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Theological Observer. – Kirchlch Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer. — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

Aus der Synode. Die verschiedenen Distriktsblätter der Synode bringen ermutigende Berichte von neuem Leben auf den Missionsfeldern. Selbst in den nordwestlichen Gebieten, wo die furchtbare Dürre von 1934 so viel Elend zur Folge hatte, werden Kapellen und Pfarrhäuser gebaut. Ein Missionar berichtet, daß er in den Monaten Juni und Juli 2,318 Meilen zurückgelegt habe, ein zweiter sogar 3,256 Meilen. Es sind dort oben also noch wirkliche Reife prediger. In Oklahoma geht die Arbeit auf der Station Lutheroma rüstig weiter. Eine Klasse von Erwachsenen ist durch Taufe und Konfirmation in die Kirche aufgenommen worden. Und man redet davon, die Missionsarbeit unter den mehr als 90,000 Indianern Oklahomas auszudehnen. Auch im Argentinischen Distrikt dehnt man die Seile lang. Ein kürzlicher Bericht beschreibt eine Missionsreise nach Formosa, einem Territorium, das weiter nördlich liegt als der Chaco. Es sind dort über 100,000 Hektar Land der Besiedelung eröffnet worden, und unter den Ansiedlern finden sich auch Lutheraner. In Brasilien unternehmen einzelne Missionare ähnliche weite Reisen, wie ein neuerer Bericht über eine Reise nach Ararangua im Staate Sta. Catharina zeigt. Eine solche Missionsreise bedeutet für den Missionar etwa 500 Kilometer, die zumeist auf einem Reittier zurückgelegt werden müssen. — Viele der Distriktsblätter bringen interessante Nachrichten von Gemeindejubiläen, die zum Teil, wie in Nord-Wisconsin, auch mit Schilderungen aus den Anfangsjahren der betreffenden Gemeinden verbunden sind. Auch was hin und wieder über die Versammlungen von Konferenzen gesagt wird, ist mehr als ein kahler Bericht. So bringt unter anderem das „Kirchenblatt“ von Brasilien einen längeren Bericht über die Porto-Alegre-Distriktskonferenz, die auch den gewöhnlichen Leser instand setzt, die Wichtigkeit und den Segen der Pastorkonferenzen zu erkennen. — Das Distriktsblatt von North Dakota und Montana bringt Auszüge aus einem Briefe P. E. Zieglers, der die furchtbaren Erdbeben in Helena, wie sie im Oktober und November vorigen Jahres stattfanden, beschreibt. Es war dies augenscheinlich eine schreckliche Heimjuchung Gottes, und auch unsere Glaubensbrüder sind schwer betroffen worden. — Das *Atlantic Bulletin* hat kürzlich einen kurzen illustrierten Artikel über die „Erste Lutherische Synode in Amerika“ gebracht, die im August 1785 in den Watchung-Bergen in New Jersey organisiert wurde. Auch wurde kürzlich berichtet, daß eine spanische Mission in New York ins Leben gerufen worden ist. — Unter den goldenen Jubiläen des Spätjahrs finden sich die Pastoren C. H. Weder von Seward, Nebr., Wm. Hagen von Detroit, Mich., A. W. Meyer von Yonkers, N. Y. (der langjährige Direktor vom St. John's College in Winfield), Konrad Engelder von Liberty Corners, N. J., und E. Holm von Columbus, Nebr. P. E. A.

Verbal Inspiration and the Lutheran Union. — There are men within the Christian Church who abhor the doctrine of the verbal inspiration. They consider it a dangerous doctrine; and when they engage in negotiations for church union, they voice their fear of this doctrine. Members of the Episcopal Church have recently been conferring with represen-

tatives of the Lutheran Augustana Synod in the interest of church unity, and naturally the doctrine of inspiration was discussed. The report of the conference, published in the *Living Church* of January 4, 1936, under the heading: "Anglicans, Lutherans Confer on Reunion," contains this paragraph: "The Episcopalians expressed preference for the statement that the Bible 'contained the Word of God,' in order to avoid the pitfalls of a possible theory of literal, verbal inspiration. The Lutherans preferred the simple statement that the Bible 'is the Word of God,' qualified by the understanding that all parts of the Bible might not be of equal significance. Both agreed that the Bible was the basis of all Christian doctrine." These Episcopalians feel that they must warn all Christians against the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible: it contains pitfalls; it endangers the faith. They insist on the formula "The Bible contains the Word of God," meaning that not all parts of the Bible are inspired and that no part of the Bible is *literally* inspired.

There are men also within the Lutheran Church who abhor the doctrine of the verbal inspiration. The *A. E. L. K.*, the organ of the conservative Lutherans in Germany, has been assailing this doctrine these many years. Here are some typical pronouncements: "*Karl Barth strauchelt sich gegen den Vorwurf, er führe das Gespenst der Verbalinspirationstheorie wieder herauf*" (1935, p. 987). And: "*Damit waere der Verbalinspirationstheorie bald der Boden entzogen*" (1935, p. 1042). Verbal inspiration, these Lutherans say, is a fearsome ghost, a foul spirit that troubles the Church. Men must be warned against the "*Gespenst der Verbalinspirationstheorie.*" There is no room for it in the Christian Church: *der Verbalinspirationstheorie muss der Boden entzogen werden*; it must be cast out of the Church. They do not want verbal inspiration mentioned in their presence. It produces an uncanny feeling in them.

