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## Miscellanea

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## Miscellanea

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### Catholic Action

Rome never changes. It is still dreaming of world dominion for the Catholic Church and is striving for control in every field of human activity. To further the aims of Catholicism and to achieve the ultimate goal in our country, various organizations have been called into existence. Among them are the following: The National Catholic Welfare Conference, National Council of Catholic Men, National Council of Catholic Women, Diocesan Council, Holy Name Society, Catholic Central Verein of America, Society of St. Vincent de Paul, National Catholic Alumni Federation, International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, Convert League, and Christ-child Society. The goal toward which these organizations are tending is clearly set forth in the following general aims of the National Council of Catholic Men:

1. To serve as the channel for the interchange of information and service between the National Catholic Welfare Conference and the laity in their common work for the Church.
2. To be a central clearing-house of information regarding activities of Catholic men and women.
3. To promote under ecclesiastical supervision unity and cooperation among clergy and laity in matters that affect the general welfare of the Church and of the nation.
4. To aid existing Catholic organizations to work more effectively in their own localities.
5. To cooperate in furthering the aims of all approved movements in the interests of the Church and society at large.
6. To participate through Catholic lay representation in national and international movements involving moral questions.
7. To bring about a better understanding and a more wide-spread appreciation of Catholic principles and ideals in our educational, social, and civic life.

In reviewing these aims we note that through this organization the Catholic Church as a visible entity desires to introduce its ideals into all phases of American life, civic, economical, political, cultural. Effective as the work of this organization and related organizations has been in furthering Catholic principles, in striving to regain the loyalty of apostate Catholics, and in removing prejudices against Catholicism among non-Catholics, progress was not as rapid and thoroughgoing as the hierarchy desired it to be. New life and new energy had to be injected into the whole fabric of Church organizations if Romanism was to thrive and grow after the reverses which it has suffered in recent decades. Formerly the burden for the propagation of Catholic faith, morals, and principles lay chiefly upon the priesthood and holy orders; but since 1928 the laity, under the specific guidance of the hierarchy, from the Pope down to the parish priest, was also to be enlisted in the task of strengthening Catholicism and in the duty of carrying the Roman conception of Christianity into every sphere of private and public life and into the affairs of government. This new life, this new hope, and this new

aspiration are being infiltrated into Catholic thinking and activity through a movement known as Catholic Action, the Lay Apostolate. This movement is not a new organization but a new spirit pervading the old organizations, a whipping up of enthusiasm for things Catholic, and a determination to claim the world as the spiritual and temporal realm of the Pope.

In a letter dated July 28, 1928, Pope Pius XI defined Catholic Action in the following words:

. . . the part taken by the Catholic laity in the apostolic mission of the Church with the object of defending the principles of faith and morals and of spreading a sane and beneficial social action so as to restore Catholic life in the home and in society. This is to be done under the guidance of the hierarchy of the Church, outside and above all party politics. . . . If by the necessity of connection of matters organized Catholic Action must go down to the economic and social field, touching even political subjects, it does so only because of supernatural interests and the moral and religious welfare of individuals and peoples.

Speaking before a group of priests, seminarians, sisters, and laymen at St. Francis Xavier College Hall in the fall of 1934, the Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S. J., editor of the *Queen's Work*, impressed on the minds of those present that Catholic Action is "twenty-four-hours-a-day religion, cooperation of the laity with the hierarchy, expert professional Catholicity, a struggle against apathy, and a knowledge of the person of Christ and an enthusiasm for His leadership."

Archbishop Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, apostolic delegate to Mexico, has expressed himself on Catholic Action as follows:

Catholic Action cannot or should not be confounded with civil or political action. The purpose of Catholic Action is to form practical Catholics who will know their duties, who will have true character and will practise their religion in every activity of life, in their own consciences, in their families, in their professions, in their social relations, and in their duties with regard to the public good, by avoiding all disturbance and without forming any political party, by remaining Catholics free to choose, as their own consciences dictate, the party which for them is most beneficial.

Literature on Catholic Action is making constant reference to the Mass and the mystical body of Christ. This is natural and quite logical in Catholic thinking. By extolling the sublimity of the Mass and emphasizing the importance of the priesthood, the laymen are made to see and feel their dependence on the hierarchy and are more easily led into the channels of the lay apostolate.

