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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

T. Laetsch

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

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Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

I. Amerika

Lutheran Statistics.—From the *News Bulletin of the National Lutheran Council* we take the following, giving figures for the Lutheran Church in America for the year ending December, 1937:

In a single year, from 1936 to 1937, the number of communing members in the Lutheran churches of America was increased by almost 150,000, or 5 per cent. Today there are 2,884,477 communing Lutherans in America. This is compared with 3,481,942 confirmed members (increased by almost 140,000, or 4 per cent., over 1936) and 5,114,250 baptized members (increased by more than 125,000, or 2.5 per cent., over 1926). The number of congregations decreased slightly, but the number of pastors was increased by 159, there being at present 13,024 pastors in America, serving 19,738 congregations. This may be interpreted as a favorable development—indicating less duplication, increased efficiency, and more adequate pastoral care. The number of church-schools was increased by 1,500, or 7 per cent., but the proportionate increases of church-school officers and teachers and church-school scholars, although substantial, were decidedly smaller. In 1937 there were 24,589 schools served by 179,774 teachers for 2,090,983 scholars in the Lutheran churches of America.

The second feature, before mentioned, of these 1937 statistics is that there was indicated a creditable increase in general expenditures. In a single year congregational expenses leaped from \$34,186,294 to \$40,017,827, an increase of almost \$6,000,000 or 18 per cent. The increase was not caused simply by a rise in prosperity; in this case it must indicate a greater stewardship, a heartier cooperation of church-members toward the advancement of the Christian message, for these expenditures provide church facilities that make possible that advancement. This stewardship was evidenced also in contributions for benevolence, which increased more than \$850,000, or 11 per cent., in the single year, making the total 1937 expenditure (congregation expense plus benevolences) of the Lutheran churches in America \$48,668,386. The value of Church properties was increased by \$16,000,000, or 5 per cent., as compared with the 1937 figure of \$370,757,229. A.

Conference of Lutheran Free Church.—The Lutheran Free Church, one of the constituent members of the American Lutheran Conference, held its annual convention in June at Thief River Falls, Minn. A report in the *News Bulletin of the National Lutheran Council* says that nearly five hundred delegates, of whom 102 were pastors, attended. The Rev. T. O. Burndtvedt is president. The size of the body is somewhat indicated by the number of pastors. The organization seeks to raise \$125,000 for a building on the campus of Augsburg Seminary, Minneapolis. At the time of the meeting \$107,800 had either been donated or pledged. Dr. Bernard N. Christensen was elected president of the Augsburg Seminary. This church has a number of missionaries in China. A.

Augustana Synod Meeting.—From the lengthy report appearing in the *Lutheran Companion* on this year's Augustana Synod meeting, held in New York at the end of June, we take a few items that are of special interest. Concerning the debate on the proposed congregational constitution, presented again this year by the respective committee, we read: "The controversial section which deadlocked the delegates assembled in Omaha last year was accepted this year without revision. It stipulates that 'no person shall be received into membership, or retained as a member, who is associated with an organization or movement inconsistent with the Christian faith or which gives offense to the Church of God.'" We rejoice to see this statement, showing that the Augustana Synod officially is opposing the Christless lodge.

The synod resolved "not only to give substantial aid to the sorely tried Gossner Mission of the Lutheran Church in India but also, in case of crisis, to assume responsibility for this field of 140,000 Christians, which is in danger of being lost to the Lutheran Church."

On the situation in China the report says, "Despite the ravages and dangers of the war in China our mission in Honan has hitherto been spared."

Besides conducting Foreign Missions in India and in China, this body has a mission-field in Africa, where the need of advancing the educational work is marked.

Pastor Carfelt, speaking on Home Missions, made the correct observation that "a large indebtedness is a great danger, as it is likely to crush out the very life of the Church." A.

"Union with Lutherans.—To the Editor: . . . There is a righteous passion for reunion in the hearts of Christians today. If we are to look beyond orthodoxy and the Old Catholic churches, why not turn to the Lutherans for fellowship before other Protestants? The family resemblance to the world's 70 millions of Lutherans quickens the imagination. The one serious attempt at Anglo-Lutheran relations in the Conversations of 1935 with the Augustana Synod in the Midwest got nowhere simply because that synod is Episcopophobic (with good reasons) and very pietistic theologically. Before we move on to the Presbyterians, why not return to our German cousins via the United Lutheran Synod? (Rev.) Norman Godfrey."—*The Living Church*, July 6, 1938.

Mr. Clinchy Warns the Church to Stay Poor—and Free.—Few Americans are better informed about relations among the various racial and religious groups in our population than Everett R. Clinchy, executive director of the National Conference of Jews and Christians. Mr. Clinchy has just returned from a two months' stay in Germany, Austria, and other European countries. On the basis of his observations there he offers this counsel to the American Church and synagog: Steadfastly maintain the American separation of Church and State. While individual church- and synagog-members should be politically active and responsible citizens as a matter of course, the religious societies must be non-political. Without doubt a degree of dependence upon subventions of the States has created difficulties for the churches in some other lands. . . . Watch lest the churches become too rich. Let the churches

avoid such degree of entanglement with the status quo as to become apologists for things as they are and neglect their prophetic function. . . .

