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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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## Theological Observer

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**Final Steps for the Formation of the World Council of Churches Taken in Geneva.**—The following was reported by the *Religious News Service* for February 21:

"Geneva (By Wireless).—The meeting here of the Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches is the final step before the actual formation of the World Council, which will rank as an international body representing major non-Roman denominations in six continents.

"Attended by leading Protestant and Orthodox representatives, the meeting will be called upon to ratify the many decisions which have been taken by Provisional Committee members at gatherings in Geneva, London, and New York since the first meeting of the group at Utrecht, Holland, in 1938 when preliminary outlines for the international body were drawn up.

"The current meeting will decide how and when the World Council is to be officially constituted. One of the gravest questions it will face is whether the list of churches which have accepted membership in the Council is sufficiently comprehensive to provide a solid basis for the formation of the Council.

"At the present time, the Council represents 92 Protestant and Orthodox communions in 33 countries. Latest Churches to become members are the Waldensian Church of Italy, the Evangelical Church of Austria, the Evangelical Church of Germany, and the Lutheran Church of Norway.

"The question of future relationships with Orthodox churches is also on the agenda. At the present time, the Council is largely cut off from the larger Slavonic churches as well as from the Roumanian Church. Protestant leaders are known to be anxious to strengthen relations with Orthodox churches.

"As planned, the World Council of Churches will have authority to call a world conference on specific subjects as occasion requires. It will be a purely consultative body, without any power to legislate for constituent churches or to impose limitations upon their autonomy.

"Its main purpose will be to facilitate common action by the churches in matters of international interest; to promote co-operation in study; to establish relations with denominational federations of world-wide scope and with other ecumenical (world church co-operation) movements; and to promote the growth of 'ecumenical consciousness' in the members of all churches.

"According to its proposed constitution, the principal authority of the World Council will be an assembly which will meet every five years, consisting of not more than 450 members, divided proportionately between the churches of various countries. There will also be a central committee of not more than 90 members, which will serve from the beginning of the Assembly meeting until the

next assembly. This committee will meet normally once a year and have power to appoint its own executive committee.

"The World Council movement is an outgrowth of the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910. From this meeting three ecumenical agencies developed: the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, the World Conference on Faith and Order, and the International Missionary Council.

"The proposal for a World Council of Churches was first submitted to the two Christian Conferences on Life and Work and on Faith and Order held at Oxford and Edinburgh in the summer of 1937. The former movement consists of a series of conferences and discussions looking to the solution of problems which separate the churches, while the latter seeks the co-operation of all churches in the application of Christian teachings to practical problems of the day.

"The proposal was adopted by both the Edinburgh and the Oxford meetings, each of which appointed a group of seven, constituting a committee of 14, which was entrusted with the task of drawing up a constitution for a World Council. When this committee met, however, it was felt that its works would be of such far-reaching consequence that a broader base should be given to its deliberations. As a result, 80 leaders of world Christianity met at Utrecht in 1938 to set up the Provisional Committee which is now ready to launch formally the World Council."

**What Is the Christological Foundation of Ecumenical Theology?**—Ecumenical Christianity is the goal of many church leaders in the postwar era. The World Council of Churches, Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, secretary, comprises representatives of practically all denominations with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church. The World Council of Churches hopes to constitute an outwardly united organism on a world-wide scale similarly as the Federal Council of Churches claims to represent Protestantism in America. Naturally the theological platform of a federation of all churches must be sufficiently broad to include all and to exclude none. The Council's platform is sufficiently latitudinarian and is ready to extend the hand of fellowship to all churches throughout the world "which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior." This doctrinal basis for fellowship of Christian denominations could hardly be less exclusive, unless the Council would be ready to receive Socinians, Unitarians, and Jews. But Dr. Clarence T. Craig, in an article in the winter issue of *Christendom* on "The Christological Foundation of the World Council of Churches," takes objection to this formulation. He states that this phrasing is unbiblical and not in accord with what the orthodox tradition of the Church meant to affirm. He believes that the phrase is unsuited as a foundation for the ecumenical movement, since it is a statement formulated by the Church and not found in the Bible itself. In the article he sets forth his interpretation of the meaning and significance of Jesus on the basis of

the higher critical approach to the New Testament. The article is significant in an evaluation of Ecumenical Theology, because its author, professor of the New Testament at Oberlin Graduate School of Theology, is a member of the American Theological Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order and incidentally also a member of the American Standard Bible Translation Committee. The article is significant further because it appears in the official organ of the American Committee for the World Council of Churches. We append a few paragraphs from the article which will enable the reader to evaluate the position of Dr. Craig.

"In understanding New Testament language, it should be realized that the question is not one of the application of the word *theos* to Jesus. As Paul said, 'There are many *theoi*.' When he added that for 'us' there is only one, he did not mean Jesus. Many years ago President McGiffert pointed out, in his 'God of the Early Christians,' that there were gentle Christians who directed their piety toward 'our God Jesus' (to use Ignatius' phrase) rather than to the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. When these referred to Jesus as *theos*, that did not mean that he was identical with the one God of the universe any more than when Philo called the *logos* by the name *theos*." (P. 14.)

