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Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

On the Doctrine of Election. — At several intersynodical conferences the following propositions, drawn up by the undersigned, were submitted and considered:

1. While the doctrine of predestination, or election, is a definite Scripture doctrine, it would be a mistake if we made it the most prominent teaching of our Church.

2. But since, as just stated, this doctrine is a Scripture doctrine, it would be wrong if we did not teach it. What God's Word teaches we have to teach, too.

3. Our rule must be, **First things first!** Everything in its place in due time! Cf. Heb. 5:12; 1 Cor. 3:2.

4. The doctrine of predestination, though it has the reputation of being a dreadful doctrine, is presented in the Scriptures as a sweet, comforting article of faith. When the Scriptures speak of it, they do not set it forth as something that must make us shudder but as a great truth in which we are to rejoice.

5. To view predestination correctly, we must view it as something that God has done for us for our salvation. This shows that it belongs to the Gospel, not to the Law.

6. The doctrine of predestination can best be regarded when we look at it as St. Paul does in Eph. 1. The apostle speaks there of the blessings we enjoy here as believers in Jesus Christ, and then he says that our possession of these blessings is in agreement with the fact that God elected us before the foundation of the world.

7. The doctrine of predestination teaches that whatever spiritual blessings God bestows on His children here in time He already in eternity decided to endow them with. The Scriptures present election as a cause of our salvation.

8. What moved God to elect us were His grace and the merits of Christ. There was nothing in us that induced God to elect us to eternal life. The *intuitu-fidei* view of the doctrine of election does not rest on the Scriptures.

9. The doctrine of election speaks of faith. It sets forth that God elected us to faith, that is, to become believers. The way of salvation is included in the election of God.

10. The Scriptures assure us that the election of God does not fail, John 10:28; Rom. 8:28-30. This is one of the elements on account of which we call this teaching a part of the Gospel.

11. According to the Scriptures the election of God has reference to persons, the believers, the Christians. It would be wrong to say that God merely elected a class or a group, leaving it indefinite who would belong to that class or group.

12. It would be wrong likewise to say that election merely consisted

in God's appointing the means of our salvation. The Scriptures speak of election as pertaining to persons.

13. In keeping with the Scriptures the Lutheran Church has rejected the doctrine of an absolute election, likewise the double election of the Calvinists. It teaches, however, that the election is particular. Rejecting the doctrine of an absolute election, our Church emphasizes that God's predestination rests on the grace of God and the merits of Christ as its pillars and includes the way of salvation.

14. In thinking of the election of God, difficulties arise for our reason when we turn our thoughts to the "others," the non-Christians. Their case, however, does not belong into a discussion of this doctrine. The eternal election of God, as the Formula of Concord says correctly, pertains to the children of God. What must be said of the "others" belongs to a different chapter.

15. Human reason would like to construct a doctrine of election which contains a unifying principle, giving one answer to the question Why are some saved, others not? The Bible does not give us such a unifying answer.

16. Another difficulty that has been raised with respect to this doctrine refers to the temporary believers. Here, too, we should say that their case, strictly speaking, falls outside of the doctrine of election. While their status presents a difficulty for our thinking, it has nothing to do with the doctrine of election. This doctrine is sweet Gospel, while what the Bible says of the status of the temporary believers is Law, placed before us for our warning.

A.

Again the Doctrine of Eternal Election. Under the heading "Die Lehre von der goettlichen Vorherbestimmung" the well-known German U. L. C. A. periodical *Der Lutherische Herold*, republishes from the *Ev.-Luth. Friedensbote* an article on divine predestination which is basically synergistic. There are a number of points in the article that deserve praise because they are in every way orthodox. The writer rejects Calvinism in every form, affirms the *gratia universalis*, warns against sinful speculations on the mysteries involved in predestination, teaches that we should seek our election in Christ Jesus as revealed in the Gospel and in Him be sure of our salvation, and finally insists that there is true comfort for the Christian believer in his gracious election to life eternal. But he starts off on his synergistic detour when he avers that God, in His providence and salvation, has limited Himself to definite means and a distinct *modus operandi*, so that He cannot work if these means and this *modus* are not observed. God cannot let any wheat grow in a field if the farmer does not sow the seed. So also God cannot save men if they refuse to accept the salvation offered them in the means of grace. "Gott zwingt die Menschen nicht zum Glauben, sondern er kommt den Menschen mit seinem Wort und den Sakramenten entgegen. So kommt der Mensch unter den Einfluss Gottes." And now follows the writer's synergistic explanation of the question *Cur alii, alii non?* He continues: "Er [der Mensch] kann und soll sich nun aber entscheiden, ob er es mit Gott halten wolle oder nicht, Apost. 2, 37-41. [Sic!] Diejenigen, die auf Gottes Ruf hoeren und ihm ihr Herz auftun, werden durch Gottes Treue und

durch seine Gnadenmittel weiter gefuehrt zur vertrauensvollen Hingabe an Gott und seinen Willen. . . . Aber Gott sah auch von Ewigkeit her voraus, dass die Mehrzahl der Menschen dieses in Christo vorhandene und durch die Predigt des Evangeliums dargebotene Heil nicht annehmen wuerde. Daher kann er seinen allen Menschen geltenden Vorsatz nur einem verhaeltnismaessig geringen Teil der Menschheit zuwenden. Diese nennt die Schrift 'die Erwaehlten'. Die Erwaehlung ist also nicht durch Gottes Willkuer bestimmt und begrenzt, *sondern durch das Verhalten der Menschen.* [Italics ours.] Gott hat sich die erwaeht, *die sich zum Glauben fuehren lassen."*

This is the ancient error of synergism both of the Melancthonian and of the Laternmannian type. — Space does not permit us to enter into, and correct, all errors set forth in the article; by quoting from it, we merely meant to show that not all hold the same doctrine of election in the various synods in our country and that for this reason we must practice eternal watchfulness.