Every one of these five items is worthy of an editorial, but particularly arresting are the third and the last. Mr. Clinchy sees that only as religion, free from dependence upon any political or economic system, aggressively commits itself to the building of a just and therefore new society, can it hope to escape the fate of becoming either the tool or the victim of some kind of secular totalitarian order. One wonders to what extent the National Conference of Jews and Christians, a largely middle-class organization, will agree with such a description of the situation confronting the churches. — *The Christian Century*, June 15.

"The Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God." — From the sermon on this text (1 Tim. 1:11) preached during the recent General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, North, by Dr. C. E. Macartney, a former Moderator of that Church, we quote the following:

"Years ago a great Christian scholar, Dr. Franz Delitzsch of Leipzig University, made this prediction. Speaking to his students, he said: 'Young men, the battle is now raging around the Old Testament. Soon it will pass into the New Testament field; it is already beginning. Finally it will press forward to the citadel of your faith, the person of Jesus Christ. There the last struggle will occur. I shall not be here then, but some of you will. Be true to Christ, stand up for Him, preach Christ, and Him crucified.' . . .

"The crying need of the hour in the Protestant Church is a revival of faith in the pulpits of her churches and in the students in her theological seminaries. An analysis of the views held by a representative group of five hundred active ministers of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, Congregational, and Evangelical churches reveals the following saddening and alarming facts: Of the five hundred ministers in active service who were interrogated, thirteen per cent. reject the distinguishing doctrine of the Christian Church, the Trinity; forty-eight per cent. reject the Scriptural account of the creation of the world by God; thirty-three per cent. no longer believe in the existence of a devil, whose works Christ said He came to destroy; thirty-eight per cent. do not believe in special revelation; forty-three per cent. reject the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; twenty-eight per cent. do not believe that the Old Testament prophets were so inspired as to be able to predict future events; fifty-five per cent. do not believe that the Bible is wholly free from myth and legend; nineteen per cent. reject the account of the Incarnation as related by St. Matthew and St. Luke, that our Lord was born of the Virgin Mary; nineteen per cent. do not believe that Jesus is equal with God; twenty-four per cent. reject the atonement of Christ on the cross for the remission of sins; twelve per cent. reject the resurrection of Christ as related in the gospels; thirty-four per cent. no longer believe in the future punishment of the finally impenitent; thirty-three per cent. do not believe in the resurrection of the body; twenty-seven per cent. do not believe that our Lord will come again to judge the quick and the dead; thirty-three per cent. reject the fall of man from a state of original righteousness, as taught in the Old and in the New Testament; fifty-one per cent. regard the two Protestant Sacra-

ments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as non-essential; and thirty-nine per cent. think that well-disposed persons who love God and deal justly should be received into the Church regardless of their beliefs concerning the great doctrines of salvation."

"This record of the ministers is bad enough. But more appalling is the record of the unbelief prevailing among two hundred students of five representative theological seminaries of the Protestant Church in America. Thirty-five per cent. reject the Trinity; eighty-two per cent. the devil; ninety-nine per cent. special revelation; ninety-one per cent. plenary inspiration of the Scriptures; sixty-six per cent. prophecy in the sense of prediction; ninety-five per cent. hold that the Bible is not free from myth or legends; fifty-one per cent. reject the virgin birth of our Lord; thirty-seven per cent. do not believe that Jesus was equal with God; sixty-one per cent. do not believe in the atonement on the cross for the sins of the world; thirty-one per cent. do not believe in the resurrection of Jesus as related in the gospels; seventy-six per cent. reject hell; sixty-nine per cent. do not believe in the resurrection of man's body after death; seventy per cent. reject the Fall; fifty-two per cent. reject the second advent of Christ; seventy-eight per cent. regard the Sacraments as non-essential, and eighty-five per cent. of these theological students hold that persons well disposed toward God and man should be taken into the Christian Church regardless of what they believe about Christ and the way of salvation. . . .

"I was once asked to deliver the first lecture on a Foundation established by a godly, believing man at an old Christian college. The terms of the Foundation required a discourse on St. Paul's conception of the atonement. A minister's widow who brought her two sons to the lecture and who hopes and prays that one of them may be brought into the ministry to testify to the great things of God wrote to me afterwards that one of the faculty had said to her after the lecture, 'There is not a member of the faculty of this college who believes in the deity of Jesus, in the inspiration of the Bible, the atonement, or that God answers prayer.' With such a condition obtaining in our colleges, is it strange that our theological seminaries should abound in unbelievers? And with so many of the students in the seminaries unbelievers in the cardinal truths of Christianity, is it strange that our pulpits resound with the echoes of unbelief?"