"An unsolved, and doubtless insoluble, problem is how Paul came to interpret Jesus of Nazareth in terms of the incarnation of a pre-existent heavenly being. I have examined all of the theories and am personally convinced that we do not yet possess sufficient knowledge of first-century religion to answer the question. The Jewish Messiah was neither pre-existent nor the agent of creation. Paul's Christ was both. Men might 'experience' a risen Christ. Paul was sure that such a figure had appeared to him, and his new life which resulted from that event was a life *in Christ*. But by what epistemological process could he know that this Christ was the one through whom the angels came into being? There is an answer ready at hand for those who look upon 'revelation' as the communication of just such information, which obviously could neither be discovered nor verified by any rational process. Those of us who understand by revelation the saving activity of God in history have no such solution available." (P. 16.)

"To conclude, the essence of New Testament Christology is not to be found in the myths of a pre-existent heavenly being which were employed because of their immediate background. Neither is it, as some students of *Religionsgeschichte* once tried to make plausible, that various divine titles were transferred to Jesus in a primitive Christ-cult, by which they rescued from oblivion this Rabbi who had been put to death as a Messianic pretender. The approach to the true understanding of New Testament Christology is ever and always through our doctrine of salvation. The New Testament message is not so much an evaluation of the person of Jesus, as the realization that through him God's saving and revealing act for men has come into history. The Gospel does not

consist in the affirmation that Jesus was in some way God. That crude way of putting it is really the patripassionism which the Church rightly repudiated. The original Gospel proclaimed that through Christ God was reconciling the world to himself. *It does not deal essentially with some pre-existent or post-existent being; it is concerned with the act of God himself for men.*" (P. 21.)

"By the Trinity we seek to state that God is as rich in his being as the totality of his revelation, but the guiding clue to our knowledge of him lies in the historic revelation in Christ. This Word never remains a distant fact, for it is interpreted to us through the witness of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not one third of God, or a third God, but God as he is experienced under these conditions. The Son is not a second God, but God as he is experienced through the divine act in the historic Jesus. Around this Gospel we must rally the Ecumenical Church without introducing divisive speculation; for it is this which is 'the power of God unto salvation.'" (P. 22.)

F. E. M.

**The Proper Reaction to Roman Propaganda.**— On this subject the Rev. H. C. Schreck of Chester, Ill., recently wrote us as follows:

"From Hollywood comes a voice that pleads the cause of tolerance. 'Join the Brotherhood,' cry Van Johnson, Eddie Cantor, Katherine Hepburn, and many more of the fabulous half mortals! The pleas of such folk carry so much more weight than do those of lesser people. Tolerance is a thing to be desired. Intolerance breeds strife, discord, bloodshed. It cannot make a nation great. We have so recently come from a laboratory demonstration of the fruits of intolerance, it should not take much argument to convince anyone that intolerance ought not be tolerated in a free country.

"Tolerance has always been a distinguishing characteristic of the American. We say that without hesitation, though we remember that there are patched places in the pattern of our nation. It has always saved us in our hysterical moments to remember that 'all men are created free and equal.'

"A Christian is tolerant. He must be if he would be a follower of Jesus Christ. The Savior did not turn from the Roman centurion, nor from the overbearing Zacchaeus. Before the Master took leave of His disciples, He commissioned them: 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations . . .' On another occasion He was heard to say: 'Whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother.' It was the same Jesus who taught: 'Love your enemies.' Tolerance is part of a Christian's way of life.

"However, tolerance does not take from free men the right to speak out against wickedness wherever they find it. If Protestantism sees in the rising tide of Roman Catholicism a definite threat to our love of freedom, must it keep silence and issue no warning, for fear such action might be construed as intolerant? We think not. Yet we think a better plan would be for the Protes-

tant Church to meet the challenge of Rome with a vigorous and bold proclamation of the Gospel; with a display of zeal for the saving of souls that will cause Satan himself to pause in amazement."

**A Significant Papal Admission.**—The *Christian Century* calls attention to the fact that Pope Pius XII in his invitation to Protestants to reunite with Rome says things which may cause eyebrows to lift in certain Roman Catholic circles. "‘Come back to the arms of Mother Church,’ in effect says Pius XII, ‘because it is a better Church now than it was when you left!’ Or, to quote the papal document as it appeared in the *New York Times*, since the Council of Trent got through with its housecleaning inside the Roman branch, the resulting reform ‘has provided the Church with bishops, priests, and religious of such quality that they have shown themselves superior to their predecessors of the preceding centuries.’ We believe that what the Pope says is true. The important thing, however, is that he knows it is true and is telling those who look to him for spiritual guidance that it is true." We, too, believe that in one respect it is true; that there has been some moral improvement in the clergy of Rome since the days of Trent. Whether it actually was the Council which by its reform resolutions brought about this improvement may be doubted; there is very little evidence that these resolutions were enforced. The real cause of the improvement was the great change in public opinion; the Roman clergy could no longer afford to live as they did before the Reformation; people would not permit it and remain in their Church. And what was it that so changed public opinion? Not the Council of Trent, but the Lutheran Reformation!—The significant thing, however, in the Pope’s letter is the admission that the Roman Church and clergy before the Reformation *was worse than it is now!* Which makes it unanimous! Do Roman Catholics realize that thereby the old fiction, inaugurated by Johannes Jansen in his *Geschichte des deutschen Volkes*, that Church and society were at their best in the late Middle Ages before Luther caused that "tragic breach," is now acknowledged as fiction by the Pope himself? He admits that a reformation was necessary! And since all efforts to reform the Church in the course of many centuries had no other results than that the reformers were excommunicated and burned, what else could be done but what Luther finally did: Separate from the corrupt Church.—That the Roman Church *in her teaching* is not one whit better today than it was before the Council of Trent is another chapter. T. H.