J. T. M.

Truth and Error Concerning Divine Predestination. — In *Bibliotheca Sacra* Dr. L. S. Chafer, professor of Dallas Theological Seminary, rejects the proposition "Predestination predetermines that men shall sin." He says: "Such a revolting inference might on the surface seem to some minds to have a foundation. It has been pointed out that neither the Bible nor the consciousness of men ever accuses God of promoting sin; nor do the Scriptures retreat from the assuring averment that God has preordained all things which come to pass. Such a seeming contradiction is harmonized in God, if not in the mind of man. No more clarifying illustration of this seeming contradiction is to be found than is involved in the death of Christ and God's eternal purpose in that death. God had determined that His Lamb should be slain and predicted that He would be slain at the hands of wicked men. His prediction even anticipated the very words these men would utter at the time of Christ's death (Ps. 22:8). The manner of Christ's death and the precise words of His executioners were not merely foreknown by a foresight, which determines nothing. These wicked men did their deed and uttered their words under that necessity which predetermination imposes; but within the sphere of the consciousness of these men they did precisely what they wanted to do, without thought of necessity. They would have resented with vehemence any suggestion that they were fulfilling to the letter the most important decree of God. The strange harmony between predestination and human sin is asserted in Acts 2:23: 'Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.'"

Here it is correctly stated that God must not be pictured as promoting sin. The author neutralizes this statement, however, by saying that the wicked men who brought about the death of Christ acted "under that necessity which predetermination imposes," in other words, he contradicts himself. What is still worse is that he writes in one of the following paragraphs combating fatalism: "This conception is gained whenever the sovereignty of God is stressed to the exclusion of the free action of men or when God is left out of the reckoning and men imagine

they are driven by blind forces, over which they have no control. The most important choice the human heart can ever make is that of the acceptance of Christ as Savior, and the will of man alone is appealed to in this decision. If man is free in the realm of things most vital and eternal, it is to be supposed that he is equally free in matters of lesser import." If the author had read and heeded Luther's *Bondage of the Will*, he would not have written such synergistic sentiments. A.

Die Verbalinspiration dargelegt und verteidigt. Auf einer intersynodalen Konferenz in Minnesota wurden die folgenden Sätze besprochen und angenommen (Referent war ein Pastor der M. L. S.):

Während die Kirchenväter der altchristlichen Zeit, dann Luther, die Bekenntnisse unserer Kirche, die alten Dogmatiker alle bekannten und lehrten, daß die Heilige Schrift Gottes Wort ist, von Gott selbst eingegeben und darum alleiniger Grund, Regel und Richtschnur aller Lehre ist, soll nach der Meinung fast aller neueren Theologen, selbst etlicher der strengeren lutherischen Richtung, die Heilige Schrift nur *relativ* als Gottes wahrhaftiges Wort und als inspiriert vom Heiligen Geist betrachtet werden dürfen. Demgegenüber ist an folgenden Grundsätzen festzuhalten:

These 1. Die Heilige Schrift ist nicht bloß die geschichtliche Urkunde göttlicher Heils offenbarung, sondern sie ist laut ihres Selbstzeugnisses Gottes Wort im vollen und eigentlichen Sinne.

A. Sie ist auch geschichtliche Urkunde der Heils offenbarung. Ist von Menschen in menschlicher Rede geschrieben und trägt daher auch eine menschliche Seite an sich. Aber sie ist mehr.

B. Sie ist Gottes Wort im eigentlichen Sinne.

1. Die Schrift bezeugt das Alte Testament als Gottes Wort. a. Das Alte Testament bezeugt sich als Gottes Wort. b. Das Neue Testament bezeugt das Alte Testament als Gottes Wort.

2. Das Neue Testament bezeugt sich als Gottes Wort. a. Christi Worte sind auch Gottes Worte. b. Nach dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments stehen die Worte der Apostel mit denen der Propheten auf einer Linie. c. Nach dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments ist die menschliche Predigt der Apostel Gottes Wort. d. Nach dem Zeugnis des Neuen Testaments haben die Apostel das Evangelium, das sie predigten, in ihren Schriften niedergelegt.

3. Die Heilige Schrift bezeugt, daß Gottes Geist die heiligen Männer nicht nur erleuchtet, geleitet und vor Irrtum bewahrt, ihnen auch nicht nur die Sachen und die wesentlichen Grundgedanken, sondern auch die Worte eingegeben hat, so daß nicht etwa nur die Heilswahrheiten in derselben, sondern die ganze Schrift von Gott inspiriert ist.

These 2. Alle Einwände, die man auf Grund der vorliegenden Gestalt und Beschaffenheit der Schrift in unsern Tagen zu erheben pflegt, sind nicht imstande, dieses Selbstzeugnis der Schrift umzustößen und zu entkräften.

1. Nicht die Tatsache historischer Forschung seitens der heiligen Schreiber, *Lut. 1, 1—14.*

2. Nicht das individuelle Gepräge der verschiedenen Schriften.

3. Nicht die Unterscheidung Pauli zwischen dem, was Gott sagt, und dem, was er sagt.

4. Nicht der Umstand, daß sich gar geringfügige Dinge in biblischen Büchern finden, 2 Tim. 4, 13 und Stellen im Brief an Philemon.

5. Nicht die naturwissenschaftlichen, historischen und chronologischen Irrtümer, die sich in ihnen finden sollen.

6. Nicht die sogenannten Widersprüche, die gar nicht solche sind.

7. Endlich auch nicht die verschiedenen Lesarten (Varianten), in denen wir die Bibel jetzt haben.

These 3. Weil sie Gottes gewisses, untrügliches Wort ist, ist die Heilige Schrift ausschließliche Quelle und Norm des Glaubens und Lebens und ebenso auch Wegweiser und Gnadenmittel zur Seligkeit.

