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## Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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**Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches**


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"When Is a Lutheran a 'Good Lutheran'?" — With this question the *Lutheran Church Quarterly* (April, 1940) concerns itself in a somewhat lengthy article, which, however, in the end leaves the question unanswered. Beginning with a passage in modernizing Paul Tillich's autobiographical sketch (in his book *The Interpretation of History*) in which occurs the statement "The substance of my religion is and remains Lutheran," then pointing out that modernistic Reinhold Niebuhr (Union Theological Seminary) has been described, in an article on "The Amsterdam Conference," appearing in a British periodical, as "the famous American Lutheran professor," which term he did not resent, though "he apparently gave different content to the term than is common in Lutheran circles," and next suggesting how different are the concepts of "good Lutheranism" among Lutherans of General Synod and Augustana background or of Hauge Synod and Missouri Synod background, he shows that the question "What is a good Lutheran?" is at least intelligible, if not justified. Summing up his conclusions, he states that a man may be considered more or less a "good Lutheran" as he falls within one or more of the following classes of Lutherans: "(1) He may be a Lutheran by rearing and education, in which case his worldview may be profoundly influenced by his Lutheran training even though he is only vaguely aware of this influence. (2) He may be a Lutheran as a practicing churchman. (3) He may be a Lutheran as a theoretical churchman in that his faith is in agreement with the symbolic formulations. (4) He may be a Lutheran as a disciple of Dr. Martin Luther." "Most of us," he then explains, "who consider ourselves Lutheran are a confused mixture of all four classes," and he thinks that "there are some who could be rated 'good Lutherans' under Classes 1, 2, and 3 of our classification who would have to be considered 'poor Lutherans' in Class 4." The latter remark he expounds thus: "Those theologians, for example, who have their roots in seventeenth-century Lutheran scholasticism rather than in the Reformation era have more in common with the Aristotelian views of Calovius and Gerhard than with the nominalism of Luther. On the critical questions of the doctrine of the Word of God and of the Church they find their support in seventeenth-century Lutheranism rather than in Luther. On the other hand, much of the strength of Lutheranism which still remains in Germany rests in men such as the followers of Karl Holl, who are 'good Lutherans' in Class 4 but very indifferent Lutherans judging by the norms of Classes 2 and 3."

Since, then, great difficulties arise when one attempts to set up norms for delimiting the class of "good Lutherans," the writer suggests the following principles to guide those who wish to perform this arduous task: (1) "The adoption of any one standard for the use of the term 'Lutheran' is an arbitrary judgment and should be recognized and admitted as such by those who adopt that standard. (2) On the adoption of any one standard the term 'good Lutheran' is not automatically

defined but presupposes a sliding scale of comparatively 'good Lutherans,' according as the standard is intended to measure (a) theological tendency, (b) congregational loyalty, (c) fidelity to the Confessions, (d) synodical regularity. (3) In using the term 'good Lutheran' to designate a fellow-Lutheran, it is necessary to state specifically which norm (or norms) is used and to what extent a person is more or less a 'good Lutheran' on the sliding scales within at least four different classes of Lutherans. (4) The synodical body that fixes standards for determining 'good Lutheranism' is at liberty to take the steps in that direction that are regarded as expedient. But the standard should not be made to operate so as to deprive others not affiliated with the body of the right to be called 'good Lutherans.'

It is very interesting to note that the writer blames Luther himself for the difficulty in grouping the different kinds of Lutherans. He says: "The roots of this difficulty for Lutherans probably rest in Luther's own views, for in emphasizing the importance of the Church as the congregation of true believers, he broke the authority of all institutional norms. In placing the individual as alone responsible over against a God of justice and love, he relegated all corporate ecclesiastical organization to a role of secondary importance. The Christian thus finds himself in the paradoxical position where he can never separate himself from the Church and yet must never allow himself to become dependent upon the institutionalized Church for his salvation. The problem of living in the midst of this paradox and the task of reconciling this paradoxical situation in his society place a strenuous responsibility upon the shoulders of the Lutheran churchman at all times and places."

