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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

Summer-School at River Forest.—From Prof. W. O. Kraeft, dean of the summer-school at Concordia Teachers' College, River Forest, Ill., has come the following information: "The summer-school is taking on greater importance since the preparation for teaching in the Missouri Synod has been extended to four years above the high school (bachelor's degree) at the last synod meeting. More and more of our teachers, especially the younger men, may be expected to complete the work leading to the bachelor's degree in summer-school. In a brief summary Dean Kraeft stresses the following features of the summer-school. It offers: "1. A full summer course leading to the bachelor's degree, offered to teachers in a Christian environment. 2. A modified program for women teachers, particularly in religious education and primary methods. Many of our lady teachers have had no opportunity for college training in a synodical institution. 3. Summer courses for choir-masters leading to membership in the Lutheran Choirmasters' Guild. 4. Courses for Sunday-school teachers in the new Concordia Sunday-school Teacher-training Series. 5. Graduate courses in theology given at River Forest by the faculty of St. Louis Seminary's offering credit toward a degree in theology." All who are interested may obtain a catalog of the summer-school by addressing Dean Kraeft. A.

The War has Spread.—Words cannot describe the grief Lutherans feel when they consider that nearly all the countries of Europe which usually are labeled Lutheran have been or are experiencing the horrors of modern warfare. Why must this scourge fall upon peoples that have been teaching and defending the doctrines of Luther's Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession? is a question that is widely asked. It is not our intention to elaborate on this matter at present, except to say that undoubtedly this visitation is largely deserved but that we all have reason to repeat the words of Jesus, Luke 13:2 f.: "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay; but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." We can well understand the anguish of heart which made the editor of the *Lutheran Companion* write this paragraph: "The lights of Europe are indeed going out one by one. National honor is a thing of the past. Justice and morality have vanished. Christianity itself is in gravest peril. When nations sink to such depths that right and truth and justice are no longer considerations in determining national policy, it may indeed be questioned how long Christianity can survive in such an environment. And these are the very nations where the light of the Gospel has been shining longer and more gloriously than in any other part of the world!" Our comment is that we do not fear for Christianity itself. But that the visible Christian Church as it is now constituted may go to pieces is a possibility which looms threateningly. A.

The Unionistic Campaign.—The *Living Church* of April 17 reports: "New York.—A forum on the proposed concordat [for the union of Episcopalians and Presbyterians], under the auspices of the Greater New York Federation of Churches, was held in the parish-house of St. Thomas's Church on April 5. Fr. Dunphy was followed by Judge Robert McC. Marsh, whose subject was 'The Laymen's Point of View.' He said in part: "The laymen's point of view is that of men who look out at the world and see what its state is. Only the Church can remedy the evils on every side. But the laymen see also that the Church is not doing this. Why? Divisions, large and small; rivalries, waste. Any kind of scheme seems better to the laymen than the present one. The concordat appears to them to show a desire to come together. It was a great day in history when the General Convention voted to try to effect "organic union" with the Presbyterian Church. The proposals seem to the laymen practical and good. Yet men in high positions oppose them. What are the laymen to think? The discussion seems futile to them; they want action. The only feasible action is compromise, each church conceding something to the other for the sake of coming together.' Dr. William Adams Brown attended the forum and was persuaded to say a few words. He stated: "The things we have in common are so supreme, our differences really so little. . . . My deepest belief is that every soul is dear to God and that it is our supreme duty to bring together all men of good faith. Those who oppose the concordat take a heavy responsibility. . . . The Archbishop of York said in Edinburgh that the fact that we could not be together at the Lord's Table was the greatest scandal in Christendom. The concordat would do away with that scandal. My own sacramental experience is, I believe, equal to that of any Anglo-Catholic in the whole world. In my church we also are in the "Apostolic Succession.""—The usual unionistic strategy is being employed. "Our differences are so little." We are familiar with the cries "Trivialities," "our petty differences," "nice distinctions." And they want quick action. "The laymen want action." At a conference held in St. Louis April 5 "quick completion of the proposed union" was urged by the Episcopal bishop H. W. Hobson and Dr. J. H. Cotton, president elect of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary of Chicago. It takes too long to arrive at the unity of the one faith. According to the laymen's point of view "the only feasible action is *compromise*, each Church conceding something to the other for the sake of coming together."

Judge Marsh, by the way, is not speaking for the laymen in general. He is speaking only for his group. But that is a part of the unionistic strategy to make it appear that the laymen as a body are backing the union movements. That is pure propaganda. There is nothing in the make-up of the Christian layman's mind that would make him more susceptible than the clergy to the unionistic disease. There are, proportionately, as many unionists among the theologians as among the laymen. Dr. Brown starts it: "Our differences are so little," and the unionists among the laity are glad to hear it and repeat it. The stampedes organized at times by groups of laymen are, in some cases, directed from headquarters.

