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Of Faith.

(Continued.)

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

THE REV. JUL. A. FRIEDRICH, Iowa City, Iowa.

But where is it written that Abraham believed Christ? Does not Scripture rather designate the promise of the Seed as the contents of his faith? True, but this Seed was Christ. This is the testimony of the same apostle who sets Abraham's faith before us as an example. Gal. 3, 6. But if Abraham became righteous through faith in the Seed, and if this Seed was Christ, then he became righteous through faith in Christ. Pray do not tell us that we illumine the mind of Abraham with the torch of Paul; that the patriarch understood the seed to be a child and nothing more. Nothing more? May it tickle the contemporaries to crowd their father Abraham under their footstool — he was greater than they. "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day," says Christ, "and he saw it and was glad." John 8, 56. It makes no difference whether one takes the "day of Christ" to be the day of His incarnation or the day of His appearing in the Plain of Mamre — it is certain that Abraham saw Christ, either with the eyes of his body in the door of his tent or by faith, when God promised him Seed, or both. See Him he did; this Christ testifies expressly, and so also the Jews understand Him: "Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast seen Abraham?" John 8, 57. How in the name of common sense can there have been a personal acquaintance between you? Very easily, answers Christ; for "I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am." John 8, 58. Will you still say that we illumine the eyes of Abraham with the lamp of Paul? Methinks they do not need it. One should not picture the patriarchs to one's eyes as poor simpletons — with eyes turned to the ground, moved by earthly promises, without knowledge of Christ, and without hope of the life to come. Did they not have the Gospel of the "Seed of the woman" who was to bruise the head of the serpent? Gen. 3, 15. And they faithfully pondered it in their

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A Defense of Unionism Refuted. — The *Lutheran Church Herald* reprints a valuable article from the *Bible Banner*, in which unionism is discussed. Last Thanksgiving Day Dr. S. G. Hägglund of the Augustana Synod took part in a union service in Boston which was participated in by Jews and Unitarians and spoke the benediction. Attacked on that score, he wrote a short defense. Dean Miller replied to this defense in the *Bible Banner*, showing how utterly untenable it is. He first summarizes the arguments of Dr. Hägglund and then presents his counter-arguments. Lack of space forbids our reprinting Dean Miller's remarks verbatim. We must be content with giving his thought as briefly as possible. Dr. Hägglund's arguments were: 1) The meeting was held in a public hall and not in a church. 2) It was in accord with the proclamations of the President and the Governor. 3) A passage from the New Testament was read in the name of Jesus Christ. 4) The benediction was spoken by Dr. Hägglund in the name of the Trinity. 5) Although we must not deny, is it not our duty to be courteous to others? 6) Jesus mingled with publicans and sinners, scribes and Pharisees, and worshiped in the synagog. 7) The truth and purer spirituality will finally prevail. 8) We Lutherans ought not isolate ourselves and allow others to be in sole charge of community services, but put the leaven of true Christianity into the lump. 9) If community services are held in a place of dignity, that factor must not be overlooked.

The following is the gist of Dean Miller's reply: 1) The meeting under consideration was a religious service. The fact that it was held

3) "If the devil could die, he would not die in another way," later some converted eye-witness declared. ("*Si le diable pouvait mourir, il ne mourrait pas autrement.*") These words, according to the Abbé of St. Sulpice, were spoken by the chef of Hôtel Villette. (Cp. *Histoire de M. Vuarin par l'Abbé Martin*, t. I, p. 372.)