Are We Drifting? Some time ago, under this heading, the *Lutheran Herald*, official organ of the United Norwegian Church, published an article presenting "a Christian pastor's view" on present-day spiritual conditions in that Lutheran synod, a member of the American Lutheran Conference. The writer, in his stirring review, compares the pastors and congregations of today with those of the Norwegian Lutheran Church sixty years ago and finds them wanting in many respects, though in general active, aggressive, and spiritually alive. The article is written in a kindly, sympathetic spirit, and the reader readily perceives that it is the writer's deeply religious earnestness which prompted him to say what he did. His chief concern is about the inward, spiritual religiousness of pastors and people. Do ministers so preach the Law that there is in it a "solemn warning of impending doom to those who continue to live in an unconverted state"? Is the Gospel so proclaimed that impenitent sinners realize that they have "neither part nor lot in this matter" as long as their "heart is not right before God," Acts 8:21? Moreover, he is greatly alarmed at the fact that a general invitation to come to the Lord's Supper is extended to the whole congregation and that pastors are glad if they see people come in great numbers. Then, too, when general absolution is announced, is it made clear, he asks, that those who do not repent of their sins, believe in Jesus Christ, and purpose by God's grace to improve their sinful life reject the very absolution which is pronounced upon them? Other points emphasized in the appeal by this apparently troubled and perplexed pastor we shall pass over. The reason why we refer to it here is not only because it brings us face to face with the most alarming problem of religious externalism and indifferentism (but don't call this dreadful thing "dead orthodoxy," for orthodoxy in doctrine and life is never dead), which we must not ignore today, but also because it shows how very necessary it is for us today to restudy not only the Bible and our Lutheran Confessions but also our Lutheran dogmaticians on the *locus De Conversione et Sanctificatione* in order that pietistic, sectarian, and fanatic elements may be kept out of our ministerial praxis. Grateful as we are to the author for submitting the subject for general discussion, we must nevertheless, from the Lutheran point of view, criticize and repudiate the dogmatic implications in paragraphs such as these: "Whither are we drifting? Can it be possible that we consider baptized and confirmed members in good standing as true Christians

without a conscious change of heart by conversion and a new birth? [Italics ours.] . . . We hear reports in our church-papers of groups in different places won by adult baptisms and confirmations after having received Christian instruction. *How is it that we do not hear reports of spiritual awakenings, conversions, and changed hearts and lives?* [Italics ours.] Do we really consider Christian instruction and confirmation equivalent to a new birth? Do not the Word of God and the teaching of our Lutheran church fathers as well as our *barnelaerdom* stress the need of a change of heart by a true repentance and a new birth if an adult person, fallen from baptismal grace, is to become a true Christian? Why is Scripture's urgent call to unconverted sinners to repent of their sins and to seek the Lord by a true conversion so faintly heard in our preaching today? Are these old fundamental teachings of Scripture of the great transformation in a sinner's life by conversion and a new birth not applicable any more in our time? Whither are we drifting?"

We do not know what is the practice in the United Norwegian Church with respect to the preaching of the Law and the Gospel, the instruction and confirmation of children and adults; there may be much room for improvement there as there is in our own Church on these points. But to us it seems as if the writer were stressing (especially in the lines quoted above) a "conversion and new birth" such as the Methodists and other fanatical sects emphasized years ago, when they were still in conformity with their confessions, an entirely wrong view of conversion and the new birth, based upon their very rejection of the means of grace as inherently efficacious (*media dotika*) and upon their repudiation of the Scriptural fact that the Holy Spirit works the wonders of His converting, sanctifying and endowing grace as *He wills*, 1 Cor. 12:6-11. When Lutherans speak of "conversion" and "new birth," they mean by this *the implanting of faith* in man's heart, and together with this of course its renewal, through the Word and the Sacraments. Now, if a person gives evident proof that he is not a believing child of God, *e. g.*, by rejecting the means of grace, living an unchristian life, and refusing to listen to the warning and reproving Word of God, then he must be disciplined and finally excommunicated, Matt. 18:18; 1 Cor. 5:1 ff. But as long as he gives evidence of a Christian life, Christian love demands that we should regard him as a believer, even if faults and weaknesses attach to his life, provided, of course, that he repents of his sins. Nor must pastors withhold from their people the blessing of general absolution, for substantially this is nothing else than an emphatic form of preaching the Gospel in its full sweet purity. In short, our divine instruction as ministers of the Gospel is *that we preach the Word*, the Law in its whole condemning severity, the Gospel in its entire winsome grace, leaving to God the thirtyfold, the sixtyfold and the hundredfold fruit production by the Word. There is nothing more injurious to a Church than to look for "reports of spiritual awakenings, conversions, and changed hearts and lives." God may grant these; but in our foolishness we may, by our mechanical and fanatical emphases, produce what Luther has rightly called "*eine erdichtete Heiligkeit*," a "fictitious holiness," which is liable to end fatally in spiritual satiety and crass rationalism, as church history has shown. We believe that the matter here touched upon ought to be

looked into carefully by all pastors. Certainly, it would be profitable for the Lutheran churches in America to restudy with becoming thoroughness and earnestness the Lutheran doctrine of conversion in its relation to sanctification. This may be a suitable subject for our intersynodical conferences and our pastors' study groups in 1940. J. T. M.

Is the Social Gospel Avoided? — A correspondent from Indianapolis writes the *Christian Century* as follows: "Ministers of many Indiana Lutheran churches joined in recommending that the denomination abandon its traditional non-committal attitude toward social problems. The recommendation of an active policy was in reply to a questionnaire from the Church's Board of Social Missions. The president of the Indiana Lutheran Synod, Dr. Homer E. Turney, stated that 'through the years it has been the custom of the United Lutheran Church to preach Christian truth and leave the settling of social problems to individuals according to their interpretation of the truth.' Marriage and divorce, gambling, liquor control, indecent literature, and demoralizing movies are among the problems listed by the ministers as needing attention from the pulpit. Others are, war and peace, conscientious objection to war, race, industrial relations, minority blocs, foreign refugees, unemployment and relief, and capital and labor." Are these people aware that they are treading on dangerous ground and that, while the Church has to preach everything the Scriptures contain, its function is entirely spiritual?

A.

