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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Concerning Lutheran Union.—The readers of the *Lutheraner* and the *Lutheran Witness* have seen the report that the American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church Commissions for Lutheran Union, in a meeting held at Pittsburgh, Pa., have agreed on a statement pertaining to the doctrine of inspiration, on which there had been disagreement between the two commissions. The statement adopted by the two commissions was not given to the press in its complete form. Without omissions it reads:

"Doctrinal Statement on Inspiration and the Scriptures

"1. The Bible (that is, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments) is primarily not a code of doctrines, still less a code of morals, but the history of God's revelation for the salvation of mankind and of man's reaction to it. It preserves for all generations and presents, ever anew, this revelation of God, which culminated and centers in Christ, the Crucified and Risen One. It is itself the Word of God, His permanent revelation, aside from which, until Christ's return in glory, no other is to be expected.

"2. The Bible consists of a number of separate books, written at various times, on various occasions, and for various purposes. Their authors were living, thinking personalities, each endowed by the Creator with an individuality of his own, and each having his peculiar style, his own manner of presentation, even at times using such sources of information as were at hand. Nevertheless, by virtue of a unique operation of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21), by which He supplied to the holy writers content and fitting word (2 Pet. 1:21; 1 Cor. 2:12, 13), the separate books of the Bible are related to one another and, taken together, constitute a complete, errorless, unbreakable whole, of which Christ is the center (John 10:35). They are rightly called the Word of God. This unique operation of the Holy Spirit upon the writers is named inspiration. We do not venture to define its mode, or manner, but accept it as a fact.

"3. Believing, therefore, that the Bible came into existence by this unique cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the human writers, we accept it (as a whole and in all its parts) as the permanent divine revelation, as the Word of God, the only source, rule, and norm for faith and life, and as the ever fresh and inexhaustible fountain of all comfort, strength, wisdom, and guidance for all mankind." (On §§ 1 and 2 see *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, Vol. IX, p. 917.)

The undersigned consider the sentence in the Pittsburgh statement (§ 2) "Nevertheless, by virtue of . . . Christ is the center" inadequate. The phrase "taken together" makes the statement ambiguous because it may be understood in a limiting sense, and the sentence lacks the explicit, unequivocal declaration of the verbal inspiration and of the inerrancy of Holy Scripture in all its parts which the situation demands. In view of present-day controversies we consider such an unequivocal, definite avowal necessary.

As to further statements in the A. L. C. and U. L. C. agreement we find the first sentence in § 1, "The Bible . . . is primarily not a code of doctrine, still less a code of morals, but the history of God's revelation," etc., open to misunderstanding. That applies also to the phrase used in § 3 "unique cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the human writers."

Two members of our commission, Drs. Engelder and Arndt, together with President Behnken, met with members of the American Lutheran Church commission and were informed that the American Lutheran Church commissioners by accepting the above statement did not intend to recede from the position on the doctrine of inspiration as set forth in the *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod and the *Declaration* of the American Lutheran Church representatives and adopted by the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. Naturally, we must await official declarations from the A. L. C. authorities, and shall publish them as soon as they have been received.

March 20, 1939

THE COMMITTEE ON LUTHERAN UNION

Pastors' Institute at St. Louis. — Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., will, God willing, conduct an Institute for Pastors from Tuesday, July 11, 8:15 A.M., to Saturday, July 15, noon. The following subjects will be treated: 1. The Doctrine of the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, with Special Reference to Current Trends, by Dr. Th. Graebner. 2. Interpretation of the Prophet Amos, by Dr. Walter A. Maier. 3. The Making of the Sermon, by Dr. John H. C. Fritz. 4. The Pastor and Social Problems, by Rev. W. E. Hohenstein. 5. The Value and Meaning of Life in Significant Trends of Contemporary American Literature as Expressed by Some of Its Major Writers, by Prof. L. Blankenbuehler. 6. Fundamentals of Speech, by Prof. E. J. Friedrich. — Fee, including lodging and meals, \$10. Bed linens and blankets extra. Fee for those not lodging and eating at the seminary \$3. — For further information address Pastors' Institute, Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo.