4) "*In zwanzig Jahren wird der liebe Herrgott Feierabend haben.*"

in a hall does not change its character. 2) The proclamations referred to state that thanksgiving should be rendered in our homes and several places of worship. No compromising of our religious faith by worshipping together with those who hold some other faith is suggested. 3) The reading of a passage from the New Testament in the name of Jesus on such an occasion is more of a compromise than of a confession, because one agrees to worship together with Jews and Unitarians and thereby puts the Christian faith alongside of the Jewish and Unitarian religion, recognizing the latter as being on an equality with Christianity. 4) Pronouncing the benediction in the name of the Triune God in such a union service is more of an indignity than a testimony. It is taking the name of Christ in vain, for it is certain that the Word of God pronounces no benediction upon such mixing of the worship of Belial and Christ. 2 Cor. 6, 15. 16. 5) Courtesy does not require that we unite with representatives of Modernism and heterodoxy in any form of worship. Compare 2 John 9—11. 6) We cannot for an instant accuse Jesus of having had any tolerance whatsoever with the unbelief of the scribes and Pharisees. John 8, 44. Matt. 23 shows that Jesus did not pronounce a benediction upon these people. 7) The truth will prevail; but Jesus cannot use us as instruments for spreading His truth if we compromise with that which is a lie. 8) The Lutheran Church should testify far and wide, but she cannot be of influence for spreading the clear Gospel of salvation if she becomes a partner in worship with the enemies of Christ. 9) We should preach Christ all over, in churches, halls, etc.; but that does not mean that we must join Jews or Unitarians in joint worship. — It is worthy of note that Dr. Miller applies what he says to lodge services also; for he says this question “not only affects the ministers, but also our lay people in their relationship to such unbelievers in the lodge services.” We should like to add that the principles which he utters so forcefully apply not only to worship with Jews and Unitarians, but also to false prophets in general, and that non-compliance with the principles of Scripture must lead to severance of fraternal relations.

“Baptists Necessary.” — So says the *Watchman-Examiner*, December 15, 1927, after having laid down these general principles: “A body of Christians can justify a separate denominational existence on one ground only, and that is, that they hold some distinctive and essential truth that others either pervert or do not teach at all. If a given denomination does not differ materially from others in its order, ordinances, and doctrines, it is a cumberer on the ground and ought not to be. It is a serious thing to fly in the face of our Lord’s prayer in John 17 for the unity of His people and perpetuate a sect unless those doing it stand for some essential truth that others do not teach. . . . Our Baptist people would have no trouble making out their case on this ground.” In *Why I Am What I Am* Dr. R. S. MacArthur made out this case for the Baptists: 1) “There is absolutely no place for infant baptism in an evangelical system of theology. If baptism will not make a child a Christian, there is no reason for baptizing the child. How can men who adopt the famous

dictum of Chillingworth, 'The Bible, and the Bible only, the Religion of Protestants,' practise infant baptism?" 2) "The baptism of the apostolic churches was immersion, if the tautology of the expression may be permitted. A Baptist does not consider that he is ever at liberty to use a human substitute, such as pouring or sprinkling, for the divine command of baptism." 3) "It has been said that Baptists make too much of Baptism; but in fact no religious body, except the Quakers, make so little of it as they. They have very low ideas as to the necessity of Baptism. They observe Baptism as the organizing principle of church-life. How can a few drops of water or an ocean change the child's relations to God?" Accordingly the essential truth which justifies the separate existence of the Baptist denomination is the teaching that, while Baptism is of little importance, the outward form, immersion, is of great importance, equaled only by the importance of denouncing infant baptism as "the efflorescence of a most gross superstition." Dr. MacArthur has not made out a good case for the Baptists. However, there is an additional plea: "Another point in which Baptists are the exponents both of New Testament and modern ideas is their doctrine of religious freedom, the tenet that the civil magistrate has no authority over a man's religious creed and usage. This was originally a distinctively Baptist idea. For this idea they have again and again shed their blood." The Baptists certainly have stressed this important truth. Great credit is due them. But they had no call to separate from the Church of the Reformation in the interest of this truth. It is not a distinctively Baptist idea. It is a distinctively Lutheran idea. Dr. MacArthur is acquainted with the Augsburg Confession. He says: "The Augsburg Confession of 1530 says: 'They condemn the Anabaptists [a nickname of the Baptists], who reject the baptism of children and say that children are saved without Baptism.'" If he had read on, he would have come across these statements in Article 28: "Civil government deals with other things than does the Gospel. The civil rulers defend not minds, but bodies and bodily things against manifest injuries and restrain men with the sword and bodily punishments in order to preserve civil justice and peace. . . . Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded. The power of the Church has its own commission, to teach the Gospel and to administer the Sacraments. . . . After this manner our teachers discriminate between the duties of both these powers." E.