From Philosophy to Revelation. — The *Sunday-school Times* (Dec. 9, 1939) gives the following account of the return of a modernistic professor to the Christian faith: "'From Philosophy to Revelation,' by Prof. Edwin Lewis of Drew Seminary, is perhaps the most remarkable of the series that the *Christian Century* is publishing on the return movement to Christ. In this he describes his 'break with the futilities of Modernism and his acceptance of Christianity in its Biblical and historical self-presentation.' Ten years ago 'he came to realize with a force that he had never even remotely felt before that the Biblical doctrines of God the Creator and God the Redeemer, with all that was implied in them, were wholly central to Christianity and indispensable to its perpetuation and that they could be held to be true only on the ground that they had been revealed.' Among other experiences that led him back to this position was his rediscovery of the Bible. He had assumed coeditorship with Dr. Eiselen of a one-volume commentary. Circumstances led to the bulk of the work of revision, proof-reading, and indexing coming on his shoulders. For three years he lived in the Bible, and it revolutionized his thinking. 'I saw with devastating clarity that speculative philosophy could never accommodate itself to Christianity. I found myself faced with the Word of God, given, it is true, by slow processes through the words of men, but at last in Christ made flesh. [?] The Creator appeared as the Redeemer. He who acted in the primal miracle of creation acted again in the miracle of redemption. I saw that this must either be true or not true. If it be not true, then have we nothing but the confusion of Naturalism. But if it is true, it can be true only as something revealed, not as something discovered.' Strange to say, his break with

Modernism was made final and definite by the theological chapters of *Rethinking Missions*. These, he saw, constituted a virtual abandonment of the Christian Gospel as presented in the New Testament. Then came Dr. Lewis's *A Christian Manifesto*, which differs from his early modernist book *Jesus Christ and Human Quest* in that, whereas the latter was an attempt to graft the Gospel on a philosophy by mutilating the Gospel at many points, the former 'takes the Gospel as it is,' expounding its amazing content, especially as concerns the personal cost to God of redeeming from the blight of sin the world which, of His own sovereign will, He had created."—The experience of Dr. Lewis proves the power of the Word even among Modernists. May he return to the full truth of God's Word and to a clear confession of Christ before those whom in the past he has misled by his modernistic teaching!

J. T. M.

The "Pittsburgh Plan."—According to the church-papers the Department of Education in the city of Pittsburgh made a unique offer to the clergy of the city respecting credits the board is willing to give high-school students for religious instruction they receive in their respective churches. If a high-school pupil will engage in religious study three hours a week, he will be allowed two credits for this work. The work is to be divided as follows: One hour is to be spent in the regular Sunday morning worship, another at the Sunday-school of the congregation, and the third hour is to be set aside for systematic instruction in religion to be given by the church on Wednesday morning. The first hour of school time on that day is to be utilized for this purpose. It strikes us that a grand opportunity is offered the churches to give instruction to their young members in what is most necessary. While undoubtedly much error will be taught, we hope that for our own boys and girls and for many others the plan will result in rich blessings. The arrangement is to begin in September of this year.

A.

Auburn Becomes Associated with Union.—The suit brought against Auburn Seminary (liberal Presbyterian), located in Auburn, N. Y., to enjoin it from uniting with Union Seminary in New York terminated in a victory for the union project. The official referee of the court was not impressed by the claim made by the committee of the General Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church to the effect that, since Auburn is a Presbyterian institution, it could not become associated with an institution which is non-denominational. The whole venture, of course, is altogether unionistic. Auburn does not hesitate to become affiliated with an institution in which Modernists like Reinhold Niebuhr and Fosdick are teaching. Denominational loyalty evidently does not play much of a role in the religious thinking of the promoters.

A.

The President Appoints a Personal Envoy at the Vatican.—It was with a good deal of consternation that many Protestants in the United States read of the step President Roosevelt took when he appointed Myron Taylor, an Episcopalian, to be his personal representative at the Vatican. The President did not have the authority to appoint a United States ambassador to represent our country at the Vatican, so he sent Mr. Taylor as his personal envoy. We, of course, are entirely in sympathy with what is declared to be the purpose of the appointment, the de-

velopment and furtherance of plans for peace between the warring nations of Europe, but the end does not justify the means. While the Papacy nominally is now a secular power, in reality its status is that of a religious institution, and as American citizens we cannot endorse the President's move, being convinced that it constitutes a serious threat to the cardinal principle of our country that the sphere of religion must not be invaded by the State. When Congress in 1868, while the Papacy was still a secular government, refused to continue the ambassadorship at the Vatican, it took a course consonant with the right principles as to the relations between the Church and the State. It is to be regretted that the White House has not adhered to the policy inaugurated at that time.

A.

Street Preaching Advocated by Catholic Paper.—Thinking of the huge number of American pagans, John G. O'Connor, writing in *America*, thinks that one way of bringing religious instruction to people might be the return to street preaching. In Missouri, in 1935, he states, the Catholic Motor Missions were established. "Two priests carried on the work of street preaching in the archdiocese of St. Louis and two in the diocese of St. Joseph. They conducted 14 street missions—a total of 84 open-air meetings—and spoke to about 60,000 people." He informs us that from Missouri the work spread to Illinois, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, and Texas. In the summer of 1938 more than 400 meetings were held, and the total number of people who attended was 105,750. Another venture of Catholics to indoctrinate people is that of the Home Missioners of America. These workers gave courses which extended over six successive evenings. Another society with missionary aims is devoting its energies to "the conversion of rural America to Christianity." One method that the workers employ is mail follow-up work. Among the Negroes the Josephite Fathers are working. Among the thirteen million Negroes in the United States there are 250,000 Catholics. Since the unchurched are extremely numerous, totaling sixty-five million, the writer insists that the laity must help in making these people acquainted with Christian teaching. We cannot forbear quoting the last sentence of the article: "Those who are so keen about saving Christianity abroad by a holy war against Nazi-Communism should not overlook the moral crisis confronting our own country and our own people."

A.

