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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

über das Übereinkommen zwischen den A. L. C.- und U. L. C.-Kommissionen schreibt die „Kirchl. Zeitschrift“ (Aprilheft): „Unter der Führung von D. Knubel, der in all den Verhandlungen der Wortführer eines konservativen Luthertums gewesen war, bekannte sich die Kommission der Ver. Luth. Kirche zur uneingeschränkten Irrtumslosigkeit der Schrift. Die Vorlage unserer Kommission hatte in bezug auf diesen Punkt gelautet: Die Schrift ist 'one organic whole without contradiction and error (John 10:35),' die der Ver. Luth. Kirche: Die Schrift ist 'a complete, perfect, unbreakable whole, of which Christ is the center (John 10:35).' Davon ließ die Kommission 'perfect' fallen und ersetzte es durch 'errorless.' Damit konnte sich die Kommission der A. L.-Kirche zufrieden geben, denn 'errorless' war eine wörtliche Wiedergabe des 'without error' und das 'unbreakable' deckte sich sachlich mit 'without contradiction,' wie diese Gleichung oder Identität auch ausdrücklich ausgesprochen wurde. . . .

„Diese Erklärung in bezug auf die Schrift geht in zwei Punkten über die Baltimorer Declaration vom Oktober 1938 hinaus, indem sie 1. die recht verstandene (nicht mechanische) Verbalinspiration ausdrücklich ausspricht und indem sie 2. die Irrtumslosigkeit der Schrift nicht mehr einengt auf die Abschnitte, die sich auf das Heil beziehen. Dieser Unterschied und Fortschritt wurde auch ausdrücklich zugegeben. Es bleibt nun abzuwarten, welche Stellung die beiden Kirchenkörper zu diesen von den Kommissionen angenommenen Sätzen einnehmen werden und ob die Sätze, wenn angenommen, auch im Leben der Kirche durchgeführt werden; denn wohl ist es ein Großes, eine Wahrheit zu erkennen und anzuerkennen; schwerer aber ist es, aber doch auch notwendig, im kirchlichen Handeln mit ihr ernst zu machen. Ohne Lehrdisziplin kann keine Kirche auf die Dauer gesund bleiben. Wir befehlen die ganze Weiterentwicklung der Gnade und Wahrheit Gottes. — M. R.“ A.

An Expression of the "Lutheran Companion" on the Question of Lutheran Union. — In an editorial appearing in the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod) of March 30 we read as follows: "The editor of the *Christian Century*, in commenting on the recent moves toward unity among Lutherans of America, makes some curious observations. He says: 'While these and all other approaches to unity are hailed with satisfaction by friendly observers in all denominations, the fact cannot be overlooked that, in building a solid theological platform for their own unity, and especially one of the extremely conservative character indicated by this recently adopted verbal-inspiration plank, the Lutherans are rendering more remote their union with non-Lutheran bodies and are imposing difficulties in the way even of cooperation with them.'

"The allusion to a 'verbal-inspiration plank' is a reference to the recent agreement between commissions of the American Lutheran Church and the United Lutheran Church in America on the subject of the inspiration of the Scriptures. The formula adopted reads: 'By virtue of a unique operation of the Holy Spirit, by which he supplied to the holy writers content and fitting word, the books of the Bible are related

to one another and, taken together, constitute a complete, errorless, unbreakable whole, of which Christ is the center.'

"In regard to the comments of the editor of the *Christian Century* it might be observed, first of all, that, although many Lutherans in America would gladly cooperate with non-Lutheran bodies in efforts where they believe the kingdom of God can be advanced, there are no Lutheran groups, so far as we know, that are even contemplating 'union with non-Lutheran bodies.' Furthermore, if the building of 'a solid theological platform' of a 'conservative character' is to be regarded as an obstacle in the way of unity between the various branches of the Christian Church, it may as well be stated right now that the fears of the *Christian Century* editor that unity between Lutherans and other Protestants is unlikely are well founded. A 'unity' in which revealed truth is to be sacrificed for the sake of external agreement is no unity at all and is indeed a remote prospect so far as Lutherans are concerned. It is the more to be regretted that there are some leaders in the Protestant Church who seem to feel that it is no great concern what the Word of God has to say in regard to our Christian faith. Herein, in the final analysis, may be found the real reason for our sad disunity.

"So far as unity among Lutherans is concerned, it is just because of doctrinal agreement that final union may be regarded as virtually inevitable. And we may truly rejoice over this. When the day comes, by God's own gracious direction, that the Lutheran Church in America shall become one, it is of supreme importance that the external union be founded on inner unity, in order that the Church of the open Bible may bear mighty witness to all the world of the spiritual truth which has been committed to her and which she believes and confesses.

"We believe that this inner unity among Lutheran church-bodies in America already exists. It only remains to have it revealed. How is this to be done?

"We are not altogether sure that the 'technique,' or procedure, now being pursued in order to demonstrate the existence of spiritual unity in the Lutheran Church is the correct one. It suggests from the outset that some Lutheran bodies are suspicious of the 'orthodoxy' of other groups. It even affords opportunity for one or more groups to assume the arbitrary position of being the final judges of what constitutes real Lutheranism.