Letter-Writing Evangelism. — The *Watchman-Examiner* writes editorially on an opportunity of winning souls which is often overlooked. It says: "We ought by all means to try to win men to Christ. Have you ever tried to approach men by letter? The writer has won scores to Christ by that method. A letter cannot take the place of the spoken word, nor ought it ever to be resorted to from cowardice. But often it is possible to plead with men by letter when a personal conversation with them is impossible. The letter has a distinct advantage in that it can be read over and over again. It has a further advantage in that it eliminates distance. Hand-written letters are

the best because they are recognized as personal and private; but even the dictated letter is not to be despised. Dr. John Timothy Stone says, talking with a traveling man of New York City, 'I never let a day end without dictating a letter to some personal friend about his soul's salvation.' And then he added quietly: 'I want to tell you this: All unconsciously to me, three stenographers in the last few years have been won to the Lord Jesus Christ, won through the letters I have dictated, and in each case I did not know a single word I said was being taken to heart by them.'"

To the apostles' Spirit-guided and Spirit-directed letter-writing we owe the major and most important part of the New Testament. If the Holy Ghost has sanctified this method of winning, instructing, and encouraging souls that are not in close proximity, we ought certainly not to be slack in using it. The world would be better off to-day if Christian parents would write more letters to their children away from home; and how many souls would be saved from damnation if pastors would only take the time to remember in this way those members, especially such as they instructed and confirmed, who afterwards moved to some other city or town! And, above all, a Christian letter to a friend from a Christian friend! Are we not neglecting a wonderful opportunity for good by forgetting one of the most potent means of inspiration and comfort — the personal Christian letter?

MUELLER.

Neo-Unitarianism in Ulster.—"The battle that Dr. Henry Cooke fought out in Ulster a century ago must apparently be fought over again," writes the *Sunday-school Times*. "The Presbyterian Assembly of 1927 retained Professor Davey in his position as theological professor. His stand is not essentially different from that of the Non-Subscribers a century ago. Professor Davey tells us that in Christ 'we have a perfect spirit in the imperfect vestments—social, historical, and intellectual—of a provincial Judaism and an apocalyptic piety. . . . Jesus was subject to variations of the nervous system as Paul was. . . . Christ would not have spoken of the innocent suffering for the guilty. He would not regard Himself as innocent any more than good. . . . If Christ is not a final revelation, still less are our Scriptures. . . . I do not think that for practical purposes it can have any but an injurious outcome to say that Jesus Christ is the highest that is possible.'

"Canon Mozley tells us that the Arians taunted the Nicene Fathers with being poor, unintellectual men. It is curious to note how the same taunt comes from the mouths of Arians of our own day. The Nicene Fathers were not disturbed, but merely insisted that what they taught was the doctrine that the apostles had delivered to the Church and that had been held by the Church ever since. 'The same, the very same,' they repeated. They were right, and they triumphed. The Irish Presbyterians also triumphed in their day after a stiff fight with the intruders. If the Christian Church in America is ultimately to win over a conscienceless and subtle Unitarianism, it is high time to awake out of sleep and realize what its deadliest enemy is doing."

MUELLER.

Glimpses from the Editor's Window.

In the current volume of the *Freikirche*, published by our brethren in Germany, Rev. A. Huebener, submits, in a number of issues, a valuable discussion of a book which constitutes a vehement onslaught on "Missouri," the writer being Dr. Slotty of the Breslau Synod. These articles ought to be read far and wide in order that people may become acquainted with the refutation of wrong views about our Synod's doctrinal position.

