

THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY.

VOL. I.

AUGUST—SEPTEMBER, 1921.

Nos. 8 & 9.

The Vatican and Diplomatic Relationships.

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There are at present thirty-one countries represented by embassies and legations at the Vatican, and the *New World* (Chicago, Roman Catholic) boasts that "the diplomatic influence of the Holy See is the greatest in the history of the Church" — a statement which can only refer to the extension of these diplomatic relationships and not to the exercise of actual temporal power involved. However, it must be conceded that the Curia has scored heavily during the political upheavals consequent upon the war. When France renews relations with the Vatican, — as now seems certain, — Italy alone, of all the principal countries of Europe, will be without a representative accredited to the Papal Court. A Catholic News Service dispatch of April 1 says: —

"The Vatican is in diplomatic relations not only with all of the great Catholic countries and most of the principal Protestant states of Europe, but has established at least semiofficial intercourse with Turkey, Japan, and China. All of the states which have arisen since the war — Poland, Czecho-Slovakia, and Jugo-Slavia — have exchanged diplomatic representatives with the Holy See. Every country in South America, most of the Central American republics, and Haiti and San Domingo have legations at the Vatican. Canada is represented by Great Britain, whose temporary representative has been made permanent."

The British envoy was sent to the Vatican five years ago on a mission which was intended to be "strictly temporary," its object being "to congratulate the Pope on his election [!] and to keep him informed respecting British policy during the war," as the press announcements read at the time. When no longer needed for this purpose, the representation was to come to an end. But it is two years and a half since the war ended, and the envoy is still at

The Reestablishment of the Christian Church in Germany.¹⁾

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It is with a feeling of deep commiseration that one peruses the six brochures mentioned below. As we laid them aside, we were reminded of a scene which once left an equally painful impression on our mind. It was in a sanitarium, and more particularly, in a ward arranged for those who were writhing in the dreadful final stage of tuberculosis. Through the narrow aisles we passed, between beds and cots, amid groaning and gasping, and endless hacking and flowing of blood, which the nurses tried in vain to check, until we came to the bedside of a young sufferer — a lad from “over there,” where in trenches and shell-holes and by ceaseless exposure he had contracted the disease which now had wasted his strength. There was little that he could say between fits of coughing and spitting of blood, but what we understood was this: “Oh, pastor, I am gaining strength. I sleep better, and I am having a better appetite; *and now a friend has sent me some medicine, which the boys slipped through to me, and they say that medicine will cure any case of tuberculosis.*” In spite of this

1) *Wie verfassen wir die Kirche ihrem Wesen entsprechend? Die staatsfreie Volkskirche. Was nun? Eine christlich-deutsche Zeitbetrachtung.* Von Dr. Theo. Kaftan. *Von Innen nach Aussen.* Von Dr. Ph. Bachmann. *Ecclesiola in Ecclesia.* Von Dr. Gerh. Hilbert. *Die babylonische Verwirrung.* Von Herb. Brakebusch.

apodictic assertion the writer broke to him the bread of life as to one just about to set out on his last, far journey. And during that night the young soldier boy died.

The writers of the above-named pamphlets have led us through the ward of suffering, pain, and hopelessness. We should never have believed that the trouble could be so great, the sickness so quite unto death, and the case of the patient so distressingly hopeless. But it must be so. It cannot be otherwise. Pastor Brakebusch, in his *Die Babylonische Verwirrung*, has depicted the situation so graphically, and adduced evidence so overwhelming, that there can be no room for doubt. On page 44 he sums up the matter thus: "If the common man may, without fear, allow year after year to pass by without ever troubling himself about any Sunday or holiday, but rather employ these days for sleeping, working, traveling, or idling away his time foolishly while divine services are being held, then all this is the upshot of that pitiful inefficiency of a church that no longer knows what to do with her people, which has used up her powder, and does not understand or know what to do or desire, or for what purpose she is in the world; otherwise she would terminate such an insipid, silly, and reprehensible nuisance with a clap of thunder. Surely the salt has lost its savor!"²⁾ On page 45 he says: "I certainly have no desire to wade in this abominable slough any farther; however, I hope that I may have helped in showing that with our most wretched Babylonian confusion we are facing, at this time, a deluge which threatens to inundate the Church even more than the State."³⁾

This is the indictment, not of an erratic superhypocondriac, but of an earnest pastor, who, halting at the brink of the enormous ecclesiastical cesspool of unbelief, wickedness, and corruption,