"To permit the Lutheran unity movement to gravitate into a discussion of a few specific doctrines of the Church also has its dangers. It opens the door for the introduction of new issues, as has already happened during the negotiations between two groups. All this merely impedes the progress toward the desired goal, since the number of doctrinal questions that might be raised is almost interminable. It also may result in making Lutheran unity contingent upon the acceptance of definite, individualistic interpretations of certain doctrines in which the Church has not made a final pronouncement or has permitted considerable latitude of opinion. Unless it is the purpose of American Lutheranism to rewrite the Book of Concord, the wisdom and value of such procedure may indeed be questioned.

"How, then, shall we proceed? It is obvious that the purposes of unity among American Lutherans can be promoted most logically on the basis of the official doctrinal declarations of the various groups. Each church-body has incorporated its doctrinal standards in its constitution; it has written the same standards into the constitution which it has given to its congregations, and it requires the candidates whom it ordains to the ministry to subscribe to these doctrinal statements.

"If we are satisfied that adherence to the historic confessional symbols of the Lutheran Church is sufficient to entitle a group to be called 'Lutheran,' why should it be necessary to proceed any farther than to determine whether or not that group has officially adopted these symbols?

"Never has the time seemed more propitious for the Lutherans of America to get together on a basis of mutual understanding than it is right now. It would be more than tragic if doors that are now open should be closed again through unfortunate and unnecessary quibbling. In the words of a noted Lutheran divine, 'God have mercy on the Lutheran Church of America, lest she miss the day of her destiny!'"

There are good and heartening things said in this editorial. Besides, there is submitted here the editorial expression of the *Christian Century* on the subject of Lutheran union, which we should like to bring to the attention of our readers. In surveying, however, the views of the *Lutheran Companion* on the establishment of union between Lutherans, we fail to see how thorough doctrinal discussion among Lutheran bodies, culminating in joint statements concerning controverted points, can afford "an opportunity for one or more groups to assume the arbitrary position of being the final judges of what constitutes real Lutheranism." Every group, in the last analysis, will have to pass judgment as to the Lutheranism of the body with which it proposes or is asked to unite. It will have to decide whether this Lutheranism is sufficient for union or not. If a Lutheran church-body votes for union with another Lutheran body solely because of the latter's formal acceptance of the Lutheran Confessions, it makes the establishment of church-fellowship a rather mechanical matter, but it nevertheless constitutes itself a judge of what must be regarded as Lutheranism. Presumably it would vote against union with a body which has the Lutheran name, but does not avow allegiance to the Lutheran Confessions.

That in discussions intended to bring about unity new issues will arise is inevitable if one of the negotiating parties deviates from the Confessions while the other does not. In such cases, it is not only profitable but absolutely necessary that the point of difference be carefully examined and that the error which is sponsored by one group be recognized as what it is. That is not "an impeding of progress" but a direct contribution to advancing the cause of true unity. Furthermore, the fact that the Church has not "made a final pronouncement" on certain points of doctrine cannot enter into these discussions as a deciding factor. What must be considered in every case is whether the respective teaching, be it old or new, is Scriptural or not.

It may be that "never has the time seemed more propitious for the Lutherans of America to get together on a basis of mutual under-

standing than it is right now." But let us not forget that, if this basis of mutual understanding should rest on indifference rather than on unity in doctrine, the resulting fellowship would do far more harm than good and would provoke our God to pronounce on the negotiating parties the verdict uttered against the church at Laodicea, Rev. 3:15 f.

A.

The Freedom of the Will.—The *Lutheran Church Quarterly*, theological organ of the U. L. C. A., in its January issue offers among a number of other readable articles also one on the "Freedom of the Will," written by W. C. Waltemyer, professor of the English Bible in Gettysburg College and Holman lecturer on the Augsburg Confession in 1938. We congratulate the *Quarterly* on its discussion of the subject from the viewpoint of our Confessions. If there is anything (outside the Bible) at this time, when the Lutheran synods in our country are talking church union, that deserves thorough discussion, it is the *corpus doctrinae* contained in our venerable *Concordia*. If the Lutheran synods could be persuaded to accept this *corpus doctrinae* in one and the same sense, no further brief or long statements would be required to effect a sound and solid union. The question only is whether we really understand our Confessions in *eadem sententia*. There is a tendency today to recast the ancient formulas of our Christian faith in new molds, taken over from modern psychology and philosophy. There may be some advantage in this use of a new theological terminology; for since theological parlance is predominantly man-made, there is *per se* no reason why it should not be modern, just as our church architecture today is modern and our garments are modern. Still, whenever we employ new expressions, we are apt to be misunderstood, and besides, the new terms are commonly unintelligible to our laity, most of whom are not psychologically or philosophically trained. Dr. Waltemyer employs Article XVIII of the A. C. very ingeniously against modern opponents and perverters of the ancient categories of human freedom. In the incandescent light of Art. XVIII of the A. C. he views and condemns behaviorism, humanism and theistic naturalism as superficial and inadequate, and shows that Article XVIII of the A. C. still supplies us with a safe and workable canon for our theological thinking and action. He broadly divides the contents of Article XVIII of the A. C. into three parts: 1. Our fathers believed in the fact of free will. "Man's will hath some liberty" (*libertas minor*). 2. They declared there were definite limitations in the exercise of man's freedom. "It hath no power to work the righteousness of God, or a spiritual righteousness." 3. For the highest spiritual endeavor they felt the inadequacy of any dynamic other than that which is of God. "This spiritual righteousness is wrought in the heart when men do receive the Spirit of God through the Word." God alone enables one to possess *libertas maior*. God gives us this highest kind of freedom. So far so good. But the article contains a number of explanatory statements which we fail to understand, as, for example: "It is with difficulty (if at all possible) that one realizes the *libertas maior*, that freedom which is our final liberty in truth and goodness." What do these words mean? If they refer to the *libertas spiritualis*, by which a person truly repents of

