

2-1-1939

Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches

J. T. Mueller

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm>



Part of the [Practical Theology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Mueller, J. T. (1939) "Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 10 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol10/iss1/15>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

I. Amerika

The Church and Social Problems.—The American Lutheran Conference at its convention at Racine, Wis., on Nov. 12, adopted the following statement of principles and declaration of attitude in the question of social relations:

"1. The Church of Jesus Christ has the duty to supply guidance to the consciences of men on the pressing moral problems of the age, and at this time particularly on the mutual relations of capital and labor and their position in present-day society.

"The Lutheran Church stands ready to acknowledge its need of self-examination on this and kindred problems; to humbly confess its lack of understanding at times of the crying needs brought about by the rapidly changing complex of our modern economic and social life; and to pledge itself to give renewed attention to these things whereby peace may be brought to the warring elements of labor and capital, and to that great middle class which, technically, belongs to neither of these two categories.

"However, we are of the unfaltering conviction that the Church of Jesus Christ has in its hands, in Word and Sacraments, the only remedy that can cure the ills in any sphere of organized society. Hence we give emphasis to the following points.

"2. Through its emphasis upon the teaching of the Word of God, particularly with respect to sin and grace, the Lutheran Church can give guidance and supply the power needed to remove the tension between capital and labor. It is convinced that the cure is in the Gospel of redemptive forgiveness through Jesus Christ, which, accepted in faith, takes away guilt, makes man a new creature, and enables him to live a new life in love to God and his fellow-men.

"3. Any adequate answer to the question of right relations between employer and employee must recognize the fundamental necessity of changing self-centered and self-seeking individuals into men and women who love God and who love their fellow-men as objects, with themselves, of God's redemptive love in Christ Jesus.

"4. Any emphasis upon the necessity of individual conversion and regeneration becomes one-sided unless it is also emphasized that the reborn individual cannot live his life as a Christian isolated from society but must live it in relation to his fellow-men.

"5. The Church should not identify itself with any political party or political-pressure group but should assume an attitude of awareness, with faithful and courageous testimony, judging all social movements in the light of God's Word. It is the duty of the Church to enlighten its membership and awaken their consciences in order that the will of God may be done in the social as well as the private affairs of men.

"Therefore Be It Resolved:

"1. That we endorse the stand taken by the Oxford Conference on

Life and Work, that 'labor has intrinsic worth and dignity, since it is destined by God for man's welfare. The duty and right of man to work should therefore alike be emphasized. In industrial process, labor should never be considered a mere commodity. In their daily work, men should be able to recognize and fulfil a Christian vocation. The working-man . . . is entitled to a living wage, wholesome surroundings, and a recognized voice in the decisions which affect his welfare as a worker.' (The Church and the Economic Order.)

"2. That the Conference stands for the right of employee and employer to organize for collective bargaining; the safeguarding of all workers against harmful conditions of labor and occupational injury and disease; insurance (without diminishing personal responsibility) against sickness, accident, want in old age, and unemployment; and the abolition of child labor, by which we understand the work of children under conditions that interfere with their physical development, education, opportunities for recreation, and spiritual growth.

"3. That we stand for release from work at least one day in seven and a reasonable work-week, commensurate with the productivity of industry and the physical and spiritual well-being of the laborer, to the end that labor may increasingly share in the cultural, educational, wholesome recreational, and religious opportunities available. Conditions of work for women should be regulated so as to safeguard their personal welfare and that of the family and the community.

"4. That we also emphasize that it is the responsibility of the worker and the employer to work for the public good and not to abuse their power by trespassing upon the legitimate rights of others. If they are to achieve permanent blessings, both laborer and employer must build upon a spiritual rather than a materialistic basis, and to this end both stand in need of the continued ministrations of the Christian Church.

"5. That we take steps to arrange for conferences at important centers on the relation of the Church to social problems, detailed information to be submitted to, and approved by, the Executive Committee."