In Catholic Action there is an unmistakable echo of the principles of Jesuitism and an attempt to approximate the unlimited and unqualified obedience of the Jesuits among the laity. The precision and the mobility of the Jesuit order, however, cannot be achieved among lay workers; but what is lost on this score is gained through an increasingly larger number of lay people who are dedicating themselves to an active participation in living and spreading the tenets of Rome. If possible, the entire man-power of the Catholic Church is to be captivated by this movement and placed in the service of the Church. But since gifts, mental acumen, and personalities vary widely, persons with outstanding qualifications are chosen and painstakingly trained to

occupy strategic positions for the protection of Catholic interests and the promulgation of Catholic thinking among educators, editors of newspapers and magazines, legislators, social-service workers, and among all whose duty and privilege it is to influence others.

In Catholic Action classes, which are being conducted throughout our country, the dominant note is urgency, aggressiveness, and resolution, centered around topics like the following: The necessity of rewriting incorrect history and fostering the renaissance of Catholic philosophy; the value of hearing the best Catholic sermons, lectures, and radio broadcasts; the rewards of attending a Catholic college or university; the joy and benefit of reading and studying Catholic essays, drama, magazines, newspapers, biographies, and fiction. All this discussion and this study have but one purpose—to focus the attention upon Catholicism and to move the “faithful” to widen out the sphere of the Church’s influence. The present-day nervous, hectic, and chaotic world condition seems to be most auspicious for an energetic and well-planned drive in the interest of Rome. Men are longing for security and seem to be ready to submit to any one who can exercise enough authority to turn confusion into peace, insecurity into security. Since the hierarchy of Rome claims to be able to establish the kingdom of Christ on earth and fulfil the innermost longings of the human heart, the Pope is urging all Catholics, under the leadership and guidance of the hierarchy, to take advantage of present-day conditions and explore them to the fullest extent for the aggrandizement of Rome. He has said time and again that Catholic Action “must rightly deserve the name of Social Action.” And in emphasizing the necessity of drawing in new members and spreading the influence of Rome, he spoke these words: “You undertake an arduous task, but you also will reap special consolations. Catholic Action is in your hands. It is for you to make it into the success which it is bound to be if it is undertaken with zeal.”

Rome never changes. It desires to bring back a state such as that which obtained in the Middle Ages, when the Pope at times was the absolute ruler also in things temporal. But we who are Lutherans pray God that such a period may not return to plague the souls of men. Rome has never been a blessing to any people as the annals of Europe, Mexico, and South America amply prove. That which concerns us Lutherans most of all is Rome’s anti-Biblical teaching on the justification of a sinner before God. In spite of Biblical terminology Rome’s position is essentially pagan and hence cannot be a blessing to any one. He who trusts in purgatory and the supererogatory works of the saints for the salvation of his soul is misled. Action for the benefit of the human soul both here and in the hereafter is eminently necessary, but it does not lie in Catholic Action. It lies alone in the pure, full proclamation of the Gospel of our Lord, which gives forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation to every one who humbly believes in the Lord and His redemptive work. O Lord, imbue us with Thy Spirit and send us forth with Thy Gospel-call to work “while it is day, before the night cometh when no man can work.”

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Oak Glen, Ill.

ALEX WM. C. GUEBERT

**From the Archeologist's Note-Book**

From time to time we have reported the progress of the Nubian expedition of the Egypt Exploration Society. (See *C. T. M.*, May, 1937, p. 391, and February, 1938, p. 134.) The second season of excavations at Sesebi began December 20, 1937. All exploratory work at this site was completed February 13, 1938. On the termination of this work the men and equipment were taken to the society's new concession at Hamarah, and twelve days were spent examining the ancient site of Hamarah West. This site bids fair to become of great interest to the student of Old Testament history, particularly the periods of the Oppression and the Exodus.

Hamarah West is a large mound, covering a town buried deep in the sand. The ancient town seems to have suffered little from modern looting, and all houses are well preserved. The walls of the temple are inscribed both within and without. As the walls are preserved to a height of six or seven feet, a sizeable proportion of reliefs and inscriptions remain, many of them retaining their original colors. There are historical inscriptions of Rameses II, Merneptah, Rameses VI, and Rameses IX. Noteworthy are two large stelae of Rameses II. The expedition found evidence of an occupation of the town before the rise of the second Rameses, an occupation not later than the XVIIIth dynasty. Field Director H. W. Fairman writes: "It is clear that the site is a well-preserved one that will produce interesting results, including much inscriptional material, and there is every hope of finding objects, including statuary, in a good state of preservation. The site should well repay excavation."