But really, does it? To us it seems that the difficulty is not so very great after all. For one thing, the question in the final analysis is not: "What is a *good* Lutheran?" but: "What is a Lutheran?" Lutheranism represents a definite faith, or profession. To be a Lutheran means to hold the principles which Luther held, or to believe and live those spiritual truths which Luther believed and lived. In particular, it means to believe and live the Bible as Luther believed and lived it. Luther regarded the canonical Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament as so absolutely inspired that "one single word made the world too narrow for him," that is, that one single word demanded his complete consecration and obedience. Accordingly, Luther believed that the whole Bible should be taught, and nothing but the Bible; no human speculation but God's Word only. Again, Luther believed that the teachings of the Bible must be lived; in other words, in his religious scheme of things, sanctification follows upon justification, and Christian sanctification embraces the frank confession of truth in the face of error, just as also strict separation from all who teach false doctrine. Matters of doctrine were to Luther supremely important matters. He was neither a liberalist nor a unionist, but an honest, outspoken follower and defender of the Bible.

Now, then, judged by the standards of Luther's faith and profession, modernizing Paul Tillich is not a Lutheran, for he subscribes neither to Scripture nor to the Lutheran Confessions in the sense of Luther. Nor is modernistic Niebuhr a Lutheran, nor Karl Barth, nor any one

who wilfully departs from Scripture in faith and practice. The claim that there is a chasm between "seventeenth-century Lutheran scholasticism" and "Lutheran nominalism" is a myth. On the questions of the Word of God and the Church these Lutheran dogmaticians only restated what Luther had written before them on these doctrines. Calov and Gerhard did not go one iota beyond Luther in teaching and defending the *sola Scriptura* and the *sola fide*. Nor can we see how the "roots of difficulty for Lutherans rest in Luther's own views," for while it is true that Luther regarded the Church, in its proper sense, as the *congregatio credentium*, or the *communio sanctorum*, just because of that fact he warned all Christians against all false teachers and called upon them to separate their connection with erring church-bodies. We write this, not in a spirit of carping criticism but in that of brotherly helpfulness, seeking that desirable church union which is anchored in true unity of faith, but which, alas, seems still so far away. Lutheranism has a definite historical meaning, and to be a Lutheran, in the true historical sense, means to measure up to the high standards of faith and practice that are rooted in God's infallible Word. As we measure up to the standards of God's Word, we shall be genuine Lutherans and shall then also attain to the desirable goal of a truly united American Lutheranism. In the last analysis the question is merely: "Are we going to accept the Word of God, or are we going to reject it?" Just that decides whether we are Lutherans or not.

J. T. M.

**Agreement in Doctrine as a Prerequisite for Church-Fellowship.**—The editor of the *Lutheran Standard*, the Rev. E. W. Schramm, taking as his caption the words "A Real Fallacy," criticizes a statement made by Dr. Behnken at the meeting in Columbus, O., at which the case of orphaned Lutheran missions was discussed. He writes: "To think that cooperation among Lutherans in matters of common responsibility has something to do with fostering unity is not a fallacy. That was the burden of an editorial in last week's issue. To think that agreement in doctrine is the sole requirement of real unity is a fallacy. That is the burden of this editorial. Here, in the words of President Behnken of the Missouri Synod, is a clear statement of the view that complete agreement in doctrine is all that is necessary to complete unity: 'We believe that you must touch the very heart and core of the matter and reach agreement in doctrine. The Lord says, "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. . . . One Lord, one faith, one Baptism," etc. If such real unity is achieved on the basis of God's Word, then all other matters will readily be solved, then cooperation in other matters will become self-evident.' Although there is much truth in this statement, it contains a very serious fallacy, one that has been a prime obstacle in the way of effecting full-orbed unity among Lutherans in America. For when we analyze this statement in the light of the attempts that have been made to 'reach agreement in doctrine,' we discover that the emphasis is entirely too much on intellectual agreement and entirely too little on the requisites of unity which the inspired Paul enumerates in the opening verses of the second chapter of his Letter to the Philippians—'Be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or vainglory,

but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself. . . . Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus.' In other words, the emphasis is too exclusively on theology and too little on Christian attitude and Christian life. And the fallacy consists in the claim that agreement in theology — and that alone — effects full unity and lays the basis for full Christian fellowship in worship and work, and that spiritual affinity, oneness in heart and soul and love, oneness in the attitude and mind of Christ, oneness in joint labors with Christ and for Christ, are all to be regarded as not even remotely connected with the fostering of Christian unity. That is a fallacy of the deepest dye."

