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Theological Observer. – Kirchlich Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer

Lutheranism Today.—Dr. J. A. Dell, the present editor of the *Lutheran Outlook*, offers to the readers of that Monthly (October, 1947) an excellent article on Lutheranism today. Having spoken of the two fundamental teachings of Lutheranism, the *Sola Scriptura* and the *Sola Gratia*, he continues: "The other way to show that Lutheranism is still important today is to make it clear that these eternal principles are still being denied. Judaism, Unitarianism, and Masonry are kindred religions of work-righteousness, of salvation by character. Although Catholicism still has the basic truth of salvation by grace for Christ's sake, it is so covered over by doctrines of penances and indulgences and of purgatory and of the mass and of the intercession of the saints and of work of supererogation that it is hard for the common Christian to find the essential truth under the debris of superstition. As for the Protestant churches, they are shot through with modernistic deniers of the old Gospel, of whom St. Paul says, 'If any man preach any other gospel unto you than ye have received, let him be accursed.' Fosdick says: 'Of course, I do not believe in the substitutionary atonement, nor do I know any intelligent Christian who does.' A couple of years ago I was invited to present the Lutheran doctrine of the atonement to a conference of Methodist ministers. After I had done so, one said it sounded to him like 'God taking something out of one pocket and putting it in another.' Another said that he did not believe that God was reconciled to man 'by the sacrifice of Christ or any other animal.' I told them that there wasn't any use for us to continue the discussion. What I had presented to them was based, point after point, on the Word of God. If we had no common authority, we could never get together. We know that we are saved by grace because God's Word says so. Those who deny salvation by grace for Christ's sake are already denying the authority of the Scriptures. Says Fosdick: 'The passage of centuries has made untenable for us Scriptural ways of thinking. . . . Bible miracles will more and more become unreal ghosts, lost in antiquity; and, gradually becoming dimmer, will disappear in utter incredulity (Modern Use of the Bible).' There is still need for a vigorous and persistent Lutheranism in the world today." Well done, Dr. Dell!

J. T. M.

Against Secularism.—On November 15 a statement was issued on behalf of all American Catholic bishops by the administrative board of the National Catholic Welfare Conference. The leading Roman Catholic clergymen signed it: Cardinals Dougherty of Philadelphia, Mooney of Detroit, Stritch of Chicago, Spellman of New York, Archbishops McNicholas of Cincinnati, Lucey of San Antonio, Cushing of Boston, Ritter of St. Louis, and Ryan of Omaha; and Bishops Gannon of Erie, Pa., Noll of Fort Wayne,

Walsh of Charleston, Alter of Toledo, and Ready of Columbus, Ohio. The statement defines secularism as "the practical exclusion of God from human thinking and living." In speaking of the present situation as perhaps the greatest crisis in all history, the statement puts the blame for it on Communism and secularism. Among the evils brought on by secularism are listed "the greatest divorce problem in the world" and juvenile delinquency, things properly said to have been caused by "setting the will and convenience of husband and wife in the place that Christian thought gives to the will of God and the good of society." The assertion is made that "God's law of right and wrong" has been disregarded in international affairs "more openly, more widely, and more disastrously in our day than ever before in the Christian centuries." Crimes against small nations and "the systematic degradation of man by blind and despotic leaders" are catalogued. The clergymen hold that secularism "is not indeed the most patent, but in a very true sense the most insidious hindrance within the strong framework of God's natural law." As to the problem of reconstruction and rehabilitation of the world, the statement is made: "There would be more hope for a just and lasting peace if the leaders of the nations were really convinced that secularism, which disregards God, as well as militant atheism, which denies Him, offers no sound basis for stable international agreements, for enduring respect for human rights, or for freedom under law." The clergymen deplore the exclusion of religious teaching from education, which, they assert, "breaks with our historical American tradition." "Our youth problems would not be so grave if the place of God in our life were emphasized in the rearing of children. There would be less danger for the future of our democratic institutions if secularism were not deeply entrenched in much of our thinking on education."

While all of this is said from the point of view of the Roman Catholic hierarchy, one must admit that the finger is here placed on one of the sorest spots in our whole national life. What is here called secularism is better known in our circles and literature as worldliness. That the type of thinking, planning, and acting described by this word dominates almost every phase of our national existence, everybody who is not spiritually blind can easily see.

A.

Lutheran High Schools.—The *Lutheran Outlook* (October, 1947) makes a strong plea for more Lutheran high schools. Beginning with the report that the Baptists in Louisville, Ky., have now started a high school which for the first year will take care of sixty-five pupils, and the following year of one hundred, and so forth, Dr. Dell pleads editorially with Lutherans to increase the number of Lutheran high schools in our country. His reasons are as follows: 1) They bring our young people into contact with religion at a most important time of their lives, either early adolescence or the post-confirmation period. 2) The difficulties that

surround Christian education at a lower level are either altogether absent or at least considerably reduced at the high school level. These difficulties consist in getting together the children and in the expense which the parochial school causes to the congregation. The young people that attend the high school, however, are old enough to ride the streetcars and public busses across town or even to drive their own cars. 3) Lutheran high schools serve as logical connecting links between elementary education and Lutheran colleges. We like this plea for Lutheran high schools. But let high school associations not deceive themselves regarding the cost of such secondary institutions of learning. They cost rather much money and hardly can survive unless they are subsidized. Then, too, the high school can hardly exist where the Christian day school is not nurtured. The parochial school is naturally the feeder of the Christian high school. In short, the Lutheran high school is worth much, and it also costs much. But it certainly is worth the cost. J. T. M.

