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Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer. — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

The American Lutheran Conference and Lutheran Union. — November 14—16, 1934, the American Lutheran Conference held its second biennial convention in an Augustana Synod church in Des Moines, Iowa. The five participating synods were represented by 150 pastors and lay delegates. The report in the *Lutheran*, on which we draw, says that the preliminary committee of the convention submitted for adoption the following resolutions as the declaration of the American Lutheran Conference on Fellowship: —

"1. The American Lutheran Conference voices its joy over agreement with the United Lutheran Church in America and the Synodical Conference so far as official confessions of faith are concerned.

"2. We rejoice that in official declarations each body concerned opposes unionism.

"3. We rejoice that the respective bodies recognize the evil of societies holding antichristian doctrines and warn against them.

"4. The American Lutheran Conference is earnestly desirous of pulpit- and altar-fellowship with the United Lutheran Church in America.

"5. The American Lutheran Conference is equally desirous of pulpit- and altar-fellowship with the Synodical Conference.

"6. The American Lutheran Conference respectfully recommends and urges the selection of committees on fellowship by the respective constituent bodies in order to initiate conferences with other Lutheran bodies relative to fellowship and to deal with similar commissions elected by other Lutheran bodies. It shall be within the province of each church-body, if it so decides, to act jointly with other commissions of A. L. C. so appointed. In any case final approval or disapproval of commission or committee recommendations in regard to altar- and pulpit-fellowship rests with each individual church-body as far as they are concerned.

"7. The American Lutheran Conference hereby establishes a Commission on Lutheran Cooperative Endeavor, to ascertain in what matters and to what extent other Lutheran groups would be willing to cooperate even before complete fellowship is established.

"8. In clarification of the meaning of unionism the following statements are submitted: —

"a. Unionism is well defined in the Minneapolis Theses. Unionism exists 'where the establishment and maintenance of church-fellowship ignores present doctrinal differences or declares them a matter of indifference.'

"b. Unionism is not necessarily implied in every type of joint endeavor within a community where pastor and congregation may participate.

"c. While the character and extent of such community cooperation must in large measure be determined by the local congregation and its

pastor, this guiding principle should be kept in mind, that under no circumstances shall the clear purpose of the Lutheran Church be obscured or compromised. In the words of the Washington Declaration, that Church 'is bound in duty and in conscience to maintain its separate identity as a witness to the truth which it knows; and its members, its ministers, its pulpits, its fonts, and its altars must testify only to that truth.'"

After printing these resolutions, the report in the *Lutheran* continues: "After considerable discussion the Conference went on record as urging the selection of committees on fellowship to study the possibility of further unification in the Lutheran Church. A resolution adopted asserted that these committees, selected by the respective constituent bodies of the Conference, should 'initiate conferences with other Lutheran bodies relative to fellowship, and deal with similar commissions elected by other Lutheran bodies. It shall be within the province of each church-body, if it so decided, to act jointly with other commissions of the American Lutheran Conference so appointed. In any case, final approval or disapproval of commission or committee recommendations in regard to altar- and pulpit-fellowship rests with each individual church-body as far as it is concerned.'" From this it is not clear whether or not the resolutions quoted above were adopted. Here there is further evidence that the question of Lutheran union is bulking very large to-day and that the Scripture declarations on unity, union, and unionism must again be carefully studied.

A.

The Lutheran Laymen and Lutheran Union.—An editorial in a Lutheran periodical (we choose not to mention names) dealing with the present movement towards establishing a Lutheran union bears the caption "Lutheran Laymen are Becoming Impatient" and makes the following statements: "The Lutheran laymen are demanding to be heard. . . . The moment church-leaders take up the question of fellowship, they are apt to dig up old controversies, get into heated debates, and throw a wet blanket on the fine spirit of friendliness which is blossoming forth. . . . How can professors and editors draw up rules and regulations for pastors on the firing-line?" These statements with their implications call for a few remarks.

