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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

The Status of Baptized Children whose Parents Are Not Church-Members.—In the Augustana Synod the question is discussed whether children who are baptized by the pastor of a church but whose parents are not members should be enrolled as members of the church in whose midst the baptism took place. We reprint with approval an editorial published in the church-paper of the Augustana Synod, the *Lutheran Companion*:

"One of the significant decisions of the Minnesota Conference at its recent convention in Minneapolis was to petition the synod to reverse the stand taken at the 1939 convention in Lindsborg, Kans., when it was decided that hereafter baptized children of non-members shall not be added to the unconfirmed membership of congregations. The synod took the position that it was sufficient to record baptized children of non-members in the book of ministerial acts.

"One of the immediate results noted by the Minnesota Conference was a sharp decrease of 3,251 in the number of unconfirmed members during the year. While a part of this decline was undoubtedly due to a decreasing birth-rate among members of the Church, the new rule was probably responsible for the greater portion of the loss.

"We are in entire agreement with the stand taken by the Minnesota Conference. We are persuaded that the action of the synod last year was not only ill advised but also inconsistent with our Lutheran teachings.

"The Word of God makes it very clear that the baptized child becomes a new creature in Christ, a child of God, and a member of the kingdom of God. In the opening address of the rite of Holy Baptism, therefore, the officiating pastor declares that 'we receive this child (these children) into the Christian Church through the washing of regeneration.' Following the recital of the Apostles' Creed, the pastor then asks the parents or sponsors: 'Do you desire that this child (these children) shall upon this confession be baptized and by Baptism be received into the communion of Christ and His Church?' Thereupon follows the act of baptism, after which the pastor prays: 'Almighty, eternal God, our heavenly Father, we give Thee hearty thanks that Thou dost continually preserve and increase Thy holy Christian Church and that Thou hast now permitted this child (these children) to receive the washing of regeneration unto eternal life.' Finally the sponsors are admonished to 'take solemnly to heart the obligation of the Church,' in order that the baptized child may be reared 'in the fear and admonition of the Lord' and that it 'may faithfully keep the gifts of grace received in Holy Baptism.'

"It is true that the synod last June recognized the fact that 'all children are received into communion with Christ and His Church,' but it seems to be a strange inconsistency, after taking this stand, to refuse to add all children to the membership of the Church. This is to deny in practice what is held in theory. Are we not guilty of hypocrisy when we declare to non-member parents that we receive

their children 'into the Christian Church through the washing of regeneration' when we purpose not to record them as real members?

"During our ministry we have had adults who have come to us and asked to be baptized, but who have made it clear that they did not desire to become members of the Church! Perhaps there will be more who will feel encouraged to make such requests in the future unless the synod moves to change its present anomalous stand regarding children.

"In these days when fewer and fewer non-members bring their children to the font of the Lord, it would seem to be more imperative than ever to give added emphasis to the real meaning of Baptism, and especially to strengthen every tie by which the baptized child is bound to the Church of Christ. This should include education in the matter of the responsibility of sponsors in order that this obligation, which is now so lightly and even frivolously undertaken, may become a matter of conscience not only with the sponsors but with the parents who choose them.

"We realize that there are many practical difficulties involved in keeping baptized children of non-members on the church rolls and in maintaining spiritual guardianship over them, but this is the business of the Church. Herein truly may be applied the words of Jesus: 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.'"

A.

On Abuse of Religious Freedom.—Chief Justice Hughes deserves a vote of thanks from sensible citizens for his recent defense of the rights of religious bodies. Three devotees of Jehovah's Witnesses—Newton Cantwell and two sons—had entered Catholic homes and there played phonograph records which outraged the religious sensibilities of the Catholics by declaring that the Roman Church was "the greatest racket" in the world and that its purpose was "to control the world by dictators." The Cantwells were tried and convicted for the offense in a Connecticut court, but the case was carried to the United States Supreme Court on the plea that the defendants' conviction "violated the constitutional pledges of religious freedom." This is the usual outcry of Jehovah's Witnesses, following out the persecution complex so assiduously used by their original founder, "Pastor" Russell. When this plea was made, Justice Hughes interrupted the proceedings to demand, "I suppose these Catholics had some rights of religious freedom themselves, did they not? I suppose they have the right to be let alone and not to be attacked with these scurrilous denunciations of their most cherished faith? . . . Is there no limit at all to what you can do when you think you are worshiping your God?" That no intention exists to deny the proper constitutional rights of Jehovah's Witnesses is evidenced by the action of this same court a few months ago, which vindicated the right of this cult to distribute its literature unmolested.—*The Lutheran*.