**A Note on the Waldensians.**—The Waldensian Church of Italy has joined the World Council of Churches. Announcing the affiliation, the Waldensian Moderator Virgilio Sommani, Rome, reports: "Where our churches were not destroyed, they were placed for services and meetings at the disposal of Congregationalists, Anglicans, Methodists, Baptists, and other Evangelical movements of the United States, England, South Africa, Canada, France, etc. In the period when we could no longer communicate

from Rome with our congregations in the south of Italy, an American Chaplain, finding our little congregation in Ceriguola without a pastor, took charge of it. Although himself a Lutheran, he learned the Italian language, made himself acquainted with our liturgy, and for a whole year exercised in that place a brotherly ministry. The congregation remembers this with gratitude, as we ourselves do." (Wireless from Geneva, the *Protestant Voice*.) The chaplain was Major M. Scharlemann of the Missouri Synod, and that Waldensian flock heard good Lutheran sermons for a whole year, and their youth was instructed on the basis of Luther's Catechism.

T. H.

**"Purple and Fine Linen."**—Thirty-two new cardinals for the Roman Church! But the picture is not altogether bright; a clothing crisis impends, fears the *Christian Century*; the wholesale appointment is "causing headaches among the prominent Roman tailors." "The chief difficulty is the shortage of gold tissue and of scarlet and moiré silk—which 'costs 5,000 lire a yard, when you can get it,' as one of the tailors explained. Some orders from newly appointed cardinals have had to be declined because of the critical shortage of what may be called strategic materials. This is serious. One hates to think of an obstacle being thrown in the way of the postwar spiritual revival by the lack of proper robes and haberdashery for the new cardinals! Protocol is highly important in any court, and there is no court in the world in which the visible symbols of status and authority are more lavishly provided or more guarded against variation than in that court which professes to rule over a purely spiritual empire. Cardinal-designate Spellman has solved his personal part of the problem by the decision to use the robes of former Cardinal Hayes, his predecessor as archbishop of New York, which have been hanging in a closet since 1938. There is even the cheering news that Cardinal Hayes had a spare set which may be made available to another of the new cardinals."

Touching, isn't it?

T. H.

**Decision on the Legality of Conducting Religious Education Classes.**—Much publicity has been given to the suit of Mrs. V. McCollum against the practice of the school board of Champaign, Ill., to have religion taught in the public schools according to the "released time" method. On the decision handed down toward the end of January *Religious News Service* reports thus:

"Urbana, Ill.—A ruling by a three-judge Circuit Court here has halted efforts by Mrs. Vashti McCollum, an avowed atheist, to have religious education classes banned from the public schools of Champaign, Ill.

"In their 41-page decision, which took two hours to read, the judges declared that no constitutional or statutory rights have been violated by the Champaign system of religious education.

"Mrs. McCollum, wife of a University of Illinois professor, and mother of three children, had alleged in her suit, heard last

fall, that her son Terry, ten, a fifth grade pupil, was embarrassed by being the only child in his class not taking the courses.

"It also was alleged in Mrs. McCollum's petition for mandamus that time from regular school subjects was lost because of the instruction and that as a taxpayer she objected to having classes taught in school buildings maintained by tax funds.

"The court asserted in its decision that Mrs. McCollum 'adheres to a school of thought known as "rationalism," including atheism, is not a believer in any religious creed or doctrine, accepts no part of any Bible as true where such part is not in accord with proved scientific fact. . . .'

"The legal fact in the suit was a question of whether the religious teaching, according to the evidence, 'is repugnant to the federal and state constitutions and in violation of the statutes of Illinois.'

"Citing previous U. S. Supreme Court rulings, the court said, '. . . so far as federal constitutional provisions are concerned, and conceding that they are binding upon the State of Illinois, and on the defendant school board, there is nothing in any expression of the Federal Supreme Court that remotely indicates there is any constitutional objection to the Champaign system of religious education.'

"Mrs. McCollum was among the audience of less than 100 persons who heard the decision read. She was accompanied by the Rev. Philip Schug, pastor of the Unitarian Church, who has served as her adviser.

"Landon L. Chapman, of Chicago, Mrs. McCollum's attorney, stated that he felt the court had left him a good record for appeal.

"I don't feel this is just my case,' Chapman said. 'It is a case for the people of Illinois. As far as I am concerned, the case went very well, except for the final decision, which is upside down. But the trial court did permit us to make what I think is a good record for appeal, so that the Supreme Court may have an opportunity to reverse the decision. And for this the three trial judges honestly deserve our gratitude.'

"John L. Franklin, attorney for the Champaign school board, said the religious education program 'has now received the stamp of approval of the law and has established a standard by which other fair-minded people may be guided in setting up similar programs.'