1. If it is true that in certain Lutheran bodies the laymen are demanding to be heard and are becoming impatient with their leaders, these bodies are in a state of most pronounced disunion. The situation described by the statements under discussion is that of a state of inner strife. These bodies should, then, establish harmony in their own midst before attempting to establish harmony within the entire body of Lutherans. 2. If these dissatisfied laymen of the various Lutheran bodies form a confederacy for the purpose of putting over the union despite the opposition of the "pastors, professors, editors, church-leaders," and succeed, they will not have brought about a union, but will have imposed the state of strife upon the whole body. 3. These impatient laymen are either right or wrong. If they are right, the pastors and professors, etc., are wrong. The laymen are right, we shall assume. They know that there is no real difference between the Lutheran synods. They know that, while formerly the synods disagreed on the doctrines of inspiration, of conversion, of election, etc.,

these differences now have been removed. Only the pastors, professors, etc., choose to create strife. The laymen are fighting the Lord's battle. The pastors are fighting against the Lord. What then? It is the sacred duty of the laymen to discipline their pastors. They will not have time to work towards a general union. Their first duty is to set their pastors right. 4. Let us assume that these impatient laymen are wrong. They do not know the true situation. They have not been informed of certain weighty matters of doctrine and practise. Or if they are informed on these matters, they brush them aside as unimportant. What then? It is the sacred duty of the respective pastors to meet their laymen in a course of indoctrination. And if the laymen refuse to bother with matters of doctrine, they must be dealt with as the case requires. And if a pastor takes this same attitude, if he insists that there may be a God-pleasing union in spite of weighty doctrinal differences, or if he is unable to see the differences, he must also be taken to task by his brother pastors, by his visitor, and last, but not least, by his lay brethren. That is the Lutheran way of dealing with these matters. The Lutheran Church is a doctrinal Church. She stresses the doctrine. And she indoctrinates the laymen. She wants her lay members indoctrinated to such a degree as to enable them to correct, if need be, the pastor. 5. As to the intimated state of opposition between the professors and the pastors, remarks 1—4 apply also here. Besides, we are rather unacquainted with the state of affairs existing in those bodies—if there are any such—where "the professors and editors draw up rules and regulations for pastors on the firing-line." Down here in Missouriiland such a state of affairs does not exist. Nor do our professors and editors have a different outlook and spiritual constitution from that of the pastors. They are taken from the ranks of the pastors. Actually, they think alike. Our professors and editors are not, when inducted into their new offices, subjected to some process which changes their outlook and constitution. 6. "The moment church-leaders take up the question of fellowship, they are apt to dig up old controversies, get into heated debates, and throw a wet blanket on the fine spirit of friendliness which is blossoming forth." That statement is not true. The utterer of it will be held accountable for filling the minds of some laymen with suspicion and distrust of the pastors and other church-leaders. The well-informed laymen should take him in hand. 7. The movement towards Lutheran union now in progress is going to try men's souls. It calls, on the one hand, for the stalwart, uncompromising adherence to the truth of God's Word and the Lutheran Confessions and, on the other hand, for the exercise of much Christian forbearance, infinite patience, and discriminating wisdom. All carnal motives and passions must be suppressed. Casting doubt upon the honesty of the motives of the men engaged in this business will wreck the movement. And if the movement should eventuate in a union which is not based upon the unity of doctrine, but is accomplished through clamor and tumult, the blessing of God cannot rest upon it.

E.

Scientists Oppose Materialism.—A new book has appeared which should be of some value in combating the materialism which is now flooding our country. The title is *The Great Design*. It is written "by fourteen eminent scientists," "edited by Frances Mason," and published by the

Macmillan Company. Its price is \$2.50. Reviewing this book in the *Christian Century*, N. M. Grier says: "Is there a living intelligence beyond nature, or does the great cosmos run itself, driven by blind forces? . . . To the mechanist reality was unknowable, yet was conceived to take the form of a purely mechanical system in which only simple particles were at work in an aimless fashion. Hence no guidance, plan, or design. Everything was contingent, or happened by chance; in the last analysis there was only the survival of the fittest. While we owe to the stimulus of mechanism many scientific discoveries of surpassing importance as regards the welfare of humanity, Mind, on the other hand, was not regarded as an entity in itself, for conscious life was conceived merely as the mechanics of the brain 'as seen from the other side.' Thus science had asked and answered its own questions, Whither? and How? but beyond was the inevitable test of *Why?* before which mechanism has seemed inadequate to many. Now come fourteen eminent men of science with their evidence as to the purposeful and directing Mind at the back of the great drama of creation and in further testimony that the discoveries of science strengthen, not weaken, a belief in an infinite Creator." Mr. Grier then describes the position of the physicist who made a contribution to the volume and according to whose researches protons and electrons are transformed into photons, that is, radiations of the smallest wave length, which are considered the "fundamental stuff of which the universe is made. They are something more than simple particles; indeed, they can be fully described in the symbolic language of mathematics, and hence behind them and in them are reason and order." The contributing chemist shows that in the "infinite permutations and combinations" of the atoms with which he deals, simple rules and not mere chance, or contingency, are observable. In the same way the astronomer and the geologist set forth the reign of law in their respective spheres. The biologist, too, has to admit that life cannot be explained by any mechanistic theory. The psychologist dwelling on the experiments of Driesch, "a noted German experimental embryologist," likewise holds that every theory which looks upon life as due to machinelike development fails to do justice to patent facts. The conclusion of all these men is that there is "order, plan, and design in evolution which can never be the result of mere chance." Mr. Grier correctly says: "May we not say that, wherever we meet plan and design, in reality we are faced by a spiritual agent?"—This position of course is still many miles away from the Christian faith, but it constitutes one of the foundation stones on which all religion must rest. A.