A Warning Against the Church's Seeking of Temporal Power, Unionism, and "Band Wagon Religion." — On October 26, 1947, the Rev. Peter H. Eldersveld, radio minister of the Christian Reformed Church, broadcast a message which was based on the words of Jesus: "And upon this rock I will build My Church," Matt. 16:18. It was intended to commemorate the Reformation of the Church in the sixteenth century and was given the title "The Church You Need." We have it before us in a neat little pamphlet, copies of which can be obtained free upon request at this address: Back to God Hour, Box 773, Chicago, Ill. The speaker makes mention of three mistaken notions which explain why "the church today has been pushed into a corner" and all of which have to do with the attempt to make the Church more prominent. The first one of these mistaken ideas is the belief "that the church ought to be a strong world power as an institution, competing with human governments, sending diplomatic representatives to world capitals and receiving theirs in exchange." The second is the mistaken notion which is pointed to in the word "unionism." The third is aptly called the cultivation of "band wagon religion," in which "the toggery and trimmings of the theater" are employed "to compete with the amusement business in getting the crowds." The section which has to do with unionism we should like to quote in full on account of its pertinency and timeliness.

"Another mistaken notion is that sectarianism is our only trouble, and if we can present a united front to the world, we will recapture a place of respect and influence. We are said to be divided among ourselves and working at cross-purposes. So today we hear the old song of church union. We must agree to dissolve our differences, suppress the right of individual interpretation, and combine into one great Protestant organization. And so we behold the spectacle of such ecclesiastical bodies which, though they are miles apart in matters of orthodox truth and conviction,

try to fool the world into believing that we are essentially one. The old democratic principle that a man is free to worship as he pleases is not yet consigned to the scrap heap, but the man who refuses to join the church union for honest reasons of conviction is labeled archaic and is held up to public ridicule by religious editors. We are being called upon to merge every shade of modernism and orthodoxy under one big tent, in order to impress the world around us.

"Aside from the fact that such a merger is watering down our conceptions of truth to a point of spiritual anemia, does anyone seriously believe that the world is going to fall for it? Do you think a superficial combination of sharply divergent church groups will deceive the outsider into thinking that we are really one? I have had many opportunities to hear the opinions of those who are on the outside and have been the targets of ecclesiastical pressure groups. They find it most unbecoming to the church. The high-handed suppression of minority elements in order to gain recognition as a powerful unity has left a bitter taste in the mouth of many, and it certainly has not made more attractive the spiritual claims of a church which wants to occupy a position in this democracy. Christianity in the role of a huge lobbyist, aping the methods of those who make an impression by external bigness, is far from admirable in the eyes of those who are supposed to be impressed. They may yield to the pressure, publicize every new merger, and even give front page space and free radio time to the leaders of the movement; but they are left untouched, yea, even antagonized, by the whole thing. But worst of all, this unionism has *not* given us what we thought it would. It has not put the church back on the world's boulevard. It is still true: they haven't found any use for us yet."

How true all this is! But how difficult to avoid the extremes, on the one hand, of fanatical, loveless exclusivism and, on the other, of unscriptural banding together! Confronted with this difficulty, as we are, every one of us has need daily in humility to ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance.

A.

Away From Rome.—Those who are distressed at the report that Rome today is winning many converts among nominal Protestants may read with interest what Dr. Gordon writes in the *Sunday School Times* (Nov. 15, 1947) with respect to Catholics who are *going away from Rome*. He says: "Reports are coming in of Roman Catholic priests becoming Protestants. Thus the Rev. Noel Patrick Conlon of the faculty of St. Bonaventure College has entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church. The Rev. Allan A. Hughes has been ordained a Baptist minister in San Diego, Calif. The Rev. Andrew Sommerse and the Rev. John Zerhusen have become Lutheran pastors. In Phoenix, Ariz., the Mexican bishop G. O. Celis was recently ordained to the ministry of the Gospel in a Baptist mission. The Mexican priest Jose Vega has joined the Episcopalian mission in Mexico City. Mr. Pierre

Mathern, a young Frenchman who was studying for the priesthood, joined General De Gaulle in Africa during the war. While a patient in the Banguia Hospital, Africa, he was converted through the testimony of a Swedish missionary and fellow patient. Mr. Mathern is an engineer by profession and is at present superintending the construction of certain buildings, but is planning to enter the Baptist ministry by way of the Baptist Bible Seminary in Johnson City, N. Y., for training as a Mid-Missions Baptist missionary. In Venezuela, thirty-three Roman Catholic priests have broken with the Church of Rome and organized the Venezuelan Catholic Apostolic Church under the leadership of L. F. Castillo. In a French exchange one reads of very successful conferences on the Bible, now being given in Paris by a couple (probably Prof. and Mme. Chasles) who still remain Catholics, though having come to the Bible by Protestant help." J. T. M.