Is Unionism the Antithesis of Quietism?—That seems to be the view of the Rev. T. Benton Peery, writing in the *Christian Century* on the topic "Lutheran Preaching Takes a Turn." Pastor Peery is minister of

St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Philadelphia, Pa. In Europe "quietism" is characteristic of Lutheranism according to his opinion. He says: "A large majority of pastors [that is, in the U. L. C. A.] are certain that the 'quietism' of European Lutheranism is far from satisfactory for America." The term "quietism" evidently is meant to describe that attitude which makes pastors keep aloof from questions of social improvement and politics. We need not now investigate whether the Lutheran Church of Europe, generally speaking, has been and is characterized by quietism. That there is a kind of quietism which is reprehensible, a withdrawal from actual life, a refusal to face the moral implications of social questions, a retreat into the citadel of one's own thoughts, where one spends the time in self-contemplation rather than in endeavors to preach the divine truths which the generation needs, must, of course, be admitted. The question, however, which chiefly presents itself to us here is whether the answer to the false quietism to which we have pointed is unionism. Pastor Peery writes: "We rejoice to see a growing religious fellowship with other Protestant bodies which will help to give the Christian Church a united voice." Is that, we ask, the only retreat from the wrong aloofness briefly mentioned above? Must one, in order to preach to one's congregation the message of God pertaining to social questions, join in religious fellowship with errorists? Must one, in order to be more alive to the burning issues which confront our Christians in their everyday life, become lax in doctrine? That certainly would be a strange position to take. The remedy of the reprehensible quietism mentioned before is simply the faithful preaching of the great moral precepts given us in the Holy Scriptures. If we have been remiss in this respect in the past, let us repent and change our course; but let us not, in making our message more complete in one respect, dilute or curtail it in another.

A.

"Mr. Taylor, Come Home!"—Confessional Protestantism continues its protest against "the appointment by President Roosevelt of Mr. Myron Taylor to the Vatican," which the *Christian Beacon* (April 18, 1940) describes as "most serious." It writes under the heading given: "The correspondence between Dr. George A. Buttrick and the President of the United States, printed in last week's issue of the *Beacon*, reveals that the President evaded Dr. Buttrick's definite question, and it further appears that the President not only intends, but seems willing to permit, the situation to exist in which the Roman Catholic Church looks at the appointment in one light and the Protestant Church in another. The same act he apparently wants the Roman Catholics to consider as meaning one thing and the Protestants as meaning something different. The President has violated the principle of the separation of Church and State, and if anything is going to be done about it, it *must be done by the Protestant churches*. [Italics ours.] The Senators and Representatives in Congress cannot be relied upon to do anything unless the Protestant constituency is aroused sufficiently. It is our opinion that every single Protestant church that loves at all its heritage and cherishes the basic principle of separation of Church and State, upon which this Government rests and the Constitution clearly stands should protest

vigorously against this appointment and should request that Mr. Taylor be withdrawn and that this relationship between the United States and the Vatican be terminated. Our religious liberties are being encroached upon subtly, yet nevertheless in a most real manner."

We, however, do not agree with the *Christian Beacon's* contention that it is the Protestant churches as such that must preserve the principle of the separation of Church and State; for if the Protestant churches act as churches in this matter, they commingle Church and State as much as do the Romanists. But we agree to everything else that the militant Presbyterian periodical writes, especially with the statement that our "religious liberties are being encroached upon in a most real manner." The *Watchman-Examiner* (May 9, 1940) quotes a part of the protest by the Methodists, made recently by the Council of Bishops before the General Conference in Atlantic City against Mr. Taylor's appointment, with a special committee report reading as follows: "We therefore respectfully but with genuine earnestness urge our President to recall Mr. Myron C. Taylor. His appointment has created a spirit of uneasiness and resentment in the minds of a great number of people and instead of promoting peace has engendered discord and strife, which seem calamitous at this time, when there is imperative need for harmonious united action on the part of those who fear God and love righteousness." The *Watchman-Examiner* itself remarks on this score: "We shall not get action by inventing apologetics for the invaders of separation of Church and State. We can get it, and will obtain it, by our consistency, by reaffirming the principle of the separation of Church and State and all it includes, by a divine [?] intolerance of all political actions which invade it, and by a courageous insistence upon immediate objectives—which are the recall or reassignment of Mr. Taylor and the closing of the Vatican embassy." J. T. M.