The conclusion of the sermon: "To you who are strangers to the message of Christ and the Gospel I now with joy proclaim it. This day to you it is preached. It will meet all your needs; it will solve all your problems; it will heal all your wounds; it will comfort all your sorrows; it will take away the stain of all your sins. It is able to keep you from falling and present you faultless before God in heaven. The time to believe the Gospel is when you hear it preached to you. Now is the accepted time. When the people of Antioch at Pisidia refused to listen to Paul, he turned from them and went unto another city. 'Seeing,' he said, 'you put it from you and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles.' Everlasting life is God's great plan and gift for you. Do not neglect so great a salvation. Do not judge yourselves unworthy of it. Choose everlasting life!" E.

"Dr. Frank Buchman Is Sixty."— Under this heading the *Lutheran* of June 29 brings a report of the celebration of Dr. Buchman's sixtieth birthday anniversary, from which we cull the following notes, which undoubtedly will interest our readers:

"On June 4 millions of people in fifty countries of the world celebrated the sixtieth birthday of Frank N. D. Buchman, D. D., a member of the Allentown Conference of the Ministerium of Pennsylvania and founder and leader of the world movement known as the Oxford Group. Though the celebration covered a period of ten days, the climax was reached when on June 4, 1,000 American leaders, educators, clergy, labor leaders, farmers, students, and professional people engaged in a forty-minute two-way telephone celebration with Dr. Buchman and a party of intimate friends, including leaders of Church and State, gathered in London, England. The Americans met in Town Hall, Stockbridge, Mass., and the party with Dr. Buchman were gathered in the large drawing-room of Brown's Hotel, Dover Street. Speeches and music, vocal and instrumental, were amplified both in Stockbridge and London, and this particular party concluded with the thousand gathered in America singing 'Happy Birthday to You.'"

"At a dinner given June 1 in honor of Dr. Buchman in London by the Countess of Antrim thousands of cablegrams were received from all parts of the world. A cabled news-story from London appearing in the *New York Herald Tribune* of June 2 stated that these messages 'came from Arabs, Jews, and Americans in Jerusalem, from British battleships at sea, from Washington and American industrial plants, from Danish farmers, Norwegian fishermen above the Arctic Circle, from Tokyo, Berlin, Oxford, Burma, South Africa, and Sweden.'"

"In the America-England telephone celebration referred to Dr. Buchman said in part: "The fundamental crisis is moral. America must rearm morally. This is our first and most urgent need. This takes precedence over all search for security. . . . Moral recovery creates not crisis, but confidence and unity in all phases of life. How can we release this moral recovery to the nation? We need a power strong enough to change human nature and build bridges between man and man, faction and faction. This starts when every one admits his own faults instead of spotlighting the other fellow's."

"God alone can change human nature. That power active in a minority can be the solvent of a country's problem — one leader changed, a nation's thinking changed, a world at peace with itself."

"We have not yet tapped the great creative sources in the mind of God. God has a plan, and the combined moral and spiritual forces of America can find that plan. We can, we must, and we will generate a moral and spiritual force that is powerful enough to remake America and the world."

T. L.

Barthianism and the Word of God.— Writing on this subject, Rev. David S. Clark, D. D., has some remarks which we trust will prove enlightening.

"According to Barthianism the Scriptures are *not* the word of God; for the Scriptures are written, and whatever is written is human,

and whatever is human is imperfect. This is the paradox, or contradiction, that looms large in the mind of Barth. But if the written Scriptures, even as they come from the hands of prophets and apostles, or even the *Logia* of Christ, are *not* the word of God, what is? Is there any word of God in the world, and if so, where can we find it?

"Now, Barthianism is willing to admit that the Scriptures are very necessary and that the word of God proceeds from the Scriptures, though the Scriptures themselves are *not* the word of God. What, then, is the Barthian word of God?

"Briefly stated, the new cult [?] teaches that the word of God is the spiritual impression or influence made by the agency of the Holy Spirit on the mind of the man as he reads the Scriptures. It is sort of an invisible, intangible, indefinite, psychological something which grips the mind while it uses the Scriptures as means or medium of instruction and inspiration. It is this that is put in the place of the written word. But God might use anything to impress the mind with spiritual lessons; His providence and power are unlimited, and He works with means or without means, when and where and how He will. Some distinction must be drawn between the providential operation and the word of God as such. We had a friend who declared that she was converted by the ringing of the church-bells. In the Barthian view the church-bells were as much the word of God as the Scriptures."

Criticizing the position of Barthianism, Dr. Clark correctly says that in hundreds of places the New Testament refers to what is written as carrying the revelation and authority of God. A.

Christian Education Stressed by a Modernist.—In the *Christian Century* of June 1 a lengthy editorial, written undoubtedly by the editor-in-chief, Charles Clayton Morrison, is printed which has the title "While the Church Waits." Several paragraphs appear here dealing with the problem of the education of our youth, and they are so important and so much to the point that we print them in full. It is amazing what conclusions this Modernist arrives at, conclusions which he here in clear language places before the public, and one feels this man ought to be in cordial sympathy with our efforts to maintain our richly blessed Christian day-schools. We now submit his words, asking our readers to ponder them:

"Space forbids, and the magnitude of the problem makes impossible, more than a passing mention of the third structural task to which a waiting Church must devote itself if it hopes to survive the present interim between two epochs. Religious education, which may be defined as the Church propagating itself, was long since abandoned by the Protestant churches and the whole of education given over to secular control. It is the completely secular character of education which is more responsible than any other single cause for the alienation of modern culture from the Christian faith. For more than fifty years virtually no effort has been made by Protestantism to propagate itself, save by evangelism, which is far less fruitful than is usually imagined, while such fruit as it bears is thin and juiceless when compared with that of a sound educational procedure.