Prof. Carl Stange, of Goettingen, has declined the call to Berlin to become the successor of Professor Seeberg (cf. our March issue).

In Tuebingen the seventy-fifth birthday of Dr. Adolph Schlatter was observed recently. This conservative theologian is said to be so popular as a teacher that the room in which he lectures had to be provided with special seats to accommodate the students anxious to hear him.

Archbishop Soederblom has written a reply to the recent papal encyclical on the union of all Christians. He refers to the invitation sent the Roman See to be represented at the conference in Stockholm, although the opinion was voiced in the committee that Rome was heterodox and hence should not be sent an invitation. What blindness shown by Soederblom and his *confrères* in asking the Antichrist in Rome to join them in brotherly deliberations rather than to call upon him to repent!

Says the *Presbyterian* of April 5: "Something has happened in the minds of the followers of John Calvin and John Wesley that could hardly have been predicted fifty years ago. They have both come to see the rich spiritual possibilities of the Lenten season. . . . Evangelism seems increasingly easy as we approach the cross and the empty tomb and the risen Lord. It [*i. e.*, Lent] is thus a season of twofold value, a time of special devotion, communion, abstinence, and also a great hour for the ingathering of precious souls."

The German Field Marshal Erich von Ludendorff has taken up the cudgels against Freemasonry. The *Ev.-Luth. Kirchenblatt* of South America has some valuable comments on the famous general's writings in which he combats Freemasonry, stressing especially its dangerous character from a political point of view. He puts Freemasonry down as an organization which desires to do away with national lines in the interest of a cosmopolitan Judaism and aims at the destruction of Christianity. In Berlin, we are told, forty pastors, some of them prominent men, are Freemasons. The *Deutsche Christliche Arbeitsgemeinschaft* recently demanded that all ministers belonging to lodges who do not leave the lodge within half a year should be deposed.

The *Presbyterian* says that the General Assembly statistics of its Church report 2,998 churches with no additions on confession of faith. In explanation it says that the same statistics report 1,995 vacant churches, that is, churches without the services of a regular pastor. Of these vacant churches 240 report no membership (I suppose that means that nothing is said in the report as to the number of members) and more than one hundred, a membership of 25 or less. To the outsider the situation would seem to be alarming.

Montreal, Can., has among its citizens a prominent Modernist, namely, Dr. Richard Roberts. According to the *Sunday-school Times* this man recently made a remarkable confession. He admits that he does not know what to do. "Action requires conviction, and we are without convictions." "We have opinions, car-loads of them; but only convictions discharge themselves in acts." He and his brethren know very well that only faith conquers the world, and still they will not have faith.

Times reports that the new, critical edition of the Vulgate, which is in the course of preparation by a commission of Benedictine monks under the guidance of Cardinal Gasquet, is making progress and that the second volume will soon be in the hands of the public. Twenty thousand manuscripts have been gathered and are being compared.

The A. A. A. A. (American Association for the Advancement of Atheism) is reported to have as its objective, among other things, taxation of church property, secularization of marriage with divorce upon request, and removal of "In God we trust" from coins and of the cross from above the flag. While justified in its protest against the mingling of Church and State, the association is evidently on a course leading to the deepest pools of filth.

In explaining why the churches are not growing more rapidly, Missionary C. H. Fenn, who is home on furlough, said, so we are told: "The Church is suffering from fatty degeneration of the heart, pernicious anemia, cerebro-spinal meningitis, cancer, and neuritis." There is much truth in this. It must not be overlooked, however, that according to the Scriptures the last times are to be a period of ever-increasing unbelief.

We Americans are so prone to fondle a new fad or to rush into novel experiments. The *Watchman-Examiner* quotes this from a daily paper: "The only reason a great many Americans do not own an elephant is that they have never been offered an elephant for a dollar down and easy weekly payments."
