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## The Unionistic Campaign

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everything which is from God and everything holy, and does it all in the name of holiness; and for this reason he is much more mischievous and corrupting than Lucian.' ”

Almost a quarter of a century after Luther posted his Theses, in 1540, to be exact, Blessed Peter Faber, the first of the companions of St. Ignatius Loyola, reported on the conditions in Germany: “It is not the false interpretations of Scripture nor the sophistry which the Lutherans introduce into their sermons and disputes that have caused so many nations to apostatize and so many towns and provinces to revolt against religion. All the mischief is done by the scandalous lives of the clergy. . . . Would there were in the city of Worms only two or three churchmen who were not living openly with women or guilty of some other notorious crime and had a little zeal for the salvation of souls.”

Milwaukee, Wis.

WM. DALLMANN

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### The Unionistic Campaign

(Some Informal Jottings)

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*The Presbyterian Guardian*, January 25, reports: “Dr. John A. Mackay, president of Princeton Theological Seminary and champion of Barthianism, is one of ten well-known Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Jewish leaders participating in an *interfaith* ‘Institute on Religion’ now being held in the Jewish synagog at Wilkes-Barre, Pa. The theme of the Institute is: ‘Religious Values in American Democracy.’ Speakers in addition to Dr. Mackay are: Gregory Feige, noted Roman Catholic writer; Dr. Louis Finkelstein, provost of the Jewish Theological Seminary; Dr. F. Ernest Johnson, professor of Religious Education, Columbia University; and Rabbi Louis M. Levitsky, rabbi of Temple Israel, Wilkes-Barre.” The unionists have well-seasoned leaders. They do not even shy away from syncretistic practices.—These interfaith affairs are put on all over the country. *The Globe-Democrat* of St. Louis, February 6, reports on one held here. Dean Sidney E. Sweet (Episcopal) and Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman made the speeches in Temple Israel’s Institute of Judaism. Bishop Scarlett (Episcopal) presided at the morning session and Dr. John W. MacIvor (Presbyterian) in the afternoon. (The good will binding these interfaith brotherhoods together cannot stand much of a strain. *Globe-Democrat*, January 24: “Rabbi Ferdinand Isserman of Temple Israel resigned last night from the Executive Board of the local chapter of the National Round Table of Christians and Jews after all five Catholic members of the Executive Committee had quit. The Catholic leaders resigned because Rabbi Isserman had criti-

cized the appointment of Myron Taylor as presidential representative to the Vatican in a discussion before the brotherhoods of three churches—Temple Israel, St. John's Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Second Baptist Church—at a joint meeting, January 15. Dr. R. E. Kane, a physician, said he resigned because he felt Rabbi Isserman's remarks were incompatible with the aims of the Round Table, an organization to end causes of discord and misunderstanding among religious faiths. . . ." The great questions of faith and doctrine do not disturb the harmony in these brotherhoods. Why should such a relatively unimportant matter as the mission of Mr. Taylor set them by the ears?—The comment of the *Christian Century* on this affair just now came to hand: "The Round Table and the National Conference of Christians and Jews ought to be the last organization to be disturbed by such an incident. One of their cardinal principles is that of 'recognizing the right to be different and agreeing to disagree amicably.' It is not their business to make pronouncements about this matter of the envoy; but if a minister or Rabbi cannot give free expression to his own opinion about it and still be a member of the Round Table in full fellowship and good standing, then the nature of that organization is not what it had been supposed to be.")