"By its neglect of the educational process Protestantism has allowed at least three generations of its youth to grow up without any serious participation in the Christian faith. Its children are falling between the two stools of secularism on one hand and Roman Catholicism on the other. The problem of Christian education must be attacked by the Church in almost complete disregard of the existing Sunday-school system and of the so-called scientific type of religious education, which is an adaptation of the prevailing secular system to religion. Both of these are pathetically unable to impart the Christian faith to the Church's youth. One thing is clear, and that is that Protestantism must assume its obligation in this field in terms far more formidable than perhaps any of us now envisage. We must think in terms of an expressive and adequate educational institution, manned and controlled by the Church and operating in such a manner as to mold the Church's children into intelligent and loyal members of the Christian community."

Dr. Morrison of course speaks of the Sunday-schools as he knows them; his generalization may be too sweeping. But that on the whole he correctly describes conditions must be granted. What a rebuke his words contain for all those of us who are lukewarm in their support of our Christian day-schools!

A.

The Church of Rome and Masonry.—From an article in *Brazil: The Church and the New Constitution* published in the *Commonweal* of May 27, 1938, we quote the following:

"The reign of Pedro II, lasting over half a century, was a period of significant economic and social development. But it was also a time of grave trial and imminent peril to the Brazilian Church. Ominous forces, which had gained furtive footholds in the last decades of the old regime, now emerged unashamed to shackle the vitality of Catholic life in high places. Freemasonry, of the Grand Orient variety, and a laxity in personal morality settled upon the clergy of the land.

"Specious professions of humanitarian altruism very probably allured the greater number of the clerical members into the lodges. Itself a product of eighteenth-century Liberalism, Freemasonry had allied itself with the political and social ideals of the 'Enlightenment.' Political and social reform advocated by the Masonic lodges seemed desirable to large numbers of the Brazilian clergy.

"Whatever may be the validity of this explanation, by 1850 by far the larger part of the clergy had joined Masonic lodges. And whatever may have been the inducements held out to the clergy to become Masons, it became obvious after the middle of the century, if it had not before, that Masonry had adopted a policy that was antagonistic to the Church, and especially to the Papacy.

"To the credit of large numbers of the clergy it must be admitted that, when this anti-Catholic aspect of Masonry became obvious, many severed their connection with the lodges. Many others, however, continued to retain their membership. This anomalous situation persisted without serious challenge until 1870, when individual bishops began to direct their priests to give up their Masonic connections.

"The half decade from 1870 to 1875 were years of trial for the

Brazilian Church. The Masonic forces marshaled all their strength against the reform movement within the Church which had been inaugurated in 1870. Pressure at home and misrepresentation of the situation to the Holy See retarded the efforts of the reforming bishops to effect the changes so ardently desired. It was not until 1875, when the Masonic group in the government was forced out under the weight of public disapproval, that the Church became in any tangible measure free to carry out reform." T. L.

A Tragedy of Religious Education.—Under this heading we read in the *Watchman-Examiner* of August 11: "From the point of view of nationalistic philosophy there has not appeared in recent literature a more fascinating interpretation of human life than that written by Lin Yutang in his book *The Importance of Living*.—In his latest book Lin reveals that he has reverted to Confucianism, even though he is the son of a Chinese Methodist preacher and was at one time preparing for the ministry. . . .

"The tragedy of his career, however, is related in the section 'Why I Am a Pagan.' . . . As a young Chinese he was brought to this country and found himself in the center of modernistic theology. There all that in his childhood he had been taught to believe was essential to the Christian conviction was openly questioned. He confesses, "Then, enrolling in a theological class and initiated into the holy of holies, I learned that another article in the creed, the Virgin Birth, was open to question, different deans in American theological seminaries holding different views. It enraged me that Chinese believers should be required to believe categorically in this article before they could be baptized, while theologians of the same Church regarded it is an open question.'"

A tragedy indeed! A young Chinese Christian is brought from a pagan country to a Christian country, attends a Christian theological seminary, and the teachings imbibed there lead him back into pagandom! Surely, judgment without mercy shall be passed upon these "theologians" through whose "theology" sheep of Christ are torn out of His arms and delivered over to Satan. T. L.