his sin and believes in Christ as his Savior, then that liberty is utterly impossible to natural man. Again, we read: "God gives us this highest kind of freedom," i. e., the *libertas maior*. That of course is true; but God gives us also every kind of freedom, for He has created us free and responsible beings. The statement needs additional qualification. Moreover, we read: "Conflict in thought is to be preferred to self-satisfied assurance or indifference." We ask: Is that true? Self-satisfied assurance or indifference is, of course, a most vicious evil, but is spiritual conflict in thought anything good *per se*? Luther certainly did not find it so in his pre-Gospel days. Furthermore, the writer, quoting an authority, says: "There is nothing so dead as an accepted creed." Again, we ask: Is that true? The Apostles' Creed is to us personally a most vital, living, effective thing, which moves us, thrills us, energizes us, whenever we pray it, although it has been accepted centuries ago as a declaration of divine truth. And that is true of all our confessions, especially the A. C. Or, again, quoting another person, he declares: "A philosophy that is done, is a philosophy that is done for." That may be true of a philosophy, but it is not true of our Christian faith. Our A. C., for instance, is not "done for" just because it is "done." We do not write all this in the spirit of carping criticism but rather by way of appending a few notes of inquiry to what we have read. Perhaps the following may help to clarify the issue. Our confessions (taken together) concede to natural man freedom 1. in all matters of this earthly life; 2. in the matter of *iustitia civilis*; and 3. in the sense that in these matters man is a free agent, and therefore not under coercion. But they deny to him any and all freedom in *spiritual matters*, so that he cannot of his own power truly repent of his sins and truly believe in Christ Jesus as his Lord and Savior. If we adhere to these simple Scriptural statements, we shall not only understand one another but also explain more adequately the true facts of human psychology against all anti-Biblical trends, such as behaviorism and humanism, which the learned author rightly rejects both as opposing reason and divine revelation. It is certainly well for all Lutherans to meet on the common ground of our glorious Confessions and thus to be "perfectly joined in the same mind and in the same judgment," 1 Cor. 1:10.

J. T. M.

"Scripture Contains the Word of God." — The January number of the *C. T. M.* (p. 69), discussing the proposed union of the Presbyterian and the Protestant Episcopal churches, said: "Paragraph 1 of the Proposed Statement on Reunion states: 'The conferring churches find themselves agreed in their acceptance of the Old and New Testaments as containing the Word of God and furnishing the supreme standard of faith and morals.' The commissioners felt that the statement of the [original] Resolution ["The two churches, . . . recognizing the *Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith, . . . hereby formally declare their purpose to achieve organic unity between the respective churches*"] needed to be amplified. But saying that the Scriptures 'contain the Word of God' does not help matters. The conservative Presbyterians will not stand on such a platform. And there will be so many liberals rushing to stand on such a platform that it will break." The *Presbyterian Guardian*, in the Feb-

ruary number, thus voices the refusal of the conservative Presbyterians to stand on such a platform: "In declaring that the churches 'find themselves agreed in their acceptance of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing the Word of God and furnishing the supreme standard of faith and morals,' the Proposed Statements on Reunion might appear to give the impression that the authority of the Scriptures is maintained in accordance with the historic Reformed position. But that is far from being the case. This is an essentially different doctrine from that of the Westminster Confession of Faith, which affirms that Holy Scripture 'is the Word of God.' This statement demands much less than does the formula of subscription for the ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., for the latter requires recognition of the Scriptures as 'the Word of God, the *only infallible* rule of faith and practise.' . . . By the most solemn vows Presbyterian ministers affirm their acceptance of the Scriptures as the Word of God, receive and adopt the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures, and approve of the government of the Church, even as our President and other public officers swear to uphold the Constitution. But now, by the steps that have been taken towards union, the representatives of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. seem clearly to imply that these vows are not to be taken seriously, that the Church is to lower its flag of testimony to the Scriptures as the Word of God, abandon its constitution. . . . If the truth is that the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. has lost its faith in the Bible as the Word of God and no longer wishes to uphold its constitution, as many of its actions in recent years bear out, the frank and candid action would be to seek constitutional changes after open admission of its rejection of the old standards." E.