Anent Demoniac Possession.—Writing in *America* on the topic "Satan and Spiritism are Again Beginning to Rap," William J. McGarry submits some interesting remarks on demoniac possession and the supernatural phenomena of spiritism. He holds that here we are dealing with something that belongs not merely to the realm of pathology but is truly diabolical. He admits that there are natural phenomena which the acumen of scientists has not yet solved. Among such things he lists telepathy. But while he warns against credulity, he quite properly insists that some of the things confronting us here distinctly belong to the sphere of the supernatural. "The Catholic Church still ordains to the Minor Order of Exorcists, though she forbids the exercise of the power save by episcopal permission." Writing from the point of view of Cath-

olic theology, he says: "The first degree of possession is called obsession, the second possession, properly. The difference is one of degree; for both mean that the devil enters within a person, perturbing the senses and the nervous system; this perturbation may reach, too, to the imagination; it may be so invasive as almost to prevent any free choice. Possession may be accompanied by violence done to the person exteriorly. More generally, sinners have been the objects of possession, but occasionally holy persons. Apparently, there were more possessed in Palestine in Christ's time than now; if so, we can see obvious reasons why God permitted this in manifestation of the power of the Prince of Peace against the power of Satan." A.

Concerning Psychiana.—If you have noticed the advertisements of Psychiana in any of your papers or magazines,—though that might be a commentary on the quality of your reading,—it will be good for you to become acquainted with some of its natural history. People who are influenced by numbers will be impressed by a recent statement that from Psychiana's headquarters—Moscow, Idaho, a town of 4,500 inhabitants—a flood of mail had just gone out to 700,000 persons in sixty-seven countries in one week. Stupendous! But that's what they want you to think. This particular batch carried the message: "Visualize the picture of 'our enemy' and repeat earnestly and forcefully, 'The spirit of God will bring your downfall.'" The creator and "barker" of this new folly of Psychiana, F. B. Robinson, seems to imply that, if all 700,000 will exercise their animal magnetism collectively, they may be able to produce deadly thunderbolts.

This 54-year-old Briton, who became in turn a peripatetic Baptist minister, a traveling salesman, and a drug clerk, equally peripatetic, came to the conclusion one day, when he was tired of clerking, that Christianity was "neither original nor true." So, out of his contacts as a druggist with the pathology of inveterate remedy-seekers, he developed another sample of that form of religion that tells men they can lift themselves by their own shoe-laces. He gravely assures every one that all creeds, dogmas, religious organizations—except his own—are useless; that by one's own innate superiority any one can lay hold of heaven, work miracles, win success, attain prosperity, heal diseases, etc.—if they will send the price and follow his instructions. He has not yet got around to the self-willing of immortality; but give him time. At present he offers a cure-all in Psychiana for heart disease and dipsomania, asthma and ruptured appendixes, tumors and unemployment, paralysis and poverty, sadness and bankruptcy. He has testimonial letters to prove it. A former Methodist college president, C. W. Tenney, heads his staff of workers and edits the advertisements that approach the "one born every minute" through 18 radio stations, 400 newspapers (mostly in the sticks), and 50 magazines (largely the pulp stuff). At present Psychiana is trying to launch a new denomination—the very thing he denounced a few years ago. The susceptible are offered a D. D. for a two-year correspondence course, two book reviews, a thesis, and —\$50. Don't forget the \$50 if you are interested.—*The Lutheran*.

Protestant Work in South America. — "Latin America is almost completely Roman Catholic, yet for a century evangelical work has been in progress there. Yet it is estimated that half the population of that vast region, that is, about 60,000,000 souls, has not yet heard the Gospel, though there are over 337,000 communicants in an evangelical community of over 1,724,000. *World Dominion* says of progress in Brazil and Bolivia: 'Some new developments are reported from Brazil. The Institute of Religious Culture, a new movement with headquarters at Sao Paulo, is presenting Christianity in an attractive way to the educated classes. A school of lay preachers is training laymen in Christian truth and preaching, enabling them to conduct services in their own churches in cooperation with the pastors. All this is inspired and directed by the Brazilians themselves. The Evangelical Union of South America reports encouraging progress in its new mission-work in Bolivia. Tract distribution, Sabbath-schools, medical work, and preaching are being carried on.'"

The above is taken from the *Presbyterian*. We are not surprised that no particular mention is made of our own work in Brazil and Argentina, because we are not in fellowship with the other Protestant bodies carrying on mission-work in South America. Many of these people might be surprised to learn that in Argentina our District numbers 25 pastors and two Christian day-school teachers, that the Brazil District of our Church numbers 76 pastors and 19 Christian day-school teachers, and that our message, in addition, is preached in Paraguay and Uruguay. God be praised for giving us an opportunity of spreading the Word south of the equator!

A.

Die Predigt von Christo ins Zentrum. Wie der „Lutherische Herold“ aus dem „Friedensboten“ mitteilt, hat der lutherische Landesbischof D. Meiser beim Ausbruch des Kriegs ein ernstes Grußwort an die Pastoren der bairischen Landeskirche gerichtet. Darin heißt es: „Es muß klar sein, daß es für unser Volk im gegenwärtigen Augenblick nach menschlichem Ermessen um eine Entscheidung auf Tod und Leben geht. Da gibt es für uns nur einen Willen und nur eine Pflicht: uns ganz für unser Volk einzusetzen, ihm mit aller Hingabe und Treue zu dienen, mit ihm alle Lasten zu tragen und durch unsere ganze Haltung zu bekunden, daß wir in unzertrennlicher Schicksalsgemeinschaft mit ihm stehen. In einer solchen Stunde gewinnt der uns befohlene Dienst eine ganz andere Bedeutung. Es ist der Dienst des heilsamen Wortes. Er wird nicht so stürmisch begehrt wie zu Beginn des Weltkriegs. Unsere Gemeinden heute sind stiller und verbergen ihre innere Bewegtheit. Aber doch wächst die Bereitschaft, das Wort zu hören, und Gott tut manche Tür auf, die bisher verschlossen war. Wer wollte da nicht in seiner Verkündigung sein Bestes geben, daß die Gemeinde nicht leer von uns geht? Was sollen wir predigen? Es kann nicht unsere Aufgabe sein, zu den politischen Tagesereignissen Stellung zu nehmen oder die Heeresberichte der Woche zu wiederholen. Gewiß wird das große und ernste Erleben dieser Zeit überall in unserer Predigt durchschlagen. Wir können nicht so predigen, als wenn nichts geschehen wäre. Aber wir können uns nicht bei dem bloßen Zeitgeschehen aufhalten, sondern immer muß unsere Predigt die Höhe weltüberlegener Ewigkeitsgedanken gewinnen. Darum schöpfen wir auch wieder