Meeting of Northern Presbyterians.—Held in Rochester, N. Y., this year's assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. elected Dr. William Lindsay Young, president of Park College, Parkville, Mo., its moderator. The report in the *Presbyterian* states that the relations with the Protestant Episcopal Church are "growing closer," though the concordat which a joint committee has drawn up does not yet satisfy. The Presbyterians insist that the validity of their ministry and Sacraments must be recognized, which the Episcopalians, on account of their doctrine of the Apostolic Succession, are not much inclined to do.—With respect to union with the Southern Presbyterians the report speaks of progress. Other sources indicate that Southern Presbyterians are hesitating to merge with their brethren in the North on account of the Liberalism which has invaded the ranks of the latter to an alarming extent. The question whether the Westminster Confession should be revised in the paragraph referring to war was turned over to the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education for study, with the request that a report be made in 1941. The appointment of Myron C. Taylor to be the President's personal representative at the Vatican was condemned. In the foreign field this Church maintains 1,222 missionaries, assisted by 8,028 native workers. A.

Modernist to Succeed John Timothy Stone.—Dr. John Timothy Stone will retire at the end of the present academic year as president of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Chicago (formerly McCormick Seminary) and be succeeded by Dr. J. Harry Cotton, pastor of the Broad Street Presbyterian Church of Columbus, O. But as the *Christian Beacon* (April 18, 1940) points out, Dr. Cotton, a graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary and Princeton University, 1931, is generally recognized as one of the "most prominent younger Liberals in the denomination." With respect to God he affirmed in a conference address at Grove City College, June 20—25, 1938, that "reality is a world of mind," and "this is what religion means by God." Cotton's conception of God is therefore pantheistic. Regarding Scripture he said that it "has both a divine and a human element." Speaking of the "human element," he stated that "the Bible is not 'letter-perfect' and that the Church's doctrine of the infallible Bible is a heresy." He also said that "it is dishonest to tolerate those who hold that all parts of the Bible are equally inspired"; again, "that the Church's insistence upon our believing every word of the Bible is the cause of its present disuse." He called Bible believers who hold the inerrancy of Scripture "Bible-belittlers." The Biblical stories about the Creation and the Flood he branded as "versions of Babylonian myths." Furthermore he said that "there are many contradictions in the Bible, as Robert Ingersoll used to point out; but these things no longer bother us." With regard to the "morals of the early part of Scripture" he stated that these are "much lower than those of Christ." In relation to the New Testament he said that "many details are in question, but that there is a general agreement concerning the life of Christ." As other parts of the Bible, so also "the epistles of Paul have a human and a divine element." Dr. Cotton thus differs in no respect from the liberal divinity school of the near-by University of Chicago, which for decades has undermined and destroyed in the hearts of its students the Christian faith in the Bible and all that it teaches. J. T. M.

Gideons Save Souls at New York Fair.—Under this heading the *Christian Beacon* reports: "The New York Fair, 1939, has come and gone, but some of its effects will live forever. In this 'World of Tomorrow' with its gay exhibits and modernistic buildings was one booth rather insignificant in comparison with many others in the Fair, yet one that will be remembered throughout all eternity. This was the Gideon Booth in the Communication Building. The Gideon Booth was the direct result of prayer and definite guidance of the Lord. The financial side of the booth was taken care of by contributions and subscriptions by the members to the amount of \$5,500. This was taken as an indication of the Lord's will, and the booth was set in a space which had been providentially left open. A pile of 500 Bibles presented the customary cross, which is used in all Gideon Bible displays, the red edges forming the cross and the black backs of the remainder forming the background. On the rear wall was the slogan 'The Bible—God's Communication to Man.' On the side walls, the Gospel was clearly set forth by appropriate verses. Working behind the counter were Mr. . . . These men labored twelve

hours a day, from 10 to 10, over open Bibles on the counter, showing men of 70 and boys in their teens the way of salvation. This was the primary purpose of the booth, not to raise funds, not to advertise the Gideons, but to spread the Gospel of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . The Lord led 2,083 to profess their acceptance of God's eternal salvation. A number of converts returned to the booth and brought their unconverted friends. Many, however, turned a deaf ear to the Gospel. There were 345,000 tracts, gospels, and New Testaments given out and 150,000 copies of the *Ministry of the Gideons*. The Lord willing, the work will go on this year, and your prayers for the salvation of souls, guidance for the workers, and the supplying of the necessary funds will greatly aid in the work of the booth and in the saving of many more precious souls." Indeed, a laudable work! And shall not all believing and confessing Christians of all denominations learn a lesson of practical piety and missionary zeal from the Gideons? Putting the Gospel in the World's Fair is much like the preaching of Paul on Mars Hill almost two thousand years ago. J. T. M.