To bring out fully what Editor Schramm has in mind, we ought to quote some more sentences from his article: "The simple fact of the matter is that full, Spirit-wrought, fruitful Christian unity demands oneness in Christlikeness and in the Christ-life just as truly as it demands oneness in the doctrine of Christ. And it is a fact of Christian experience that we may sense a closer tie of Christian unity with some one who disagrees with us on some points of doctrine than with some one else who, ostensibly at least, fully agrees with us in doctrine. The explanation, of course, is not hard to find. 'The heart has reasons which the reason cannot know.' Joint agreement on a set of doctrinal theses does not of necessity make two Christians 'of one accord.' The word in Phil. 2:2 that is translated 'being of one accord' is *sumpsuchoi* and might be translated 'soul-buddies,' or, as Dean Farrar has rendered it, 'heart-united.' So-called doctrinal agreement does not necessarily make us heart-united. If a Lutheran pastor fails to extend the common social amenities to a younger Lutheran pastor of another synod who calls upon him to consult with him in a friendly way about the status of a person who is nominally a member of the latter pastor's congregation, the doctrine of this latter pastor may be never so orthodox, but the younger Lutheran pastor is probably going to discover closer spiritual affinity between himself and some courteous, Christlike Salvation Army captain than between himself and this inconsiderate pastor of a Lutheran synod that is commendably conservative."

Asserting a greater inclination of the laity to bring about the union of Lutheran bodies, while he acknowledges that there may be "failure on the part of the laity to some extent to realize the importance of some of the points in doctrine and in church practice that are at issue," Editor Schramm holds that the laymen see clearly "that there are more things in heaven and earth than settling theological differences; that a more united Lutheranism would mean a more effective agency for Christ and against Satan; . . . that, if Christians are really united in Christ, then they have enough of the truth to insure unity; and that, if they are not united in Christ, they have no real unity, no matter how much alleged doctrinal agreement may exist." That the establishment of union in the foreign field and in the work of inner missions at home usually is more easily achieved than at the home base itself, he holds is due to this, that in these difficult situations spiritual realities and responsibilities and privileges are more clearly seen "because we see things with our hearts as well as with our heads." He emphasizes that "the Gospel of Jesus

Christ must affect not only our intellects but also our hearts. To imagine that, if a group of theologians can come to intellectual agreement on a set of theological theses, their constituencies are forthwith in perfect Christian unity, is sheer nonsense." Viewing the matter in what he terms a practical way, he says: "Has not the progress thus far made in the attainment of more ideal Lutheran unity been largely the result of the bearing of one another's burdens through such agencies as the National Lutheran Council and the Lutheran World Convention?" And he closes the editorial with these words: "To deny the contribution of the cultivation of such a family spirit, of such cooperation in common tasks, to the cause of Lutheran unity, is one of the most subtle and dangerous fallacies that is plaguing the road to Lutheran unity in our day."

There are a number of matters here which invite discussion; we shall confine ourselves to what we consider most important.

Certainly Editor Schramm is right when he says: "To imagine that, if a group of theologians can come to intellectual agreement on a set of theological theses, their constituencies are forthwith in perfect Christian unity, is sheer nonsense." Yea and amen. We hope that none of the Lutheran bodies involved will ever commit the fatal error of letting committees draw up articles of agreement and sign them in the name of their Church without themselves carefully examining these articles and ascertaining whether they received the sincere endorsement of the rank and file. A mere paper unity, or a unity dictated from above, is something all Christians must abominate. We hope that the editor of the *Lutheran Standard* does not think that we favor the establishment of fellowship on such a basis. When he furthermore says that to be united must mean oneness in Christlikeness and in the Christ-life, we again fully agree with him. Not merely the heads but the hearts must be united, and the common bond must be joint doctrinal convictions, and especially faith in Christ and love of God and the neighbor. Again we say, We hope that the editor does not think that we of the Missouri Synod are so indifferent toward plain teachings of Scripture as to ignore or even deny that a common dedication to a Christlike life must be a prerequisite of fellowship. If he understands Dr. Behnken to mean that all that is necessary for fellowship among Lutherans is an *intellectual* agreement on doctrinal propositions, he is in error.

