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## The Virgin Birth of Christ.

Essay read before a conference by REV. G. ALBERT SCHULZE  
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### V.

The disgrace of being the earliest known impugner of the Virgin Birth falls upon the head of Cerinthus, a contemporary of the Apostle John. Cerinthus taught that Christ, the son of Joseph and Mary, at his baptism received the *ἄνω Χριστός*, "the Christ [from] above," who, however, departed from Him before His suffering. Soon after Cerinthus, the Ebionites, a Jewish sect, appeared upon the scene as champions of the purely human origin of our Lord. They taught that He was a mere man, whom God had elected to the Messiahship because of His extraordinary piety. In the so-called Ebionite gospel the chapters in which the evangelists teach the Virgin Birth were omitted. The Gnostics, many of them at least, could not find any room in their monstrous speculations for the Virgin Birth. They either denied the true humanity of Christ or else represented Him as a human being upon whom the *ἄνω Χριστός* descended at baptism. Of course, we find Marcion (ca. 100) and the Docetae on the side of the enemy. The philosopher Celsus (second century) delighted in pouring out his contempt upon this doctrine in particular and thereby came into conflict with Origen (*Contra Celsum*). Celsus was what the psalmist would no doubt call a brutish man; he called Jesus a bastard and spread the blasphemy that He was the offspring of an illicit union between Mary and a soldier named Panthera. It would seem that Satan finds a fiendish pleasure in stirring up men to renew the attacks of these ancient slanderers from time to time. Luther, as we have already heard, had his troubles with men who departed from the Scriptures also on this point. Schwenckfeld, *e. g.*, taught a "deification [*Vergottung*] of the body of Christ." The Anabaptists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have cherished the rather peculiar notion that Christ brought a body

# THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

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Dr. C. M. Jacobs and the Scriptures. — On April 22 Dr. C. M. Jacobs was inducted into office as president of the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, known as Mount Airy Seminary. On this occasion Dr. Jacobs delivered a notable address, which has been given wide publicity. With many of the sentiments which he

expressed we find ourselves in hearty agreement. How can we, for instance, withhold assent and approval when the following paragraph comes before us:—

“The Word of God, then, is the center of the Church. It is the Church’s dearest possession. When it is lost, the Church’s life is gone. This was the conviction about the Church on which our spiritual fathers of four centuries ago staked all that they had in this life, and all that they hoped to have hereafter. At the heart of historic Lutheranism are two convictions that are fundamental to it. They are, first: To be a Christian means to have that faith which is an active, living trust in God, through Jesus Christ, His Son; and secondly: This faith, which makes men Christians, is produced by God Himself, who comes to heart and conscience through His Word. It is but the corollary of these statements when we declare that the supreme purpose for which the Church exists is to bring this Word to man.”

But the position which Dr. Jacobs takes with respect to the Scriptures is one that must fill every true Lutheran with alarm and sorrow. Speaking of the Scriptures, he says:—

“But with all the emphasis which we lay upon the Scriptures we do not identify them with the Word of God. We confess that the Word of God is a means of grace; none of us will say that the Bible is a means of grace, save as it preserves in human language, and passes down from generation to generation, the record of God’s Word. Because it is the record of God’s Word, we owe to it our spiritual life; from it we derive our primary and normative knowledge of spiritual faith; in it our faith discovers the revelation of God Himself. Out of the Bible we learn to see the long historic process by which that revelation came. We learn to know it as a growing revelation, a light that had its dawn as well as its noon, a light that shone first upon the mountain-tops and fought the shadows down the hill-sides into the valleys. The Scriptures show us not only the perfect truth as it is in Christ, but half-truth as it lived in the minds of men; they have their zones of twilight as well as their brilliant sunlight. It was Luther who taught us to find in the Scriptures themselves their own standard of criticism and principle of interpretation, — *Ob sie Christum treiben*, ‘Do they deal with Christ?’ God’s revelation recorded in the Scriptures, His Word about Himself and ourselves that is written there, came ‘in divers parts and divers manners unto the fathers,’ before it came at last in His own Son, ‘the brightness of God’s glory and the express image of His person.’ That which we seek in Holy Scripture is this revelation, this God-given insight into the nature of God and of man; this Word of God that enters the depths of our hearts, convicting of sin and of righteousness and of judgment and calling us to seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. We do not go to the Scriptures primarily for information about the world that is the material environment of life, or primarily for codes of law with which to regulate human conduct, our own and other men’s, but for that self-knowledge which is not complete until we have seen ‘the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’ This

is what we mean when we say that the Word of God is a means of grace and the Scriptures are the record of God's Word. For this view of the Word of God and this view of the Scriptures the Philadelphia Seminary has stood, and for them it will continue, by God's help, to stand."

