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Theological Observer. – Kirchllich Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

The Recent Convention of the Federal Council and the U. L. C. A detailed report of this convention appeared in the *Lutheran* of January 10. A representative of the *Lutheran*, the Rev. Dana S. Johnson, attended the meetings of the Federal Council held at Dayton, O., December 4—7, 1934, and furnished a description of the various important features and events. The U. L. C., as our readers know, maintains a so-called consultative relation to the Federal Council, the exact nature of which is thus given by the editor of the *Lutheran* in the same issue: "It will be remembered that the United Lutheran Church in America, while not holding membership in the Federal Council, has what is technically called a consultative representation on its executive committee and on four of its 'commissions,' namely, the Social Service Commission, the Committee on Worship, the Radio Committee, and the Army and Navy at Washington Committee. Our executive board makes the appointments to these positions, receives reports from them, and transmits them to the biennial conventions of our Church." The reporter of the *Lutheran* puts his finger on several sore spots of the Federal Council transactions when he says: "There was little business conducted outside of the election of officers on the last day and the adoption of resolutions having in general 'the social gospel' import. . . . The key-note of the entire convention was 'The Church for Such a Time as This.' Largely, both speakers and the convention itself hewed straight to this line, with, however, one very serious and vitally important omission. That was a very general forgetfulness of the fact that for such a time as this, or indeed any other time, the Church needs a consciousness of the Head and Founder Jesus Christ far more than it needs outward unity or unctuous resolutions couched in imposing terms. There were of course many occasions, both in reports and addresses, when loyalty to Christ was stressed, but the emphasis, as a whole, was not as strong as it might have been." We add here that loyalty to Christ unfortunately is a term which, because of its use not only by evangelical Christians, but also by Modernists and Unitarians, has lost its value as a badge of Christianity.

The editor of the *Lutheran*, too, is aware that the Federal Council in several respects is traveling in the wrong direction. He has both praise and criticism for it. These are his words: "The *Lutheran* is of the opinion that the Federal Council is of great service to religion, civic affairs, and to Protestantism in the United States and elsewhere at the present time. Its active *personnel* are fearless in pronouncements and in some fields are the only agency by which the churches can give expression to Christian ideas and exercise combined influence. We consider, however, that its zeal in behalf of certain social and ecclesiastical projects results in the proclamation of policies that Lutheranism can examine with interest, but, having examined, must dissent from. We do not accept the objective of the union of the denominations as entitled to serious consideration unless unity of doctrine precedes it. We are not at one with the Council in its demand for

legislative enactments to bring about social changes which have not first been adopted by the individuals of the nation. While Lutherans dread war for the same reasons and with the same fervor that grip the minds and hearts of all citizens, we are not prepared to demand the weakening of defensive armament by our Government, the interruption of chaplaincies, nor the substitution by us of an appeal of internationalism for the traditional nationalism of the United States. We can only receive respectfully the Council's declarations in this field." What is more serious than the matters the *Lutheran* points to is the indifference in doctrine which characterizes the Council and positive errors which at times are advocated by it, for instance, in its "Address to the Churches," drawn up at the last convention by a committee of which a professor of the U. L. C. was a member, an address, by the way, which is commended both by the reporter of the *Lutheran* and by its editor. This paragraph from it is submitted by the reporter: "Our deepest resources, after all, are in a vital communion with God as Christ has revealed Him to us. Only as we dwell deep in the spiritual verities of life, shall we have the poise, or lay hold of the reserves of strength, we need to stand unshaken in difficult days. We face a crisis in character as well as in economics, — indeed, a deeper crisis. Is not this the real heart of our age's need and trouble? Too many people are trying to get along without any vital, sustaining sense of God. In the first century St. Paul, by definite moral and spiritual counsels, summoned Christians to endure a great moral and spiritual crisis. In the world of the twentieth century the Church must continue this apostolic task. We must call people through prayer, through worship, through meditation on the Scriptures, through the Sacraments, through confession and humility, and a sincere seeking of the inner light, to be reconciled to God. Then shall the peace of God enter into lives now frantically seeking superficial pleasures and excitement or beset by sin and fear and inner conflicts." That may be stirring language, but what of its theology? "We must call people through prayer, through worship, through meditation on the Scriptures, through the Sacraments, through confession and humility and a sincere seeking of the inner light, to be reconciled to God." Is it possible that a Lutheran theologian gave his endorsement to such a sentence? He must know that there is only one way of being reconciled to God, and here six of them are enumerated. What is left of the *sola-fide* principle of the Scriptures? If being reconciled to God means that one experiences a sort of emotional thrill and resolves to become a better man, we have nothing to say. But if it means that a poor sinner accepts the forgiveness of sins earned for him by a divine Savior, the sentence quoted involves a woeful departure from what is most vital in Christianity. A.