die Motive unserer Predigt aus reinen innerweltlichen Impulsen noch die Quietive unserer Predigt aus landläufigen Trostgründen, sondern beides stets aus der reinen Quelle des Evangeliums. Der Ton der Buße darf nicht fehlen. Denn nur dem Demütigen gibt Gott Gnade. Nur aus der Buße kommt die Vergebung und nur aus der Vergebung die Kraft zu einem neuen Leben. Aber es werde nicht vergessen, daß liebloses Schelten auf die Sünde anderer und richtende Kritik noch keine Bußpredigt ist. Auch wäge man vorsichtig die Worte, daß kein Anlaß zu Mißdeutungen entsteht. Im übrigen aber verschweige man nicht die Tatsache, daß wir, gemessen an Gottes heiligen Geboten, vor Gott in mannigfaltiger Schuld stehen und daß wir uns seiner Hilfe keineswegs als einer Selbstverständlichkeit trösten dürfen. Den Höhepunkt unserer Predigt aber bilde die Bezeugung Gottes, der im Kreuz Jesu Christi seine Barmherzigkeit hat groß werden lassen über all unsere Fehlbarkeit und Sünde, der uns rettet, auch wenn er uns betrübt, uns lebendig macht, auch wenn er uns tötet. Die Augen der Gemeinde auf diesen Gott zu richten, dessen Gnade und Barmherzigkeit triumphiert, auch da, wo unsere Augen nur Mästel, Leid und Dunkel sehen, tut besonders not in einer Zeit, in der wir mit besonderer Eindringlichkeit vor die Frage nach den letzten Wirklichkeiten des Lebens gestellt sind und wo so viele in Unruhe, Sorge, Angst, Verwirrung, Trauer und Leid versehrte Seelen sich nach Erhebung, Aufrichtung und Stärkung sehnen. Nicht daß wir ins Sentimentale abgleiten dürften! Es ist so leicht, die Herzen zu rühren. Wehe dem Prediger, der auf Nührung abzielt! Nein, unsere Predigt sei auf den Ton der glaubensstarken Zuversicht, des trohigen „Dennoch“, der sieghaften Gewißheit gestellt. Unser Glaube ist der Sieg, der die Welt überwunden hat. Solcher Glaube macht innerlich frei und von selbst stark zur Treue der Pflichterfüllung, zu der Bereitschaft zum Opfern, zur Standhaftigkeit im Entbehren, zur Geduld im Leid, zur Getrostheit im Tod und schenkt uns damit die Tragkraft, ohne die wir die Belastungsprobe, die uns auferlegt ist, nicht bestehen können.“ — Gewiß, ein feines Wort zur ernststen Zeit, ein edles Zeugnis, das klar beweist, wie man auch in Deutschland noch weiß, was es eigentlich mit der christlichen Predigt auf sich hat. Und wie viele Lehren für unsere Predigt im eigenen Land enthält nicht dieses verständnisinnige Grußwort von drüben!

J. L. W.

Die deutschen lutherischen Gemeinden in den Baltischen Ländern Estland und Lettland haben infolge der Umsiedlung der deutschen Volksgenossen aus diesen Ländern zu bestehen aufgehört, ebenso natürlich die deutschen Volksschulen daselbst. Der Bischof D. Bölschau in Riga, dem die 57 deutschen lutherischen Gemeinden in Lettland unterstanden, ermahnt sie in einem Schreiben vom 11. Oktober v. J., im Vertrauen auf Gott den Weg zu gehen, den der Vertrag zwischen der lettländischen Regierung und dem Deutschen Reich, in dem sie eine Weisung Gottes sehen müßten, sie gehen heiße. In ähnlichem Sinne hat auch Propst Thomson in Rebal an seine Gemeinden in Estland geschrieben. Darüber, wie diese Lutheraner weiterhin kirchlich mit lutherischer Predigt und Sakramentsverwaltung versorgt werden sollen, ist aus den Schreiben der beiden Kirchenführer nichts zu ersehen. In dem Schreiben Propst Thomsons heißt es u. a. sehr richtig: „Wir wollen uns nichts vormachen: bei sehr vielen ist der Christenglaube zu einer toten Tradition erstarrt. Ein erstarrter Glaube wird nicht standhalten, wenn die Kirchtürme

am Horizont versinken. Es kommt nun alles darauf an, daß der alte Christenglaube neu erwache. . . . Dieser Glaube hat einst unsere Kirchen gebaut." Es darf aber nicht vergessen werden, daß dieser Glaube aus der Predigt kommt, daß Predigen aber durch das Wort Gottes.

M. B. in der „Ev.-Luth. Freikirche“

The Desperate Situation of German Missionaries.—A correspondent in the *Christian Century* from New York reports on the situation which German missionaries are in who are serving stations in the British Empire. The writer, Dr. A. L. Warnshuis, says: "In the treatment of German missionaries in British colonies there has been considerate discrimination, and individual cases have been considered on their merits. Missionaries who would pledge themselves to refrain from political activities have been permitted to remain at their stations on parole so that they may continue their usual work. In India, however, all the men in German missions have been placed in internment camps. This is also true in the case of some individuals in the colonies. Where this has been done, efforts are being made through the cooperation of neighboring missions to give assistance to the churches bereft of the services of their own missionaries. In India the National Christian Council has devoted much time and effort to this task and with the cooperation of the Federation of Lutheran Churches has been successful in making arrangements that are measurably satisfactory." He states that the German missionaries on Sumatra (Batak Mission) at the end of September reported they had received no funds since July. They haven't even money to buy food for themselves. The number of these missionaries is 112. In Japan 14 missionaries are without support. The situation is heart-rending. The National Lutheran Council is endeavoring to furnish help.

A.