Bishop Culbertson, the New Head of the Moody Bible Institute.—As Ernest Gordon reports in the *Sunday School Times* (Nov. 15, 1947), Bishop William Culbertson has been chosen to head the Moody Bible Institute as the successor of Dr. Will Houghton. In a "personal note," sent out to the friends of the Institute, Bishop Culbertson writes: "My appointment as acting president of the Institute has given me a fresh sense of my inadequacy apart from His strength. There never was a time when I realized more the truth of 2 Cor. 3:5: 'Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.' We look up to Him and renew our vows to uphold the fundamentals of the faith once for all delivered, to holiness of life by power of the Holy Spirit, and to love for all who love our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth. Moody Bible Institute will carry on, true to the Word of God, loyal to the Son of God." The staunch loyalty of Moody Bible Institute to the fundamentals of the Gospel and, above all, its ardent missionary spirit and its undaunted witness against Modernism are highly commendable. Its success in a world of atheism and liberalism has been amazing. Dr. Gordon writes: "Under the leadership of Dr. Houghton the *Moody Monthly* has tripled its circulation, which is now 75,000, twice that of the *Christian Century*. In the last thirteen years, enrollment in day and evening schools doubled to nearly 3,000. The correspondence school has, in addition, more than 13,000 active students. There has been large building advance, which included the erection of the twelve-story Crowell Hall and Torrey-Gray auditorium, and the WDLM radio frequency modulation station. The *new missionary aviation course* (italics our own) has been a recent feature of advance." No wonder Dr. Gordon remarks: "The much loved and much used Dr. Houghton . . . left behind a great heritage of advance in that institution."

J. T. M.

An Organization for Maintaining Separation of Church and State.—According to press reports a significant meeting was held

in Washington, D. C., on October 14. A number of Protestant churchmen, sixty, to be exact, met and discussed the founding of an organization which has as its purpose the defense of the time-honored principle of separation of Church and State in our country. The chairman of the meeting was the well-known Methodist bishop Dr. G. Bromley Oxnam of New York. What the men who are the founders of this organization fear is that the encroachments of Rome may become still more sinister and sweeping and finally curtail or even destroy the religious liberty which we justly prize as one of the most precious jewels in our country's crown.

The question may arise whether this very action, that is, the organization of a society to work for the maintenance of separation of Church and State, is not a violation of the principle for which the organization allegedly stands. Does it not enter the sphere of politics, although it is of a religious nature itself? The answer, it seems to us, is that a person cannot justly accuse this organization of acting contrary to its own purpose. If its intention were to obtain power and prestige for any church organization or for itself as a group of church people, the accusation that it is violating its own principle might appear to be well founded. As a matter of fact, it is not at all interested in obtaining special privileges for any church or any group in the churches. What it maintains is that there is a Church which endeavors to obtain special advantages for itself through the support of the State, and it seeks to oppose any step which would sanction such attempts to obtain special privileges. The person who hurls the attacker of his wife and children out of the house cannot be said to have violated the principle which forbids us to do any harm to a fellow man. Hence it is our opinion that any charge of mixing of Church and State on the part of this organization as it is projected is unjustified. The originators entrusted a committee of nine men with the task of writing a constitution and platform.

A.

One Holy Catholic Church.—*Theology Today* (October, 1947) contains a number of challenging articles, among these one by Emil Brunner, entitled "One Holy Catholic Church." We recommend this essay for study to our pastors, for in it liberalism of the Barthian type attempts to formulate a doctrine of the Church which declines the premises of both Roman Catholicism and of traditional Protestant orthodoxy. Brunner writes: "Instead of constantly reiterating the formulas of the Reformers, we must think through afresh the nature of the Church as it is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures." This sounds well enough, as also the following: "This Church . . . is the fellowship of men who have been renewed through Christ and are united with their Lord." But this "fellowship" must not, as Brunner thinks, be interpreted in the sense of the "invisible" Church of the Reformers. While he rejects the "institutionalized Church" of the Romanists, he, too,