The Religious Situation in Mexico.—In an illuminating article the *Lutheran Standard*, in its issue of December 15, 1934, discusses the struggle which the idea of religious liberty is experiencing in our neighbor country to the south. It is there pointed out that already in 1857 there was a sharp clash between the interests of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and those of the patriotic Mexicans who wished to see their country freed from the usurpations of Roman ecclesiasticism. While Mexico is 95 per cent. Catholic, it has many citizens who feel that the hierarchy has abused its powers and is in a high degree responsible for the intellectual and economic impotence which characterizes a large part of the population.

In 1917, when the constitution was revised, some stern measures were resolved on against the Catholic Church; it was forbidden "to own real estate, church-buildings or any other buildings, to possess invested funds or other productive property, to maintain convents or nunneries, to conduct primary schools, to direct or administer charitable institutions, or to hold religious ceremonies outside of church-buildings." When in 1926 the Mexican Congress passed an enforcement act, many priests of foreign birth had to leave the country, and much church property was confiscated. The *Standard* states that at this time twenty-five thousand priests left their churches in protest—a course which provoked the opposing party to be unrelenting in executing its stern decrees. According to the *Standard's* informant one must not forget that Mexico at present has a one-party government, similar to that of Russia, Italy, and Germany, and that whoever opposes its action is considered an enemy of the state. This authority holds that, if the Church withdraws entirely from politics and devotes itself entirely to spiritual activities, the violent outbreaks of hostility against it will cease. The *Standard* concludes quite well: "Whether a government with atheistic tendencies and a Church with political aspirations can walk together remains to be seen." A.

A Word from the United Presbyterian Camp.—In the *Lutheran* recently a few paragraphs were printed that had appeared in the *United Presbyterian*, issued by the church-body bearing that name, and we think it proper that our readers should see with what venom this Presbyterian journal speaks of the antiunionistic element in the Lutheran Church.

"To an outsider it would seem that the difficulties in the way of union among Lutherans are greater than those which exist in the other large Protestant families. While doctrinally the Lutheran branches may be close together, in their attitude, outlook, and practises they differ sharply. Some of them are evangelical and socially minded, while others are reactionary and sacramentarian. At least one of the conservative branches maintains a *hauteur* and exclusiveness equal to that of the Roman Catholic Church. It would look as if a good deal of adjustment would be required before this branch could become one with those branches which hold an inclusive rather than an exclusive attitude.

"It is significant that, the farther one gets down the scale, the less pronounced is the sentiment for union. The average of all the little branches is but 55 per cent. Two factors enter into this. One is that a narrow and intense loyalty is apt to exist in a little group, which has a bitter struggle to exist, a loyalty not to the Kingdom, but to the organization as such. The other factor is the cramping effect of a narrow horizon. One can confine his thinking and energies within the limits of his little group so completely as to remain in ignorance of the big problems and issues of the day and civilization in which he lives."

This sounds strange, does it not, especially since it comes from a church-body which for many years refused to affiliate with other Presbyterian bodies because it insisted that in the church services not our lovely church hymns, but merely psalms should be used as songs of praise and that instrumental music must be barred from church services. A.

John Dewey's "God."—In the *Christian Century* Prof. H. N. Wieman makes the rather startling announcement that Prof. Dewey, the well-known New York philosopher and humanist, believes in "God." Professor Dewey recently published a book entitled *A Common Faith*, and it is in an appraisal of this book that Professor Wieman makes the statement referred to. "He pronounces non-theistic humanism as futile and mistaken and thus clearly separates himself from that movement with which many have identified him (pp. 53. 54). Above all he declares his knowledge of God and devotion to God." A person might be inclined to use this as the text of a discourse setting forth that in the last analysis atheism is found to be not workable. When one reads, however, how Professor Dewey defines or describes the God he believes in, one cannot wax enthusiastic over his declaration. Who is the God that he does homage to? Is it the God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? No. This is what Professor Wieman says: "We can put Dewey's idea of God into a single summarizing sentence: God is the activity which connects the ideal with the actual." God not a person, but merely an activity! Can we turn to an activity and say "Abba, Father"? Professor Dewey's book may prove that he is groping for the truth, but it likewise furnishes mournful testimony that he is still encompassed by abysmal darkness. A.