Here the new president of Mount Airy Seminary definitely rejects the old Lutheran principle that the Bible not merely contains the Word of God, but *is* the Word of God. His remarks seem to imply the repudiation of the verbal inspiration and of the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Dr. Jacobs here throws down the gauntlet, as it were, to all Lutherans who still hold the old belief, that the Bible is the Word of God. He places himself on the same platform as a writer in the *Lutheran Church Review* (U. L. C.) who in October, 1924, writing on the Sacraments as means of grace, said: "It seems almost impossible in the minds of most persons, both lay and clerical, to dissociate the Word of God from the Scriptures. For Luther there is a clear distinction, and his position is historically correct. . . . The Word of God for Luther meant something distinct from the Scriptures, its record," to which our only comment at this time is, *Quod est [non erat] demonstrandum*. — That the columns of the *Lutheran* (U. L. C.) are open to writers who express similar views can be seen from a book review which appeared in the issue of May 26, 1927. The writer, discussing a book condemning Modernism, has this to say about the author: "His own viewpoint is, however, so wooden and rigid and narrow that much that is written appears prejudiced, exaggerated, even false. The author believes 'Christianity is Bible religion,' and to him every sentence is absolutely true in every detail." This conviction the reviewer belittles. It seems that he does not believe that Christianity is Bible religion and that every sentence (in the Bible) is absolutely true in every detail. It appears, then, that certain influential spokesmen of the U. L. C. have left the old Lutheran moorings and are swiftly drifting into the channel of modern theology.

**Two Prominent Lutherans Deceased.** — Leipzig University mourns the death of a brilliant scholar, Dr. H. Boehmer, world-renowned for his researches relating to Luther. He died on March 25 at the early age of fifty seven. — Dr. G. H. Gerberding, professor at Northwestern Lutheran Seminary, Minneapolis, met his death in an accident on March 27. He had reached the ripe age of fourscore years.

**A Victory for Religious Instruction.** — "By ruling against the Freethinkers' Society, the highest court in the State of New York has ended the fight against classes in religion for public school children," writes *America* (May 21). It explains the attack of the Freethinkers as follows: "About 130 cities and towns in the State have adopted what is known as the New York Plan, which allows the local school boards to dismiss the children once or twice weekly, on the request of parents, for religious instruction by teachers approved by the boards and by the local pastors. More than a year ago the Freethinkers' Society of New York attacked the plan and was sustained by the court

of first instance, but lost on appeal. A complete analysis of this important case and of the decision can be found in *America* for May 8, 1926. Appeal to the highest court in the State was then taken by the society, and on May 10, ruling on the merits of the case, this court held that the plan was 'in harmony with the Constitution and the laws of the State.' This decision is wholly in keeping with the common-sense attitude adopted from the beginning by the State and local educational authorities. They realized that in certain districts parents wished to provide their children with a training which could not be obtained in the public schools. In the spirit of the decision of the Supreme Court in the Oregon case, a decision which has figured prominently in this litigation, they cooperated with the agencies which could give at least the elements of an education in religion and morality. The Appellate Division unanimously sustained them, remarking that, after all, the right of parents to control the education of their children is a natural right, protected by the Federal Constitution. New York's final court of appeal now sustains this righteous and plainly constitutional decision."

Two matters of utmost importance are defended in the decision of the New York Supreme Court: first, that regular and supervised instruction of children in religion is acknowledged as a vital part of their training; secondly, that the Federal Constitution protects the right of parents to control the education of their children. Both of these fundamental principles have been attacked and in the future will continue to be attacked by certain educational agencies. The precedents established by the decision of prominent courts of our country must not be forgotten by us who champion the Christian day-school.

MUELLER.

**Farce.** — "The University of Iowa has just organized a school of religion in which earnest men will strive to teach religion as a dynamic force in life, rather than as a matter of creed, tenets, rites, thaumaturgy, or priestcraft," writes *Time* (May 23). "At this aim, endorsed by the Presbyterian Board of Christian Education, the *Presbyterian*, 'an official organ of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America,' last week scoffed: —

"[The school] includes in its plan the religions of the Protestant Christians, the Roman Catholics, and the Jews. That these three parties should live in harmony and cooperate in civil and secular relations is reasonable and time-tested. But these religions and beliefs are in deadly antagonism. The Protestant Christians through their history have believed and testified that Christ is very God and very man. The Jews crucified Christ and have persistently declared that He was only a man, and even a man worthy of death. He has no special value either as a man or as a Savior. The Protestant declares that Christ offered up Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, that He is our only High Priest and holy Intercessor, and that through Him alone we have access to the Father. The Roman Catholics, while they acknowledge His deity, declare that man must at least in part pay the penalty of his own sin and that the hierarchy

fills the place of intercession between the believer and a just and holy God. The attempt to unite these three religions in any way is a farce."

*Time* is wrong when it asserts that the *Presbyterian* merely scoffs at the Iowa University scheme of teaching religion. In a very clear and objective way the *Presbyterian* states the facts of the case; nor is the word "farce" applied to this sort of teaching religion too strong, since it is, in the last analysis, a mockery and suppression of the true religion of Christ. The scheme, of course, is not new; long ago our liberal seminaries and university divinity schools have introduced into their curriculum this very abomination. MUELLER.