**The Present Whereabouts and Status of German New Testament Scholars.**—Professor Henry J. Cadbury of Harvard University, a prominent New Testament scholar (by the way, a Quaker), has sent a note to the *Christian Century*, printed in the issue of February 13, in which he submits information on the leading scholars of Germany in the New Testament field. The names of the men to whom he refers have often been mentioned, and many of our readers will be glad to learn how these men are faring. We print the whole note. Apparently Professor Cadbury



is of the opinion that the political animosities are still operative and account for the treatment accorded one or the other scholar that he mentions.

"Probably others besides myself have wondered what has been happening lately to the seventeen theological faculties of Germany. I therefore pass on some of the information which appears in recent issues of the *Theologische Zeitschrift* of Basel, edited by Karl Ludwig Schmidt. I confine myself to New Testament scholars.

"Schmidt himself, after being deposed by the Nazis from the University of Bonn in 1933, has been invited back with the approval of the British occupying authorities, but under conditions that make his acceptance problematical. Karl Barth (not precisely a *Neutestamentler*) is in the same position, having been deposed at Bonn in 1935 and now invited back from Basel. He intends to go to Bonn for the summer semester of 1946 as guest professor.

"At Berlin, J. Behm has now been deposed. M. Albertz is teaching in 'an ecclesiastical high school' with the permission of the Western Allies, but not as under the university. At Halle, E. Barnikol and E. Fascher have both been deposed since the Allied victory, but E. Klostermann and J. Schniewind remain. E. Lohmeyer retains his chair at Greifswald; he is, in fact, rector of the university. F. Buechsel, of the Rostock faculty, was killed in 1945 (shot by accident). Late in 1945 H. von Soden of Marburg died, but his colleague R. Bultmann remains on the faculty there. H. D. Wendland of Kiel is a prisoner of war. At Goettingen, W. Bauer is prevented through illness from teaching. G. Bertram of Giessen has been suspended, and G. Kittel, formerly of Tuebingen but transferred to Vienna after the *Anschluss*, was arrested and now has been deposed. At Heidelberg, Martin Dibelius, having held his chair with difficulty through the Nazi regime, is now the dean of the theological faculty. They were allowed last summer to give a series of brief courses to forty or fifty theological recruits, not under the university, but for the Church.

"At this distance it is hard to interpret this information. If it is reasonably correct and typical, it raises many questions. Do such conditions bode well for the perpetuation of Biblical scholarship and for the theological training, especially when taken with the information we have about the destruction of buildings, libraries, and the businesses of some theological publishers (e. g., Hinrichs of Leipzig, but fortunately not Mohr of Tuebingen or Vandenhoeck of Goettingen)? Are we witnessing a kind of alternating vendetta in the universities?"

A.

**Need of Doctrinal Preaching.** — The Baptist *Watchman-Examiner* (January 17, 1946) emphasizes the need of doctrinal preaching, writing editorially on this matter as follows: "It is astonishing how little doctrinal preaching there is. Complaints abound. Sermons are good, of their kind, but there is far too little definition of real Christianity in them. Compare the average

published sermon with one of the New Testament sermons. We have much good preaching, but far too much doctrine is left out. The preaching is admired, but it too frequently fails of bringing people to God. The listeners admire, but they do not revere; they appreciate, but they do not repent; they are interested, but they are not exalted. The exhortation which that great pulpit prophet Philips Brooks gave to the divinity students at Yale in his day is appropriate now for our needs: "The preachers that have moved and held men have always preached doctrine. No exhortation to a good life that does not put behind it a truth as deep as eternity can seize and hold the conscience. Preach doctrine, preach all the doctrine you know, and learn forever more and more; but preach it always, not that men may believe it, but that they may be saved by believing it." A similar note is found in *Theology Today* (January, 1946), in an article by A. N. Meckel, "The Evangelism Which the Times Need." Dr. Meckel says (among other things): "Finally, we stress the need for a more adequate theology for our evangelism, for a *rationale* which will enable us to give a reason to those who ask us for the hope that is in us." He pleads that preaching again become *kerygma*, setting forth justification by faith, the new birth, the Holy Spirit, sanctification, salvation as a free gift, the Cross as *theologica crucis* (Luther), the kingdom of God and Christ, the Church of the living God. From the definition of the terms it is obvious that *Theology Today*, representing the neo-orthodox form of Liberalism stemming from Karl Barth, does not use these expressions in the sense of traditional orthodoxy. Luther's *theologia crucis*, for example, is not "the historic event in which the 'vertical God' and 'horizontal man' met in divine encounter and where a once-and-for-all victory was won by a righteous and holy God — and salvation for men." Nor would Luther define justification by faith as "man entering into right relations with the living God by taking Him at His word." Nor would he have defined the new birth as "the literal being born again into a new kind of existence through the Holy Spirit — being planted into the very life of Christ." Nor would Calvin have defined the expression just mentioned as they are here defined; we mention this because Princeton's neo-orthodoxy has a Calvinistic background. Nevertheless, the insistence on the study of theology (though this should be the right, Scriptural theology) for the sake of evangelism or in order that modern preaching might again become a preaching, a *kerygma*, is laudable and timely. There is indeed a great and crying need of doctrinal, Scriptural preaching everywhere.