2) "Erlaubt sich der Buergersmann, ohne jedes Bedenken sich jahraus, jahrein um keinen Sonntag und Festtag mehr zu scheren, dann an diesen Tagen zu schlafen, dann zu arbeiten, dann zu reisen und dann umherzufaulenzen, wenn Gottesdienst gehalten wird, so ist das eben die Folge einer bloeden Unfaehigkeit der Kirche, die mit den Leuten nichts mehr anzufangen weiss, die ihr elendes Pulver verschossen hat, nicht mehr begreift und weiss, was sie soll und will und wozu sie da ist; andernfalls wuerde sie verstehen, ein gehoeriges Donnerwetter hinter ein so fades, dummes und schimpfliches Treiben zu machen. Wahrhaftig, das Salz ist dumm geworden."

3) "Ich will nicht weiter und tiefer in diesem gottsjaemmerlichen Sumpfe waten, hoffe aber zu der Einsicht verholffen zu haben, dass wir mit unserer schaudervollen babylonischen Verwirrung zu dieser Zeit kirchlich noch mehr als politisch vor einer hereinbrechenden Sintflut stehen."

stands aghast at the coming catastrophe which must wipe out the entire German people. "Rottenness of rottenness! and all is rotten!" — this is the burthen of his plaint. The "Landeskirche" is rotten and has been rotten ever since the vagaries of rationalism and pietism swept over the ill-treated Church of Luther. The pastors, bishops, and rulers are rotten to the core. The people are rotten. Their works are rotten and stink to heaven. It is all a "gottsjaemmerlicher Sumpf"! Pastor Brakebusch states the situation very forcibly, just as Luther did in his time. The others mince their terms, qualify their statements, juggle their words, and hope against hope — yet the burden of their blasts is the same, a dreadful delineation of horror, frightfulness, and utter pollution. Kaftan in his *Was nun?* on page 36 draws up this statement: "And what has the Church, the witness of truth, done in this distress and perplexity? The real status of the Church is flashed before our eyes by the affair of Jatho. Jatho denied the Savior, denied God, denied eternity. Others did the same. Yet Jatho demanded for such denial a place in the ministry, and a multitude of pastors and professors supported his claims. In the very fact there became apparent the utter impotency and dissolution of all theology and the whole Church, which can scarcely be surpassed. Yet what could such an impotent Church do? She has become a salt that has lost its savor." 4)

Let us, then, take their statements for granted. Those who have heard the reports which time and again issued forth from earnest, truth-seeking men, know that such a description of the German state-church cannot be far from truth. What interests us more than the awful disease is the cure which these men suggest. Each of the six brochures is written to "slip through a medicine that can cure any case of tuberculosis." Those who have written the pamphlets are, no doubt, true friends of the dying patients lying in the wretched wards of the huge charnel-house of death — the state-church of Germany. Moreover, they are men who ought

4) "Und was hat die Kirche getan in diesen Wirren und Noeten, die Zeugin der Wahrheit? Wie es um die Kirche stand, beleuchtete blitzartig die Jathoaffaere. Jatho leugnete den Heiland, leugnete Gott, leugnete die Ewigkeit. Das taten andere auch. Aber Jatho begehrte fuer dieses sein Leugnen Platz im geistlichen Amte, und ein grosser Haufe von Professoren und Pastoren unterstuetzte seinen Anspruch. Darin offenbarte sich eine Haltlosigkeit, eine Selbstaufloesung von Theologie und Kirche, die schwerlich ueberboten werden kann. Was aber vermag eine so haltlos gewordene Kirche? Sie ist dunm gewordenes Salz."

to know, for they are pastors, professors, teachers, men of experience and learning and also, we may add, of painstaking observation. What, then, is the medicine which they "slip through" to save the dying man? It is very much like the nostrum of the quack friend that brought our dying patient to a more than speedy death. It must be "slipped through," for the Great Physician will not have it. Nor will the nurses and attendants, abiding by the direction of the Great Physician, have it. Nor will the patients who are accustomed to entrust themselves to the real, authorized, divine Physician have it. The writers mean well enough, but they have lost faith in the materia medica of the Great Healer of souls; and so they are loath to follow His directions, preferring and trying out prophylactics, restoratives, panaceas, and embrocations of their own invention. Let us see.

