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Foreword.

In making a survey of conditions as the new year is beckoning to us to gird our loins for another twelve months' service, if such be the will of our heavenly Father, we are again struck by the vast change that has taken place with respect to prominent issues before the Church if we compare our times with those of our fathers forty or fifty years ago. In those days there was a good deal of doctrinal discussion, Methodists arguing with Baptists on their distinctive teachings, Calvinists opposing Arminians, and Lutherans of one synod debating with those of another synod on the positions of their respective bodies. The starting-point invariably was the Bible, and the debate usually concerned itself with the question whether the tenets of a certain denomination were Scriptural or not. Inasmuch as both parties to the debate appealed to the Scriptures as their authority, the interpretation of the Bible became a very important matter, and often there was to be witnessed a thorough investigation of special texts which one or the other of the contestants had quoted in support of his belief. In the last analysis, what kept Protestants apart was a difference in principles of interpretation with respect to the sacred Book, the authority of which all acknowledged, a difference which resulted in disparity of doctrine on an ever-increasing scale, the stream widening as it proceeded on its course. To take an example, the Lutherans and the Reformed agreed in regarding the Bible as true in every word and as a guide to be followed in all religious matters, but they differed as to the interpretation of certain important passages, the Lutherans holding that the words of Scripture must be taken as they read, the exegete using such light as the Bible itself affords (*Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur*), while the Reformed held that reason must be permitted a vote when we determine the sense of a Scripture-passage, an attitude which, of course, resulted in their having two guides to whom they entrusted themselves in establishing the content of divine revelation, namely, the

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

Are Christ and Gospel Opposites? — The *Lutheran*, November 22, 1928: "It has been said that Luther substituted an infallible Book for an infallible Church. This is not true. Christianity is not a book-religion. We are not founded upon any book, be it the creeds and confessions, noble as they are, not even on the Scripture, holy as it is. Christianity is founded upon a living Christ. He Himself is the Word. The Christian company is composed of those who believe in Him and love Him and follow Him. The Bible is the record in which we find Him, just as the shepherds in the Christmas-story found Him in the swaddling-clothes and in the manger. Because it brings us this complete revelation of God in Jesus Christ, we look upon it as different from all other books, and our faith ever goes back to it for sustenance and renewal of strength. It was written by men even as we are; but in it God speaks to us, and we reverently refer to it as God's Word."

Th. Harnack: "We do not believe in a book, but in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. . . . Scripture comes into consideration only secondarily. The primary consideration is Christ."

Ihmels: The faith of the first disciples was engendered, not through Christ's testimony of Himself or through the *word* concerning Christ, but rather "through the impression of reality received by the disciples in their daily intercourse with Him. So to-day only that is true faith in Jesus Christ which is thrust upon men by Christ's exhibiting Himself to them."

A. Harnack (Liberal): "The Christian does not, as Luther himself very well knew [?], live on the means of grace; he lives by the personal conjunction with God which he has experienced in Christ."

W. Herrmann (Liberal): "To be sure, not even the Christian can derive the foundation of an indestructible assurance simply from the New Testament conception of God's fatherly goodness. . . . Faith can find its basis only in the experience which produced it. This is always a happening in which a man becomes aware of the spiritual power to which alone he can surrender himself without compunction. . . . To accept God's forgiveness means that we become aware in a fact of our experience that the same God who judges us for our sins still seeks to unite us with Himself. . . . That Jesus Christ has the power to redeem us can only mean that our present experience of the reality of His person convinces us as nothing else does that God will accept us. . . . We do not believe in Christ because of the Bible, but we believe in the Bible because we have found Christ in it."

Luther: "Outside of His Word and without His Word we know of no Christ, much less of Christ's thoughts." (17, 2015.)

H. E. Jacobs: "Our faith rests entirely upon God's promise. . . . Upon what does this certainty depend? Not upon man's ability to read the secret will of God or upon any new personal revelation, but upon what God has already revealed in the Gospel. . . . 'The soul can do without everything except the Word of God.' (Luther.)" (*A Summary of the Christian Faith*, pp. 192. 202. 267.)

Jesus Christ: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me *through their word*." John 17, 20. E.

