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## The Ghost of Pietism

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## The Ghost of Pietism.

It has been raised in the Norwegian Lutheran Church. An attempt is being fostered with an energy and persistence worthy of a better cause to revive upon American soil the lay activities connected with the career of Hans Nielsen Hauge. When the Norwegian Lutheran Church was organized in 1917, the smallest of the bodies entering the union was the so-called Hauge Synod. Characteristic of this Norwegian body are revivalism and lay preaching. A minority was reluctant to enter the union because they feared a gradual submergence of their peculiar type if associated with the former Norwegian Synod and Norwegian United Church. They stipulated that their peculiar views of congregational life be left unhampered by the majority. In a recent issue of the *Lutheran Herald* (1931, p. 1480) we read this reference to the union of 1917: "It was said many years ago by a leader in the Church: 'We shall gobble the pietists [Hauge Synod] in a tremendous outward organization.' 'Yes,' it was answered, 'such an attempt can surely be made; but then the Church must be prepared to take the consequences. If the attempt is made to gobble the pietists for the purpose of getting rid of them, then it is to be feared they will cause tremendous pains in the belly of the Church.' There may be a grain of truth in this assertion." The writer of this article, of which we have quoted the ominous closing words, is Rev. J. M. Wick; and the immediate purpose of his article is to plead for recognition by the Church on behalf of the Haugean element. This recognition, let it be noted, is to take the form of maintaining a training-school at Red Wing, Minn. From a note in the *Lutheran Sentinel* (1931, p. 409) we gather that the Haugean faction has during the last year held several meetings "for the purpose of effecting the organization of a society in order to put forth concerted action in furthering their cause." This they succeeded in doing at a meeting at Red Wing, Minn., the latter part of October. Their society is called "The Red Wing Seminary League of Friends."



We are also informed by the same paper that the cause of these efforts is to be sought in the fact that the Board of Education of the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America had resolved to close the school for lack of funds. When it is remembered that this seminary was formerly the property of the Hauge Synod, where its doctrines and practises had been taught and advocated for years, the surprising amount of feeling which is evident in the articles pro and con may be understood. The intention of the Haugeans is to support this school in preference to all other schools in the Church and to make it a stronghold of pietism. They also demand that their views shall be taught at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, the official seminary of the Church.

Rev. Wick's argument for the effort now being made "to gather the pietistic element about a certain school" is based on the presence of "a natural gift molded by God's recreating grace into a gift of grace," the gift of praying and testifying in public. It is argued that gifts of this kind must not be ignored by the Church, but should be placed into its service. He says: "We are aware of a situation. The old Haugean lay preachers are fast disappearing in our Church. One by one they are passing away, and few seem to rise to take their places. That is one thing. Then we have the language transition wielding its influence. The old men of God have given their message almost exclusively in the Norwegian language. A witness who is from now on going to reach and influence the growing generation must be able to deliver his message in English." Now, for this purpose they need a school where laymen may receive "some help in handling the language, but particularly Bible knowledge, Lutheran teachings, and homiletical assistance in the treatment of Bible texts." Of course, the students would have to be brethren with a definite, positive "Christian experience." Preventing the establishment of a school for their training is referred to as an attempt to "choke the true Christian life." In the same issue of the *Lutheran Herald*, space is given also to an article by Rev. C. K. Solberg, who speaks somewhat more boldly, first, in his complaint of the "high-churchly tendency," which had no use for revival meetings or prayer-meetings, where the laity took part with testimony and free prayer. Then follows the old-time Haugean complaint about "educational Christianity" (*opdragelseskristendom*). The danger of "a dead orthodoxy and formalism" is pointed out especially in view of the fact that "many in the congregations are unsaved." While not willing to go so far as to demand that the layman who feels called of God to preach shall have the right to go into a congregation and hold meetings without the permission of the congregation or its pastor, Solberg nevertheless compares the action of a congregation which refuses to permit lay preaching to the rejection of Christ's own disciples — "when ye depart out of that house, shake off the dust



of your feet." Such congregations "will have to take the consequences and shoulder the responsibility themselves."

To the present observer this attempt to revitalize Haugeanism looks like an attempt to galvanize into life the dead body of a movement which in its own day was not only blessed of God, but was undoubtedly Spirit-driven, — the Haugean revival of Norway, 130 years ago.

This man Hauge was not only what Kielland has called him, "the greatest man that Norway ever had," but was one of the greatest laymen in the history of the Christian Church. To appreciate this high estimate, one must read Wilhelm Pettersen's *The Light in the Prison Window, the Life-story of Hans Nielsen Hauge*, or, better still, the biography by Bishop Bang.

Hauge was a peasant, who lived in the age when a Norwegian bishop could sit and listen to a minister preaching "gospel" that had in it "neither a Savior nor remission of sin nor repentance nor sanctification and just about no God," — and say nothing or even praise the minister's eloquence and learning. Rationalism and materialism were in the saddle. Ministers, instead of preaching the Gospel of salvation, talked about planting potatoes and about vaccination and wrote drinking-songs. Bishops of the Church were outspokenly hostile to Christianity itself. The ministerial education was at low ebb. In some years there were only three theological candidates, in 1817 only one. In 1827 nine parishes were vacant in the Trondhjem district alone.