The President of the A. L. C. on Union with Missouri. — For the information of our clergy we reprint the following paragraphs from the "President's Report," submitted by Dr. C. C. Hein, president of the A. L. C., at its recent meeting in Waverly, Iowa: —

"Will we ever come to an agreement with the Missouri Synod? The Chicago Theses, which were adopted by representatives of the Missouri Synod, the Wisconsin Synod, and the synods of Buffalo, Iowa, and Ohio, after most thorough deliberations of more than a decade, were rejected by the Missouri Synod in 1929. The committee advised to reject them 'since

all chapters and a number of paragraphs are inadequate; at times they do not touch upon the points of controversy; at times they are so phrased that both parties can find in them their own opinion; at times they incline more to the position of our opponents than to our own. Your committee considers it a hopeless undertaking to make these theses unobjectionable from the view of pure doctrine. It would be better to discard them as a failure.' The results of ten years of work were declared nil.

"In the January, 1933, issue of the *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY* a series of doctrinal statements is submitted upon whose adoption the recognition of other Lutheran bodies on the part of the Missouri Synod is made dependent. In conclusion the editor states: 'A few other questions which will have to be discussed and settled according to the Word of God are those of the celebration of Sunday, which cannot be said to be divinely commanded, certain questions of marriage and divorce, particularly the validity of rightful betrothal, the value of John's baptism, and a number of other points, chiefly in the field of Christian ethics.' If these matters are essential to unity in the faith, and if this type of unity is to be the basis of a union with other Lutheran bodies, there is no hope whatsoever for the Lutherans of this country ever to get together." A.

Unionism at Its Height.—The Greater New York Federation of Churches has as its president a member of the U. L. C., Dr. Charles Trexler. When this federation recently was preparing to induct a general secretary, Dr. Trexler announced that special services would be held in the St. Nicholas Collegiate Church, Fifth Avenue and Forty-eighth Street, and that the speakers would be Dr. Fosdick and Bishop Gilbert, who with Dr. George Buttrick and Dr. M. MacLeod would be assisting the president of the federation at the induction.—Here you have unionism in its most consistent form. What becomes of the testimony of the Lutheran Church to the truth when its representatives join hands with outspoken opponents of that truth in public services and religious endeavors? A.

Materialism Combated by Chicago U. Professor.—When Paul Shorey, professor of Greek at the University of Chicago and head of the respective department, who died in April of this year, had been invited, not long before his death, to preach a "lay sermon" in the chapel of the university, he sounded a noble blast against the all too prevalent materialism in the intellectual world. Known as one of the foremost classical scholars of our age and as the greatest Plato student whom America has produced, his discourse, printed in the *Atlantic Monthly* of June, a veritable gem of artistic feeling and expression, has not failed to attract wide attention. While the message of the Cross is not dwelt on and there are other features of the "sermon" which we deplore, some of the statements are so arresting that we feel they ought to be preserved in these pages. Speaking of the function of the Church, he says: "I am confident that, whether you agree with me or not, you know what I mean when I say that the proper service of a Church and of a religious institution is to confirm the hope that there is something more in the universe than mechanism and to strengthen an active and coercive faith in an abiding Moral Law. This may not be all, and the religious life of a large portion of mankind may require the expression of these beliefs in the

symbolisms of historic creeds and ceremonies; but this is the least that can be properly called religion." Let every minister ponder these words: "So overwhelming is the prestige of the physical sciences in their proper sphere that I believe many sincere and pious preachers are afraid that the materialists may be right, after all, and do not dare to challenge them lest they be called obscurantists and Fundamentalists. Let them take courage. If they will really study the question and examine the evidence, they will find that the dogmatisms of negation in this matter are pure bluff. The case for materialistic atheism is just what it was when Cicero discussed it two thousand years ago. The progress of science has merely made it seem more plausible to the half-educated. But the argument is just what it was when men became aware that a blow on the head may suspend consciousness, that the evidence for communication with the world beyond the grave is untrustworthy, and that there may be much eloquence in a cup of tea. A courageous clergyman with a mind disciplined by dialectics and a habit of public speaking should be able, after due preparation, to argue this question to a finish with any psychologist or biologist in any conversation, on any platform, or in print. I, of course, do not mean that the clergyman should be a wrangling controversialist. I mean only that he should not be too skeptical or too timid to defend his faith on the proper occasion; otherwise his place is elsewhere than in the pulpit." Very attractive, too, is a paragraph in which Dr. Shorey delivers himself of his views on modern books which try to popularize science, books which to the earnest inquirer are far less valuable than "any simple, objective, neutral text-book of physics, chemistry, or biology." In these modern books the era of Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Westermarek is hailed as that of true science and enlightenment, while the preceding ages are spoken of as producing nothing but "inept ideas." After dwelling on the silly pretensions of the authors in question, Dr. Shorey says: "This is not parody, and I am not going to quote, but I challenge any addict of this literature to go through thirty or forty volumes of it, pencil in hand, and note how many pages are devoted to the rhetorical amplification of negative, radical, and denunciatory commonplaces." These brief excerpts will show that in the era just ended there was at least one profound thinker and scholar who was not carried away by the tide of atheism and materialism which has descended especially upon our colleges and universities.