What Is Wrong with the Thesis Method? — In an editorial appearing in the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, March issue, Prof. J. Tanner of the Norwegian Lutheran Church, deals with this question. He introduces his editorial with the note "Warning. When a man is handling dynamite, it is incumbent upon him to give bystanders proper warning. Hence the statement that this article is written in behalf of neither the American Lutheran Conference nor of any of its synods." The first part of the editorial says: "In our efforts to establish Lutheran unity it may not be irrelevant to ask, What kind of unity? The prevalent answer is, Unity in doctrine and practise. Still the answer is not self-explanatory. What is meant by unity in doctrine and practise? Let us begin with doctrine. When a synod has subscribed to the Ecumenical Symbols, Luther's Small Catechism, and the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, will it then be accepted into pulpit- and altar-fellowship by other synods that have subscribed to the same confession? Not in America. But if a synod, in addition, has stated its position on all controversial points of doctrine and practise and in this way as well as by its history has proved itself in harmony with the soundest Lutheran teaching, it will of course be accepted by all Lutheran bodies into pulpit-

and altar-fellowship? Not in all cases. Why not? Because in some quarters all this is not accepted as sufficient proof that one is an unadulterated Lutheran. Specific statements (theses) must be prepared setting forth, logically and completely in concise phrases, the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Subscription to these theses constitutes the narrow gate through which one enters into pulpit- and altar-fellowship. Now, the thesis method is a two-edged sword. . . ." (The rest of this section will be given farther down.) "Where, then, is the line to be drawn? Without speaking for any synod or laying down rules for anybody, it may probably not be out of order to say that in the synod to which the writer has the privilege of belonging there are those, and the number may be surprisingly large, who decline to subscribe to more theses. We are convinced that in our public declarations we have expressed ourselves so clearly and unequivocally on all doctrinal points that we have established ourselves as true and sound Lutherans. If on this basis others will accept us as brethren in the faith, good and well. If not, we deplore it and will have to get along as best we can till saner days arrive. But no more theses as far as we are concerned."

We offer this, first, as a news item. Our readers are interested in knowing what others think of the doctrinal discussions carried on between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. But we will be permitted, in addition, to make a few comments. We believe that the thesis method is a sane way of arriving at Lutheran union. This thesis method has its good points. We cannot express that better than in Dr. Tanner's words: "It may clarify. It may exclude misconceptions and focus the true meaning." The purpose of doctrinal statements is to focus the true meaning and to uncover and disavow the respective error. The presentation and frank discussion of straightforward theses has never harmed and retarded the cause of true union. Formulating and adopting theses which cover up doctrinal divergences is an evil thing. No one can be blamed who declines to subscribe to such theses. But that is not the point at issue. The point is being made that under certain conditions self-respect demands that a church-body should refuse to engage in doctrinal discussions with some other church-body. The time may come when a synod would be justified in taking that attitude. But do not be too hasty in declaring that that period has arrived! He that assumes to know absolutely that that time has arrived has assumed a terrible responsibility. So go slow; and if you really desire Lutheran union, keep on using the good old thesis method. It is the natural, the sane thing to do. If ever the time should come that Dr. Tanner and a Missourian should meet on this business, I am sure that the Missourian would ask him,—in the present state of affairs,—and he would ask the Missourian: What does your synod teach on the controverted question of the verbal inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture? He would say, and the Missourian would say: We believe in that doctrine one hundred per cent., and we will ask our synods to go on record, once more, as teaching that. There's no dynamite in such a thesis. It would cause great joy in many quarters. There will be dynamite in it only with respect to those who would like to detract from the supreme

and sole authority of Scripture. Then, we should have to have—as conditions now are—a thesis on conversion. Both would declare, for instance, that the unconverted man has the ability to decide against God, but not the ability to decide for God. No harm in confessing that for the thousandth time! There is dynamite in such a thesis only for those who have synergistic leanings and objectives.