conceives of the fellowship as one that is true and visible, even if those that make up this fellowship are not agreed with one another in doctrine. To him it is not a scandal that Lutherans and Calvinists do not have the same understanding of the Lord's Supper, but that they do not acknowledge each other to be a Church (which, of course, is not true) by having altar fellowship. Also not true is Brunner's statement that Matthew's theology is not that of Paul and that Paul's is not that of John (p. 324). But what Brunner means to derive from this supposed divergence of theology in the New Testament is that there may be different doctrinal trends or confessions in the Church and yet a true and complete fellowship. The Church is one, nevertheless. Unity is not conformity. Brunner in his article speaks in favor of the ecumenical movement; in particular, of the EKID, as a union Church, in which Lutheran, Reformed, and United (*unierte*) elements are joined together in fellowship. As Brunner rejects the "invisible Church" of the Reformers, so also he rejects their "marks," or *notae*, of the true Church, namely, purity of doctrine and the right administration of the Sacraments. He admits that the Church certainly is present where "the Word of the living God in Jesus Christ is spoken to men and is received by them with a living faith." But the "Word of God must not be identified with the preaching of the Gospel" (p. 329). "God's speaking neither binds itself to such direct Biblical instruction nor is the presence of God's Spirit guaranteed thereby" (*ibid.*). "God can proceed in entirely different ways to speak his Word to men and to build his Church, and indeed it seems that in our time all the customary ways of 'preaching' have become more or less ineffectual" (*ibid.*). Here, then, is *Schwaermerei* in its grossest aspect, but an enthusiasm which fits in well with Brunner's wrong view of the Church. To Brunner's "fellowship church" anyone can belong who feels himself addressed by God in Christ. All liberal views may here converge; only the orthodox Christian view is not tolerated. As Brunner does not identify the Word of God with Scripture, so also he rejects the Sacraments as objective means of grace. "It was at this point that the false concept of the Church intruded, namely, the contention that the priesthood [*sic?*] dispenses the blessings of salvation through the sacrament" (p. 330). True, Brunner does speak of Baptism and the Lord's Supper as "the expressions and means of personal truth and fellowship," but only in the sense that "they involve fellowship with Christ and fellowship with the 'saints'" (*ibid.*). Brunner's thesis of the Church justifies any and every church union of such as feel themselves influenced by God's Word (God's reaction upon the soul) in Christ Jesus, for among them exists true fellowship "in a personal and non-institutional sense." And this fellowship should be symbolized by Baptism and the common partaking of the Lord's Supper. Liberal Protestantism thus justifies the syncretistic union which it advocates; only what it advocates is no longer Scriptural. J. T. M.

Minnesota Baptists Conservative.—It is reported in our exchanges that in Minnesota the members of the Northern Baptist Convention are of the conservative kind and in a recent meeting again definitely have placed themselves on the platform of the Fundamentalists. The cleavage between them and the Northern Baptist Convention, which is largely Modernistic, is becoming more pronounced all the time. Is this an indication that there is a trend toward conservatism in the sectarian churches of the world? We believe it is. Modernism was in the saddle about twenty-five years ago and seemed to be conquering to the right and to the left. However, the sad experiences which have been man's lot in the last decade have had a deeply sobering effect, and in many quarters people who formerly were inclined to follow the flag of Modernism now have abandoned that leadership and gone into the conservative camp. This trend is noticeable not only here, but in Europe, too. In our own country the neo-orthodoxy of men like Reinhold Niebuhr may have had much to do with this shift of allegiance. In Europe the work of Barth and Brunner looms large, and it represents to some extent a defiance of the position of unscriptural liberalism. For the sake of millions of immortal souls we hope that this trend will continue and that churches which now are looked upon as hotbeds of Modernism will welcome back the old Gospel of Jesus Christ. A.

A Liberal Praises the Preaching of the Law.—Stanley High was pastor for three years in the Congregational Church, then edited the *Christian Herald*, and is now connected with the *Reader's Digest* as a roving editor. Some of his time he devotes to criticizing Liberal Protestantism, though he himself is a liberal. As *Time* (August 18, 1947) reports, he, in the early part of August, addressed an interdenominational audience at the 63d Northfield General Conference, where he spoke on "How the Church Failed Me." He said (quoted in part): "I think that the first business of the Church is to redeem me. And I don't mean me in the merely social sense which convinces me that the Golden Rule ought to be my Confession of Faith. By redeeming me I mean personal redemption—the process by which I am spiritually taken apart and spiritually put together again, and from which I—the personal I—emerge a totally different person. . . . The first reason for this failure is that the church—the modern, modernist Protestant church—rates me altogether too highly. It has been one of the glories of Protestantism that it has put its emphasis on the Individual, on Free Will and Free Choice. But the net result may prove to be disastrous. . . . I am simply not as good as modern Protestantism assumes me to be. I haven't got the spiritual stuff to do, on my own, what modern Protestantism expects me to do. The church failed me because it has given me too much freedom and too little discipline. . . . It has assumed that all I needed was the right hand of fellowship, when . . . what I am in greater need of is a kick in the pants. . . . Ever since my Sunday school days

