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## Full Forgiveness.

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Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, Part V.  
(Concluded.)

And did not Peter say in the Apostles' Council that he believed that he should be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ? Acts 15, 11. This statement strikes the Socinians so hard that in their catechism<sup>1)</sup> they deem it necessary to use fully a page and a half endeavoring to refute it. The passage, says the catechism, reads thus: "Now, therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." Acts 15, 10, 11. And then the catechism explains that the pronoun *they* refers to the Gentiles. To whom? To the Gentiles? Why, the apostle had just spoken of the "fathers." V. 10. Besides, in the original text the pronoun *they*<sup>2)</sup> is masculine, like "the fathers," but the noun *Gentiles*<sup>3)</sup> is neuter gender. Now, nobody refers a masculine pronoun to a neuter noun without urgent reason, especially if a masculine noun is much closer. Besides, the entire argument of St. Peter would be perverted in a most ridiculous manner if we would explain it according to the Racow Catechism. The manner of the justification of the Gentiles was under discussion in the Apostles' Council at Jerusalem. Acts 15. Some had asserted that faith alone was not sufficient, but that the Gentiles must also be placed under the Law. Acts 15, 5. And now imagine, Peter arises and proves — what? Not the justification of the Gentiles by the justification of the apostles, but the justification of the apostles

1) *Catechismus Racoviensis*. [*Catechesis Ecclesiarum Polonicarum*, published in Polish 1605, in Latin 1609. Racow (or Rakow), a small town in Russian Poland, was the center of the Polish Socinians at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. See *Concordia Cyclopaedia* sub "Socinianism" and "Socinians." — *The Translator*.]

2) Ἐκεῖνοι . . . πατέρες, vv. 11, 10.

3) Τὰ ἔθνη, v. 7.

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## THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

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**A Historical Convention.**—When the Joint Synod of Ohio held its recent biennial meeting, resolutions were adopted which are of unique interest and will go down in history as marking an epoch in the development of Lutheranism in America. The one pertained to the merger with the Iowa and Buffalo synods, which was endorsed and will be consummated as soon as certain technical details have been adjusted. The Iowa Synod had adopted a declaration on the doctrine of inspiration (see last issue of *THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*) which was considered satisfactory and removed the obstacle to union which quite unexpectedly had arisen two years ago. The other resolution is to the effect that pulpit- and altar-fellowship shall exist between the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America (Merger) and the Ohio Synod. The various Districts of the Ohio Synod had voted in favor of such a mutual recognition, and the Norwegian body had passed a similar resolution a year ago. By establishing fraternal relations with the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, the Ohio Synod approved the Norwegian *Opgjoer*, in which the *intuitu fidei* doctrine of election is placed on a level with the doctrine of election taught in the Formula of Concord. How, in view of this fact, the

Ohio Synod will be able to accept the *Chicago* (Intersynodical) *Theses*, which explicitly reject the teaching that God elected us in view of faith, is hard to see.

It will be recalled that the Ohio and the Norwegian Synod both were members of the Synodical Conference before the predestination controversy. When the storm broke, about 1880, Ohio withdrew on account of doctrinal disagreement with Missouri, and the Norwegian Synod, a few years later, likewise left the Synodical Conference, declaring, however, that it was taking that step for reasons of expediency, hoping that in this manner it might be enabled more easily to compose the differences in its own ranks. Fraternal relations with the synods of the Synodical Conference were maintained by the Norwegian Synod until the latter merged with the United Church and the Hauge Synod to form one body. It was at that time that a number of members of the old Norwegian Synod, who for reasons of conscience refused to join the Merger, chose rather to perpetuate the body to which they had belonged, the Norwegian Synod, and joined the Synodical Conference, thus reestablishing its historical relations with this federation. Dr. Wm. Schmidt, favorably known in our circles as the author of *Aethelburga*, *Sieghardus*, etc., in reporting in the *Lutherische Kirchenzeitung* the convention under discussion, expresses the wish that soon the time may come when all conservative Lutheran synods will see eye to eye and, if possible, form one body. It is a wish which we cordially adopt as our own. We must not forget, however, that our great task is not to form mighty, imposing church-bodies, but to be faithful witnesses of the revealed truth.