The thesis method would be wrong only if applied in the spirit which is denounced in the last issue of the *C. T. M.*, where in discussing a similar matter the writer says: "Their endeavor to express the truth which they believe in their hearts, and in the possession of which they rejoice, with as much clarity as possible and their submitting such expression of their faith to others with the remark: This is where we stand; will you share our position? is regarded as 'a method of attaining fellowship which consists in one party offering a document to the other to be signed on the dotted line.' . . . We are convinced that Missourians with practical unanimity will reply that their attitude is misunderstood."

One particular objection to the thesis method is expressed by Dr. Tanner in these words: "Now, the thesis method is a two-edged sword. It may clarify, and it may confuse. It may exclude misconceptions and focus the true meaning. On the other hand, it may leave the erroneous idea that the fulness of the truth has been probed because the truth has been intellectually formulated. A further confusion is hidden in the assumption that, where there is intellectual agreement, there is also spiritual unity. Another danger consists in the establishing of a rigid intellectual strait-jacket that must be put on by everybody if he is to escape the suspicion of doctrinal irregularity. Add to this that in our churches we have practically no voice of the lay people checking and testing ecclesiastical logic and abstractions on the basis of the experiential understanding of the Word of God as worked out in the practical life of non-ecclesiastical Christians, and we have the elements of a heart-and-mind-killing scholasticism." The objection is not well taken. What is said, for instance, about an "intellectual strait-jacket" would apply to the Formula of Concord and any other confession of the Church as well as to any other set of theses. And particularly the last sentence contains a great amount of dynamite. E.

A Correct Interpretation of the U. L. C. Declaration on "The Word of God and Scripture."—Let Dr. Traver interpret it. In "the Young People" column of the *Lutheran* of February 22 he takes up "the eight statements in the Declaration" and discusses them one by one. He discusses that fine statement "We believe that the whole body of the Scriptures in all its parts is the Word of God." Are these words to be taken in their exact, full sense? The young people of the U. L. C. are asking: Does our Church teach that every statement of the Bible is absolutely true? Dr. Traver tells them that the Declaration does not say so. He tells them that in two paragraphs of his exposition. The first one reads: "This whole revelation of God to man, completed in Jesus Christ, is faithfully recorded and preserved in the Holy Scriptures and comes to us alone through them. They are the infallible truth 'in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.' We may therefore speak of

the Holy Scriptures as *"The Word of God."* (Italics in original.) When the young people ask Dr. Traver, whether everything in the Scriptures is infallible, he tells them to note the restriction insisted on by the Declaration. "We accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation." We have been pointing to that fatal restriction and now Dr. Traver tells us that we have understood the Declaration correctly. He does not want his young people to hold that the Holy Scriptures are infallible in all matters therein recorded. The other paragraph reads: "Does not modern science contradict the Scriptures? God did not inspire the writers of the Scriptures to know all truth. He gave men minds to use in investigation and discovery. For instance, the laws governing the use of airplanes have been learned through the painful processes of many years. It is not necessary that men should know how to fly in order to be saved from their sins. Bible writers wrote with the background of their age and its scientific beliefs. *The one thing that they were called to do was to reveal God to men.*" (Italics in original.) Dr. Traver is warning the young people against taking the statement "We accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth" as meaning that every historical, geographical, scientific statement is true. Dr. Traver tells them that the holy writers wrote false scientific beliefs into the Bible. The young people of the U. L. C. are certainly not asking him whether airplanes are available to take men to heaven. But they are asking him: Can we be sure that our Holy Bible is reliable in every statement it makes? Dr. Traver tells them: No; only in matters that pertain to our salvation is it infallible. — Dr. Traver has interpreted the Declaration correctly. The commissioners that drew up the Declaration told the U. L. C. convention that adopted the Declaration: "Our commission was unable to accept the statement of the Missouri Synod that the Scriptures are the infallible truth 'also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters.'" (See C. T. M., Vol. 9, p. 917. *The Lutheran*, Oct. 5, 1938.)