An Appraisal of the Missouri Synod's Action Pertaining to the Approach between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod.—In the *Australasian Theological Review* for October-December, 1938 (Vol. IX, No. 4), we find a long article in which Prof. H. Hamann, member of the faculty of the school of our brethren in Adelaide (Unley), South Australia, discusses the chief facts pertaining to the efforts looking to the establishment of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod. The article, having the caption "A Step Toward Lutheran Union in America," is intensely interesting, and we should like to reprint it in its entirety, but on account of its length we have to restrict ourselves to the reproduction of a few paragraphs. Special importance, we think, attaches to what Professor Hamann says on the action of our Synod pertaining to the points in which, according to the *Declaration* of the A. L. C. representatives, some members of the latter church-body do not fully agree with Missouri Synod teaching. We quote:

"An examination of the reservations, if we may use this term, which the *Declaration* makes with respect to certain doctrines, reveals nothing that need arouse apprehension as to a successful continuation of the doctrinal discussions. Thus the *Declaration* holds that it is not false teaching to speak of a visible side of the Church when speaking of its essence, provided that by this term nothing else is meant than the means

of grace. Now, while the means of grace (the Word of God and the Sacraments) are indeed necessarily connected with the Church, they are properly defined as its marks (*notae ecclesiae*), not as its essence. However, it must be conceded that, if no other elements enter in, any objection raised against the statement of the *Declaration* must enter the plea of inexact definition and not that of false doctrine.—As regards the teaching of the Antichrist, it is gratifying indeed to know that the *Declaration* accepts without qualification the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions 'that the Pope is the very Antichrist,' though the question whether there will be in the future 'a specific unfolding and personal concentration of the antichristian powers present and thus a still more comprehensive fulfilment of 2 Thess. 2,' is left to God. We feel that this vague reference to the future would profitably have been omitted; on the other hand, we find a certain reassuring significance in the initial capital letter of the word 'Antichrist' and in the absence of such a mark of distinction when the 'antichristian powers' are mentioned.—Finally, in the field of eschatology the *Declaration*, after demolishing in three terse and telling sentences the picture of the last times as usually painted by Chiliasts, asks freedom of teaching for three points, which are held by some though not expressly taught by the American Lutheran Church. They are: the hope of a general conversion of the Jews (chiefly on the basis of Rom. 11:25, 26); the possibility that there may be a physical resurrection of the martyrs before the Last Day, on the strength of Rev. 20:4; and the point that, in the words of Dr. Walther, it is not possible to say with absolute certainty either that the thousand years (Rev. 20) have 'been fulfilled or that they still lie in the future.' We wonder a little why these matters should be insisted on when all millennial implications and associations are so emphatically repudiated. Perhaps some allowance must be made for exegetical judgments that have become habitual. We venture to think that, in the absence of a chiliastic background to which these details can serve as embellishments, insistence upon them will be neither general nor long-continued. They will probably die of inanition.

"With respect to all the doctrinal matters mentioned in the previous paragraph, the *Declaration* states, appealing in most instances to pronouncements made by writers within the Missouri Synod, that the views put forward need not be disruptive of church-fellowship. Committee No. 16 endorsed this opinion, and the convention did the same by unanimously adopting the report of this committee, after the matter had been discussed in four sessions.

"How carefully and conscientiously the Missouri Synod moved in this entire matter may be seen from a number of other resolutions, all of which are contained in the report of Committee No. 16 and all of which hence secured synodical approval by the adoption of that report. Thus the Committee on Lutheran Union was instructed to endeavor to establish full agreement on the 'points of non-fundamental doctrines' mentioned in the *Declaration* and to work for 'uniform and Scripturally acceptable terminology and teaching' in regard to the 'visible side of the Church.' Again, it was pointed out that for true unity agreement in practise was

needed as well as doctrinal agreement, particular mention being made of 'the attitude toward the antichristian lodge, anti-Scriptural pulpit-and altar-fellowship, and all other forms of unionism.' Finally, the resolutions state that the establishment of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend on the approval on the part of the other synods with which the bodies named are now in fellowship, of the action so far taken. [The respective paragraphs read: "The establishing of church-fellowship between the American Lutheran Church and the Missouri Synod will depend also on the establishing on the part of the American Lutheran Church of doctrinal agreement with those church-bodies with which the American Lutheran Church is in fellowship. As far as the Missouri Synod is concerned, this whole matter must be submitted for approval to the other synods constituting the Synodical Conference." *Et.*] Yet it may be argued that the Missouri Synod envisaged at least the possibility that this happy consummation may be reached before its next regular convention; for another resolution reads: 'If by the grace of God fellowship can be established, this fact is to be announced officially by the President of Synod. Until then no action is to be taken by any of our pastors or congregations which would overlook the fact that we are not yet united.'" A.