I had it dinned into my ears that I am a Child of God, that I am made in His Image. It seems to me that those who lay so much emphasis on my bearing such a resemblance to the Almighty are not only mistaken about me, they are also mistaken about history. Man was made in the image of God in the first chapter of Genesis. He did not stay that way very long. In fact, he only stayed that way until the third chapter of Genesis. Then he had what the theologians call a Fall. He has never been the same since — not on his own. . . . The whole of the Bible and the whole of the ministry of Jesus, as I understand it, were designed not to persuade man how good he is on his own, but how evil he is on his own. And how good, by the process of redemption . . . he can become. . . . There is, unmistakably, a great uneasiness abroad in American Protestantism — a widespread concern about the Protestant future in this country. Much of that concern seems to be focused on the Catholic Church. . . . As a Protestant . . . I do not think our chief concern about Catholicism should be in terms of school buses or political influence or the separation of church and state. . . . The really vital matter . . . is that for the modern man — and for the likes of me, if you please — the Roman Catholic Church has something to offer which Protestantism too generally is not offering. . . . The ground the Catholic Church stands on is — for Catholics — high and lifted up. It preaches the love of God, but it also preaches the fear of the Devil. . . . The Catholic doctrine of Heaven has meaning because there is meaning and reality in the Catholic doctrine of Hell. . . . As Protestants I wish we would stop worrying and clamoring against the secular competition with Roman Catholicism and begin to worry a little about the spiritual competition. I, personally, need the church as I never needed it before. I happen to know that my fellow laymen need it as never before and are ready, at the slightest suggestion, to acknowledge that need. But the church we need will have more of Dante and Dostoevsky in its message and less of Alfred Lord Tennyson and Eddie Guest; more of the Last Judgment and less of the Golden Rule. It will not only have a Living God, but a Live Devil. It's Heaven will have a Hell for its alternative. Its objective — so far as I am concerned — will not be my cultivation, but my rebirth. I might fail that kind of church. But that kind of church could not fail me." What Stanley High is urging his fellow Congregationalists to do, is to go back to the preaching of the Law as old-fashioned Lutherans still preach it. Of course, one must not forget that such Law preaching requires as a correlative also pure Gospel preaching, together with proper definitions of theological terms and processes. Confessing Bible Lutherans are after all not so very much out of date. That is, it seems, what the roving editor of the *Reader's Digest* wishes to tell our Protestant modern Modernists. J. T. M.

Do We Reach the Layman? — The question is worth asking. We ministers certainly would like to reach and influence him. It is our desire to help make him a child of God if he is not yet

converted, and after he has entered the kingdom to assist in keeping him on the narrow way and in making him ever more fervent in the service of God and his neighbor. Do we succeed?

A minister, whose article is printed in the November 1, 1947, issue of *The Divinity School News* of the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, made a unique experiment to determine what pastors actually accomplish. After having been a minister for thirty years, he resigned and entered the ranks of the workers in a factory, taking over the position of inspector in automobile shops. In this environment he was able to observe the conduct of church members as they followed their daily calling. What he reports makes distressing reading. The church members in the factories or shops did not manifest in their conversation that they were adherents of the Christian religion. For instance, when one of their number had died, the talk did not concern itself with the life after death, heaven and hell, salvation and the Judgment; the person was spoken of as gone—that was all. The people in the labor union who had the reputation of being goodhearted and fair-minded often were no church members.

The writer, it seems to us, fails to evaluate sufficiently the fact that many people who are earnest Christians do not possess the faculty of setting forth vigorously and effectively their inmost thoughts on their personal relations to Christ, and that many fear they might appear as intolerable braggarts if they speak of such intimate matters as their own religious faith. But that there is too much truth in what he says to permit us to remain comfortable cannot be denied. He thinks that the Church must cease to cultivate the attitude of "withdrawnness," that is, it must cease to travel a path which takes it away from the real life of the people into regions that are far removed from what the ordinary layman thinks and does. Fellow ministers, let us give this matter our serious consideration. A.

Thomas Chalmers as Preacher.—This is another article in *Theology Today* (October, 1947) that merits careful study. It is written by the Rev. Dr. G. D. Henderson, professor of Church History in the University of Aberdeen (Scotland). Thomas Chalmers was the most influential leader of the Free Church of Scotland and, without doubt, its foremost theologian. He was born in 1780 and died in 1847, so that this is the centennial year of his departure. He left the Church of Scotland when the General Assembly refused to grant the parishes veto power upon nomination of obnoxious ministers. With him 471 ministers left the Establishment and in 1843 founded the Free Church of Scotland under the moderatorship of Chalmers. As professor of theology, moderator of the Free Church, and leading member of the Church Extension Committee, which helped to build 220 churches, he exerted a tremendous influence for good on the churches and the clergy of Scotland. The article in *Theology Today* emphasizes his pre-eminence as a preacher. He was indeed a great speaker.

"All the world went wild about Dr. Cahlmers," said the famous Wilberforce. John Foster, the Bristol essayist, referred to "the brilliant glow of a blazing eloquence" in his sermons. Yet neither was his voice melodious, nor were his gestures graceful, nor was his pronunciation acceptable to any but his Scottish countrymen. Just what made him the great speaker that he actually was? We believe that the analysis of the author is worth studying by our pastors. By the way, let them not leave unread also the fine Palestine article "The Great North Road," by E. F. F. Bishop, who has spent many years in the Holy Land in the service of his Church. "The Great North Road" leads from Jerusalem to Damascus, and what Saul of Tarsus saw on his way to that Syrian city, where he desired to destroy the Christian Church, is vividly related by a Palestinian student who personally visited all the places which he describes historically, geographically, and topographically in his stirring travelog. On Chalmers see C. T. M., the current volume, June issue, p. 411 ff.

