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## CURRENT EVENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

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**Protestant Fellowship in Europe.**—Dr. Charles S. MacFarland, the general secretary of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, has published a very interesting report of his recent visit to Europe on behalf of the Protestant churches of America. Of particular interest is the so-called Bethesda Conference of European Churches which met in Copenhagen in August. Seventy-five delegates, representing thirty-seven church bodies in twenty-one European nations, were present. The state churches in the several Protestant nations, as well as the denominations known as sects, such as Methodists and Baptists, met in democratic form in this conference to consider the common interests of Protestant Christendom. In view of the intensity of the distrust which has prevailed between Protestant bodies in Europe, this conference marks the beginning of a new united consciousness. The encouragement and influence of American Protestantism is especially necessary just now when so many Protestant bodies in Europe are facing extremely difficult tasks of rebuilding their material and spiritual interests after the war.

**The World Conference on Faith and Order** is making plans for a meeting in Washington in May, 1925. In order to arouse public interest in the problem of church unity the management of the Conference is urging the organization of local groups for the discussion of questions which will come before the Conference. It is interesting to note the topics which are suggested for the consideration of Christians. *First Series:* (1) What degree of unity in faith will be necessary in a reunited church? (2) Is a statement of this one faith in the form of a Creed necessary or desirable? (3) If so, what Creed should be used? or what other formulary would be desirable? (4) What are the proper uses of a Creed and of a Confession of Faith? *Second Series:* (1) What degree of unity in the matter of order will be necessary in a reunited church? (2) Is it necessary that there should be a common ministry universally recognized? (3) If so, of what orders or kinds of ministers will this ministry consist? (4) Will the reunited church require as necessary any conditions precedent to ordination or any particular manner of ordination? (5) If so, what conditions precedent to ordination and what manner of ordination ought to be required?

It is interesting to observe that attention is here directed almost exclusively to matters of official organization and formal belief. These are questions which have been foremost in Christendom since the days when the Catholic church branded heresy and schism as sins. In view of the fact that there are so many branches of Christendom which glory in their dissent from the authority of the body from which they divided, it is questionable whether a revival of the discussion of these subjects will greatly further the cause of Christian unity. There are large numbers of Christians who are asking whether the most hopeful pathway is not in the direction of a co-operation in practical tasks, with the recognition of inevitable diversities in beliefs and in church organization.

**The Increasing Friendliness of Science to Religion.**—In an address delivered before the New York Society for Ethical Culture, published in the *Standard* for October, 1922, Professor M. C. Otto gives an illuminating survey of the relationship between science and religion. He points out the fact that science has won the victory for the rights of its experimental methods of research, and that it is becoming increasingly clear that this triumph has been gained by a rigid kind of specialization. "It is important to insist upon the indispensableness of science, but it is equally important to remember with Clerk-Maxwell, himself an eminent physicist, 'that there are many things in heaven and earth, which, by the selection required for the application of scientific methods, have been excluded from our philosophy.'" Professor Otto notes a very widespread longing on the part of scientists for the stabilizing and guiding of our human life by moral and religious ideals. He deplores the fact that in so many instances scientists know no other pathway than a resort to vague mysticism or indefensible supernaturalism. He pleads for the carrying over of the scientific attitude into the realm of religion so that our human hopes and capacities and achievements may be guided by as exact a knowledge of human nature as physical science possesses in its guidance of physical processes. Not a mere emotional submission to stereotyped religious ideals, but a creative thinking concerning our human needs and possibilities is the imperative task of the present. "For below all theories and creeds and faiths he (the modern man) will hold to the conviction that neither science nor religion nor art nor commerce nor any of the specialized forms of human activity is the end of man's endeavor, but a satisfying life for all who may have a life to live."

**Christianizing the Rural Community.**—Foremost among the problems of our day is the rural church situation. In the *Biblical Review Quarterly* for July, Kenyon L. Butterfield makes a strong plea for the Christian-

ization of all the forces of the rural community. Recent surveys have shown many overchurched yet spiritually undernourished communities. This is especially true of those isolated from the main currents of our life. On the other hand, there is an increasing number of communities where varied programs, based upon the needs of the local groups, have been carried out. We recognize that the spirit of Christ is needed in industry today, but we have failed to see that it is needed just as surely in our rural districts. By Christianizing the community the author means every phase of its life, economic, political, educational, and social. There is no such thing as an individual Christian apart from a community. Again, in this process of rural integration, the church is only one of the agencies of Christianization. She is a means and not an end in herself. She should co-operate with every other agency working in the same direction, and should rejoice that the spirit of her Lord is penetrating every phase of life.