Not many comments are required. We wish to say that we are in sympathy with everybody who tries to clarify his thinking and that of other people with respect to the question how Christian principles can be applied in the solution of our vexing social problems. The endeavor of the American Lutheran Conference to draw up a statement that would be Scriptural and at the same time sufficiently specific to furnish aid in our perplexities has resulted in a pronouncement which in some respects is admirable. What we add now is said not chiefly to criticize, but with the intention of helping those interested in arriving at conclusions which are truly Biblical. With the statement of principles in the pronouncement we have no fault to find; it is excellent. In the declaration of attitude (the resolutions), where the concrete application of the principles is undertaken, we naturally enter a territory bristling with difficulties. The principle that the Church has no authority to teach what the Bible does not teach has not been sufficiently

observed. To illustrate, we point to the item, "(Be It Resolved) 2. That the Conference stands for the right of employee and employer to organize for collective bargaining." If asked what Scripture induced them to write these words, the authors no doubt would point to the Golden Rule, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." But is the right of organizing for collective bargaining necessarily included in what the Savior says about the attitudes we should take one toward the other? Suppose the authors lived in a totalitarian state forbidding the forming of combines and organizations such as visualized in the pronouncement, would they still say, We stand for the right of employee and employer to organize for collective bargaining? Could they in such a situation insist on the recognition of this position as resting on the Bible? Could they still appeal to the Golden Rule as furnishing proof for the Scripturalness of their attitude? Were the apostles remiss in not proclaiming this "right"? It follows that what the pronouncement in this instance sets forth is not an everlasting Scriptural truth but a view whose correctness and applicability depends on circumstances. There are other items where the same stricture applies and a modification should be added. A.

"The Word of God and the Scriptures." Zu dieser Deklaration der U. L. C. A. (abgedruckt in C. T. M., Dez. 1938, S. 918 ff.) macht D. Neu in der „Kirchl. Zeitschrift“, Nov. 1938, S. 697, folgende Bemerkungen: „Das ist allerdings eine gute Erklärung, und wir bezweifeln nicht, daß die Männer, die sie ausarbeiteten, meinen, was die Worte besagen. Wir wollen auch nicht an diesem oder jenem Punkt hängenbleiben, wollen nicht fragen, wie die Schrift, in allen Teilen Gottes Wort ist und irrtumslos doch bloß in dem, was sich auf das Heil bezieht. Wir fragen bloß, wie sich mit dieser Deklaration die Tatsache reimt, daß theologische Lehrer derselben Kirche Anschauungen über die Schrift vertreten, die mit dieser Deklaration in offenem Widerspruch stehen. Mangel an genügender Lehrdisziplin war eine der Hauptursachen der heutigen traurigen Situation im Mutterland der Reformation.“ Die erste Frage: Wie kann die Schrift, die in allen Teilen Gottes Wort ist, nicht in allen Teilen irrtumslos sein? werden die Theologen der U. L. C. A. nicht leicht beantworten können. Meinen die Männer, die diese Deklaration ausgearbeitet haben, was die Worte besagen, so müssen sie uns erst sagen, was dieser Ausdruck: Gottes Wort, das nicht irrtumslos ist, besagt. Die zweite Frage D. Neus wird leichter zu beantworten sein. Wie konnte eine Deklaration angenommen werden, mit der nicht alle Theologen der zustimmenden Körperschaft stimmen? So: "After much debate the declaration was adopted by the convention, but only after Dr. Knobel had officially stated that the declaration 'does not become a part of the confessional faith of the Church.'" (Luth. Witness, 1938, S. 374.) So konnte also jedermann zustimmen; denn die Erklärung bindet nicht den einzelnen. Keiner hat etwas dagegen, daß eine Anzahl von Leuten in der U. L. C. A. glaubt, was in der Deklaration steht. Sie dürfen ihren Glauben bekennen. Die andern dürfen auch ihren Glauben bekennen. Und so konnte der Lutheran vom 2. November 1938 berichten: "The paragraphs of the declaration on the Word of God and the Scripture were approved, 'no one contradicting.'" E.