**Ground for Divorce.**—In the same issue of *Time* which we quoted above, we find the following report of a recommendation submitted to the Presbyterian General Assembly for the purpose of suppressing or at least checking the divorce evil: "Because alone of the principal Confessional Protestant communions the Presbyterian recognizes desertion as well as adultery as proper grounds for divorce, a committee headed by Dr. Clarence Edward Macartney, of Pittsburgh, last week recommended that the Presbyterian General Assembly declares: '... Yet is adultery alone clearly recognized in the New Testament as cause for divorce. Therefore the Church cannot sanction divorce on any other ground nor the remarriage of divorced persons other than the innocent parties in divorces granted for adultery; and it shall be unlawful for a minister to marry any divorced person except one so divorced.'

"The committee also proposed to delete entirely the old article of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith: 'Adultery or fornication committed after a contract [for marriage], being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract.'"

Of course, it is not true that "alone of the principal Confessional Protestant communions the Presbyterian recognizes desertion as well as adultery as proper grounds for divorce." It is the common opinion of Christian denominations that adultery is the only cause for divorce named in the New Testament; but every Christian denomination adhering to the Word of God admits also that in cases of malicious desertion "the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases." 1 Cor. 7, 15. The suggestion of the committee that "the Church cannot sanction divorce on any other ground nor the remarriage of divorced persons other than the innocent parties in divorces granted for adultery" goes beyond the express allowance established by God's Word and is therefore reprehensible.

MUELLER.

**Poor Diagnosticians — Poor Physicians.**—The visible Church is grievously ill. The normal condition is that of unity. The Holy Christian Church is one, and there should be but one "denomination." Instead of that the body ecclesiastic is torn and disrupted, divided, here in America, into forty major denominations and, counting their various subdivisions and independent growths, into some 257 bodies. And they refuse to unite. The *Christian Union Quarterly* lately

asked twenty-three prominent churchmen to define the disease, in other words, to state what they regard as the chief barriers to unity. Diagnosing the case, they arrived at a variety of conclusions. The *Lutheran* summarizes their findings thus: "1) Unchristian denominationalism. 2) Unwillingness to sacrifice denominational identity. 3) Resistance to any modification of the denominational idea. 4) Sectarian preferences in polity, ritual, and theology. 5) Established custom and inherited prejudices. 6) Indifference or antagonism to collective effort. 7) Lack of theological liberality. 8) Lack of will to unity. 9) Lack of intimate fellowship. 10) Lack of belief that further unity is possible. 11) Differences of intellectual attitudes. 12) Natural conservatism in favor of inherited forms of Christianity. 13) Holding fast to crass Biblical literalism. 14) Unwillingness to go through intellectual, moral, and spiritual struggle. 15) Racial, national, and denominational self-satisfaction. 16) Creeds and confessions. 17) Order of the ministry." Not one of them has diagnosed the case correctly. And yet Scripture has so plainly described the cause of the trouble. Teaching false doctrines has caused the divisions, and adhering to the error is perpetuating them. The Spirit states so expressly. We have 257 sects because "some are giving heed to seducing spirits," because "they are speaking lies in hypocrisy." No. 7 must pronounce his formula: "Lack of theological liberality," not against us, but against the writer of 1 Tim. 4, 1. 2. The divisions in the Church are caused and maintained by those who teach "contrary to the *doctrine* which ye have learned," Rom. 16, 17; "who come unto you and bring not this *doctrine*," 2 John 10; who "*teach* otherwise and consent not to the wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ and to the *doctrine* which is according to godliness," 1 Tim. 6, 3. If No. 13 is describing the adherence to the words of Jesus Christ and His apostles as "holding fast to crass Biblical literalism," he will readily admit that he has not studied in the school of the Holy Spirit. Did 2 Thess. 2, 10, 11 never occur to these men? Do they not know that if men receive not the love of truth, God will send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie? They are poor diagnosticians. There may be, there is, something to what, for instance, Nos. 8 and 9 say. But the real disease has escaped their notice. Nos. 1 to 5, 15 and 17 describe a true state of affairs, but they are dealing only with symptoms, not the disease itself. And it may be that the one or the other, when speaking of "denominationalism," has that condition in mind which No. 7 pronounces to be "lack of theological liberality," No. 13, "holding fast to crass Biblical literalism," and No. 16, the disease which breaks out in "creeds and confessions" — mistaking a clear case of virile health for a diseased condition. They are poor diagnosticians — and therefore poor physicians, unable to prescribe the cure, in other words, to remove the barriers. Various remedies are proposed. "1) Going Christ's way and going that way with Christ Himself. 2) Deepening and strengthening the Christian life. 3) More Christian esteem and confidence. 4) Association in common work. 5) Recognition of various forms of ordination. 6) Intercommunion and joint services. 7) Interchange

