

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. VIII.

FEBRUARY, 1928.

No. 2.

The Work of Christ.

Translated from Dr. Ed. Preuss's *Die Rechtfertigung des Suenders vor Gott*.
Part I, of which the first chapter is offered here, is superscribed
"On Redemption."

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The bars of our prison are broken, its gates are shattered. What we could not do another one has done: Jesus Christ, true man and true God. The offense of one man brought condemnation; the righteousness of one Man brings rescue. Rom. 5, 18. True, not the righteousness of a *mere* man, for a *mere* man would have died for his own sins and could not have reconciled the Lord of the earth, just as little as a pot its potter. What gave that insuperable power to the righteousness of this Jesus was the fact that He is the true God and eternal Life. 1 John 5, 20.

This Son of David, who at the same time is the Son of God, Jer. 23, 5. 6, bore our sin. Isaiah prophesies this three times: "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all," Is. 53, 6; "He shall bear their iniquities," Is. 53, 11; "He bare the sins of many," Is. 53, 11. John the Baptist testifies to this when he says: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1, 29. If I am groaning under a heavy load and another man comes and takes it on his shoulders, then he takes my place. We were groaning under the load of our sins; then Christ came and took them on His shoulders. Therefore we justly say that He took our place. How earnestly this substitution was meant is shown 1 Pet. 2, 24: He "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree," that is, on the cross. And there is where they belonged. It is one thing to wear another man's uniform in times of peace and quite another thing to wear it in a battle. He who wears it in a battle is willing and ready to do service in another man's place. But more: Scripture not only teaches that Christ bore our sins, but it directly calls Him, the true God, "sin." 2 Cor. 5, 21. If God made Him to be sin, then He was *sin* indeed. How are we to understand

The Lutherans at Lausanne.

(Concluded.)

The Unity of Christendom and the Relation Thereto of Existing Churches.

(Report of Section VII.)

This report, prepared chiefly by Archbishop Soederblom and the archbishop of Armagh and reviewed by Bishop Brent, the bishop of Gloucester, and Canon Tatlow, was referred to the Continuation Committee for amendment. It need not be given here in full. The following quotations (translated from the *Kirchenzeitung*) characterize it: "Christian unity finds its expression in love, in faith, and in order. . . . In obedience to the Master's commandment of love there should be community of work by all Christians, as being one body and one visible communion of brethren, without prejudice to their theological principles. . . . The union movement which found its expression at Lausanne has a Church in view which is united in the essentials of faith and order, but takes in different types of dogma and of the execution of the ecclesiastical office. . . . In a united Church there must be 1) a common faith, a common message to the world; 2) Baptism as the rite of incorporation into the one Church; 3) the Holy Communion as expressing the community of the Church; 4) a ministry everywhere recognized in the whole Church; 5) liberty regarding the conception of the Sacraments, the ministerial order, and the ecclesiastical authority (regarding the measure of this liberty there is a difference of opinions); 6) due provision for the exercise of the prophetic spirit. . . . Ways of approach. . . . We also emphasize the value of joint evangelistic work."

The story of this report is thus told by the *Watchman-Examiner*: "The report was sharply criticized by American High-church Episcopalians and received only for reference to the Continuation Committee. The rule of the Conference requiring that all actions must be unanimous or at least *nemine contradicente*, prevented the reception of this report with the others, although it is safe to say that a large majority favored it. The progressive element was outspoken in its regret that it was not received. It contained a plan for a league of churches for practical purposes, in which many saw the possibility of an international federation which might prove powerful for world peace. It gave definite suggestions for working together, praised the growing unity on the mission-field, and advocated that 'all God's children should join in communion at the Lord's Table.' The ancient conflict between the priest and the prophet asserted itself at this point, so that this document could not be received."