II. Ausland

Validity of Protestant Marriages in Quebec.—Mixed marriages of Catholics and Protestants have had a hard time in Quebec for many years, but a happier day is dawning for those who tangle the boundaries of faith. Heretofore in Quebec, whose population is 85 per cent. Catholic, the church courts have declared such marriages null and void unless certain required promises were given by the non-Catholic participants previous to the granting of a dispensation by the ecclesiastical authorities. Such an annulment was invariably ratified by the civil courts, and the concurrence of the civil judges was justified on the ground that "the religious principles of old French law have been perpetuated in the Canadian constitutions of 1774, 1791 and 1867." Now a higher voice has spoken. Recently in Montreal, Chief Justice Greenshields of Canada's Superior Court canceled an annulment granted by a Catholic judge because "the minister (a Protestant) was incompetent to perform the marriage and because of a technicality about witnesses." The Chief

Justice, himself an Anglican, gave as his reason for the decision: "Such authority as the Church has in civil matters is given to it by the law of the land, and the Church, and every church, is subservient to, and in no sense dominates, the law. . . . Any Church may bless or curse a marriage to its ecclesiastical heart's content, but it does not in any way affect the validity of the marriage." — *The Lutheran*

Tagung des Exekutivkomitees des Lutherischen Weltkonvents vom 21. bis zum 25. Mai 1938 in Uppsala. Hierüber berichtet D. Hanns Lilje des Längeren in der „A. G. L. N.“ (Nr. 23, Jahrg. 71) mit besonderer Betonung der drei Beratungsgegenstände in diesem Jahr. Was zunächst das Hilfswerk des Konvents betrifft, so wird dies im kommenden Jahr etwa 80,000 Dollars erfordern, und zwar in Verwendung für solche Zwecke wie die reformatorische Bewegung in der Ukraine, die Fürsorge der jungen Kirchen auf den verschiedenen lutherischen Missionsfeldern usw. Der nächste Konvent soll im Mai 1940 in Philadelphia stattfinden; und sollen die folgenden drei Hauptthemata besprochen werden: „Die lutherische Kirche heute. 1. Kirche, Wort und Sakrament. 2. Die Kirche und die Kirchen. 3. Die Kirche in der Welt.“ Diese Themata sind in der gegenwärtigen Zeit fürwahr von Wichtigkeit und sollten nicht vom rein akademischen, sondern vom biblisch-praktischen Standpunkt aus behandelt werden, und zwar so, daß man zum klaren Verständnis darüber kommt, was die verschiedenen Kirchen tun können und müssen, damit es womöglich zur rechten Einigkeit in der Lehre und Praxis kommt. Denn gerade hier hapert es. D. Lilje selbst gibt dies zu, indem er die Schwierigkeiten der Umorganisation des Weltkonvents beschreibt. Er bemerkt: „Es hat sich im Verlauf der nun fast zwanzigjährigen Geschichte des Weltkonvents herausgestellt, daß er zur Durchführung seiner weitgespannten Aufgaben einer festeren verfassungsmäßigen Grundlage bedarf, als es bisher der Fall war.“ Das ist natürlich der Fall und bedarf gar sehr der Betonung.

Aber wie etwa ist diese Grundlage zu schaffen? D. Lilje fährt fort: „Aber die Herausbildung einer gemeinsamen Verfassung ist für den Zusammenschluß so verschiedener Kirchengebilde aus allen Teilen der Welt keine leichte Aufgabe. Denn die äußere Verfassung der verschiedenen lutherischen Kirchen ist außerordentlich verschieden und enthält alle möglichen Formen kirchlicher Organisation, vom bischöflichen Staatskirchentum bis zur presbyterial-synodalen Freikirche. . . . Die Instanzen, die einen Zusammenschluß der lutherischen Kirchen herbeiführen können, sind außerordentlich verschieden; die einen brauchen einen Parlamentsbeschluß, die andern vielleicht nur die Entscheidung des leitenden Gremiums, wieder andere nur die Zustimmung der leitenden geistlichen Spitze. Noch viel wichtiger ist der Unterschied im Verständnis der Kirchengemeinschaft, der viel schwieriger ist, als sich der Außenstehende klarmachen kann. Denn neben der Großzügigkeit und Weite der schwedischen und einiger andern nordischen Kirchen, die offiziell Abendmahlsgemeinschaft mit der Kirche von England haben, steht als äußerster Grenzfall nach der andern Seite die Entschlossenheit, auch denjenigen lutherischen Kirchen die Abendmahlsgemeinschaft zu versagen, die ihrerseits Nichtlutheraner zum Abendmahl zulassen. Der lose Zusammenschluß genügte für die bisherige Hilfsarbeit völlig und vermied eine Reihe grundsätzlicher Schwierigkeiten. Es hat sich aber eindeutig herausgestellt, daß der lutherische Weltkonvent einer festeren verfassungsmäßigen Fundierung bedarf,

wenn er seine künftige Arbeit mit der erforderlichen Großzügigkeit und Autorität tun will. Das hat zu den Verhandlungen über einen neuen Verfassungsentwurf geführt, der bis zum Zusammentritt des nächsten Weltkonvents, 1940, zur Annahme gebracht werden soll.“