J. T. M.

**Unitas Controlled by Roman Catholics.** — According to *Religious News Service* last June saw the founding of an interdenominational organization whose aim is the uniting of Christians of all denominations throughout the world with Catholics in promoting international good will and combating anti-Christian influences. *Unitas* is the name that has been given to this venture. It embraces

800 members of whom 15 per cent are non-Catholics. The central international committee of 11 members controlling it is entirely Roman Catholic. The view has been urged that as the movement is extended from Italy to other countries, the endeavor should be to let the membership be two thirds Catholic and one third non-Catholic. It is quite apparent that Rome intends to remain the dominating force in this undertaking. The president is Rev. Charles Boyer, S. J., dean of theology at the Gregorian Pontifical College in Rome. On last October 14 the organization for the first time held a public meeting. The occasion was the centenary of the conversion of Cardinal Newman to Roman Catholicism. A.

**Hungary's President on Attitude of His Country Toward the Church.**—From Budapest, according to *R. N. S.*, comes the following important wireless communication:

"Baron Zoltan Tildy, Calvinist pastor and first President of the Hungarian Republic, pledged in an interview here that he will 'run the country according to the principles I preached as a pastor.'

"He declared he will 'never tolerate an anti-Church policy' and asserted that Hungary can only be reconstructed 'if she accepts the moral foundation of the divine teachings of Christ, especially the commandment of love.'

"As a pastor,' Tildy said, 'I always tried to fulfill my duty. As a humble servant of the Church, I believe in divine predestination. In politics I seek only the will of God and nothing else. The Gospel has many messages for Hungary.'

"The pastor-President declared he was in favor of Church-State separation and said State subsidies to the clergy should be abolished, thus leaving the churches to support themselves as 'free, independent bodies.'

"He defended the recent land reform legislation under which church estates were nationalized, declaring that although church leaders regard this move as a 'Red' attack against the Church, the legislation was 'not against church interests at all.'

"The loss of the churches' rich acres,' he said, 'will be very beneficial to the former luxury-loving clergy, and will bring them closer to the poor whom they are supposed to serve.'

"Baron Tildy, who has been strongly supported by Communist groups, asserted that 'there is no ideological conflict between Marxism and Christianity' and claimed he knew 'Marxists who are devout Catholics.'

"Stressing his belief that 'Communism can help Hungary,' he described as 'my most vital decision in recent months' the new collective wage system in Hungary which permits payment of workers in food as well as in cash."

**Shintoism No Longer Supported through Public Funds.**—In the *Protestant Voice* of January 25, 1946, a wireless from Tokyo, sent by a correspondent, Richard T. Baker, is submitted which is of special interest. We herewith reprint it. Mr. Baker says, "Christians here have expressed gratification over General Doug-

las MacArthur's directive ousting Shintoism as a State-supported religion and decreeing freedom of religion in Japan. Under the directive, the State can no longer use Shinto as a test of good citizenship, compel attendance and the offering of gifts at Shinto shrines, or teach Shinto doctrines in schools. Religious discriminations are banned. General MacArthur's directive prohibits sponsorship, support, perpetuation, control, and dissemination of Shinto by government and officials, and support of militarism from Shinto doctrines. Shinto shrines (112,970 of them), which received public funds and compelled gifts from the people, suffer a setback, but it is believed that purely religious aspects of the faith will prosper (?). State Shinto, which is actually a form of spiritualized patriotism, is only 75 years old in Japan. It is a clever hoax, whereby empire builders' propaganda has convinced the Japanese that Shinto is inseparable from Japanese history and tradition. Christianity, a minority religion with 400,000 adherents, gains most from the new freedom and protection. Nothing is said in General MacArthur's directive regarding the emperor himself, who is Shinto high priest and its focal point of reverence. But it is explained that the emperor's private religion is not molested. As an individual, the emperor can go to Ise to report to his ancestors and make gifts to shrines, but Dyke indicated that budgetary control of the imperial household might restrain excessive grants from the emperor's funds to religious organizations. Military-manufactured Shinto, dating from 1870, claimed the Japanese were of divine descent and therefore superior, that the emperor came in lineal descent from the Sun-goddess and therefore had divine right to rule all lands and peoples. These were the tenets the national government in 1875 drew up in ritual and creeds. No variance from official beliefs was permitted except by special permit. The government issued textbooks and commentaries expounding the faith. The circulation of these volumes is now banned, and no textbooks will be prepared."

**High Divorce Rate in St. Louis.** — With distress of heart one reads what the *Globe-Democrat* of St. Louis in its issue of February 5 has to say on the present status of the divorce evil in this city. A special article in that issue says: "Last month [i. e., January] saw the granting of more divorces in a circuit court in St. Louis than any other month since the 'Domestic Relations Branch' was established in 1921. A total of 1,231 petitions for divorce were filed, the result being that 965 decrees were granted. A total of 1,387 marriage licenses were issued in the same period. This means there was one divorce for every 1.4 marriages in St. Louis in January, or approximately two divorces for every three marriages." As to the reasons for this enormous divorce rate, one of the judges declared: "It is the war. War breeds nothing good and everything bad. The boys come back from service dissatisfied, nervous, irritable. They hear things, and in many cases there is plenty of justification for their determination to get a divorce."

