

# THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. IV.

DECEMBER, 1924.

No. 12.

## The Creed of Jesus.

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**Creed or Deed?** — In a recent issue of the *Presbyterian* (July 31, 1924) the editor, under the heading, "Doctrines as Tests," touches upon a subject of vital present-day interest. He writes: —

"It is popular to decry doctrines as tests — whether the question, What is Christianity? or the question, *What is a Christian?* is under consideration. When a reason is given, it is usually to the effect that *doctrines are not essential to Christianity*. Some allege that Christianity consists of its facts rather than its doctrines, while others affirm that it is *life, not doctrines*. If either of these allegations is sound, it is evident that doctrines belong to that which is secondary rather than that which is primary to the Christian religion. If such is the case, the rejection of doctrinal tests merits universal approval. Unless doctrines enter into the very substance of Christianity, both as a system of thought and as a way of life, it is evident, to say the least, that doctrinal tests are inadequate.

"It is frequently said that Christianity consists of *its facts rather than its doctrines*. It is impossible, however, to have *the facts of Christianity* apart from its doctrines. Give up the doctrines, and at the same time we give up the facts. There is no sieve discoverable that will strain out the doctrines and save the facts. . . .

"It is frequently said that *Christianity is life, not doctrine*. What is meant is that doctrines are secondary in Christianity, that they are but the intellectual expression of the life that precedes them. From this point of view, doctrines are the products, rather than the producers, of the Christian life. As such they possess only a relative significance, and one set of doctrines may be as good as another. At any rate, the life is the one thing of vital importance, and as long as it flourishes, the doctrines may be allowed to take care of themselves."

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## THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

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**British Celebrities in Westminster Abbey.**— While wandering through the maze of chapels composing Westminster Abbey a few years ago and passing by the tombs and commemorative tablets of British celebrities, I asked myself time and again, By what principle did this or that personage gain admission to this Christian sanctuary? Evidently not by the principle of a Christian profession of faith and consequent Christian life and conduct. For by that principle not a few of the names in Westminster Abbey would have to be removed. The handbook of Westlake, the custodian of the Abbey, warned me that I “would do well to remember that many of those who are commemorated within its walls were scarcely deserving of the honor which ordinarily attaches to such commemorations.” I had to force myself to forget that I was walking in a great church and to say to myself: This is an apartment of the British state, an exhibition of its earthly greatness and secular glory and renown. It is a consistent deduction from the state-church theory, which is to-day probably stronger in official England than anywhere else in the world. That is what may be expected when Christ is hitched to Caesar’s imperial chariot. But what a parody on Christianity! And now comes Bishop Ryle, Dean of the Abbey, and rules that Byron can have no place in the Abbey because he was immoral. If some of the tombstones and tablets in the Abbey could speak, they would call the bishop’s decision a post-mortem joke on themselves. Of course, Byron does not deserve to be commemorated in a Christian church, but he belongs in Westminster Abbey among some of his compeers; for he was a great Briton spite of the fact that he was a great pig. Bishop Ryle’s decision will not deceive any one who

knows Westminster Abbey and the character of the Established Church into believing that the decision was prompted by his Christian conscience.

DAU.

**Modernism and Fundamentalism Briefly Defined.** — In order to exhibit at a glance the difference between Modernism and Fundamentalism, Dr. E. J. Pace some time ago drew a cartoon for the *Moody Monthly* of Chicago. It shows two steep cliffs separated by a chasm. Over the top of the picture this legend is printed: "No Middle Ground — Only a Chasm." Over the cliff on the left side this heading is inscribed: "The Faith which was Once for All Delivered unto the Saints." Down the face of this cliff the following seven facts of orthodox belief are recorded: —

1. The Bible IS the Word of God. "The Book judges man."
2. Jesus Christ is THE Son of God in a sense which no other is.
3. The birth of Jesus was SUPERNATURAL.
4. The death of Jesus was EXPIATORY.
5. Man is the product of special CREATION.
6. Man is a SINNER, fallen from original righteousness, and, apart from God's redeeming grace, is hopelessly lost.
7. Man is justified by FAITH in the atoning blood of Christ; result: supernatural regeneration from ABOVE.

Over the cliff on the right side is the inscription: "Modernist Theology," and down the face of this cliff the following seven contradictory views are recorded: —

1. The Bible CONTAINS the Word of God. "Man judges the Book."
2. Jesus Christ is A Son of God in the sense which *all* men are.
3. The birth of Jesus was NATURAL.
4. The death of Jesus was EXEMPLARY.
5. Man is the product of EVOLUTION.
6. Man is the unfortunate VICTIM of environment, but through self-culture can "make good."
7. Man is justified by WORKS, in following Christ's example; result: natural development from WITHIN.