of preachers. 8) Coming together of Christians in world organizations. 9) Universal federation of Protestant churches. 10) Universal federation of Episcopal churches and Eastern Orthodox, Anglican, and Protestant Episcopal. 11) Working of the Spirit of Truth. 12) Preaching and praying for the ideal. 13) Stressing the universality note in each denomination. 14) Stressing the Catholic character of Christian fellowship. 15) Return to the New Testament term of profession of faith in Christ. 16) Willingness that one's communion shall be lost in the kingdom." Again, not one of them is applying the apostolic cure. The Church will be restored to health in that day when all the erring denominations return to the pure doctrine, and by those who "in meekness *instruct* those that oppose themselves, if God peradventure will give them *repentance* to the acknowledging of the *truth*." 2 Tim. 2, 25. Not even Nos. 11 and the like will do, at least not as the formulas read. The chief ingredient is lacking: "Working of the Spirit of Truth" *through the Word of Truth*. Nos. 6, 7, and the like are applying the Christian Science cure: ignore the differences, deny the disease, and the patient will recover. Exactly what the apostle warns against! "Mark them — avoid them — receive them not — from such withdraw thyself!" And these are the apostolic directions how to treat the disease: "These things command and teach." "Holding fast the faithful Word, as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers." 1 Tim. 4, 11; Tit. 1, 9. The Churches can regain the unity in the truth only by holding out for the truth. Ignoring the truth and refusing to discuss the doctrinal differences, even such a world-wide application of Remedy No. 4 as the "Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work" (Stockholm) is attempting will not effect a cure; it will only aggravate the case. — We agree with the *Lutheran*: "Before churches and sects can be united, they must find a common authority and bow before it. . . . No real unity is possible on the basis of Christian love. Get men together on a common basis of faith, and Christian love will have something to feed upon." Continuing, the *Lutheran* writes: "The only prospect for real unity as we see it is a serious and prolonged study, not of the creeds, but of the Scriptures, which most denominations profess to be the only authority of faith and life, to ascertain what *they* have to say concerning the great essentials of the Christian religion. . . . Scholars have cooperated successfully in producing a revised translation of the Scriptures; why should it be impossible for representatives from the various bodies to cooperate in seeking to extract from the Scriptures a definite body of belief to which either all, or particularly those bodies more nearly related to each other, could subscribe?" Such a body of doctrine is already in existence. All Christians can subscribe to it. It needs no revision in a single particular. Of course, it will come under the ban of No. 16 of the first set. So we shall not name it now. But if ever any body of Christian scholars should meet and produce a statement of belief to which all Christians can subscribe, it will prove to be the exact counterpart of the *Book of Concord*. And this new Book



of Unity will not confine itself to "the great essentials of the Christian religion." It is going to agree with the old *Book of Concord* and declare: "From this our explanation . . . every one may clearly infer that we have no intention of yielding *ought* of the eternal, immutable truth of God for the sake of temporal peace, tranquillity, and unity. . . . But we entertain heartfelt pleasure and love for, and are on our part sincerely inclined and anxious to advance, that unity according to our utmost power, by which His glory remains to God uninjured, *nothing* of the divine truth is surrendered, no room is given *the least error*," etc. Naturally, the discussions aiming at a Book of Unity will not at the start deal with the minor errors. They will take up, first of all, "the great essentials of the Christian religion" and here, first of all, the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Lutherans will demand that. It is to them the chief doctrine. All Christians will demand it. It is to them the chief doctrine. So that will be carried unanimously. If honest agreement is reached on this point, the cure will be effected. Says Luther: "If this single article remain pure, the whole Church will also remain pure, harmonious, and *without factions*." (5, 1170.) Why not, after all, make the old Book of Unity the basis of discussion? That was proposed long ago by Dr. Seiss: "She [our Church] has successfully laid a doctrinal, liturgical, and governmental basis, which leaves no possible excuse for sectarianism." (*Ecclesia Lutherana*, p. 189.) E.

**If the Romanists Are Not Semi-Pelagians, What Are They?—**  
*The Triumph of the Church*, "Compiled by Rev. John P. Markoe, S. J.," St. Louis, Mo., gives a list and description of "False Religious Denominations," from the first to the nineteenth century. We read: "Lutherans: The name of an heretical sect founded by Martin Luther. . . . Luther denied tradition; the divine authority of the Papacy; that councils were infallible; that original justice was a supernatural gift; that human nature remained essentially the same in its powers after the fall of Adam; that man, after the Fall, can produce any good works; held that man sins in whatever he does; that the sins of the just are covered by faith and not done away with; maintained that all works of sinners are sins; denied free will; all the Sacraments except Baptism and the Eucharist; transubstantiation; the sacrifice of the Mass; purgatory and the utility of praying to the saints," etc. In the main, Father Markoe has given his people a pretty fair idea of what Luther taught and what their Church teaches. Luther "denied free will," and the Romanists assert free will. So far, good. Then they would be Semi-Pelagians. The Semi-Pelagians rejected the doctrine of Pelagius, of the moral soundness of man; they rejected also the doctrine of Augustine, of the entire corruption and bondage of the natural man. They taught that his natural powers were diseased, crippled, but sufficient to assist towards his salvation, conversion and sanctification being the joint product of grace and the human will. But our pamphlet has this: "Semi-Pelagians: a sect traced to John Cassianus. . . . The errors of the Semi-Pelagians were condemned in the year 432 by Pope Celestine I; in 529 by Pope Felix IV, in the