#### Resolutions Effecting Merger between Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo.

For the sake of completeness we reprint, from the *Lutheran Church Herald*, the following resolutions which were adopted by the Ohio Synod at its recent meeting in Columbus: 1. "We are glad to find that the declarations of the Hon. Iowa Synod concerning its attitude toward the Scriptures, as adopted at its convention at Waverly, correctly express our position on the inspiration and the inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures." 2. "We believe that Article II, Section I, of the proposed constitution, as adopted by the Joint Merger Commission, is the best available summary of these declarations for use in a synodical constitution." 3. "We take note of the fact that the Buffalo Synod has resolved not to enter the merger unless this section be retained in its present form." 4. "We recommend that the synod reaffirm its desire for organic union with the synods of Iowa and Buffalo and that the commissioners be reappointed and instructed to proceed with the work of effecting a merger as soon as possible on the basis of the constitution proposed by the Joint Merger Commission." 5. "We recommend that the forty-ninth convention of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States adjourn subject to the call of the general president and that every District shall elect its delegates to the first convention of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America, the Districts to be represented at the said first convention by a number of delegates conforming to the rules of the new body."

MUELLER.

### Program of the 1929 Copenhagen Lutheran World Convention.

The Lutheran press reports that the following subjects will be discussed at the Lutheran World Convention, which will convene next year at Copenhagen, beginning on June 26 and continuing for about ten days: "The Origin and Significance of Luther's Large and Small Catechisms." "The Duty of the Present Generation to Transmit Its Heritage of the Faith to the Next Generation." "The Faith and the Confession of the Church in the Light of Marburg and Augsburg." "The Distinctive Contribution of Lutheranism to Christendom." "How Should we Strive for an Inner Awakening of Our Church?" "The Lutheran Conception of the Relation between Christianity and the World." "The Lutheran Church and the Social Crisis." "How May the Inner Unity among the Lutheran Churches be Furthered?" "Report of the Executive Committee, with Suggestions for the Future Organization of the World Convention." (Closed session.) "Helping Our Needy Brethren in the Faith (Diaspora, etc.)." "The Chief Problems for Lutheran Missionary Work that Arise from the Present Situation."

The trouble with these conventions is that those arranging them take unity of faith for granted instead of first establishing it. It is no secret that there are glaring disagreements on really fundamental matters between the men who will attend this convention. For instance, theologians accepting the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures will be sitting beside men vigorously denying such inspiration. Why not make the removal of these disagreements the objective? We do not wish to be understood as though we opposed "free conferences" called for the settling of doctrinal disputes. The history of the Lutheran Church shows that such conferences have often resulted in great blessings. But when World Conferences are called where fundamental disagreements are kept in the background or treated as non-existent, we cannot but regard such a course as an unscriptural procedure.

**In a Garbled Form.**—The *Lutheran Church Herald*, writing editorially on the statement given to the press by the Convention of Lutheran Editors at Columbus, O., points out that this appeared "in a garbled form in the Columbus papers to suit the political leanings of the papers." It declares: "The first topic considered by the editors was: 'What Attitude Should Our Lutheran Church-papers Take toward a Catholic Candidate for the Presidency of the United States?' It being noised about that this was under consideration, a representative of the press was on hand for 'news.' In a weak moment the editors promised a statement for the next day, which was given with the specific instructions that either all or nothing be printed. It appeared in a garbled form in the Columbus papers to suit the political leanings of the papers. The consensus of opinion among the editors was that the church press should not advocate the election of special candidates, but at the same time would not consent to be muzzled on any ecclesiastical, religious, moral, or theological question to enlighten its constituency."

The statement given to the press reads in part: ". . . that the

Lutheran Church believes in the separation of Church and State and that in no previous election in the United States has the Lutheran press given space to political issues. The Lutherans agree to the principle contained in the Constitution that 'no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.' In itself the right of the member of any Church or even a man who is no member of any Church to be a candidate is held inviolable; but public agitation, which has become current throughout the nation, calls for enlightenment of our constituents in the present campaign relative to the distinctive doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church concerning the seat of civil and spiritual powers, that is, the Church and the State."