A.

The Glory of the Priest. — The *Australian Lutheran* writes: "As late as 1905 the Roman Catholic archbishop of Salzburg in Austria glorified the priesthood of his Church by the following effusion: 'Who in heaven has such power as the Catholic priest? Have the angels? Has the Mother of God? Mary indeed conceived Christ, the Son of God in her womb, and bore Him in the stable at Bethlehem. But consider what takes place in the holy Mass, under the consecrating hands of the priest in this holy action. Under the forms of bread and wine Christ becomes truly, actually, and essentially present, and as though born again. . . . Mary brought the divine Child to the world once. And, see, the priest does this not once, but hundreds and thousands of times, as often as he celebrates. . . . The Catholic priest is able not merely to make Him present on the altar, lock Him in the tabernacle, take Him again, and hand Him to be enjoyed by the faithful; he can

even offer Him up, Him, the Son of God, become man, as a sacrifice for living and dead persons. Christ, the only-begotten Son of God the Father, by whom heaven and earth were made, is herein doing the will of the Catholic priest.' Is it any wonder, then, that the mere presence of the priest strikes awe into the hearts of devout Romanists and that just one gesture from him is sufficient to extort submissive obedience? Were the prestige of the priest to go, Rome would soon lose its power over the masses."

It is against the blasphemous claim stated in the above that the *Formula of Concord* so emphatically declares that "no work of man, or recitation of the minister, produces this presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper, but that this is to be ascribed only and alone to the almighty power of our Lord Jesus Christ" (cf. Epit. VII, 8), whose institution once for all has made the Holy Supper a true Sacrament. At the same time, while our Confession maintains that the "papistie consecration is justly rebuked and rejected, in which the power to produce a sacrament is ascribed to the speaking as the work of the priest" (cf. *Sol. Decl.*, VII, 121), it rejects the equally erroneous view of the Reformed, who contend that "not only the Word and omnipotence of Christ, but faith renders the body of Christ present in the Supper." (*Ibid.*) The Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper therefore has nothing in common with either Zwinglianism or Romanism. In the papistic Mass we condemn not merely one error, but rather a bundle of errors; for of such that iniquitous dogma consists, and all are designed to support and inculcate the doctrine of work-righteousness and to glorify the Roman Catholic priesthood. Nor did the archbishop of Salzburg go beyond the teaching of his Church in affirming what he did. The power which he claims for the priests the Council of Trent claimed for them centuries ago, and it anathematizes every Christian who dares to deny that power. By no means let us employ the discarded term *mass* for Holy Communion; for now it stands for one of the delusions of Satan.

J. T. M.

Episcopalians. — According to the *Living Church Annual*, which has just been published, there have been in the Protestant Episcopal churches during the past year 72,562 confirmations, an increase over 1933 of 3,677. The number of baptized persons in the churches is given as 2,039,902, an increase of over 25,000; the number of communicants as 1,364,414, an increase of 21,600. Contributions for all purposes have dropped off, being now estimated to total about thirty million dollars. This figure has been decreasing steadily since the record figure of forty-six million reported for the year 1929. — *Christian Century*.

Why Certain Episcopalians Want to be Called Catholics. — Some Episcopalians lay claim to that name because they have been led to identify the Episcopal Church with the holy Christian Church. "Those of us who hold deep in our hearts great love and thanksgiving for the Church and her heritage must surely be in entire accordance with the changing of the Church's name. Every thinking Churchman or -woman must feel the intense longing to break away from the words 'Protestant Episcopal' and give to the Church her rightful name, 'the Holy Catholic Church,' as taught us in the Creed. The following prayer has been used daily for some years, and I trust more of our church-members will add

this prayer to their daily petitions: 'Almighty God, Father of all, grant that for Christian unity and for the sake of Thy people seeking for the truth the title of the Church shall be called as the Creed teaches us, the Holy Catholic Church. Grant this for the sake of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen'" (*Living Church*, September 15, 1934.) Others want to be known as Catholics in the Roman Catholic sense, because they know that the Episcopal Church is to a great extent Roman Catholic. "As a parish priest I have found the apparent contradiction between our legal title and our solemn assertion before God in our creeds that we believe 'One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church' very difficult to explain to all inquirers. . . . One Monday morning a man came to one of our clergy and said that there were twenty-five families whom he represented who had decided to leave the near-by Roman parish and come to his church. After a long talk the details were arranged, and the man stopped on his way to tell the Roman priest what had been determined. The priest said, 'I am sorry you are going to turn Protestant.' The man said that was not true. 'I know the Mass when I see one, and this, while not in Latin, is a Mass, and the priest there says he will give us absolution when we wish to make confession as well as you.' The priest went to a safe in his office and took out a roll of bills. 'Here is \$100. Take it and go to that priest and ask him if he belongs to the Protestant Episcopal Church. If he says no, you can keep the money. If he says yes, you must bring the money back to me.' The man did as he was told, and our priest could not but say yes, but tried to explain. But the man was angry, feeling he had been deceived, and said, 'Protestant is Protestant,' and left. Nothing came of the matter." (*Living Church*, September 1.)