No doubt some of these young people will ask Dr. Traver: What about your statement in the introduction of your article that "Lutherans insist that *the Bible is the Word of God*"? (Italics in original.) How "may we speak of the Holy Scriptures as 'the Word of God'" when not everything in the Bible is infallible? Can a false statement be called a word of God? Why do you say that the Scriptures "*in all its parts*" is the Word of God when you refuse to call certain parts infallibly true? Such questions are sure to arise. They have already been raised. A layman wrote a letter to the *Lutheran* of January 18, saying: "In Section 5 [we have] this declaration: 'We therefore accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to His revelation and our salvation.' What as to matters that do not pertain to His revelation and our salvation? Are some portions of the Scriptures not infallible? Is not that a plausible inference? It would appear to this writer that in Section 6 this position is contradicted when it is asserted: 'Therefore we believe that the whole body of Scripture in all its parts is the Word of God.'" The layman is faulting his theological leaders for using inexact language.

The U. L. C. needs a revised Declaration. Let Dr. H. C. Alleman

write it, who sticks to the old General Synod formula and says that "the Bible contains the Word of God" (*Luth. Church Quarterly*, July, 1936, p. 240). The new Declaration, using exact language, will say: "We may therefore speak of the Holy Scriptures as containing 'the Word of God.'" E.

A Representative of the Augustana Synod Once More.—In our last issue we reprinted the section of a letter of Dr. Bergendoff which the Lutheran (U. L. C.) had reproduced and in which there was found the heated refusal of "signing on the dotted line." We are now in possession of the complete document and consider it but fair that the first part of the letter, which deals with the position of the Augustana Synod concerning certain doctrines be reprinted also. The letter, it should here be stated, was addressed to a pastor of the Missouri Synod who had asked for certain information concerning the Augustana Synod. The part not yet printed by us reads as follows:

"Your letter places a considerable obligation upon me, for it asks for little short of a complete exposition of the teaching and practises of the Augustana Synod. Yet I welcome your request and am happy over the spirit in which it is written. The conviction has grown on me over a considerable number of years that the Augustana and the Missouri synods know very little about each other, and, what is worse, the little they do know is largely untrue. Far more than we probably are aware, we have been so careful to point out each other's faults, and so little concerned about understanding the good qualities of each other, that in the minds of our people the resulting impressions are far from the truth.

"Your first question concerns doctrine. My answer is that the early history of our synod is the story of an immigrant group trying to find itself in the strange conditions of a country where doctrine was frowned upon even in many Lutheran circles. Our leaders finally organized an independent synod because of their conviction that the unaltered Augsburg Confession must be the basis of sound Lutheranism. They consequently chose the name Augustana, itself almost a unique appellation for a Lutheran synod in America, where racial origin and geography determined in most cases the names of synods. It would require a considerable volume for me to tell the doctrinal history of our synod since 1860, but I can sum up my conclusion very simply, because I believe it to be so clearly proved in that history: To this day the synod has not wavered in its allegiance to the confessions of the Lutheran Church but would meet every fair test that might be applied to its orthodoxy.

"You specify several details, and I shall give as direct an answer as I can. We do not believe nor teach that God elects man to salvation by virtue of anything in man, be it either his works or his faith as foreseen by God. The election is entirely by grace. In my teaching as professor of systematic theology in the theological seminary I have consistently held that the phrase *electio intuitu fidei* is misleading and should not be used. That we cannot explain the love of God who chooses us in Christ even as sinners is no reason why we should add an explanation which does not explain but only confuses. (I have tried to make clear our position in my brief exposition in *The Making and Meaning of the Augsburg Confession*.)