The statement quoted the paper read at the convention in part as follows: ". . . It becomes the duty of our church-papers to give to their readers reliable information as to the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church towards the authority of the worldly government and especially the precious liberties guaranteed by our Constitution; to counteract misinformation and to correct false and misleading innuendos, statements, and impressions."

"The church-papers, however, will not and need not advise their readers how to vote, but must leave this to their own intelligent and conscientious judgment."

MUELLER.

**"The Methodist Gospel."** — "American Methodists of all colors and countries will be interested in the celebration of the 150th anniversary of Wesley Chapel, City Road, London. This will occur on All Saints' Day, November 1, 1928. John Wesley first preached in that chapel November 1, 1778. From that location began the work of the evangelist, who with a burning heart, 'strangely warmed,' went into the world to preach what later proved to be 'the Methodist gospel.' This chapel, now called Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, is the mother of over 100,000 Methodist churches throughout the world. This means that on the average, every day during these 150 years, two new Methodist preaching-places have been opened somewhere in the world. Verily, let all true hearts exclaim, 'What hath God wrought!'

"When Wesley died, there were not more than 200,000 people called Methodists. However, that is not a small number for a leader to attract about him in a lifetime of a little over eighty years. Now the Methodist people number nearly 40,000,000. They are to be found in all parts of the world, while one of the great bodies, the Methodist Episcopal Church, is rapidly becoming a world-wide communion. There is reason for the celebration of the 150th anniversary at City Road. All Methodists throughout the world should join in it by offering some form of prayer during the day and calling the history of the great movement to memory midst thanksgiving to Almighty God." — *Western Christ. Advocate*, September 20, 1928.

What is the Methodist gospel? The teaching Wesley stressed was not the Gospel of forgiveness of sins through faith. He stressed the article of sanctification. This article needs to be stressed. It needed it particularly in those days. But it must never be placed above or

even beside the article of justification by faith in importance. Wesley did that. He spoke of sanctification as "the grand *depositum*" which God had lodged with the people called "Methodists." For the sake of propagating this chiefly, "he appears to have raised them up." (H. K. Carroll.) — Another teaching for which Wesleyan Methodism stands is Arminianism. The stressing of sanctification and Arminianism usually goes hand in hand. Methodists ascribe a varying degree of freedom of the will in spiritual matters to man. Wesley was willing to be classed as an Arminian and says: "We believe that at the moment of Adam's fall he no longer possessed a freedom of the will, but that God, when by His own free grace He gave him and his descendants the promise of a Savior, restored to mankind a free will and the power to accept the offered salvation." (Guenther, *Pop. Sym.*, p. 164.) In the Twenty-five Articles of Religion drawn up by Wesley for the American Methodists the *total* corruption of the nature of man is denied, and man is held only "to be very far gone from original righteousness." Those 100,000 churches are dedicated to the idea that natural man can cooperate in his conversion and salvation. The *Western Christian Advocate* of June 2, 1927, speaks of men "who go out deliberately intending to find Christ. They have something in their souls that draws them towards Him, as though they had the metal in their own hearts that was responding to the far-away magnet which witnesses to the drawing power of Jesus Christ." In common with the rest of the Reformed divisions the Methodists do not believe in the power of the means of grace and as their own special gospel have introduced emotionalism. Art. XVII declares "that baptism is a *sign* of regeneration" and Art. XVIII that "the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper only after a heavenly and spiritual manner." The means of grace are consequently not held in high esteem among the Methodists. For instance, last year, according to an official organ of their Church, not even one out of six children born in the congregations was brought forward to baptism in the Missouri Conference of the M. E. Church, South. Instead of the means of grace instituted by God they have devised "means of grace" of their own, made effective through stirring up all manner of spiritual and unspiritual emotions. The *Advocate* of October 11 enumerates the prayer-meeting, the class-meeting, the camp-meeting, and revival, and since these are falling into desuetude, "the present-day youth is making his own fountains; the human spirit has creative genius; out of his own nature comes the solution of his own problems." Youth has "created the Epworth League institute." — The heart of the Gospel is justification by faith. The Methodist Confession has this fine article (IX): "We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings. Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only is a most wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort." There is an echo of what Wesley heard and experienced on that memorable evening when he drank in the words of Luther's *Introduction to the Epistle to the Romans*. Whenever in some of these 100,000 churches this article is read and