Synod of Orange and the Synod of Valence, both of which councils were confirmed by Pope Boniface II. These errors were: The beginning of faith depends on man's free will, while faith itself and its increase depend absolutely upon God; nature has a certain claim to grace; final perseverance is not a special gift of grace, but depends upon man's own strength; some children die before baptism, and others after, on account of the foreknowledge God possesses of the good or evil they would have done if they had lived; some are predestined to heaven, others to hell." We shall not discuss the errors here listed, but only make the general statement that Catholics repudiate the name and title of Semi-Pelagians. Then what are they? They are not Lutherans; for Luther denied free will. And Semi-Pelagians they cannot afford to style themselves; for Semi-Pelagianism stands condemned by councils and Popes, and "councils are infallible." The author of the treatise could not afford to set down the points in the Semi-Pelagian system which have been taken over bodily by Rome. We shall do so in order to give the Catholic Church a fixed status in the religious world, or rather let Rome fix its own status. *Canons and Decrees of Trent*, Sess. VI, chap. I: ". . . although free will, attenuated as it was in its powers and bent down, was by no means extinguished in them." Canon IV: "If any one saith that man's free will, moved and excited by God, by assenting to God, exciting and calling, no wise cooperates towards disposing and preparing itself for obtaining the grace of justification, . . . let him be anathema." Canon V: "If any one saith that since Adam's sin the free will of man is lost and extinguished, . . . let him be anathema." There is no help for it; Semi-Pelagianism, "condemned in the Synod of Orange and the Synod of Valence, both of which councils were confirmed by Pope Boniface II," is the faith of Rome. And Father Markoe has no heartfelt horror of the founder of this faith: "John Cassianus, . . . a celebrated and holy man, who, although never formally canonized, was venerated as a saint, and whose name appears as such on the Greek Calendar,"—and he the founder of a "false religious denomination"! And it's true! The biography of Luther as given in our manual is worth reprinting here: "Martin Luther, who was born at Eisleben, Germany, November 10, 1483; attended a Catholic Latin school at Mansfeld, and in 1497, when fourteen years old, entered another Catholic school at Magdeburg. He matriculated at the Catholic University of Erfurt in Thuringia, in 1501, where he became a Master of Philosophy at the age of twenty. On Juli 17, 1505, he entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt and in 1507 was ordained a Catholic priest. In 1508 he was made professor of philosophy at the new Catholic University of Wittenberg, visited Rome in 1510 or 1511 on business of his order, and some time after his return began to lecture on the Scriptures. On October 31, 1517, he nailed his 95 theses against indulgences to the door of the church in Wittenberg. On September 21, 1520, he was excommunicated by Pope Leo X. Later he married an ex-nun, Catherine von Bora, and finally died in 1546." The story ends somewhat abruptly, but there's no denying it—he finally died.

**"The Candidate of the Holy See."**—The Marshall-Smith controversy has led to the following statement, published May 10, by the Apostolic Delegate to the United States in the press of the country: "Lest there be any doubt in the public mind about the Holy See's absolute indifference concerning the candidacy of Governor Alfred E. Smith of New York, or that of any other person, in the approaching presidential elections, Cardinal Gasparri, Secretary of State, has considered it proper, even though superfluous, to emphasize the Vatican's position of aloofness from the politics of the United States. In a communication received by Archbishop Fumasoni-Biondi, Apostolic Delegate to the United States, the Cardinal-Secretary of State notes that some newspapers have been referring to Governor Smith as 'the candidate of the Holy See,' while others declare that his candidacy is deplored by the Holy See. His Eminence deemed it superfluous to assert that the Holy See is not interested or concerned in any way in the coming presidential campaign, and this by reason of its principle of remaining absolutely aloof from the internal contests in the political circles of every country." To this *America* remarks: "To the straightforward declaration of Cardinal Gasparri, transmitted by the Apostolic Delegate, nothing need be added. It is the platform on which *America* has stood and will continue to stand."—The great service which Lawyer Marshall has rendered the American people by publicly challenging Governor Smith to come out with a clean-cut statement of his position if he were elected President, is reflected in Cardinal Gasparri's communication. As a matter of fact the Holy See is deeply interested in "the internal contests in the political circles of every country," and of this many of our countrymen are no longer ignorant. Archbishop Fumasoni-Biondi's declaration was prompted by more than a passing spirit of unrest caused by Governor Smith's unsatisfactory reply. Rome saw the rising of a tide of opposition which it was not ready to meet at this time, and therefore it poured on the tempestuous waves the oil of a conciliating falsehood.

MUELLER.