"Our Distinctive Doctrine of the Means of Grace."—The Scripture-doctrine that the means of grace offer the sinner the full righteousness gained by Christ, thereby create faith, and thus put the sinner in possession of the forgiveness of sins is a distinctive Lutheran doctrine. That is universally recognized. Th. Haering, for instance, says: "Among the evangelical churches the Lutheran Church is the 'Church of the means of grace,' respectively, of the Word as means of grace; it is in the strictest sense necessary for salvation." (*Der christliche Glaube*, p. 562.) Because of the relation of this doctrine to the chief doctrine of the Bible, justification by faith, we make so much of it. We love our Church because she stresses the doctrine of the means of grace. We say with Dr. Krotel: "I am a Lutheran because my Church, not only in her confessions, but in her preaching and teaching, gives such prominence to the two fundamental principles of Evangelical Protestantism, the so-called formal principle, *viz.*, that the Bible is the only infallible rule of faith and practise; and the so-called material principle, *viz.*, that men are justified by the free grace of God through faith in Christ. . . . I am a Lutheran because my Church believes that the means of grace given by the Lord, . . . namely, 'the Word and Sacraments,' are the 'instruments' by which 'the Holy Spirit is given, who worketh faith where and when it pleaseth God, in those that hear the Gospel, that God, not for our merits' sake, but for Christ's sake, does justify those who believe that they, for Christ's sake, are received into favor.' (Art. V of *Augsb. Conf.*)" (*Why I Am What I Am*, p. 115 ff.) Convinced of the supreme importance of this doctrine, it is our duty to bring it to the attention of all Christians. The *Lutheran* (August 2, 1928) brings

up the matter thus: "These misrepresentations of the Gospel lie in the dulled perception of the power of God unto salvation or in the hobbling of the Gospel by hitching it with secular forces, which limit its ability to drag men's souls away from mammon into the kingdom of God. We believe a properly appointed committee could draft a statement concerning what the Gospel is, what it can do, and how it should be proclaimed in this age. If such a 'platform,' to borrow a word just now common, were put into the hands of the ten thousand Lutheran preachers in North America and preached with the vigor such official backing would give its items; if from pastors and congregations our distinctive doctrine of the means of grace permeated the various church groups and fermented in the minds of other denominations, the now partly buried talent of Lutheranism would become more effectively active." We are heartily in favor of persistently calling the attention of the churches to this doctrine. The "platform" is already constructed. We cannot improve on Article V of the Augsburg Confession and the related confessional statements. Let us preach it and present it with vigor. We need not attach great importance to "the official backing." Let us preach it with the vigor the Scripture backing gives it. The warning of the *Lutheran* is timely. We dare not bury this great talent of Lutheranism. The other churches need it. The doctrine of justification through faith cannot be maintained without the doctrine of the means of grace. Dr. Walther said: "It is true that besides the Evangelical Lutheran Church most so-called Protestant churches declare that man is justified before God alone by grace, through faith, for Christ's sake, and not by the works of the Law; but they subvert this doctrine through their teaching on the means by which man is justified before God. They teach falsely, first, regarding the means of grace, the means by which God gives, namely, the Word and the holy Sacraments; and secondly, on the instrumental means on the part of man by which he appropriates the gift, namely, faith. And these errors spring from their false teaching on the redemptive work and person of Christ and on the gracious will and gracious call of God." (*The Lutheran Doctrine on Justification*, p. 35.) A Church which denies that the forgiveness of sins is offered in the Gospel and the Sacraments and denies that faith comes into consideration only as the instrument of appropriation, has lost the Scriptural conception of justification through faith. Justification through faith is a distinctive doctrine of that Church alone which maintains the doctrine of the means of grace. In the interest of the chief doctrine of Christianity we must ask the Reformed churches to study what Scripture says on the Gospel and the Sacraments. And we need to study it among ourselves, too. If we would free the Lutheran Church of all traces of synergism and establish the rule of the *sola gratia*, we must maintain that the full power to convert lies in the means of grace and that man is justified and saved, not on account of any good quality in himself, but solely through the promise of grace in the Gospel. The study of the means of grace will prove profitable to all concerned.

The Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of the Norwegian Synod.—The *Lutheran Church Herald* writes editorially: "This year [1928] being the seventy-fifth year since the Synod of the Norwegian Ev. Luth. Church of America was organized, Dr. H. G. Stub, former president of the synod and president emeritus of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, was asked to speak about the former synod; but being unable to be present, the editor of the *Herald* served as substitute and spoke for a few minutes on the subject.

"The former Norwegian Synod, as it was generally called, was organized at Luther Valley, Wis., at a meeting held there from the 3d to the 7th of October, 1853. A constitution had been drafted earlier in the year and sent to the congregations for ratification. Seventeen congregations had adopted the constitution and were represented at the meeting. The pastors present were: A. C. Preus, H. A. Stub, G. F. Dietrichson, N. Brandt, H. A. Preus, and I. A. Otteson. Rev. C. L. Clausen, who joined the synod, was not present, being interested at the time in a migration project to St. Ansgar, Iowa. There were at this time about 38 congregations served by these pastors, and the membership altogether was 11,400 souls. Dr. J. Magnus Rohne has written a history of Norwegian American Lutheranism up to 1872, which with considerable exhaustiveness covers the early history of the synod and other church-bodies up to this time. In the short period of time allotted to the speaker of the evening it was impossible to enter into any review of the history. It is a fairly well established historical fact that the synod organized in 1853, after many years of doctrinal discussion and conferences, came to an agreement with the former United Lutheran Church and the former Hauge Synod in 1912. Further conferences were held to agree on articles of union and a new constitution, and all these being ratified in a regular and legal manner, the three bodies united in the year 1917 at a meeting in St. Paul. The three former bodies with their constitution and articles of incorporation are still functioning within the new body until all properties have been transferred to the new corporation. *When a few pastors and congregations of the former synod, dissatisfied with the union, organized and formed a new body, they were, of course, prohibited by law from appropriating the name of the former synod and adopted a new name and formed a new corporation. They have no right, either legally or otherwise, to the claim of being the former Norwegian Synod organized in 1853.*"

We have italicized the sentences which refer to the "Norwegian Synod" which is affiliated with the Synodical Conference and leave it to the reader to draw his own deductions and judge the new united body both from the words themselves and from the tenor and tone in which they are written. To us the spirit expressed appears as an intolerable one.

MUELLER.

May We Participate in the So-Called World Conference of Lutherans?—Since this is a question which engages the interest and attention of all of us, we reprint here, with a few comments of our own, the discussion of this subject which some time ago the *Lutheran Standard* submitted to its readers. Says this contemporary: "We

should like to say just a word yet concerning the second Lutheran World Convention, which is to be held in Copenhagen next year, more particularly about the relation of our own synod to that meeting. There is just one question that we want to raise here: in deciding whether delegates are to be sent or not, should the synod be governed solely by the question whether such participation involves what is commonly known as unionism with Lutheran bodies which are not considered sufficiently orthodox by our synod? If that is the only question to consider, then quite probably the matter of sending delegates will be easily disposed of.

"Would it be quite fair and logical to dispose of the matter simply on the basis of unionism, without considering carefully what the purpose of those conventions is? To state the purpose in a few words, as we see it, the aim of those conventions is to bring the many bodies of Lutherans throughout the world together that they may learn to know one another and thus cultivate a deeper spirit of friendship and good will and create everywhere a world-consciousness of Lutheranism.

"Then also undoubtedly these Lutherans the world over, if they are truly disciples of Jesus Christ as well as members of the Church of the Reformation, will, on meeting together, be willing to learn from one another, and each synod or body should be profited. Certainly no one in the Ohio Synod thinks that we have no need of learning from others, and if we are so fortunately situated that we can be of help to others, to render such help should be our greatest delight, especially if they are willing to meet with us.

"One may well ask the question here whether the Joint Synod of Ohio has any obligations to the world at large and in particular to the Lutheran Church of the world, and then the other question, How can we hope to discharge such obligations fully if we refuse to meet with other bodies for consultation?"

In looking at these arguments the following considerations arise in our mind:—

1. According to the above, almost every form of unionism could be defended and justified; for there is hardly a body of earnest Christians in any denomination from which we could not learn something and which, in turn, would not be benefited by associating with confessional Lutherans.