The New Testament Conception of the Church.— Among the representatives attending the recent International Missionary Council meeting at Tambaram (Madras), India, was also the Rev. Dr. Abdel Ross Wentz, professor at the Gettysburg Lutheran Theological Seminary of the U. L. C. A. Under the heading given he presented a paper in which he stressed the commonly acknowledged Scriptural *affectiones* of the Church: The Church is 1) Christian; 2) holy; 3) apostolic; 4) catholic, or universal; 5) one. These marks of the Church the Romanists apply to their own external ecclesiastical organization, while their Lutheran opponents rightly relate them to the *ecclesia invisibilis*. "*Ecclesia invisibilis est sancta, una, apostolica, catholica, infallibilis [columna veritatis], extra quam nulla salus.*" (Cf. *e. g.*, *Hutterus Redivivus*, p. 266 f.) Hase quotes Hutter as complaining: "*Quod ad veram ecclesiam pertinet, quod sit columna veritatis quodque non erret, illud ad suam ecclesiam Pontificii vitiose transferunt.*" (*Ibid.*) But the same papistic tendency, to refer that which properly and exclusively belongs to the *ecclesia invisibilis*, we find also in Reformed theology, as also in Calvinizing Lutheran denominations of a unionistic type. In his article Dr. Wentz commits the same mistake, and we direct the attention of our readers to this fact because we find his essay published in a popular Lutheran periodical without any critical comment whatever. But thus to apply to *Christendom in general* what really belongs to the *communio sanctorum* means to present not the New Testament conception of the Church but a downright rationalistic conception (Calvinism, Romanism, Ritschlianism, Modernism), which is bound to cause the greatest confusion.

This confusion is grossly apparent even in the essay of Dr. Wentz. The Madras (Tambaram) International Missionary Council was governed in the main by liberal leaders. Dr. Mott served as its moderator and was again chosen for this office, though he is an outspoken Modernist of

the E. Stanley Jones type. The most popular books at Tambaram were those of Toyohiko Kagawa, whose "Christian outlook" has become almost entirely "socialized." Prof. Hendrik Kraemer's recent work, *The Christian Message in a Non-Christian World*, written especially for the convention, was much discussed; but while it aims at a conservative attitude, it is nevertheless steeped in the unionism and externalism from which Calvinism commonly suffers. At the conference sixty-three different denominations were represented, including staunch conservatives, middle-of-the-rovers, and declared Liberalists. Such a variegated assembly made up of believers and scoffers, and all of them given blindly to religious unionism, is certainly not the "Church of the living God." And yet Dr. Wentz addressed it as if the external body of so-called Christians represented by these several hundred delegates were the Church, which is Christian, holy, apostolic, catholic, one. But we dare not comfort an ecclesiastical church-body which is so inherently rationalistic and unionistic as that convened at Tambaram with the *affectiones* that apply only to the *congregatio sanctorum*, which to us in this life is invisible.

The confusion in the mind of the writer may be shown by a few statements from his essay. He writes: "The Church of the New Testament is catholic because its message is a message of divine revelation and transcends all forms of religion and religiosity. Christianity is not a religion. Religion is man's effort to adjust himself to the ultimates. Christianity is God's answer to the quest of the human heart. Jesus Christ is not the founder of a religion. The message of the New Testament Church is not simply one of several possibilities for man's pious self-expression. It stands alone as God's message to man. It is not just a word from God or a word about God; it is the Word of God whose content is Jesus Christ. The Church is catholic because it does not come with a philosophy nor a system of doctrine nor an ethic; it does not even come with a religion. It comes with a person, a living God, who speaks through Jesus Christ. Our God is larger than the founder of religion. Our Gospel transcends religion as well as time and place. And our Church, so long as it is faithful to this witness, is the catholic Church."

To correct such a paragraph in the sense of Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions is simply impossible, for in it truth and error are hopelessly commingled. The whole article so teems with unbiblical and un-Lutheran declarations that it must be rejected in its entirety. One thing is certain: If we give up the Scriptural distinction of the *ecclesia visibilis* and *invisibilis* and of orthodox visible churches and heterodox visible churches, which we must avoid, then the entire doctrine of the Church becomes uncertain and confused. Then, too, there will be nothing to oppose to the prevailing unionism of today, and rationalism will reign and destroy without hindrance. What we need today is a new, careful study of the Scriptural doctrine of the Church as it is set forth in the Confessions of our Lutheran Church. *Qui bene distinguit, bene docet*. But to distinguish well and to teach well requires first of all that we study well, *viz.*, Holy Scripture and our precious Lutheran Confessions.

J. T. M.

"A Working Faith for the World," by Dr. Hugh Vernon White, professes to speak from the standpoint of "liberal Christianity," which in some fashion is set in contrast with "the dogmatic metaphysics of the Catholic Church," the "irresponsible other-worldliness of Lutheranism," and the "legalistic conception of Calvinism." When the author declares, bluntly and dogmatically, that "Lutheran Christianity has no working faith and philosophy for this present world," one wonders amazedly whether the author has ever seen the great "guide book for the Christian life," Luther's Small Catechism, which perhaps has had a greater ethical influence in the "present world" than any other single book, excepting the Bible itself. And one wonders why certain countries where the Lutheran Church is practically the only Church are pointed to by the whole world as the best in social and economic and political conditions if "Lutheran Christianity has no working faith and philosophy for the present world. . . ."

