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The Reunion of Christendom

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The Reunion of Christendom

(Continued)

A second catch phrase of the unionistic propaganda is "Unity in diversity," "Diversity within unity," "Einigkeit in Mannigfaltigkeit." It expresses the idea that the existence of the various denominations within the external church denominationalism is a blessing; the doctrinal differences do not divide the churches, but form one harmonious body of doctrine; and by practicing fellowship, pulpit fellowship, intercommunion, co-operation—interdenominationalism—the churches utilize the blessings connected with denominationalism.

"Unity in variety" is the watchword of the Moravian Church, the ideal of the ancient *Unitas Fratrum*.²¹⁾ It is the watchword of all unionistic bodies and movements. The *Western Christian Advocate*, Dec. 1, 1927, declared: "If denominational life means anything to us, its justification and significance must be found in the fact that it produces a different variety of Christians. The Baptist Christian, if true to type, is different from the Methodist Christian. The Protestant Christian, if true to type, is different from the Roman Catholic Christian. It is this variety that has sprung up in the Protestant Garden of God that justifies the continuance of different denominations. . . . The new day should be marked by a resolution on the part of the ministry to insist upon the making of the Baptist Christian and of the Methodist Christian and of the Presbyterian Christian in perfect form, so that they would be

21) *Popular Symbolics*, p. 278: "The Moravian principle is 'In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity.' This principle permits them to seek 'Unity in variety,' and they believe that 'the heart of the Gospel can be expressed in various forms, yes, that it is but natural that conscientious Biblical interpretation will produce a variety of views.'" While the second catch phrase of unionism has much in common with the first one, it brings out some new aspects of the unionistic delusion.

so highly differentiated from another that the world would say: We cannot get along without them." Archbishop Temple declares: "The only way to Christian unity that is fully Christian is this: the different standpoints must all be admitted as supplementary to one another, in a fellowship of true reconciliation—that is, a fellowship maintained despite differences." (*Christendom*, 1938, Autumn, p. 29.) Bishop Woods wants "a reunited Church, in which, through mutual self-denial and forbearance, room is made for our divergences in reasonable proportion, but in which the members are drawn together in a unity which far transcends these divergencies." (See above.) That is the plan on which the World Conferences are operating. Peter Ainslie, the apostle of unionism, was happy to note that "Lausanne marks the passing of uniformity and the coming of diversity within unity." (See *Theol. Mthly.*, 1928, p. 39.) And the Edinburgh Conference on Faith and Order (1938) stated in its "Affirmation of Union": "Jesus Christ, our Lord, makes us one in spite of our divisions." "Unity in diversity" means: The Lord has divided Christendom into many denominations, and He asks them to dwell together in an interdenominational confraternity for their mutual benefit.

This thesis asserts three things. 1. It declares that the Lord of the Church originated the various denominations. It is owing to the wisdom and love of God that there is a Lutheran Church and a Presbyterian Church and a Roman-Catholic Church. Denominational divisions have God's permission and God's blessing. Alfred E. Garvie insists that "under the providence of God, with the guidance of His Spirit, different types of creed have emerged. Uniformity, therefore, cannot be insisted on." (*The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 145.) And Bishop Wm. T. Manning declares: "Unity does not mean uniformity. God has created men with widely different temperaments, gifts, and spiritual capacities. These gifts are not to be repressed; they are to be developed in fellowship with Christ. . . . There must be room in the Church for great freedom and variety." (*Op. cit.*, p. 222.)

These various denominations came into being, they say, under the wise rule and guidance of the Lord; men are different, and God will not force them to have the same creed. A. T. Robertson: "There is variety in nature and in grace. . . . Given the open Bible, the open mind, and the honest conscience, then the result must be left to God and to the individual. History, heredity, environment, the personal equation, and the guidance of the Spirit of God determine the outcome. Meanwhile we can learn to love each other heartily in spite of our differences, even because of them. What a dull world it would be if we were all precisely alike!" (*Paul, the Interpreter of Christ*, p. 79.) Dr. Oscar Bensow of Sweden agrees with Robertson.

In an article published in *The Lutheran*, July 5, 1928, with the heading: "Denominational Divisions Have God's Permission," he says: "Now, there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.' These words in 1 Cor. 12:4 are applicable to the different churches. . . . Unity does not exclude diversity and variety. God does not love monotony, but rich harmony. The founding of different churches is not contradictory to the will of God. . . . We do not wish to exterminate the varieties. . . ." And the Methodist Bishop McConnell agrees fully with the Baptist Robertson and the Lutheran Bensch. In an address given to the Church Federation of St. Louis he said: "The voices of our times call for Christian unity. This does not mean uniformity. The Church must always be diverse enough to meet the specific needs of the various types and temperaments that are inherent in humanity itself." (*The Church at Work*, Dec. 5, 1929.)²²⁾

If it be the will of God that the church at large be made up of divergent denominations, it will naturally be His will that also the individual denomination contain divergent elements. It is known that the Church of England is in that condition; it harbors in its midst all manner of different trends and conflicting theologies; and Bishop Woods is proud of that. "Just as the British Empire is called to be a specimen League of Nations . . . so in the providential purpose of God, as I believe, the English Church is called to be the exhibition in Christendom of a Church with many divergent elements," High, Low, Broad. (*The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 132.) And there are those who would have the same law of unity in diversity apply to the Lutheran Church. *The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1942, p. 235, says: "There is no warrant in Scripture or in life for the belief that unity can be attained by uniformity. Only when that basis is rejected for the New Testament basis of unity—unity of spirit in which differences are recognized and allowed—will any Lutheran unity be achieved in America or in the world." What a dull company it would be if all Lutherans were precisely alike!

22) Bishop McConnell said something more. It shows that the unionists are hoping that these differences will gradually disappear; they are not so good, after all. "But there is a steady drift in the direction of the unification of the Church. Our world does not tolerate old differences. The largest demand of our times is that of the common need to mass our forces for the assault upon evil. The great human needs of life begin here, and the enmities pass away. Out of our diversities will come a unification which constitutes the body of Christ. . . . Our differences remind me of the great beasts one used to see pictured in our physical geographies as the inhabitants of the earth during the prehistoric periods. I used to ask myself who killed these strange, forgotten monsters. The answer was 'Nobody.' 'The climate changed, and they just died off.' The climate of life. Our differences are going to die off."

People should therefore not feel bad over the multiplicity of denominations. We read in *The Lutheran*, Oct. 15, 1941: "With a long face the pessimist bemoans the many divisions throughout Christendom. . . . But each believer and each denomination has a particular function and mission in the one great Church. 'As we have many members in one body.' . . . (Rom. 12:4, 5.) 'The eye cannot say to the hand.' . . . (1 Cor. 12.) The army, navy, and air force operate differently, but each is necessary to the national defense. The so-called divisions in the Church are not unmitigated evils, but in the providence of God are means for more diversified operation and more effective service in the world-wide enterprise of the Church."²³ Thank God for these divergent teachings, said Dr. John R. Mott; speaking of the Interchurch World Movement, now defunct, he declared: "This diversity of doctrine constitutes the beauty of the Church—the choicest possession we have." (See *Lehre und Wehre*, 1927, p. 94.) Archbishop Soederblom put it this way in *Christian Fellowship*, p. 26: "The pure light of the divine truth is refracted and appears in the divisions of Christ's Church in many colors, which are unlike one another. . . . They are all needed to form the pure and perfect light." (See *CONC. THEOL. MONTHLY*, 1937, p. 261.) Thank God for the divisions and pray this "Litany for Union," published in *The Christian Century*, March 9, 1938: "I suppose that, strictly speaking, a litany implies petition rather than thanksgiving. But we always called this a litany. It ran as follows. 'Let us give thanks for the gift and graces of each great division of Christendom. For the Roman Catholic Church: its glorious traditions; its disciplines in sanctity; its worship, rich with the religious passion of the ages.'²⁴ "For the Eastern Orthodox Church: its secret treasure of mystic experience. . . . For the great Protestant communions: For the Congregationalist jealousy for the independence of the soul. . . . For the Presbyterian reverence for the sovereignty of God. . . . For the Anglican Church: its sweet and temperate ways; its catholic heritage; its Protestant conscience; its yearning love for all divisions of Christendom; its

23) The article contains this slurring remark on Confessionalism: "As one theologian put it, 'All are like a pack of canines, with a common atavistic tendency to get together and gnaw the creedal bones of doctrine; but they begin to growl when each runs off with his own particular bone of contention, his pet *dogma*.'" The article also contains this fine statement, which is out of line with the tenor of the article: "For me the Lutheran variety suits and satisfies. I am almost 'narrow' enough to think that the Lutheran Church is broad enough and deep enough to fulfill all requirements for a universal, 'catholic,' Church into which all other groups could merge."