Everybody who has studied the history of the Missouri Synod knows that here we are treating of a vital point in Missouri's position. In endeavoring to do its work and to help in rallying Lutherans around the banner of our great Confessions, the Missouri Synod has insisted on unity in doctrine as a condition of fellowship. The unity of doctrine which it has sponsored and proclaimed as essential it has not conceived of as being merely a matter of the intellect but as a joint whole-hearted, joyful acceptance of everything the Scriptures teach, a joint acceptance born of the grateful conviction that God's Word is truth. It would have seemed utterly wrong to our fathers (and does to us today) to think of our acceptance of the great things that God has taught us with respect to our faith and life as a mere intellectual process. But this view our fathers did hold, and we hold it with them, that in an alliance where

there is whole-hearted, sincere acceptance of everything the Scriptures teach, in other words, where there is an *ex-animo* unity of doctrine, questions pertaining to life, matters of church practice, will be easily adjusted. Let two men be fully and gratefully agreed in everything that Christ taught, and the question whether it is right, let us say, to belong to the Knights of Pythias will not for a long time be a matter of controversy with them. Even if they do not at once agree in their judgment on membership in that particular lodge, they will soon be of one mind on that practical question. But if there is not whole-hearted acceptance of what Christ teaches in both camps which are negotiating with each other, the result, if they form a union, will not only be that the one party tramples under foot what the other considers divine truth, but the foundation for reaching that Christlike unity in life and conduct will likewise be lacking. How can there be true unity in Christian endeavors without mutually accepted principles of faith and conduct?

The subject has too many ramifications to permit of our doing justice to it in a few brief remarks. We mainly wish to assert here that the position which Dr. Behnken voiced in Columbus not only is the historical one of the Missouri Synod but likewise in our conviction rests on a solid Scriptural basis.

A.

**Omaha Once More.**—An open letter in the *Lutheran* of March 5, 1941, prepared, as the editor informs the readers, by the Rev. Dr. Charles Leslie Venable of Chicago, contains important statements on the action taken by the Omaha convention of the U. L. C. A. last October with respect to the Pittsburgh Agreement.

The correspondent avers: "The action of the Omaha convention was taken on the solemn assurance of the president of the United Lutheran Church that the Agreement did not mean a verbally errorless Bible, that it did not mean that a man could not be a good member of the United Lutheran Church and a good member of the Masonic fraternity\* and that it did not mean any change in positions or practices already adopted in the U. L. C. A., 'principles to which we have been winning the other Lutherans in America.'†

"I call upon every delegate to bear me witness that the action of the convention was taken on the basis of these three solemn assurances. It was these assurances which changed a convention in which proponents could not be found to speak on the Agreement on Friday afternoon into a convention which gave it a majority vote Saturday morning. The majority vote was not for any change but on the assurance that no change was involved; it was not on any issue but on the assurance that there was no issue being raised. Plainly, the bulk of those who voted for the measure did so because they felt that, if it involved no change, furthered Lutheran union, as was so desperately desired by so sincere

\* On direct question of Mr. E. F. Konering of St. Louis, Mo.

† "Quoted from the transcript of Dr. Knubel's address on the question at the convention. The assurance is given with regard to 'organizations' on page 3 in these words: 'We have been winning the representatives of the A. L. C. to stand with us'; and on page 5 with reference to the Scripture as quoted above. The transcript even records the applause of the convention when this was announced as the significance of the Agreement."

a person and one who had given so much to Lutheran unity as our president, it would be both insult and injury to him and to Lutheran union not to grant it. Of this the Church should be fully advised."

Dr. Venable claims that the minority in the convention which opposed acceptance of the Pittsburgh Agreement included every theological professor except one who spoke on the question. "They held that, if the Agreement did not mean Bible literalism and lodge legalism, it would be made to mean these things in certain Lutheran quarters in America."

On the question whether these fears were justified Dr. Venable says: "That these fears were not groundless has been shown by subsequent events. According to our information the American Lutheran Church postponed action on the Agreement for two years to see whether the adoption of these statements will make any difference in our practice. Apparently, what meant 'no change' to us did not mean 'no change' to them; what meant the winning through of our principles to us meant the winning through of their principles to them; and the articles of agreement are articles of disagreement even before they are adopted."