The Lutheran, Jan. 11, 1939

The Madras Conference.—Repeatedly it has been mentioned that the International Missionary Council was gathered in Madras, India, in December of last year. About five hundred persons attended. A matter that struck an observer as noteworthy was the fellowship practised by delegates from China and Japan although their countries are at war with each other. Bishop Hobson, who gives his impressions of the meeting in an article written for the *Living Church* and to whom we owe the little detail just mentioned, furthermore dwells on the various theological tendencies represented in the assembly, for instance, that of exponents of "the continental point of view," holding the position of Karl Barth, and another that of a group holding the so-called "American position," where, if we understand the term, the emphasis is placed not so much on theology as on social work. The Confessional Church of Germany was represented, and its spokesmen were treated with much sympathy. With respect to definite results of the meeting the Bishop says: "First, Madras proclaims the Christian truth that the State has no supreme or ultimate authority over the individual. . . . Second, Madras affirms the Christian truth that as no individual has a right to claim supreme sovereignty in his relations with others, so no state has a right to claim supreme sovereignty in its relations with other states." If this second point is reported correctly, it is very apparent that the council busied itself with matters over which the Church has no jurisdiction or authority.

A.

Recent Changes in the Presbyterian Church.—The Machen group, first known as the Presbyterian Consitutional Covenant in 1936, then as the Presbyterian Church of America, has again changed its name. Members of the Presbyterian Church of the U. S. A. (Northern Presbyterians) had brought suit to restrain the Machen group from using a name so similar to theirs. Rather than to continue the litigation the small group adopted the name Orthodox Presbyterian Church at the fifth General Assembly, held in February. According to the *Presbyterian Guardian* the name Orthodox was selected as a testimonial to the fact that they intend to remain faithful to historic Calvinism, especially the so-called Five Points of Calvinism. The theory of limited atonement is a fundamental

tenet of the Orthodox Presbyterians, whereas the Presbyterian Church in its Declaratory Statement of 1903 had virtually repudiated this theory. The *Presbyterian Guardian*, official paper of the Orthodox group, in the current volume, p. 31, objects to the Dr. W. A. Maier's statement in *The Cross from Coast to Coast* "The Savior lays down His life as the acceptable and eternal ransom of *your* souls." The reviewer states that by thus addressing believers and unbelievers Dr. Maier has fallen into the dilemma of all who teach universal atonement. If they were ransomed, they would be saved. To tell an unsaved that the Savior's blood was shed in vain for him is tantamount to saying that "Christ died intending to save, but His purposes were frustrated." Calvinism with its theory of the sovereignty of God and doctrine of irresistible grace cannot understand and accept 2 Pet. 2:1.—The Orthodox Presbyterian Church maintains Westminster Seminary at Philadelphia, which has prepared 172 graduates for the ministry since 1931.

Some Presbyterians who had withdrawn from their respective modernistic churches and had associated themselves with the Orthodox Church broke with the Machen group because of their views on premillennialism and total abstinence. This group of Presbyterians and other adherents of Fundamentalism have recently organized the Bible Presbyterian Church. Dr. H. Mcallister Griffiths, reporting on this new denomination in the *Christian Beacon* (quoted in the *Sunday-School Times*, March 18, 1939), states that "for the first time in history a Presbyterian Church holding faithfully to the great doctrinal tradition of Augustine and Calvin has officially recognized and incorporated into its standards the fruits of the eschatological study of the last three hundred years." Faith Seminary at Wilmington, Del., with an enrolment of twenty theological students, is the headquarters of this new organization. We have been informed that the title "Faith" was selected to indicate that the seminary does not depend on endowments or other regular sources of income but is financed "as the Lord provides the funds." F. E. M.

A Crusade for Clean Literature.—Beginning on Ash Wednesday and lasting during the entire season of Lent, there was held in Canada under the auspices of the Catholic Youth Union a national crusade for good reading, according to *America*, a Catholic review of the week. This plan of action was decided upon in a recent convention at Ottawa, where the delegates representing about 400,000 young Canadians promised upon their honor: 1. to buy, read, and circulate only good, clean, and wholesome literature; 2. to refrain from buying, reading, and circulating any publications containing articles, illustrations or advertisements of an immoral, indecent, or suggestive nature. 3. to boycott all publications, distributors, and venders who pander to the public by sale and display of vicious matter. The project also embraces the formation of canvassing committees, one of whose functions is to visit news agencies, bookstores, and news-stands and request cooperation with the crusade, even asking the proprietors and venders to sign pledge cards. By means of lectures, speeches, news releases, radio announcements, the organization hopes to spread its "spirit throughout the Dominion. We insist that all forms of poison be labeled by the skull and cross-bones as a constant warning to

those who must handle it. Our government has enacted severe regulations concerning the sale and use of narcotics and other harmful drugs, but vicious literature and obscene pictures, a poison more deadly to the spiritual and moral life of our young people, is sold openly over many of the counters in the places of business which we support by our patronage, or are peddled unlabeled among the children and young people of our Church and country, or are loaned to them from innocent- and at times even exclusive-looking private loan libraries. Our Christians ought to find out whether their community is cursed with distributing agencies of this form of moral poison. We would not remain indifferent if we were to discover that some fiend was deliberately polluting the water supply of our city with deadly cholera germs." A. M. R.

