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## CURRENT EVENTS AND DISCUSSIONS

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**The Semicentennial of an Interdenominational Church.**—Bethany Union Church of Beverly Hills, Chicago, has just celebrated its fiftieth anniversary, April 30–May 7. It was organized as a Union Church May 5, 1872. A small group of families who at that time had recently moved to what was then the village of Washington Heights found themselves without church privileges. They organized a Union Sunday School, had preaching services conducted in turn by three ministers who lived in or near the village. They felt the need of a permanent organization, but realized its success depended upon holding together all the religious people of the community. As a result Bethany Union Church was organized with fourteen charter members representing six different denominational affiliations. It today has over four hundred members with eighteen or twenty denominational affiliations represented in its membership. It has had seven pastors—three Presbyterians, one Free Baptist, one Methodist, and one Congregationalist. While not affiliated with any one denomination it believes that the Community Church that has the faith of Christ in its heart must have the world in its vision, and therefore it seeks to co-operate with denominational boards and other agencies in the world-wide ministry of the church. The church has its own missionaries in the foreign field. It is situated in a rapidly growing residence section of Chicago and will undoubtedly have a large growth in the next ten years. It welcomes to its membership all who purpose to follow Christ, to live and to labor in his spirit, in faith and hope and love.

**Jesus and His Mother.**—Perhaps no other words grate so harshly upon modern ears as Jesus' words to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" says Dr. W. Beet in the April number of the *Interpreter*, "A mother, it is instinctively felt, has a great deal to do with her son, and has many claims upon him, prominent among these being courtesy, sympathy, and help. No right-minded son could, without a blush of shame, think of himself as rounding upon an anxious mother in such terms as, upon this occasion, fell from the lips of Jesus." And yet "the earthly life of Jesus is rightly esteemed as an example of human life at its highest and its best; and as presenting an ideal which it is

the bounden duty of all men to strive after, if haply they themselves may realize it in the daily routine of life. This being so, it seems, on the face of it, passing strange that the Master himself should be pictured as addressing his mother in terms which we, for all our infirmities of tone and temper, should hesitate to employ." This difficulty is patent, but it ceases to exist in the light of a historical and critical study of the words which Jesus used. Jesus' reply is known to us in translation only, and a translation that has not been able to reproduce the exact coloring of the idiomatic expression of the original. The real meaning of Jesus would be rendered freely in these words, "Lady, leave it to me." Here there is nothing harsh or discourteous. That Jesus' mother had received the answer she hoped for, and that she did not at all feel rebuked but rather satisfied is realized when she hurries off to the servants to warn them, "Whatsoever he bids you, do it."

**Alcohol as a World-Problem.**—An article on the findings of the Sixteenth International Anti-Alcohol Congress, held at Lausanne, Switzerland, August, 1921, is found in the May number of *Review of Reviews*. "As many as 500 members were assembled from all parts of the world, and 32 different governments were represented, including a representative of the Holy See." An international scientific bureau was founded to collect literature on the subject and disseminate it in French, English, and German. Dr. R. Hercod, director of the International Bureau at Lausanne, already announces the publication of a monthly review to combat alcoholism in Europe. Leading representatives of the Congress put the following facts on record as having been scientifically demonstrated: that alcohol exerts a deleterious influence upon the race, that the consumption of alcohol favors certain special diseases, either because it diminishes the resistance to temptation or aggravates and complicates the symptoms of the disease when contracted, and finally, as to the medicinal value of alcohol, the writer cites the statistical reports of the Temperance Hospital in London, where in twenty-seven years, among 17,000 patients treated, the mortality was only 7.5 per cent, which was 10 per cent less than the mortality in the other London hospitals.

**A Call for a Covenant of Church Unity.**—"At the time when the leading nations of the world are entering into a covenant of ten years for the readjustment of their military forces for the sake of keeping the peace of the world, shall not the churches of Christ do likewise? Shall the diplomats of the world be wiser for their generation than the leaders

of the churches?" Speaking for the Congregationalists, Dr. Newman Smyth replies in the May number of the *Christian Union Quarterly*, "Now is the time for practical agreements. Our spiritual unity needs to be made so visible that the man on the street may see it." The following objectives may serve as the basis for continued action:

1. The fellowship of the members of any particular church in and with the members of all other churches.
2. The mutual recognition and utilization of the ministry of the different churches for common needs and service.
3. The offering thereby to our young men of larger fields and greater incentives to enter the ministry, as well as limiting thereby the number of ministers required for effective home service in places where one may be better than two or more.
4. Such gradual consolidation or combination of the educational institutions as would prove advantageous for the best education and fellowship of the ministers of the different churches.
5. The co-operation in philanthropic, social service, mission, or federated work of the different churches.