"Our differences are so little." That may be Dr. Brown's opinion, but the conviction of many Episcopalians and many Presbyterians is that the difference respecting Apostolic Succession and Episcopal Ordination is a radical one. At this same New York forum the Rev. Dr. William H. Dunphy (Episcopal) declared: "I am convinced that what is precious in Protestantism cannot be preserved except in and by the Catholic Faith. Our objection to the concordat is that it seems to let us down. It covers up with words differences in faith and order that are fundamental. It would admit to the functions of the priesthood those who are not priests." And Bishop W. T. Manning of New York tells his brethren: "What we uphold is the episcopate, maintained in successive generations by continuity of succession and consecration as it has been throughout the history of the Church from the earliest times." He tells them that the Apostolic Succession is absolutely necessary not only for the *bone esse*, but also for the *esse* of the Church. He upholds the Lambeth Quadrilateral, which insists, among other things, on the Historic Episcopate "as the Anglican basis for negotiations with a view to reunion." (See Macfarland, *Christian Unity*, p. 197.) He quotes, in an article contributed to the "Reunion of Christendom," p. 219, the statement of the Quadrilateral: "These principles are incapable of compromise or surrender." But Dr. Brown tells the forum that the differences are so little, and the layman hears it and complains that the discussion seems so futile, and becomes dissatisfied with Fr. Dunphy: "Yet men in high positions oppose these proposals" to pass over the differences.

Dr. Brown declares: "In my Church we also are in the Apostolic Succession." That reveals another side of the unionistic strategy—the employment of unionistic formulas. The concordat itself operates on this plan. We heard Dr. Dunphy voice his indignation: "The concordat seems to let us down. It covers up with words differences in faith and order that are fundamental." The words of Dr. Brown, too, mean nothing in this connection. At the St. Louis forum Dr. Cotton phrased it this way: "The Presbyterians believe in the doctrine of Apostolic Succession, not outwardly as an unbroken conferring of orders, but as a succession of great doctrines and Christian life." What quibbling! What an insult to the intelligence and honesty of the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians! A committee discussing the South India Union also evaded the issue when it "adopted the following modification of a paragraph in the present scheme: 'Whatever differences there are, however, all the uniting churches are agreed that, as episcopacy has been accepted in the Church from early times, it may in this sense fitly be called historic and that it is a form of church government which at the present time is expedient for the Church in South India.'" (*The Christian Century*, Feb. 28.) Bishop Manning would say, A plague upon your lying words! He said in the *Reunion of Christendom*: "We shall make progress not by refusing to see the difficulties, not by concealing them under ambiguous phrases, but by facing and considering them in frank and brotherly conference." (P. 226.) A plague upon your ambiguous formulas! says Luther, "this hateful double-tongued way of speaking," which "disseminates the seeds of every heresy under the cover of words and letters

that have a show of Christian faith. . . . Even the public laws of the Roman Empire condemned this manner of speaking and punished it." (XVIII: 1996.)

A word on the plan of union advocated by Fr. Dunphy, Bishop Manning, and the Lambeth Quadrilateral. We respect these men for standing up for their convictions and refusing to deal with unionistic ambiguousness. But while those who want to unite on the basis of discarding certain teachings of Scripture err *in defectu*, the consistent Episcopalians err *in excessu*. They go beyond Scripture. The Apostolic Succession is a man-made teaching, and a union effected on the basis of its acceptance would not be a union in the truth. Nor are the terms offered by Rome (submission to the authority of the Pope, etc.) acceptable. Others offer different terms of the same general nature. "The Sacrament of Reunion" mentions the case "of the Southern Baptist Church, which holds to immersion as essential and reports how a leading Southern Baptist, at the Oxford Conference, refused to participate in the Communion because the Archbishop of Canterbury was not a properly baptized Christian." (See the *Presbyterian*, March 28.) We have to defend our Lutheran position as well against those who fail *in defectu* as against those who fail *in excessu*.