The High-church Episcopalians, however, were not the only ones who refused to enter the projected union. There were others who protested, for other reasons. The *Lutheran* brings this out: "The Conference on Faith and Order has adjourned in non-agreement. Thus the secular press makes announcement. The actual break, if one can call a break what was not together, is laid at the door of the delegates of the Eastern Orthodox Church. They announced themselves as willing to accept the plenary authority of Holy Scripture, but beyond this they would subscribe to nothing later than the decrees of the ecumenical councils. Bishop Brent is reported to have observed that the Eastern Orthodox and the Lutherans had come out in direct negatives against any proposals for union that were offered. This is really another way of stating that the Anglican group is not yet ready to subordinate its own theory of the ministry in the process of 'reuniting Christendom.'" We are glad to note that Bishop Brent found occasion for criticizing and condemning the stand the Lutherans took at Lausanne. It is to their credit that they had a share in blocking the plans of the extreme unionists. More's the pity that they did not consistently and fully maintain the Lutheran position. The discussion of the Lausanne affair calls for a chapter on

UNIONISM.

The World Conference was conceived by the unionistic spirit, and the conference at Lausanne ran true to form. It was ruled by the desire to establish a union without unity. The group which

“seemed willing to disregard all existing confessions of faith and to merge all existent denominational organizations into one” (Sherer’s interview) constituted the majority of the conference, a majority which did not at all approve of the declaration of the Eastern Orthodox bishops, who “refused to participate even in these statements, lest they be thought to agree to a mere verbal unity, without any true union underneath” (*America*), but was ready to accept even the raw unionistic proposals offered by Section VII. Dr. Ainslie, a representative man of this group, deplors the fact that these divergent elements did not unite in a common celebration of the Lord’s Supper. “It would have been a still greater victory if the conference could have closed with it. And the fact that it could not be done left an ugly picture.” The conference did not reach that ultimate point, but went very far on the road of unionism. The *Federal Council Bulletin* reports that “the conference itself has made a notable beginning in the fact that it has contributed to a sense of oneness despite differences.” It gives that as “the judgment of those who attended it.” The men interviewed by the *Bulletin* were impressed by the prevalence of the unionistic spirit. Dr. Soper brings the same report: “No one seems to feel for a moment that any one is expected to surrender a conviction.” So the Protestant group felt, according to the correspondent of the *Living Church*, who points out, says *America*, “that, while he and his devoted associates [the Anglo-Catholics] were striving for a visible organic unity, the only thing the Protestants could conceive is a federal unity, that is, one in which every variety of faith would be represented, even the most opposed, but united by some bond of fellowship and charity, but not by the bond of the same faith and government.” And the Anglo-Catholics are willing to trade doctrine for the visible organic unity and the episcopacy, “the government.” “Lausanne marks the passing of uniformity and the coming of diversity within unity” (Ainslie).

Tolerance of error springs from indifference towards the revealed truth and indifferentism from the lack of firm convictions. Lausanne exhibited these characteristics of unionism to a marked degree. Dr. S. P. Cadman, Congregationalist, president of the Federal Council, does not believe the Congregationalist Church has the full saving truth; he denies that any Church has it. His address to the conference, published in full in the *Lutheran*, culminated in these statements: “From the first, Christian theology was treated as a vital science, in which no article was so perfect in its