The *Living Church* itself takes this position: "The result of this round-table conference was a united recommendation to the General Convention not to adopt the name 'American Catholic Church,' but rather to amend the title-page of the *Prayer-book* so that it should read as follows: 'The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Holy Catholic Church. According to the use of that portion thereof known as the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Together with the Psalter, or Psalms of David.' . . . It seems to us that the most satisfactory name for the Church and the one upon which all Churchmen could easily agree is simply 'The American Episcopal Church.' American and Episcopal our Church unquestionably is, and the combination of the two words effectively distinguishes our Church from any Episcopal Church in other lands and from any non-episcopal body in this country." (*L. c.*, September 1.) E.

Unbelief and the Social Gospel in the Protestant Episcopal Church.—What we submit here does not come from a professional theologian, but from a professor of English at Smith College, Howard R. Patch, who, evidently with a bleeding heart, wrote an article having the caption "The Need of Disunity," for the *Living Church*. Mr. Patch is an Episcopalian and much interested in keeping his Church at a high spiritual level. In his article he reports a conversation which he recently had with a vestryman of a neighboring Episcopalian congregation. We take over some of the salient statements.

Criticizing his old-fashioned rector, this vestryman said: "He preached

about sin last Sunday—the sin of pride I think it was. What in the name of the Lord does sin or pride mean to anybody in this day and age! I tell you, the whole terminology is forgotten. It is based on a false and medieval psychology. Pride, for example, is sometimes the result of a healthy condition of the body. It is in any case beneficial. It creates a good morality—cleans up city streets, cleans up the home, makes people look smart and dress well, makes them take pains to do a good job at their work. Our church people have the whole thing upside down. Our first job is to look out for our politics and our community. Then we can have some worship. And, incidentally, I hope they have comfortable churches by that time.”

“Then you don’t believe that Christ is God?” he was asked.

His reply was, “What do you mean by that? Christ Himself brought up the quotation, ‘I said, Ye are all gods,’ or something like that. How can we tell what it means to be a god? This all represents the old approach, theologically worthless. We must clear out the rubbish.”

“Why are you an Episcopalian anyway? The whole stand of the Church, the *Prayer-book*, everything, contradicts you,” Mr. Patch retorted.

The vestryman answered: “Does it? Well, we’ll make it over. We’ll rewrite the *Prayer-book*. But the Church does not contradict me. My son went to a bishop the other day to get a job. Jim, you know, was ordained a year ago. Well, the bishop asked if he minded letting Presbyterians or Congregationalists receive Communion. ‘I stand by our rubric,’ said Jim. ‘What for?’ asked the bishop. ‘It was written before outsiders wanted to take Communion with us. And then another point. I want you to play with your parishioners, literally play with them, not preach at them. Play golf, have tea with them; drop theology.’ That was what he said. Ah, that is the way bishops talk now! Every one at heart is intensely liberal these days. And that is the only way the Church will become effective. God does not want worship, but service of our fellow-man; our work is our ritual.”

After some more remarks of the vestryman, Mr. Patch, rising, said: “My dear man, it is marvelous! You are a prophet. You are an Episcopalian, and I am an Episcopalian. But I know one thing. We do not belong to the same Church or the same universe or the same God. For the first time in my life I can understand why they burned heretics in the Middle Ages. They were thinking of the harm they do to others. Why don’t you found a sect of your own? Like the Methodists or Holy Rollers, go out and preach your own ideas, tell your creed, and get some followers.”

“Oh, we have no creed,” said he with a touch of fervor. His eyes were fixed on a distant vision. “Oh, we do not need a sect. We are taking the Church with us. Look as far back as Mrs. Humphrey Ward’s novels and then look at our modernist conferences. Look at the name ‘Liberal Catholic’ for the High-churchman. Look at Bishop Parsons and Bishop Scarlett and the union services and all the rest of it. Ask any Episcopalian, and you will find he agrees with me. Your good, sane, healthy man of to-day does not want prayer and hymns. He wants social service. He does not want theology, fine-spun distinctions that no one gives a tinker’s damn for; he wants action! Look at the bishop of Liverpool and

L. P. Jacks. Look at nine-tenths of the people in your own congregation over at Middletown. Why, our name is legion."

Professor Patch aptly concludes: "The new heresy," I thought. "Like the old it is based on ignorance and bad thinking and half-truths. But unlike the old it forms no sects or cliques, but swallows up everything in one indiscriminate mess. It stands for everything and nothing. St. Paul recognized that divisions must come to make clear the truth. God give us disunity!"

This is not only something to be amazed at, but, we say it with the greatest seriousness, to be pondered by all of us. A.