**"A Fellowship of Uncongenial Minds."**—The Episcopalians have brought the art of walking together, though they be not agreed (Amos 3, 3), to a high degree of perfection. In *The Church and the Truth*, a volume telling the story of the Church Congress of the Episcopalian Church which met at Richmond, Va., in 1926, they exhibit themselves as faithfully "endeavoring to keep the discord of the spirits in the bond of peace." The review of the book given in the *Lutheran* says: "At the conclusion of the congress Dr. Beverly D. Tucker, Jr., chairman of the local committee, quite aptly characterized the congress as 'a fellowship of uncongenial minds.' . . . Dr. Bowie pleads for a spineless evangelical theology and assumes that evangelical faith will remain when its doctrinal foundation in the atonement is given up; Dr. Tucker pleads for the simplicity of the Gospel over against emphasis on orders, ritual, and government; while Dr. MacComb maintains that evangelical theology must emphasize a present and living Christ, the need of conversion, and the reality of the future life. Dr. Williams maintains that loyalty to the

Church is loyalty to the right, and that a loyal churchman is at once high, low, and broad. Dr. Nelson declares that loyalty to the Church is consistent with differences of faith and practise, even with differences on the truth of the Virgin Birth and of the Resurrection. Mr. Langley maintains that the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection are essential. Dr. Hodgson's address on 'Psychology and Belief' is frankly evolutionary in its standpoint. Dr. Angus Dun's address on 'The New Psychology and Christian Belief' is a fine defense of religion against the assaults of the new psychology." The prophet could not see how two can walk together unless they be agreed. The Church Congress shows how three can walk together in different directions, — as Dr. Williams puts it, "a loyal churchman is at once high, low, and broad."

E.

**Reconciling Christianity and Evolution.** — Under the general title "The Christian and the Theater" a former actor, now converted to Christ, is relating his experiences in the *Sunday-school Times*. In the second of the series the narrator, whose name is not given, points out strikingly the impossibility of reconciling Christianity and evolution. He writes: "I had, of course, accepted the evolutionary theory *in toto*; for it provided an excellent basis for the naturalistic philosophy which I had embraced. But I was no Modernist. It will generally be found that the person who attempts to reconcile the commonly accepted Christian view of the world with the evolutionist's succeeds at the cost of Christianity; the reconciliation is found to be no reconciliation at all. The process is so amusingly illustrated in an old limerick that I cannot resist quoting it: —

"There was a young lady of Niger  
Who smiled as she rode on a tiger;  
They returned from the ride  
With the lady inside —  
And the smile on the face of the tiger.

The *denouement* of this woeful rhyme is inevitable. The young lady chose the tiger for her mount; the tiger thereupon chose the young lady for his meal. One can scarcely blame the tiger for behaving like a tiger, and it strikes me that the lady, who should have known better, really deserved what she got. But, however one may feel toward the two parties in this unnatural alliance, one cannot by any stretch of imagination call the outcome of their ride a reconciliation. So when the Modernist triumphantly proclaims he has reconciled Christianity with that uncertain commodity which he calls 'the assured results of scientific thought,' it will be found that the reconciliation has been effected in much the same way as the lady in the limerick was reconciled to the tiger. All that was distinctively Christian has been sacrificed to a rigid uniformitarianism that will not, if it can help, admit the supernatural. 'The smile on the face of the tiger' would hardly be considered adequate compensation for the loss of the lady by any friends she may have had. They would not think the tiger less tigerish or more ladylike because of the smile. Neither are intelligent Christians deceived by the bland smiles of Modernists into imagining that its skepticism becomes a whit more Christian by becoming affable."

MUELLER.

**The Facts of Science and the Truths of the Bible.**—Have the modern discoveries of science rendered the teachings of the Christian religion uncertain? Dr. W. H. P. Faunce, president of Brown University (affiliated with the Baptist Church), is convinced of it. He gives this as the cause of the appalling increase in the cases of suicide committed by students: "The modern mind is overwhelmed with a multitude of new facts with no clue to their meaning. We have millions of new facts, but no sense of values, no clear perception of duty, no theory to live or die by." Before discussing these "millions of new facts" and their bearing upon the teachings of religion, an additional fact should be impressed upon the mind of the Modernist, a fact which he usually ignores. And that is the historical fact that long before the days of "millions of new facts" men have been insisting that the discoveries of science leave room for nothing but agnosticism or unbelief. It cannot be the multitude of new facts that accounts for the modern view of life, because men of ancient days with considerably less facts to deal with, have taken the same view of life and, what is still more remarkable, have been indulging in the same kind of phraseology, pleading the great advance science had made in their days. The modern mind must look for the cause of its infidelity elsewhere. Forty-five years ago Robert G. Ingersoll (who described himself, not as a Modernist, but as a plain infidel) declared: "In this age of fact and demonstration it is refreshing to find a man" (referring to an advocate of the Bible) "who believes so thoroughly in the monstrous and miraculous, the impossible and immoral." Ingersoll knew—to employ the loose manner of speaking used by Dr. Faunce—only one million facts, but this comparatively small number was to him sufficient proof that the Bible teachings are monstrous and impossible. And he had the same hopeless view of life and death as the Modernist. At his brother's grave he brought this message to his despairing fellows: "While yet in love with life and raptured with the world, he passed to silence and pathetic dust. . . . Whether in mid-sea or 'mong the breakers of the farther shore, a wreck at last must mark the end of each and all. . . . Life is a narrow vale between the cold and barren peaks of two eternities. We strive in vain to look beyond the heights. We cry aloud, and the only answer is the echo of our wailing cry. . . . He who sleeps here, when dying, mistaking the approach of death for the return of health, whispered with his last breath, 'I am better now.' Let us believe, in spite of doubts and dogmas and tears and fears, that these dear words are true of all the countless dead." How many facts were known to Pliny the Elder, the naturalist of ancient Rome? Let us say one thousand. We are sure the Modernists will gladly accept this low figure. But he, too, was overwhelmed by them and became a "heathen" infidel. Says Uhlhorn: "Deeply as this fanaticism of unbelief moves us, we are equally, if not more, affected by the calmness with which Pliny sets forth as an assured result of science that there are no gods; for, he says, Nature alone is God, the mother of all things, the holy, immeasurable universe; and with freezing unconcern he draws the comfortless conclusion inseparable from this view of the world: "There