The joint expedition of the Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale at Cairo and the University of Warsaw began on January 3, 1937, its excavation at important Tell-Edfu. The first season's work closed February 26, 1938. Its rich results are described in their 1937 volume of *Tell Edfou*. Among the finds are a considerable number of Greek ostraca from the Jewish quarter, a few Latin ostraca, and some Byzantine papyri. In a private letter, the editor, Prof. J. Manteuffel of the Institut Français, writes that some more Greek texts are discovered. Papyrologists hope that our stock of papyri from Edfu may be yet further increased. The report figured large at the Twentieth International Congress of Orientalists, which was held at Brussels, September 5-10, 1938, under the

patronage of the King of the Belgians. Presiding at the congress was Prof. J. Capart, who is also president of the Egyptology section. Prof. G. Ryckmans of the University of Louvain served as secretary.

The continuing warfare between Ishmael and Isaac in Palestine sadly tore into the Wellcome-Marston Expedition when, on January 10, 1938, Director J. L. Starkey of the expedition was shot dead in his car by Arabs while on his way to the opening of the new Archeological Museum in Jerusalem. For a number of years Mr. Starkey was associated with the celebrated Sir Flinders Petrie, whose outstanding work in the field of papyrology is well known to many of our Greek-loving pastors. He joined Sir Flinders in Egypt in 1922, later following him to Palestine. In 1932 Starkey began to excavate Tell ed-Duwer (the ancient Lachish) in Southern Palestine with the support of Sir Henry Wellcome, Sir Charles Marston, Sir Robert Mound, and later the trustees of the Wellcome Foundation. His work at the Lachish site, on which he was still engaged at the time of his death at the age of forty-five, uncovered, among many other objects, a bowl giving valuable evidence of the use of the "Sinai script" in Palestine, and later the remarkable group of Hebrew ostraca on sherds of about 600 A. D., a century prior to the Arab conquest. The remains were interred at the Protestant Cemetery on Mount Zion, January 11, and a week later a memorial service, attended by a large number of archeologists, was held at St. Margaret's, Westminster.

Our note-book contains another death notice this time, viz., that of Prof. Carl Schmidt, who died in Cairo on Easter Day, 1938, at the age of seventy. Professor Schmidt will be remembered as the editor of the most important Coptic texts and the discoverer of many of the most important Coptic manuscripts. Originally from Mecklenburg, he became a pupil of Erman and Steindorff in Berlin besides attaining distinction as a classical scholar. But his bent was always toward historical theology, and from 1899 onwards he taught in the theological faculty of the Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universitaet (Berlin), partly our own alma mater. Here, for many years, he was a close friend and colleague of Harnack. His prolific publications included critical editions of the Bruce Gnostic Papyri in the Bodleian Library, of the Acts of Paul, in the then unknown Coptic dialect, of the *Epistle of Clement* in Achmimic, and of the *Dialogs of Jesus and His Disciples (Gespraech Jesu)*. Some of his most valuable work was done upon the *Pistis Sophia*, which he edited and translated anew. All his works are characterized by the minutest care and accuracy. The Gnostic heresies and extracanonical literature were his chief interest. His last years were absorbed by the newly discovered Manichaeian Papyri. At the end of his fruitful life, and resultant from his most painstaking studies of the Apocrypha, Professor Schmidt conceived it as his solemn duty to write in defense of the authenticity of the canonical Christian documents, which were then being attacked with more pagan zeal than knowledge by the partisans of General Ludendorff's antichristian movement.

Important additions to our stock of early Christian letters are contained in the Rendel Harris Papyri, just published by the Cambridge University Press. No. 107 of the miscellaneous selection of private letters dates from the beginning of the third century, and thus it ranks among

the earliest remains of Christian epistolography. Strangely enough, the writer invokes τῷ πατρὶ θεῷ τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τῷ παρακλήτῳ πνεύματι, but makes no mention of the Son, and he invokes a threefold blessing upon his correspondent: τῷ μὲν σώματι ὑγίαν (*sic*), τῷ δὲ πνεύματι εὐθυμίαν, τῇ δὲ ψυχῇ ζώην αἰώνιον.

Los Angeles, Calif.

R. T. DU BRAU

### The Theological Seminary

An article by Dr. Earle V. Pierce, printed in the *Watchman-Examiner*, says some things in reference to a theological seminary which are also of interest to us. We quote:

"Whoever trains the future leaders grips the coming generations. . . . A seminary is needed to pour forth a stream of truth uncontaminated by the false philosophies of the age. *What is a seminary to be?* This is the second question. It is to be primarily personalities. Equipment is valuable, but it stands in third place. Scholarship counts, but it is second. The chief teaching is the teachers. It is the impress of personalities that sends forth youth to impress others. One teacher for five years shaped my ideals and intellect. When I got to the university, where electives were possible, I picked out the men I wanted to be under and took whatever they had; I would do it again. Garfield's definition of a college of liberal education as a log with Mark Hopkins on one end and a farmer boy on the other is a classic. Let us have scholars in the chairs of our seminaries, men who are thoroughly equipped; but if they are not great, inspiring personalities, their work will be pedantic and their fruit woody. . . .