2. Not the *name* Lutheran can decide for us the question whether we may meet with a number of people as brethren. Very little, if anything, depends on the name. What is essential is that the divinely revealed truths be adhered to.

3. We are here not dealing with a matter to be determined by Christian wisdom. It is not a point of policy that is under consideration. A principle is involved, laid down in the Bible. The Bible clearly teaches that it is wrong for us to fellowship errorists and schismatics. Cf. Titus 3, 10, 11; Rom. 16, 17. It probably will be rejoined that attendance at these pan-Lutheran conventions does not imply the establishment of fraternal relations with the various bodies represented there and the individuals composing the assembly. We

wish we could say that this strikes us as true, but from all we have heard and read it is undeniable that the delegates meet as brethren, liberal Lutherans of Germany and Sweden joining hands with conservative Lutherans of the United States just as though no deep chasm separated them.

4. It is in keeping with the principles of truth and honesty that we do not by a show of fraternal spirit endorse teachings which we inwardly abhor. Every true Lutheran indignantly refuses to be identified with the positions held, for instance, by Dr. Soederblom, who was one of the representatives of the Swedish Lutheran Church at the convention in Eisenach. As far as can be forecast, there will be men attending the Copenhagen Convention who openly oppose the Lutheran doctrines on vital matters. To sit in a religious convention with them as if they were our brethren is not compatible with the principles of honesty which are inculcated on many a page of the Bible and are confirmed by the voice of our conscience.

5. The situation would be entirely different, of course, if the contemplated convention were to be really a free conference, assembling for the purpose of examining the doctrinal differences which keep us Lutherans apart and of removing these differences in a God-pleasing manner. In that case we should hail the convention as the manifestation of a revived Lutheran consciousness, which might issue in great and enduring blessings. But as long as unity in faith is pre-supposed instead of being made the goal, the venture cannot be given our approval.

On the Origin of Spiritism. — The October number of the *Philological Quarterly* (Iowa City, Iowa) contains an interesting note on the word "medium" and the origin of spiritism. It was supposed that the word "medium" first came into use in 1853, and is so noted in the ordinary dictionaries. But, as a matter of fact, Emmanuel Swedenborg, in his *Arcana Coelestia*, constantly uses the word to describe any being who was "the organ of communication from departed spirits." (Cp. pp. 3902. 3913. 3928. 3937.) The writer of the note, Prof. H. S. Ficke of the University of Dubuque, concludes his short reference with the remark: "As a matter of fact the whole terminology of modern Spiritualism is borrowed from Emmanuel Swedenborg, and the borrowing was done by Andrew Jackson Davis, the seer of Poughkeepsie. In 1847 he published *The Principles of Nature, Her Divine Revelations, and a Voice to Mankind*. This has always been regarded as the first authoritative statement of Spiritualism, and in it he constantly and explicitly acknowledges his indebtedness to Swedenborg" (p. 401). K.

The Latest Work on the "Second Isaiah" and the Critical Dismemberment of Isaiah. — Prof. Geo. A. Barton, now of the University of Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia Divinity School, in an article contributed to the October, 1928, number of *Christian Education*, waxes enthusiastic over a recent book by Prof. Charles Cutler Torrey of Yale University, calling the appearance of the latter's book *The Second Isaiah* an event of the first magnitude in Old Testament criticism. It seems that Torrey's entire book is based upon the most

daring of conjectural criticisms; for he points out "that, if we erase five or six obvious glosses, mostly of one or two words which destroy the meter, but include the whole of verse 28 of chap. 44, we have a collection of poems, perfect as they stand, poems written, not in Babylonia, but in Palestine; not in the time of Cyrus, 559—529 B. C., but at least a hundred years later." Barton's estimate of this wild hypothesis is shown in his remark: "It is a solution which fits the facts [which facts?], and it is so simple that, when one sees it, he wonders that he needed any one to point it out to him. Duhm, Cheyne, and Marti have been effectually answered, and if we are not mistaken, the year 1928 has been made by Professor Torrey's book as much of a landmark in the criticism of Second Isaiah as 1781 [when Koppe first made the suggestion of the Second Isaiah] and 1892 when [Duhm further dismembered the so-called Second Isaiah] were." The guess about the Second Isaiah is as little proved to-day as it was in 1781, but liberal critics will continue to build up on false premises. K.