Were the Gospels Originally Written in Aramaic?—Most of our readers are aware that at present lively discussions are going on pertaining to the question whether our four gospels were originally written in Greek or whether they are translations of Aramaic documents. The effort of Mr. Lamsa, who submitted a translation of what he maintained was the original form of the gospels, did not do much more than excite merriment in the circles of scholars because it became evident at once that what he was endeavoring to palm off on the world as the originals of our gospels was merely the old Peshito, the Syriac Version, which dates back to the fifth century of our era, being based, however, on an earlier translation made in the second century A. D. It is merely an indication of the gullibility of our press that the appearance of Mr. Lamsa's translation was widely heralded as a great event and as introducing the world to hitherto unknown treasures. More serious, however, is the effort of Dr. Torrey, professor of Semitic languages at Yale University (now professor emeritus), who not only is one of the leading archeologists of our age, but has given lifelong study to Semitic languages, including Aramaic. In 1933 he issued a book having the title *The Four Gospels, a New Translation*, which is based on the view that at first the gospels were written in Aramaic and that to understand them we must endeavor to get back to the Aramaic original. Drs. Goodspeed and Riddle, both of Chicago University, who wrote against him, urged chiefly that there is no trace left of such Aramaic originals, that the Jews were not in the habit of employing Aramaic for writing, and that the gospels, owing to the freshness and vigor of their style, do not strike one as being translations. Dr. Torrey now, in the *Christian Century*, is defending himself against his critics, and these are the considerations which he urges:—

It cannot be denied that Christianity comes from Palestine; each one of the four gospels has about it "the atmosphere of Palestine"; they all bear evidence of an early date; they all "are based on the same loosely woven popular material"; not any one of them indicates that it is influenced by the tremendous catastrophe which came upon the Jewish nation through the fall of Jerusalem; hence the contents of the gospels reveal that here we are dealing with the very first documents produced by the early Christians; the Greek in all of them has a "strong Semitic tinge"; there is nothing similar to its language in existence except Greek translations of Semitic works, a matter, however, which cannot be detected except by experts; the multitude of papyri which have been found and studied in recent years show that the Greek of the gospels was different from that of the ordinary people; Aramaic is not so little known as some

people imagine, having been studied very much during the last one hundred years; it was the chief "literary language of all Western Asia" for many centuries; in the first century A. D., Josephus wrote his *History of the Jewish War* in this language, which he afterwards rewrote in Greek (the Aramaic original is lost); when the Lord spoke to Paul, He addressed him in Aramaic (Acts 26, 14); the book called *The Four Gospels* is based on new evidence never before submitted; Wellhausen held that the synoptic gospels were first written in Aramaic, producing evidence that certain parts of our Greek gospels constituted translations made from written Aramaic sources; Burney, a British scholar, showed that John's gospel represents the translation of an Aramaic work; Old Testament apocrypha and pseudepigrapha, long regarded as having been written in Greek, are now proved to be "translations, some from Hebrew, others from Aramaic"; the fact that those who attempt to reach the underlying Aramaic do not agree is not a valid argument against the existence of an Aramaic original, because whether we can say what the original text was or not, the Greek remains translation-Greek; the loss of Jewish Aramaic literature of the first century must not be stressed too much because there are sufficient means at hand to reach sure conclusions. Dr. Torrey concludes his article with the bold assertion: "The Aramaic origin of the gospels is not just a theory nor by any means a mere probability; it is a demonstrated fact."

To the arguments of Dr. Torrey, Dr. Riddle, in the following number of the *Christian Century*, makes reply. What is it that he has to say in refutation? It is interesting to look at the considerations which he adduces and which we summarize:—

It is not satisfactory if Dr. Torrey hides behind the claim that none but Semitic experts have a right to give a verdict in this controversy; he does not evaluate the researches of modern scholars in this whole field; learned men rejecting the view of Dr. Torrey are La Grange, a French Semitist, Burkitt, G. R. Driver, and Dibelius, while Dalman denies that the fourth gospel is based on an Aramaic original; very amazing is the assertion of Dr. Torrey that the papyri do not contain an idiom similar to that of our Greek gospels, there he is flying in the face of Deissmann, Blass-Debrunner, and Radermacher; the view of Torrey that Aramaic was widely used in writing at the time when the gospels were produced is not tenable, for there is no evidence that such was the case; what Dr. Torrey says as to the Aramaic origin of certain apocrypha and pseudepigrapha is largely speculation; a comparison of the Septuagint with the gospels shows that the Greek of the latter is different from that of the former, and it must be remembered that the Septuagint has real translation-Greek; it is true that Josephus wrote his *War* first in Aramaic, but the Greek version of it which we possess is not a real translation, for Semitisms are rare in it; while Wellhausen held that the synoptic gospels were originally written in Aramaic, he outrightly denied that this was true of John's gospel; in Dr. Torrey's book *The Four Gospels* there are Aramaic terms which are not "older than the twentieth century and [were] never current outside modern books"; "in Dr. Torrey's translation 'Simon the leper' becomes 'Simon the jar-merchant.' This is the process: the consonants for the Aramaic words leper and jar-maker are the same, and the 'translator,' Dr. Torrey supposes, supplying the wrong vowels, 'mistranslated' the word."