An Ulutheran View of Inspiration.—Under the heading *Progressive Revelation* C. J. Soedergren, in the *Augustana Quarterly*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, while professing "his implicit and explicit belief in the plenary inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures," makes the following attack upon the doctrine of Biblical inspiration: "Certainly, every student of the Bible knows that there are passages in the Bible—large sections and entire books—which are dynamically and verbally inspired. They claim to be, and Christian experience proves them to be, an immediate revelation supernaturally communicated. No other theory will account for the facts—even apart from the testimony of the Holy Spirit given to every believer. But when the claim for word-for-word dictation is made for the entire Bible,—even for every word of the Authorized Version,—then it is not impiety to ask humbly for the evidence, especially in the case of passages and sections and books for which the Bible itself makes no such claims and where spiritual leaders feel that some other theory might provide a better solution. For the Bible is greater than our little man-made theories. Nor does our insistence on keeping it behind the bars of any of these latter appear to be quite the success we fondly imagine. 'Letterology' was not the position of Luther. He knew his Bible too well to make that mistake. His faith in the Bible was such a living conviction that it was not affected by considerations of this kind. To him it had a higher source and a better foundation than mere literal inerrancy. 'God does not speak grammatical vocables,' he said, 'but true essential things.' This other spirit came in through Quenstedt, Hollaz, Calov, and the Wittenberg theologians of the orthodoxistic and spiritually comatose seventeenth century. It is from this camp and from the Calvinistic group that this 'tradition' is derived."

He then quotes Bishop U. L. Ullman as writing: "The so-called ultra-orthodox view, according to which all the words and thoughts occurring between the two board covers of the Bible have been communicated by the Holy Spirit in an immediate and supernatural manner and so as to exclude any thought of a difference in the kind and degree of the Spirit's operation, comes into serious conflict with the truth. It does not agree with the structure of the Bible itself. And when they (the advocates of this theory) insist that a theory about the Bible practically identical with the inspiration theory of the seventeenth century must continue to be taught in our Christian-education courses, then it is impossible for us to give our assent. And this not because of any unbelief or any yielding to modern negative theology or rationalistic criticism, *et cetera*, but simply because this theory evidentially does not give adequate expression to the patent circumstances and consequently is pedagogically both wrong and dangerous."

There is no need to refute the many false statements and overstatements in this attack upon the Christian doctrine of Biblical inspiration. What the author contends against is exaggeration of the position held by conservative Lutherans. If any proof were needed that thorough doctrinal discussions are required before there can be a God-pleasing union between the Augustana Synod and our own body, it would be furnished here.

J. T. M.

Federal Council of Churches.—In Dec. 1938 the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America held its thirtieth-anniversary session in Buffalo, N. Y. One of the features of the meeting was that the Syrian Antiochian Orthodox Church of North America was received into membership. This Church was represented by its archbishop, the Rt. Rev. Anthony Bashir. The suggestion of President Albert W. Palmer of Chicago Theological Seminary to call a world economic conference under church auspices if American and European governments delay the calling of such a meeting, was approved. The correspondent of the *Christian Century* reporting on the meeting says that the denominations holding membership in the Council "have ceased to think mentally in terms of possible cooperative action and now begin to look ahead definitely toward union." "There were a few dissenting voices, to be sure. It is evident, for example, that the Lutherans will make haste slowly, if at all, in this direction." The reference is to the U. L. C. A., which maintains a consultative relation to the Federal Council of Churches. There was a strong debate on the question whether the Federal Council of Churches should continue to sponsor the maintenance of chaplaincies whose incumbents are salaried by the national Government. The Council, following the recommendation of its commission, voted affirmatively on this question—an outcome roundly condemned by the *Christian Century*. The sale of war materials to Japan was deplored; gambling was again branded as sinful, gambling in churches included. A protest was again voiced against the liquor business. Chinese and Spanish relief was approved. The president of the Council for the next two years is Dr. George A. Buttrick of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York City. Dr. Samuel M. Cavert will continue to serve as general secretary.