24) P. Althaus would be ready to join in this *Te Deum*. See footnote 15: "We should not merely tolerate those who are different from us, but just this fact that the Roman Catholic Church differs from us should give us joy."

longing to be used as a house of reconciliation. . . . We thank thee, O Lord, and bless Thy holy name." . . .²⁵⁾ — To sum up: "As God has put us into families, nations, and races, so, too, has He seen fit to divide His Church into denominations. Far from being a sin against the body of Christ, this is but another evidence of the diversification of His creation. Just as all plants are not trees, and all men are not Semites, even so are not all Christians (let us say) Baptists. . . . God has provided the way in which each may best fulfill the mission which He has for it." (*The Episcopal Recorder*, Oct., 1940.)

We refuse to sing the unionistic *Te Deum*. God is not the author of the denominational divisions in the Church. God wants unity of doctrine, unity without diversity. He would have all Christians "speak the same thing," 1 Cor. 1:10. He would have them united in "one faith," Eph. 5:4, and the prayer of Jesus is: "That they all may be one," John 17. God did not send the teachers who introduced divergent teaching into the Church. He warns His Christians against those that "cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned," Rom. 16:17. The divisions in the Church owe their origin to Satan, Gal. 3:1; 2 Thess. 2:9. Satan split up the Church; those men whose pride of reason moved them to depart from the teaching of the Apostles lent themselves to Satan as his willing instruments. The rise of the sects is not a normal development. God did not guide Zwingli in denouncing the Real Presence. God was not the moving spirit when Melancthon introduced synergism into the Lutheran Church. These varieties in the garden of God which the unionists admire do not represent a healthy growth. They are due to a disease. It is an abnormal condition. Tares do not spring from wheat. And shall we praise the Lord for their existence? "It is a deplorable state of things," says Dr. Pieper, "that there are external Christian communities differing in doctrine. Sects do not exist according to God's will and good pleasure, but only by God's forbearance. All Christians, therefore, should be desirous of a reunion and earnestly labor for the same. But the union sought for must be a union in faith and doctrine. Christians may differ and, in many cases, owing to different circumstances, must differ as to ceremonies, external organization, etc. But there is one thing concerning which all Christians of all times and of all countries should

25) At the annual dinner of the Church Federation in St. Louis in 1934 the preachers sang thus: "Get religion like a Methodist. Experience it like a Baptist. Be sure of it like a Disciple. Stick to it like a Lutheran. Pay for it like a Presbyterian. Conciliate it like a Congregationalist. Simplify it like a Quaker. Propagate it like a Roman Catholic. Be proud of it like an Episcopalian. Work for it like the Salvation Army. Enjoy it like the Negro."

perfectly agree—they should be *one in faith and doctrine*. 1 Cor. 1:10." (*Distinctive Doctrines and Usages*, p. 157.) Again, on page 127: "As no person is licensed to speak aught but the Word of God in the Church, 1 Pet. 4:11, and no Christian is allowed to unite with a teacher who in any way deviates from the doctrine revealed in Holy Scripture, Christians who are not yet connected with heterodox churches should avoid them, and Christians already united with them should *come out* from among them. It is not according to the *good pleasure* of God—as modern theologians teach—that sects exist, for all Christians are required to agree on all articles of faith revealed in Holy Scripture, 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:3-6, but sects arose by God's *forbearance* only, like other sins."²⁶⁾

Dr. F. Bente on this point: "Perhaps never before has Christendom been divided in as many sects as at present. Denominationalism, as advocated by Philip Schaff and many unionists, defends this condition. It views the various sects as lawful specific developments of generic Christianity or as different varieties of the same spiritual life of the Church, as regiments of the same army, marching separately, but attacking the same common foe. Judged in the light of the Bible, however, the numerous sects, organized on various aberrations from the plain Word of God, are, as such, not normal developments but corruptions, abnormal formations, and diseased conditions of the Christian Church." (*American Lutheranism*, I, p. 7. — See also Bente's article in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1897, p. 203 ff.: "Welches ist die einzige Weise, Zertrennung in der Christenheit zu verhueten und zu heilen?") The Protestant Episcopal bishop Frank E. Wilson expresses the Scriptural teaching when he says: "What shall we say, then, of those who justify sectarian divisions because they promote healthy rivalry between various denominations and because people, being different, must have different means of expressing their religious life? It is as difficult for us today to contemplate the Body of Christ in fragments as it was for St. Paul when he asked the Corinthians: 'Is Christ divided?' (1 Cor. 1:13.) And our Lord must have meant something when He prayed 'that they all may be one' (John 17:21)." (*The Living Church*, April 14, 1934.)

26) The statement continues: "Sects arise and continue, not for the purpose that Christians should join them, but for the purpose that Christians *should prove their allegiance to God* by avoiding them, as the Scriptures explicitly teach, 1 Cor. 11:19: "There must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you." An article in *The Living Church*, Aug. 18, 1934, on this point closed with the words: "St. Paul recognized that divisions must come to make clear the truth. God give us disunity!" In that respect denominationalism comes under the providential ruling of God. In that respect the sects serve a good purpose. 2 Thess. 2:10-12 sets forth another purpose of God.

We are thus in accord with Holy Scripture when we maintain that God wants uniformity of doctrine in His Church. He wants uniform teaching on saving grace. He wants all denominations to teach the *sola gratia*. He gave no denomination license to deny *gratia universalis*. God wants uniform teaching in the realm of morals. It is His will that all churches condemn, with one voice, theft, murder, adultery. And will He countenance contradictory teachings on the doctrines of faith? Concerning every doctrine revealed in Scripture, be it the doctrine of the evil angels and of Antichrist or be it the doctrine of saving grace, God would have all Christians "speak the same thing."

The arguments of the unionists do not move us. They make much of the analogies they find in the many varieties of flowers in the garden, the regiments of the army, the various members of the human body. If they harp on these "analogies" as proofs, we shall have to tell them that they are committing the fallacy of the false analogy. To be sure, God delights in diversity. He has provided for a great variety of trees and plants and flowers. But only an illogical mind will deduce therefrom that variety must obtain *everywhere*, that *nowhere* uniformity is in place. Men perform a *salto mortale* when they argue that since God created both the rose and the violet, He wants one Church to teach that man is saved by grace alone and the other that salvation depends on man's co-operation.

If you had first proved, proved from Scripture, that God delights in diverse teaching, you could point to the diversities in the garden, army, and body as fine analogies. But where is the Scripture proof? Dr. Bensow quotes 1 Cor. 12:4. Yes, there are diversities of gifts; but we fail to see the statement of the Apostle: "Just so there are diversities of doctrine." Dr. Macfarland refers to John 14:2 and declares: "In the Father's house there must be many mansions" — room, therefore, in the Church for "the Anglo-Catholics and the Anglicans, the Reformed and the Lutherans." (*Christian Unity in Practice and Prophecy*, p. 159 f.) That is very weak Scripture proof. Nor is the proof found in Gal. 2:7-10 any stronger. There was a division of labor among the Apostles, but division of labor does not imply diversity of doctrine. Those who hold that should study Gal. 2:11 ff. And what about the proof based on the "fact" that the epistles of Paul, of Peter, and of John show different trends of doctrine? That argument is based on a fiction. Peter, John, and Paul were in perfect doctrinal agreement. They wrote by inspiration of the same Spirit. "It has been well said that the different types of doctrine, 'Pauline,' 'Petrine,' and 'Johannine,' exist only in the heads of the expositors concerned." (Lenski, on the *Epistles of Peter*, p. 17.) — These arguments do not move us.