Looking at this controversy from the outside, one must say that the *onus probandi* certainly rests with Dr. Torrey, who comes with a new theory and will have to prove his case if he wishes that we agree with him. Furthermore, it is evident, too, that Dr. Torrey relies more on vigor of assertion than on absolutely convincing proof. In brief, his thesis that the gospels were originally composed in Aramaic has not been proved. Cp. Vol. V, 530—537. A.

Personal Notices. — In the daily press the information has been published that Dr. Karl Barth, prominent German theologian, has been suspended from his position as professor of theology at the University of Bonn because he refused to take the oath of loyalty which the present German government demands of all who receive their salary from the state. We are told that Barth did not refuse to pledge loyalty, but that he was unwilling to promise the unconditional allegiance which the oath prescribed. His students have risen to his defense and are declaring that they are not satisfied with a substitute. — The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. is in a state of agitation at present over the impending ecclesiastical trial of Dr. J. Gresham Machen, who has been formally charged with violation of his ordination vow. It is stated that nine points are urged against him, the basis for all the charges being Dr. Machen's unwillingness to cease being identified with the Independent Board of Foreign Missions, although the General Assembly had ordered that this board be dissolved. As president of this Independent Board Dr. Machen naturally has to bear the brunt of the controversy. When he is charged with violation of his ordination vow, the chief accusation against him, it seems, can be put in one word, insubordination. The controversy seems to be waxing quite bitter. There are people who maintain that Dr. Machen is attacked on account of his fundamentalist attitude on points of doctrine, for instance, that of the Virgin Birth. The ecclesiastical trial will be held according to the rules of the Presbyterian Church. Seven men have been appointed as a court, and a committee of three will conduct the prosecution. Perhaps one or the other of the Presbyterians will, as the case progresses, get an inkling of the unscripturalness of the church polity which Presbyterianism represents. — In Norwalk, Conn., Rev. Augustus Beard died December 22, 1934. He reached an age of 101 years and was known as the oldest minister in the United States. For a while he served the American Church in Paris. The establishment of schools and colleges for the Negroes was given much attention by him. Being a Congregationalist, he served for years as corresponding secretary of the American Missionary Association of that Church. — The Bishop of Copenhagen, Rt. Rev. Ostenfeld, Primate of the Danish Lutheran State Church, died on October 24, 1934. His successor is Bishop Hans Fulsag-Damgaard. The deceased leader was an author of note, his books dealing chiefly with practical issues. — At the head of the Lutheran Church in Russia, as the successor of Bishop Theodore Meyer, who died April 28, 1934, Dr. C. Arthur Malmgren is serving as bishop. It is interesting to read in Dr. Morehead's remarks about him in the *News Bulletin* of the National Lutheran Council that after he had been called to the pastorate of St. Ann's Evangelical Lutheran Church in St. Petersburg in 1891, he, during the first twenty-five years of service in that position, taught religion in the upper grades of St. Ann's Parochial School and cooperated

in many institutions of mercy of the St. Petersburg congregations and the Church in Russia in general.— December 18, 1934, Dr. Frederick Lynch died, who from 1914 to 1928 was secretary of the Church Peace Union and for twenty years served as editor of *Christian Work*. A.

A Correction.— We are reliably informed that the editorial from the *Living Church* describing a service conducted by the St. James Society in St. Luke's Church, New York, and reprinted in our January issue (p. 69), contains several wrong statements. The service was not held on a Sunday, but on a Thursday. We might add, to avoid misunderstanding, that the consent of the congregation for the holding of the service had been obtained. The statement that an Anglo-Catholic would have "recognized with amazement a service surprisingly like the solemn Mass that he would have expected at the Church of St. Mary the Virgin," is described as not correct by brethren who participated in this service. Fairness demands that we should not withhold this information from our readers. A.