"You state that 'the accusation is many times made against the Augustana Synod that it has an erroneous conception of the inspiration of the Bible.' I might wish that you had gone into detail to say what that erroneous conception is. For it is always easier to accuse a man for holding an erroneous conception than to point out what is the error. In brief, my reply is that the doctrine of inspiration of Scripture has not been formulated by the Lutheran Church in her confessional writings. Until the Lutheran Church as a whole, and not merely some one fraction of it, determines what that doctrine is to be, it is hardly fair for one part of the Church to determine for the whole Church so vital a matter. In fact, I do not know that the synod has anywhere stated formally the doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible—it has been content to accept what the original confessions of the Lutheran Church say (or do not say) on this point. But while I cannot refer you to any definition of our own of inspiration, I can refer you to our catechism, our preaching, our teaching, and say that the Augustana Synod is not one whit behind the Missouri Synod in insisting that the Bible is the Word of God. That is the charter for our teaching and preaching, and while we may not know enough to say how exactly the Scriptures came to be, we do, like the blind man, know that, before this Word touched our lives, we could not see, but now we do see, and acknowledge these Scriptures to be the voice of God speaking through prophets, evangelists, and apostles.

"You inquire concerning our teaching about the millennium. Here again we allow a variety of expressions, since the Church has not forbidden the study of what things may be hoped for. True, the Augsburg Confession condemns those 'who are now spreading certain Jewish opinions that, before the resurrection of the dead, the godly shall take possession of the kingdom of the world, the ungodly being everywhere suppressed.' I do not personally hold to any form of millenarianism, as I have sought to show in a pamphlet on this subject, but I do not believe either that the Church shall discipline teachers who otherwise interpret Scriptures in these matters. I doubt that there are any more millenarians in the Augustana Synod than in the Missouri Synod, and of the few that I know in our Synod I can say that they are earnest and faithful Christians. To exclude these from our Synod on this ground would be as far from my mind as to make this a cause of separation between your and my synods. It is my contention that the millennium is not a doctrine on which salvation depends. Therefore I deprecate emphasis upon it for either personal or synodical reasons.

"On the question of Sabbath observance I do not believe I need to dwell, for it has never occurred to me that variations which might be found among us here have any but social explanations. I can think of no point of doctrine being here involved. Concerning the Minneapolis Theses may I refer you to my article in *Augustana Quarterly*, October, 1937?"

It is gratifying to see this explicit rejection of the phrase *intuitu fidei* in connection with the discussion of the doctrine of predestination. What Dr. Bergendoff says about the teaching of his church-body on the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures is less satisfying. When he states that the doctrine of inspiration has not been formulated by the Lutheran

Church in her confessional writings, he is right. His presentation, however, does not give a complete view of what the situation is. Though not discussing the doctrine of inspiration in systematic fashion, the confessional writings of the Lutheran Church by implication set forth the teaching that everything in the Bible is inspired and that hence every statement in it is true. We do not see how any unprejudiced person can read our Symbolical Books and arrive at any other conclusion than this, that they view the Bible as verbally inspired and as inerrant in every point. That in the Augustana Synod the teaching of verbal inspiration has repeatedly been rejected could easily be proved. The *Lutheran Companion* recently contained an article in which such rejection is definitely expressed. With respect to millenarian teaching it is undeniable that articles have appeared in church-papers of the Augustana Synod which were chiliastic. The majority of the ministers in the Augustana Synod may be opposed to such teaching; we hope they are. But they ought not let the teaching of such doctrine go unchallenged. What we ask of the Augustana Synod ministers and teachers is not that they immediately separate from such erring brethren; it may be that, owing to faithful witness-bearing, separation will not become necessary at all. But what we have to demand is that they earnestly testify against these errors and endeavor to bring about their elimination, mindful of the word of the apostle "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," Gal. 5:9. If Missouri Synod ministers have sponsored and published millenarian doctrine, we are not aware of it. A.