primary stages that it required nothing in addition. The apostles and their successors received from our Lord the seed of faith and the nucleus of a coherent system of belief; a vital seed, a vital nucleus, to be developed, according to their potentialities, under the Holy Spirit's illumination. . . . It should lead us to those serener heights where hard and fast lines of system melt without change of creed, while spirituality and charity attain their native universality. . . . Some of these [creeds] are enriched by ageless memories of apostles and Fathers; others by the devotional enthusiasm of the Middle Ages; still others by the Reformation and Counter-Reformation movements; and not a few by the Puritanism and Evangelicalism which have played a signal part in modern churchmanship." And this view, which is shared by the *Lutheran* ("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"; September 22, 1927), was shared by many at Lausanne. The *Christian Century* reports that near the close of the conference Dr. P. Ainslie brought the assembly to a high pitch of enthusiasm by declaring that for the sake of reunion he would be perfectly willing for his own denomination to go to Gethsemane just as Jesus did, and to die if need be. Unionism, having no convictions of its own, is the native foe of confessionalism, particularly of that confessionalism which springs from the divine assurance of the truth of the Scriptural teaching. Dr. Ainslie's report of the conference stigmatizes all confessionalism as denominationalism and sectarianism and declares: "All denominationalism has about it an unwholesome atmosphere, not Christian at all, but pagan. . . . It reveals how completely the Church has been ruled by the pride and opinion of men rather than by the Holy Ghost." It follows that controversy, the unmasking and denouncing of false doctrine, is barred from unionistic gatherings. And this was the key-note in Bishop Brent's opening address: "Conference is self-abasing; controversy exalts itself. Conference is a measure of peace; controversy a weapon of war. Conference looks for unities; controversy exaggerates differences." — The Roman-Catholics have naturally registered this confession of the lack of firm convictions on the part of the Lausanne Protestants with unholy glee. *America* quotes Bishop Brent: "I am in many respects as wrongly convinced on many subjects as the rest of you. . . . I will not be ashamed to acknowledge that a conviction which I now have is wrong if God tells me that it is wrong," and

says: These words "are a frank admission by Bishop Brent that he may be in error in what he believes. But this leads to a further question, Who is Bishop Brent's teacher? Is that teacher simply his own consciousness of what seems to be God's will? The representatives of hundreds of divergent sects in the United States alone find their authority in a similar claim. Assuredly, that teacher does not make for unity. Bishop Brent admits that his teacher cannot separate for him essential principle from prejudice and opinion, cannot tell him what is right and what is wrong, cannot distinguish for him what he is bound to believe on pain of his eternal salvation. . . ." Just as naturally *America* offers these faltering modern Protestants, instead of the sure, infallible testimonies of Scripture, the Roman-Catholic substitute: "The difference between Bishop Brent and the members of the conference, on one side, and Catholics, on the other, is clear. Catholics are certain that Jesus Christ left a visible Church with a visible Head, an authority to whom all must bow, a teacher that cannot err."

The unionists at Lausanne argued for their position along the old familiar lines. Dr. Tingfang Lew said: "So long as we look at the differences that separate us, we can never reach agreement; but if we look upon the needs of the entire world and look up to God, behold! our difficulties dwindle into insignificance." Other fields besides that of Foreign Missions in which the necessity of unity is felt are in rural work, to which Bishop Brent referred, and in young people's work. Miss Margaret Slattery, who comes in contact with 3,500 girls a year, said that if the Church does not unite, it will lose the young people more than ever. The stock argument of unionism, that charity demands union, was, of course, stressed. Cadman's address: ". . . while spirituality and charity attain their native universality." Ainslie's report: ". . . the badge of Christian discipleship, which is love. Long ago for love the Church substituted orthodoxy." (Ainslie does not agree with Christ. See John 8, 31.) The methods to be employed, according to the unionists, to bring about union are not the Scriptural method, the establishment of unity of the faith, but such as these: "Friendship, after all, is the highway to a united Church" (Ainslie); "a large part of time is given to devotional exercises, and it is deeply felt that unity is perhaps better prepared by common prayer than by the forging of common dogmatic formulae whose elaboration is not seldom done in a tempest of *rabies theologica*" (Dr. Keller's report, *Christian Century*), while some prefer to take the short cut described in Sherer's interview: "It seems to be their

conviction that if the churches would unite, the guidance of the Holy Spirit would enable them to adjust the relationships of Christians to one another under the new *régime* in a satisfactory manner."