The Unitas Fratrum, otherwise the Moravian Church, is in deep distress. The rift which began with the World War, and widened under the influences of Europe's totalitarian agitations, now threatens a complete destruction of the inner harmony which once distinguished this small communion. For a while the Moravians in Germany escaped the difficulties which afflicted the larger religious groups. Recently, however, one of their schools was closed by government order, and the same danger threatens others. The younger generation has largely accepted the Nazi program and, to the dismay of their elders, demands that their churches shall do the same, even to the extent of having pastors dismissed who are not pliant enough politically. In the Sudetenland, before the *Anschluss*, a group of the Moravian churches, under the influence of this agitation, had revolted against the Czech Moravian governing board. Now they are developing a similar revolt against the German Moravian board. Some of the German Moravian clerical and lay readers, having fallen under the displeasure of the Gestapo, or secret police, because of pacifistic leanings and friendliness to the Jews, have already sought refuge in our country.—*The Lutheran*.

The Lutheran Hour on the Philippine Islands.—All of our readers will rejoice at the news that since early this year a powerful 50,000-watt radio station of Manila, KZRM, is broadcasting the Lutheran Hour programs, furnished it on transcription plates. The time is Sundays

from 5 to 5:30 P. M. The Lutheran Laymen's League office informs us that the Lutheran Hour message is now broadcast by 135 stations, 92 of which are by wire connected with the central sending station, KFVO in St. Louis, while the others use the transcription method. Among the latter is a station in Ecuador, South America. Thus over an astonishingly wide area the message of the Prince of Peace is sounded forth in a world reechoing with the angry shouts and the cannon shots of war and the agonized shrieks and groans of the wounded and the dying. With a grateful heart one reflects how this message will hearten those of our brethren living in the Orient, in China, India, and Australia who will be able to receive the broadcast. The chief consideration, however, is that, since English has become the *lingua franca* of the world, this broadcast of the Lutheran message in the Far East will mean that a vast number of individuals will now be brought in contact with Lutheran preaching whom we could never hope to reach through the printed page or the work of missionaries. How strongly one is reminded of the words of St. Paul, 2 Tim. 2:9: "The Word of God is not bound," and of that other word of his based on Ps. 19: "Yes, verily, their sound went into all the earth and their words unto the ends of the world," Rom. 10:18. May God hold His protecting hand over the Lutheran Hour mission and its speaker, Dr. W. A. Maier, who besides carrying a full teaching load at Concordia Seminary prepares and delivers the messages of this great Gospel venture.

A.

The Quadricentennial of the Jesuits.—From *America* we take the following paragraph: "The year 1940 is a memorable one for the Society of Jesus and its scattered members in the world. It was in 1540 that Paul III approved the first formula of its institute in the Bull *Regimini Militantis Ecclesiae*. Among the many favors that have blessed this society during its four hundred years' existence two may be recalled as especially dear to every member on the occasion of its fourth centenary as well as particularly relative to our own country. The society, like other religious bodies, is divided into regional provinces, grouped at present under 8 assistancies. The total for the society as it enters its fourth centenary year is 25,954. Slightly better than one fifth of this total, 5,440, is included in the American Assistancy, which, with the greater part of the English Assistancy, comprehends today one third of the entire membership of the society. There are 4,315 in the English Assistancy, but of this number 2,678 belong to the two Belgian provinces. The second noteworthy event of the fourth centenary year is the 165 saints and beati on the society's list of martyrs and confessors. Of that number 24 are enrolled among the saints, having reached the last step in the Church's honor roll of distinguished service. Of the latter 8 shed their blood on our own continent of North America, three of them within the United States. The last beatified, blessed Joseph Pignatelli, the only one who lived in the nineteenth century, was a link between the old and the restored society."

Being a Catholic paper under Jesuit control, it is not surprising that *America* does not allude to the political intrigues and machinations which made the Jesuit Order detested and led to its dissolution in 1773, when

Pope Clement XIV, in the Bull *Dominus ac Redemptor*, declared the order disbanded and all its members relieved of their oath of loyalty to the society. Instead of ceasing to exist, the order, adopting here and there a different name, went into a state of suspended animation, till in 1814 Pope Pius VII, in his Bull *Sollicitudo*, decreed its resuscitation. One has to grant that the Pope has had no more loyal lieutenants than the Jesuits and that it was chiefly through their efforts that in the sixteenth century a Counter-Reformation was begun and to a great extent was successful. Students of more recent church history will remember that the Jesuits were the strongest propagandists for the teaching of the infallibility of the Pope. A.

Neutestamentliche Handschriften. Die Zahl der Handschriften, die wir von den biblischen Texten aus alter Zeit haben, ist gewaltig angewachsen. Zur Zeit des Textkritikers J. J. Wettstein († 1754) kannte man nur 23 Großhandschriften (Majuskeln), 175 Minuskelhandschriften (Minuskeln) und 28 Vorlesebücher (Lektionarien), insgesamt also 226 Handschriften. Papyri mit biblischen Texten waren damals überhaupt noch unbekannt. 1908 konnte Gregory in seinem Buch „Die griechischen Handschriften des Neuen Testaments“ auf 14 Papyri, 161 Majuskeln, 2,304 Minuskeln und 1,547 Lektionarien hinweisen (zusammen 4,026 Handschriften). Der gegenwärtige Bestand des Handschriftenmaterials für das Neue Testament ist dieser: 54 Papyri, 208 Majuskeln, 2,401 Minuskeln, 1,609 Lektionarien, 25 Ostraka und 9 Talismane, im ganzen 4,306 Handschriften. Allerdings enthalten diese Handschriften nur zum kleinen Teil das ganze Neue Testament. Am häufigsten wurden die Evangelien abgeschrieben. Die neuesten Papyrusfunde zeichnen sich ganz besonders durch den Umfang und das hohe Alter aus. (Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenztg.)

Brief Items. — Where must the comma be placed in the first line of the famous English Christmas song, “God rest ye, merry gentlemen”? A writer in the *Christian Century* is criticized by a correspondent living in Ontario for putting the comma before “merry.” He contends that “merry” means as much as “happy” and that the comma should be placed after merry. His interpretation is, “The first phrase of this quaintly written but beautiful carol tells us that the knowledge of Christ’s birth and His power to save us from evil is news that brings comfort and joy to distressed and troubled folk.” The editors of the *Christian Century* comment as follows: “The punctuation of this line has been debated for years without a clear verdict being reached. The accent in the music of the carol tends to uphold Dr. Clausen’s side of the argument.” Dr. Clausen was the writer whose punctuation had been criticized by the correspondent.