And whatever other arguments they might advance cannot stand in the face of the passage: "That ye all speak the same thing."

But, say the denominationalists, all cannot speak and think the same thing. That is their final proof for the thesis that God arranged for the diversity and multiplicity of the Christian doctrine. It is a psychological impossibility that all Christians should believe the same thing on any point of doctrine—the unionistic propaganda is actually spreading that monstrous idea. Professor Percy Dearmer actually said: "The age of doctrinal unity has passed away, and there is no possibility of educated and conscientious men agreeing in any one philosophy or theology." And Dr. Macfarland is glad to quote it on page 163 of his *Christian Unity*. And on page 92 he quotes with approval the statement of an official of the Federal Council: "Perfect agreement in opinion, placid uniformity and method do not appear" (in the deliberations and councils of the Federal Council). "It is a waste of energy and time to seek for either." Something must be wrong, these men say, with a body of Christians which can fully agree in doctrine; it must have stifled its intellectual and moral processes to arrive at such a condition. "You cannot make all people have identically the same conceptions except by a 'slaughter house style of thinking.' . . . The only place in this world where perfect conformity can be secured is the cemetery." (*The Watchman-Examiner*, Aug. 24, 1933.) These men look with disdain at the Lutheran Church and its unity of doctrine and glory in the "doctrinal flexibility" of the Reformed theology. In *The Fundamental Principles of Calvinism* H. Meeter writes: "The case is quite the opposite with Lutheranism. There we find not multiformity, but a condition which approaches mechanical uniformity. . . . Strictly speaking, it has produced but a single Church and a single confession, while Calvinism has founded many and multiform Churches." (See *Proc. Texas District*, 1940, p. 17 f.) Some Reformed churches teach *sola gratia*, and some deny that; some teach universal grace, and some deny it; and that is the ideal condition. God planned it that way! John De Witt declared: "Was it the divine purpose that those who love the Lord Jesus Christ and glory in Him as the one living head of this one Church that He built should think alike on all points of doctrine—the Arminians and Calvinists, Churchmen and Dissenters, Sprinklers and Immersionists? If this were so, never has a divine purpose failed so lamentably." (*What Is Inspiration?* p. 142.)

We cannot subscribe to this monstrous thesis. The Christian Church, which takes its doctrine from the Bible, cannot agree in doctrine? Then you will have to subscribe to the monstrous thesis that the Bible is an obscure book. And you will have to make

the monstrous charge that God, who declares that His Book is "profitable for doctrine," made such a choice of words that His Book is unprofitable for doctrine. Dr. Pieper says on this point: "Is perfect agreement concerning doctrine possible? We most emphatically answer: It is, as the Scriptures are perfectly clear on all articles of faith, every article of faith being revealed at least somewhere in the Scriptures in plain and proper words. God, by graciously giving His Word to men, did not propose to them a collection of riddles, but made His Word to be 'a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path' (Ps. 119:105), 'a light that shineth in a dark place' (2 Peter 1:19), 'making wise the simple.' (Ps. 19:7.) Erring concerning any article of faith is impossible as long as the words of Scripture are retained as they read. Ere falling into error is possible, the plain words of Scripture must have been entirely set aside or twisted from their natural meaning according to human reason or feelings." (*Distinctive Doctrines*, p. 138.)²⁷⁾

We abhor the unionistic thesis on religious grounds. And we reject the whole argumentation on logical grounds, too. It does not follow that because there is doctrinal disagreement among the Christians, it could not have been God's purpose to bring them into agreement. That argument leaves out of consideration the fact that men can hinder God's purpose. The fault of the disagreement does not lie in the method which God employs, but solely in this, that men employ methods of their own. They set aside, says Pieper, the plain words. Luther: "All heresies and errors in the Scriptures have not arisen from the simplicity of the words, as is the general report throughout the world, but from men not attending to the simplicity of the words." (*Dass der freie Wille*

27) We must quote another statement by Pieper, and it might be better to give the original German. "Ist aber eine Uebereinstimmung in allen Artikeln der christlichen Lehre moeglich? Das wird jetzt wunderbarerweise mitten in der Christenheit allgemein verneint. Wir unsererseits bejahen es ganz entschieden. Es handelt sich ja nicht um Uebereinstimmung in dunkeln Menschenmeinungen und schwerverstaendlichen philosophischen Problemen, sondern um Uebereinstimmung in der von Gott in der Heiligen Schrift klar geoffenbarten Lehre. Die christliche Lehre ist in der Schrift so geoffenbart, dass es nicht erst grosser menschlicher Kuenste, sondern nur des einfaeltigen Glaubens an Gottes Wort bedarf, um die Wahrheit zu erkennen. Nicht steht es naemlich so, dass die Heilige Schrift nur dunkle Andeutungen, nur *Ansaetze* zu den einzelnen Glaubenslehren enthielte, die erst von den Theologen entwickelt werden muessten. Es steht nicht so, dass Gott der Herr in der Heiligen Schrift nur A gesagt und es der Klugheit der Menschen anheimgelassen haette, B und C und das uebrige Alphabet der Lehre selbststaendig zu finden. Nein, alle Artikel der christlichen Lehre liegen in Gottes Wort *vollstaendig* geoffenbart vor. Die Menschen brauchen im Glauben nur nachzusagen, was Gott vorgesagt hat, um im Besitz der Wahrheit zu sein. Und die Heilige Schrift ist klar fuer alle Christen, auch die Ungelehrten. . . . Ps. 19:9; 2 Petr. 1:19; 2 Tim. 3:15." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1888, p. 291.)

nichts sei, XVIII:1820.) — “There is no possibility of agreeing in any one philosophy or theology.” That is the sophistry of the false analogy. No, men do not agree in philosophy. And they do not agree, the denominationalists continually point out, on political questions. But that does not apply to theology. If the statesmen had an *infallible* guide, we would need only one political party. — And do not speak of the “mechanical uniformity” in Lutheranism. With some the agreement may be purely mechanical. But “may be” is not “must be.” As the case actually stands, there is perfect agreement on, say, the doctrine of *sola gratia* among the Christians in the Lutheran Church and the Christians in all other churches because this sweet doctrine has won their hearts and produced not a mechanical acceptance, but a living, joyous, triumphant faith. Oh, yes, “we simply repeat, word for word, what God tells us to say,” but our hearts rejoice over being permitted to think with our minds and speak with our lips the glorious thoughts of God.