All of the would-be practitioners are glad that the patients are going to be sequestered from the old-time, infected and moribund cesspool of contagion—the German state-church. Expressed in ecclesiastical terms, they rejoice in the fact that the baneful amalgamation of Church and State is to end. Pastor Brakebusch writes exultingly: "I do not claim that the Church of Jesus Christ has suffered shipwreck, or that the Church of Luther has collapsed, but that a meretricious church, a heterodox church is facing dissolution, a fact which must seem only self-evident; yes, a process of decay which we must really welcome, since only in this way both the possibility and the necessity of organizing a new church have been brought nearer to us." ⁵⁾ The same spirit of rejoicing breathes through the other brochures. Kaftan in *Die staatsfreie Volkskirche* declares: "So state-churchism has outlived itself, and will crumble to pieces." ⁶⁾ It is true, reports from other reliable sources show that such a separation has not yet been really accomplished. Moved by questions of bread and butter, dignity and security, thousands of pastors are still clinging to the battered hull of the

5) "Ich weise nicht nach, dass die Kirche Jesu Christi Schiffbruch gelitten habe, oder dass die Kirche Luthers zusammengebrochen sei, sondern eine Unkirche, eine Afterkirche, ihrer Auflösung entgegengeht, ein Umstand, der . . . ja als selbstverstaendlich erscheinen muss. Mehr noch: es sollte uns dieser Vorgang der Zersetzung sogar willkommen sein, weil dadurch endlich die Moeglichkeit und die Notwendigkeit, zu einer neuen, wirklichen Kirche zu kommen, uns unweigerlich nachgerueckt ist." (p. 23.)

6) "Also ueberlebt ist das Staatskirchentum, und zusammenbrechen wird es!" (p. 16.)

“Staatskirchentum” drifting hopelessly with the tide of general destruction. Hundreds of weary, fainting hearts are crying all over Germany, “Let us by no means leave the old church; for there we have just what we want.”⁷⁾ However, the men who have written the pamphlets have gotten over that. They wish to have the incubus removed which for a century has choked the vital breath of life out of the Church, and rendered it a helpless, disgraced utensil in the hands of jurists and politicians.

Nevertheless, while the path which lies open to them seems so very clearly, simply, and well pointed out by Him, to whom the Church owes its foundation and existence, they deliberately shirk this road, which alone would prove their salvation. They seek a way which is fully as perilous as the one that they are about to leave. The “Staatskirchentum” is a thing of the past; but upon its ruins must be built a “Volkskirchentum,” and what this “Volkskirchentum” is Kaftan describes in his *Die staatsfreie Volkskirche* thus: “I certainly do not despise the free church. I surely have a high regard for a church like the old-Lutheran church in Prussia, and I rejoice in it. However, what we should try to realize is not a free-church, but an independent folk-church. Lutheranism and folk-churchism are correspondent. We who love our people cannot bear to leave it, so far as the Church is concerned. We Protestants cannot get away from a certain *entente cordiale* over against the State — even the lasting injustice perpetrated against the evangelical Church has not abrogated this — and the State needs the Church! However, not merely the State, but — and this is the more weighty consideration — no less the Church of Jesus Christ. The folk-church will pave for her work ways such as no free church can.”⁸⁾

The precise character of this “Volkskirche” is graphically de-

7) “Nur nicht fort von dem Alten! Wir haben da ja, was wir wollen!” (Pastor Clausen in *Koestliche Perle*, Dec. 1920.)

8) “Ich verachte gewiss die Freikirche nicht. Ich habe grossen Respekt vor einer Kirche wie der der Altlutherischen in Preussen, und ich freue mich ihrer. Aber was wir erstreben sollen, ist nicht Freikirche, sondern die *staatsfreie Volkskirche*. Luthertum und Volkskirche sind kongenial. Wir, die wir unser Volk lieben, moechten auch kirchlich nicht von ihm lassen. Uns Protestanten steckt die Staatsfreundlichkeit im Blut — selbst das dauernde Unrecht, das der Staat der evangelischen Kirche zufuegt, hat das noch nicht ertoetet —, und der Staat braucht die Volkskirche. Aber nicht der Staat nur, sondern — und das ist uns das Groessere — nicht minder die Kirche Jesu Christi. Die Volkskirche bahnt ihr fuer ihr Wirken Wege, die keine Freikirche ihr bieten kann.” (p. 17.)