**Factory Labor in India.**—Some of the economic changes that have come to pass in India are set forth in an article in the May number of the *Review of Reviews*. "We are told among other things that people of all castes are found in the factories, that nobody is deterred by his caste from going to work in these establishments, and that Hindus and Mohammedans work side by side." Here then is a powerful influence in the direction of solidarity among the working classes which has perhaps led to a stronger nationalistic feeling and the precipitation of the present state of unrest. In 1918 there were in India a total of 4,868 large industrial establishments with a working force of 1,238,238 people. However, "there has not yet appeared a sharp distinction between the laboring classes and the people from whom they are emerging. Unlike the wage-earning classes in Europe and America, the majority of the laborers still retain their homesteads, and some of them even own a piece of farm land, small though it may be, and they do not yet depend completely upon wages for their livelihood." In 1921 a resolution was passed in the Indian legislature ratifying the draft convention of the International Labor Conference at Washington of 1919, which reduced the working hours in Indian factories to sixty hours a week for both men and women. Previously the average working time per day for the whole year was approximately twelve hours and five minutes in textile factories.

**The Ethics of the Ministry.**—Almost every profession has its code of ethics. Is the ministry an exception to this rule? An answer is given by Dr. S. Z. Batten in the May number of the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*. Here Dr. Batten points out that “the ministry as a body has no code of professional ethics. Yet the ministry, as a body of men dedicated to a certain life and service, has very rigid standards by which men are pledged and their conduct tested.” A formal code of ethics would be impracticable because it is felt that it would cast discredit upon the very idea of the ministry. Moreover, the religious bodies are divided into so many diverse denominations that it is impossible to bring together representatives of all religious bodies for the full and free discussion of any questions either of faith, polity, or conduct. However, among themselves all religious bodies test the personal lives of their ministers very exactly and this applies to their private as well as public life; whereas, professional codes deal primarily with professional conduct. The churches accept the New Testament instructions as final for the ministry. Here are instructions from Paul and other writers “that deal with a minister’s life and conduct as a man, a husband and father. They define his qualifications in personal character, in aptness to teach, in general deportment. In view of this it seems almost needless to attempt any formal and elaborate statement of professional ethics.” However, in theological seminaries students for the ministry receive very careful instruction in ministerial ethics that deal with the protection of the profession, its standing and dignity, its motive for service, professional honesty, and professional courtesy. They are taught the necessity of a dignified conduct, the abandonment of the motive of mere profit, the obligation to hold sacred confidential information, the courage to speak the truth come what will, co-operation with the Union Minister’s Conference, avoidance of sensational and unfair methods of advertising, and such other considerations as apply in the change of pastorates. Above all, “The true minister’s loyalty must be to an inner standard, to an unseen Master, to the applause of his own conscience.”

**Christian-Jewish Friendship.**—Are the Jew and non-Jew gradually arriving at a mutual understanding and respect which are clean of religious prejudice? This is the opinion of Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, as he gleans over the discussion in a recent symposium where the means to a better understanding between the two faiths were discussed. Jew and non-Jew were invited to a frank discussion, and the result affords a brighter outlook. In the *Literary Digest* for May 20, a quotation from

the rabbi contains the prerequisite for a friendly relationship from a Jewish point of view. Says Dr. Wise, "I maintain there will be no appreciable lessening of prejudice among Christians as against Jews until Christian churches earnestly and solemnly affirm that the death of Jesus, at whosoever's hands, was incidental to the eternal fact of the birth and rise and teaching and influence of Jesus, the young Judean of Nazareth. Whatever Christians may have taught or believed touching this in the past, their duty in the present is clear as are the heavens in the noon hour—the duty of affirming that incalculable and eternal is the debt of Christians to Israel, of whose gifts Jesus is treasured as the chiefest." That there actually is a change of attitude in present-day Judaism toward the historic Jesus is evidenced by Dr. Calisch, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, when he advises a campaign of education among the Jews as follows: "A general expression on the part of the leaders and teachers of the Synagogue of deep appreciation of the profound and far-reaching influence of the man Jesus, and of the sweetness and beauty of his life." On the other hand, we wonder whether historical honesty is not modified when he further continues, "together with a statement of the lack of historical basis for the accusation by the Church of the responsibility of the Jews for the crucifixion of Jesus."