is nothing certain, save that nothing is certain, and there is no more wretched and yet arrogant being than man. The best thing which has been given to man amid the many torments of this life is that he can take his own life.'” It is not the *multitude* of the new facts that lies at the bottom of unbelief.

Nor is it the *nature* of these facts. On this point Dr. L. S. Keyser takes issue with Dr. Faunce, and we think that Dr. Keyser is acquainted with as many “millions of new facts” as Dr. Faunce. Dr. Keyser writes in the *Lutheran* of April 14: “What new facts have come to light that have obscured the meaning of life from the modern mind? Do we not still have the Bible to tell us the meaning of things? Where are there any ‘new facts’ that are not included in the eternal plan and program set forth in God’s holy Book? Not one ‘fact’ that we can think of in the least invalidates the glorious truth that God created man in His own image and designed him for an immortal destiny of blessedness and glory. Has President Faunce, the president of a great Christian university, lost his Bible and the Christ of the Bible, who ‘brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel’? What are the ‘new facts’ that blot the sun out of the skies? . . . Honestly, to our mind all the new facts that have come to light have accentuated the true values of life and may be correlated with the Biblical scheme. The wonders of matter prove the great importance of matter, since we see that God has made it more wonderful than we ever suspected. The same may be said of the marvels of living things. When the biologist describes minutely the remarkable structure and doings of the cell, which is the unit of life, we place a higher value than ever upon life. . . . Dr. Faunce complains that we have ‘no clear perception of duty.’ Now, we are glad to inform our disheartened Modernist that the Ten Commandments are still in the Bible and that they still constitute a divinely given norm of human conduct. . . . No ‘new facts’ that we can think of have abrogated the law of obligation commanded in the Book Divine. . . . Modernism means a *descensus*. Let a man once begin to question the divine authority of the Bible and get too high an idea of human reason and wisdom, and there is no telling where he will end.” E.

**Who has been Romancing?** — The higher critics have been wont to treat the historical books of the Bible, particularly those of the Old Testament, most particularly the “Heptateuch,” as romances. Archaeological research, however, is confirming the exactness of one historical statement of the Bible after the other. Compare, for instance, Deut. 1, 28; 9, 1; Josh. 14, 12; 15, 15 ff.; Judg. 1, 11 ff. with these remarks of the *American Review of Reviews*, April, 1927: “A recent issue of *Bibliotheca Sacra* has just reached our desk, and we have read with interest a detailed account of the excavations at Kirjath-sepher, conducted by the Xenia Theological Seminary in cooperation with the American School of Oriental Research at Jerusalem. . . . Kirjath-sepher is known in the Bible accounts as a ‘fenced city,’ and the spies’ frightened description of a ‘city walled up to heaven,’ in this case at least, seems justified.” (Let the higher critics get what com-

fort they may from the qualified form of this statement.) "The city is built on a high hill, the sides of which are, in places, almost perpendicular. To this was added a wall of at least forty feet and, on account of the slope of the *revêtement*, of almost fifty feet. A large part of this great wall remains, partly obscured by rubbish. . . . Such work as that at Kirjath-sepher not only confirms the findings of archeological science elsewhere in Palestine, but throws much light upon expressions of the Bible." Which, interpreted, means that the higher critics, "in this case at least, seem" to have been romancing.

E.

**God and the Floods.** — The *Christian Century*, in a recent issue, expressed its joy over the fact that, so far as it knew, no attempt has been made in Christian periodicals to charge God with being the cause of the devastating floods that have harassed large parts of our country. *Time* quotes it as saying: "It is gratifying to be able to state that, so far as we have observed, there have been no efforts to interpret the devastating floods in the Mississippi Valley as punishment inflicted by an outraged Deity upon the sinful dwellers in the lowlands. If the calamity had been a tornado, a fire, an earthquake, or a tidal wave, doubtless there would have been the usual outbursts of piously blasphemous explanations that the divine patience was exhausted and that the sufferers were getting what was coming to them for their intolerable iniquities. It was so with Galveston, San Francisco, and Florida. It is doubtful whether there has been any notable improvement in theological thinking since those earlier disasters, and the problems of theodicy are as baffling as ever. But this is a plain case of high water. One can almost see why it happened; at least one can see why it happened where it did. . . . One does not have to be a materialist to believe that the reason for the flood in the bottom-lands is not that God is angry with Arkansas and Louisiana, but that there is too much water in the river to run off through the normal channel."