picted in Kaftan's *Was nun?* where we are told: "Let it therefore be a folk-church, so far as this is possible; and above all, a *church*, a real church, and that means, a congregation in which there is no longer a blending of religion and politics, a congregation in which conservatives, liberals, and Socialists may enjoy perfect citizenship to such an extent that whenever ecclesiastical offices are to be filled, this shall not be decided according to one's political or sociological convictions, but strictly according to one's attitude toward the confession of the Church and according to efficiency."⁹⁾ Certainly, as Dr. Kaftan conceives, this "Volkskirche" must be a true Church. "A Church without Word and Sacrament, without the Gospel, without Christ is not a Church."¹⁰⁾ Yet in *Wie verfassen wir die Kirche ihrem Zwecke entsprechend?* he says: A folk-church is tolerant as a matter of course. This toleration shows itself in this, that the Church allows all such to remain in the Church as are willing to accept the services of the Church."¹¹⁾

On page 11, Dr. Kaftan states even more, for he says: "However, we are a sober people, who keep their eyes open and see things as they are. Among our church-members there are not a few who are not merely absolutely indifferent, but downright antagonistic to the Church."¹²⁾ All these are to be conceded both vote and membership, for: "A folk-church is tolerant as a matter of course."¹³⁾

True, while all members, including women, are to be given suffrage, the real administration of congregational affairs is to rest with the "Kirchenvorstand," consisting of men known for their

9) "Also Volkskirche, soweit diese moeglich ist, und zwar als Kirche, als reine Kirche, und das heisst, als eine Gemeinde, in der es nichts mehr gibt von einer Verquickung von Religion und Politik, eine Gemeinde, in der Konservative, Liberale und Sozialdemokraten voellig gleiche Heimatrechte haben bis dahin, dass bei der Besetzung aller geistlichen Aemter nicht nach der staatspolitischen oder sozialpolitischen Ueberzeugung, sondern lediglich nach der Stellung zum Bekenntnis der Kirche und nach der Tuechtigkeit im Beruf gefragt wird." (p. 47.)

10) "Eine Kirche ohne Wort und Sakrament, ohne das Evangelium, ohne Christum ist keine Kirche." (p. 47.)

11) "Eine Volkskirche ist grundsatzlich weitherzig. Diese Weitherzigkeit hat sich darin zu dokumentieren, dass sie alle in der Kirche bleiben laesst, die sich noch den Dienst der Kirche gefallen lassen." (p. 12.)

12) "Aber nuechterne Leute sind wir, die die Augen aufmachen und die Wirklichkeit sehen. Unter unsern Kirchengliedern sind zahlreiche, die der Kirche in voelliger Gleichgueltigkeit, ja, nicht wenige, die ihr feindlich gegenueberstehen."

13) "Eine Volkskirche ist grundsatzlich weitherzig."

“good repute, approved Christian character, Christian intelligence, and experience.”¹⁴⁾

Also: “The church council performs its work not as representative of the congregation, but as an independent body, for only in this way real and effective work can be assured.”¹⁵⁾ This means that, in the end, all administrative powers are vested in the church council, which, as it consists of Christian men, would naturally uphold the standard of the faithful confession of truth. They would, too, constitute the real church within the greater church of the masses, the “*ecclesiola in ecclesia*” of which Dr. Hilbert’s pamphlet treats, and the “*freie Geisteskirche*” (the free church of the Spirit) that Pastor Brakebusch advocates in his pamphlet *Die Babylonische Verwirrung*. Very poignantly does Dr. Hilbert express this on page 60 of his *Ecclesiola in Ecclesia*: Not upon the masses, neither upon the perfection of its organization, nor upon its external division into church councils and presbyteries depends, humanly speaking, the future of our folk-church, but upon her inner organization through the gathering of a narrower circle of all such as earnestly desire to be Christians and to confess the Gospel with hand and mouth in every parish.”¹⁶⁾ Again: “Salvation from a ‘mob-church’ can come only through the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*.”¹⁷⁾

But enough of this. What these men, earnest though they be, desire to organize, is not a Church, pleasing to God because based upon His directions given in His Word, but a monster begotten of fear, doubt, ignorance, and philosophy. In commending the general principles underlying the “*Volkskirche*” Dr. Kaftan himself says: “*Das sind so allgemein vernuenftige Grundsuetze, dass sie sich vor jedem Forum vertreten lassen.*” Not Scripture, but human reason, has lent the *materiale* out of which the prodigy of a “*Volkskirche*”

14) “*guten Ruf, bewachte christliche Gesinnung, kirchliche Einsicht und Erfahrung.*” (p. 12.)

15) “*Der Kirchenvorstand treibt sein Werk nicht als ein Ausschuss der Gemeindevertretung, sondern als ein selbstaendiger Faktor: denn nur so wird eine rechte und tatkraeftige Taetigkeit desselben erzielt.*” (p. 13.)