News in Nutshells.— Under this heading *Christianity Today* reports: "Some professors of Columbia University took part in a recent compilation of 1,344 pages of sections of the Bible, combined with parts of the books of the heathen religions—Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, and Taoism. They have published it under the title *The Bible of the World*." "They have profaned Mine holy things," remarks *Christianity Today* curtly.—"While there is one divorce out of every six marriages contracted in this country, there is only one divorce out of every one hundred marriages where the couple maintains church connections." One can easily recognize the lesson that lies in this fact.—"Last year the American Bible Society distributed 3,370,563 Scripture volumes in the United States in 63 different languages. In forty other countries its distribution totaled 3,600,194 volumes in 135 different languages."—"President Roosevelt, by the appointment of Myron Taylor as personal representative to the Vatican, has given *de-facto* recognition of the sovereignty of the Papal State and at the same time established political relations with the head of a religious sect. In an editorial entitled 'The Vatican and the White House,' *La Croix*, French Catholic daily, greets the appointment as evidence of a new attitude toward the Papacy both in America and in the world at large. Protestant denominations all over the United States have protested against this appointment."—"The Jews do not permit any Christian teaching or meeting in the one-hundred-per-cent. Jewish city [Tel Aviv] of one hundred thousand inhabitants. 'Tel Aviv,' they say, 'is our own city, and we do not want to hear about your Christianity in our Jewish city. Go to Jaffa and preach Christ to the Arabs but not to us.' Like the Jews in the Book of Acts, they have 'stopped their ears.' Nominally there is full religious liberty in Palestine, but actually none in Tel Aviv."—"The Presbyterian Church in the United States has completed a three-million fund to underwrite pensions for its 2,500 ministers and 400 foreign missionaries. Minimum pensions of \$50 a month will be paid at first. Ministers will contribute two and one half per cent. of their salaries, their congregations contributing seven and one half

per cent. Ministers will be eligible for retirement when they reach the age of sixty-five; but retirement will not be compulsory. Under the system, widows of ministers will receive a minimum of \$300 a year, with an additional \$100 for each minor child."—"Registering their opposition to the Board's stand on idolatrous shrine worship, four ministers, all of them long-time and outstanding missionaries under the Presbyterian Board U.S.A. in Korea, have resigned their position under that Board and have been appointed by the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions."—"The Methodist Church recently stated that it lost a million of the members of its church-schools in the last twenty years, and if the loss proceeds at the present pace, there will be no Sunday-schools left in sixty years. The loss cannot be charged solely to the declining birthrate."

J. T. M.

Brief Items.—Some of our occultists are clever people. When Madame Tussaud of Harlem, N. Y., had quite definitely "by means of the crystal-ball method" discovered that at the forthcoming Democratic convention Mr. Roosevelt will be acclaimed nominee of the party, the alleged supernatural performance carried with it a great deal of plausibility. When, however, the question was asked, whom the President would name as his own choice, the crystal ball was "accidentally" kicked over by the assistant of Madame Tussaud, and no prognostication could be made. Cleverness certainly is a part of the equipment of these deceivers.

In the Highlands of Scotland there are still many people whose mother tongue is not English but Gaelic. For this reason the churches of Scotland, in taking care of their men in the army, have been compelled to look for chaplains who can speak Gaelic.

A report of the American Bible Society says that during 1939 the Bible or parts of it were translated into eighteen new languages. This brings the total of languages and dialects in which the Scriptures have appeared thus far up to 1,039. God be praised for the progress His Word is making in spite of chaotic world conditions!

What appears to be a storm in a teapot but ought to become a real hurricane is the controversy centering about Dr. Hawlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, England. While Dr. Inge, Dean of St. Paul's in London, is known as the "gloomy dean," Dr. Johnson has been given the epithet the "red dean." It seems he favors political and social policies of the kind which Russian leaders have unloosed upon their poor country. Six of the canons associated with him have publicly protested against his attitude set forth in his work *The Socialist Sixth of the World*. What a situation!

A new monastic order, "The Community of the Way of the Cross," has been founded by Episcopal women of Buffalo, N. Y. "Nuns will remain at work in the world and must be self-supporting. They will take Communion daily, and vows will be required later. They cannot marry." This item, reported in the *Christian Century*, shows to what alarming extent Romanism has invaded certain sections of the Episcopal Church.

A.