Luther's Teaching on Good Works.—Under this heading John Horsch, in the *Gospel Herald* (Oct. 13, 1938), defends Luther against Romanists who charge him with having denounced good works. He writes: "In a recent sermon on a certain occasion the writer heard the statement that Luther denounced good works. Upon inquiry he was referred to A. H. Newman, *Manual of Church History*, first edition, Vol. II, pp. 84-93. Newman in this place gives a number of quotations from Luther's writings in which he seems to speak disapprovingly of good works. It is to be observed, in the first place, that the quotations given by this author at the place indicated are not the result of his own investigation or research in Luther's works. As indicated by the footnotes, he quotes here from the writings of Roman Catholic historians. If he had read Luther's writings, he would have known that those quotations do not express his teaching on good works. It should be noted also that, when speaking of works (or good works), Luther had in mind not only deeds of charity but all 'works of the Law,' in fact, the whole range of practical Christian duty. Hence, to say that he discredited good works means obviously that he disparaged Christian living in general. Newman represents Luther as denouncing good works, and at the same time he describes him as highly displeased and discouraged on account of the failure of church people to live consistent Christian lives. Now, if he had meant to discourage good works, or the fulfilment of Christian

duty, he could not have censured those who followed his advice in this respect. By living ungodly lives, they would merely have carried out his teaching. I heard a sermon recently by one of our evangelists. The preacher made the statement that morality is one of the greatest hindrances to personal salvation. Taken from their context, these sentences would have been actually offensive. But before he was through with this point, he made it clear that not by any means did he speak in defense of immorality; he did not insinuate that immorality was to be preferred to morality. He meant to emphasize the fact that salvation by morality is an utter impossibility. *The attempt to be saved by moral living*, he said, is one of the greatest hindrances in Gospel-work. Luther's writings contain countless passages teaching that *saving faith will invariably result in good works*. In his most widely circulated work, his *Small Catechism*, in the part treating of the Lord's Prayer, he has the question: 'How is God's name hallowed?' The answer given is, 'By teaching His Word pure and unadulterated and by leading holy lives, as the children of God do in accordance with His Word.' In the same booklet he says that the meaning of Baptism is 'that the Old Adam within us, with all sin and evil desires, shall be drowned and put to death by daily contrition and repentance, and instead there shall daily come forth and arise a new man, who in righteousness and purity will live forever before God.'

This apology of Luther's position on good works by John Horsch contains nothing new; but it is gratifying to know that even in non-Lutheran circles there still are to be found defenders of Luther and such as thoroughly know his writings. We were unable to quote the entire article, but even the few sentences cited demonstrate how easily historic and doctrinal truth may be defended against traducers. J. T. M.

Southern Baptists and Church Union.—Under this heading the *Watchman-Examiner* reports in part the memorial of the Committee on Interdenominational Relations of the Southern Baptist Convention, which met in Richmond, Va., in May of this year, stating that "in view of the wide interest now being developed within religious bodies concerning church union the report is full of significance." We would say more for it, namely, that the position presented by the committee is thoroughly sane and Scriptural and therefore the only one that churches may rightly take. The brief excerpt reads: "Our message to our brethren of other communions is that, since the present divided condition of Christendom is unquestionably the result of departures from the simple teaching of the Scriptures, the only possible road to organic union is back to the Scriptures, fairly interpreted. If it be said that this is, in our present state, impracticable and impossible, we reply that, if that be so, then organic union is impossible with Baptists, for we are unalterably bound to the Scriptures as our law and guide. We speak on this point with absolute frankness and with great plainness because we crave to be understood by our fellow-Christians. We neither ask nor wish any one to come to us except upon a personal conviction but would have all to study the Holy Scriptures to find the path of duty; and our confidence is unshaken that there is light sufficient in the Scriptures to guide us all to the union the Master wishes."

With the *materiale* of Baptist theology as such we Lutherans of course cannot agree since to us it represents most serious departures from Holy Scripture; but the *modus vivendi* here outlined for the crisis of church union now facing Protestantism in our country deserves the moral support of all honest Christians to whom the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ still is precious. The "absolute frankness" and "great plainness" with which the committee has spoken on the matter certainly requires no apology but should be emulated and imitated by all followers of Christ to whom Biblical Christianity still means what it meant to true children of God at all times; for that is the only way to real unity in faith and to worth-while church union.