Calendar Reform.—This world movement received a strong impetus on August 29 during a meeting of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work at Farnoe, Denmark, when the council, under the leadership of Dr. S. Parkes Cadman of America and the Bishop of Chichester of England, adopted a resolution pledging the churches of the world to cooperation for calendar reform and for the stabilization of the date of Easter. The Government and the League of Nations will be urged to proceed with the necessary legislation. The report of a questionnaire sheet to the American clergy of many denominations lists only 1,178 replies. Only 39 replies are credited to Lutheran ministers. There are about 12,000 clergymen listed in the various bodies of our Lutheran Church. The percentage of those interested appears so small that it would be folly to base any conclusion upon the figures. That the question of endorsement will come up before the two national conventions in October—United Lutheran Church and American Lutheran Church—seems certain.

News Bulletin, N. L. C.

General Evangeline Booth.—In the election which was held to provide a new head for the Salvation Army, Miss Evangeline Booth was chosen. She will soon be sixty-nine years old and, according to the rules of her organization, will have to retire from the position of general after four years. That the Salvation Army leaders elected a woman to be their general and representative is evidence that this body is not faithful to Biblical teachings. Its plea that in this case it merely follows the preaching of St. Paul, who has told us that in Christ "there is neither male nor female," is one of the many instances in which the Scriptures are misinterpreted and misapplied. Miss Evangeline Booth is a daughter of the founder of the Salvation Army, General William Booth. A.

II. Ausland.

Wie lange werden die gewissenhaften Christen Deutschlands in der Reichskirche verbleiben? „Die letzte Bekenntnissynode, die vom 18. bis zum 20. Oktober 1934 in Berlin-Dahlem tagte, wirft starke Wellen. Sie hat den Bruch mit dem deutschchristlichen Kirchenregiment offen vollzogen, und von allen Seiten im Reich kommen Zustimmungen. Am bedeutsamsten ist die offene Zustimmung des bayerischen lutherischen Kirchenrats. Schon beginnt der Führer der Bekenntnissynode, Präses D. Koch, mit selbständiger Einführung von Pfarrern; die erste geschah am 12. Oktober mit der Einführung des Pfarrers in dem Dörfchen Schale.“ Das deutschchristliche Konsistorium in Münster weigerte sich, diesen von der Gemeinde rechtmäßig gewählten Pfarrer zu bestätigen, weil er es ablehnte, dem Kirchenregiment unbedingten Gehorsam zu geloben. (M. E. L. N., 2. November 1934.) —

„Botschaft der Bekenntnissynode der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche. Mit Polizeigewalt hat die Reichskirchenregierung nach der kurhessischen auch die württembergische und die bayerische Kirchenleitung beseitigt. Damit hat die schon längst in der evangelischen Kirche bestehende und seit dem Sommer 1933 offenbar gewordene Zerrüttung einen Höhepunkt erreicht, angesichts dessen wir uns zu folgender Erklärung gezwungen sehen: I. . . . 2. Die unter der Parole ‚ein Staat, ein Volk, eine Kirche‘ vom Reichsbischof erstrebte Nationalkirche bedeutet, daß das Evangelium für die Deutsche Evangelische Kirche außer Kraft gesetzt und die Botschaft der Kirche an die Mächte dieser Welt ausgeliefert wird. 3. Die angemahnte Alleinherrschaft des Reichsbischofs und seines Rechtswalters hat ein in der evangelischen Kirche unmögliches Papsttum aufgerichtet. . . . II. 1. Alle unsere von Schrift und Bekenntnis her erhobenen Proteste, Warnungen und Mahnungen sind umsonst geblieben. Im Gegenteil, die Reichskirchenregierung hat unter Verufung auf die Führer und unter Heranziehung und Mitwirkung politischer Gewalten rücksichtslos ihr kirchengerstörendes Werk fortgesetzt. . . . 3. Damit tritt das kirchliche Notrecht ein, zu dessen Verkündung wir heute gezwungen sind. III. 1. Wir stellen fest: Die Verfassung der D. E. K. ist zerfallen. Ihre rechtmäßigen Organe bestehen nicht mehr. Die Männer, die sich der Kirchenleitung im Reich und in den Ländern bemächtigt, haben sich durch ihr Handeln von der christlichen Kirche geschieden. . . . 3. Wir fordern die christlichen Gemeinden, ihre Pfarrer und Ältesten auf, von der bisherigen Reichskirchenregierung und ihren Behörden keine Weisungen entgegenzunehmen und sich von der Zusammenarbeit mit denen zurückzuziehen, die diesem Kirchenregiment weiterhin gehorsam sein wollen. Wir fordern sie auf, sich an die Anordnungen der Bekenntnissynode der D. E. K. und der von ihr anerkannten Organe zu halten. . . .“ Diese Entschliebung wurde noch am 20. Oktober dem „Führer“ übergeben. (M. E. L. N., 26. Oktober.) Damit ist „der Bruch mit dem deutschchristlichen Kirchenregiment offen vollzogen“, aber nicht der Bruch mit der Reichskirche. Die Protestierenden denken nicht daran, eine Freikirche zu gründen — aus der Reichskirche auszutreten. Sie bezeichnen sich emphatisch als „die Bekenntnissynode der Deutschen Evangelischen Kirche“, appellieren an den „Führer“ und, wie Punkt IV lautet, „übergeben diese unsere Erklärung der Reichsregierung, bitten sie, von der in der D. E. K. vollzogenen Entscheidung Kenntnis zu nehmen, und