16) “*Nicht auf den Massen der Volkskirche, auch nicht auf ihrer Durchorganisation, nicht auf einer aeusseren Organisation in Kirchenvorstaenden und Presbyterien ruht, menschlich geredet, die Zukunft unserer Volkskirche, sondern auf ihrer inneren Organisation durch Sammlung eines engeren Kreises solcher, die mit Ernst Christen wollen sein und das Evangelium mit Hand und Mund bekennen in jeder Paroehie.*” (p. 60.)

17) “*Die Rettung vor der ‘Poebelkirche’ ist die ecclesiola in ecclesia.*” (p. 61.)

has been brought forth. Yet, hardly of reason either. For the whole conception of a "Volkskirche" as an organization of all such as are willing to accept the services of the Church (*Wie verfassen wir die Kirche*, etc., p. 12) irrespective of their personal attitude towards the confessions avowed by such Church, is *unreasonable*. It is a house divided against itself, for there are really two organizations, forced together into one heterogeneous compound, the *massa perdit*a, whose business it is mainly to uphold the external dignity of the Church and to feed the treasuries of the congregations, and the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, consisting of true believers, who constitute the core of the Church. With this in view the whole inanity of the thing becomes apparent at once. The men who advocate this monster are worse quacks than were the friends who slipped through the medicine that finished our patient in the sanatorium. Those friends at least realized that the sufferers from consumption must be isolated. Here our theological quacks essay to promote the well-being of perfectly healthy people by putting them into a ward crowded with victims of TB. Nor is the method scientific, for it attempts to produce one new, good product out of two antipodian and antithetical elements, just as if mother would try to bake a delicious apple-pie by mixing a slice of apple with a bunch of onions. And lastly, the whole scheme is at variance with Scripture. Is it possible that these men have never studied the Scripture-passages dealing with the doctrine concerning the Church? Do they not know who constitute the Church—the real, true, invisible Church of saints? Are they ignorant of that simple dogmatic formula which in a nutshell expresses the entire doctrine of Scripture as regards the Church: *Sola fides in Christum membra ecclesiae constituit*? Have they never read Acts 5, 14; 1 Pet. 2, 9; John 11, 52; Eph. 1, 23, and other clear passages that show what Christ primarily means by "Church"? With regard to local churches, that is, the gathering of believers into outward visible congregations for the purpose of preaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments, have they never heard how this organization should be effected? Will they not adjust their organization according to 1 Pet. 4, 11; Rom. 16, 14, etc.? Have they never considered 2 Cor. 6, 14? Are they not aware that it is not our primary purpose to establish a huge organization called "Christian Church," but rather to testify of Christ through the preaching of the pure and unadulterated Gospel? Have they never read the history of the American Lutheran Church, which proves that wherever the

Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution, the saints of God gather around the Gospel-banner with joy and ready willingness, organized into a mighty fellowship by their common confession, and cheerfully bearing every burden and making every sacrifice which Christ's cause demands? Surely they have read all this, for their books bear witness of such knowledge. In his booklet *Wie verfassen wir die Kirche*, etc.? Dr. Kaftan says: "Other countries have paved the way for us so far as the separation of Church and State is concerned. True! But was the problem really solved? So far as I see, just as imperfectly as where Lutheranism, from its very beginning, was in a position to develop itself independently of the state, as in North America. In America they have not gotten beyond a division into independent sects, emended in the course of time according to congregational principles." 18) Again: "But apart from the fact that this view (that internal affairs should be left to individual congregations) is based upon the false supposition that each evangelical congregation is a unit, so far as the question of self-direction is concerned, this would mean to divide the Church into independent sects." 19) Again: "Hofmann has said: 'We all have the same faith, if, indeed, we have the Christian faith, and each one has his own theology, if, indeed, he has any! All those who cannot get used to this must join the "Missourians," who represent a papistic Lutheranism.'" 20)

Expressions such as these make us gasp for words with which to characterize such utter obtuseness. Of late many of the foremost

18) "Andere Laender sind Deutschland in der Trennung von Kirche und Staat vorangegangen. Gewiss! Aber wurde in diesen jene Aufgabe geloest? Soweit ich sehe, ebensowenig wie da, wo das Luthertum von Anfang an sich selbstaendig und staatsfrei zu entwickeln in der Lage gewesen ist, wie das vor allem in Nordamerika der Fall ist. Man hat es in Amerika nicht ueber ein independentistisches, im Laufe der Zeit mehr und mehr kongregationalistisch verbessertes Kirchenwesen hinausgebracht." (p. 6.)

