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Of Faith.

Translated from Dr. E. Preuss's *Die Lehre von der Rechtfertigung*, Part III.

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The righteousness of Christ, then, has been procured; but, as the apostle says, it comes "unto all and upon all them that believe." Rom. 3, 22. He who keeps this in mind will be spared the vexations which the Wurttemberg superintendent Burk experienced. It seemed to him like a faulty circle: "I am to believe and thereby become righteous. But what am I to believe? This, that I am righteous. However, I cannot believe this before it is so. And yet it is not so, for I am first to become righteous." God be praised, the case is different. *This* we must believe, that Christ *has* redeemed us. And as God said to His covenant people through Isaiah: "I *have* redeemed thee, I *have* called thee by thy name; thou *art* Mine," Is. 43, 1, even so does He tell us through His apostle: "The handwriting that was against us *is* blotted out," Col. 2, 14; "He *purged* our sins," Heb. 1, 3; "We *are* reconciled," Rom. 5, 10. Eternal peace reigns; all strife is ended. Col. 1, 20. That saving faith apprehends *this* and nothing else St. Paul teaches in those texts in which he expressly and officially treats of justification. Rom. 4, 24, 25 he says that we are justified "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification." And 1 Cor. 15, 1—4 he declares that one is saved by believing "that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." And lastly, Gal. 2, 20, he describes his own faith as "the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." This is also the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession (Art. XII) and of the theologians.

"To believe" — what does that mean? Does it mean to take the death and resurrection of Christ for granted as one takes the battle of Pydna for granted? Most certainly not! Although it would be quite agreeable if Messrs. Strauss and Renan were ready

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

Is the Christian Church Invisible? — In our April issue we made favorable mention of some remarks which Dr. Elert (Erlangen) uttered in the course of an address on Article VII of the Augsburg Confession, printed in part in the *Lutheran*. The *Lutheran* of March 8 brings another section of that address, which, we are sorry to say, we cannot describe as satisfactory. In this instalment the Erlangen dogmatician discusses chiefly the question whether the Church is invisible or not. The *Lutheran*, inserting special subheads at various places, superscribes one of the paragraphs thus: "Church Visible and Invisible—a Calvinistic Idea." It is but fair to note that Dr. Elert himself does not stigmatize the teaching of the Church's invisibility as Calvinistic. The *Lutheran* ascribes a view to him which is not warranted by what he says in the address submitted. Here are the *ipsissima verba* of the Doctor, on which presumably the subhead in the *Lutheran* is based: "In the first place, nothing is said of a visible or an invisible Church. Theologians are still met with to-day who hold this differentiation to be one that is specifically Lutheran. But it is a necessary essential alone for the Reformed doctrine. There this differentiation can well be understood as the result of the predominant place accorded predestination

and to the answers accorded the question of the salvation of men cognate with this." The Catechism of Geneva defines the Church as "the body and congregation of believers whom God has predestinated to eternal life. . . . The Catechism of Geneva therefore quite consistently adds that this true Church can never be recognized by the sight of the eyes nor be manifested by definite marks." Dr. Elert here merely denies that the teaching of the Church's invisibility is *specifically* Lutheran and that it is a necessary essential for Lutheran teaching. But here our defense of him perforce ceases. He clearly rejects the teaching that the Church is invisible. Toward the end of the instalment he says: "Even in so far as the Church is the congregation of believers, is it impossible to speak of invisibility." What is so disappointing is the fact that Dr. Elert approaches the subject like an architect who has to decide whether a certain feature proposed for a building would mar the symmetry of that building or not. He ought to have come as a disciple of Jesus, asking in all simplicity, What is written? Studying the Scriptures, he would have found that the kingdom of God, which is but another name for the Christian Church, is invisible; for Christ says, Luke 17, 21: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." To point out how well a doctrine fits into the body of Christian teaching is edifying and helpful, but it can never furnish the deciding argument for acceptance of that doctrine; the Word of God alone can do that. We are, furthermore, by no means willing to grant that the doctrine of the invisibility of the Church is an idle one which might be dispensed with, as Dr. Elert asserts. This doctrine is the great bulwark against the claims and aggressions of the papists and of Romanizing Protestants, who would make of the kingdom of God an outward organization or institution. It furnishes us strong consolation when affairs in the visible Church are unsatisfactory and we see some of our fondest hopes and expectations for a sound and glorious development of our church-body dashed to the ground and our soul is cast into the anguish of confusion and doubt. Dr. Elert himself admits in the address that for Luther this doctrine was of great practical importance in contradicting "the thought that the external hierarchical structure was an essential of the true Church." Has the danger vanished which existed in Luther's age? Has Rome changed? Has the craving of the human mind for outward glitter and greatness grown less? Hence, influenced both by the words of Scripture and by the consideration that we are here dealing with an important doctrine, we must continue to hold to the teaching of the old Lutheran dogmaticians that *vera et sancta electorum ecclesia manet invisibilis* (Chemnitz).