Einerseits freut man sich über die Offenheit, mit der sich D. Nilje hier über die Differenzen ausdrückt. Eine solch freimütige Aussprache ist allerdings nötig, soll es zur wirklichen Einigkeit im Weltkonvent kommen. Die Schwierigkeit aber geht doch eigentlich weiter, als was bloß die Verfassung betrifft. Von der schwedischen Kirche z. B. ist es nicht „großzügig“, daß sie mit der englischen Staatskirche Abendmahlsgemeinschaft pflegt, sondern so etwas ist Hochverrat am Lutherischen Bekenntnis und am Wort Gottes. Ein solcher Unionismus hat uns Lutheranern hierzulande einst die Schwedengemeinden im Osten unsers Landes gekostet. Gott bewahre uns vor einer solchen Großzügigkeit, die im Reichgotteskrieg dem Feind die Hauptfestungen in die Hände spielt! Wo Lutheraner und Reformierte zu einem Tisch gehen, da vergreift man sich am Tisch des HERRN und macht unwürdige Kommunikanten. Die Differenzen zwischen den Kirchengemeinschaften betreffen im Grund die Lehre, und darüber muß man verhandeln, und zwar so, daß man sich gegenseitig versteht. Geschieht dies, kommt Gottes Wort zu seinem Recht, so wird der Lutherische Weltkonvent Segen stiften; anders nicht.

J. L. M.

Die Aufgabe der Lutherischen Kirche. Aus einem Artikel, den D. S. Sasse in der von ihm herausgegebenen „Lutherischen Kirche“ veröffentlicht hat und den die „Kirchliche Zeitschrift“ vollständig abdruckt, teilen wir folgendes mit: „Es gibt unter uns viele Einsame und Verzagte: Pfarrer, die auf einsamen Posten stehen inmitten von Kirchengebieten, wo heute selbst das hinfällt, was die Kirche früher auch durch die Zeiten des schlimmsten Verfalls hindurchgerettet hat, der Wortlaut der Heiligen Schrift und die Sakramente des HERRN; junge Theologen, die, vor unlösbare Aufgaben gestellt und in schwere Gewissenskonflikte geworfen, gleich am Anfang ihres Amtslebens die Tiefe der Verzagtheit kennenlernen, in die Gott seine Diener zu allen Zeiten geführt hat und der nur ein ganz gefestigter Glaube, nur ein ganz gereifter Charakter gewachsen ist; treue Christen, die sich im Leben und im Dienst der Gemeinde bewährt haben und die es heute erleben müssen, wie das Gericht, das über die ganze Kirche und ihre Werke ergeht, auch ihre Arbeit trifft. Aber auch dort, wo die kirchlichen Verhältnisse noch in Ordnung zu sein scheinen, wieviel einsame Sorge um die Kirche gibt es da! Wer einen Paul Gerhardt heute lobt wegen seines tapferen Kampfes für das Bekenntnis, für die reine Lehre der Kirche, der darf eines freudigen Wiederhalls in den weitesten kirchlichen Kreisen gewiß sein. Wer aber der Meinung Ausdruck gibt, die Lehre, für die Paul Gerhardt und seine Gesinnungsgenossen gekämpft haben, sei wirklich die reine Lehre der Kirche gewesen, und sie sei heute so wahr, wie sie im 17. Jahrhundert war, wenn sie aber heute nicht mehr stimme, könne sie auch damals nicht richtig gewesen sein, der muß froh sein, wenn er nur auf ein eisiges Schweigen stößt. Wer heute in Deutschland für das Lutherische Bekenntnis eintritt, wie es von Luther und Bezzel in seinem ganzen Wahrheitsernst und mit seiner strengen Ablehnung des Irrtums verstanden worden ist, der steht vereinsamt da. Das wissen unsere Leser und diejenigen vor allem, die in der Freikirche die Last und Not dieser Vereinsamung zu tragen gelernt haben. . .“

„Wir wissen, daß unsere Kirche eine Kirche der Sünder ist und daß die Sünden der andern Kirchen sich sämtlich auch bei uns finden. Aber wir wissen, daß Gott uns ein teures Erbe anvertraut hat, nicht nur für uns, sondern für die ganze Christenheit auf Erden, und daß er uns einst am jüngsten Gerichte fragen wird, ob wir mit unserm Pfunde gewuchert oder ob wir es im Schweißtuch behalten haben. Es ist weder unserer Kirche noch irgendeiner andern damit gedient, wenn wir die Lehre unserer Bekenntnisse in dem großen Meer der Religionsmengerei untergehen lassen, das heute ganze Konfessionen zu verschlingen droht. Es ist auch keine Liebe, wenigstens keine christliche, keine neutestamentliche Liebe, wenn man, nur um andern nicht wehe zu tun, nicht mehr nach Wahrheit und Irrtum fragt. Man sollte sich doch auch einmal fragen, was der wahren Einheit und dem wahren Frieden der Kirche mehr gedient hat, die Gleichgültigkeit, die nicht mehr nach der reinen Lehre fragt, oder die ernste, gewissenhafte Unterscheidung von Wahrheit und Irrtum! „Sehet den Fall“, so sagt C. F. W. Walther, der Kirchenvater der Missourisynode, in einer Reformationspredigt vom Jahre 1876, „als im 4. Jahrhundert die Lehre von Christi Gottheit von Arius angegriffen wurde, daß weder Athanasius noch irgend jemand gegen diese Verfälschung gekämpft hätte; sehet den Fall, als im 5. Jahrhundert die Lehre von der Bekehrung des Menschen allein durch die Gnade von Pelagius angegriffen wurde, daß weder Augustinus noch irgend jemand dagegen gekämpft hätte; sehet den Fall, als im 16. Jahrhundert durch das Papsttum die ganze Lehre Christi verfälscht war, daß weder Luther noch irgend jemand dagegen gekämpft hätte; sehet den Fall, als zu Ende des vorigen Jahrhunderts der Rationalismus in die christliche Kirche einrang, daß niemand dagegen gekämpft hätte: wohl wäre da unendlich viel Streit und Unruhe weniger in der Welt gewesen, aber wo wäre jetzt das reine Wort Gottes?“ (Siehe Amerikanisch-Lutherische Epistelpostille, S. 468.) „Und wenn wir deswegen auch fernerhin mit unserer ganzen Kirche seit Luther und der Konkordienformel vor den Menschen Schmach tragen müssen, wir wollen es gerne tun. Vielleicht ist die Zeit nicht fern, wo sehr viele Christenmenschen, die uns heute noch nicht verstehen, begreifen werden, daß dies Feststehen der lutherischen Kirche, diese scheinbare dogmatische Borniertheit ein Segen für die ganze Christenheit gewesen ist. . . .“