In this age of spiritual corruption a Norwegian peasant, Hans Nielsen Hauge, rose as the leader of an evangelical revival. He preached repentance and conversion. His revival was not of the fanatical type, with shouting, convulsive seizures, and similar manifestations familiar to us from the American "Great Revival," but was simple preaching of the old Lutheran doctrine. Granted that there was too high a valuation of personal testimony, professions of sin and of conviction, — we shall not judge of these excrescences too harshly; the times may have called for such evidences of return to faith. Hauge brought back the Lutheran hymn, the Lutheran books of devotion and postils, Pontoppidan's Catechism, the Lutheran doctrine. His immense influence was due to the full assurance which he had of the grace of God and an irrepressible, irresistible desire to save others. The official Church did everything to discourage, hamper, hinder, persecute, berate, deride, beat, Hauge and his assistants and finally "imprisoned the only man who really knew his people and loved his country, till this big-hearted, warm-souled, clear-minded, strong-willed, sound-bodied man was a broken-down wreck, suffering from as many diseases as he had been years in prison."

Now, in order to understand the situation in the Norwegian Lu-



theran Church in America, it must be remembered that the work of Hauge, chiefly through the arrogance and blind opposition of the state church, engendered an immense amount of bad feeling, in fact, worked a cleavage in the Norwegian people. As in other countries of Northern Europe, the revival at the beginning of the century was followed by a great strengthening of Lutheran consciousness. The Norwegian Church, too, produced a number of soundly Lutheran leaders, and when the emigration to America set in, there was a supply of orthodox ministers, men of the highest type of university training. But the Haugeans remained a people separate and aloof. They continued to regard the "educated minister" as somehow lacking in spirituality. These scholarly men had not "passed through the second birth," had no "experience" of salvation. They were orthodox, of course, but not "Spirit-filled." Haugean lay preachers continued to conduct their prayer-meetings among the immigrant settlements, and here and there *Budbaereren*, the official organ, would report revivals documented by distinct "manifestations" of the Holy Spirit's power.

We might sympathize with the first and second generations of Haugeans in this country, knowing their antecedents in the homeland: the glorious results achieved by their leader and other lay preachers, the haggard opposition of the authorities, the suffering of shame and imprisonment for the sake of testifying to the power of Jesus — it had all been so glorious that we shall not blame the early Haugeans for efforts to continue the tradition, also the methods of the revival.

To-day there is no justification, except that of sentiment, for continuing the Haugean movement. The Norwegian Lutheran Church has had these many years orthodox and conscientious preachers. It has a laity awake to the preciousness of its Lutheran heritage, a laity that loves Lutheranism and makes every sacrifice for the maintenance of the ministry and of missions. It recognizes a divine favor in its present supply of educated and well-trained preachers. It appreciates higher education through church-schools like no other Lutheran body in the United States. And this writer sincerely believes that the Norwegian Synod farmers who mortgaged their property in 1889 when Luther College was burned, were as spiritual and consecrated as their Haugean neighbors who derided the "learned preachers."

We do not believe that the pietistic movement of the eighteenth century in Germany was justified by conditions. As the *Lutheran Herald* pointed out editorially (November 24, 1931), the period of the great dogmaticians was by no means an age of dead orthodoxy. "The period of orthodoxy had men such as Johann Gerhard, the great dogmatician, a peaceful and pious man. John Arndt and Christian Scriver have written the best devotional books in the Lutheran Church. During the period of orthodoxy, Paul Gerhardt and others wrote some



of our best hymns. When scholastic subtilities were common in the pulpit, men with a deep feeling for more spirituality gave expression to their Christian experience in spiritual psalms."

To raise at this time the ghost of pietism lacks every justification from the standpoint of history. Even of the earlier Haugean lay preacher of Minnesota and Iowa it might have been said, as one English poet wrote of another:—

He never could recapture  
His first sine, careless rapture.

If, instead of returning to the discussion of lay preaching, prayer-meetings, and "the second birth," our Norwegian Lutherans would direct their attention to the amendment of their articles of agreement (*Madison Opgjøer*), they would attack a real problem and might achieve results which would lead to a greater unification of Lutheran forces than we have in America to-day. THEODORE GRAEBNER.

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### Der Spiritus Septiformis.

In dem bekannten Pfingstlied *Veni, Creator Spiritus*, das früher ziemlich allgemein dem Ambrosius zugeschrieben wurde, dagegen aber von Mone (*Hymni Latini*, I, 242) mit größerer Wahrscheinlichkeit als von Gregor dem Großen stammend bezeichnet wird, lautet die dritte Strophe:

Tu septiformis munere,  
Digitus paternae dextrae,  
Tu rite promissum patris,  
Sermone ditans guttura.

Diese Strophe ist von Ludwig Moser gegen Ende des 15. Jahrhunderts nicht ungeschickt übersetzt worden:

Du bist die siebenformig gnad,  
Der rechten hand gots synger trad,  
Des vatters gelübt von hymelrich,  
Die lelen machest reden rich.

Luthers Übersetzung besitzt die volle Kraft des Originals:

Du bist mit Gaben siebenfalt  
Der Finger an Gott's rechter Hand;  
Des Vaters Wort gibst du gar bald  
Mit Zungen in alle Land'.

Es ist bezeichnend, daß sich der Ausdruck *Spiritus septiformis* bei Gregor dem Großen, also am Anfang des Mittelalters, findet, nachdem man in der Darlegung der Lehre vom Heiligen Geiste wenigstens etwas Fortschritt gemacht hatte. Bei Hermas findet sich noch die Identifizierung des Pneuma mit dem Logos, so daß von manchen Dogmenhistorikern angenommen wurde, die apostolischen Väter hätten keinen Unterschied zwischen Sohn und Geist gekannt. Dies Mißverständnis beruht aber ohne Zweifel darauf, daß man zu Anfang des zweiten Jahrhunderts oft von der göttlichen Natur Christi als von dem Pneuma redete. So