Glimpses from the Editor's Window.

The Pope, it seems, is deeply grieved and keenly disappointed that he was not asked to sign the Kellogg Peace Pact in Paris. There we have it again! The Roman Catholic Church pants for secular power. The Pope regards himself as a temporal prince. He had no more right to sign the peace pact than the presidents of the Northern Baptist Convention and Southern Baptist Convention. — *Watchman-Examiner*.

Dr. Boyd Carpenter, bishop of Ripon, was once asked if he did not feel nervous when preaching before Queen Victoria. He replied: "I never address the queen at all. I know there will be present the queen, the household, the servants down to the scullery maid, and I preach to the scullery maid."

Several months ago *Harper's Monthly* published an article having the caption: "The Modern Christian Speaks." Hanford Henderson was the writer. Since he professes to be a typical Modernist, we quote some of his statements as they are reprinted in the *Presbyterian*: "My own attitude in this respect is not unique; it is typical, I think, of the modern Christian. I have worshiped in Buddhist temples and at Shinto shrines in Japan; with Hindu and with Parsee in India; at the Greek church in Paris and in Tokyo; in Roman Catholic cathedrals in many parts of Europe, and with as deep sincerity as in the parish church at home. That is to say, I am first of all a world religionist; and after that I am by birth a Christian; by family tradition and upbringing an Episcopalian; by personal preference a High Church man." In reality, we add, this Modernist is an enemy of the Cross and a denier of the Gospel, which says that there is no salvation except in Jesus Christ.

According to the *Sunday-school Times* there is a controversy in the Bible Institute of Los Angeles involving the dean, Dr. John McInnis. The latter is accused of modernistic teachings. He is charged with saying, for instance, that God "is always carrying up the sins of the people in His purpose of redemption and that in the World War the innocent carried up the sins of the age to the field of battle, and there they suffered for the guilty, as an illustration of the death of Christ." The *Sunday-school Times* correctly says these teachings contradict the uniqueness and finality of the blood atonement.

An exchange reports that Japan is contemplating establishing an ambassadorship at the Vatican. Roman papers dwell on this news with satisfaction. The Japanese are seeking contact with the Pope on account of the strong emigration of their people to certain countries of Latin America, especially Brazil.

Note this descent to almost abysmal depths of spiritual perversion with which Dean Willard L. Sperry of Harvard University Divinity School is credited. He is reported to have said: "The only true religious spirit to be discerned among large bodies of undergraduates to-day is in the football stadium. One of the deepest spiritual experiences I have had was one Saturday afternoon a few years ago in the Harvard stadium. It is just that spirit which transforms football from a form of athletics to a religion which our universities must diffuse through wider channels."

Trinity Episcopal Church, Manhattan, N. Y., is announcing that its clergy will no longer solemnize the marriage of parties who are non-Christians. In explanation the rector says: "We should urge non-Christians to be married by a civil officer, and we must assert the fact that Christian marriage is a Sacrament in which divine grace is given. The Church must set herself free from this harmful association with indiscriminate marriage." The *Watchman-Examiner* rightly objects to naming marriage a Sacrament; but when it calls the new policy an unwarranted step, it goes a trifle too far. A Christian pastor need not marry all comers. If he, for certain reasons, refuses to perform the marriage ceremony for non-Christians, who can blame him? This does not mean, of course, that he has no right to officiate in such cases. But the concepts of right and duty must not be confused.

The Ku Klux Klan believes that it is not fully developed as yet and can afford to add some additional features. We read in an exchange: "At its biennial convention in Chicago, July 17—19, the Ku Klux Klan decided to introduce into the order a fun degree, to be known as 'House of Mirth.'" A short time ago the consensus of opinion seemed to be that the Klan was the victim of early senility. If the above is right, then we may assume that an expert physician has been called in and that he has prescribed buffoonery. Will the remedy work?

The next move of the Anglican Church, its revision of the *Book of Common Prayer* having been rejected, will probably be the attempt to induce Parliament to pass a law giving the Church of England a higher degree of liberty for setting its own house in order. This is the opinion of observers, who state that some Anglicans point to the status of the Church in Scotland as a possible model. We are told in the press that a commission will be appointed to study this plan.