"*What is a seminary to produce?* A seminary should produce proficient preachers and pastors. This is the test of a seminary. It tends to reproduce itself. Its success is in the success of the men it sends forth.

"Its graduates should be qualified for a spiritual ministry. They should above all things bring warmth and love to the churches. Scholarship is valuable if it has a soul, but it is an arid desert if it does not have flowing through it the river of great love for God and for the souls of men. Diamonds are sparkling to look at, but you cannot eat them. Pastors are to be spiritual and not carnal. They are to be men of God. Some one has truly said that the greatest single force for good in a community is a godly minister. Seminaries should train in 'perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' . . .

"A seminary is charged with the duty of preparing students for a successful ministry. Business colleges realize they must be able to say, 'This graduate will do the work.' Medical schools must not turn a man out until they are sure he knows how to treat human bodies. Seminaries have been weak here. They do not sift their men thoroughly enough. . . . The category of the qualifications for success beyond the academic is fairly simple but searching. First, does he have common sense? Theodore Cuyler says to the young pastor: 'If you do not have education, you can get that; if you do not have culture, that can be given you; if you do not have books, you can buy them; but if you do not have common sense, God pity you, for there is no place where you

can get this.' It ought to be possible in three years of training to learn whether a student has common sense. If not, do not send him out to the churches. Then, is he a man of prayer? . . . Pastors need to know their Bibles better than most of them do. A weakness of seminaries has been that they have majored on studies about the Bible rather than upon the Bible itself. . . . There can be no real success without a love for souls, a love for people as such and for their eternal welfare. Pastors must love people as they are if they would change them to what they ought to be.

"The Bible tells us pastors must be 'apt to teach.' This requirement would weed out a multitude if strictly applied, and the Church would be the better off for the weeding. . . .

"So the pastor needs to be taught how to think and how to study and to have habits of study. It may be a misnomer to call a certain room that the pastor has a study. Often it is only an office and frequently just a loafing-place. For the primary sin of preachers is laziness. The 'seven deadly sins' very fitly have sloth at the center. It can account for all the rest. Spiritual, mental, and physical sloth cause more of the failure of pastors and preachers than any other one sin or deficiency. A seminary should make it impossible for a man morally or physically lazy to be continued."

J. H. C. F.

### For What Purpose do We Approach the Lord's Table?

Our synodical Catechism answers this question, in the first place, by saying: "Chiefly for the strengthening of our faith in the forgiveness of our sins through our Lord Jesus Christ." This reply is certainly in agreement with Scripture and has always been offered and sustained by our Lutheran teachers. Dietrich, for example, in his catechism (used in our Church in former years) answers the question as follows: "To strengthen my faith in my Lord Jesus Christ and by receiving His body and blood to refresh and quicken my hungry and thirsty soul." In substantial accord with this reply is also that in "Christian Questions with Their Answers," which certainly present Luther's doctrine on this point, even if they were not drawn up by him, as modern scholars claim. Question No. 18 reads: "Finally, why do you wish to go to the Sacrament?" and the answer is: "That I may learn to believe that Christ died for my sins out of great love, as before said, and that I may also learn of Him to love God and my neighbor." The words "That I may learn that Christ died for my sins out of great love" means essentially the same as "to strengthen my faith in my Lord Jesus Christ." That the Holy Supper is to strengthen our faith in the gracious remission of our sins is obvious from the fact that it is the *sacramentum confirmationis*, or the Sacrament which confirms, while Holy Baptism is the *sacramentum initiationis*, or the Sacrament which, by engendering faith in us, receives us into Christ's Kingdom of Grace. In other words, it is the peculiar function of the Holy Supper to strengthen that true, saving faith in Christ which the Holy Ghost already has engendered in the believer through Baptism or the oral proclamation of the Gospel or through both.

With this answer in view, the question has been raised whether it is



right to say that in the Lord's Supper "we receive forgiveness of our sins" or, putting it differently, that "the Lord's Supper imparts to the communicant forgiveness of sins." The claim has been made, first, that the statement is not Lutheran since Luther himself never used it; secondly, that it leads to misunderstanding on the part of the laity, just as if "they might do as they please" and yet, "coming to the Lord's Table, receive forgiveness of sins." In other words, the statement, it has been judged, leads to, and promotes, *externalism* or belief in *quasi ex-opere-operato* impartation of grace. For these reasons it has been urged that the statement "The Lord's Supper imparts to us forgiveness of sins" ought not to be used in our sermons and confirmation instruction. So far the contention.