Honesty—or Accident?—The Jesuit *America* carries a column headed "Events." It takes the place of the humorous column in other papers and magazines and speaks of extraordinary events, treating them in a lighter vein, with much irony and satire thrown in. The issue of February 25 reports among other things:

"New methods of treating diseases were developed. . . . When he learned that a patient suffering with nervous indigestion was worrying about an unpaid bill, a Western doctor paid the bill, completely curing the malady. . . . Protests from farmers indicated that many hunters aiming at wild life, such as pheasants, hit non-wild life, such as cows. . . . Crime, according to reports, continued. . . . In the West a suitor, burning with love, set fire to his intended's house when he discovered she was not burning with love for him. . . . One of the world's greatest collectors died in the West. Interested in fowl play, he collected during life 3,000 wish-bones. His lifelong ambition to possess an ostrich wish-bone was frustrated. Had he lived a little longer, he would have achieved his great ambition. . . . Science announced new unearthings. . . . A sandpaper highway surface that will do away with skidding was described in Cleveland. Skidding in bathtubs may be obviated by the same material, insiders hinted. . . . The possibility that cows may be trained to do the work of bloodhounds was broached, following news from New Zealand that a herd of cows had tracked a criminal to a tree."—And then, without any distinguishing mark, the column ends:

"In the whole world there is now no Vicar of Christ. . . . Thousands of millions of people dot the earth's surface. Not one of them is in-

fallible in matters of faith or morals. The cardinal who will be elected— whoever he is—is not infallible now. At the moment he accepts the election the prerogative of infallibility will descend upon him. He will hand on to his successor the unchanged revelation of Christ as 261 Popes before him have brought it unchanged to him. The last Pope will be teaching the same doctrines that the 262d Pope teaches.”

To a Protestant it seems that somehow this notice slipped into the right column.

H.

Brief Items.—Recently there died at Glasgow, Scotland, Dr. W. L. Baxter, who attained to the ripe old age of ninety-six years. A greater attainment was that he knew the whole Bible by heart. Even to the last, despite his age, he was able to repeat any passage from memory.

The Gallup Poll, a recent statement by the American Institute of Public Opinion, declared the church-conducted lotteries to be the “commonest form of gambling among Americans today.” A crying shame indeed!

For the benefit of the blind clergy of our country a new magazine will be published in Braille, bearing the title *Theological Times*.

Roman Activism is making rapid headway in our country, as was proved by the press reports on the occasion of the demise of the last Pope, when Catholicism had the entire press of the land “Romanized.” Now the bishops of the American Catholic Church are planning to establish a “Catholic bureau of information and publicity” to disseminate “facts on Catholic belief and teachings” for the benefit of the more than “100,000,000 Americans who are not Catholic and the 22,000,000 members who are.” They expressed it as the duty of the Church to “contribute its philosophy to the current thought” for the benefit especially of non-Catholics. In learned parlance this “philosophy” goes by the name of Neo-Thomism; popularly it is known as plain Romanism.

The new president of the Federal Council of Churches is the Rev. Dr. Geo. A. Buttrick, pastor of the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York City. Like his predecessors of late, he is an outspoken Modernist and an outstanding defender of the Auburn Affirmation. The Federal Council is a body to which the warning in Ps. 1:1 applies: “Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly nor standeth in the way of sinners nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.”

J. T. M.

The readers of this journal would hardly expect a long article on the new Pope. That Cardinal Pacelli, elected on the day after the beginning of the conclave and now known as Pius XII, will continue the work of his predecessors and that his talents and accomplishments will be employed to perpetuate what all true Protestants cannot but regard as a huge fraud, there is no reason to doubt. “*Annuntio vobis gaudium magnum,*” a cardinal said to the multitude when he proclaimed the papal election. Lutherans, however, turn to 2 Thess. 2 for words to express their feeling.

The Augustana Synod deplors the death of Dr. S. G. Youngert, who for many years served Augustana Theological Seminary, Rock Island, Ill.,

as professor of New Testament Greek, Catechetics, and Philosophy. He died February 26 at the age of 77. An accomplished linguist, he was appointed member of a commission after the World War to dispense aid in Central Europe.

The *Evangelisch-Lutherische Freikirche*, the paper of our brethren in Germany, reports the death of Dr. Herman Menge, widely and favorably known as a translator of the Bible. He reached the high age of 98 years. Having taught at a classical school, he began his work as Bible translator when he was sixty years old and had retired from his position as *Gymnasiallehrer*.

