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1. Walther on the Organization of the Missouri Synod.

In a letter to Dr. Sihler, written in 1847, Dr. Walther remarks:—

“I must confess that I have a kind of horror of a real representative constitution (*einer eigentlichen Repraesentativverfassung*). I do not find it in Holy Scripture. Now, it is true that we Christians may exercise our liberty as regards our constitution, but I cannot rid myself of this opinion: the more freedom a church government in a free state like ours affords, the more efficient it will be, provided that the Word is preached in all its power in the congregations. On the other hand, everything coercive that does not flow immediately from the Word easily causes opposition by refusal to comply and lays the foundation for frequent separations. Hitherto I have not viewed a synodical organization as a concentration of ecclesiastical power. I thought that it was only to exhibit the ecclesiastical union of the separate congregations, unite its resources and forces in a war upon the oncoming ruin in doctrine and life, and for carrying on operations for the common welfare of the Church, for preserving and advancing unity in faith and love, for aiming by way of commendation for the greatest uniformity possible in liturgy, for making a well-ordered disposition of the ministry possible, for setting up a court of arbitration for preachers and congregations to which recourse might be had, or not, etc. I was of the opinion that all matters pertaining to the internal administration of individual congregations should not be subject to the disposing and judicial power of the Synod.”¹⁾

1) From *Life of Loche*, p. 28.

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

Missouri Synod. — The *Nebraska District Messenger*, in its jubilee edition for March, calls attention to a coincidence: Jubilate Sunday, May 7, — the date chosen for our Jubilee services, — is also the anniversary of the death of Dr. Walther, to whom Dr. Sihler accorded the chief credit for the organization of the Missouri Synod. — An appreciation of the late Daniel Landsmann, our first missionary to the Jews at New York, where he ministered from 1883 to 1896, has been published by Rev. Paul I. Morentz, B. D., in the *American Lutheran Survey* for March. D.

The Synodical Conference. — Like a heartening message in times of despondency and a sort of spiritual balm come the sturdy words which Governor R. E. Nestos, of North Dakota, on Founders' Day spoke in regard to educators at public schools who attacked religion. The *Lutheran Sentinel* for March 1 and the *Lutheran Church Herald* for March 7 report the Governor as follows: "The constitution and the law, declared the Governor, provided that sectarian religious doctrine might not be taught, that instruction in religion might not be a part of the university courses under the law, but he also held that the same constitution and the same laws that stopped the lips of the instructors in the affirmation of religion also acted as a bar to the teaching of the opponents of religion. . . . It is agreed that these precautions were wise, declared the Governor, after he had concluded a review of the laws, and it is quite generally conceded to-day that those who teach in the State institutions should not engage in any religious instruction in or about the institution, and I am pleased to say that seldom, if ever, are the provisions of the constitution and laws violated, as far as any positive religious instruction in any of our State institutions is concerned. But a practise has grown up in many of the State institutions which is infinitely worse, and which constitutes just as direct a violation of the spirit of the provisions of our constitution and laws as would any teaching of specific denominational doctrines. This consists of attacks made by teachers in the classroom or upon the campus in the presence of students upon fundamental doctrines of the Church, upon elements of the faith of the founders of the institutions, and of the men and women who furnish the financial support of these State institutions, and who send their children here to them for instruction and guidance. The teachers who have been guilty of this practise seem to have assumed that the enabling act, the constitution, and the laws are being violated only when the teachers at the State institutions advocate positive denominational doctrines and teachings. They seem to think that sarcasm and sneering attacks upon the faith of the founders and their descendants and the teaching of doctrines especially designed to undermine that faith, do not constitute a violation of these constitutional and legal provisions. My conviction is that any such teaching undermining the fundamentals of religious faith, and the sarcastic attacks

upon the beliefs of the so-called 'old fogies' who still adhere to them constitute a still more vicious and damnable violation of the spirit of our constitution and the faith and ideals of the founders of the university than does any denominational instruction. I say this at the risk of being charged with embracing a narrow dogmatism, unbecoming in the free atmosphere of a university. I rest my case for the fathers and the founders, now forever silent, upon the solid ground of the law they have left and which you will find as far back as the Territorial Code of 1877. They have in those old statutes embalmed, we trust forever, their faith and what I confidently believe they hoped would be the faith of their posterity. If you want to know what they thought, what they believed, and what they wished their descendants to respect and revere, I commend to your thoughtful consideration section thirty-one of the old Penal Code, still a part of our statutory law as Section 9222, c.; 1913, where they seek to protect from contumely the Christian religion, the Holy Scriptures, and the Triune God. They were not afraid to let the world know what they believed; they would be ashamed and chagrined to know that any institution founded should tolerate contumelious or contemptuous treatment of those things that men and women hold most dear. I may say here that the men and women who thus violate the spirit of the constitution and the laws, in my opinion constitute but a small percentage of the faculty of any of the institutions, and that the great majority of the faculty members honestly and fairly observe and follow the spirit of our laws. During the past two years as I have been traveling around the State, I have frequently learned of parents who had sent a beloved son or daughter to one of the State institutions, and upon the return of the son or daughter at the end of the year, in sorrow had learned that their children had become scorers of religious truths and professed agnostics. I can sympathize with a father and mother who from the teachings of childhood and the experience of a lifetime have reached the conclusion that their faith and religious experience mean more than anything else in life, and constitute, if followed by the children, a greater guarantee of their success and happiness in life than anything else that can be done for them, and then discover that some teacher whose salary they are helping to pay has sought to dynamite every foundation of the faith that is theirs. One might assume that this is a recent development, but it happens that I personally know that such is not the case. I recollect quite distinctly that upon making trips on the street-car from the university to Grand Forks some ten or twelve years ago, I heard teachers of this institution talking loudly and volubly in the presence of a number of students, viciously attacking and ridiculing religious doctrines and ancient leaders of the Church held in reverence by the great majority of our people; elements of faith possessed by the parents who sent their children to the university, and by whose hard-earned money the scorers' salaries were paid. It grieved me much to think that such a thing was possible, and I said to myself and to others that if I ever had the chance or the power to hit that insidious violation of our constitu-