The *Sunday-school Times* (Aug. 23) reprints this cartoon and remarks: "Of course, the word 'Modernist' includes a wide range. There are 'extreme' Modernists, and there are 'moderate' Modernists. But the moment one accepts *any* position of the Modernist, even in the most moderate degree, he has driven the thin edge into the Christian faith and has opened the way to the logical abandonment of Christianity." The last sentence deserves to be emphasized. It is very true, and if it is applied to some who call themselves "Fundamentalists," they lose their classification and are switched over to the Modernist side, where they really belong.

DAU.

**Unionism under a New Guise.** — The Breslau Synod's *Kirchenblatt* reported September 14: "In his paper *Fuer Bibel und Bekenntnis* Pastor Franke writes regarding the new constitution of the church at Frankfurt on the Main. The preamble, which does not belong to the constitution that was approved by the state, reads: "The Evangelical *Landeskirche* of Frankfurt a. M. confesses the faith

of Christendom as proclaimed by the evangelists and apostles and declares the Gospel of the grace of God in Jesus Christ as professed by the Reformers to be the inviolable basis of its doctrine, activity, and communion. It defines the confessional status of its congregations as immovable and through the church convention summoned for that purpose lays down the new constitution as follows." By appealing in a general way to the professions of the Reformers, but not to their particular confessional writings, this preamble strips the new church of its Lutheran and, by referring to the faith of Christendom as the "apostles" and "evangelists" proclaimed it, but not the Apostles' Creed, which is regarded as the norm of that faith throughout Christendom, of its ecumenical Christian character.—The official pledge (*Amtsgeluebde*) of pastors (§ 42) reads thus: "I promise in the presence of God and this Christian congregation that I will faithfully and diligently preach from the Holy Scriptures, without fear or favor of men, the Gospel of the free grace of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord, the Savior and Redeemer of the world, as it was testified by our fathers during the Reformation; that I will administer the holy Sacraments in accordance with the order adopted by the Church; that I will consecrate my gifts and strength to the service of the *Landeskirche*; that I will discharge my office in accordance with its laws and orders; and that I will show myself in every respect a faithful servant of my Lord Jesus Christ. So help me God!" Pastor Franke comments on this pledge as follows: "The pastors to be installed are pledged to be faithful to the *Landeskirche*, which has no confessional standard (*bekennntnislos*), and must promise to place all their strength at the service of the *Landeskirche*. The only reference to the confessional question in the entire constitution is found in the exemption of all Reformed pastors from taking the pledge to be faithful to what is termed the *Landeskirche*. § 51 reads: The rules laid down in §§ 8—48 do not apply to the two Evangelical Reformed congregations of the *Landeskirche*. This corresponds with the clause in § 94, 8, the only place in which doctrine is mentioned: The rights of the Reformed congregations are not affected." Accordingly, the Reformed congregations are exempt from all unionistic decisions, but the Lutherans are bound by them and are to be officially pledged to obey them. And still, spite of this fact, it is boldly asserted that the former church has "not been changed in any respect except in its name."—Against this new constitution Pastor Franke has issued a protest, which concludes with these words: "I submit once more to the consistory this statement of my understanding of the situation, which is shared not only by a great part of my congregation, but also by many members of other congregations, and declare that for reasons of conscience this statement is binding upon me personally in my official relation. It is plain from this statement that I am not in a position to assume any responsibility over and against the new church, but I regard myself as bound by my ordination-vow and my official pledge to my congregation to remain faithful to, and henceforth to serve, that part of it which declines these ecclesiastical innovations." The con-

istory, on August 9, sent the following reply: “. . . Your view that a new *Landeskirche* has sprung up in Frankfurt a. M. is erroneous. The former evangelical church has only changed its name and received an external new order, but in every other respect it has remained unchanged, the same that it was before. Accordingly, your declaration amounts to nothing but an expression of a personal opinion. We expect from you, in the future as in the past, the prompt fulfilment of your obligation. In case of your opposition we shall inexorably proceed against you.”—Pastor Franke will likely have the sympathy of Lutherans in his conflict with his tyrannous consistory, which, by the way, talks the exact language of the old sovereign *Staatskirche*. Still the consistory may be right in stating that no essential change has been made by the new constitution. The Lutherans were pledged to unionism also under the old constitution, and the omission of a few venerable phrases savoring of orthodoxy contained in the old document were a paper confession. Perhaps the new constitution was needed to open Pastor Franke's eyes. May it open many others!

DAU.