In considering the problem before us, we must remember that it is not our Lutheran dogmaticians who denied that "in the Lord's Supper we receive forgiveness of sins" but the papists. Touching on this point in his *Christliche Dogmatik* (III, 343 ff., 438 ff.), Dr. Pieper writes: "The remission of sins as *finis cuius* of the Lord's Supper the Romanists deny. The Council of Trent anathematizes those who designate as the chief purpose of the Lord's Supper the *remission of sins*." On page 396, note 1,282, he quotes the declaration of the Council of Trent (*De Sacrosancto Euch.*, can. 5): "*Si quis dixerit, praecipuum fructum eucharistiae esse remissionem peccatorum, anathema sit.*" In the same way, as Dr. Pieper further shows, also the Reformed deny that "the Lord's Supper imparts to us the forgiveness of sins." Dr. Pieper writes: "Carlstadt tried to instruct Christians: 'That is a common and detestable offense that our Christians seek forgiveness of sins in the Sacrament.' In the same way also Zwingli admonishes that we indeed must celebrate the Lord's Supper as a commemoration of Christ's death but that at the same time 'we must beware of the thought that in the Lord's Supper there is offered to us forgiveness of sins.' The same distinction is urged by Calvin. The *Consensus Tigurinus* warns against the idea as if 'the visible sign, while it is being offered, secured in the same moment also the grace of God.'" (Cf. III, 438.)

Positively Dr. Pieper declares that in common with the Gospel and Holy Baptism the Lord's Supper is a *means of justification* (*ein Rechtfertigungsmedium, medium iustificationis sive remissionis peccatorum*). He writes: "Also the Lord's Supper is no more and no less than a means instituted by Christ by which He offers and bestows the forgiveness of sins, secured (*erworben*) by Him, to those who partake of the meal. In other words, the Lord's Supper does not belong to the Law but is pure Gospel; that is, it is not a work which we do for Christ but a work which Christ does to us (*an uns*). It is a work of Christ by which He assures us that through His vicarious death we have a gracious God. This truth is expressed clearly by the words which Christ uses at the institution of the Lord's Supper; for when Christ says: 'Take, eat; this is My body, which is given for you'; and: 'This is My blood, which is shed for you,' we can understand these words in no other sense than in this, that we ourselves no longer should pay for our sins before God but that our sins have already been paid through Christ's body given for us and through Christ's blood shed for us. Luther therefore is right when he declares:

"The Mass [the Lord's Supper] is no work or sacrifice but a word or sign of divine grace which God employs on our behalf to establish and strengthen our faith in Him' (that is, our faith that He is gracious to us). In the Apology we read: 'The Sacrament was instituted for the purpose of being a seal and testimony of the free remission of sins and that, accordingly, it ought to admonish alarmed consciences to be truly confident and believe that their sins are freely remitted.' (*Triglot*, 400, 49.) . . . In the Lord's Supper the individual absolution from the guilt of sin, which is meant for each person, is confirmed and sealed through the bestowal of the body of Christ, which was given for us, and through the bestowal of the blood of Christ, which was shed for us. By this the Lord's Supper distinguishes itself from the other means of grace." (III, 343 f.) On page 436 Dr. Pieper writes: "In spite of this fact [i. e., Luther's stout defense of the real presence] the *real presence* is to Luther only the *means to the end* (*Mittel zum Zweck*), namely, the means to impart and confirm the forgiveness of sins, and this indeed through the added words of Christ: 'given and shed for you for the remission of sins.' After Luther, in his *Large Catechism*, has proved from Scripture 'the first point, which relates to the essence of this Sacrament,' that is, the real presence, he says of its purpose, 'on account of which really the Sacrament was instituted,' namely, of the imparting of the forgiveness of sins, 'which is also its most necessary part, that we may know what we should seek and obtain there. Now, this is plain and clear from the words just mentioned: 'This is My body and blood, given and shed for you for the remission of sins.' Briefly, this is as much as to say: For this reason we go to the Sacrament because there we receive such a treasure by and in which we obtain forgiveness of sins. (*Triglot*, 757.) Luther by no means put the *real presence* in the place of the *sola fides*, but he retains the real presence as the support (*Stuetze*) of the *sola fides*, as Christ intended this to be. The Lord's Supper is to him a 'food of souls, which nourishes and strengthens the new man.' 'It is given for a daily pasture and sustenance that faith may refresh and strengthen itself.' (*Triglot*, 759.) But the 'faith' of which Luther here speaks is to him nothing else than *the faith in the remission of sins.*" So far Dr. Pieper to show that in the Lord's Supper we actually receive forgiveness of sins.