Were the delegates of Omaha aware of the significance of the Pittsburgh Agreement? The correspondent of the *Lutheran* makes the assertion: "There was one thing on which both the majority and the minority were agreed: they both were certain that they were not voting for any changes in the positions or practices of the U. L. C. A."

The conclusion reached in the letter is: "In common decency and honesty the United Lutheran Church ought to say bluntly what she said deviously but distinctly at Omaha: We will not accept Bible literalism nor lodge legalism. We ought forever to be done with trying to hunt with the hounds of sectarianism and to run with the hares of ecumenicity. When we make Christ central and judge all Scripture, as all other things, by Him, we get unity and ecumenicity. When we start with Bible literalism, we land in sectarianism and quarreling over all kinds of myopic matters like lodges. One of these Bible literalistic groups has as its divisive doctrine, so derived, that not buttons but only hooks are to be allowed on clothes."

If these words correctly describe the events at Omaha and the situation in the U. L. C. A., every one who loves conservative Lutheranism must feel profoundly sorry. It is evident that on the important doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible the house of the U. L. C. A. is divided and that those rejecting verbal inspiration are granted the same rights and privileges which those who adhere to that doctrine possess. On one point Dr. Venable seems to be in error. Previous reports on the Omaha convention stated it was due to a mutual arrangement that on Friday afternoon the opponents of the Pittsburgh Agreement spoke, while Saturday morning was set aside for the addresses of the defenders. But what of the remarks made by President Knubel and appealed to by the correspondent? The editor of the *Lutheran* discusses some (not all) points raised by Dr. Venable, among them the alleged statements of the president. He first correctly declares that what the presiding officer says at a convention in reply to an inquiry does "not rate with the action by the convention itself on the questions at issue, unless there lies in the answer



a misleading or erroneous response." He admits that President Knubel stated when asked what effect adoption of the Pittsburgh Agreement would have upon a lodge-member: "There would be no effect in this instance." The editor of the *Lutheran* explains this remark by saying that the U. L. C. A. Washington Declaration of 1920 had pronounced against membership in societies "injurious to the Christian faith" and that hence the lodge paragraph of the Pittsburgh Agreement did not advocate anything new. Given an opportunity to testify, Dr. Knubel should have positively stated that the lodge paragraph under discussion was intended to brand lodge-membership as sinful and should have called on all members of his church-body connected with lodges to sever these relations.

As to unionism, the editor of the *Lutheran* thinks the respective paragraph of the Pittsburgh Agreement condemns *indiscriminate* services. To quote him: "The Church has observed that in many instances assemblies for worship have indicated objectives which either disregard our confessional principles or seem to render the confession of them by a Lutheran indefinite or superficial. It therefore declared at Omaha that *indiscriminate* services are not permissible, and thus it drew a hard and fast line between the privileges of citizens gathering under certain circumstances for common petition or common thanksgiving or common correction of menacing evils, and meetings involving recognition of confessional principles." The editor's view evidently is that joint services with errorists are permissible except when recognition of confessional principles is involved. Everybody can see how wide the door is which is here left open for practices born of indifference in matters of doctrine. If he permits the holding of joint Thanksgiving Day services with errorists, with what sort of arguments will he convince his brethren that they must not hold joint services with heterodox people on any Sunday morning they please? The greater part of the editorial discussion is concerned with the paragraph of the Pittsburgh Agreement which treats of the doctrine of inspiration. While we believe that the editor wishes to defend the use of the word *errorless* in speaking of the Scriptures, his language is not very definite. He writes: "Attention therefore focuses on these original manuscripts. It is to them that the Pittsburgh declaration refers in its term *errorless*. It is a logical implication in view of the divine function committed to Holy Scripture that they who were called to record truths essential to salvation should be able to perform their tasks without errors. Why should they make mistakes concerning what were the conditions, situations, and events of their own times if they had had committed to them the narration of revelation? Why should the Jews for the Old Testament and the writers of the New Testament be careless about their statements of fact? There is justified allowance for errors in transcription, for inadequacies of the languages into which the Bible has been translated and especially for the 'personal equation' in interpreting the sacred books. But deduction concerning reliability is convincingly on the side of *errorless*. Indeed, the constant criticism to which it has been unsuccessfully subjected could be adduced as a correlative testimony to this same quality."