„Es ist gewiß kein Zufall, daß in den verschiedensten Kirchen die Fragen der Sakramente, vor allem des heiligen Abendmahls, in den Mittelpunkt der kirchlichen und theologischen Auseinandersetzungen zu treten begannen. Aber sollte nicht gerade diese Entwicklung darauf hindeuten, daß die lutherische Reformation noch eine Sendung an die ganze Christenheit hat? Es ist vielleicht eine der ganz großen Aufgaben unserer Kirche — eine unter vielen Aufgaben —, daß sie in dieser Lage Luthers tiefes Verständnis des Sakraments in seinem unlöslichen Zusammenhang mit dem Worte des Evangeliums den Kirchen andern Bekenntnisses verkündet. Denn wir meinen ja, daß Luther gerade hierin das Neue Testament tiefer verstanden hat als andere Theologen. Freilich könnte das erst dann geschehen, wenn die lutherische Kirche selbst die vielfach vergessenen Lehren ihrer Reformation sich neu angeeignet hat und wenn wir alle es neu gelernt haben, mit dem tiefen Ernst unserer Väter den Herrn der Kirche zu bitten, „Daß wir dein Wort und Sakrament rein behalten bis an unser End!.“ C.

Brief Items.— It is estimated that there are 450 million Chinese today. Among them, according to a conservative count, there are 450,000 Protestant Christians. The number of Protestant mission workers is 5,753, who are working at 601 mission-stations. Of the appalling darkness which still prevails in China, the following statement, which is taken from the *News Bulletin of the National Lutheran Council*, gives an idea: "In the 1,608 districts into which the country is divided there are 293 with 146,500 villages entirely without any mission-work, and in 206 other districts with 103,000 villages there is very nearly no mission-work."

At the (alas, unionistic!) services held June 27 in the "Old Swedes Church" at Wilmington, Del., the Episcopalians and Lutherans officiating together, a facsimile impression of the Swedish translation of the Bible printed in 1541, the first in the Swedish language, was presented to the church mentioned. As is well known, this church now belongs to the Episcopalians. The occasion was the celebration of the tercentenary of the founding of New Sweden.

The religious press carries the information that on June 4 President Quezon of the Philippine Islands vetoed a bill which provided for compulsory religious instruction in the public schools of these islands. The Catholic bishops are said to continue their propaganda for the enactment of a measure which will introduce religious instruction in the public schools, which would mean, of course, the teaching of the Catholic religion.

A paragraph in the *Lutheran* says that at present one fourth of the marriages in the United States are performed by justices of the peace. Of 669 marriages which were studied, those solemnized by clergymen lasted on an average 7.81 years, while those which took place in the offices of justices of peace had an average length of 5.13 years. These figures have their significance.

One of our exchanges reports that in the territory of the Loyalists in Spain there is a great demand for the Bible. The same item states that according to the decree of the Loyalist Ministry of Defense all military heads have been ordered to grant all facilities to priests and ministers of whatever faith for the unrestricted practise of their religious duties within the limits of camp life. There is no doubt that God's good purpose will be accomplished in spite of the frightful carnage going on in poor bleeding Spain.

The U. L. C. lost a prominent church-worker through the death of the Rev. Paul I. Morentz, missionary among the Jews. He was born in Bessarabia in 1888. In 1907 he embraced Christianity and was baptized. Immediately after his baptism he entered the theological seminary at Chicago, from which he was graduated in 1910. His headquarters was Philadelphia, where he worked among the Jews and from where he regularly supplied other Jewish mission stations.