On the other hand, throughout the war many girls have received snapshots of their husbands with other women and letters openly relating their activities away from home. After all this, they do not want the men back. You can write your whole divorce story around the war." Another judge said, "At least fifty per cent of the cases involve service men coming back and finding they do not care to live with their wives, or finding she has been living with some one else." A third judge made this statement: "Home is becoming just a place to hang your hat. There has been a general breakdown of home conditions under the war. This trend in divorce may climb still more if the re-conversion program does not get the mother back into the home." The *Globe-Democrat* article continues, "All three judges blamed hasty marriages for a large part of the domestic discord that is landing hundreds of couples in the divorce courts every month." As to the grounds on which divorces are sought, the article says: "The most common grounds are infidelity, drinking, general quarreling, jealousy, and financial difficulties. The judges estimated that at least 90 to 95 per cent of the divorces are uncontested."

A tidal wave of wickedness is upon us, and the divorce evil is a part of it. Our generation is fast drifting away from the old foundations, of which the fear of God and the desire to do His will were a substantial part. A.

**A Roman Opinion on the Action of the Japanese Emperor.**—The Jesuit journal *America* discusses the Imperial Rescript which the Emperor of Japan addressed to his people at the opening of the New Year. "In it the Emperor, believed by his millions of subjects to be divine, bluntly characterized this belief as a 'false conception' and classed it with 'mere legends and myths'... The Emperor's abdication of divinity has removed one of the greatest obstacles in the way of framing a democratic constitution for Japan. It will doubtless be a tremendous moral shock for the people; but it is better in the long run that they be given truth instead of falsehood." A Protestant is tempted to say: "Physician, heal thyself!" If the Papacy would give the people the truth instead of falsehood with regard to that institution, and "bluntly characterize" the belief that the Pope is the Vicar of God on earth and as such infallible as a "false conception" and a "mere legend and myth," would it not remove one of the great obstacles in the way of framing a democracy in Catholic countries, Italy, Spain, and others? T. H.

**A Plea by a Protestant Episcopal Bishop for a More Liberal Attitude toward Divorce.**—From Buffalo, N. Y., comes this item (R. N. S.): "Pleading for a 'more realistic' approach to the subject of remarriage in the Protestant Episcopal Church, the Rt. Rev. Cameron J. Davis, bishop of Western New York, declared here that 'in many cases it is a greater sin against God and society for couples to stay together than to separate.'"

"Bishop Davis, who is chairman of the Commission on Holy Matrimony of the Church, spoke before diocesan clergy at a meeting marking the 16th anniversary of his consecration. He will retire next fall. He said his commission will present a new canon to liberalize the remarriage law at the General Convention of the Church in September.

"Remarriage in the Episcopal Church of persons whose previous marriages have been dissolved should be decided according to the individual merits of the case,' Bishop Davis asserted.

"A blanket law in the field of human relations is directly contrary to the mind of Christ. I have seen many cases where it seemed that our Lord Himself would permit a remarriage—where society, the church, and the people involved would have benefited—and have had to refuse to marry those people because our Church canon recognizes only nine or ten grounds of annulment and one of divorce.

"The commission feels, and I feel strongly, that the power of judgment in cases of remarriage should be vested in the bishop and a theological court.

"In many cases it is a greater sin against God and society for couples to stay together than to separate, yet the Church is unable to remarry them because the grounds for their separation are not one of those approved by the church law.

"A God-made marriage is and should be indissoluble. That is Christ's teaching. Such a marriage cannot be terminated. But most marital failures were never true marriage in the Christian sense. The couples were not free and competent to make a Christian marriage, or there were physical and mental impediments that became apparent later.' "

What strikes us as strange is that the laws of the Church are emphasized rather than the laws of God. Not what the Church says is important, but what the Head of the Church decrees.

A.

**The Family Altar.**—A good word is spoken for joint prayer and worship in the family circle by Dr. D. D. Burrell in *The Presbyterian*, where he writes thus: "Recently four women took part in a radio discussion on 'How to Hold Your Man'—meaning 'your husband.' I happened to tune in on it, and listened carefully. There seemed to be altogether too many women who are not holding their husbands, likewise too many men whose wives do not stay anchored. What these women said was good, as far as it went, but it was what they failed to say that struck me most forcibly, for not one of them even mentioned religion as a factor in family life. Men and women who have and practice a sound Christian faith seldom, if ever, seek the divorce courts or desert each other. I have married hundreds of couples (and refused to marry many); and of these, as far as I have been able to trace them, only three or four have broken up. Those few were men and women of whom I had my doubts from the first. One of the

prime essentials in a happy marriage is a Christian attitude; and I doubt if this is ever all it should be unless from the first the husband and wife share a confidential relationship in family worship." This is a good item to read to couples looking forward to marriage. A.

**Witnessing Christ by Conduct.**—Ernest Gordon in the *Sunday School Times* (November 17, 1945) has this to say of Protestant natives called upon to serve in the African Belgian army: "Mr. Lasse, of the Africa Inland Mission, found that in and about Stanleyville fifteen per cent of the native troops were Protestants and forty per cent of the officers. The unsolicited testimony of a European officers was: 'Your Protestant officer is first of all obedient, prompt, and exemplary in his obedience to his superior officer. Then he is honest. When something goes wrong in the military camp and the officer of the day wants to know the facts—and all the facts—he calls a Protestant officer and gets them. His sobriety is proverbial in the forces. He does not carouse at the first opportunity, making himself useless for duty the next day. Nor does he cater to camp followers.' This is the frequent witness of Belgian army officers." No further comment is needed, but one wonders just how many other Christians of Protestant faith, whose witness by works is just as necessary as theirs, these simple native believers put to shame. J. T. M.