fordern von ihr die Anerkennung, daß in Sachen der Kirche, ihrer Lehre und Ordnung die Kirche unbeschadet des staatlichen Aufsichtsrechts zu urteilen und zu entscheiden berufen ist". Unbeschadet des staatlichen Aufsichtsrechts! Diese Männer wollen, obwohl sie heftig gegen die Anwendung von Polizeigewalt, gegen die Heranziehung und Mitwirkung politischer Gewalten in Kirchensachen protestieren, von einer reinen und völligen Trennung von Kirche und Staat nichts wissen. Wie viele Bischöfe müssen noch abgesetzt und in Hausarrest gesetzt werden, bis dem Staat das Aufsichtsrecht gekündigt wird? Und wenn auch Bischöfe einstweilen wieder eingesetzt werden, was schützt sie vor baldiger Wiederabsetzung? Hier hilft nichts als die Freikirche.

The Christian Century vom 31. Oktober sagt zu den oben mitgeteilten Beschlüssen der Bekenntnissynode: "The effort of the protesting synod to free itself from the trammels of state control will not have the success which its spiritual energy and Christian heroism deserve unless it has the courage to take one more step, which, so far as the reports indicate, it has not yet contemplated. The way to be free from the burden and bondage of control by the state is to surrender the real or fancied advantages of support by the state. . . . No Church can be effectively and satisfactorily free which is the recipient of special favors and privileges from the secular order. . . . The government has, to be sure, gone beyond the reasonable limits to which the state may go in the control of the Church, and the protesters have done well to stand against this invasion of their rights as Christians. But there is no complete and permanent escape from the dilemma short of a radical, root-and-branch separation of the Church from the State at whatever cost in buildings and income and status." Warum können die gewissenhaften Christen sich nicht entschließen, aus der Reichskirche auszugehen? Ist es die Geldfrage? Bei manchen, vielleicht bei vielen, fällt diese Sache schwer ins Gewicht. *The Christian Century* vom 14. November sagt darüber: "Already Mueller has been subjected to the indignity of . . . being forced to reinstate in office the intractable bishops of Bavaria and Wuerttemberg, who had, even when arrested, refused to acknowledge his authority. . . . Impressive as is the victory which the evangelical pastors have won, however, it remains to be seen whether they will know how to use it. At the moment there are indications that the pastors are almost as much dismayed at the prospect that Hitler's announcement of a hands-off policy on religious matters may logically involve an end to tax-supported churches as they are elated over the defeat of Mueller." Das mag bei manchen, bei vielen vielleicht, zutreffen. Diese Erwägung kann ja vor dem Forum des Gewissens nicht bestehen. Aber auch die Erfahrung verwirft sie als eine nichtige. Die Kirche, auch die Kirche in Deutschland, kann sehr gut ohne die finanzielle Unterstützung des Staates fertig werden, und die Verlegenheiten und nötigen Einschränkungen der Übergangsperiode werden sich ertragen lassen. "The Baptist and Methodist churches in Germany are free churches. They owe nothing to the state because they get nothing from it. They are on their own. They stand or fall by the appeal which they make to the people and by the degree of support which their members voluntarily give to them. . . . In times like these and under such a government such liberties