J. T. M.

Death of Prominent Missionaries.—Tibet, the land closed to Gospel preaching, is being reached by Christian missionaries through Bibles and missionary pamphlets. Ernest Gordon, in the *Sunday School Times* (Oct. 18, 1947), reports the recent death of the Rev. Hoseb Gergan, a Tibetan minister and missionary in Western Tibet. "He was the son of an eminent lama, was trained in Srinagar, and was gifted as a scholar, speaking various languages. His greatest contribution to the extension of the Kingdom of God was his translation of the Bible into Tibetan. All his powers of mind were devoted to this stupendous task, and for this he was honored with a life membership in the British and Foreign Bible Society. He also wrote Christian hymns. He was a man of great strength of character and proud of his race so that he would never wear other than Tibetan clothes, in this way identifying himself with his people. Portions of Scripture are being widely circulated in Tibet. The Tibetans venerate all books, especially those presented in Tibetan format—pages not sewed together, but laid on each other loose, between two strong covers, and tied about with a lace. These, given to Tibetan traders, are read in remote villages and camps." Of another successful missionary Dr. Gordon writes in the same issue: "Mr. George Hunter of the China Inland Mission was the apostle to Sinkiang, otherwise called Chinese Turkestan. Now he has passed on at the age of eighty-five, having served fifty-seven years in China, a lonely man on a lone outpost of the farthest interior of China, who had not been even to the coast of China for fifteen years; nor to England 'since the last year of the reign of Queen Victoria.' Of his ministry one writes in *China's Millions*: 'Age and white hair are greatly revered in China. During the daylight hours Mr. Hunter would stroll about the city with Scripture portions in his pockets and get into conversation with all sorts and conditions of men, particularly with any he met from the borderlands of China.'

. . . More than once I espied him in conversation with a Mongolian camel driver on the sandy beach where the camels came down to water in the winter. Tens of thousands of people jostle in the streets, various in race, and there is something grand and apostolic about this strange old man, so cheerful in manner, so kindly and dignified, and so clear in message. Look past the stubbly chin, the shabby clothes, and slightly stooping figure, and behold an ambassador of the King of kings, one of the meek who inherit the earth, as it is written: "*How beautiful . . . are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace!*" At his funeral a Chinese Christian remarked: "He wore clothes we could not wear and ate food we could not eat." But that was no bitterness to him. He was undoubtedly happy and contented, and on his lonely bed his lips moved in prayer and his fingers seemed to be playing some tune upon the bed-clothes. He was a pilgrim, and was only taking another journey.' How beautifully is not the spirit of missionary consecration made manifest in some of Christ's humblest workers!

J. T. M.

The Jewish Question.— On this burning issue much light is thrown in a lengthy article or essay written by Rabbi Morris S. Lazaron of Baltimore and printed on special pages of the *Christian Century* of November 19, 1947. The essay seems to speak with authority, and the information submitted in it may be regarded as reliable. Evidently the intention is to make a worthwhile contribution to discussions going on in official and unofficial circles concerning the Palestine question. Rabbi Lazaron (very sensibly, it seems to me) opposes the partition plan advocated by a special commission of the U. N. Assembly and rather favors the establishment of the Palestinian State under international control, resting on a democratic foundation. Apparently his hope is that, once started, such a State would gradually develop into a republic in which the two chief constitutive, and now unfortunately hostile, elements, the Arabs and the Jews, would find they can live together amicably if good will is manifested on both sides.

What interests us mainly is the information given on modern-day Judaism itself. According to the author, the number of Jews in the world today is ten million. Of this, slightly more than one half are citizens of the United States. The war and its economic disturbances, evils, and horrors took a fearful toll among the Jews; six million of them were put to death, more than one-third of their total number. What a blot on the escutcheon of our much-vaunted civilization!

As every observer knows, the Jews are divided into parties as far as religious teachings and observances are concerned. Rabbi Lazaron mentions three divisions, the Orthodox, the Conservative, and the Reform Jews. The Orthodox Jews, as the term indicates, are those that cling to the old traditions, which in this case means the rabbinical teachings on the law and the Old

Testament in general. This is the branch of Judaism which is most numerous. The Conservative Jews, who represent the section which is second in size, try to conserve the old teachings, but have adapted themselves to certain changes which the world in which they live and the times seem to demand. Prayers in the synagog services are no longer offered exclusively in the old Hebrew, but the language of the country is employed to some extent. With this group Rabbi Lazon classes the so-called Reconstructionists, who are nationalists and subscribe to the tenets of Zionism. Reform Jews, representing a movement which began 150 years ago in Germany, look upon Rabbi Isaac M. Wise as the founder of their school in the United States. They formed a group which advanced rapidly in the social and economic world and lost the deep interest in religion which characterized many of the other Jews. These people eliminated the ceremonies which they thought were without significance in the modern age and simplified and shortened the synagog ritual. The Zionists have drawn on all the various parties of Judaism for their members. It is their aim to establish a Jewish State in Palestine where their displaced fellow believers can find refuge in an unfriendly world. Rabbi Lazon deplors the aims and activities of the Zionists, holding that ultimately, if the dream of Zionists is realized, the religious interests of Judaism will suffer and be suppressed.

The foregoing will give the reader an inkling of the wealth of information contained in the article of Rabbi Lazon, which one cannot lay aside without the prayer that many Jewish people may be led to the faith engendered in the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well. A.