J. T. M.

The Business of the Church.—Writing in the *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, October, 1938, p. 349, Dr. H. F. Miller says: ". . . The Church is interested in the work of mercy. She has her Inner Mission institutions and her Inner Mission programs throughout the congregations. That is the natural result of her message and spirit. But she is not exclusively or primarily a social-service agency or a crusader for improved social conditions. . . . The Church is concerned about law and order. She teaches morality and high social living. She indeed aims at perfection, for her standard is God in His holiness. But she is not to be confused with the police force, the standing army, the courts of justice, or a detective agency. . . . What a delicate situation that is for the Church! She is in the world but not of the world. Many think that such a position is evasive. The Church is interested in many things in the world, but she refuses to take definite responsibility for anything in the world. In consequence many have turned their backs on the Church and have devoted themselves to noble secular movements. Others have endeavored to force the Church to assume definite responsibility for current movements of social or political reform. They have even interpreted the kingdom of God to mean the perfect political and social state realized in the natural order of events. The Church has always had a difficult time to preserve her character of otherworldliness and her independence of secular institutions and movements. . . . There is the threat of the false conception of the kingdom of God. Man wishes to bring in the Kingdom, to make it a visible and actual reality here and now. Some seem to think that the kingdom of God can be identified with some perfect human society, to be achieved by human effort. To them it is a religious Utopia. In consequence there must be a social gospel, human institutions must be controlled, whole States must be brought into line, and the whole international situation must be directed. The Church must step out and assume responsibility. . . ." Let us heed the warning.

E.

The Business of the Church.—The liberal Shailer Mathews does not think much of those who turn their churches into club-houses, social centers, and amusement halls. In his latest book, *The Church and the Christian*, he says on page 141: "True, a few radicals hold that social and cultural activity is the primary, if not the only, function of a Church. They would substitute sociology and psychology for theology, and social activities, moving pictures, basket-ball games, political discussions, for

the conventional activities of a Church. Such a view deprives religion of any other than social validity and makes churches social institutions of the order of social settlements, parent-teacher associations, and united charities." Page 4: "I should be the last to belittle the importance of social activities on the part of a church, but I am convinced that, unless it is more than a community center for recreation and social acquaintance, a church is not fulfilling its historic function."

What is Dr. Mathews's own idea of the real business of the Church? He says, page 141: "I conceive of religion as a biomyicism in which by the projection of the life process of an individual the human and divine reach adjustment. . . . As a social group a church has for its particular function today that which it has had in the past. That is to say, it can further the help-gaining adjustment of individuals with those cosmic activities upon which we are dependent, with which we are organically united, and which operate in the personal as well as in the chemical and physical realms to which humanity belongs. Doctrines have rationalized, and rites have implemented, this recognition of cosmic relations." In less oracular terms this means: "The Church, if not the only, is certainly the chief agency for lifting social duty with its self-sacrifice from professional routine into human brotherhood. It is more blessed to give than to receive when one feels the urge of divine love." P. 143. What Dr. Mathews means is that the chief, practically the only, function of the Church is to work for social reform. The churches must aim at "making nations moral units," etc. (Pp. 129-134.) And how do the social-rehabilitation men mean to achieve their purpose? "What the world requires of the churches is not a revival of fourth-century Christology but the impregnation of economic and political processes with love. Only then will Jesus have given meaning to their function. If Christians are to be interested in helping make a better world, the churches must make theology secondary to morality." (P. 105.) E.

Brief Items.—Latest statistics on the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Northern Presbyterians) show that this body numbers 8,883 churches and 1,953,734 communicant members. Contributions last year totaled \$40,551,108, representing an increase of \$1,523,303 over those of the year before.

Austrian Catholics are said to be divided into three antagonistic groups. One, taking the old stand, holds that whoever opposes the Pope is wrong; a second group is strongly nationalistic and in a conflict between Hitler and the Church may forsake the latter; a third group follows Cardinal Innitzer and hopes that a compromise can be effected. Recent developments seem to indicate that the cardinal is not very successful.