In its superficial and blasphemous statement of the case the *Christian Century* entirely overlooks the very question which baffles all who view the situation, "Why is there too much water in the river?" The unceasing rains which are accountable for the disaster are certainly not "true generous gifts of nature," as a certain periodical has put it. If we admit a divine providence which orders and controls all things according to definite laws, we are naturally led to connect the chastening hand of God with this horrible disaster. The Bible informs us that God in His divine sovereignty is the cause of all things that happen in the world either by His dispensing or His permissive providence. "I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." Is. 45, 7. Again: "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3, 6. However, the awful calamity is a solemn warning to the whole country, and we are not to regard God as being particularly angry with the inhabitants of Arkansas and Louisiana. Luke 13, 1—5. Christ's admonition and warning reads: "I tell you, Nay; but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

MUELLER.

**Is the Crowd Mind a Safe Guide?** — Discussing this subject, the *Lutheran* offers some remarks which are worth repeating:—

“Beware of the ‘crowd mind.’ If ever there was a fallacy proclaimed, it was by the author of the Latin proverb, ‘The voice of the people is the voice of God.’ History teaches the exact contrary. The belief in majority rule, which has taken such a strong hold on the popular mind in America, is cut out of the cloth of the Latin proverb. The grain of truth that lies at the bottom of the proverb escapes the average mind. It is that the universal religious consciousness in the hearts of men is often a safer guide than the highly specialized wisdom of those who sit in the seats of the learned. Glenn Frank speaks of the psychologist’s fear that we are rapidly becoming a crowd-civilization, in which mass thinking is thrusting out of influence and power the disciplined thinking of the individual. It is what the majority says that determines what is believed to be right or wrong. We are beginning to be aware of the dangers of this ‘crowd mind.’ It was quite conspicuous during the late war. ‘He kept us out of war’ elected a president; but it soon ended and gave place to another slogan, ‘Make the world safe for democracy.’ Now that the catastrophe has crushed the war spirit, those who once shouted for war, even from the pulpit, are now calling it a crime and saying, ‘Make the world safe against another cataclysm like that.’ Human nature has not changed from what it was when the multitude shouted ‘Hosanna’ in one breath and but a few brief hours afterward changed it into ‘Crucify Him! Crucify Him!’ Fickle as the wind is the ‘crowd mind.’”

**The Sunday Evening Service.** — Thus writes Dr. Sheldon in the *Christian Herald*: “Nearly all the ministers of all the denominations have what is known as a ‘Sunday evening problem.’ It consists in creating a service that will attract an audience and be at the same time appropriate for Sunday evening in a church. Many different plans have been tried by many different ministers. Just straight Gospel sermons with a regular church worship service; a musical service, centering most of it around cantatas and orchestra; an open forum for the discussion of current and historical subjects; motion-pictures; evangelistic services enlisting special talent; meetings in which the Church Brotherhood has charge; and many other methods with occasional pronounced success as far as audiences are concerned, but nearly all of them created with tremendous effort on the part of the pastor or the church committee and a constant search for ‘programs’ that will draw a crowd.

“‘But why try to have a second Sunday service?’ say an increasing number of the younger ministers all over the country. And the question is not put by men who want to escape the work of another service. Let one of these young ministers speak of the vesper service as the most satisfactory solution of his Sunday evening ‘problem’:—

“‘I struggled for five years to keep up a Sunday evening service, and the best I could do was to get into the service the same people who had already attended a morning preaching service, many of whom



had taught a class in the Sunday-school and had done other mission-work during the day. I have a large church auditorium, and in the morning it is nearly always filled. But in the evening the galleries were empty, and if I had two hundred people, I felt as if it were all I could expect.

“By the consent and cooperation of my church board I have been having for the last two years a vesper service at five o'clock Sunday afternoon and no other evening service except the young people's meeting at six-thirty. This vesper consists of music by my choir, made up of consecrated church-members; we have devotional readings; there is silent prayer; I speak on some theme that touches life; often I read passages from the Bible with comments. The whole service lasts an hour. The audiences number more than I ever had for an evening meeting. The people are home in time to spend the time there without feeling guilty not to be at the second service. I find by inquiry that my church-members for the most part are delighted with this vesper plan. Other parishes may not be like mine, but I shall never go back to the old struggle to keep up another preaching service Sunday night.”

“From large correspondence with ministers and from personal acquaintance I am being convinced that for a large number of parishes situated as is the one described by this young minister the vesper plan is a reasonable change from the night service. It is worth considering by anxious preachers who face the empty pew Sunday nights.”

If we may express an opinion on Sunday evening services, it is this: Do not hold such services unless you have time to offer a well-prepared sermon. One good sermon a Sunday is better than two poor ones; not quantity, but quality, counts here.

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