This, then, is the question put bluntly: Should all Christians be Lutherans? The unionists cry out: God forbid! God wants Presbyterians and Catholics as well as Lutherans. We say: God wants all Christians, if they have the opportunity, to unite with the Lutheran Church. We cannot say otherwise. If it is true that Scripture teaches the *sola gratia* and the *gratia universalis*, and if it is true that all should teach and believe this, it follows that all Christians should withdraw from those that deny these truths and join the Church which teaches these truths — and that is the Lutheran Church. God does not want a multiplicity of churches, but only one visible Church, one Church which teaches all the truth that God has revealed. The unionists say there cannot be such a Church. E. S. Jones wrote in *The Christian Century* of Dec. 16, 1942: “I am not interested in, in fact, I would oppose, any one church overtly or covertly trying to absorb the rest. . . . It would lead to impoverishment, for no church has the whole truth. The truth is in Christ, who is ‘the Truth.’ What we, as denominations, hold are varying approximations to Christ, who is the Truth beyond us all.” Macfarland declares: “Truth is many-sided; no Church, or indeed body of Churches, possesses the whole truth. The word of Paul to our own generation of Lutherans and Calvinists would be: ‘Let no one glory in man, for all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas.’ Not only are Paul, Apollos, and Cephas shared by them all, but in such a way that to make them divisive is contrary to the spirit of Christ.” (*Op. cit.*, pp. 9, 19.) That is to say: The Lutherans have only half of the truth; what they teach is only an approximation of the truth. And there are Lutherans who agree with that. The *Luth. Ch. Quarterly*, 1939, p. 276, distinctly states: “Lutherans do not claim

to have all the truth." This being so, P. Althaus feels that he cannot ask the Roman Catholic Church to turn Lutheran; by doing that it would not get the whole truth. (*Theol. Aufsätze*, II, pp. 116, 120.) Men of that mind cannot understand how Dr. Walther could write a book with the title: *The Evangelical Lutheran Church the True Visible Church of God on Earth*. They know well enough that Walther never said, and does not say in this book, that the Lutheran Church is the only saving Church. He does say that all points of the doctrine of the Lutheran Church agree with Scripture and that that holds true with no other Church. And it is this that raises the ire of the unionists. They denounce Walther and the Lutherans as conceited bigots. They characterize the attitude of such Lutherans as "smug complacency," devoid of "humility," the result of "the disease commonly called 'swelled head.'" ²⁸⁾ The Senior Catechism of the American Lutheran Church has: "Question 156. Why are we in the Lutheran Church? Because we believe that the Lutheran Church teaches the Word of God in truth and purity. Question 157. Does it make any difference to which denomination one belongs? Yes, the Word of God earnestly warns against all false teaching and teachers. 1 John 4:1; Gal. 1:9. . . . For Class Discussion: How do we know that one church is better than another? In Ephesians 4:5 how many faiths does St. Paul say the Christians have? But there are many differences today. How do we know what to believe? Where does the Christian faith come from? Which would be the best church, then?" That, say the unionists, is instilling pride and self-conceit into the Lutheran children. At the Lutheran World Convention in 1935 Bishop Rahamaegi (Estonia) said: "Die Parole ist: *Zum lutherischen Christentum! . . . Nicht Christliche Vereine Junger Maenner allein; nicht christliche Jugendarbeit in interkonfessioneller Vereinsform — nein! Jungendliches Gemeindeleben in der Form des konfessionellen Luthertums.*" (*Luth. Weltkonvent*, Paris, p. 148.) Smug complacency? God forbid! We want all Christians

28) *The Lutheran*, Sept. 22, 1927: "The Lutheran Church cannot in smug complacency bid the rest of the Christian believers enter its ranks. It is not likely we have all the truth that has been learned since apostolic days under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." The Lambeth Conference of 1930: "The humility required must lead to a readiness on the part of each Church to admit that in some respects it may have been wrong. If churches fear for their own repute as they seek reunion, they cannot have enough contrition or humility to obtain it." (See above.) We read in *The Lutheran Standard*, Feb. 20, 1943: "I have read Lutheran church papers in which writers tried to prove that 'we are the only true church.' . . . To speak the truth as I see it, the Lutheran Church has had a bad case of the disease commonly called 'swelled head,' and though others have seen and known about it for years, our Church itself is just now beginning to sense something has been and still is the trouble. R. W. O."

to accept and love the Lutheran doctrine only because it is the apostolic doctrine. St. Paul did not have a swelled head when he wrote Gal. 1:8 and Rom. 16:17. He wanted no other doctrine but his preached because he knew that that was the full truth of God. And because we know that the Confessions of the Lutheran Church have in no point or particle deviated from the apostolic teaching, we ask all Christians to avoid those that have deviated therefrom and to march under the Lutheran banner.²⁰⁾ — God does not rejoice

20) Do we, then, deny the "equality of the various tendencies" in theology and the Christian Church? We certainly do. Dr. Pieper closes his discussion of unionism with the remark: "As to the talk current in our day even among so-called positive theologians that 'various trends,' that is, divergences in doctrine and confession, have been designed by God, we can only feel amazement that in view of the contrary testimony of Scripture such talk is heard within Christendom." (*Chr. Dogm.*, III, p. 492. See I, p. 66.) There is much talk about "Gleichberechtigung der Richtungen." They speak of the "Lutheran type, the Reformed type, the Catholic type." We heard the statement that "if under the providence of God, with the guidance of His Spirit, different types of creed have emerged . . . liberty must be granted," all types standing on an equal footing. (*The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 144 f.) "Paritaet" is what they call it in German, equal rights for all tendencies. (See *Proc. Syn. Conf.*, 1908, p. 27.) "Equality of the churches" is demanded. Peter Ainslie of the Christian Unity League: "Christ receives all Christians at his table: who are we to bar anyone whom He receives? All Christians are equal before God. All Christian Churches are equal before God." (*Christendom*, 1935, Autumn, p. 60 ff.) Yes, all Christians are equal before God. We are glad to know that and shall presently speak of it once more. But we cannot subscribe to the statement that "all churches are equal before God," if the meaning is that the Reformed have the right to preach their distinctive doctrines. Nor will we concede to the groups which have liberal tendencies a legal status. They are illegitimate. Let us hear Dr. Pieper on this point: "Most everybody is today saying that the 'various tendencies' in the Church, with their divergent teaching, have equal rights. Only recently a periodical of the General Council credited 'the existence of the various Churches on earth,' or, to put it concretely, the fact that there are besides Lutherans also Reformed and Catholics, to 'the deep wisdom of God.' But the claim that divergent types of theology have the divine sanction would hold good only if God had either dispensed the preachers from preaching the whole Word in all its purity or at least exempted the hearers from believing everything taught from God's Word. But neither is the case. Jer. 23:28; 1 Peter 4:11; Acts 20:27; Deut. 12:32; Rev. 22:18, 19; Matt. 5:19; Luke 24:25; Rom. 16:17. According to Scripture only one type of theology is permissible in the Church, that type which teaches God's whole Word, without addition or subtraction. As God wants only one doctrine in the Church, the doctrine revealed in His Word, so He wants only one type in the Church. The 'different types' are not due to 'the deep wisdom of God,' but to the sin and folly of man, to unbelief, which will not accept God's Word as it stands. God did not call forth nor create the Reformed and the Catholic type of theology. He suffered their emergence as he suffers any other sinful development. The form of the Church which God desires is the orthodox Church, all its members in agreement on all articles of the Christian doctrine. And since God would have all men accept this whole Word and since the Lutheran Church actually accepts the whole Word of God, all men should be Lutherans." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1888, p. 293.) Again: "The Reformed Church cannot be called a sister-Church of the Lutheran Church. That a Reformed

in the divisions caused by the sects. We have no use for the diversities called for by the slogan: Unity is diversity.

Nor do we have any use for the "unity" this slogan demands and commends.—It declares (2) that despite their doctrinal differences the churches should and can live together in a blessed interdenominational confraternity, because they are, after all, one. "Do we really want Christian unity? Are we prepared for a unity that will include those who differ from us as well as those who agree with us? Can we conceive of a united Church firm in the faith once and for all time delivered to the saints, yet so constituted that Orthodox, Anglo-Catholics and Protestants will all feel at home?—The Anglican communion is in itself a conspicuous example of diversity in unity." (*The Living Church*, April 17, 1937.) Yes, indeed, declares Wm. Adams Brown, "The greatest of the results achieved at Lausanne was the strengthening of the position of that large and growing body of Christians who contend that the Church, in spite of the wide differences of belief and practice among its members, is in the deepest spiritual sense already one." (*The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 243.) A Report on the World Conference of Christian Youth, Amsterdam, 1937, stated: "The emphasis at Amsterdam was on our underlying unity over and beyond our many doctrinal and practical differences." And we had the statement of *The Luth. Ch. Quarterly*, 1942, p. 235, that "the New Testament basis of unity is the unity of spirit in which differences are recognized and allowed." These people believe that something better than the old-fashioned "unity of doctrine"³⁰ unites the various divisions in Christendom. What is this unity?