With these clear and emphatic statements before us, it is hardly necessary to add anything in support of the truth that the Holy Supper imparts to us forgiveness of sins. But we may approach and settle the matter from still another angle. In the first place, since the Lord's Supper, as Dr. Pieper so clearly shows, belongs, not to the Law but to the Gospel, it needs must offer, convey, and seal to us the gracious forgiveness of our sins, for just that is the peculiar function of the blessed Gospel. Here applies Article IV of Luther's sublime Smalcald Articles: "We will now return to the Gospel, which not merely in one way gives us counsel and aid against sin; for God is superabundantly rich and liberal in His grace and goodness. First, through the spoken Word by which the forgiveness of sins is preached in the whole world; which is the peculiar office of the Gospel. Secondly, through Baptism. Thirdly, through the holy Sacrament of the Altar. Fourthly, through the

power of the keys and also through the mutual conversation and consolation of brethren, Matt. 18:20." Here Luther affirms that in the Holy Supper we receive the same remission of sins which is offered to all men in the spoken Word or in Baptism or in Absolution.

Again, the Lord's Supper could not strengthen our faith in the gracious forgiveness of our sins if it did not at the same time offer and impart to us the free remission of our sins, in other words, if it were not from beginning to end God's sweet and blessed Gospel promise of plenary pardon; for how could our faith be strengthened by anything else than the Gospel and its wonderful promise? For this reason there must be no controversy on this point. Carnally secure communicants who incline to externalism must be reproved by the Law and its terrors but never by withholding from those who come to the Lord's Table anything of the precious Gospel which God has connected with this Sacrament. To do so is Romanistic and not Lutheran practise. Let Lutheran ministers therefore open to those who kneel at the Lord's Table the full fountain of salvation and strengthen them with the promise of forgiveness in Christ Jesus.

J. THEODORE MUELLER

### How a Jew Won Another Jew for Christ

In the *Lutheran Companion* we find an interesting article treating of Professor Kohnstamm of the Dutch Foreign Missions Board and of the manner in which he arrived at a fuller understanding of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. After relating how Kohnstamm when a student had been influenced by one of his professors who was a devout Christian, the author gives the following account of how matters further developed in this eminent man's life and thinking:

"But he had still a long way to go between the recognition of Jesus as a great and inspiring teacher and the acceptance of Him as the object of his personal faith. It is interesting to follow him through the various stages by which his prejudices were removed, his faith in Jesus enlarged, and the necessity of an open confession passed into conviction and action. With the passage of the years had come his marriage, his appointment as a teacher in the university, and his recognition as an outstanding scholar. But in spite of his love for the Bible and his growing esteem for Jesus, religion was for him largely a thing apart; it was not central in his life and thought.

"Hitherto, under the influence of liberal individualism, he clung to the opinion that a man's religious views are his own and do not require definite form or expression. In one's relationship with others it is never necessary to voice one's deepest convictions. But in a political meeting in a small Netherlands village, where he was called upon to face a company of anarchist basket-weavers, it became necessary to answer clearly and frankly their own positive claims. He was conscious of vagueness and uncertainty. 'In reply,' he says, 'it was up to me to attempt to make clear to these dear folk why I could not share their views. I was conscious that I had miserably failed. I had not learned to give form and expression to my religious faith, which really inspired and guided me, in a language which I myself as well as others could understand.'

"At this stage help came from an unexpected source. A nephew of his father came from Germany to visit him for several weeks. This relative held Professor Kohnstamm in high esteem, and he paid great respect to his views on important questions. But there was one point that was entirely incomprehensible to him.

"It was not," says Professor Kohnstamm, "that I, an intellectual, above all a physicist, should call myself religious. That to him was sufficiently odd, yet he could conceive the possibility. But that I, a Jew, should accept Christianity, that for him was sheer nonsense. He challenged me to point out a single idea or truth in the New Testament that was new. I thought at first my task was an easy one and proceeded to formulate a whole series of theses, such as man's relationship to God as Father, his acceptance with God by mercy and grace rather than because of any merit on his side, the unity of mankind, and the revelation through suffering as well as the meaning of the cross, and much more. To my astonishment he took exception one by one to all my theses, basing his argument on a knowledge of the Bible that I had never suspected he possessed. He held that that which I had declared to be Christian teaching, statement by statement, could be found, if not explicitly, at least in embryo, in the Old Testament.