**The Missionary Awakening among Roman Catholics in the United States.**—Kenneth Scott Latourette, in the *International Review of Missions* for July, discusses this very interesting development among American Catholics. With the decrease in immigration and the lessened demand upon the church in assimilation, has come a new interest in foreign missions. Heretofore, the United States has been considered a field for missionary endeavor. In recent years, however, the situation has changed. Catholics of the United States have given more money to the "Society for the Propagation of the Faith" than any other nation. In 1918 it totaled over a million dollars. Several colleges and a number of training schools have been established in recent years for the distinct purpose of training missionaries. The Jesuits and other orders have turned their attention in this direction. The rise of the Catholic Students Mission Crusade in 1917 is significant. The movement is spreading rapidly through Catholic colleges and universities. Another step in the same direction has been the creation of the American Board of Catholic Missions in 1920. And, unless unseen hindrances develop, a continued growth seems certain.

**Christian Education in China.**—An illuminating survey of the situation in China which calls for a wise program of Christian education is presented in the *International Review of Missions* for July, 1922. The article is written by Professor Ernest D. Burton, chairman of the China Educational Commission of 1921-22.

The writer points out that there is yet no co-ordinated system or general policy of Christian education in China. Again, the Chinese

government has been developing a system of schools patterned after the modern educational systems of the Occident. In these government schools are found twenty out of every twenty-seven pupils in school in China. But Dr. Burton believes that the Christian schools, if rightly conducted, can make to China's intellectual, moral, political, and spiritual life a contribution of great value and one which cannot come from any other source. "It is indeed not too much to say that without the powerful influence of Christian education there is no prospect that China will either develop a healthy life within the nation, assume the place among the nations which her magnitude, native ability, and resources call for, nor escape being a serious menace to the world at large."

The specific and immediate objective of Christian education we are told is the development of a strong effective Chinese Christian community. "Only through such a community can the task of interpreting Christianity to the Chinese, and on the basis of such interpretation, making China a Christian nation, be accomplished."

The Commission has strongly recommended the establishment of an Institute of Educational Research which would call to its services experts in the field of education. These experts would investigate various problems needing solution and place their findings at the service of all Christian schools and educational boards. It is a conviction of the Commission that all Protestant Christian schools should be co-ordinated into one great system of Christian education.

There is much in China's rapidly growing industrialism which must be remedied. The Commission has recommended the establishment of an Institute of Social and Economic Research, which shall endeavor to discover how business may be conducted in China both profitably and on Christian principles.

The Commission also felt the need of positive and definite measures for the conservation to the Christian movement of the products of Christian education. There are large numbers of intelligent, educated young men and women from the better class of Chinese families, and all too few churches in which they can be at home, and all too few pastors who can claim or hold their attention. "On the other hand, the return of educated non-Christian young men and women from America and Europe is bringing into China a ferment of thought and discussion which is permeating all the educated thinking classes." It is evident that "China cannot be won to Christianity by an ignorant or a divided church. A church must be created that can receive and use the Christian educated product of the Christian school, and deal ably and fairly with the questions and criticisms of the young educated Chinese."

**The Crisis Confronting Protestantism.**—"Constructed at infinite sacrifice, cemented with honest blood, productive of eminent spirits and manifold services, and resting upon principles which exercise a legitimate and wide dominion, Protestantism now confronts the world situation which tests the fitness of historic institutions and systems to survive. Shall it perish, or prove itself the master of a grave and well-nigh universal emergency?" This is the core of the issue discussed by S. Parkes Cadman in the *North American Review* (October, 1922).

To meet the present world-problems the writer suggests that the church must first adopt several measures of internal reform. The church should cease its useless quarrel with modern learning. Among the world's chief needs is that of a spiritual ideal in more complete accord with the meditated experiences of life. Protestantism should meet this need without forfeiting intellectual integrity at the behest of blind obscurantism.

Again, the church should be a first-class example of fraternal unification. "That world which refuses to be either entirely Protestant or Catholic does not desire Christians to make a transient truce, but to arrive at a just and settled peace within their ecclesiastical borders. Until they do so, what right have they to preach peace to separated and suspicious states?"

The church must regard the prevalent economic abuses not as accidental but as normal products of the present system. "This verdict, once it is adopted by Protestantism, as I hold it must be, will end its fatalistic attitude toward social iniquities. It will then proceed to their extermination as its third primal duty."

Perhaps the greatest immediate service which Protestantism can render the world is to redress the balance between church and state. "The reaction against the fatal heresy that the state is unconditional and supreme should be promoted and yet restrained by the church." It is the mission of Protestantism to guard the ethical and religious truths which enrich every political heritage. "It can show that the claims of the individual upon the state and of the state upon the individual are reciprocal. But both sets of claims are conditioned by the fact that man's obligations as a spiritual being must be duly honored."

**What Should Be the Attitude of Missionaries in India to Political Questions?**—An English missionary has tried to answer this question in an article entitled "Christian Missions and the Reforms" in *Young Men of India*, February, 1922. He believes that the missionary should no longer aim at the conversion of men only and let public questions

take care of themselves. Religion embraces all life, and no one can live in water-tight compartments and merely apply religion to individual life. According to his opinion, there is only a small class of missionaries who are radicals; the conservatives are constantly diminishing in number; and the moderates, who belong to the largest group, declare that not only is the development of self-government in accordance with Christian principles but they also demand that reforms shall conduce to the good of India and shall not result in any injury to the work of missions. They believe that the reform should come through the steady development of the powers that the councils now have and through a constructive program of social uplift and constitutional agitation. They admire Mahatma Gandhi but cannot agree with him in adopting methods which will stir up bitter racial passions.