Our comment is: Certainly it is right to limit the inspiration of the Scriptures to the original manuscripts. Everybody admits that in asserting the verbal inspiration of the Bible, we are not speaking of copies that were made or translations that were produced or of interpretations that have been uttered. To state that the men who wrote the Old and the New Testament were careful in what they asserted is irrelevant. Of course, they were careful. The question is whether the Holy Spirit guided them in such a way that what they wrote became the infallible Word of God. We wish that the editor of the *Lutheran* had spoken with greater clarity and emphasis on this point.

The situation of the U. L. C. A. evidently is confused. There is a difference of opinion as to what was adopted at Omaha. That the subject is discussed in the official organ of the U. L. C. A. is a good thing. Perhaps as a result of such discussions it will become evident to the conservative members of the U. L. C. A. that a number of their leaders and teachers have definitely broken with historical Lutheranism and that stern action with respect to them is required. A.

What About Christ's Agony in Gethsemane? — In the January, 1941, issue of the *Augustana Quarterly*, pages 59—65, an article by T. A. Holmer appeared on "Our Lord's Prayer — Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane," with the following editorial comment: "Rev. T. A. Holmer is pastor of the Lebanon Lutheran Church, Du Bois, Pa. He was formerly a missionary in India. His article on Christ's agony in Gethsemane directs our attention to the meaning of suffering in general and to the mystery of a 'suffering God' in particular as we approach the season of Lent." (*L. c.*, p. 2.)

What do we learn from this article? After rejecting a number of theories seeking to explain the mystery of Gethsemane, the author continues: "The first of two commonly accepted theories is that Jesus as our High Priest, who was tempted in all things like as we are, must be afflicted also by this fear of death, even as it afflicts us. Now it seems quite evident that the 'cup' about which Jesus prayed was His death upon the cross, that He wished to be delivered from this death, and, furthermore, that He yielded only because He must. However, if Jesus suffered this fear of death in order to be like us, what could have been the purpose of it? To make Him more sympathetic with us in our hour of death? . . .

"The second of these theories is that Jesus, the absolutely Pure and Sinless, now encountered the sum total of sin and evil as a horrible and well-nigh infinite mass, and this made Him recoil. He was the Sin-bearer, not of one individual only but of all men of all ages. It would be as if the billows of all hell in an overwhelming mass, with its foulness and guilt, rolled over Him. How utterly revolting and shocking the hellish wickedness of some one story can be! Then, besides this, complementing this experience, was Jesus' consciousness of God's crushing reaction against all sin as an absolute and consuming judgment requiring full satisfaction. All the sin and offense by all men in all ages against an infinite and holy Majesty was to be fully balanced by Jesus, suffering and dying as our Substitute. And the burden was such as to break the strength even of the Son of God.

"Each and all of these theories fail to answer serious questions arising from the facts of the case. In the first place, could Jesus, who dwelt much on the thought of His death and has tried to prepare His disciples for it, Himself have come to the Garden so unprepared for the demands of this sacrifice that, when faced with it, He totally broke down and lost self-control? Not once but three times, not one hour but three, with the bloody sweat of His soul's agony, did He supplicate His Father to take the 'cup' from Him. Certainly, that was not making the sacrifice with a spirit ready and prepared.

"Then again, the argument from the sinlessness of Jesus fails to satisfy. It may be granted that His sinlessness produced a certain spiritual delicacy or fastidiousness by reason of which He would naturally recoil from all contact with hell's slime. But, on the one hand, a person with true spiritual zeal will not be deterred by any such delicacy when there are spiritual principles at stake. From such a viewpoint, how could Jesus have taken the first step, from heaven to earth? On the other hand, Jesus had already met sin in all its vileness as He moved among men. After all, it was just this sin of man that He had to meet and deal with in His redemptive work, and the dark and awful depravity of the human heart was fully manifest to Him. To put into the picture an imagined wickedness found neither in the Bible nor in human experience serves only to create a straw-man. . . .