Another characteristic of unionism, by the way, was evident at Lausanne. It is congenital with unionism to harp much on charity and to pronounce the most uncharitable judgment on its opponents. Dr. Cadman's address sets up that where men insist on hard and fast lines, spirituality and charity are lacking, Dr. Keller diagnoses confessionalism as *rabies theologica*, and Dr. Ainslie, who was ready to have his denomination go to Gethsemane and die, fails to crucify the uncharitable spirit which prompts him to denounce the confessionalists as claiming infallibility, to indulge in the sneer: "Long ago for love the Church substituted orthodoxy, which is very much less expensive," and to make the sweeping statements: "In this instance [Section VII] the protest came from the Anglo-Catholics. It might have come from any other; for many Christians regulate their interest in Christian unity upon whether it comes their way. . . . Would that all communions might stress penitence rather than pride!"

Whether unionism had the ascendancy at Lausanne, the official report must show. Unionism did not succeed in putting through Section VII, but the sections received bear the well-defined image and plain superscription of unionism. Section II, as already pointed out, offers a common denominator for justification by faith and salvation through works. Section III declares, for instance, that the churches possess "a fellowship . . . in all the means of grace," ignoring the radical divergence in the conception of the means of grace. Section IV shows the members of the conference uniting in common prayer. German: "*Wir haben uns zu gemeinsamem Gottesdienst zusammengefunden.*" Furthermore: "Notwithstanding the differences in doctrine among us, we are united in a common Christian faith." Certainly a most candid and straightforward profession of the principle of unionism. Again: "We are united in the Christian faith which is . . . witnessed to in the Apostles' Creed." But Archbishop Soederblom, for instance, prays the Second Article differently from other Lutherans. Or, as the *Presbyterian* puts it: "We are sure that any statement acceptable to a man like Dr. Cadman would be unacceptable to us and all truly evangelical believers." Finally, "it is understood that the several churches will continue to make free use of such special confessions as they possess." In some mysterious way the Formula of

Concord and the Westminster Confession, to be used jointly in the United Church, are going to be kept from clashing. Section V: "These communions have been, in God's providence, manifestly and abundantly used by the Holy Spirit in His work of enlightening the world," etc. Surely. But not by means of their departing from Scriptural teaching, but in spite of it. "Each separate communion should gladly bring to the common life of the united Church its own spiritual treasures." Adherence to false teaching, with reference to the ministry or any other point of doctrine, never gained spiritual treasures for a communion. "In particular, we share in the conviction, repeatedly expressed in this conference, that, pending the solution of the questions of faith and order, in which agreements have not yet been reached, it is possible for us . . . to unite in the activities of brotherly service which Christ has committed to His disciples." Union without unity, expressed as baldly as possible. Section VI is a bold profession of the unionistic principle ("common appreciation of Sacraments on the part of those who may otherwise differ in conception and interpretation") and a masterpiece of unionistic equivocation ("Baptism for the remission of sins — Jesus Christ, who is our one Bread — the reality of the divine presence"). — The unionists departed from Lausanne with high hopes for the future. Dr. Ainslie opens his article on "The *Rapprochement* of the Churches" with the sentence: "The Lausanne Conference was the opening door toward wider Christian fellowship," and closes it with the wish: "If there could be a conference without officially appointed delegates and constituted of younger groups, the interpretations would go far in advance of our denominational conservatism. There is room in these times for adventurers, and the adventurers will come."

What did the Lutherans at Lausanne have to say to all this? What say the Confessions? Article VII of the Augsburg Confession: "To the true unity of the Church it is enough to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments." There must be no external union except on the basis of the unity of the faith, as the Apology says (*Trigl.*, p. 227): "Which fellowship nevertheless has outward marks, so that it can be recognized, namely, the pure doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments in accordance with the Gospel of Christ." But this "agreement in doctrine" means agreement not only in the chief articles, but "in all its articles." "We are anxious to advance that unity according to our utmost power by which nothing of the divine truth is surrendered, no room is given to the

least error." (*Trigl.*, pp. 831, 1095.) Finally: "Being instructed from the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, we are sure concerning our doctrine and confession. . . . We also have determined not to depart even a finger's breadth from the subjects themselves, or from the phrases which are found in them" (the Confessions). (Preface. *Trigl.*, pp. 21. 23.)