The Lost Colony here (that is, Roanoke Island, N. C.), where 351 years ago was baptized Virginia Dare, the first English child born on American soil, was the scene of a service conducted August 21 by Bishop Brown of Southern Virginia.—*Living Church.*

The *Lutheran*, in its report on the U. L. C. A. Baltimore convention, says, speaking of the resolutions submitted by the committee dealing with the report of the Commission on Relationships to American Lu-

theran Church-bodies: "The second resolution called for approval of the Declaration on the Word of God and the Scripture. This consists of eight items and the introduction. Each item was subjected to careful scrutiny, and several delegates spoke concerning them separately and as a whole. But there was no opposition to the Declaration in so far as its main significance is concerned. The doctrine known technically as 'the verbal inspiration of the Bible' was deemed out of accord with the Lutheran Confessions, and the paragraphs drafted by the commission and the committee of theologians was approved, 'no one contradicting.'" This report seems to indicate that no one on the floor of the convention championed the teaching of "verbal inspiration." This is a sad state of affairs.

The *Lutheran Companion* of November 3, 1938, publishes an interesting article on "Lutheran Martyrs in Florida." Reference is made to attempts of French Protestants to found a colony in Florida beginning in 1562. In 1565 a Spaniard, Menendez, came with a force and massacred them. This was "over one year before the first Jesuit missionary, P. Pedro Martinez, S. J., was martyred (September 28, 1566) by the Indians between Fernandino and Mayport, Fla. If ever a monument should be erected in the interest of Lutheran martyrs in the United States, it should be at old Fort Caroline on Anasthasia Island, near Matanzas Inlet. . . . We have recently heard that such a Lutheran project was under way." While these people called themselves Lutherans, it would be more correct to regard them as Reformed, for they were Huguenots.

According to the *News Bulletin* of the National Lutheran Council the Lutheran United Mission at Kiaoshan, two hundred miles north of Hankow, was badly damaged October 13 by Japanese planes flying low. On October 14 the Augustana Synod Mission at Hsuchang, twenty-five miles farther north, was bombed heavily. We are told that this happened in spite of large American flags on the roof of both missions. On October 24 the Lutheran Brethren Mission at Tsaoyung, in the province of Hupeh, was bombed by Japanese planes, and Phoebe Nyhus, three-year-old daughter of Missionary Nyhus, was killed.

Report comes from the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work that Pastor Niemoeller (reported ill) has refused to accept his release from the concentration camp on condition that he sign a declaration forbidding him to resume activity in his Berlin-Dahlem parish.

Christian Century

The *Living Church* reports that the missions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Brazil are making satisfactory progress. The item speaks of forty mission-stations in the states of Sao Paulo and Parana, in which the bishop confirmed 109 persons.

"The founder of the New York Girls' High School and of many other Catholic schools, orphanages, and hospitals, Mother Francis Xavier Cabrini, is slated for beatification in St. Peter's, Rome, on November 13. Her body was officially sealed here in a glass coffin, to be placed in the crypt under the chapel of the Mother Cabrini High School, 701 Mother Cabrini Boulevard. Before the sealing the schoolgirls were permitted to touch the feet of her corpse with their erasers. A bone from her body

will be carried in a silver tube by papal officials to Rome. High-church officials, including Bishop Stephen Donahue, witnessed the sealing and signed the certificate to go in the tube with the bone to Rome."—So reported the *Christian Century*. The beatification has been pronounced. Evidently in many quarters the so-called enlightenment of our age is merely skin-deep.

A.

II. Ausland

German Action Against the Confessional Church.—The *Manchester Guardian* in its issue of Nov. 18, 1938, carried the following dispatch, which at the time of this writing had to our knowledge received no currency in the American press, but which is important for all who are interested in the status of the Church in Germany:

"It would seem that new repressive measures against the Confessional Church are contemplated by the German authorities. The excuse is provided by the prayers for peace ordained to be said in all Confessional churches on Sept. 30, although they were not said because the Munich Agreement removed the immediate danger of war. In these prayers the following words occurred:

"Lord God, we confess our sins and the sins of our people before Thee. May God forgive us and avert from us His wrath. But if, according to His inscrutable decision, He punish us with war, we shall seek comfort in His promise of salvation.'