"The trouble with all the aforementioned theories is that they look in the wrong direction for the solution. The explanation of the Lord's agony in the Garden is not to be found in His relationship to His Father nor in His relationship to the mass of mankind's sin. The cause of His agony is found in His relationship to His people and in the realm of His love. His agony did not come from any fear of mere death, nor was it a quailing under an unspeakable pressure of God's wrath, nor was it a squeamish shrinking from the foulness of sin. In respect of these matters Jesus evinced a robustness equaled by no man. No, it was in the perfect, the heavenly, sensitiveness of His heart that He suffered torments like those of the cross.

"The truth is that Jesus was crushed by His people's heartless and blind rejection of Him and of their own salvation. It is impossible for us with our calloused sensibilities fully to appreciate what He felt. His love was perfect, more tender than a mother's love; and the attitude of His people must have given Him most poignant pain. . . . He mourned over the failure of great opportunities and promises. His soul was in travail with the woe of the people, the women and children. To Him it was an imminent and awful tragedy. He had sought to avert it, but now He faces it helplessly: 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me.' But the most bitter pain was caused by the human hard-heartedness and the blindness of these people whom He loved to the end, for whom He had left heaven itself. How could they commit this heinous crime and damn their souls with such a sin! This thought utterly crushed Him. Therefore, in making this petition, Jesus was not praying for Himself but for the people; He was praying for the conversion of the people. . . .

"Not only the unbelieving and the hostile play a part in this garden tragedy; the disciples, the sleepy, misunderstanding, unresponsive, have their share in it. Jesus took them along with Him and admonished them to watch and pray with Him. They knew that He went up to Jerusalem to die. The sad consciousness of this so sapped them of strength that they fell asleep 'for sorrow.' But they utterly failed to apprehend the cause and meaning of the tragedy facing them. And it is evident that they bitterly disappointed their Lord at this crucial time. Did this failure of the disciples in discernment and prayer have a bearing on the course of events? Did it contribute to the apparent defeat which the Lord suffered?

"Had there been ten righteous, prayerfully zealous men in Sodom, the city would have been spared. In fact, Jesus intimates that He could have saved Sodom. If the disciples had been fully awake to the situation and had earnestly devoted themselves to prayer, could Gethsemane and Calvary have been averted? From this viewpoint it is easier to understand the cryptic remark of our Lord to the disciples as He faces His captors: 'Sleep on now and take your rest; it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.' In other words: 'Prayer has failed, particularly your prayer. The opportunity is past; and I will not ask any more for your effort. There is only one thing left to Me now: to go the bitter way of the cross.' . . .

"Does not the Lord have His Gethsemane tragedies today? What of Russia? What of Germany? Are they not such tragedies? And can not these tragedies be multiplied from the record of church history? Is it not true that the Christ is still being betrayed into the hands of sinners? And why? Because the Church, the blind, misunderstanding, sleepy Church, has failed to heed His admonition to watch and pray. We must realize that the Gethsemane problem is a joint matter of the Lord and His Church. As such this scene has a meaning and application for all church history."

We ask, Is that Lutheran doctrine? Is that the Biblical explanation of the agony in Gethsemane? No, says Isaiah, chap. 53:4-6. No, says Paul, 2 Cor. 5:18-21. No, says Peter, 1 Pet. 1:18, 19. No, says John, 1 John 1:7; 2:2. No, says our Savior Himself, Matt. 20:28. Christ's agony in Gethsemane, like all His suffering, was vicarious, a suffering of the agonies we had deserved. Has the *Augustana Quarterly* forgotten the a-b-c of the Christian religion?

THEO. LAETSCH

Von der deutschen evangelischen Mission. Nach den neuesten Nachrichten sind in der Südafrikanischen Union seit dem 29. Juli Superintendent Zädel sowie die Missionare Johannsmeier, Schulz, Zimmermann, und Kasse in dem Camp Andalusia interniert, wo sich jetzt 13 deutsche Pastoren und Missionare und 46 katholische Missionare in Internierung befinden. Aus der Herrnhuter Mission in der Kapprovinz sind die Missionare Deth und Knöbel interniert worden, während die andern Herrnhuter Missionare in Kafferland noch an Ort und Stelle sind. Zu der geplanten Kirchenkonferenz der Herrnhuter Missionare mit ihren farbigen Gemeindevertretern in Kapland hat die Regierung die Genehmigung verweigert. (Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung.)