II. Ausland.

Die theologische Hochschule in Berlin-Zehlendorf. Über die theologische Hochschule unserer Brüder in Deutschland, insbesondere über die Arbeit des Wintersemesters, schreibt Rektor Willkomm in der „Freikirche“: „Wir haben, wie im vorigen Semester, zehn Studenten, von denen einer sich zunächst auf die Prüfung in der hebräischen Sprache vorbereitet und ein anderer, der nicht unserer Freikirche angehört, an den Vorlesungen teilnimmt, um unsere Lehre und kirchliche Stellung kennenzulernen. Der Vorlesungsplan ist nicht wesentlich verändert. In der Glaubenslehre wird in diesem Semester die Lehre von Gott, vom Menschen und seinem Fall und von der Person unseres Herrn Jesu Christi behandelt, in der Kirchengeschichte die Reformationszeit. Aus dem Alten Testament werden ausgewählte Psalmen gelesen und erklärt, aus dem Neuen Testament der Brief Pauli an die Epheser, der ja ganz besonders von der Herrlichkeit und dem Reichtum der Kirche Christi handelt. Die Einleitung in das Neue Testament wird fortgesetzt, in der über die Entstehung der einzelnen Bücher des Neuen Testaments, ihre Verfasser, ihren Hauptinhalt usw. gehandelt wird. Den älteren Studenten wird in der Katechetik und in der Pastoraltheologie Anleitung zur Führung des praktischen Amtes gegeben, und der Lehrgang für kirchliche Jugendpflege dient ebenfalls diesem Zweck. Im Lehrgang für englische Sprache werden die Studenten eingeführt in das rechte Lesen der englisch-kirchlichen Literatur, wie sie namentlich in den Kreisen unserer amerikanischen Glaubensbrüder erscheint, und die Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der neueren Philosophie, die P. Dr. Koch hält, dienen dazu, die Studenten bekannt zu machen mit den geistigen Strömungen der neueren Zeit, von denen ja auch die neuere Theologie stark beeinflusst ist. So haben unsere Studenten ein großes und mannigfaches Arbeitsgebiet, auf dem sie sich betätigen können und sollen, damit das, was ihnen in den Vorlesungen geboten wird, auch wirklich von bleibendem Nutzen für sie und die ganze Kirche sei. Für ihr leibliches Wohlergehen ist auch gesorgt. Sie selbst verwalten im Einverständnis mit der Fakultät und dem Verwaltungsrat das Verköstigungswesen. Bis auf einen wohnen wieder alle hier in der Anstalt.“

J. L. M.

Vereinigungsbestrebungen lutherischer Freikirchen in Deutschland. Aus dem Bericht über den Pfarrkonvent der Hannoverschen Ev.-Luth. Freikirche, veröffentlicht in dem Blatt „Unter dem Kreuz“, bringt Rektor Willkomm in der „Freikirche“ die folgende Mitteilung: „Bekanntlich waren von der Synode in Bledmar Superintendent Wöttcher und P. Gerhold beauftragt worden, als Vertreter unserer Kirche an den kommenden Verhandlungen teilzunehmen. Beide haben nun am 4. Juli [1934] einer Tagung in Kassel beigewohnt, an der außerdem die Ev.-Luth. Kirche Altpreußens, die Selbständige Ev.-Luth. Kirche in Hessen und die Hermannsburg-Hamburger Ev.-Luth. Freikirche beteiligt waren. Dort ist es zu einem greifbaren Ergebnis nicht gekommen; ein solches war auch nicht zu erwarten und kann für die nächste Zukunft nicht erhofft werden. Wohl sind bereits von zwei Seiten Vorschläge zu einem Zusammenschluß der lutherischen Kirchen gemacht worden, die im Konvent nach einem Referat von P. Gerhold besprochen wurden. Doch ehe es zu einer wirklichen Vereinigung kommen kann, müssen nach unserer einmütigen Ansicht die verschiedenen Freikirchen eine einheitliche Stellung zu den sich lutherisch nennenden Landeskirchen und der diese umfassenden Reichskirche gewinnen. Dies ist aber wieder nicht möglich, solange nicht die jetzigen kirchlichen Wirren zu einem endgültigen Abschluß gelangt sind. Für uns in Hannover ist am wichtigsten die Heilung des Risses, der leider innerhalb der Freikirche eingetreten und bisher nur teilweise beseitigt ist. Hierbei wird es wesentlich sein, wie es sich mit der Hermannsburg Mission weitergestaltet. Es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, daß die schwierige Missionsfrage durch die gesamtkirchliche Entwicklung ihre Lösung findet.“

Hierzu schreibt Rektor Willkomm: „Auch wir sind der Meinung, daß eine wirkliche Vereinigung der lutherischen Freikirchen in Deutschland nur möglich ist, wenn die verschiedenen Freikirchen zuvor auf Grund des Wortes Gottes zu einer einheitlichen Beurteilung der sich lutherisch nennenden Landeskirchen und der Reichskirche, zu der diese ja alle gehören wollen, gekommen sind. Daß dies bisher nicht der Fall war, ist ja ein Hauptgrund dafür, daß die von uns schon seit Jahren erstrebte Einigung zwischen den andern Freikirchen und uns bisher nicht zustande gekommen ist. Wenn man aber damit warten will, bis die jetzigen kirchlichen Wirren in den Volkskirchen zu einem endgültigen Abschluß gekommen sein werden, dann kann es noch lange dauern. Gerade die gegenwärtigen Kämpfe um die Deutsche Evangelische Kirche haben doch deutlich genug gezeigt und zeigen es immer noch aufs neue, daß auch die besten unter den deutschen evangelischen Volkskirchen wirkliche Bekenntniskirchen im Sinne des lutherischen Bekenntnisses weder sind noch sein wollen. Denn das, was das Augsburger Bekenntnis als unerläßlich für die wahre Einigkeit der Kirche fordert, daß nämlich einträchtiglich nach reinem Verstand das Evangelium gepredigt und die heiligen Sakramente laut des Evangelii gereicht werden, wollen sie alle nicht. Das würde ja bedeuten, daß rechte evangelische Lehr- und Kirchenzucht eingeführt und geübt würde. Davon will man aber auch in den sogenannten lutherischen Landeskirchen nichts wissen, sondern auch dort hält man fest an der ‚Lehrfreiheit‘ und an den Massenkommunionen. Darum wäre es vielmehr das richtige, daß an der Einigung der lutherischen Freikirchen zunächst ohne Rücksicht auf die Verhältnisse in den Landeskirchen mit allem Ernst gearbeitet würde. Eine in der Wahrheit fest gegründete