19) "Aber abgesehen davon, dass diese Auffassung (die internen Angelegenheiten seien ganz der Einzelgemeinde zu ueberlassen) auf einer irrtuemlichen Voraussetzung beruht, naemlich der, dass jede evangelische Gemeinde in der sogenannten Richtungsfrage eine in sich geschlossene sei, heisst das die Kirche independentistisch aufloesen." (p. 16.)

20) "Hofmann hat gesagt: Wir haben alle denselben Glauben, wenn anders wir einen christlichen haben, und jeder hat seine eigene Theologie, wenn anders er eine hat. *Wer sich darein nicht schicken kann, muss sich den Missouriern anschliessen, die ein roemisches Luthertum repraesentieren.*" (p. 35. Minoritaetenschutz.)

scholars of the world have stated again and again that it is utterly impossible for them to comprehend the psychology of the German mind. We are nonplused at least at the psychology of the German theologian. There is but one explanation for the mystery. In spite of the vast amount of pious verbiage contained in the brochures, the writers plainly reveal themselves as such as have not the least inkling of the Scriptural doctrine concerning the Church. And what is worse: even though they had all knowledge, we are convinced that they would nevertheless not follow the plain dictates of God's Word. After all, these men are not seeking to establish a new Church after the heart of Christ, but to reestablish the old state-church, under a different form and name, with the same disregard for Christ's Word of truth that characterized the godless "Staatskirche," and with the reestablishment of the "Volkskirche," conceived and executed according to their misguided notions, they are creating the very thing of which they have falsely accused the "Missourians," and what the author calls "papistisches Luthertum." Their "Volkskirche" is in fact the exact counterpart of the Church of Rome — a hierarchy of dead forms, dead institutions, dead members, and dead theology, — a veritable *bête noir* with all the detestable characteristics of the Roman Church, only less adhesive, virile, impressive, since Rome perfectly knows what she wants, while these men neither know what they want, nor want what they really know in their hearts to be their sacred duty. Inured to a dead formalism, deep in the rut of ossified thought, intensely narrow in understanding, hopelessly opinionated so far as their own glory is concerned, despising the Word of God and the men who would preach it to them, distrustful of the people to whom they would speak the message of life, despairing of the efficacy of the living testimony of the Gospel, these men present to us a most pitiful picture of what it means to be lukewarm, — neither hot nor cold, neither strong nor weak, neither orthodox nor liberal, neither confessing the truth as fearless children of God, nor quite willing to turn to the other extreme, from which they shrink with horror.

Not in this way can the Evangelical Lutheran Church be reestablished in Germany! Let the men who love Christ and the Gospel at once free themselves from all the dead forms and ideals among which they have been reared. Let them take up their old Bibles and read them with childlike faith and the heartfelt prayer that the Holy Ghost would grant them wisdom and knowledge. Let them go back to Luther's Catechism, to the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, to the Lutheran fathers of the sixteenth century,

and to the clear, simple, and forceful testimony of our American Lutheran Church, especially that of Dr. Walther. Let them study what these men have written on the Church and the ministry. Then let them tear themselves away from the fetters which still chain them to the state-church and its theology, and go forth among the people simply as preachers of the Gospel-truth, without any thought of establishing a huge "Volkskirche," but with the one purpose clearly set in their minds to preach Christ and Him crucified. That is all they have to do. The rest God Himself has promised to take care of, and so they will find that after all the Gospel is still a power of God unto salvation, also among the poor German people that have been fed by unmoral preachers on an unmoral theology for decades and centuries. Then also that great bugbear of fear — the bread-and-butter question — will solve itself, of which many of the advocates of the "Volkskirche" seem to be so very much afraid. And then, finally, will Luther's ideal be realized — the pure, unadulterated Gospel of Christ will be preached to a people, strong in faith and faithful in confession of Him, "who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Pet. 2, 9. As Luther's whole work of Reformation was based upon one outstanding basic act, and as from this one basic act the entire regeneration of the Church came, so it is now, — under circumstances and conditions very similar to those at the time when Luther began his work, — for those who would follow in Luther's steps to let every other consideration be one of secondary importance, and with might and main to attend to the King's chief business, expressed in the command: "Preach the Gospel." With that spirit may the Lord bless all those who would again build the walls of Zion in Germany!