are worth all they cost." (*The Christian Century*.) Die lutherischen Freikirchen in Deutschland können ihre Arbeit auch ganz gut ohne staatliche Beihilfe verrichten. Können die Christen in der Reichskirche Ähnliches leisten? Der europäische Berichterstatter des „Kirchenblatts“ schreibt: „Zahlreiche ‚bekennende‘ Gemeinden, die zu ihren gemäßigtesten Pfarrern stehen, Gemeinden, die vielfach sogar aus den Kirchengebäuden ermittelt wurden und die dazu noch die wirtschaftliche Existenz ihrer Geistlichen und Kirchbeamten tragen mußten, haben sich meistens fähig gezeigt, die großen Lasten zu tragen. Die Opferwilligkeit und Hingabe der Anhänger der Bekenntniskirche hat bisher [24. November] alle Erwartungen übertroffen.“

Es handelt sich hier aber bei manchen nicht um die Geldfrage, wenigstens nicht ausschließlich oder hauptsächlich. Andere Erwägungen geben den Ausschlag. Die althergebrachten Verhältnisse und die darauf beruhenden, tiefeingewurzelten Anschauungen machen es manchem so schwer, sich zu trennen. Man kann sich nicht von dem Gedanken losmachen, daß die Verbindung von Kirche und Staat das von Gott Gewollte, das Normale ist. So ist jedenfalls das Wort vom „kirchlichen No t recht“ in der Erklärung der Bekenntnissynode zu verstehen. Andere wieder meinen, daß ihr Zeugnis für die Wahrheit kräftiger wirken könne, wenn sie die alten Verbindungen nicht zerreißen; sie meinen, um des Gewissens willen in der Reichskirche bleiben zu müssen. Unsere Frage: Wie lange werden die gewissenhaften Christen Deutschlands in der Reichskirche verbleiben? hat daher den Sinn: Wie lange wird das durch Gottes Wort gebildete und geschärfte Gewissen den Christen erlauben, in der unierten Reichskirche zu verbleiben? Man tritt ja nicht von heute auf morgen aus einer verderbten Kirche aus; man darf aber auch nicht einhundert Jahre lang zusehen, wie das Zeugnis gegen die Lüge ungehört verhallt.

Treten aber die Deutschen Christen, reformierte und lutherische Christen, um des Gewissens willen aus der unierten Reichskirche aus, so dürfen sie sich nun auch nicht in einer unierten Bekenntnissynode verbrütern. Die Reformierten, denen es um ihr Bekenntnis ein Ernst ist, können es nicht tun. Viel weniger können es die ernstesten Lutheraner tun, die sich deswegen zu ihrem lutherischen Bekenntnis bekennen, weil sich göttlich gewiß sind, daß das reformierte Bekenntnis schriftwidrig ist. Viele Lutheraner weigern sich darum, sich mit der Bekenntnissynode zu identifizieren. Was sollen diese zusammen mit denen, die um des Gewissens willen schließlich aus der Bekenntnissynode austreten, tun? Es bleibt nichts übrig als die Bildung einer fest auf Gottes Wort und dem lutherischen Bekenntnis stehenden Freikirche. Sie mögen ihre eigene Freikirche bilden. Die treuen Lutheraner werden sich dann schon zusammenfinden. —

Die „N. C. Z. N.“ vom 9. November berichtet, daß der Führer und Reichsanzler die drei Landesbischöfe D. Meiser (Wahern), D. Marahrens (Sannover) und D. Wurm (Württemberg) am 30. Oktober in zweistündiger Audienz empfing („Der Reichsbischof war nicht dabei, Rechtsminister Dr. Jäger auch nicht“), daß die beiden abgesetzten Landesbischöfe, Meiser und Wurm, wieder in ihr Amt eingesetzt wurden und daß „die Reichsregierung die Rechtungültigkeit der Nationalsynode vom August mit ihren Gesetzen, auf denen der Einbruch in Württemberg beruht, anerkannt hat“ (Mundschreiben der vom Landesbischof Wurm Beauftragten), und veröffentlicht sieben Zuschriften an den Reichsbischof, seinen Rücktritt betreffend. Die Landes-