The *Living Church*: "The Year (1939) in Religion." "The movement toward better understanding and cooperation among the three great religious groups of Protestants, Catholics, and Jews has gone forward during the year, for the most part under the leadership and direction of the National Conference of Christians and Jews.—The drawing of the churches into closer relations for fellowship and service continues to furnish some of the most important items in the chronicle of the year. The Madras Conference, held in December, 1938, had its chief impact on the churches of America and of the world in 1939. The first World Conference of Christian Youth, meeting at Amsterdam in July, sought ways of realizing an ecumenical ideal of the Church. The World Council of Churches still continues to be in process of formation. . . . Meanwhile continuation committees of Life and Work and of Faith and Order are directing extensive cooperative studies of the nature and function of the Church. The Methodist uniting conference, at Kansas City in May, brought to completion the reunion of three great bodies. The Episcopal Church and the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. have under consideration a concordat drafted and submitted by a joint commission with the avowed purpose of seeking a way to organic union as speedily as possible. The difficulties are evident. On both sides there are unionists and also those whose conscience will permit no yielding upon any point of difference. No hasty action is to be expected.

American Lutherans also are moving toward unity. Commissions of two of the three large Lutheran bodies—the United Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church—early in the year came to agreement upon a formula of union which is to be submitted to the biennial conventions of the two churches in 1940.” As to the last item in this communique, we will not blame the *Living Church* for not knowing that after later developments there is no perfect agreement that an agreement was reached. Regarding the Methodist agreement the *Christian Century*, January 31, reports: “The South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church South was organized at Columbia, S. C., recently by 400 delegates representing congregations which have refused to enter the united Methodist Church.”

A *communiqué* from the *Lutheran*, February 7: “The annual meeting of the Home Missions Council and Council of Women for Home Missions was held in Indianapolis, Ind., January 11–16. The United Lutheran Church was represented by Dr. Martin Schroeder and the following members of the Women’s Missionary Society. . . . Denominational founding fathers must be wondering in their graves as they hear their sons and daughters devising ways and means to overcome the problem of Protestantism they themselves have created, that is, their having divided and redivided the Christian forces in our land, which condition is now a great hindrance to unified efforts. It was at the meeting of the Home Missions Council in Indianapolis that we could not help but make the observation. . . . Observers, uninitiated in broader Christian activities, may easily be led to believe that the work done at the Indianapolis meeting has for its objective the combining of the various major denominations. However, what the Home Missions Council desires to accomplish is mutual respect and cooperation in certain fields, not union where it is not called for.” The Home Missions Council operates “on the principle of cooperation in religious work. . . . In general, this meeting revealed elements all churches have in common, beginning with the challenge by which non-Christian America confronts us all and ending with cooperation and mutual respect wherever such is called for in working out particular problems.” What is this Home Missions Council? C. S. Macfarland gives us the information in *Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*. “Under the general idea of federation and cooperation we have the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work, the Home Missions Council and the Council of Women for Home Missions, etc. . . . The Home Missions Council was organized on the wave of rising spiritual appreciation of an essential unity among Christians. . . . Within the past few years the Federal Council,

the Home Missions Council, and the Council of Women for Home Missions have been coordinating their forces and unifying their service so that today, in those fields which are mutual, they act as one body. . . . These bodies are forms of *federal unity*." (Pp. 4, 58, 103, 128.) "The objective of the Home Missions Council is not the combining of the various major denominations." That is true. The aim is not *organic* union but *federal* unity. And getting the churches to cooperate in religious work is good strategy. Cooperation does bring about a union—a union of sorts. It works in this way: "The Federal Council was the result of compelling practical necessities, of new, imperative, and enlarging spheres of *useful service to mankind*. . . . In this fellowship we have seen the glory of sympathy break into the flame of enthusiasm when men of different cults and names have brushed aside tradition and prejudices and found the Christ in one another's hearts. . . . Perhaps, after we have united with the disciples and among ourselves with the Master in washing one another's feet long enough, we shall find some common symbol that will express our faith." (C. S. Macfarland, *op. cit.*, pp. 92, 159.) "We believe that every sincere attempt to cooperate in the concerns of the Kingdom of God draws the several communions together in increased mutual understanding and good will." (*Edinburgh Declaration, 1937.*) The battle-cry of this division of the union army is: "Doctrine divides, but *service unites*." We know, of course, that service does not really unite those who are not one in faith. "*Das Wort und die Lehre soll christliche Einigkeit oder Gemeinschaft machen.* The Word and doctrine must create Christian fellowship and communion; where there is unity of doctrine, the other matters will follow; if it does not exist, the harmony will not endure." (Luther, IX, 831.) There are men also in the unionistic camp who agree on this point with Luther. They understand the psychology of Christian fellowship. Dr. W. A. Visser 't Hooft, general secretary of the Provisional Committee for the World Council of Churches, declares: "If cooperation between the churches is not to be merely of a technical kind, they must face together the theological and doctrinal questions which underlie all action in the world. Christians who act *as if* [italics in the original] they were one body and forget to ask why they are not in fact one body will soon discover that, instead of arriving at true understanding and real collaboration, they end in confusion. And service unites only those in a *lasting way* [italics in original] who do the same thing for the same reasons, that is, who seek to arrive at a common conception of truth." (*Christendom, Vol. IV, No. 1.*) However, the slogan "Service unites" reveals a canny strategy. Getting men who are of different faiths to cooperate in religious work is training recruits

