never supersede in importance the record found in the Book of books itself. Let the authenticity of God's Holy Word stand unquestioned."

A.

The Difference. — *The Calvin Forum* (November, 1945) treats the doctrine of predestination in a comprehensive article from the Calvinistic point of view. We appreciate the frankness and the scholarliness of the article and, above all, the very fact that the *Calvin Forum* is willing to discuss a doctrine at a time when the discussion of Christian doctrine is very unpopular in many theological areas. But in the article a fundamental difference between the Calvinistic and the Lutheran doctrine of predestination is brought to light, especially in the final paragraph, in which we read: "The Calvinist acknowledges that he is chosen in Christ, yet the mediatorial office of Christ is not the cause of his election, but the cause of that salvation that he is chosen to obtain, and he has the unquestionable evidence of his salvation in the fruits of election. Subjectively, in faith, repentance, and perseverance, and, objectively, in God's special revelation illuminated by faith. Or, as John Calvin has said: 'For there is not a more effectual means of building up faith than giving our open ears to the election of God, which the Holy Spirit seals upon our hearts while we hear, shewing us that it stands in the eternal and immutable goodwill of God towards us; and that, therefore, it cannot be moved or altered by any storms of the world, by any assaults of Satan, by any changes or by any fluctuations or weakness of the flesh. For our salvation is then sure to us, when we find the cause of it in the breast of God.'" There are, in the main, two points mentioned here in which Lutheranism differs from Calvinism with regard to the doctrine of predestination. Lutheranism teaches that Christ's

mediatorial office is not merely the cause of that salvation that the believer is chosen to obtain, but also the cause of his election, since time and again Scripture emphasizes the fact that we are elected in Christ. In the second place, while his present state of grace is also to the Lutheran an indication and proof of his eternal election (for God has elected His saints unto faith and the fruits of such faith), nevertheless, the believer relies for his eternal election first and last on the universal Gospel promises of God's grace in Christ Jesus, which are seriously meant for all men. In other words, the foundation of the believer's hope that he is one of the elect is the *gratia universalis* and the *gratia seria et efficax*, as set forth in the Gospel. Our salvation and election certainly cannot be sure to us when we find the cause of it "in the breast of God," for no man knows the secret counsels which are in God's breast. The writer, of course, stresses the fact that our election proceeds from God's eternal goodwill as found in His breast against Arminianism, which wants man to rely also on his worthiness or good works. What he means to set forth is the *sola gratia*. But unless the *sola gratia* is taught side by side with the *universalis gratia*, as this is done in Scripture, not a single sinner in the world can be sure of his election and salvation. The difference between Lutheranism and Calvinism on predestination is indeed far-reaching. The Lutheran rests the assurance of his election and salvation on the objectivity of the means of grace; the Calvinist, if he is consistent, on the subjectivity of his personal assurance wrought by the Holy Spirit without means in the human heart. J. T. M.

Baptists Turning Away More and More from Immersion.—In the *Watchman-Examiner* of November 22, 1945, the Rev. Paul Barker of Saco, Maine, makes a significant admission. He writes, after having dwelt on his conviction that Baptism should be performed by immersion: "In more recent times, a gradual departure from immersion has resulted in a new tradition. One large denomination has actually circulated moving pictures showing Jesus being baptized by John as the former stood knee-deep in the Jordan and with John pouring water upon him from a mollusk shell.

"A departure from tradition is not always fatal, but to teach men that the new way is actually the traditional way is definitely a dangerous untruth.

"In some states, as many as one third of the Baptist churches accept members who have not been immersed. At first, nearly all such churches begin harmlessly by accepting non-immersed members under the guise of associate membership. As time goes on, new accessions from non-immersing denominations are more boldly accepted into the regular membership. My own church has followed such an evolution. The transition has been slow, and few persons are aware of the total change which has been effected.

"In one association of an Eastern state, some pastors are not

averse to performing the rites of pouring and sprinkling at the altar of their own churches.”

What must be our reaction? We are, of course, of the conviction that immersion is not prescribed in the New Testament as the mode of Baptism. If people come to realize that God has not given us any law or regulation on this point, we rejoice. On the other hand, we must say that it is a bad thing to have a creed on paper and to practice differently from it. Such a thing ultimately is bound to break down true religion. As long as a Baptist believes that immersion has been commanded by Christ, he should practice immersion. The remedy for the cleavage separating immersionists from those baptizing by sprinkling does not lie in dulling men's consciences as to teachings of the Scripture, but in a careful study of what the Word of God actually says. A.

Brief Items.—The attention of all brethren who use the Spanish language should be drawn to a Christmas program or Christmas liturgy for a children's service drawn up by our brother Pastor A. T. Kramer of Bahia Blanca, Argentina. Whoever can use material of this nature had better soon get in touch with the author so that he may be equipped for the next Advent and Christmas season. This *Programa para Festejar el Nacimiento de Jesus* has the old familiar form of questions and answers among which are interspersed our well-known Christmas hymns. The hymns were translated chiefly by Pastor Kramer and Professor Lehenbauer.—We once more should like to draw attention to the *El Luterano* published in Buenos Aires, whose editor likewise is Pastor A. T. Kramer. The management is in the hands of Prof. R. W. Rippe. The August number is particularly interesting because it deals with our seminary in Argentina and contains pictures of the present seminary buildings and of the new ones that are planned, and of the professors and students.

The Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church (Suomi Synod) at its recent annual convention voted to permit use of the English language on the floor of the convention. Till now Finnish was used exclusively. The membership of the Church is 23,000.

“Clergy of the Lutheran Church in Denmark have emerged from World War II with the conviction that the Church and its pastors must be interested in all political, social, and national questions,” says the Rev. John M. Jensen, editor of the *Ansgar Lutheran*, who has just returned from an official visit to Denmark. Let us hope that the Danish pastors will not become what is known in this country as “political parsons.”

Today, in spite of our war aims, there is little religious liberty in Italy and that little grows less every day. The present Italian Government, with the tacit approval of Allied military government diplomatic representations, is in every possible way obstructing Protestant work. Our State Department should know that this is contrary to the principles for which we fought.—*The Presbyterian* of November 22, 1945.

From Glasgow a correspondent of the *Christian Century* writes about an effort to provide for the real or imagined needs of young people for Sunday evenings. "A large restaurant in the busy center of the town, which is normally closed on Sundays, is to be thrown open from the top floor to the basement each Sunday evening. Good music will be provided and refreshments at usual prices. There will be community singing in the ball room and a short religious epilogue for all who care to attend." To understand this endeavor, one must remember that in Scotland Sunday observance is still of the Puritanic type.

Of the trend in German church circles, the request addressed by Bishop Wurm to Bishop Marahrens of Hannover that the latter resign is symptomatic. Bishop Wurm is head of the newly organized Evangelical Church Council (a unionistic body). Dr. Marahrens is accused of having abetted the Nazi regime.

"The third self-evident proposition is that the results achieved by the American educational system are poorer than ever. Our children, that is, are receiving a worse education than our grandfathers. It is true that a smaller proportion of our grandfathers had educational opportunities—only fifty per cent of mine did, whereas all our children expect as a matter of right to go to college if they feel like it. The very process by which education has been opened to the mass of the population, the process which is the great glory of American education and perhaps the greatest contribution of our country to democratic theory and practice, has resulted in obscuring the aims of education and the consequent degradation of educational standards. Education today can only be defined as what is done in educational institutions. And educational institutions will do whatever any considerable fraction of the population asks them—or pays them—to do. Consequences are too well known to require elaboration here. They may be summed up in the word 'trivialization.'"—From an address of Robert M. Hutchins, Chancellor of the University of Chicago.

According to an item in the *Christian Century* the representative of the new Evangelical Church in Germany, elected at Treysa in August, decided to join the World Council of Churches. Its desire is to have fraternal relationships with the other bodies composing the World Council. Thus a unionist start is made. The leaders of the Evangelical Church in Germany are said to have expressed their "great solidarity of guilt" with the German people. They stated, "Through us has endless suffering been brought to many peoples and countries." Among the people that signed the statement were Bishop Wurm and Pastor Niemoeller.

According to reports from Norway, Bishop Ivind Berggrav, who is the head of the Norwegian Church, is working on plans looking to a more complete separation of Church and State in Norway than obtains at present.

From Portland, Oreg., the report comes that in respect to granting divorces this city is second only to Reno. Approximately there are twenty-five per cent more divorces than marriages in Portland. These dreadful figures are in part explained by the fact that marriages are often contracted across the lines in Vancouver, Wash., where licenses can be more easily obtained, and the divorces then occur in Portland, where the couples live.

At the meeting of the executive committee of the Evangelical and Reformed Church a Mr. M. R. Ziegler, who had just returned from Germany, reported that he had seen "fifteen thousand orphaned children without clothing huddled in one building with no windows and the cold winds howling through."

Professor Henry Pitney Van Dusen recently was installed as head of Union Theological Seminary and Auburn Seminary, succeeding Henry Sloane Coffin, who has retired.

From Princeton, too, comes the admission that the elective system, which for a number of decades has been in vogue in American colleges, has not been successful. In the future, so it is stated, the objective is to be "a closer control over the selection of Freshman courses." Sanity seems to be returning.

America (Jesuit weekly) states that the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (of Mary) has been chosen as the patronal feast of the United States. Nothing is said about the authorities who did the choosing. One thing is certain: Millions of Protestants will refuse to have a feast of this kind saddled on them. The same issue of *America* says that St. Joseph seventy-five years ago was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX the patron of the universal Church and that soon after that proclamation the stock of the papacy began to rise. Make your own comments, brethren.

How impotent a Christian citizen not holding political office is when endeavoring to influence the course of world events is demonstrated strikingly by the case of Evangelist E. Stanley Jones, who in the summer and autumn of 1941, according to the December issue of *Asia and the Americas*, tried his best to avert war between the United States and Japan and, of course, finally failed. Cf. the *Christian Century* of December 19, 1945.

An appeal for Government permission to send church supplies and funds immediately to former enemy countries has been issued by the Federal Council of Churches, the Foreign Missions Conference, the Church Committee for Relief in Asia, the Commission for World Council Service, and the Church Committee on Overseas Relief and Reconstruction. The authorities of our own Church have appealed directly to the President for such permission. A.

If I had three hundred men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and Him crucified, I would set the world on fire. — John Wesley, quoted in the *Presbyterian*.