"On Oct. 27 the *Schwarze Korps*, the newspaper of the S.S. (Black Guards) and of the Gestapo (Secret Police), poured abuse on the Confessional clergy for ordaining these prayers and asserted that 'public security imposes upon the State the duty of extirpating these criminals.'

"On Oct. 29 Bishops Mahrrens, Wurm, and Meiser were summoned before Herr Kerrl, the Minister of Church Affairs, who told them curtly that he had a new plan of ecclesiastical 'appeasement.'

"When the plan had been sanctioned, so he declared, every one in Germany would be able to listen to sermons 'about whatever Christ he might want to hear about' and that in future no particular articles of faith would have any special validity. As for the prayers that were to have been said on Sept. 30, he characterized them as treason (*Landesverrat*) and declared that 'negotiations for confining these traitors in a concentration camp were in progress.' Presumably he meant negotiations between the Ministry of Church Affairs and the Gestapo.

"The three bishops were thereupon asked to sign a declaration against the order issued by the Confessional Church to have these prayers said. The bishops complied, and the declaration will, it would seem, be used against the Confessional Church in the near future. No doubt it will help to give the action of the German secular arm the appearance of ecclesiastical sanction."

It will be recalled by our readers that Bishop Mahrrens and Bishop Meiser visited our country in 1936 as representatives of the Lutheran World Convention for the purpose of acquainting American Lutherans with those European groups which are endeavoring to bring back confessionalism into European Lutheranism.

W. G. POLACK

The Situation in India.—The *Kirchliche Zeitschrift* reprints an informing article by Dr. Carl Ihmels, director of the Leipzig Mission, having the title *Zur Lage des Christentums in Indien*. We submit a few of his statements. India is in a condition of ferment. No one can foresee what developments will result. Pandit Nehru, who followed Gandhi as leader of the National Congress, saw India's salvation in the abolition of all religions, because the religions were preventing India from becoming truly unified. His successor is Subha Bose, who does not favor the atheistic program of Nehru but who has taken de Valera of Ireland as his *beau ideal*, striving for the political independence of India. One of the chief topics of discussion is universal education. The so-called Wardhar scheme proposes as a minimum seven years of schooling for all of India's youth. To cover the expense, the teaching of trades is to be made central, and the articles manufactured are to be sold to provide the salaries of the teachers. English is to be crowded out of its governing position and no longer to be used as medium of instruction in the higher schools. Its place is to be taken by Hindi, which is used more widely in North India than any other language. The thought has been expressed that the state should take over all elementary mission-schools. In opposition to this idea it has been pointed out by authoritative persons that the mission-schools have rendered India an immense service. As far as religion is concerned, the last census (1931) showed that there are 6,200,000 Christians in British India. At present there may be eight or nine million Christians there. A native Church is that of the Thomas Christians, called Mar Thoma Church. Everywhere the sentiment is heard that the churches now supported and governed from the outside must become truly native churches. The education of native pastors is stressed. An earnest attempt is made to procure contributions from the native Christians for the support of the congregations and the church-schools. Leaders endeavor to find a liturgy suitable for the Indian people. Indian hymnology is being developed. Among its prominent native religious leaders Christianity in India can point to Bishop Asaria of Dornakal, who was the first Indian to be consecrated a bishop by the Anglican Church. Another one is Dr. Datta, connected with the Young Men's Christian Association and professor at a college, a layman who is the leader of the Christian Nationalists. Socially and politically the native Christians are not prominent in India, which in part is to be explained by the fact that more than eighty per cent. of them are outcastes, or untouchables. It must not be overlooked, however, that the Christianizing of the outcastes is influencing the higher castes, too. Besides, the untouchables are beginning to assert themselves, to organize, and to demand consideration. Their leader is Dr. Ambedkar. In 1936 a meeting of untouchables decided to leave Hinduism and seek a new religion. Until now Dr. Ambedkar, who had stated that he would soon recommend a suitable religion, has not done this. The interest and enthusiasm created through these discussions have induced many thousands of untouchables to apply for Baptism. It cannot be denied that this is harvest-time in India, and the Church is growing. A.