for the unionistic army, is teaching them that *doctrine* is of minor importance, is instilling the maxim set down in the manual contained in the *Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry*: "Away from sectarianism toward unity and cooperation, and away from a religion focused upon doctrine toward a religion focused upon the vital issues of life for the individual and for the social environment in which the individual lives." (So much regarding the item from *The Lutheran* of February 7. We are glad to note, by the way, that there are voices raised within the U. L. C. A. which denounce unionism. In *The Lutheran* of January 31 we find this statement: "On the other hand, we have large groups of Lutherans who are just as sincerely convinced that many Lutherans are not sufficiently exclusive. Many so-called liberals or pietists permit pulpit and altar fellowship with non-Lutherans. Do they not thereby encourage and support error?")

*The Lutheran Companion*, February 1: "Hartford Harmony. 'Praise the Lord, each tribe and nation; Praise Him with a joyous heart.' So sang the congregation gathered in the First Congregational Church of Waterbury, Conn., on the evening of Sunday, November 19, to hear the Hartford District Luther League Chorus raise its voice in sacred song. . . . Greetings were heard from Rev. E. Einar Kron, pastor of the Lutheran Church, whose Luther League was the sponsor of the concert, and from Dr. James E. Gregg of the Congregational Church." This song-fellowship was not so bad as the pulpit-fellowship affair reported in the *Rockford Morning Star* of September 27, 1939. "Four thousand persons turned out last night to inaugurate Rockford's community-wide Church Fidelity month. . . . The choir will sing again tonight and at the concluding service Thursday evening, when Dr. Bernard C. Clausen, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Pittsburgh, Pa., will speak. . . . The Rev. Harold M. Carlson, president of the Rockford Ministerial Association, presided last night. The Rev. Albert Loreen, pastor of First Lutheran Church [Augustana] and program chairman, read the opening Scripture-lesson, and the Rev. R. M. Powers [Methodist] offered a prayer."

Just what kind of union does Dr. Alfred E. Garvie, a leader of the English Free Churches, advocate? His article "The Reunion of the Churches: Some Fundamental Problems," in *Christendom*, V, No. 1 (winter 1940), states: "It is sometimes even claimed that the divisions are happy as presenting the more adequately the manifold truth and grace of God, because each Church exhibits some aspect of the heavenly treasure which would otherwise be obscured. But it is surely God's will, not that a number of churches should partially, and thus defectively, present the truth and grace of Christ, but that one Church should adequately and effectively

present Christ in His fulness and wholeness. 1 Cor. 1:13." We agree with that. We are ready to march with Dr. Garvie. However, the very next sentence states: "If the visible Church is to recover its unity, it can only be by allowing room for such variety as the divisions here have shown to be both necessary and not inconsistent with the essential content of the Gospel." And the article closes with the sentence: "For me the bond of Christian fellowship is not common creed, polity, ritual, but faith, hope and love in Christ." The leader seems to be issuing contradictory orders. He wants *one* Church. But this one Church does not need to have a common creed. That does seem contradictory. However, if you listen closely, you will find that he is consistent. Just emphasize the "essential." He wants one Church, a union based on the agreement in "the essential content of the Gospel." That fine statement denouncing denominationalism with its alleged advantages and calling for one Church means nothing, after all. It simply repeats the old unionistic slogan "Unity in essentials only."