**What the Supreme Council Favors.**—According to the *Scottish Rite Clip Service*, a semimonthly bulletin issued under the authority of the Supreme Council of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, the latter favors the following points regarding public education in our country:—

1. A Federal Department of Education with a secretary in the President's Cabinet and Federal aid for public school purposes under the absolute control of the States.
2. A national university at Washington, supported by the Government.
3. The compulsory use of English as the language of instruction in the grammar grades.
4. Adequate provision for the education of the alien population, not only in cultural and vocational subjects, but especially in the principles of American institutions and popular sovereignty.
5. The entire separation of Church and State and opposition to every attempt to appropriate public moneys, directly or indirectly, for the support of sectarian institutions.
6. The American public school, non-partisan, non-sectarian, efficient, democratic; for all the children of all the people; equal educational opportunities for all.
7. The inculcation of patriotism, love of the flag, respect for law and order and undying loyalty to constitutional government.

This program Freemasonry is bound to carry out. It is therefore well to remember what is coming. Also, it is wise to bear in mind why the Supreme Council favors these seven points. MUELLER.

**Emotion or Education.**—The *Christian Herald* (October 11) regrets “that the seminaries training young men for the ministry are tending toward an educational and intellectual program, in sharp contrast to the emotional or evangelistic type of ministerial training of the last century.” “No less than twenty-five years ago,” the editorial says, “the great Christian Endeavor Society met in a Western

city, and there was an attendance of more than 40,000 young people from all over the world. These young people got up every morning for more than a week and had sunrise prayer-meetings. Then they attended religious meetings of emotional intensity all day long and far into the night. There were scenes of tremendous emotional experience that could not be called irrational or fanatical [*sic?*]. We wonder if such a convention would be possible to-day. How many times have ministers of the modern Church heard sobs in their church services caused by repentance for sin? Is emotion going to be ruled out of the Christian experience? Is cold intellectuality going to be the mark of Jesus' disciples? It will be a poor and stupid life in the religious experience of mankind if the time ever comes when the intellectual overrules the spiritual."

What is to be regretted is not the passing away of the old-time frenzied revival, but the elimination of true Gospel-preaching. The revival was as antisciptural as is the modern method of ruling out God's Word from pulpit and church. Wherever the Word of God is preached, there both the will and the intellect are rightly influenced by the Holy Ghost.

MUELLER.

**"To the Hell of Deserved Oblivion."** — "Let us do our level best to send these writers of corruption to the hell of deserved oblivion," writes the *Watchman-Examiner* (August 7). "We are not in the habit," the editorial declares, "of reading salacious literature. We detest it as we detest the rank odors of an open sewer. Unfortunately, the highways of our literary life are imperiled by the presence of many unsavory cesspools in these days. The unwary wayfarer does not always scent their putridity, but too often tumbles in. So, quite without warning of danger, we were beguiled into reading a recent debauching novel."

After describing the novel, the name of which he does not mention, "in order not to advertise it," the writer proceeds: "The story is morbid and thoroughly rotten. It is bad because it sneers at religion and mentions God only to profane His holy name. It is bad because it is emphatically immoral, making light of honesty, sobriety, and purity — these three words are carefully chosen. From beginning to end there is not one line that comforts or strengthens or vitalizes. There is just a mixture of dish-water and garbage. The author plays to the lowest passions; he wilfully confuses lust and love; he has no word for the higher self. This is not paganism; it is not healthy animalism: it is sheer indecency.

"A little more interest on the part of our pastors would not be out of place. These men are asked to speak with fitting eloquence on all sorts of topics. Is it fair to call their attention to yet another subject? It is, when that subject concerns the soul of youth. Our people are a reading people. Our youth read many books. Fiction is the favorite form of literature, as the librarians of the land can testify. Is it well when the young men and young women of America are at the mercy of these literary ghouls, trained in ways of indecent thinking and degenerate imaginings?"

This reminds us that Synod has appointed a Board for Juvenile Literature, which is working hard to select suitable literature for our young people. It reminds us also of the fact that it is not quite fair to the Lutheran author who wishes to create a wholesome literature for Christian boys and girls to have his books and writings ignored just because he happens to be a Lutheran. Such things, however, are being done to the harm of books worthy of being read. MUELLER.

The Williamstown Institute of International Politics, which convened about a month ago, proved among other things that also men in high places are bound to talk. The Institute was characterized by "bursts of forensic fireworks," as *Time* (September 8) relates.