"Yet I knew that in spite of the truth of his statements he was none the less wrong; for the Bible is a unity. But I could not explain what I meant in a manner which could satisfy me, much less him. Suddenly, in reading Hermann's book on *The Christian's Communion with God*, the answer came, the answer for myself as well as for my cousin. I went to him and said: "You are right. There is nothing of wisdom in the New Testament which is not found in the Old. But in the New Testament there is One that is new, Jesus Christ, and without Him I cannot live."

"He stared at me in wondering amazement and said quietly: "That being the case, there can be no further use for argument with you." I, however, knew that I had found Him in whom alone the kingdom of God can and will be victorious."

"But in spite of all this, for various reasons, four more years passed before he was able without reservation of any kind to make public confession of his faith in Jesus Christ as his Savior and Lord. He had come to place a high estimate on the obligations of the Christian life, knowing that one could become Christ's follower only through complete surrender of self. On an Easter Sunday, a few years ago, he was publicly received as a member of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, as one of the great fellowship in Christ, in which it is one's unspeakable privilege to be a witness and servant." A.

### "Luther an Instigator of Persecution during the Peasants' War"

The *Presbyterian* of October 13, 1938, writes: "Men like Dwight L. Moody have done more to redeem the unregenerate and build up the Kingdom than a whole army of inquisitors. John Calvin is a nobler character when he is writing his *Institutes* than when he is consenting

to the death of Servetus. Luther is closer to our hearts when he proclaims the good tidings of justification by faith than when he becomes an instigator of persecution during the Peasants' War." It is surprising that a publication like the *Presbyterian*, usually so well informed, would make such a pronouncement concerning Luther. It is true indeed that this myth concerning Luther has just about gained the status of an established historical fact. Generation after generation repeats it. It is trotted out year after year. Anything to discredit Luther! "*It Began in Galilee*," by R. J. Barker, published in 1938, pounces upon it: "Of the other writings in the New Testament, it will be enough to refer to James and John. The man who took sides with the princes against the peasants called the Letter of James an 'epistle of straw.'" (P. 76.) The *Western Watchman* (Catholic) makes much of it: "Luther prided himself on the orgy, saying: 'I, Martin Luther, slew all the peasants; for I said that they should be slain.'" (See the *Pastor's Monthly*, 1932, p. 621.) The *Western Christian Advocate* believes in it. "Having aroused the people, Luther deserted them. . . and said: 'Dear lords, smite, stab, destroy; whoever dies fighting for authority is a martyr before God.'" (See *Theol. Monthly*, 1928, p. 26.) *Colliers' Weekly* is much exercised about it. "When the peasants revolted against their intolerable lot, they, of course, expected to find in the arch-revolver Martin Luther a sympathetic friend. But 'a rebel is outlawed of God and the Kaiser,' said the prophet contemptuously. 'Therefore, who can, shall here openly or secretly smite, slaughter, and stab.' Nice words from the follower of One who said: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor,' etc." (See *Lutheran Witness*, 1927, p. 186.) H. Grisar (Jesuit) castigates Luther, "who in the beginning had stirred up the populace through his incautious, incendiary talk about evangelical liberty . . . and then, when the rebellion threatened to revolutionize all Germany, turned in fierce wrath against 'the murdering peasants' and became a partisan of the rulers." (See *Lehre u. Wehre*, 1926, p. 171.) It must be so. Everybody says so. And so the editor of the *Presbyterian*, too, permits his contributor to say it.

It might be expecting too much if we asked these writers to read the essay in *Four Hundred Years* on "Luther and the Peasants War." They would find that Luther taught that Christian freedom has nothing to do with a man's social or political position in this world and that men must not employ force for the advancement of Christian freedom or any Church reform. They will find further that the peasants were engaged in open rebellion, "despoiling and incinerating castles and cloisters, mercilessly murdering the captives, the infuriated mobs becoming guilty of ever more vicious excesses and revolting brutalities," and that Luther was convinced "that the government must, in the performance of its duty, use all the power at its command to suppress such insurrection." And they will find that before the outbreak of the Peasants' War in 1525 Luther had declared in 1521: "I hold, and ever will hold, to the party which suffers violence, no matter how wrong it may be, and will oppose the party that causes tumult, however righteous its cause, and this because no tumult will pass off without the shedding of innocent blood and other harm." This essay on "Luther and the

Peasant War" may not be available to all. However, it is not asking too much if we insist that men have no right to make any pronouncement on this matter unless they have heard Luther himself.