Dangerous Preaching Methods.—The *Calvin Forum* (November, 1947), under this heading, voices a warning against improper methods in preaching, which cheapen the Gospel and render Christian preaching offensive to men of the world with a sense of fitness and decency inbred into them. The writer's warnings may be summarized as follows: 1) Beware of hawking the Gospel. Hawkers are found at carnivals selling their patent medicines and other articles of dubious value. The minister needs but to present the Gospel in all its fullness. 2) Be chary about the methods of advertisement. Why not be straightforward in one's announcements of sermon topics? Why not say in intelligent terms precisely what the sermon is going to be about? 3) Shun exhibitionism in presenting the Gospel. Aimee Semple MacPherson was a past master at this game. She generally put on a good show. Such exhibitionism has little place in the Gospel which teaches the virtues of modesty, meekness, humility, and lowliness. 4) Do not follow the methods of the commercial artist. The minister has nothing to sell. Selling is a process in which one attempts to give value for value received. This does not apply in the field of the Gospel at all. 5) Do not cheapen the contents of the Gospel by bringing

the message down to the level of the people in an undignified way. Do not stoop to the secular and the vulgar. Let the preaching be in accord with the seriousness and dignity of the message. Let the Gospel be brought forth with all the earnestness and sincerity of which the preacher is capable. — Simple instructions, indeed! But "evil communications corrupt good manners" (1 Cor. 15:33). Lutheranism especially has no part with vulgarity. J. T. M.

Is Higher Criticism Truly Objective? — When a layman, Mr. Albert Buenger of Cincinnati, Ohio, had objected to statements of Dr. Pittinger of New York which he made in an article in the *Christian Century* concerning the attitude of Fundamentalists toward the Bible (see the letter of Mr. Buenger which was published in the *Christian Century* of Nov. 19, 1947), and when this layman in particular regretted that Dr. Pittinger had spoken of the "absurdity of Biblical and ecclesiastical fundamentalism," the following reply was printed in the same issue of the *Christian Century* by Dr. Pittinger:

"Sir: My dictionary defines 'absurdity' as meaning 'that which is ridiculous or unreasonable.' In that sense, I must assert, 'biblical' as well as 'ecclesiastical' fundamentalism seems to me right described as 'absurd.' For it is both unreasonable and ridiculous to regard the Bible as absolutely inerrant, in every detail and in every respect.

"Modern investigation, during the past hundred years, has made it abundantly clear that the Scriptures are, humanly speaking, a 'deposit' which includes not merely historical data — usually mediated to us through the faith-inspired response of highly gifted men and women — but also much that is allegorical, mythical, legendary. No competent student of the subject would for a moment deny this. Nor does such a recognition in any way alter the position which the Scriptures hold in the life of the Christian church, for it is perfectly 'reasonable' and in no sense 'ridiculous' to maintain that in and through the error and imperfection of the human writers, God's Holy Spirit was guiding men, in ways natural to them and available for their use, to truths about himself, to the recording of his revelatory acts in history, and to the kind of faith and behavior which are well pleasing to him. Unless God would entirely override human freedom, he must accommodate himself to the capacities of those through whom he would speak; as St. Thomas Aquinas remarks, all revelation is *ad modum recipientis*.

"What is, it seems to me, both 'ridiculous' and 'unreasonable' is to reject, *tout court*, as do the fundamentalists, all the findings of generations of learned, humble and devout men who have given their most painstaking attention to the Bible and its contents. For these scholars have saved the Scriptures for us, not by putting them on a pedestal where they cannot be considered critically, but by applying to them the most exacting and thorough critical study. The result has been that the Bible has emerged

as 'the Word of God written,' in a sense richer and more satisfying, because intelligible and understandable, than ever before."

It will be observed that Dr. Pittinger defends his thesis by a categorical statement which is simply not true. He says fundamentalists "reject all the findings of generations of learned, humble and devout men who have given their most painstaking attention to the Bible and its contents." How false a charge! Without defending everything that so-called fundamentalists stand for, we have to say that the labors of the Bible critics whom Dr. Pittinger has in mind are evaluated by scholarly Fundamentalists, and what is correct and helpful in them is treasured and utilized. It is the old story: Conservative Bible students are accused of not being objective, but their accusers are themselves many miles away from true objectivity. A.

The Policy of Dismantling German Factories. — On account of our deep interest in the rehabilitation of normal life and activities in Germany, we print the following from *America* (issue of Nov. 22, 1947) on the dismantling operations going on in Germany.