Has the preaching that voids the stern truths about sin and salvation brought peace and comfort to the Church, the nation, or the world? Under the caption "A Notorious Failure" *The Brethren Evangelist* forcibly sums up the situation:

"Modern religious movements for a generation have centered their efforts toward bringing world peace, tolerance between the races, and a new social order. Not only have these efforts ended in failure, but all these ideals are further from realization than when churchmen stopped the preaching of salvation and shifted to the social emphasis. Modernism can be credited with nothing but failure. It has not brought world peace; it has not brought tolerance between the races, and it has failed miserably in ushering in a new social order. There is a reason. Modernism is a departure from the purposes and commission given by our Lord to His Church. The Church is not told to transform men from the outside in but to present the Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation and to outward transformations as well. The social gospel can find no short cut in a new social order. Salvation is an individual matter, and the more born again believers there are in the world, the better will be society. *The Presbyterian*

Where "America" Is Right.—No comment is needed on this item of *America* (Roman Catholic weekly) having the title "Mothers on the Jury."

"Some weeks ago, Mrs. Bessie Zahnstecher began to serve on a New York jury. After a few days she was rebuked by the judge, and her name was ordered stricken from the jury lists. She had reported late every morning. 'If you want to do jury duty,' said the judge, 'you should do it as the men do it.'

"The worth of that advice may be dubious, but it seems to us that Mrs. Zahnstecher had a good excuse. She had to prepare breakfast for her husband. Her little boy was suffering from a bad cold, and a new servant had to be instructed how to care for him. In addition, this domestic task and that called her before she could set out to serve her country on the jury.

"Sympathy is due Mrs. Zahnstecher, who deposes: 'I just feel terrible about all this.' But we should like to inquire into the mentality of the official who allowed a mother with a sick child to serve on a jury. Jury service is a duty, but there are higher duties, with which it should not

be permitted to interfere. A mother who cares for a sick child not only fulfils one of these, but helps the State more than by serving on a jury. It also seems to us that feeding a husband ranks above jury service. When homes are neglected, the State as well as the household suffers."

The Church Situation in Germany.—"According to latest news advices from Germany it is evident that further restrictions are being placed on the Church by those who are in authority. While the new decrees may be variously interpreted, it would seem that the process of bringing German Protestantism under the control of the Nazi state is gradually going forward.

"One of the new orders which have been published by Dr. Friedrich Werner, president of the Evangelical Church Council, provides that any church-member may choose some pastor other than the regular minister of his parish for the performance of 'the individual duties of his office, for religious instruction, or even for his entire churchly ministrations.'

"Another of the new decrees provides that a pastor may be removed from his church against his will if it seems desirable to redistrict parishes. A pastor also may be dismissed 'if he can no longer conduct his office within his congregation in an advantageous manner or if the preservation of order in his congregation so demands.'

"Confessional circles are reported to be greatly concerned about the new orders, believing them to be a direct attempt on the part of the Nazi State to eliminate pastors who have been recalcitrant. Struggle for control of the churches between the Confessionals and the German Christians (advocates of State domination) has been going on ever since Hitler came to power. Because of his opposition to Nazi interference in the Church the Rev. Martin Niemoeller, militant leader of the Confessional Synod, has been in a concentration camp for more than a year.

"The Evangelical Church, which is the State Church of Prussia, is a combination of both Lutherans and Reformed. The question of who dominates it is not very clear. Although Hitler brought about the election of Ludwig Mueller as *Reichsbischof*, the early efforts of this man to rule the Church brought about such a wide-spread revolt on the part of the Confessionals that Hitler was constrained to restrict his powers. This he did by appointing a layman, Hans Kerrl, as minister of church affairs in the *Reich*. Kerrl, however, has delegated certain powers to Dr. Werner, president of the Evangelical Church Council, and is believed by some to be using him as an instrument to carry out his own ideas. Werner does not possess the confidence of the Confessional group and has been openly opposed by many of these."

The above is an editorial appearing in the *Lutheran Companion*. On account of the difficulty of obtaining information we hesitate to make any statement of our own concerning the present religious situation in Germany. A.