Who Is to Blame for the Compliment?—The *Western Christian Advocate* is gratified to find that "the Lutheran Church" is experiencing a change of heart. "It will be a matter of information to many of our readers to learn that the Lutheran Church is cooperating with other Protestant bodies more than ever in its history. Heretofore it

has been non-cooperative. It has gone its way, giving little concern to other denominations and manifesting bias and much narrowness. It is a great Protestant body. It could wield a great influence if it would play on the Protestant team. Hitherto it has refused to do so." The term "the Lutheran Church" is too general. A good many Lutherans refuse to accept the compliment. The synods constituting the Synodical Conference and the other conservative synods in sympathy with their position still confess to a strong bias, for the unity of the spirit, against unionism. The synods constituting the U. L. C. and the other synods in sympathy with its position, which send delegates to Lausanne and practise pulpit-fellowship whenever granted the opportunity, will be glad to hear that the *Advocate* is complimenting them on their broadness. E.

The Confession of Faith of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association. — The *Sunday-school Times*, in a recent issue, published the confession of faith of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, the nine points of which read as follows: 1. We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as verbally inspired of God and inerrant in the original writings, and that they are of supreme and final authority in faith and life. 2. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. 3. We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man. 4. We believe that man was created in the image of God, that he sinned and therefore incurred not only physical death, but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature and, in the case of those who reach moral responsibility, become sinners in thought, word, and deed. 5. We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice; and that all that believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood. 6. We believe in the resurrection of the crucified body of our Lord, in His ascension into heaven, and in His present life there for us as High Priest and Advocate. 7. We believe in "that blessed hope," the personal premillennial and imminent return of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 8. We believe that all who receive by faith the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and thereby become children of God. 9. We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

Local organizations of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association are being formed at various places, as, for example, the Christian Fundamentals Association for New England. "The impelling incentive to this move," writes the *Sunday-school Times*, "is the appalling spread of destructive Modernism and the insidious working of the 'leaven of the Sadducees' throughout the New England States." As much as the Christian believer will rejoice in the testimony of the Fundamentalists, he must nevertheless say that their confession in many places is not definite enough to rule out the errors of rationalism which have always infected the Church. Then, too, it omits the

important doctrine of the means of grace, especially that of the Sacraments; and besides, it teaches the figment of premillennialism. Fundamentalism is identified with Calvinism, which in its essential teachings is the opposite of Lutheranism. MUELLER.

What We Do Not Owe the Pilgrim Fathers. — Mr. C. Hale Sipe, a Pennsylvania lawyer and historian, rejects the statement that the Pilgrim Fathers laid a good foundation for the government of the United States. The *Lutheran Church Herald* prints a letter from this writer, parts of which we herewith reprint: —

“Woodrow Wilson expressed a great historical fact when he said: ‘However humiliating it may be to them or to us, America did not come out of New England,’ etc. Wilson then went on to say, in effect, that the characteristic mark of America is the mingling of racial stocks and that toleration which comes from the existence, side by side, of different forms of Christian belief. He pointed out that ‘America came out’ of the central colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, etc., calling attention to the fact that in these colonies, from the very first, were the mingling of racial stocks and the existence of different forms of Christian belief.

“The Swedes on the Delaware had more to do with the genuine molding of American history than had the Pilgrim Fathers of New England. With these early colonists, liberty of conscience was a historical fact, and not a mockery or a myth, as with the Pilgrim Fathers of New England. They laid the foundation for the success of William Penn’s ‘Holy Experiment’ before this great man was born. At a later day the migration from Pennsylvania into the valleys of the Ohio and Mississippi and to the West spread the Delaware and Pennsylvania influence throughout these regions.

“Well for all of us that ‘America did not come out of New England.’ Well for all of us that America did not take on the stamp of the bigotry and intolerance of the witch-hanging and Quaker-hanging Pilgrim Fathers. Let us be truly thankful that there were ‘other rocks’ than Plymouth Rock.”