In the *Lutheran* we read that the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits, who have been welcomed back to Spain by Franco, are said to number 1,983 serving priests and teachers, more than 500,000 students in more

than 12,000 schools, of which 15 are of university grade. In their missions they publish 116 periodicals. They operate 170 orphanages, 33 hospitals, 7 leper stations, and 294 dispensaries besides many other institutions.

Reviewing the excellent positive book of Prof. H. Sasse, of Germany, *Here We Stand*, Dr. John Aberly of the Gettysburg Seminary of the U. L. C., writing in the Lutheran, holds that one need not follow the author "in his view that the Lutheran view is such that it dare not risk fellowship with others." Speaking of the specific doctrines of Lutheranism, he says, "Whether, after all the facts are in, these differences will appear so great as to prevent fellowship is a question that needs wider consideration. May the conclusions finally reached not be those of Lausanne and Edinburgh—that while these do exist, they are not sufficient to form a barrier against closer, if not even altar, fellowship?" Prof. Aberly here speaks as a consistent unionist.

A friend of mine, still happily alive, was one day speaking to her friend, the daughter of Karl Marx. The talk turned, as serious talk so naturally turns, to religion. The daughter of Karl Marx said: "I was brought up without any religion. I do not believe in God." Then she added a little wistfully, "But the other day in an old German book I came across a German prayer, and if the God of that prayer exists, I think I could believe in Him."

"What was that prayer?" asked my friend. Then the daughter of Karl Marx repeated slowly, in German, "Our Father."—*The Presbyterian*.

That the fight against Communism is not without its dangers can be seen from this quotation from the *Covenanter Witness*: "The French-Catholic government in the Canadian province of Quebec is so busy seeking out Communism that it takes to itself the power to search private homes without a warrant and confiscating whatever literature its officers deem improper. The latest is the prohibition of the Baptist Bible Society to circulate its edition of the Scriptures. In Sinclair Lewis's book *It Can't Happen Here* we have Americans who object to Fascism in the United States fleeing to Canada. But they had better stay out of Quebec."

From London comes the news that William Charles Willoughby died. He was a London Mission Society missionary and had become an expert in the Bantu language of Africa. For a number of years he taught in this country at Hartford, Conn.

Strange to say, the *Commonweal*, representing the Roman Catholic layman's point of view, is said to be an opponent of General Franco in Spain, thus taking a different stand from that of the great majority of the Catholic clergy. It is said to have many followers in the ranks of the Roman Catholic laity.

From the University of Chicago it is reported that Dr. Shirley Jackson Case, who for the last five years served as dean of the divinity school and who taught in that school for more than twenty-five years, has relinquished his positions in the divinity school because he has reached the retiring age of sixty-five. A brilliant scholar and lecturer,

he is known as an arch-Modernist. Perhaps in no work of his did his modernistic prejudices become more evident than in the widely heralded volume *Jesus — a New Biography*.

Opposing the view that a minister should refrain from praying at "secular" occasions, a correspondent of the *Christian Century* writes: "It seems to me that it is up to the minister to use the small opportunity given him at such occasions . . . to make a definite impression for real religion. If the minister has what it takes, this can be done. Let the Church hold such small footholds as it has and advance from these tiny positions into larger places in the life of the community and in the hearts of men." The writer forgets that "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven," Eccl. 3:1.

The council of the Episcopal diocese of Virginia, meeting in Richmond, according to the *Christian Century* "adopted a canon forbidding any minister of the Church to solemnize a marriage in the diocese unless and until each contracting party presents a medical certificate from a qualified physician indicating that he or she is free from any communicable venereal disease." Another remarkable feature of this meeting was a debate on the proposal that "the term of every rector shall be limited to five years unless the congregation acts to prolong it." The motion was lost; but imagine the chuckle with which old-fashioned Methodists must have read this indirect indorsement of their system.

According to one of our exchanges Catholic papers in the United States admit that thousands of Roman Catholics living in Austria are deserting their Church and adopting the new Nazi religion. "In the first six weeks after annexation 46,000 individuals gave up their allegiance to the Church in Vienna alone. An average of 6,000 per week leave the Church in the Vienna archdiocese." If this away-from-Rome movement meant that thousands now embrace the cause of the pure Gospel, one could rejoice. As it is, these poor people are merely passing from one darkness into another.

At the recent convention of the Augustana Synod held in New York 26 candidates were ordained as ministers. One striking feature of the method followed by the Augustana Synod in such cases is that, while the doctrinal examination of the candidates is left to the theological seminaries, the convention examines them as to their personal life and religious experience.

Several months ago occurred the death of a well-known New Testament scholar of Germany, Dr. Adolf Schlatter, who was surprisingly active as an author, furnishing especially valuable commentaries on New Testament books. Born 1852 at St. Gall, he was nearing the completion of his eighty-sixth year at the time of his death. Though he largely worked in Lutheran circles, he fundamentally was Reformed in his theology. A feature of his work that deserves commendatory mention is that he never lost sight of the practical aims which theology, if it is not to degenerate into mere intellectualism, must have. It was chiefly in Tuebingen where he served as professor and attracted many students. On the whole he was conservative in his theological views.

A.