Oswald Garrison Villard, pacifist editor of the *Nation*, drew much odium upon himself by assailing United States men and methods in our Government's Latin-American policy. He said: "The United States rules all but six Latin-American republics 'by bullets and bankers.' The blood of the 3,000 Haytians slain by our American marines and of the 400 dead in Vera Cruz, mostly women and children, dishonors our good name, especially when involved with so sordid a business as debt collection." The army and navy officers answered this outburst with the cry, "Sit down! Sit down!"

The Rev. E. A. Walsh, of Georgetown University, Director-General of the Papal Relief Mission in Russia, stated that the Soviet Government had officially admitted to the execution of 1,800,000 persons between 1917 and 1922. Arthur B. Ruhl, traveler and journalist, declared the figures "quite impossible." However, Father Walsh stuck to his story and received support from Sir Bernard Pares, the English editor.

Prof. Henry Pratt Fairchild, of New York University, reiterated his solemn warning to the world against overpopulation and urged an ethical birth-control as well as a curb upon migration. The learned speaker was not asked to sit down.

After this the august body adjourned, and a dainty luncheon was served by the amiable hostess. MUELLER.

**Church Union in Canada.** — After long years of debate, Canada's Parliament passed a bill last spring officially uniting the Dominion Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists. Every church, however, in each of these denominations may decide for itself whether or not it will accept the union. The number of Congregational and Methodist churches which will vote to remain outside the union will be insufficient to warrant the perpetuation of those two denominations in Canada. But of Presbyterians there are irreconcilables a-plenty. Nearly a third of the Presbyterian churches will probably hold aloof from the union. Meanwhile the example of Canada is being preached throughout the world by advocates of church union, although the practical results, at least in the United States, are likely to be quite different. Here the Methodists, at present the largest church-body in the United States, are liable to absorb the other denominations if the church union will really take place. MUELLER.

Concerning our very own K. K. K. our British cousins are forming interesting opinions, which the *Illustrated London News* of September 13 voices as follows: "Singularly little is told us in the English papers about the American crisis in connection with the Ku Klux Klan. If it were the fifth marriage following on the fourth divorce of a young woman who happened to be good-looking enough for the films, we should be told about it in considerable detail. We are sometimes interested in what happens *in* America. But apparently we are not at all interested in what happens *to* America. And the problem of this secret society has already become the pivot of a Presidential election and may yet become the genesis of a schism like that of the North and South. Even if it had been anything so ordinary as the murder of a millionaire, it would probably have been reported with the richest elaboration. But apparently we are interested in murders and not in massacres. Of the Ku Klux Klan, in the only aspect which ever does interest the journalists, that of its curious parody of a church, its ritual, mysteries, masks, head-dresses, and all the rest, it is hardly worth while to write. It is sufficient to say that one of its brightest ideas is to call a gentleman a Kleagle, thereby (it will be noted) achieving the triumph of assimilating the word 'eagle' to the alliterative diction of the Klan. The thought of being terrorized by people on that intellectual level suggests a nightmare of falling into the hands of cheerful chimpanzees. There is something quite subhuman about such stupidity as that. About the criminal anarchy that it has let loose a great many things might be said if there were space for them. It is enough to say that it is certainly worse than anything the wilder element in America has yet produced, and that there is far less excuse for it than for the occasional lynchings that horrified our more humane civilization in the past. It has obviously little or nothing to do with the old Ku Klux Klan or with the old South. For instance, it has lately disregarded the civilized distinction which protected women. The old South, to do it justice, would have been the last to disregard that. Also the old Southern fear of the Negro seems to be quite secondary to a fear of a number of totally different and strangely incongruous social figures. The Jew and the Roman Catholic, who have been opposed to each other in almost all the controversies of the world, are opposed in the same blind and blundering fashion by the Ku Klux Klan. And just as this spirit expressed its disapproval of African savages by roasting them after the fashion of cannibals, so it expresses its disapproval of the errors of popery by establishing an irresponsible Spanish Inquisition. . . . Unfortunately this reactionary spirit has two other elements, which profess to give it an expression and largely use it as an excuse. First, there is an element in America notably absent in England, an element of ferocity and savagery. Secondly, there is that infinitely dangerous and generally indefensible thing—a secret society. It is perfectly obvious that the method is being used more and more, not merely for crime, but for criminal insanity. These things may not all have the same source; but that is exactly the weakness of a secret society. A secret society can never clear itself of any crimes as long as it re-



mains secret. And even the admitted anarchy and atrocity are bad enough. When such people call themselves the sons of the Puritans, one is tempted to agree that they are indeed the sons of those who butchered prisoners at Philiphaugh or hunted witches at Salem. But indeed the old Puritans were far less lawless and were not, relatively to their time, so terribly like a last rally of barbarians."

(Communicated by *Rev. H. Ruhland*, Ottawa, Can.)

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