“The Bane of Liberalism.” — The leading article in the *Western Christian Advocate* of January 12 carries this heading. The despairing death-bed meditations of the liberal minister here given constitute a most terrible arraignment of the theology of Modernism. We quote from the article: “The heart lesion of Liberalism is inevitable. It is a perilous thing to deal liberally with your faith. . . . Recently we had opportunity to hear an expression from a liberal minister. All his life he had preached broadly, commendably (?), even brilliantly, but never positively or assuringly. . . . When the evening time came, he was heard to say: ‘I do not see my way. I cannot understand the course I am to take. I have gone to the great depths of doubt. After the years have passed, life’s experiences have dissolved any positive faith I ever had. My confession, if I am able to interpret my own present experience, is that I am adrift on the current of life, drawing near the end, knowing not whither I am going, neither able to understand.’ This is a pathetic expression coming from a man who should have a great faith

in the evening time, who should have Jesus Christ as the Light of his life. . . . He did not build a careful highway over which he came. At the end his path is lost in bog and morass. We have come to the place where observation enables us to make this statement. This man is only one of many we have met. We have known men who made a similar confession. We were led to study their lives and have come to the conclusion that they are paying the price of a lack of a positive faith in Jesus Christ and His teaching."—There is only one thing to counteract the bane of Liberalism, and that is the old Gospel. And by the infinite grace of God the old Gospel has saved many a dying Liberal from his own damnable folly. The examples adduced in *Christliche Dogmatik*, II, 442, to show that the modern theories of the atonement will not serve the sinner in his great need, are cases in point. "In his dying moments Horace Bushnell said: 'I fear what I have written and said upon the moral idea of the atonement is misleading and will do great harm'; and, as he thought of it further, he cried: 'O Lord Jesus, I trust for mercy only in the shed blood that Thou didst offer on Calvary!' Ritschl had severely criticized Paul Gerhardt's hymn '*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden*' as describing physical suffering; but he begged his son to repeat the last two verses of that hymn when he came to die." The late Dr. Charles A. Berry, of England, had had little use for the story of the Cross, branding the doctrine of the vicarious satisfaction "an immoral doctrine. Ministering to a woman dying in a house of ill fame, he talked to her about Jesus as the beautiful example. The woman declared, 'I don't want an example; I am a sinner.' There was no comfort for the dying sinner in the liberal theology. Berry then thought of what his mother had taught him, and he told the dying woman the old story of God's love in Christ. 'Now you are getting at it,' said the woman. 'That's what I want. That's the story for me.' Berry later, in telling the story to a brother clergyman, said, 'I got her in, and I got in myself.'" (*Theol. Mthly.*, I, 93.)

E.

The Vatican and the White House.— "Unthinking people have been made to believe by Governor Smith's *Atlantic Monthly* article and the discussion that followed it that there is no antagonism between Romanism and self-respecting popular government," writes the *Watchman-Examiner* editorially. And it continues: "We are in full accord with the *Reformed Church Messenger*, which said in discussing that famous article:—

"It will certainly require more than the declaration of one man to allay the fears of many students of history who have known of the political entanglements and aggrandizements of that Church, the official utterances of its supposedly infallible head, its open claim of "supremacy above all states," its intolerance toward all other forms of ecclesiastical organization, its antidemocratic structure and practices, and other unsavory and tyrannical pages in its long record. Greatly as we admire and applaud individual Catholics, the idea of giving the Vatican at Rome any closer connection with the White House in Washington than it now has will continue to be opposed

by millions. Whatever any of us may think about the justice or injustice of this attitude, it is simply a *fact*, and it will have to be faced. The history and teaching of the Catholic hierarchy have made it inevitable.'”

MUELLER.

The Curtis-Reed Bill Now before Congress.—Hardly has the Smith-Towner Bill disappeared when a successor is challenging our attention. The Curtis-Reed Bill aims at establishing a Federal Department of Education. It is vigorously sponsored by the National Education Association. According to *America* the secular press is largely opposed to the bill and alive to the evils that would result if it should be adopted. The *Ohio State Journal* is quoted as saying: “Do our Ohio teachers wish to have the school dominated by politics to a far greater extent than now, to be instructed in their teaching duties by Washington politicians, to have their positions made dependent, as sooner or later they would be made, upon their political views and their political service?” Another paper voices the view that “a Federal Department of Education will result in an alarming usurpation upon the rights of the States. It will create uniform Federal standards for the local schools, it will be expensive, and it will throw the interests of the schools into the hands of politicians.” Whatever influence we can legitimately exercise we should throw into the scales against the adoption of such bills.

Glimpses from the Editor's Window.

The Indians of our country, contrary to the current view, are not dying out, if census figures can be trusted. In 1900 their number was 270,544. To-day they are said to number 349,876. May this remind us of our debt to the Red Man!

A new journal, called *Stockholm*, has appeared. Its aim is to advance the ideals which were stressed and elaborated at the Interdenominational Convention of Stockholm in 1925. Among the contributors to the first number are Archbishop Soederblom, Dr. Garvie, the Bishop of Winchester, the Bishop of Manchester, Dr. Cadman, and others. These names sufficiently indicate that the journal will not be devoted to the promulgation of the unadulterated Bible truth.