tional guarantees and legal rights, I would hit it with all the strength I possessed. I hope I will not be misunderstood. My objection is not to the faith or religious belief, or lack of religious belief of the professor — that is his own concern. He has the same rights and should enjoy the same freedom that I claim for myself and for the students at the State institutions. He may believe anything he pleases with reference to God, the Bible, and the elements of our faith, but he has no right to express that belief in the classroom or upon the campus in the presence of students, and especially do I object to the making of these statements for the purpose of undermining the faith of the students, or belittling the faith and religious belief of their fathers. If these teachers desire employment in our State institutions and compensation from our tax moneys, they should be willing to observe not only the letter, but the spirit of the constitution and the laws of this State, and that means not only that they shall refrain from religious instruction, but also from the demonstration of antireligious sentiments. The teacher who is worth retaining is a leader, a model to his students. Let him scrupulously refrain from expressing sentiments to his loyal, but immature followers that may undermine or break down that faith which the experience of a world shows is the only sure foundation on which to build individual and national character. . . . It seems I can see and hear those stern pioneers of the prairie State we love. Some left their Eastern homes, where culture, learning, and simple faith, inherited from colonial ancestry, prevailed; others came from foreign lands to breathe the air of liberty, bringing with them homely virtues of honesty and truth; but all were men who, through the privations of pioneer days, when sometimes the only code was that code of honor which generations of virtuous ancestors had cultivated in the hereditary character, retained a fundamental reverence for their Creator, a reverence which the freedom of the frontier never lessened. I can see them, hear them, as they meet in their legislative assemblies to write the law; I see the seamed faces; hear the rough words, as one by one they wrote the statutes that insure liberty and education to their children. They, the founders, call to us through the mists of the past: There shall be no sectarian instruction in our free schools, imposing upon the minds of our children doctrines and dogmas distasteful to them; neither shall there be in the name of that liberty we prize above possessions and within the walls of these free schools we have established any insidious undermining of that reverence for God and His inspired Word which through all the tribulations of frontier life we have found the only safe rule of life and conduct, upon which we builded our faith, and which we seek to protect from the sneer of one who 'in his heart has said there is no God'; may we heed this call, hear its message, and carry it with us through the years." D.

The United Lutheran Church. — The cause of the division in Christendom, that is not often pointed out, is adverted to by the *Lutheran* on March 2. The editor points to the unwillingness of many

who still claim membership in the Christian Church to bind themselves to any definite confession of faith. He says:—

“This *aversion* to definite belief, and not *insistence* upon the need of unity in the faith, is responsible for ‘division, sectarianism, and intolerance.’ They who are not ready to declare exactly and definitely what they believe must not complain if others, who know what they believe, and who regard the truth of the Gospel to be as unchanging as Christ Himself, however different and fresh and new its apprehension and appreciation are bound to be from age to age, will not consent to join with them in a common fellowship. To fight shy in matters of faith and base a plea for union on expediency rather than on common conviction is to postpone the day of union and to continue the sectarianism which characterizes and curses our land.”—

Information gathered by Rev. Wm. Steinbicker regarding the religious status of our congressmen is quoted in the *Lutheran* for February 16. Of the 435 members of the House of Representatives, 313 enroll as having church connections, 98 give no information, and 24 are not churched. Of 96 Senators, 4 report non-membership, 23 omit information, and 69 belong. In the House, the United Brethren, Mormons, Independent Mennonite, Dutch Reformed, and Evangelicals have one member each. There are 2 Universalists, 3 Quakers, 5 Unitarians, 10 Disciples, 10 Lutherans, 11 Christians, 18 Roman Catholics, 35 Episcopalians, 29 Baptists, 56 Presbyterians, and 99 Methodists. In the Senate there are 17 Methodists, 11 each of Presbyterians and Episcopalians, 7 Congregationalists, 6 each of Baptists and Catholics, 2 each of Lutherans, Mormons, Dutch Reformed, and Unitarians. Episcopalians and Christians each have one.—The death of Mr. Buschman and Dr. C. L. Brown at Sanoghie about the middle of November is reported in the *Lutheran* for February 16. These men were workers in the Lutheran mission-field in Liberia, Africa, and their death is regarded as a severe loss to the promising mission.—The mission-work of the U. L. C. in Argentina is very promising. The first missionary, Dr. E. H. Mueller, has adopted the method of founding Spanish-speaking Sunday-schools in different districts of the city of Buenos Aires. A largely attended Sunday-school convention was held recently at the capital of the South American republic, and a still larger one, to follow the recent assembly in Tokio, is definitely announced to be held in Buenos Aires in the near future. The U. L. C. plans the erection of a new building at Buenos Aires, to involve an investment of not over \$65,000, which is to be known as the South American Headquarters of the U. L. C. in the Americas. “This is being pushed with all possible impetus, though neither a drive nor a campaign are at all contemplated. The plan is, 1,300 shares at \$50 each.”

D.