We dare not conclude this article without calling the reader's attention to what we must regard as a most vicious and insidious misrepresentation of Luther's views on the Church. That the writers of the brochures should, in support of their theories, fall back upon the great Reformer is but natural; and that, in the extensive survey of his wide literature, there should be passages which seemingly read in their favor does not seem strange to any one who is aware of the conditions under which Luther was obliged to compose his works. However, neither the advocates of the state-church nor those of the folk-church may justly cite the great protagonist of truth in defense of their notions. Luther's ideal of the local, visible Church on earth was neither that of a Church blended with the State into one powerful unit for righteousness,

nor that of a Church of the masses, gathered around a nucleus of Christians confessing the truth. Very strikingly does Dr. Hilbert point out in his *Ecclesiola in Ecclesia* that because of his very fixed conceptions on State and Church Luther was of necessity antagonistic to any and every attempt to fuse the domain of Caesar with that of Christ.²¹⁾ No one who has read Luther will refuse to grant Dr. Hilbert this point in the argument. It is only a pity that Dr. Hilbert does not observe that the very dart which he hurls against his opponents is a boomerang which strikes back at his own position. For the very arguments which Luther maintains against the state-church are directed also against the folk-church which men like Dr. Hilbert would now establish in Germany. Just because Luther could conceive of a Christian state, for the very same reason he could not conceive of an entire nation, or a part of a nation as such, constituting the Christian Church. In other words, Luther wanted no Church of the unbelieving masses, but a Church made up of true, confessing Christians, ruled by the Spirit and the Word. A few quotations will bear us out on this.

With regard to the true character of the Church Luther writes in his interpretation of Ps. 16: "And since now that time is here of which Jesus has prophesied, and the fury of the Romanistic perdition is plainly opposing the Gospel, neither knowing it or permitting others to know it, it behooves us to steel our minds with the Word of God, and to believe most firmly and know most surely that the Church of Christ is nothing *but a spiritual communion of believers*, wherever these may be in the world." St. Louis Ed. IV, 768. Here Luther emphasizes the spirituality of the Church; for in his opinion the Church is nothing else than the communion of believers. This strikes us the more forcibly when we consider that this statement is but the corroboration of an asseveration immediately preceding the one cited. There he says: "For we believe that the holy universal (*catholica*) Church is the communion (*communio*) of saints." IV, 967. And since Luther regards the Church as the communion of true, believing saints, he claims for it the quality of invisibility. With regard to this Luther writes: "Therefore we rightly confess in our holy Christian faith that we believe a holy Church. For it is invisible, dwells at a place in the spirit, to which no one can approach; for which reason her holiness cannot be seen." *Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians*, IX,

21) "Einen christlichen Staat kennt Luther ebensowenig wie ein christliches Schusterhandwerk." (*Ecclesiola in Ecclesia*, p. 23.)

702. These true saints and believers are found everywhere where the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments are administered according to Christ's institution. "The Christian Church is there where Christ is the Head, and where His Word is found, where He also calls children to Himself. And those so called become His brethren, His sisters and coheirs. Therefore in every parish where children are baptized, and the Gospel is preached, and Christ is depicted to the people so that they receive Him, there is the Church. Hence also our Church here at Wittenberg is the true, real, Christian Church." Sermon on Matt. 18, 2—5, VII, 873. True, wherever the Gospel is preached, and through it true saints are gathered around the standard of Christ, there will be found, besides true believers, hypocrites and false Christians. "In this text (Matt. 22, 1—14) we are taught first that there are always wicked people in the Church, that is, hypocrites, both in the ministry as also in general; and that they cannot all be recognized and separated, which only Christ can do on Judgment Day; and that accordingly the Church is not to be judged according to its outward appearance, because there will be found in it even the most hidden hypocrites. And we must know this fact in order that the Church should not be condemned on account of the wicked, or the demand be made that no wicked man or sinner should be in it. This error has been the fountain and cause of much distress, and has thoroughly shaken the Church. For, although the manifestly wicked and abominable should not be tolerated, who can judge those who are secretly evil? But to obscure and confound this difference between the manifest and the secret wicked means to pervert the Church and the marriage of the Son." Sermon on the 20th Sunday after Trinity, XII, 1923. 1924. Here Luther states a truth which those who establish a folk-church with the evident purpose of tolerating indifferent and hostile elements, in other words, clear and manifest sinners, should indelibly inscribe upon their hearts, both as a lesson and a warning. "The manifestly wicked and abominable should not be tolerated!" This truth Luther emphasizes again and again, with words that cannot admit of any doubt. Thus in his sermon on the Fifth Sunday after Epiphany he writes: "This should not mean that the Church should destroy the wicked. But she should excommunicate and ban them as heathen, so that they might come to the knowledge of their sins and make amends, and others fear their example and beware of sins." Sermon on Matt. 13, 24—30, XIIIa, 190. Again: "If he [the wicked] would not hear even then [when admonished by the

whole Church], then they should declare him excommunicated, and let him go, and regard him as a heathen and a publican, and as one who is no sheep, nor as one who would be sought, but one who is bound to be lost." Sermon on Matt. 18, 15—18, XII, 920.