"The insanity of the recent announcement by British and American military authorities that the dismantling of 682 German factories would soon be under way was scored in a protest published November 13 and signed by thirty public figures of varied political and religious background. The factories earmarked for removal have been designated as 'surplus' under the new level-of-industry plan adopted on August 30. The 682 factories actually are far fewer than the original list based on the first level-of-industry plan drawn up just after the Potsdam meeting of the Big Four. According to an explanation given by Dr. Don Humphrey, deputy director of the Economics Division of the U. S. Military Government, in a statement over the German radio network in the American zone, the new plan 'leaves in Germany the productive capacity required to permit the Bizonal Area to achieve a decent standard of living without subsidies from the U. S. and British Governments. The plants to be left in the US-UK zones of Germany, he continued, 'are sufficient to provide a decent standard of living for the Bizonal Area, if the people of the two zones are prepared to go honestly to work and to obtain the full output of these factories.' As though to answer this official justification for the decision the protest referred to says: 'We question the wisdom of any planner who purports to predict with any accuracy, and for a period of years, the amounts of production required by a highly developed industrial society, especially in a politically chaotic world.' The statement goes on to urge at least a moratorium on the scheduled dismantling until the European economic and political crisis is on the road to solution. In the meantime only war plants which are clearly nonconvertible to peacetime uses should go for reparations, it contends. Despite this and other protests, however, Military Government officials in both the zones have declared that the dismantling and reparations program would

proceed on schedule, since the decision represents the culmination of years of careful planning and statistical work. In other words, the announced program is the product of old assumptions and policies that have already been proved mistaken by the experiences of the past months."

Brief Items.—McCormick Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, located in Chicago, has received a new president. Dr. Robert Worth Frank, professor of Religion and Christian Ethics, has been elected to that position. Although the seminary is 118 years old, he is only the fourth president of the school. There must have been extremely long tenures of office in the past for the presidents.

Church papers, generally speaking, report an increase in circulation. The *Lutheran* (U. L. C. A.) since 1940 has increased from 19,193 subscribers to 47,778; the *Lutheran Herald* (Evangelical Lutheran Church) from 38,847 to 78,668; the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod) from 23,047 to 40,696; the *Christian Herald* (non-denominational) from 252,000 to 380,000; the *Christian Advocate* (Methodist) from 250,000 to 350,000; *Our Sunday Visitor* (Catholic weekly) from 474,576 to 674,981; and *Extension* (Catholic monthly) from 233,170 to 491,384.

The Romanian Baptist Theological Seminary was reopened in Bucharest on November 15 for the first time since it was closed by the Nazi-controlled government in 1941. Fifty students are enrolled.

Arab Lutheran congregations in Jerusalem and vicinity held a joint service, first of its kind, at the Church of the Redeemer, near Mount Calvary, to celebrate Reformation Day. The service was the first of its kind held in Redeemer Church since German Lutherans who worshiped there were interned shortly after the outbreak of the last war. Many of the Arabs in the congregation in Jerusalem formerly were inmates of the Syrian Orphanage operated by German Lutherans and conducted by members of the Schneller family.

Attorney-general John E. Martin has handed down an opinion stating that Wisconsin's public school buildings cannot be used by private organizations for religious purposes.

An appeal that all 26,401 churches of the Southern Baptist Convention conduct New Year's Eve prayer services, possibly lasting through the night, has been issued in a paper signed by executive secretaries of all convention agencies. A. W. C. G.

Brief Items from *Religious News Service.*—Twenty-five Protestant leaders, representing ten southeastern States, fourteen separate denominations, and several inter-denominational councils of churches, have formulated plans for an inclusive Protestant church convocation to be held in Atlanta, Ga., January 13—15,

1948. Leaders agreed upon the "urgent need for increased spiritual stimulus and a united, practical approach to the serious personal and social questions in which center the dominant issues of present-day life."

Protestants in Italy have shown a general increase of 8% since the end of the war, with the Seventh-Day Adventist and Pentecostal sects claiming the largest individual membership gain — 20% — according to a survey made by Protestant leaders in Rome. It was reported that besides actual converts there is a great number of so-called "sympathizers" who are undecided whether or not to join a Protestant church but are frequenting Protestant services and reading Protestant literature and books. According to informants, two factors which have helped to increase Protestant strength in Italy are the "allied influence," which has made it possible to preach openly in public squares, and the Protestant services broadcast on Sunday morning from radio stations in Rome, Firenze, Milan, Turin, Venice, Genoa, and Cagliari.

The Northern Baptist Convention's two-year crusade for Christ through evangelism was put into full swing during the month of November when more than 150 of its scheduled 231 leadership training conferences were held throughout the country. Principal objectives of the crusade are: to revitalize use of the Bible; to make Baptists more effective in winning people for Christ; and to discover the great mass of unchurched people who have no contact with any church.

The Mexican Supreme Court upheld a law which forbids acts of external religious worship in a decision denying to two Presbyterian ministers a restraining order against the state government of Campeche. The ministers, the Rev. Braulio Dzul and the Rev. Donciano Sima, were arrested two months ago after they had set up a public address system in the town of Becal. They were charged with violation of the law against acts of external worship and were fined for violating an anti-public noise ordinance.

Formation of the Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Colleges was announced in Winona Lake, Ind., following a meeting of representatives from forty educational institutions. Dr. Samuel Sutherland, dean of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles, was named president of the new group, which comprises conservative Christian schools. The Association will evaluate member institutions and integrate Christian education in Bible institutes and colleges with higher education generally.

Opposition to religion was reaffirmed in Moscow by the central committee of the Communist Youth League in a ruling which condemned the *Young Bolshevik Magazine* for publishing articles favoring "religious tolerance." The committee's reprimand was published in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, chief organ of the Communist Youth League.