Did the Lutherans at Lausanne reflect this attitude? They, with others, refused to receive at all Section VII and received the other sections only conditionally. Dr. Sherer is not in sympathy with those who "seem willing to disregard all existent confessions of faith" and is convinced that "the statements of the Church upon these (justification by faith, the universal priesthood of believers, phases of doctrine of sin and grace, particularly as to the means of grace) are as essential to the convictions of present-day believers as are those that concern the Trinity and the person and nature of Christ." Dr. Elert's conference address insisted again and again that there must be no compromising with error. And the Lutheran "Declaration" declares: "For the unity of the Church it is necessary that there be agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel and in the right administration of the Sacraments."

But these Lutheran principles were not applied by all, and by none consistently. The Lutheran Soederblom is responsible, with others, for Section VII. How could such a pronounced unionist subscribe to the statement in the "Declaration" just quoted? For the simple reason that this fine Lutheran sentence receives a most un-Lutheran interpretation in the next sentence, which reads: "To express the spiritual unity, which can indeed only be done along the lines of the ecumenical symbols, imposes a great task," etc. That means that for the purpose of agreeing with the other churches it is not necessary to come to an agreement along the lines of the Lutheran Confessions. Dr. Elert is hardly sure concerning all points of doctrine put forth in the Confessions of the Church. He said before the conference: "Perhaps former Councils of the Christian Church have erred more than once in their determination of what constituted truth and error for them. But they had faith in the truth, even though they apprehended it only in part." His further statement: "Our second wish for this council is that the great unity which it seeks may not destroy already existing unities, but that it might rather, like a mother, receive its matured and independent children into its house," reveals a unionistic animus. And why must he add to the fine declaration: "There is no confession of truth without condemnation of error" the qualifying statement: "By making this statement we are not asking for

a heresy trial"? Is the new United Church going to condemn error, but tolerate the errorist?

The Lutherans who went to Lausanne do not believe in "that unity by which nothing of the divine truth is surrendered, no room is given to the least error." The grave errors held by the liberal Lutherans did not prevent the conservative group from maintaining fraternal relations with them. However much the Lutherans disagreed among themselves, they dwelt together in peace and amity. We read in the press reports of no clash in their meetings. It does not appear that truth condemned error. The *Presbyterian* makes the point that the Lausanne Conference went after union in the wrong way, that a more reasonable path to pursue would be to discover if the various Baptist bodies can unite in one great Baptist communion, the Methodists the same, etc., and that then indeed union of the united groups might be more hopefully considered. We make the additional point that the Lausanne attempt to unite disagreeing groups was not only hopeless, but also unscriptural. And the Lutherans confirmed the conference in its position. If intradenominational unionism is to be the order of the day, interdenominational unionism will follow as a matter of course.

The position taken by the Lutherans at Lausanne was not that of Lutheran confessionalism. The Lutheran stamina was lacking. Having gone to Lausanne, they should have demanded and insisted that the conference aim at reaching agreement on the doctrines of justification by faith and of verbal inspiration and that, unless agreement on these and all other doctrines be reached, all negotiations for union must cease. And when they found that the conference, naturally, was in no mood for taking such steps, that, for instance, in spite of Dr. Elert's warning against the attempt "to find theological expressions of compromise," just such formulae were incorporated in the Report, they should have repudiated the whole proceedings as strongly as the Orthodox representatives, indeed, even more strongly. The Lutheran Declaration, if it was a protest, was an extremely weak protest. This Declaration is willing to accept the Report as matter for further discussion and, more than that, is willing, in spite of the developments at Lausanne, to have "a committee made up of Orthodox, Evangelical Lutheran, Reformed, etc., members" prepare this matter for the next conference, — is willing to work along the same lines, to keep on working together with pronounced unionists. In view of the unionistic spirit prevailing at Lausanne the Lutheran Declaration should have read: We will not go to Lausanne a second time.