Let them read Luther's tract "Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants" (St. Louis ed., 16, p. 77 ff.; Holman translation, 4, p. 248 ff.) and the related writings. Yes, Luther said: "Therefore, dear lords, here is a place where you can release, rescue, help. Stab, smite, slay, whoever can." But pay attention to the "therefore." That means: "They are starting a rebellion and violently robbing and plundering monasteries and castles. . . . Any man against whom it can be proved that he is a maker of sedition is outside the law of God and the Empire, so that the first who can slay him is doing right and well. Rebellion is not simple murder but is like a great fire, which attacks, and lays waste, a whole land. Thus rebellion brings with it a land full of murder and bloodshed, makes widows and orphans, and turns everything upside down, like the greatest disaster. Therefore let every one who can, smite, slay, and stab, secretly or openly, remembering that nothing can be more poisonous, hurtful, or devilish than a rebel. It is just as when one must kill a mad dog; if you do not strike him, he will strike you and a whole land with you." That being so, Luther was right in adding: "If you die in doing it, well for you. A more blessed death can never be yours; for you die in obeying the divine word and commandment in Rom. 13 and in loving service of your neighbor." How can the *Presbyterian* find fault with Luther for taking this position? If the Russian and German and Scottish Reds in the United States banded together and went up and down the country pillaging, burning, and killing and all good citizens were calling upon the authorities to smite and slay the murdering hordes, would the *Presbyterian* write an editorial against these citizens as instigators of persecution? The *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* says: "It would be well to remember that, when Luther 'took sides against the peasants,' he was taking sides against anarchy and the mob; and also to ask oneself whether any other man since St. Paul did as much to further the interests of the common man and to bring about the Christian community as this same Luther." (Nov., 1938, p. 76.)

Now read *An Open Letter concerning the Handbook against the Peasants*. You will hear Luther saying: "If my first advice, given when the rebellion was just beginning, had been followed and a peasant or a hundred of them had been knocked down so that the rest would have tripped over them, and if they had not been allowed to get the upper hand, many thousands of them who now have to die would have been saved, for they would have stayed at home. That would have been a needful deed of mercy." And read on: "I did not teach, however, that mercy ought not to be shown to the captives and those who have surrendered. They accuse me of having said it, but my book proves the opposite."—Luther siding with the princes against the peasants? Keep on reading, and you will find this: "It was not my intention either to strengthen the raging tyrants or to praise their raving. For I hear that some of my knightlets are treating the poor people with

unmeasured cruelty and are very bold and defiant, as though they had won the victory and were firmly in the saddle. . . . But soon they will reap what now they are sowing. He that sitteth on high sees them, and He will come before they expect Him." (16, 77 ff. Holman, 4, 259 ff.)

While you are reading up in Luther, you might come across this passage: "Where was their prowess in the peasant insurrection? At that time there was not a single priest or monk, not a single bishop, powerful though he might be, who had one spark of courage in his soul. Not one of them prayed in those days, not one believed, no one dared to reprove the people for their public sin of rebellion, but they were all afraid and offered to submit to anything the peasants demanded." (On Is. 28; St. L. ed., 6, p. 355.) It was Luther who wrote the tract against the robbing and murdering hordes. He knew what was required of the government and was not afraid to say so. Besides, "over against every charge of cowardice it must be recorded that, at the risk of being murdered, he went into various disturbed localities, seeking to quiet the rebellious spirits." (*Four Hundred Years*, p. 138.)

Just to show that there are others besides the Lutherans who do not fault Luther in this matter, we submit the following extract from the *History of the Christian Church*, by John F. Hurst (Methodist): "Luther felt that the revolutionists were emphasizing the Reformation, to its detriment, for the support of their cause. It was purely in the interest of the Gospel that he wrote his tract *Against the Murderous Robber Peasants*, in which he called upon the authorities to do their duty, at the same time giving them to understand that they deserved this disaster. He advised them to try peaceable methods of settlement and, if these failed, to use the sword in suppressing the rebellion, but to treat the prisoners with kindness. . . . The greatest mercy consisted in the most vigorous suppression of violence. . . . It is difficult to estimate which was the wise course. Had Luther taken side with the peasants, his enemies would have charged the Reformation with the entire trouble. That he opposed them did not save him from this charge, while he lost favor with the discontented classes. All this Luther could foresee. It is to his credit that he did what he thought right, regardless of consequences." (II, p. 181 f.)

E.