Is Christianity Being Crushed in Germany?—A negative reply to this question is found in the *Presbyterian*, which quotes an exchange to this effect: "Recent dispatches from Berlin through the Associated Press indicate that the efforts to eradicate religious teaching in the

schools are making little headway. Only about fifteen per cent. of the Protestant teachers are reported as having acceded so far to the demands for the elimination of classes in religion. The great majority of the teachers not only themselves favor the continuance of such teaching, but are receiving the support of most of the parents, who also are opposed to the discarding of religious education. Moreover, it is stated that some of the provincial governors are siding with these parents, though it apparently means that they are risking their positions in doing so. The large group of Christians who have opposed the efforts of the government to force the Church to conform to the religious viewpoint of National Socialism, notwithstanding the persecutions to which they have been subjected, continue to defy these and all other efforts to paganize Christianity." To what extent the efforts of the State are here correctly characterized we are unable to say. Recent events make the separation of Church and State loom as a real possibility.

A.

Juvenile Delinquency in Germany.—“Juvenile and youth delinquency and crime in Germany show an increase of forty per cent. during the past three years according to a report issued by the Nofrontier News Service. The number of offenders from 14 to 18 years of age jumped from 6,751 in 1934 to 9,954 for 1936. Once previously, during the depression years of 1931 and 1932, Germany experienced a similar rise in juvenile delinquency. During that period nearly 10,000 young people appeared before the courts, but of that number approximately (about 30 per cent.) were driven to crime by hunger and poverty. According to the most recent statistics, however, only 934 youths (fewer than 10 per cent.) were similarly motivated.” So reports the *News Bulletin of the National Lutheran Council*. Whether this report is correct or not, we cannot say. *A priori* every Christian will admit that depriving the young of instruction in the Word of God must result in lawlessness on their part. If the article from which we have quoted is correct in what it cites from its authority, “two or three afternoons and Sunday belong to the Hitler youth irrespective of the schools,” one need not be surprised at these conditions.

A.

Brief Items.—Concordia Teachers' College, River Forest, Ill., announces that it will again hold a summer session. The dates are June 26 to July 29. For Sunday-school teachers an institute will be conducted from July 17 to 21. “The summer-school offers 1. a full summer course leading to the bachelor's degree, offered to teachers in a Christian environment; 2. a modified program for women teachers, many of whom have had no opportunity for college training in a synodical institution; 3. summer courses for choirmasters leading to membership in the Lutheran Choirmasters Guild; 4. courses for Sunday-school teachers in the new *Concordia Teacher-training Series*; 5. a special course for pastors, in which they prepare themselves for teaching the Sunday-school courses.” An attractive folder, giving full information, is available. All that are interested should address the dean of the summer-school, Prof. W. O. Kraeft, Concordia Teachers College, River Forest, Ill.

Greece is having its troubles with people who cling to the old

(Julian) calendar. Imprisonment of two bishops who advocate adherence to this calendar was of no avail. These men have been set free, and they have been ordaining helpers, sending them as priests to any village that is willing to have them. A certain number of monks, especially from Mount Athos, have been abetting this strange cause. It seems the Greek Church is afflicted with a real schism.

Speaking of decided changes in his religious convictions, Prof. E. G. Homrighausen of Princeton says in the *Christian Century*: "It was not Karl Barth alone who made this transformation. Mention must be made especially of Emil Brunner, Karl Heim, and Herman Kutter, and Eduard Thurneysen. Other events, listed farther on, conspired to assist in the process of my spiritual rebirth. Yet I must confess, it was not these men and events merely, but all of them led me to the two men I now regard as the greatest Christians of all times—Paul and Luther. In short, what hit me was not a theology, nor a theologian, nor a group of theologians, but realistic Biblical religion!"

Recently in Havana, Cuba, an Episcopal bishop was consecrated, the Rev. A. Hugo Blankingship. "He is the first Anglican bishop ever to have been consecrated in Cuba and the third bishop of Cuba."

The bishop (Anglican) of the Windward Islands is reported to have uttered this complaint: "Today we are spending thousands of pounds on the education of children in the mission-field. In my islands there are at work 46 American crazy religions.—Holy Rollers, Holy Shakers, and all sorts of unholy holies. We are flooded with pernicious literature. Here is our Mother Church teaching her children to read and leaving it to the heretics to provide them with reading matter." The Windward Islands belong to the West Indies.

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York will be practically completed this year. \$435,000 has been collected for that purpose.

A reader of the *Presbyterian*, writing a letter to that journal, warns against union with the Episcopalians. He says very correctly: "We would suggest that, if Presbyterians, either clerical or lay members, wish to become Episcopalians, let them do so, and *vice versa*; but there is no necessity for taking the whole denomination along for the sake of a few who wish the change."

The *Christian Century* writes that Dr. A. D. Mattson, professor of Christian Ethics at Augustana Lutheran Seminary, is to have said in an address before a conference on the relation of the Church to contemporary social problems: "The New Testament provides more material for sociology than for theology. . . . Jesus performed many of His miracles for social service. The sins of which John the Baptist urged his listeners to repent had a very definite social character. The duty of the Church is to testify against all sin, individual and social. The Church must not identify itself with any political group, but must sit in judgment upon all political movements and theories from the standpoint and spirit of Jesus." What a sad aberration! The speaker ought to ponder 1 Cor. 5:12, 13, "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? . . . But they that are without God judgeth." A.