The unionists usually start out with saying that the common acceptance of the *essentials* of the Christian teaching is the bond of fellowship which God has provided; when God says: "One faith," He means unity in one half or one tenth of the saving doctrine.

Church exists side by side with the Lutheran Church, is not the result of 'a necessary historical development,' as men say nowadays, but is due to the fact that the Reformed Church has, in those doctrines in which she differs from the Lutheran Church, made human reason the principle of theology alongside of God's Word." (*Vortraege ueber die Ev.-Lutherische Kirche*, p. 29.)

30) Unionism, we know by this time, shies at the concept "unity of doctrine." There need be "no unification of thought about Christ and His saving purpose." (See footnote 6.) Dr. O. F. Nolde declares: "It is not necessary for all communions to hold exactly the same beliefs." (*Christian World Action*, p. 99.) *No lex fidei!* For, as the motto of the Federal Council has it, "doctrine divides!" Study again Macfarland's statement: "We shall not reach unity of faith by discussing *filioque* and *homoousion* with the Patriarch of Constantinople or unity of order by debating *su ei Petros* with the Anglo-Catholic or Anglican, or the difference between *ex opere operato* and *sola fide* with the Committee of Archbishops, or by reasoning on *hoc est corpus meum* with the Lutheran." (*Op. cit.*, p. 159.) Doctrine, you see, divides!

"Unity does not mean uniformity. . . . There must be uniformity in those things *which are essential to Christian belief and life.*" (*The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 222.) In the framework of the reunited Church "room is made for our divergencies in *reasonable proportion.*" (*Op. cit.*, p. 131.) The essentials must be retained! The plan of union advocated by C. M. Pfaff (1720) provided that the union should be based on the conviction that both parties were in possession of the saving truth. (See *Rudelbach, Reformation, etc.*, p. 613.) As long as a Church retains portions of the saving Gospel, it meets the conditions for church fellowship! And, as we have seen above, the unionists are out to reduce these required portions to a minimum. They are hunting for "the least common denominator." Some of them are willing to go to any extreme in this direction. W. A. Brown finds that "Christians of different creeds have made the surprising discovery that in the measure that they were frank in the recognition of their differences they have been able to appreciate the extent of their agreements." And speaking of "such organizations as the National Conference of Christians and Jews and such gatherings as the World Parliament of Religions," he says: "Here, too, it is found that beneath all differences there are common experiences and convictions which make spiritual fellowship possible." (*A Creed for Free Men*, p. 164 f.)

A union based on the "minimum of faith" is not the union which God requires and creates. The attempt to find "a common denominator for unity" has not, as we have previously shown, the authority of Scripture back of it. It is a wicked method. We have no use for it.³¹⁾

The unionists tell us, next, that the diversities of doctrine do actually form one harmonious body of doctrine. They do not

31) In the two preceding articles we had quoted statements from *The Lutheran Herald* of Jan. 26 and March 9, 1943, which advocated the common-denominator-method. The issues of March 30 and April 13 contain strong protests against this method. We quote a few statements. "In the Apostolic Church, it was soon discovered that a 'common denominator' as, for example, 'I believe in Jesus,' was not sufficient. They were forced to add more and more to the Christian confessions for the sake of truth. Chaplain — calls our fight for the faith once delivered to the saints mere 'quibbling.'" "Such a 'common denominator' basis for united worship and work with the Reformed churches would certainly mean the elimination of doctrines in which we are in conflict with them. Who can cut away or pare down to a 'common denominator' such vital doctrines as Baptism or the Lord's Supper, for example, without wounding our Lord, who not only instituted them for us by Word, but who gave them living power by His Cross, being also present in Word and Sacrament today as our risen Lord? . . . It would seem evident that the only God-pleasing basis for church union would be, not the low level of a common denominator set by human reason and desires, but rather a denominator which would include the full teaching of God's Word."

mean the old-fashioned "unity of doctrine," which excludes divergencies, but a new, mysterious unity back of the diversities. What is it? "It is," says Professor Percy Dearmer, "the truth behind the creeds that all Christians believe." (See Macfarland, *op. cit.*, p. 163.)³² No, say others, the creeds themselves, though divergent, form a unity. Speaking of "The Doctrine of Grace," a study containing interpretations of this article by representatives of various church bodies (Anglican, Methodist, Lutheran, Eastern Orthodox, etc.), "the Archbishop of York says: 'It makes clear the important fact that Christians are asserting the same truth in different terms.'" (Macfarland, *op. cit.*, p. 164.) The only difference lies in the emphasis — "differences of emphasis and expression" (*Ibid.*); "Tonunterschiede," as the Germans say; "there are marked differences of emphasis and expression between different churches in their formulation of the message of the Gospel concerning grace." (Footnote 10.) The Lutherans emphasize *sola gratia* and the Catholics *gratia infusa*; the Lutherans emphasize universal grace and the Calvinists limited grace — all being phases of the same truth. These divergent doctrines are not contradictory of each other, but all express the same truth — one being supplementary of the other. Archbishop Temple wants "all the different standpoints admitted as supplementary to one another, in a fellowship of true reconciliation," and Bishop W. T. Manning declares: "There is no irreconcilable difference between the opposed positions. . . . It is not that one of these principles is true and the other false, but that both are true, both represent vital elements of the Gospel, both are needed for the full life and power of the Church of God." (*The Reunion of Christendom*, p. 221.) — We have no use for this sort of unity of doctrine. We have no use for "the truth behind the creeds." It is too much like the "truth" which *The Pastor's Monthly*, 1932, p. 384, pillories in its remark: "There can be no middle ground between truth and error. Someone said: 'There are some who say there is a God, and there are some who say there is not a God, but for myself I believe that

32) Why do they not tell us, in so many words, what this truth behind the creeds is? Then we would have something definite, concrete, to deal with. What is this truth behind the Lutheran creed that man is justified by faith alone — this secret truth with which the Catholics agree? "At Lausanne a German urged that acceptance of a creed did not mean the dogmatic form of it, but the religious conviction it sought to express. Many others distinguished between the intellectual formula and the Christian substance of the creed. A Scandinavian believed we could reach a 'deeper-lying level of the soul' than the creed." (Macfarland, *op. cit.*, p. 161.) If they would only tell us what the "substance of the creed" is as distinguished from the words that express it, our troubles would be over at once.

the truth lies somewhere between these two extremes.' Only a confused and disorderly mind can harbor the thought that the advocates of the Apostolic Succession and the defenders of the equality of the Christian ministers are aiming at the same thing, that Augustine and Pelagius were both champions of saving grace, emphasizing different phases of it, that justification by faith and justification through works are terms expressing the one underlying truth.

The true unity of the Church consists, the unionists tell us finally, in the common performance of the work of the Church. "Doctrine divides, but service unites."³³ E. S. Jones endorses this idea. In *The Christ on Every Road*, p. 130, he quotes "this significant statement of the Chinese Christians, 'agreed to differ, but resolved to love and unite to serve.'" W. A. Brown has the same idea: "Those who met at Utrecht to draft the constitution for the World Council . . . had come to realize that in spite of all differences as to doctrine and polity Christians share a common life." (*Christendom*, 1939, Winter, p. 103.) And in *The Living Church*, May 4, 1938, he wrote: "I want to speak to you of the biggest thing that happened at Oxford and at Edinburgh. . . . There we were, a cross-section of humanity, a company drawn from many different nations and races, differing not only in our theological beliefs, but, what is even more divisive, in our social philosophy, and yet conscious of something still deeper and more fundamental: a common life." And Dr. Kappler, representing the Evangelical State Churches of Germany, has the same idea. He passed out the slogan which "became the social Credo of Stockholm and is rapidly becoming the social Credo of ever-widening circles in our own country: 'Doctrine separates; love, charity, unites.'"