**News Brevities.**—The following news brevities are taken from the *Sunday School Times*, where they appear under Ernest Gordon's "A Survey of Religious Life and Thought."

"The Assemblies of God raise a million a year for missions. They have recently purchased the first of a proposed fleet of missionary planes." (November 17, 1945.)

"Southern Baptists have established twenty-eight hospitals, and two are building. They are faithful to the Gospel. The Northern Baptist machine is modernist and 'social' in its pronouncements. It has three hospitals and two schools of nursing. Three of these five units owe their existence to evangelical Baptists, and possibly the others do also. The 'social gospel' is the son who said, 'I go,' and went not." (November 17, 1945.)

"The prime minister of Uganda, recently assassinated, was a Christian who bore the name of Martin Luther Nsibirwa." (February 9, 1946.)

"The new president of the Mother (Christian Science) Church in Boston, Mrs. Myrtle Holm Smith, in her presidential address advocated 'quicker and more numerous healings through Christian Science.' Then she went on to deprecate the sending of evangelical missionaries to Russia, China, the Balkans." (February 9, 1946.)

"J. Edwin Orr is chaplain of the American Air Force in the Pacific. He has taught his Christians in the force to tithe. In twelve weeks they contributed about \$1,700 to missions in China and the South Seas." (February 9, 1946.)

"A worker among Jews asked a Jew what he and his people did with the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. In his kind way he answered, 'We are taught to pass over it.'" (February 9, 1946.)  
J. T. M.

**Brief Items.**—Because of the affiliation of the Northern Presbyterians with the Federal Council of Churches and because of the domination of Modernism in the denomination referred to, the Rev. William Wallace Thompson left this denomination. He has now become a member of the Bible Presbyterian Church. Cf. *Christian Beacon* of January 24.

It will interest our readers to know that the *Evangelisch-lutherisches Gemeindeblatt*, one of the official papers of our sister Synod of Wisconsin and Other States, recently published its two-thousandth number. The paper was first issued in September, 1865, and thus has passed the eightieth milestone, a rare occurrence in the journalistic world, where changes and innovations are the order of the day. We congratulate.

The United States is to have a Brotherhood Week, in which opposition to intolerance and bigotry will be stressed. A fund of four million dollars is to be gathered, which will be used in the interest of such opposition. The tendency to have a week set aside for the discussion and promulgation of every worthy cause strikes one as thoroughly puerile.

One million copies of the New Testament will be printed in Japanese by the American Bible Society as a result of a recent request by Japan's Christian leaders for religious literature. The first 60,000 already are en route to Japan. It is also planned to print 100,000 Testaments in English. — (R. N. S.)

Dr. Charles M. Sheldon, author of the well-known religious novel *In His Steps*, died at Topeka, Kans., Feb. 25. *In His Steps*, published in 1896 and sold in 23,000,000 copies, was first read to the congregation of the Central Congregational Church of Topeka. The book sets forth how the social implications of the Gospel ought to condition our Christian life. C. H. Hopkins, in his *The Rise of the Social Gospel* (p. 154), claims that this novel became a mighty factor in popularizing the social gospel. We are not prepared to say whether or not Dr. Sheldon himself had this objective in mind in publishing the novel. — F. E. M.

According to *Religious News Service* some Catholic leaders are urging that a Catholic newspaper be placed into every non-Catholic home in our country. Romanists know the power of the press.

According to *Religious News Service* the American Bible Society has sent its general secretary, Dr. Eric M. North, to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where he will attend a conference of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society concerning their work in Latin America.



Jesuits estimate that twelve million dollars are required to rebuild the churches, colleges, schools, seminaries, and other institutions of their Society in Europe. The attempt is being made to raise this money. — R. N. S.)

The Federal Council Executive Committee approved the largest budget in the history of the Federal Council, amounting to \$475,000, according to press reports.

The well-known monthly magazine for Bible study *Our Hope*, devoted to the promotion of millennial ideas, lost through death its editor, Arnold Clemens Gaebelein. He was a prolific writer, being the author of some sixty books having to do with the Bible. He clung to the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.

The Evangelical Alliance this year observes its one hundredth anniversary. It will be recalled that when it was founded a century ago, a Lutheran belonging to the General Synod, Dr. S. Schmucker, was one of the prime movers.

The well-known Protestant Episcopal Bishop of New York, Bishop Manning, is observing three anniversaries this year: the 55th of his ordination to the priesthood, the 25th of his consecration as Bishop of New York, and his eightieth birthday. The *Living Church* says: "Bishop Manning has always regarded the laws of the Church as binding upon all the members of the Church, as the laws of the land are upon all the citizens of the land. His insistence upon this has been, and is, one of his greatest contributions to the Church." It may be that here "laws of the Church" is considered synonymous with "teachings of the Bible." If this is not the case, the eulogy voiced by the *Living Church* does not impress us.

In the Lebanon region of Syria the Greek Orthodox bishop of the region is said to be a prominent Freemason. Cf. *America* of January 26, 1946. The same issue of this journal says that in 1945 for the first time in Soviet history Moslem citizens of Russia were given official leave to take part in the annual Mohammedan pilgrimage to Mecca.