The report on the New York forum closes with this paragraph: "An opportunity was given at the end for questions and discussion. Only one question was asked, namely: 'Why seek organic union only with the Presbyterians; why not with Baptists and Methodists as well?' The answer was to the effect that such reunion was the aim of the World Conference on Faith and Order." What about the Church of the Pope? The unionists answer: If the Pope is willing, we are. Bishop Manning writes in the *Reunion of Christendom* (p. 227): "We are beginning to believe that the fulfilment of our Lord's Prayer for His Church is not impossible. Thirty years ago a reunion which should include both Protestants and Roman Catholics was regarded as chimerical. Today to many scholars and leaders this is no longer a thing incredible. It is Professor Harnack who writes: 'If one objects that at this time no one can imagine how, and under what forms, Catholicism and Protestantism can ever draw near one another, it is to be remembered that three hundred years ago no one could have conceived beforehand how Lutheranism and Calvinism could have been fused together. And yet we have today the Evangelical Union, and thousands know themselves as evangelical Christians without any suspicion of that opposition which once bade Lutherans and Calvinists contend more bitterly than Lutherans and Catholics.'" The unionists are today hopeful of making a treaty with the Pope. The Pope has not indeed modified his terms. He is going to stick to the dogma of Infallibility and Immaculate Conception and Justification through Works. But that need not stand in the way of union. For we are finding out, say the unionists, that at bottom we are one. The latest issue of *Christendom* (spring, 1940) joins the *pourparlers* aiming at a Catholic-Protestant union. Dr. G. M. Gibson, minister of the United Church at Hyde Park, Chicago, writes an article, "Are Catholicism and Protestantism irreconcilable?" and comes to the conclusion: "The

Catholic and Protestant conceptions of God and His manner of working with His world are not irreconcilable. Unity is not irreconcilable with diversity but only with disunity." We have space only for one paragraph: "*God Seeking Man—Man Seeking God.* The classic view is that the initiative always belongs to God and that man's role is one of acceptance. Both terms need stressing, else the first makes for blind and stupid submissiveness and the second for self-sufficient superiority. We may not 'by seeking (in the pride of our intellects) find out God.' On the other hand, we are urged to 'seek and find,' in the humility of our openness to truth. *The ecumenical Church must conserve both these values.* With God is the initiative. Even our impulse to return to Him is planted in us by Him and is not an invention of our own. But we are charged with responsibility and clothed upon with dignity and must be continually 'transformed by the renewing of our minds.'" (P. 177.) The idea is that the diversities of the Catholic and of the Protestant teaching can be blended into a harmonious whole if men only would not quarrel about the differences. What Dr. Gibson sets forth in philosophical language Karl Barth has put into this popular form: Let each Church contend to the utmost for its distinctive teaching; "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 doctrine, . . . and these 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." (*Prolegomena*, 1937 World Conference, p. 36.) The doctrine of justification by faith and the doctrine of justification by works represent a *sic et non*, but they are not irreconcilable, say Gibson and Barth. Both serve a useful purpose. The Church which teaches both is the ideal Church.

Here is another item from the *Living Church* of March 6. The high command has an offer to make to us Lutherans. "No one believes that overnight Catholics and Protestants, Fundamentalists and Modernists, Liberals and Conservatives, will be able to come together in the unity of a single Christian Church, though under the leadership of the Holy Spirit even this seeming impossibility is possible. It does seem, however, that Christian statesmanship in America ought to be capable, through prayer, tact, and energy, of merging the hundreds of denominations into perhaps four or five Christian communions in this country. Doubtless the Roman Catholic Church would form one such communion; Episcopalians, Eastern Orthodox, Old Catholics, and certain groups with which we have increasingly close relationship, might form a second such communion; Lutherans and other conservative Protestant bodies, a third; Methodists and other liberal Protestant groups, a fourth." Our *St. Louis Church at Work* of June 4, 1931, favors this division: "1. A non-liturgical and non-immersionist Church. 2. An immersionist Church. 3. A liturgical Church. 4. A Church, say, of Lutheran antecedents for the presumable German or Scandinavian minority (in any given community). 5. Possibly a fifth Church of American antecedents." As to the proposal of the *Living Church*,

"Lutherans and other conservative Protestant bodies," we shall have to ask what conservative Protestant body is supposed to unite with us. Are they thinking of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church? That body would not unite with us. Nor we with them. The unionists ought to know that there are still men who have firm convictions.

Here is an item telling a somewhat different story. A writer in the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, February issue, states on page 4: "Sound doctrine and meticulous agreement are not enough. The unity of the Spirit must give life and power and reality." We do not quite know what to make of this statement. In itself it is quite true. And it expresses an important truth. Church-fellowship should be the outward expression of the "spiritual unity—the fellowship of faith and of the Holy Ghost in hearts." Apology (*Trigl.*, pp. 227, 237). Where there is no spiritual unity and fellowship, any outward union is a sham. But since this spiritual unity is invisible, it cannot serve as the basis for establishing and maintaining church-fellowship. This basis must be the agreement in doctrine, as the Apology points out: "Which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks, so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel," etc. (*L. C.*) The statement under discussion would be false if it meant to deny that "to the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments." (*Augsb. Conf.*, Art. VII.) It would be in place only in dealing with a church-body whose unchristian life and practices gave the lie to its profession of the pure doctrine. We are loath to think that this statement reflects a pietistic indifference to doctrine and is intended to slur those who insist on agreement in the sound doctrine as the necessary condition for church-fellowship. We are saying this because we read further on: "It is said that the Holy Synod of Russia was discussing the exact shade to be used in clerical vestments while the revolution of 1917 was taking the basic and strategic steps for the overthrow of the old order. The color of vestments is perhaps important. But should we be too concerned about it while a revolution—possibly a revolution directed by God and not man—is in progress at our doors?" E.