These quotations, to which multitudes of others, held in a similar strain, might be added, sufficiently and clearly portray Luther's fundamental view of the Church. What Luther desired above all was the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of the Sacraments according to Christ's command. Such preaching would not be in vain, for by it the Holy Ghost would call, invite, and convert sinners and gather them into Christian congregations. Certainly there would be hypocrites — subtle, insidious hypocrites, who would hide their malice under the cloak of piety. However, as soon as they or others would manifest themselves as incorrigible sinners, they should be excommunicated, that is, declared as heathen and publicans. A mere application of these principles leaves no room for a folk-church where believers and manifest unbelievers worship side by side. According to Luther, Christ's Church on earth can never be a great, outwardly mighty organization of huge masses, but: "Even so it is to-day: the true Church is a poor, small, miserable, despised little flock, which finds comfort and delights in God and His Word, troubling itself about nothing else. On the other hand, the Pope and his crowd, who have the name that they are the Church, know nothing of God or of His Word, and they should know nothing about it, inasmuch as they concern themselves only with earthly things, and therefore would be honored as Christians only for this reason, that they have greater power, might, money, and goods than other common Christians." Sermon on Luke 2, 22—32, XIIIa, 223. How very fittingly may the last words be applied to the folk-church which the writers of the brochures have in view!

Just one more word in conclusion. Throughout the pamphlets we find expressions of scorn for the free church, that is, for that church organized on the new principles set forth in the quotations of Luther, to which Kaftan applies the name "Missourians." Who are the Missourians both in America and in Germany whom these men so thoroughly contemn? We trust that Kaftan and his fellow-aspirers for a folk-church will seriously peruse their literature, compare their principles with the Word of God, and make them their guide and basis in the attempt to reestablish the Christian Church in Germany. For the Missourians are nothing else than true, earnest Christians, who simply and solely and wholly stand

upon the foundation of the Word of God, preach the Gospel in all its truth and purity, and gather around the preaching of this Gospel all those who would hear, believe, and live as it becomes Christians and children of God. Their slogan is: *Sola Scriptura, sola gratia, solo Christo*, just as it was Christ's and the apostles', and Luther's, and that of all true Christians. They are a little flock, it is true, for the number of the true disciples of Christ is — a little flock. Before the eye of the casual observer they appear very badly united, — very little of a mighty organization such as the folk-church should be! In reality, however, they are knitted together by the common confession, the common faith, the common hope, the common obedience to the Bible. Small though they be, their testimony is tremendous, because it is the pure testimony of Christ. Christ working with them, they are therefore among themselves that testimony which decides every issue of conscience and faith. In all other matters Christian charity prevails. They do not look for support to any state, king, or masses of power. In fact, they will not have any gift unless it be hallowed by the giver's faith and prayer and gratitude to God. So in the end there are very few that turn their riches into the coffers of their churches. Yet their churches are not poor. Willing love, flowing from hearts filled with faith, readily offers upon the Lord's altars those things which are needed for the preaching of the Gospel at home and abroad. And thus, their hearts turned to God, sanctified by faith, their hopes fixed in the Word of salvation, receiving and accepting the precepts of their divine King, they live in this world, not recognized by the world, because they are not of this world, a light that shines in darkness, a salt that keeps the world from putrefaction, — humble, faithful servants of Christ, full of love for Him and His Word, doing in all things His will unto His glory. Such are the Missourians, of whom the writers would have the Christians beware as advocates of a hierarchical Lutheranism. Why should this be? Why should they who would build Christ's Church antagonize those who, as true Christians, are building it according to Christ's will? There is but one answer. Even they who would thus build the Church, will not so build it as Christ has commanded, will not plant the structure upon that sure foundation upon which it alone rests safe — the foundation of *sola Scriptura*. The words of Mary: "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it!" (John 2, 5) have not entered into the hearts of the men who wrote these books. And that is the pity of it.