The basic idea in the strategy of the unionists is to get men to accept the principle "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity" *without defining and specifying the essentials*. We know, of course, that the principle "In non-essentials liberty" is unscriptural. But assuming that it were a correct principle, we at once would ask: What are the essentials and what are the non-essentials? The unionists will not tell you. And therein lies their strategy. If the area of "essentials" is left undefined, all manner of compromises are possible. So *what are the essentials?* *Christendom*, Vol. IV, No. 3, proposes "A Federal Plan of Unity" and says on page 392: "What the essentials are is a question that will have again to be considered. When we say 'Unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials,' we are assuming that every one agrees on what falls into each of these categories. If we could agree in the acceptance of certain articles as essentials, all the rest would fall naturally into the class of non-essentials. But the difficulty may be that certain groups will insist that articles of faith and morals are essential which all the rest are agreed are non-essentials. Will such a group, or denomination, be willing to accept the situation which permits that denomination to declare such articles to be essential to its members (since they believe them to be essentials), and will that group at the same time live in fellowship with other denominations who state their conviction that those same articles are not essential?" No doubt, if we could agree on what are the essentials, "all the rest would fall naturally into the class of non-essentials." We are perfectly agreed on that. But *which are the essentials?* Up till now no unionist has

told us. As a matter of fact, some of the very important doctrines, such as the Real Presence and the Person of Christ, are, if the strategy demands it, classed as non-essentials. Even the most important doctrine, Justification by Faith Alone, is treated at times as non-essential, as a matter merely of philosophical definition. The unionists are willing to reduce the number of essentials to almost nothing. And then they will make this "irreducible minimum" as hazy as possible. In the same volume and number of *Christendom*, Bishop McConnell offers this as the one essential: "The doctrinal statements to which those coming into the membership of the Methodist Church now agree are two: (1) 'Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and pledge your allegiance to His kingdom?' (2) 'Do you receive and profess the Christian faith as contained in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ?' If we are to consider a statement of belief in its bearing on the problem of the union of Methodism with other denominations, I do not think that the Methodist Church is likely to ask less than this—*though the second question might conceivably be omitted*. On the other hand, it is doubtful if the Church would ask more than this or if it would be willing to limit the right of the candidate to interpret the questions in his own way. The questions do imply and sum up the essentials of belief in the new united Church." (P. 357.) Do we now know which are the essentials on which the new united Church ("the union of an entire Protestantism," p. 355) agrees? Read the two questions once more, or rather the one which constitutes the irreducible minimum—can anything be more hazy and indefinite? We have a pretty good definition of what constitutes the unionistic essentials in *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, VI, p. 620: "That has always been the unionistic formula: Agree on some essentials (these essentials being the things on which you agree) and treat all other matters as minor differences." Those things are the essentials on which you happen to agree—that ought to suit the unionists. It is, in fact, what they are proposing. It is good strategy. It can unite the most discordant elements.

When the unionists are discussing the question how much must go into the list of essentials, how much into the list of non-essentials, we do not join the discussion. The discussion of the nature of essentials and non-essentials, fundamentals and non-fundamentals, is very useful and necessary in other respects, but it is largely out of place when the question concerns church union. We will tell them when they hand in their two lists, constructed with much labor and circumspection, that their labor is lost. Our principle is: No liberty in any Scripture-doctrine! They may shout and insist: "In non-fundamentals liberty"—we do not listen to