Bereinigung der evangelisch-lutherischen Freikirchen, für die wir stets eingetreten sind und nach der wir uns herzlich sehnen, würde gerade jetzt ein großer Segen sein und denen, die mit Ernst eine Bekenntniskirche wollen, eine Zuflucht bieten in den Wirren unserer Tage." J. L. M.

Tagung des Arbeitsausschusses des Lutherischen Weltkonvents. Der Arbeitsausschuß des Lutherischen Weltkonvents tagte vom 18. bis zum 20. November v. J. in München. Gegenwärtig waren alle Vertreter: Präses D. Morehead, New York; Rektor D. Voe, Minnesota; Dompropst D. Behrson, Göttingen; D. Jörgensen, Kopenhagen; Landesbischof D. Marahrens, Hannover; Landesbischof D. Meiser. Der Arbeitsausschuß tritt jährlich zusammen, während der Lutherische Weltkonvent, „der oberste Rat des Lutheriums, in dem Abgeordnete der lutherischen Kirche der ganzen Welt vertreten sind“ (so die „A. E. L. N.“), alle sechs Jahre tagt. Der Lutherische Weltkonvent wird seine nächste Sitzung, wie in München beschlossen wurde, in diesem Jahr in Paris abhalten. Und was will er? Die „A. E. L. N.“, die von ihm urteilt: „Es stehen im ganzen achtzig Millionen lutherische Christen hinter ihm“, schreibt hierüber: „Präsident Morehead antwortete gelegentlich eines von der Pressestelle München veranstalteten Presseempfangs auf diese Frage ungefähr folgendes: „Das Ziel des Lutherischen Weltkonvents ist die Verwirklichung des Bewußtseins der inneren Zusammengehörigkeit und Einheit aller lutherischen Kirchen in der Welt. Auf der Grundlage des gemeinsamen Glaubensbekenntnisses sollen die großen, für alle lutherischen Kirchen der Welt gemeinsamen Fragen beraten und entschieden werden. Dieses Ziel soll auf praktischem Wege erreicht werden, nämlich nicht allein durch Beratungen, sondern vor allem durch gemeinsames Handeln, durch gemeinsame Liebesarbeit an nothleidenden Glaubensgenossen überall in der Welt. So hat der Lutherische Weltkonvent in den Jahren nach dem Krieg ein großes charitatives Werk getan; neun Millionen Dollars wurden an Unterstützung aufgebracht. Gegenwärtig steht die Fürsorge für die aus Rußland nach Chargin geflohenen Wolga-Deutschen im Vordergrund. Vierhundert dieser Flüchtlinge wurden von dem Exekutivkomitee nach Brasilien gebracht und dort neu angesiedelt. So greift der Lutherische Weltkonvent mit seiner Hilfe ein, wo in der Welt sich lutherische Glaubensbrüder in Not befinden. Aber diese Hilfe ist nicht der Hauptzweck. Durch dieses gemeinsame Handeln soll vielmehr das große Ziel des Weltkonvents erreicht werden: die lutherischen Christen in der ganzen Welt sollen zum Bewußtsein ihres gleichen Glaubens und ihrer Zusammengehörigkeit erweckt werden.“

Erreicht werden kann dies gewiß höchst wichtige Ziel nur so, daß man das ernste, aufrichtige Studium der lutherischen Bibelwahrheiten an erste Stelle rückt und nebst der Theses auch die Antithesis hervorhebt. Gemeinsames Handeln bringt nur äußerlich näher; die innere, vom Heiligen Geist gewirkte Annäherung bringt allein das Wort Gottes zuwege. Soll aus dem Lutherischen Weltkonvent wirklich ein bleibendes Gutes hervorwachsen, so muß Gottes Wort allewege im Zentrum alles Denkens, Redens und Handelns stehen als Hauptgut, worum es uns Lutheranern zu tun ist. Dann wird auch die wahre christliche Liebe mit ihren vielen charitativen Werken von selbst folgen. Handelt man umgekehrt, will man durch gemeinsames Handeln eine Einigung herbeiführen, so begeht man den Fehler, den der Amerikaner durch den Ausdruck bezeichnet to hitch the cart before the horse.

J. L. M.