bischöfe Meiser, Borm, Marahrens und Jänker (Breslau) halten ihm vor: „Nun müssen Sie es erleben, daß die höchsten Organe des Staates die von Ihnen vollzogene Gesetzgebung als rechtsunwirksam erklären“ und erklären: „Wir sehen uns genötigt, Sie auf das dringendste zu bitten, dem Staat und der Kirche wenigstens den Dienst zu tun, daß Sie die Möglichkeit für einen Neuanfang und eine Befriedung der Kirche durch Ihren Rücktritt schaffen.“ Der Bruderrat (Bekenntnissynode; Präses D. Koch) „fordert, daß der gegenwärtige Inhaber des Reichsbischofsamts unverzüglich seinen Platz räumt“. Der Lutherische Rat (Meiser, Vorsitzender) erklärt: „Der Lutherische Rat, zu dem Zweck gebildet, dem lutherischen Bekenntnis innerhalb der D. E. K. die ihm gebührende Geltung zu verschaffen, sieht durch die von Ihnen geduldeten Bekenntnisgefährdung eine tödliche Gefahr für den Bestand der D. E. K.“ Das Schreiben der Universitäten an den Reichsbischof ist von 118 theologischen Hochschullehrern unterzeichnet (von Althaus, Clerf., Sasse, Dibelius, Gogarten, Brunner, Heim, Mittel, Wehrung usw.). Die Leipziger Universitäts-theologen gingen gesondert vor. Sie veröffentlichten am Schwarzen Brett folgenden Anschlag: „Wir Unterzeichneten haben folgendes Telegramm an den Herrn Reichsbischof gerichtet: „Wir theologischen Hochschullehrer bitten inständig, daß Sie der zerrütteten und nach Frieden verlangenden Kirche den Dienst tun, sofort zurückzutreten. Auch wir kämpfen um eine wahrhaft innerlich geeinte, im Volk stehende Evangelische Reichskirche.“ — Man sieht, daß viele deutsche Kirchenmänner trotz allem und allem den status quo beibehalten wollen. (1.) Sie denken nicht daran, den Staat von der Kirche zu trennen, sondern freuen sich, daß die „Reichsregierung“, „die höchsten Organe des Staates“, die kirchliche „Gesetzgebung“ einer Revision unterzogen haben. (2.) Die in der D. E. K. bestehende Union soll fortbestehen. Sie sehen noch immer nicht, daß eine „wahrhaft innerlich geeinte“ Evangelische Reichskirche, die Lutheraner und Reformierte, Positive und Liberale umfaßt, eine Unmöglichkeit ist. Und wir können uns absolut nicht in den Gedankengang des Lutherischen Rats hineinfinden: er will dem lutherischen Bekenntnis innerhalb der Evangelischen Reichskirche Geltung verschaffen, damit die Evangelische Kirche Bestand habe! Wir stellen uns die Sache so vor: wenn die Lutheraner ihr Bekenntnis zur Geltung bringen, so fliegt die Reichskirche in tausend Stücke auseinander. E.

Convention of the Episcopalians. — When the Episcopalians last October met in Atlantic City for their triennial convention, the opening service was more of a pageant than of an occasion for worship. “More than twenty-five thousand massed in the great Atlantic City Auditorium to watch the procession of bishops and clergy, followed by lay delegates, march to their places, confronting an altar under an enormous canopy, — the press was informed that it was a Byzantine baldachino, — much like that which provided the focus for the Eucharistic Congress of the Roman Catholics held in Chicago a few years ago,” so writes the correspondent of the *Christian Century*. One main thought in the opening sermon of Bishop Perry strikes one as very sensible, namely, the admonition addressed to his Church to let the composing of their own differences be their chief contribution to church unity. The convention consists of two houses, that of Bishops and that of Deputies. The convention was confronted by financial troubles, and it reduced the budget of the National

Council by almost four hundred thousand dollars. Of the resolutions adopted, one that deserves special mention is that which permits deaconesses to marry and which was carried in spite of the opposition of the High-churchmen. What disgusts the Bible Christian, however, is the provision that deaconesses, if their bishop approves, may now preach, too. As to the question whether bishops might be called from one diocese to another, it was voted that bishops should remain in the see to which they first were elected. When a young clergyman had the daring to state that the Russian Church in its collapse merely reaped what it had sown, two bishops on the following day voiced apologies on behalf of the Church for the criticism of the Russian Orthodox Church. Two events that were given much publicity were the refusal of the convention to drop the name "Protestant" from the denomination's official title and the refusal of the House of Bishops to recognize the election of the Rev. John Torok, who had been ordained in an Orthodox Church as suffragan bishop of the Anglo-Catholic diocese of Eau Claire, Wis. The attempt to make the presiding bishop an archbishop and to elect him for life was not successful. What is surprising in a conservative body like that of the Episcopalians is that birth control was approved. A resolution was adopted which reads: "We endorse the efforts now being made to secure for licensed physicians, hospitals, and medical clinics freedom to convey such information as is in accord with the highest principles of eugenics and a more wholesome family life, wherein parenthood may be undertaken with due respect for the health of mothers and the welfare of their children."