them. We listen to the Lord, who is saying: "Teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," Matt. 28:20. Dr. S. Parkes Cadman—and in fact every unionist—sends over this proposal: "I plead for union upon an irreducible minimum and propose certain neutral zones for difference of opinion in theological thought." Our strategist Luther replies: "They plead with us not to destroy Christian unity, love, and peace on account of these matters, for they are but minor differences. . . . They say it is a very small matter. . . . I say: Cursed be such charity and unity, for such a union does not only split Christendom most miserably, but, in the very spirit of Satan, makes sport of Christendom in her misery." (XX, p. 772 f.) We cannot recognize "neutral zones" in the doctrine. Dr. Pieper tells Dr. Cadman and the other unionists: "Christians should never agree to disagree on any article of faith, but endeavor to bring about an agreement on all doctrines revealed in Holy Scripture. Nothing but the revealed truth, and the *whole* revealed truth,—that is the platform which God has made for the Christian and which every Christian is commanded to stand upon. An agreement on a more or less comprehensive collection of so-called 'fundamental articles,' selected by man, leaving a portion of the divinely revealed truth to the discretion of the dissenting parties, is a position wholly unbecoming to Christians, for, not to deny, but to confess the Word of Christ, is their duty in this world." (*Distinctive Doctrines*, p. 138.) We want no neutral zones and no truce: "Nothing taught in the Bible may be treated as an 'open question.' Persistent denial of any doctrine stands in the way of church-fellowship." (*Concordia Cyclopedia*, p. 510.) That is our "irreducible minimum."

Are there men who would take such an uncompromising position? men so different from the rest? Well, "Lutherans are different." And when the union army reaches the Lutheran Line, it must stop. Dr. Abdel Ross Wentz wrote an article for *Christendom*, IV, No. 4 (autumn 1939) with the title: "Lutherans are Different in America." We should like to quote one paragraph from it. It belongs to the subject "The Unionistic Campaign." It tells the unionists what to expect when they reach the Lutheran Line. "This has produced a religious self-assertion among the Lutherans of America which, at least until recently, was unknown among their brethren in Europe. The Lutherans of America are uncompromising in doctrine. Prone always to accept the authority of the State in its sphere and disposed always to conform, however slowly, to the prevailing social ethics of contemporary society, they nevertheless assert their distinctiveness in matters of faith, and they steadfastly protest against modifying their doctrinal scheme in the interest of uniformity or unity. They decline to be an accommoda-

tion group. Lutheranism in Europe lost its protestant character when it identified itself with the State; Lutheranism in America through a series of causes recovered its protestant character and expresses it in cultural and theological conservatism. Through much of their history in this country Lutherans have been a 'conflict society,' intent upon maintaining their doctrinal distinction from other groups, no matter how much they may resemble those other groups in piety and policy. So the 'spirit of isolated national ecclesiasticism,' which Troeltsch ascribes to Lutheranism in Europe, has its counterpart in the cultural conservatism of the Lutherans in America." (P. 547.) What we particularly like about this presentation is that Dr. Wentz does not add anything to it — not one word of censure or disapproval. — Yes, Luther was different. He stood like a stone wall. "Know that our friendly talk in Marburg has come to an end. We agreed on most points. Only in one point we did not agree: the other party insists on retaining mere bread in the Lord's Supper and having Him present only spiritually. To-day the Landgrave is working on getting us together, or, if we do not agree, we should still consider one another brethren and members of Christ. On this the Landgrave is working with might and main. *Aber wir wollen des Bruederns und Gliederns nicht; friedlich und Guts wollen wir wohl.*" (XXIa, p. 1366.) The Lutheran position is: In essentials unity, in non-essentials unity! Luther repeats it: "Some foolish spirits advocate this position: Even though somebody should hold an error in a *minor matter*, as long as there is unity in other things, one might yield a little and be tolerant and practice brotherly and Christian fellowship and communion. No, my dear man, do not talk to me about peace and fellowship which makes us lose God's Word. . . . Here our rule must be not to yield or concede in order to do either you or other people a favor." (IX, 831.) That is the Lutheran Line. Let the unionists dash their heads against it!

TH. ENGELDER