An exchange says that the U. L. C. supports 23 institutions of higher learning. A commission of experts which has been investigating these institutions has presented data which make it appear advisable to some of the leaders of the Church to amalgamate several of these institutions. In connection with the survey it has been discovered that more young people belonging to U. L. C. churches are pursuing their studies at non-Lutheran colleges than at those of their own church-body; hence the idea of having student pastors at the various state universities and other large educational institutions will be given thorough consideration.

The American Bible Society on the 1st of August, 1927, laid the cornerstone for a new Bible house in Peking. Most of the speeches of the occasion were delivered by Chinese Christians. It is certainly remarkable that in spite of all the political confusion in China the Bible Society manifested enough courage for this undertaking.

The following statement of a prosecuting attorney in Spain sheds some light on the status of religious liberty in that country. In demanding that a woman be punished who had stated as her conviction that Mary had other children besides Jesus, he said, according to the *N. L. C. B.*: “In this land it is a greater crime to insist that the Virgin Mary had other children besides Jesus than to express hatred against God Himself. The

latter could be atoned for by fourteen days' imprisonment, but the former is mockery against the teachings of the Church." The court complied with the request of the attorney and meted out a severe sentence to the defendant. Is Rome tolerant of other beliefs where she can afford to be intolerant?

Dr. Schneider's Year-book for 1927 informs the public that with respect to Germany the often heard claim of Rome's ascendancy over Protestantism in gaining converts from its rival is unfounded. There are more Roman Catholics in Germany joining Protestant churches than Protestants accepting Catholicism. In 1925, 13,591 Roman Catholics embraced Protestantism.

Certain Catholics, professedly without orders from the Vatican, are discussing the question whether there cannot be found a plan agreeable to both Italy and the Pope, according to which the latter could become a petty temporal ruler. The proponents of the idea are willing to let the papal principality be as small as can be conceived, as long as it will be granted the right of existence. We recall that Archimedes asked for just one little spot outside the earth where he might stand, and he promised to move the globe if that were given to him. Just a little spot! If Italy is wise, it will think of Archimedes before it yields to these aspirations of the Roman hierarchy.

In the Evangelical Synod, so an exchange says, Fundamentalists and Modernists are coming to blows, figuratively speaking. A new constitution has been proposed in which the confessional paragraph is the cause of heated discussions. The Fundamentalists maintain that in this paragraph grave concessions are made to unbelief. The Modernists complain that the concessions are too limited. It seems that a compromise version will be sought. May God strengthen those who are contending for the truth of the Bible!

In Germany it is proposed to change the law and the procedure relating to oaths in the court-room. The plan is to make every false statement punishable, but to exact an oath only in exceptionally urgent cases. It strikes us that this is a sensible plan, which ought to be supported by all those who are anxious to see the sanctity of the oath preserved.

Turkey seems to be preparing for another important step. Its president, Mustafa Kemal, has declared that he intends to bring about a complete separation of Church and State. According to the Constitution of Turkey, Mohammedanism is still the state religion. It may mean very much for the success of Christian missions if the respective paragraph in the constitution is changed and Mohammedanism removed from its preferred position.

Zionism may be very attractive in theory, but in practise it seems to meet with insuperable difficulties. The immigration of enthusiastic Jews into Palestine has created grave economic problems, inasmuch as the new arrivals naturally looked for work and crowded many an Arab out of his position. The unemployment problem is very pressing. The natives who are without work are bitter against the immigrants, and such immigrants as have not yet found employment are thoroughly disgruntled. The whole movement seems to be stalking on its last leg.

A kind brother has sent us a clipping giving a statement by Bernard Shaw on his belief in God. The famous Irishman wrote in 1910, in a private letter to Tolstoi: "There is a creative force constantly struggling to evolve an executive organ of godlike energy and power, that is, to achieve omnipotence and omniscience; and every man and woman born is a fresh attempt to achieve this object." What a blasphemous utterance! Unbelieving scientists have said that man was evolved from a lower stage; now comes this playwright and says that God is being evolved. We quote Shaw's words to show into what depths of folly some of our modern literati have sunk.

Some shocking figures demonstrating the ravages of alcoholism in Germany are reported in the *Lutherische Herold*. A German physician, who at the same time is professor at the University of Bonn, says that

Germany has 170,000 idiots, of whom there are 100,000 for whose deplorable condition alcohol is responsible. There are 80,000 epileptics in the various institutions of the *Reich*; of these 60,000 are the victims of the intemperance of their father. 400,000 people of Germany are considered to be toppers; 300,000 marriages are blighted, and one half million children are cast into misery by this evil.