What is the cost of the war in neutral countries? A statement in a religious paper says that Switzerland spends \$1,250,000 a day in maintaining its troops who stand ready to defend their country’s neutrality. How little by contrast is offered for the cause of Christ! A Detroit woman is carrying on a campaign to erect a large carillon tower on Belle Isle, which is to be known as “Peace Tower” and which will cost \$45,000. How can any one believe that such a project will aid materially in dispelling war clouds?

The church-papers these days refer to the famous seven Cambridge men of 1885 who were converted in the movement inaugurated by D.L. Moody. The sixth of them to depart this life, the Rev. Sir Montague Proctor-Beauchamp, died recently. The only survivor is Mr. Hoste, who is the director of the China Inland Mission.

“Die Reformierten waren vom Anfang an geneigt, keine Tradition der Kirche, kaum einen Schluss, aus klaren Worten der Heiligen Schrift gelten zu lassen; sie haben abgetan, was nicht auf einem ausdruecklichen Worte der Heiligen Schrift beruhte. Die lutherische Kirche hingegen hat das Bestehende angegriffen, wenn es dem Worte Gottes widersprach, dagegen stehenlassen, was mit dem Worte Gottes uebereinstimmte. Wenn nun reformierte Sekten den Grundsatz ihrer Mutterkirche noch ueber das Mass der Mutterkirche ausdehnten, so zeigten sie damit nur, wie falsch der Grundsatz sei; wenn hingegen die lutherische Kirche auf dem Wege ihres Grundsatzes die Kindertaufe behielt, so erwies sie damit nur, was fuer ein grosser Schutz gegen die Irrfahrt reformierter Sekten in diesem ihrem Grundsatz liegt.” Diese Worte Loehes werden in der *Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung* abgedruckt. Sie leiten eine Besprechung des Schriftbeweises fuer die Kindertaufe ein. Ein fundamentaler Gegensatz zwischen reformierter und lutherischer Theologie wird in den zitierten Worten treffend gekennzeichnet.

One of the well-known religious papers of the country is the *Christian Register*, a Unitarian journal 118 years old. Under the editorial guidance of Dr. Dieffenbach it wielded a good deal of influence in “liberal” circles. Now the control of the paper is taken over by the American Unitarian Association, and it is to be transformed into a “news journal.” Apparently it is to cease having the character of a distinctly religious publication.

Finland is a country of 3,500,000 people, all of whom, with the exception of less than three per cent., are classified as Lutherans. There are said to be about 550 congregations in that country, which are divided into five dioceses. Each diocese is headed by a bishop, and one of the five bishops has the title of archbishop. The number of ministers in 1929 was 1,056 at home and 25 abroad. A heroic little group of three pastors, of whom the Rev. A. A. Uppala (Wegelius) is the chairman, is affiliated with us, owing to its protest against un-Lutheran views and tendencies in the Established Church.

The Methodist Church mourns the death of Bishop Eben S. Johnson. He had become bishop in 1916 and served in Africa for a number of years. His death occurred in Portland, Oreg., at the age of 74.

These words of Dr. E. D. Kohlsteadt, a prominent Methodist, should be pondered: “The danger of progressive paganism today is an actuality rather than a fanciful fear. America’s threatened moral collapse rather than her economic crisis is our nation’s most acute pending problem.”

In India the union movement, affecting the Church of England, the Methodist Church, and the South India United Church, is meeting with difficulties. One of the points on which the movement may founder has

to do with intercommunion before union has been established. There are many Anglicans who consider such intercommunion unscriptural. We have to commend them for this stand.

The United Brethren and the Evangelical Church (Albright Men, *Albrechtsbrueder*) are trying to unite. The United Brethren will vote on the union document in 1941 and the Evangelical Church in 1942. Both bodies have a Methodist background.

By the World Council of Churches, which has representatives in Geneva, Switzerland, authoritative information is sent out respecting Pastor Niemoeller. We reprint what the officials of this council have ascertained: "Pastor Niemoeller has offered his services to the military authorities, making it clear, however, that this step should not be interpreted as an attempt to 'buy his liberty.' The general command of the German fighting forces has refused this offer. Pastor Niemoeller remains therefore in concentration camp."

Among Southern Presbyterians there are numerous laymen who are strongly opposed to union with the Northern Presbyterians. An exchange says that they fear "the dangers of Northern race ideas and modernistic theology." Knowing of the inroads of Modernism among Northern Presbyterians, we have to declare the fears of these laymen justified. Let us hope, however, that their position is not chiefly due to apprehension concerning "Northern race ideas."

"While we say the Office of the Dead, we take the place of the departed and plead with God for them. What they cannot do for themselves we do for them. November is most liturgically appropriate for helping the souls in purgatory." So writes a reviewer in *America*. We quote the sentences to show that Rome in the twentieth century still clings to the errors for which it contended in the sixteenth.

The first encyclical of Pius XII has received a good deal of attention. It speaks of the spiritual and moral bankruptcy which stare our generation in the face. But mark what he says: "The denial of the fundamentals of morality had its origin in Europe in the abandonment of that Christian teaching of which the Chair of St. Peter is the depository and exponent." Apparently he is pointing to the Reformation of Luther. The leopard cannot change its spots.

According to a paragraph in the *Lutheran*, Roman Catholics in Austria now have to support their Church themselves, while formerly all the citizens had to pay the bill. The arrangement is that the church tax, which is not large, has to be paid to a laymen's church council in each parish. Certainly, Catholics have no right to complain about this turn of events.

The *News Service* of the National Catholic Welfare Conference reports that a law which went into effect in Russia on October 15, 1939, assigned 38,000 commissars to the Red army for the propagation of atheism. Each battalion will have a commissar in charge of "atheistic training." — *Christian Century*.

From Great Britain comes the announcement that on account of the war the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops, which had been planned for the coming summer, has been postponed. A.