People are getting worried about the rising divorce rate. In New Orleans the Ministerial Union is planning a marriage clinic. Under present plans the first work of the clinic will be to inform the public of the facts, emphasizing education for marriage, with courses on the subject given in local colleges. The ministers do not feel well enough equipped to go into the more specialized field of divorce prevention, but will seek the aid of professional people, once the clinic is established. And in Miami, Fla., where over 6,000 applications for divorce were filed in 1945, and which is second only to Reno as a divorce capital, ministers and civic leaders are organizing a Council on Education for Marriage and Family Living. — Dr. Dell in *Lutheran Standard*.

Myron C. Taylor has quietly returned to his post as the President's representative to the Vatican after a rest in this country. Evidently no change in American-Vatican relations will

occur in 1946, despite the barrage of Protestant criticism, concludes the *Protestant Voice*. — T. H.

At Geneva a difficult problem is receiving discussion — the resumption of activities by German missionary societies. It is well known that many Christians in Germany before the war were extremely active in missionary undertakings. An attempt is made now to find a way of continuing the efforts which the war interrupted.

In Michigan the question is discussed whether it is right for a State legislature to vote subsidies for denominational colleges. The return of the veterans has naturally resulted in an enormous increase in the enrollment, and colleges are requesting aid. According to *Religious News Service*, "Senate and Administration attorneys said they believed it (that is, the measure granting aid to denominational schools) to be contrary to the State Constitution."

Payments to the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod's Centennial Thankoffering fund have passed the \$2,000,000-mark, Thorsten A. Gustafson, Director of Stewardship reported. The total received to date is \$2,052,680, representing 90 per cent of the amount pledged two years ago. Final payments are due before the Synod meets in June of this year. — R. N. S.

The *Christian Register*, a monthly Unitarian publication, entered upon its 125th year.

An interesting attempt to equalize clergymen's salaries in the Protestant Episcopal diocese of Michigan on the basis of marital status, number of children, and length of total service in the ministry was not successful. A committee had proposed that such equalization should be introduced and that single clergymen should be allowed \$2,100 a year, those married, \$2,640, \$400 a year for each child under 18, and \$200 for every 5 years in the ministry. The delegates at the convention did not favor the plan and indicated that they would be more receptive to some form of minimum salary proposal. (R. N. S.)

The first contingent of Mormon missionaries assigned to Europe since the war have left here for Norway and Sweden. Another group of 9 missionaries have left for the South Pacific. — Dispatch from Salt Lake City to R. N. S.

*Christian Frontiers* is the name of a new Baptist magazine which is to be published at Chapel Hill, N. C., and which will seek to serve especially Southern Baptists. The editor is Dr. Barnett of the Chapel Hill Baptist Church. — (R. N. S.)

10,000 copies of the Bible are being printed by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Rumania for distribution in that country, according to word received at church headquarters here. More than 300 colporteurs will distribute the Bibles as well as other religious literature. — (R. N. S.)

Dr. Abdel R. Wentz, president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa., has been elected chairman of the

American section of the Lutheran World Convention. He succeeds the late Dr. Frederick H. Knubel, who headed the group until his death last October. — (R. N. S.)

In Chicago an effort is made to halt the stream of divorces. It is proposed that the physical examination required should be complemented with compulsory pre-marital education. — (R. N. S.)

The House of Mercy, 63-year-old remedial institution supported by the Washington diocese of the Protestant Episcopal Church, has been re-opened to serve "war casualties" among young, unmarried women. The institution was closed last June for extensive renovations. — (R. N. S.)

A nation-wide radio survey made by the Department of Agriculture reveals that farm and small-town listeners prefer programs featuring religious hymns and sermons to most other programs. . . . The department, in making results of the survey public, pointed out that "old-time" music, both religious and secular, is preferred by twice as many small-town and rural residents as any other type of program. — (R. N. S.)

*Religious News Service* reports that "the first substantial gift for relief in Germany donated by outside churches has been distributed in Berlin, according to Warner Wickstrom, director of the Material Aid Division of the World Council of Churches" at Geneva. . . . "Wickstrom pointed out that all the packages contain stickers which state that the gifts come from the World Council of Churches and the Lutherans in the United States, including the National Lutheran Council and the Missouri Lutheran Synod."

A new law insuring exemption from taxation and protection of property for all religious organizations in Japan has been effected as an imperial ordinance here. The law scrupulously avoids giving the government any control or supervision over doctrine or polity of the religious bodies. — (R. N. S.)

The psychologist finds at the end of the "psyche" the beginning of the "pneuma," the mysterious region in which the human spirit is face to face with God; only God can help there, and the psychologist knows that he is not God. In that field not the psychologist but the priest is needed. But there are misunderstandings between the two; the psychologist often seems to the priest to lack a sense of spiritual reality, while religion often appears to the psychologist as no more than a "morbid symptom to be excised as soon as possible." They must get together. — Sentiments expressed by Bishop Stephen Neill in the *Spectator* (England), reported in the *Christian Century*.

It is reported that both in Korea and in Japan Christian universities are to be established at an early date. Let us hope that the unadulterated Gospel will be taught at these schools. The sponsors appear to be Japanese Christians. A.