We shall have to submit a few more statements of the same kind. We want to emphasize the fact that the unionists actually believe that what unites the Christians is not a common faith, but the common life—that the stressing of life above doctrine is an outstanding characteristic of unionism. Dr. O. F. Nolde: "It is not necessary for all communions to hold exactly the same beliefs. . . . Nevertheless, they ought to be united by a common bond of sympathy and good will. Real co-operation in specific church work and in community enterprises with a common purpose then become possible." (*Op. cit.*, p. 99.) The Moravian Church states:

33) In *Prologomena to the 1937 World Conference on Faith and Order*, p. 10, H. Sasse writes: "The Federal Council took as its watchword: 'Doctrine divides, but service unites,' which has been since Wichern the motto of German 'unionists.'" Wichern was one of the most influential advocates of "practical Christianity," the modern term for the old pietistic aberration that stressed life above doctrine.

We seek a "positive unity, i. e., the personal, mystical union, with Christ as the living force of Christianity and offer the hand of fellowship to everyone who accepts this basis, though he may incline to the Lutheran or the Reformed viewpoint. . . . Only one thing is needful, namely, to love our Lord in sincerity and to live to His glory." (See *Pop. Symb.*, p. 278.) The Czechoslovakian Church declares: "We do not look for the unity of Christendom in the uniformity of thoughts, opinions, and church order, but we seek it in the Spirit of Christ, trying to follow Him in the actual life of love and sacrifice." (*Convictions*, p. 213.) Dr. J. R. Mott excoriates "the effort 'to unite on a doctrinal basis rather than on the basis of a common loyalty to Christ' in service." (Macfarland, *Trends of Christian Thinking*, p. 157.) "The task of the whole Church,' say these men, 'is more important than the faith of the whole Church,'" (Dr. A. C. Headlam, *The Doctrine of the Church and Christian Reunion*.)

Lest anyone should doubt that the unionists do hold the monstrous doctrine that life is more important than doctrine and that it is not doctrine, but service which unites, let us have some more classical pronouncements to that effect, showing that the liberals among the unionists and the conservatives are in agreement on this point. In line with 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" . . .) Rockefeller, the patron of H. E. Fosdick, would unite all churches on "the fundamentals of religion — God's love and Christ's living Spirit." Shailer Mathews is of the same mind. "What the world requires of the churches is not a revival of fourth-century Christology, but the impregnation of economic and political processes with love. . . . The real unity in the Christian religion lies in the effort inaugurated at Stockholm and carried forward at Oxford to make churches an influence in society." (*The Church and the Christian*, pp. 105, 75.) And what say the Conservatives? Dr. S. M. Zwemer subscribes to "the statement of the Friends in their Book of Discipline: 'We find the true bond of Christianity not in any statement of our common faith. . . . We find it rather in the participation of a common inner life springing out of communion between the human soul and God.'" (*The Presbyterian*, May 18, 1939.) The unionists find an adequate expression of their creed in Alexander Pope's lines: "For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight; His can't be wrong whose life is in the right. In faith and hope the world will disagree, but all mankind's concern is charity."

We have no use for this sort of unity. To be sure, "service unites"; the Christians find great joy in common work. But

"service unites" only those who are one in faith.³⁴⁾ And we have less use for it because of the pernicious principle underlying it. "It just reverses the order which God Himself established"—doctrine comes first. 2 Tim. 3:16. (Dr. J. H. C. Fritz, *Religious Unionism*, p. 5.) And it leads directly into nomism; making life the most important thing prepares the way for work-righteousness.³⁵⁾

May we be permitted to define the mysterious unity which unionism commends? There is among them *one spirit*—the spirit of indifference. That is the definition given in *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1943, p. 63, as previously quoted. And employing slightly different terms, the unionists give, substantially, the same definition. They call it "the Unity of Mutual Recognition." (See *Proc., Texas District*, 1940, p. 15.) It is the spirit which enables them to "establish the fact of likeness" underneath the differences. Recall the statement of G. Harkness concerning "the power of Christian faith to span differences in belief. . . . All baptized Christians, forgetting postdenominational schisms, met together [at Oxford] at the table of our one Lord. 'Unity in diversity' was a reality." And the statement of G. A. Gordon: "One commander, our Lord Jesus Christ; all sects and denominations and communions, different regiments in His grand army; that is my idea of Church unity." Note the statement of P. Ainslie: "We can resolve doctrinal differences only by affirming and practicing

34) W. A. Visser 't Hooft, himself a unionist: "Service unites only those in a lasting way who do the same things for the same reasons, that is, who seek to arrive at a common conception of truth." (*Christendom*, 1939, Winter, p. 24.) Luther: "Das Wort und die Lehre soll christliche Einigkeit oder Gemeinschaft machen, wo nicht, so bleibt doch keine Einigkeit." (IX:831.)

35) Discussing the question of unionistic pulpit and prayer fellowship, *Kirchenblatt* (A. L. C.), April 24, 1943, says: "Es gibt nun Leute, die sagen, auf die Lehre komme es nicht an, wenn man nur heilig lebe. Das hoert sich ganz schoen an, aber es gibt kein heilig Leben, welches sich nicht nach der ganzen Lehre Jesu Christi haelt. In der Auslegung der ersten Bitte: 'Geheiligt werde dein Name,' sagt Luther so klar und schoen: 'Wo das Wort Gottes lauter und rein gelehret wird und wir auch heilig als die Kinder Gottes darnach leben. Das hilf uns, lieber Vater im Himmell! Wer aber anders lehret und lebet, denn das Wort Gottes lehret, der entheiligt unter uns den Namen Gottes. Davor behuete uns, lieber himmlischer Vater!' Da haben wir festen Glaubensgrund, alles andere, von Menschen aufgemacht, ist haltlos. In dem Einssein gibt es auch Schranken, die wir einhalten muessen, um an das Ziel zu gelangen. 'Lehret sie halten alles, was ich euch befohlen habe.' Nicht bloss ein Stueck seiner Lehre, sondern alles, was er uns gegeben, sollen wir haben und behalten. . . . Ein Diener Jesu, der mit Predigern, die nicht auf dem Grund der Lehre Jesu stehen, zusammen amtiert, mag in den Augen der Welt gross dastehen und geachtet sein, aber er baut damit nicht das Reich Gottes, nicht das Einssein in Gott, sondern untergraebt es. Die Wahrheit steht ueber der Einheit. Um die Einheit herzustellen, darf die Wahrheit nicht beiseite gesetzt werden."

Christian unity. . . ." This act, altar fellowship, would draw the participants "into closer fellowship and signalize the fact that beneath the apparent divisions of the Church there was a unity of all its branches in the one vine" (*Christendom*, 1936, Autumn, p. 49.) It will be seen that the unionists are calling for a spirit which is ready to "resolve doctrinal differences" by forgetting and ignoring them. The *Christian Century*, Oct. 15, 1941, explicitly says so. "The times call for a new spirit, a holy spirit, capable of transcending the trivial differences and the vested interests which keep our denominations alive and separate." And that is the one spirit animating all unionists and molding them into one homogeneous body. They call it "a holy spirit." We call it the spirit of indifferentism, and the union effected by it is an unholy alliance.

A final word on this point. We, too, believe that there is "unity in diversity." The Edinburgh Conference declared: "Jesus Christ makes us one in spite of our divisions." We say the same. Pieper: "All Christians are already one in Christ." (*Dist. Doctr.*, p. 136.) The Christians in the Lutheran Church are in spiritual fellowship with the Christians in the Presbyterian and in the Catholic Church. They all believe in the one Lord. They are one in spite of their divisions. And "all Christians are equal before God." We heard Peter Ainslie say that, and we say the same. All Christians have the very same forgiveness of sins and enjoy the same love of Jesus Christ. O blessed unity in diversity!