**The Bible League of India, Burma, and Ceylon.**—This new movement just launched in India is similar to that of the Bible Union of China. Its supporters, according to the *Moody Bible Institute Monthly*, February, 1922, will fight to prevent modernism and critical views of the Bible from eating their "deadly way into India." The tendency to acknowledge the merits of non-Christian religions and to regard Christianity as in any way comparable to "heathen faiths" is to be resisted. Thus the "fundamentalist" movement is reaching around the globe.

**Child Marriages in America.**—Recent statistics from the Census Bureau have revealed some rather alarming facts regarding youthful marriages in the United States. According to these statistics 1,600 boys and 14,834 girls, fifteen years of age, entered into the matrimonial relation during the year 1920. Religious leaders and social reformers have been pondering considerably upon that fact. The census reports also state that 82 boys and 499 girls, of the age of fifteen, were either divorced or widowed. According to the figures given by the Census Bureau the number of youthful marriages is increasing from year to year. Here then is another problem which confronts the church and all organized forces which are aiming to establish a better social order.

**Looking toward World-Brotherhood.**—The seventh annual meeting of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches was held during the third week of May, at Cleveland. Much of the finest international feeling in America was expressed by this meeting. The conference adopted a definition of international morality upon which there should be no disagreement among Christians. It ran:

"Nations are the composite development of the individual and are subject alike to the compensations of love and the penalties of injustice,

intrigue, and hate. The Golden Rule grants no exceptions to nations or to any group in the social order. Upon organized society is imposed the binding obligation of obedience to the moral law, and neither parliaments nor rulers can remove the ban. The church everywhere must begin to preach the doctrine of applying to governments and international relationships the same moral and spiritual standards of life as are binding upon individuals."

The conference earnestly requested our government to take part in the recently established Permanent Court of International Justice, since the way is open for America to do so on a basis free from "any further international involvement," and since America has long and consistently contended for the settling of international disputes by law rather than by war.

The conference also strongly recommended that churches organize classes for the study of the principles of the Christian religion in their application to international relations.

**Palestine Today.**—General Allenby's entrance into Jerusalem December 25, 1917, meant the beginning of a new era for Palestine. The *Methodist Quarterly Review* (January, 1922) presents an article upon "The Religious and Social Conditions of Palestine" by J. M. Rowland, who has recently studied that land. The writer tells us that with the breaking of Turkish power in Palestine redemption has come for the women of that country. They are fast throwing off their traditional veils and costumes. The British have established government schools, and the churches have already planted 150 schools in the land. Mosques are almost empty save for lazy loafers. Jerusalem is fast becoming a modern city. It now has a telephone exchange, a splendid new water system, a weekly paper printed in English, Hebrew, and Arabic, electric lights shine over the city, and the people show in many ways that they are catching the spirit of the west.

**The Prohibition Movement in Chile.**—The Latin-American countries look to the United States as a source of inspiration for their political and social reforms. The prohibition movement in Chile is an example of this, according to Ernesto Montenegro, whose discussion of the present temperance propaganda in Chile appears in *Current History* for March, 1922. The writer tells us that for years there has been a steadily increasing propaganda in Chile for the repression of alcoholism. Thirty years ago a National Temperance League was founded in that country, and ten years later a bill was passed for the taxation and control of alcoholic beverages. At the present time the Chilean government is considering



a new temperance project. The plan is to limit the quantity of intoxicating drinks produced at every vintage for five successive years; also to tax every vineyard of the country according to acreage, regardless of the amount they produce. Fifty per cent of the taxes on the vineyards will be used to compensate vinegrowers and distillers who wish to abandon their business and engage in other work. The other 50 per cent of the taxation will be used for temperance propaganda, for stimulating the export of standardized wines and for research work to improve the methods of production of fuel alcohol. The liquor interests are more powerful in Chile than in any other Latin-American country, but it looks as if that state will have the honor of leading in a South American movement toward prohibition.

**The Church and Negro Education.**—The church is playing a large part in the education of the negro in our country. In an article on "Negro Education in the United States," appearing in the *World Call* (March, 1922), H. L. Herod presents some facts relating to negro education and what the church is doing in this work. There are 653 non-state schools devoted to secondary, higher, and private training of negroes. All of the schools are financed mainly through the benevolence of churches and other philanthropic organizations and individuals. The secondary and higher education of the southern negro has been left almost wholly to the church through its mission boards and individual Christian donors. From first to last in all the schools the fundamental aim of character-building is kept to the fore.

There is a great need for many more schools to handle the problem of negro education. More teachers must be trained and a great number of elementary schools and colleges established. It is estimated that in order to meet in any adequate measure the problem of educating our 10,000,000 American negroes there are needed at least 3 university centers, 11 standard colleges, and 20 junior colleges. Here is a great opportunity for the church to carry forward still farther the work which it has so well begun.