As we see from press reports, the followers of Dr. Frank Buchman, who have been called, and have called themselves, Oxford Groups, are running into difficulty with respect to the use of this name. The Oxford University representative in the British Parliament is protesting against the assumption of this name by the adherents of Dr. Buchman, stating that there is no connection between the University of Oxford and Buchmanism. The appellation has no standing in law, and a bequest made to the Oxford Groups could not be collected when Dr. Buchman presented himself as the head of the movement.

The *Lutheran School Journal*, edited by a committee of our River Forest Teachers College faculty, has developed into a very attractive magazine. Its reading-matter is varied, including material which is of interest to the theologian as well as to the teacher, and its external appearance is extremely inviting. Whoever has not seen it in its new dress ought to ask for a sample copy.

Dr. L. G. Abrahamson, eighty-three years old, recently sent in his resignation as editor-in-chief of the *Augustana*, Swedish organ of the *Augustana Synod*. Dr. Abrahamson has had that position for thirty years. His resignation was not accepted. He was asked to remain as chief editor and given a new assistant, Dr. A. T. Lundholm, one of the best-known clergymen of the Synod.—*Lutheran Standard*.

The Roman Catholic bishop of Brooklyn, the Rev. Thomas E. Molloy, is said to have written in a letter to his clergy that he entertained the hope that Catholic schools "from those of elementary grade to the university, inclusive, may soon be properly recognized as agencies of public service and as such should be justly supported by public funds." There is no denying that our priceless American possessions of religious liberty and separation of Church and State are in jeopardy.

An affirmation is being circulated among ministers of all denominations which may be called a pacifist pronouncement. The chief sentences of it are said to be the following: "We believe that in the cross is revealed God's way of dealing with wrong-doers and that to this way all Christians are called. . . . We believe that God leads His Church into new life through obedience of the individual believer in refusing war for Christ's sake." Not long ago it was reported that one hundred ministers had signed the statement, among them such well known Modernists as H. E. Fosdick and J. H. Holmes. How sadly they err in thinking that Christ branded the career of a soldier and participation in war *per se* as wicked has often been shown.

From Doerffling & Francke, Leipzig, publishers of the famous *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, has come this communication, "Auf vielfache Anfragen hin koennen wir nur mitteilen, dass die *Kirchenzeitung* am 21. Dezember 1938 verboten wurde." Enough said!

The religious press carries the item that the Department of Public Safety in the city of Cleveland will no longer issue permits for the playing of "bunco," which until now has been very popular in many churches of that city.

The *London Catholic Herald* reports that Nazi authorities have closed down the Catholic theological faculty of Munich University on the ground that Cardinal Faulhaber, Archbishop of Munich, interfered with non-ecclesiastical affairs by "forbidding students to attend lectures" by a priest-professor who has been used by the Nazis in their campaign for the abolition of Catholic schools, and has attacked Cardinal Faulhaber and urged Catholics to send the children to Nazi schools.

Christian Century

It is reported that coordination of the activities of nearly 400 Lutheran welfare agencies throughout the country will be undertaken by the newly created department of National Lutheran Welfare of the National Lutheran Council, of which Rev. Clarence E. Krumbholz of New York is director.—*Christian Century*.

The *Lutheran* of March 22, 1939, prints some flippant remarks of a Nebraska correspondent, who speaks of an intersynodical conference which discussed the matter of prayer-fellowship. When this man says: "The next game in this intersynodical *rapprochement* between Missouri and the American Lutheran Church will come off September 19, at Luther (Augustana) College, Wahoo, Nebr.," he employs a tone which makes it difficult to engage in a discussion with him.

In the *Living Church* the interesting case of J. Middleton Murry is related. Described as one of the first half dozen of critics and publicists writing today in English who has lectured frequently on literary and philosophical matters and written voluminously, he formerly was altogether negative in his theological thinking. But now, at the age of fifty, he has entered Wescott House, the theological college at Cambridge, "to prepare for ordination to priesthood in the Church of England." A.