expounded, the Gospel finds utterance. But if the preacher has just been expounding Arminianism, the full need of the Gospel has been obscured to many. And those who feel their need are being told not to look to the means of grace, the only vehicle for bringing forgiveness of sins to the sinner. Justification by faith is held up to his view, but the way to obtain it is blocked. Art. II also gives expression to the glorious truth of the Gospel: "The Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin, so that two whole and perfect natures — that is to say, the Godhead and manhood — were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried, to reconcile His Father to us and to be a sacrifice not only for original guilt, but also for the actual sins of men." Whenever we hear that in one of these 100,000 churches the doctrine of the person and work of Christ is preached in its purity, we note it "midst thanksgiving to Almighty God." And when we note the intrusion of the Methodist gospel into the true Gospel, Arminianism and the rejection of the means of grace derogating from the merit of Christ and keeping it from the sinner, our hearts are filled with grief and resentment. And, worst of all, in how many of these 100,000 churches is Art. II still held? The *Presbyterian* states that "the *Christian Advocates* are undertaking to control Methodism in the interest of Modernism." *The Methodist League for Faith and Life* confirms that statement: "We believe the Christian Church is facing the greatest crisis it has confronted in 1,500 years. — Modernism has totally rejected this historic Christian foundation." And the *Western Christian Advocate* of October 6, 1927, strongly confirms that statement. It printed this contribution by Bishop Locke: " 'My friend,' said a rather frank, but well-informed man of progressive doctrinal thinking, 'your orthodox position seems to me untenable, if not unreasonable. I cannot subscribe to your belief in an inspired Bible, nor a blood atonement, nor to the physical resurrection of Jesus, nor to the deityship of Jesus, and I am not at all secure in my confidence in the immortality of the soul; although I believe firmly that God is good and that He is a living, heavenly Father.' 'My brother,' replied the sincere man of rather old-fashioned theological views, 'in this world of mysteries presided over by a God of infinite personality, it is a wonder that infinitesimal finites like ourselves can understand anything. We should, not any of us, become too dogmatic concerning our beliefs and should cultivate receptive minds. I confidently believe in all of these great doctrines which are puzzling you; but if we differ from each other in our conscientious interpretations, each of us will be judged according to our honesty and sincerity. Every man will have his own Christ, and if he follows his holy ideal and conforms his life to the truths and spirit of Jesus, he will doubtless share in the salvation which Jesus brought to a dying world, even if he is not sure whether Jesus had one human parent or two or is uncertain regarding the mysteries of the atonement or whether he thinks everything in the Holy Bible is

wholly inspired.' 'And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy name, and he followeth us not; and we forbade him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My name that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part.' WHEN WILL IT HAPPEN?" Does this belong to the Methodist gospel which the *Advocate* aims to spread among the 100,000 churches of Methodism and for the spread of which it calls for thanksgiving to Almighty God? E.

**The Roman Church in Politics.** — Bishop Warren A. Candler of the Methodist Church recently uttered some words which precisely state the reason why Protestants are filled with alarm whenever there is mention of Roman ascendancy in our political life. He said: "The trouble with the Roman Catholic Church is that it seeks to be both a church and a political party. Its arrogant claim of being the only true Christian Church might be treated with indifference; but when its head asserts political and civil authority, a position is assumed which cannot be allowed any Church whatever. If it must assume such a position, its members must not complain if it is met with political opposition not offered to any other Church. If it were willing to take its place as a Church along with all other churches, it would be improper to meet it with any other attitude than that with which we meet all other churches; but it is not willing to be only a Church. Putting itself into a class by itself by its political animus, it must take all that such improper attitude makes inevitable. It cannot claim the political exemption of a Church while it asserts political claims as well as churchly prerogatives."