„Wacht und Weide“ (Jahrg. 4, 1939, Heft 5, 6). Vor uns liegt wieder eine Nummer des Fachblatts für Pastoren und Lehrer in Südamerika, die fleißige, treue Arbeit unserer Brüder in Brasilien, Argentinien, Paraguay und Uruguay. „Wacht und Weide“ ist ein Fachblatt in dem Sinn, daß es unsern Brüdern am Dienst des Wortes praktisch dienen will. Es enthält daher solche Artikel, wie sie unsere Brüder jetzt im Drang der Sturmzeit nötig haben. Der Sprachenwechsel zeigt sich in den vielen portugiesischen und spanischen Predigten und Dispositionen. Die vorliegende Nummer enthält eine portugiesische Predigt über Luk. 22, 54—62, einen Artikel in portugiesischer Sprache über das Studium dieser Sprache mit geschichtlichen Angaben, eine spanische Beichtrede über das zweite Gebot und spanische Dispositionen für die Sonntage Rogate und Trinitatis. Unsere Pastoren arbeiten somit fleißig für die Zukunft. Unter den deutschen Artikeln finden wir „Der Pastor als Synodalglied“, aus C. T. M.; „Das Konzil zu Konstanz“; Messiashoffnungen und Messiasverheißung in Jer. 23, 5. 6 und Jer. 33, 14—16; „Die Homiletik“ und zum Schluß eine Besprechung „zur Frage

von der Teilnahme am Gemeindegottesdienst“. Auf 44 Seiten wird hier reichlicher und guter Lesestoff für Prediger und Lehrer geboten. Wir wundern uns darüber, daß unsere Brüder bei aller Arbeit, Sorge und Armut auch diesen Beitrag in den Dienst der Kirche stellen können, und möchten solche Brüder hierzulande, die Zeit und Geld dazu haben, dringend bitten, auch dieses Fachblatt auf ihren Arbeitstisch zu legen. Sie werden es nicht bereuen.

J. L. M.

Gandhi's Religious Position.—That Gandhi is not a Christian and that he resents efforts made to win the masses of India over to Christianity is brought out in a letter of his which recently was published in one of our exchanges. He writes: "In Free India every religion should prosper on terms of equality, unlike what is happening today. Christianity being the nominal religion of the rulers, it receives favors which no other religion enjoys. A government responsible to the people dare not favor one religion over another. But I should see nothing wrong in Hindus' congratulating those who, having left them, may return to their fold. I think that the Christians of free America would rejoice at the return to their ancestral Christianity of Americans of the slums,—if there are any in America,—temporarily calling themselves Hindus under the influence of a plausible Hindu missionary. I have already complained of the methods adopted by some missionaries to wean ignorant people from the religion of their forefathers. It is one thing to preach one's religion to whosoever may choose to adopt it; another, to entice masses. And if those thus enticed, on being undeceived, go back to their old love, their return will give natural joy to those whom they had forsaken." Evidently to Mr. Gandhi Christianity is merely one of many religions, among which one may choose according to one's special bent.

A.

Spanien. Die Verhandlungen zwischen der Nationalregierung und dem Vatikan über den Abschluß eines Konkordats stoßen, wie wir in der „Jungen Kirche“ lesen, auf nicht unerhebliche Schwierigkeiten. Es handelt sich dabei vor allem um das Recht der Ernennung von Bischöfen. Im früheren Konkordat zwischen der spanischen Regierung und dem Papst war dieses Recht der spanischen Krone zugestanden, der Papst hatte nur ein Einspruchsrecht. Die heutige spanische Regierung möchte dieses Recht für erneut bestätigt haben und ist wenig geneigt, darauf zu verzichten, während von päpstlicher Seite darauf hingewiesen wird, daß mit dem Sturze des Königshauses auch die Vorrechte desselben hinfällig geworden seien, wie das auch in Bayern und in Osterreich der Fall gewesen sei. In andern Stücken ist eine Einigung erreicht worden. Die Ehescheidungen wurden abgeschafft, und die im Widerspruch zum kanonischen (päpstlichen) Recht geschlossenen Ehen wurden für nichtig erklärt. Für Wiederherstellung von im Kriege zerstörten und beschädigten Kirchen hat die spanische Regierung eine Summe von zwei Millionen Peseten zur Verfügung gestellt. Als jährliche Staatsbeihilfe an die römisch-katholische Kirche hat der Ministerrat 65 Millionen Peseten bewilligt.

(Ev.-Luth. Freikirche)