The great sensation of the convention came near the close. A Committee of Ten on National and International Questions presented a report which is described as ultraconservative. When it was presented to the convention, it created so much angry opposition that most of it was rejected and through the insertion of amendments an altogether new document produced. Endeavoring to keep the pendulum at the extreme right, these gentlemen, we are told, had to see it swing to the opposite extreme. The resolutions that finally were adopted declare opposition to all war; they furthermore request our Government to grant conscientious objectors of any Christian denomination the same status which the Quakers have enjoyed in the past; they sound a trumpet-blast against the munitions traffic and place the Church on record as favoring social insurance, the right of collective bargaining, and the partnership relation between employer and employees. Thus in the end the advocates of the "social gospel" won another triumph. A.

Victories of the Bible.—The November issue of the *Foreign Missionary* (United Lutheran Church) has a timely interest because of its series of articles telling of the Bible in the Telugu, Japanese, Chinese, and Spanish languages, in which the Board is doing its work. One reads with new interest in the Liberian Missions that the English Bible is used there. The Gospel of St. Mark, translated into Kpelle and published by the American Bible Society, is not in common use, we are told, although translations of the Common Service both in Kpelle and Buzi, of Luther's Small Catechism, and of hymns are in use.—*News Bulletin of N. L. C.*

Rome and the Scandinavian Countries.—The *Lutheran Companion* places before its readers some statements taken from the *Universe*, a Roman Catholic journal published in London, England, which are of more than ordinary interest. Speaking of the influence of the Reformation in the Scandinavian countries, this Roman Catholic journal expresses itself as follows: "In an important lecture to the Pius XI Institute in Paris, Pere Bechaux, O. P., who is head of the Dominicans in Norway and Sweden, gave an interesting survey of the Catholic position in Scandinavia. There is probably no part of Europe in which the Reformation was so overwhelming and has prevented any wide-spread Catholic revival for so long. Even in Norway, where the Reformation was enforced less ruthlessly than in Sweden, conversions to Catholicism were not recognized by law until 1873. At present there are only four thousand Catholics in a population of six millions in Sweden. There are only ten parishes, with twenty-one priests, of whom only two are Swedes. In Norway religious freedom was conceded in 1843, but even there the Church has only three thousand Catholics, with five Norwegians among its forty-two priests. In Finland a Vicariate Apostolic was established in 1920, after the Revolution; but there are not yet 1,800 Catholics, with only four parishes and eight priests, of whom two are Finns. Denmark has very much the largest Catholic population, with twenty-five thousand Catholics (among 3,500,000) and forty missions, with ninety priests, of whom twenty are Danes. But there is an awakening in all these countries that may make the history of the near future very different." That these countries, just as well as ours, need an awakening may be true enough. But we devoutly hope that, when it comes, it will not mean a return to Rome. A.

Some Statistics on Iceland.—Dr. G. L. Kieffer has compiled some interesting facts on famous Iceland, known as a Lutheran country. Its population at the end of 1932 was 111,555. Its capital, Reykjavik, in 1932 had 30,566 inhabitants. As to education Dr. Kieffer writes: "The elementary instruction is compulsory for a period of five years, the school age being from ten to fourteen years. Before the age of ten children are usually privately educated, at any rate, in the country. In 1928/29 there were 238 elementary schools, with 400 teachers and 8,709 pupils. There are also several continuation schools for young people. The population is almost entirely Icelandic. Illiteracy is negligible." This is the status of religion: "The National Church, and the only one endowed by the state, is the Evangelical Lutheran. There is complete religious liberty, and no civil disability is attached to those not of the national religion. The affairs of the National Church are under the superintendence of one bishop. In the census of 1930, 1,503, or 1.4 per cent., were returned as Dissenters. The Adventists in 1920 had 167, the other Protestant churches 125, the Catholics 67 members, and 204 did not give any church connection. The total of Evangelical Lutherans in 1920 was 94,227; in 1930, 107,358." It seems law and order are observed on that island. "In 1928 there were 34 men and 3 women convicted of crime; in 1929, 30 men and one woman; in 1930, 37 men and one woman." Reading these figures, one must endorse the statement of Dr. Kieffer: "Crime in Iceland is almost negligible as compared with the population." A.