**The Bible of Mr. H. G. Wells.** — Speaking of one of the recent books of H. G. Wells, in which he advocates the ancient doctrine of Hindu philosophy on the Nirvana, the *Presbyterian* says: "Since the publication of *Outlines of History* Mr. Wells has dealt very generously with philosophy and more authoritatively with theology — that science which intimidates more modest men. Now he comes forth as the prophet of a new dispensation. It is not an original idea, for others have formulated a creed in which individual hopes and identity will be lost in the haze of a final Nirvana. Mr. Wells has brought down a new suit of clothes with which he has robed this antiquated figure, dressing him as if he were a modern. It is so strange that these new cults are not recognized as the revived ghosts of a depleted system that has been weighed in the balances and found wanting. Yet there are thousands of readers who will imagine that in *The Open Conspiracy* they have discovered the gateway of the kingdom of God. There is a Book more eagerly bought to-day than in any former period, and it is pathetic to see men attempt to displace it with the puerile production of their infantile minds. In it is an answer to all the pressing questions of life, whether about this world or the world to come." MUELLER.



## Glimpses from the Editor's Window.

As usual, the bimonthly theological journal of our brethren in Germany *Schrift und Bekenntnis*, in its number for July and August, offers valuable material. The first article, which will be concluded in the next issue, treats of modern dialectic theology (*Zur weiteren Kenntnis der dialektischen Theologie*), examining some writings of Gogarten. The next brings a report on "The Youngest Lutheran Free Church in Europe," the Free Church of the brethren in Finland. Ten congregations, we are told, have united to form a church-body. In the section superscribed "Miscellaneous" we find parts of valuable articles reprinted from other journals. Finally, there are remarks on contemporaneous religious happenings and some book reviews. Price of the journal: M. 2.50 for half a year.

The Ohio Synod, so the church-papers state, now numbers 900 pastors. In its five institutions of higher learning there are 1,500 students. 130 missionaries are serving in the home mission fields. In India its mission among the Telugus numbers 4,000 converts.

The *Christian Century* complains of the "emergence" of three new Baptist theological seminaries of a fundamentalist type, apprehending that they will do much harm. These three are the Northern Baptist Theological Seminary at Chicago, the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and the Western Baptist Theological Seminary in Portland, Oreg. The *Watchman-Examiner* says that to the group of outright conservative seminaries must be added the Kansas City Seminary. To the extent that these schools defend the inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures we can rejoice in their existence.

Concerning the work of the Baptists among the colored population in our country we read in an exchange: "The National Baptist Convention, composed of colored people, was formed in 1886. It has 22,037 churches and 3,253,733 church-members." Our contemporary continues: "Most of the colored Baptists hold tenaciously to the time-honored doctrines and polity of the Baptists." The emotionalism fostered by many Baptist churches, especially in the South, has a great appeal for the colored man and, we may add, for many whites as well.

A new future seems in prospect for the state of Liberia in Africa. One of our exchanges informs us that it has been discovered that "rubber can be raised there at a profit. A large American concern has leased for ninety-nine years a total acreage of one million for the purpose of developing rubber plantations. Some 350,000 men—practically the whole man-power of the republic—will eventually be on the pay-roll of the company. Adjustments are being made in the type of mission-work, increases are being made in the number of schools, plans are being made for industrial and agricultural training, and other plans are under way for community and health betterment—all with a view to meeting this new economic situation that will doubtless reshape the country."

The *Lutheran* of October 11 is an anniversary number, commemorating the founding of the U. L. C. ten years ago. One thought occurring repeatedly in it is that the Lutherans of America ought to present a united front in order to do the Lord's work more effectively. Yea and amen! But will outward union without true inward unity help matters?

The extent to which modern Jews are turning away, not merely from Jesus the Savior, but from their own traditional religion as well, is appalling. Witness what, according to the *N. L. C. B.*, a writer in the *Juedische Rundschau*, the official organ of the Zionist movement in Germany, has to say: "One of the causes that led up to the Zionist movement is the realization that we are without a religion. The majority of intelligent modern Jews, actuated by a powerful impulse of national spirit, turned our thoughts to Palestine because we realized that our belief in

a personal God has vanished. We hope to find in Palestine a new valuation, arising from a deep, new sense of national life, to fill up the void of our inner life and being. This shall replace that which hitherto we have designated as religion, the relation of an individual man to a personal God, which has proved a mere phase of development of mankind. Once we acknowledge this absence of religion, we may no longer dally with obsolete forms. All efforts in that direction would come to naught and expose its unreality. Therefore at the national festivities of Palestine all religious observances are out of place."

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