But we cannot say with the Edinburgh Statement that because of this inward unity church fellowship follows as a matter of course. We cannot sign the "Reconciliation Pact" of Ainslie's Christian Unity League, which provides that "in conformity with this principle—the equality of all Christians before God—no Christian shall be denied membership in any of our churches nor the privilege of participation in the observance of the Lord's Supper." For the Lord of the Church has provided that we "all speak the same thing" and "avoid them which cause divisions," etc., 1 Cor. 1:10; Rom. 16:17. We cannot practice fellowship with those who insist on remaining members of a heterodox body. "The fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in the hearts . . . has outward marks, so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel." (*Apology*, p. 227.) As long as men refuse to display the marks, the banner of the King, we cannot march with them. "It is not lawful for Christians to unite with those ecclesiastical bodies that rebel against Christ by proclaiming false doctrines, although many Christians 'in their simplicity' (2 Sam. 15:11) and by mistake have joined them." (Pieper, *loc. cit.*, p. 127. See also *Proc., Syn. Conf.*, 1888, pp. 11, 30.) So the fact that a man is a

Christian does not give him the privilege of preaching from a Lutheran pulpit and uniting with us in Holy Communion. Unity of doctrine is the basis and condition of a godly union. The Lord has so provided! Theodore Schmauk puts it thus: "Those whom Christ recognizes despite their errors and imperfections are already one with us in Christ. They may not be one with us in mind and faith, . . . and hence we may be unable to feel and say that they are in a common brotherhood of faith, because we earnestly believe that, although Christ can receive them as they are unto Himself without danger of His truth, we cannot do so with the same safety." (See Th. Graebner, *The Problem of Lutheran Union*, p. 103.) Dr. Graebner adds on page 106 the remark: "We receive men into our churches . . . solely on the basis of correct *profession* and a practice consistent therewith. This is not only logic, but fairness and true charity—love that transcends the narrow boundaries of creed while *observing the limitations* which Christ Himself has established for our communing of others."

(3) The slogan "Unity in diversity" asserts finally that unless the churches practice church fellowship in its various forms, they will lose the blessing God has prepared for the Church by creating the diversities. Each denomination has received a particular blessing, and all should share in each other's blessing. Macfarland: "We need to recognize important values in each denomination, they all have special and valuable contributions to make in the varying emphases upon which they differ. The Lutheran bodies today are bearing witness to certain aspects of the Gospel to which some other bodies do not give sufficient attention. . . . The Baptists and Congregationalists will see to it that we do not forget the grace of liberty, etc." "Each group of Christians needs the other, and both must find their way into a form of unity which permits diversity and liberty." (*Op. cit.*, pp. 3, 323.) *The Lutheran Companion*, May 19, 1934: "As men have differing gifts, so denominations have emphasized different phases of the truth. Thus the Lutheran Church upholds the authority of the Bible as against that of the Pope and emphasizes justification by faith as against righteousness of works. Calvinists stress the sovereignty of God and predestination, etc." Archbishop Temple declares that since "the different standpoints are supplementary to one another," the churches in their disunity not only obscure the Gospel, but "each Church loses some spiritual treasure and none perfectly represents the balance of truth." (See Macfarland, *The Christian Faith in a Day of Crisis*, p. 215.) In the words of E. S. Jones, the refusal of the churches to join the interdenominational confraternity "would lead to impoverishment, for no Church has the whole

truth. . . . We need, therefore, to pool denominational emphases." The unionists are telling the Lutheran Church that she is impoverishing herself by refusing to emphasize both universal grace and particular grace. They are telling her that she is greatly blessed by emphasizing justification by faith and that she would receive an additional blessing if she also somewhat emphasized justification through works.

The unionistic propaganda does not tire of this theme. Speaking of the proposed South India Church Union, merging Anglicans, Reformed, and Congregationalists, Henry P. Van Dusen prognosticates: "There are differences of *belief*, of practice, of tradition, but all the members will bring into the united Church whatever of value they have learned in their separate organizations. Each of these elements will find its proper and effective place, and be an *enrichment* of the life of the united church." (*Christendom*, 1943, Winter, p. 95.) The Church needs the *sola gratia* as taught by Presbyterians, but it would remain comparatively poor if it did not also make use of the Methodist teaching which lauds the capabilities of man.

"Eine Kirche muss die andere befruchten," says the Lutheran E. Stange (*Pastoralblaetter*, Sept., 1936). The Lutheran *sola gratia* needs to be impregnated by the Catholic *gratia infusa*; the Lutheran *gratia universalis* remains barren without the influence of the *gratia particularis* of Calvinism.

Ah, how immensely the Church would profit if we would "pool our resources" by employing the "give-and-take" method. Paul Althaus advocates this method. "Die Verantwortung der Kirchen, aufeinander zu hoeren und zueinander zu reden, *einander zu geben und voneinander zu nehmen*, ist als solche Verantwortung fuer die kommende Einheit der Kirche." (*Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung*, Oct. 6, 1939.) *The Christian Century*, Feb. 10, 1937, advocates it. "In this spirit of *give and take* we should go to Edinburgh. . . . The Lutherans should be paged and told about it. . . . The Anglicans should bring with them their doctrine of an apostolic succession, which seems to those who do not hold it to be so full of assumptions, historical and theological, and they should be prepared to demonstrate its truth to their Christian brethren. Lutherans might bring their doctrine of justification by faith, which as often formulated, conceals a subtle assumption, not so much in what it affirms as in what it implicitly denies." (See *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, 1937, p. 553, for a fuller discussion of this point.) There is something precious about the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith which the other churches should be willing to take; but the other churches also teach valuable truths concerning justification which the Lutherans should be willing to assimilate. By

giving to each other and taking from each other the churches would increase their doctrinal wealth enormously.³⁶⁾

We have no use for the give-and-take plan. Give—yes. We would like to give the other churches our precious doctrine of justification by faith, our precious doctrine of verbal inspiration and all the other doctrines—precious because they are the pure Scripture truth. But we cannot take any of the sectarian doctrines. Which one would it be? We can learn much from the sects, indeed. Their great zeal in mission work should be an example to us. The earnest Bible study carried on in some sectarian circles puts many a Lutheran congregation to shame. But which one of the distinctive Catholic and Reformed doctrines would you be willing to take over in place of the Lutheran doctrine? Says Dr. Pieper: "Wenn die Meinung die ist — und das scheint sie zu sein —, die lutherische Kirche habe es noetig, in bezug auf die richtige Auffassung der christlichen *Lehre* von den Sekten zu lernen, so laesst diese Meinung sich nur damit entschuldigen, dass die, welche sie hegen, weder mit der lutherischen Lehre noch mit der Lehre der Sekten genauer bekannt sind. Sie wuerden sicherlich schon in Verlegenheit kommen, wenn sie die Lehre oder die Lehren nennen sollten, die von den Sekten richtiger als von der lutherischen Kirche dargelegt worden sind." (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1929, p. 287.) One who *knows* the Lutheran doctrine will not barter his wealth for trash.

And only he *knows* the Lutheran doctrine who is assured that it presents the absolute truth. The real reason why men advocate the give-and-take plan is that they are not sure of the truth of their teaching. They tell us that quite frankly. The *Christian*

36) K. Barth does not approve of the give-and-take method. He thinks that the interest of the Church is best served if every denomination retain its particular "truth" to the full. By doing that the churches will somehow or other come to understand each other and the interdenominational confraternity will be established. In the *Prolegomena to the 1937 World Conference*, p. 36, he writes: "Within the multiplicity each Church can represent the unity of the Church if in its ordinances it is zealous for Christ. . . . Let the Roman Church work out its doctrine of nature and grace, with the Tridentine teaching on justification, to their logical conclusions; let the Lutheran and Calvinistic bodies do the same with their specific eucharistic doctrine and neo-Protestantism with its doctrine of man's natural goodness; but let them do this not merely in a syllogistic spirit, but as listening to Christ, the Christ of the Scriptures. . . . Those who fail to understand other churches than their own are not the persons who care intensely about theology, but the theological dilettantes, eclectics, and historians of all sorts; while those very men who have found themselves forced to confront a clear, thoroughgoing, logical *sic et non* find themselves allied to each other, in spite of all contradictions, by an underlying fellowship and understanding." Barth wants the churches to acquire the fabulous faculty of not merely tolerating contradictory teachings, but finding both of them to be true; Luther, who could not do that but declared the Pope's teaching on justification and Zwingli's teaching on the Lord's Supper to be absolutely false, was a theological dilettante.

Century article which proposed this plan contains the monstrous statement: "Perhaps all can be right even though they differ." "Perhaps," "can be"—that spells doctrinal incertitude and indifference. And the next statement reveals the same uncertainty: "There is no *unalterable doctrine* which embraces the whole scheme of Christian thought." Perhaps all can be right—perhaps all are wrong! (Lambeth Conference.) These men are ready to confess that their teaching is in need of correction. E. S. Jones: "Each [of these differing theologies] needs the other for purposes of correction." (*The Christian Century*, March 15, 1939.) Archbishop Temple: "Each would correct the bad tendencies of the other." (*Loc. cit.*) Macfarland: "Denominational values will be all the more clearly preserved when denominational impediments disappear." (*Christian Unity*, p. 227.) One who doubts that his goods have sterling worth is ready for barter. And those Lutherans who are willing "to give and take" do it because they are not sure that their Church has the full truth. They do not realize that they would be exchanging their gold for brass.

The give-and-take proposal asks us Lutherans to do just that—give up our wealth. Its proponents tell us, indeed, that we, in taking over the wealth of the others, will be retaining our own wealth. In an address to the Federal Council, which *The Lutheran Companion*, March 18, 1937, calls a "notable utterance," E. S. Jones said: "This plan would not ask any denomination to give up any truth it may possess. *It would not have to give it up*—it would give it to the rest of us. And each needs the other's truth, for all of us are but partial expressions of the Truth." In his *Christ's Alternative to Communism* Dr. Jones says: "Christians of the world, unite! We have nothing to lose except our dividing walls. The truth of each will then belong to the whole. . . . We have discovered that there are two ways to find truth. One is to put forth your truth, press it to a decision, and the majority rules. The other is to pool our truths and see if we cannot come to a common mind. . . . In that way *the truth that each holds will be preserved* and added to the common store. We should say to each denomination, 'We do not want you to give up your special truth, we want you to give it to the rest of us. Out of these differing types of Christianity would grow a larger Christianity.'" (Pp. 219 f., 289.) But all of this is transparent camouflage. Dr. Jones and Dr. Althaus know well enough that it is impossible for us to share in the Calvinistic limited grace and still retain the *gratia universalis*.³⁷ What they really mean is that we Lutherans should

37) Or does Dr. Jones really not know it? We confess that we do not know what to make of his statement on p. 220. "I spoke in a Presbyterian College in North India, and at the close the Presbyterian

give them our doctrine of justification in a *modified form*. Read that provision in *The Christian Century's* give-and-take article once more. When the Lutherans take their teaching on justification to Edinburgh, they must be prepared to have its "subtle assumptions" toned down or cut out entirely. This modern give-and-take plan of union is nothing else but the old plan of union by compromise. The "purer truth" offered to us is obtained by diluting the truth. We can get the "larger truth" only by sacrificing half of the truth.

We are not ready for this sort of barter. It would mean our impoverishment. The "blessing" promised us by way of interdenominational sharing is a curse.

When the authorities in Prussia were pushing the union of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches, Claus Harms issued the ninety-five theses of 1817 and cried out: "Through a marriage the poor maid, the Lutheran Church, is to be made rich. Do not perform the ceremony over the bones of Luther. They will become alive, and then woe unto you!"

In the Church named after Luther men have been using strange language. At the inauguration of S. S. Schmucker (one of the founders of the Evangelical Alliance) as professor at Gettysburg, in 1826, he was given these instructions: ". . . Hence, I charge you to exert yourself in convincing our students that the Augsburg Confession is a safe directory to determine upon matters of faith declared in the Lamb's Book. To a difference of opinion upon subjects of minor importance, by which different denominations of Christians have been brought into existence, we have no objection, provided the spirit of Christ prevails. The visible Church is rather beautified by such differences, as is a garden by flowers of variegated colors. But the different genera and species should be preserved, according to their peculiar nature. The right of private judgment Luther contended for, and hence the utmost liberality towards others should ever characterize the pastor of

chairman said, 'The speaker tonight has emphasized God's side in conversion, but I don't think he has sufficiently emphasized man's side.' He proceeded to emphasize it. At the close I went to him and said: 'My brother, the battle is all over. We have changed sides. You, a Calvinist, emphasize man's side in conversion, and I, an Arminian—whatever that is—emphasize God's side in conversion. The battle is all over.' We had taken each other's truth and were the better for it. These battles must cease by our taking the other man's truth and out of it all growing something that is more akin to the Kingdom of God." Is Dr. Jones writing a satire on his give-and-take plan? We have been saying this right along—that by taking over the distinctive Reformed doctrines we would be giving up the distinctive Lutheran doctrines.—"We have changed sides!" If that expressed the real situation, the battle would still be on. But we think we know what Dr. Jones means. We know that these men want to end the battle by an inglorious armistice, its shameful terms hidden under the phrases: larger Christianity, larger truth, truth behind the creeds.

the Lutheran Church." (See A. R. Wentz, *History of Gettysburg Seminary*, p. 120. *The Pastor's Monthly*, 1931, p. 268.) What, Luther praising the beauty of diversity, Luther tolerant of certain kinds of false teaching? Luther, who says: "There is nothing under the sun more evil and harmful than the venom of false doctrine. It works deadly, unspeakable harm; it leads men farther and farther away from God, into all kinds of abomination and blasphemy." (III:1873.)

Unity in diversity, divided and still one—do not let Luther hear such talk! Luther, who says: "Verflucht sei solche Liebe und Einigkeit in Abgrund der Hoelle, darum dass solche Einigkeit nicht allein die Christenheit jaemmerlich zertrennet, sondern sie, nach teuflischer Art, noch zu solchem ihrem Jammer spottet und naerret." (XX:773.)

(To be continued)

TH. ENGELDER

Kiefl on Luther

"Luther's fundamental error of the whole system is that in the work of salvation God does everything and man nothing."

So wrote the late Franz Xaver Kiefl, Dean of the Cathedral of Regensburg and before that professor of dogmatics in Wuerzburg, in *Hochland* of October, 1917. His article is "Martin Luther's Religious Psyche the Root of a Modern World Picture," reprinted in 1922 as "Catholic World-View and Modern Thought."

That is Luther's fundamental truth of the whole system.

"Words of wonderful power of imagination" Kiefl calls Luther's description of his desperate condition, which he quotes:

"He has felt these pains of hell often and every time in the very shortest time. They were, however, so fearful and hellish, that no tongue can tell it, no pen write it, no uninitiated believe it. Were they completed or lasted half an hour or only the tenth part of an hour, he would be destroyed and all his bones turned to ashes. Then God appears terribly angry and at the same time with Him all creation. Then there is no escape, no comfort, neither within nor without, but all around only accusation. Then man in tears says with Holy Writ: 'I am cut off from before Thine eyes,' Ps. 31:22, and he dares not even say: 'O Lord rebuke me not in Thine anger,' Ps. 6:1. In this moment the soul strangely cannot believe ever to be redeemed. It only feels the punishment is not yet completed. And yet the punishment is eternal, and one cannot hold it for temporary. There remains only a naked longing for help and a fearful sighing. But the soul knows not where to