And there are men within the United Lutheran Church of America who abhor the doctrine of verbal inspiration. Prof. E. E. Flack has recently stated: "Is not the inspiration of Scripture too high and holy a reality to be defined in terms of stenography? Does one exalt the Word of God by dehumanizing it? . . . The achievement of closer unity among Lutherans in this country, and indeed throughout the world, will require, for one essential, a higher view of Scripture than is represented by the theory of inspiration by dictation" (*Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1935, p. 417). The *Lutheran Church Quarterly* has set out to exorcize the ghost of the verbal-inspiration theory. It has again and again voiced its abhorrence of this doctrine. It declares: "The idea of verbal inspiration and the practise of literal interpretation may destroy the reality of the Bible's message" (1935, p. 255). It attacks "those literalists who have constant recourse to the words *infallible and inerrant*," who say "the Bible is an infallible book" (p. 260). Again: "I found that I could not meet these [men of a modern *Weltanschauung*] by falling back on the claim that this Bible was the literal Word of God." (1935, p. 117. Cf. *CONC. THEOL. MTHLY.*, 1936, p. 149.)

The *Lutheran Church Quarterly* feels that it must warn its readers against the pitfalls of the "theory" of verbal inspiration. And these writers feel that the warning must be sounded also in the *Lutheran*. Not only the pastors, but also the laymen of the United Lutheran Church are

being told that the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and all that goes with it must be cast out of the Church. Four issues of the *Lutheran* (Dec. 12; Dec. 19; Dec. 26, 1935, and Jan. 2, 1936) contain a series of articles on "Lutheran Scholarship—the Need of It," the series being headed by the editorial caption: "Dr. T. A. Kantonen, Professor of Systematic Theology in Hamma Divinity School, Springfield, Ohio, Writes about 'The Canned Goods of Past Theology,' 'Faith that Cannot Express Itself,' 'Living Off Borrowed Capital,' etc." In this essay Dr. Kantonen declares that there is no room in the Church for the doctrine of verbal inspiration. It must be exorcized and cast out. After making the fine statement that "the Church of Luther must never deny its future leaders the opportunity of becoming Biblical scholars," he continues: "But let it also be said in all seriousness that Lutheran exegesis will be seriously handicapped unless it abandons once and for all the unpsychological and mechanical theories of inspiration and unhistorical views of verbal inerrancy which the application of scientific and historical methods to the study of the Bible has rendered obsolete." According to Dr. Kantonen and his party the students at the seminaries must be told that the idea of the inerrancy of the Bible based on the verbal inspiration is obsolete. The pastor must refrain from telling his people that this or that doctrine is divine truth because *it is so written* in the Bible. The laity must be disabused of the idea that all the words of the Bible are verbally inspired, actually spoken by the mouth of the Lord.

Dr. Kantonen further insists that, when the doctrine of verbal inspiration is cast out, other things must go with it, such as "The Canned Goods of Past Theology" (see editorial heading). That means the "restitution theology." And that means that there must be development of doctrine, of theology. The Church needs "new truth." The essay does indeed state that, "if Lutheran scholarship is to emerge from its doldrums, it needs, *not a change in the contents of its message*" (italics ours), "but a change in its methodology." However, the last paragraph of the essay contains the statement: "I am convinced that the highest kind of scholarship can flourish only in such an institution as the Lutheran Church, a fellowship of believers not content with ready-made doctrine or institution, but ever searching the Scriptures for new truth and ever receptive and obedient to the Spirit of the living God." "New truth" does not mean the old truth in an up-to-date form of presentation, but it means *new truth*. The theology that presents the same doctrines that Luther and the Confessions and the dogmatists taught has been stigmatized in Germany and America as the "theology of restitution." Restitution here means the revival, the reproduction, of the old Lutheran doctrines. That has no place in modern Lutheran theology, they say; what we need is a development of doctrine, a readjustment of the old truth. And that certainly amounts to the same as "new truth." Dr. Kantonen is calling for *new truth* when he writes: "The value of men like C. P. Krauth, H. E. Jacobs, Pieper, and Lindberg, to mention but a few, must not be underestimated. But their theology was either that of scholastic orthodoxy or of 'restitution,' approaches which served well in the period of *ecclesia plantanda*, where the chief concern was to preserve intact and immune the heritage of the fathers. It was more or less an immigrant theology, quite in keeping

with the rest of the immigrant outlook." The "new truth" must take the place of "the heritage of the fathers"—that is plain language. And here is some more plain language: "Its pastors dare not be satisfied with feeding souls hungering for the Bread of Life with the canned goods of past theology. Its theologians dare not use the Confessions of the Church as Gorgon heads upon which to stare with such fascination as to become petrified." The meaning of this is clear. When a pastor declares that he will abide exactly by the doctrines presented in the Lutheran Confessions, the sneering terms "canned goods" and "petrified" are applied. Again: "If it [a Church] holds to an erroneous pre-Kantian conception of truth as a static quantum, it will soon find the precious 'heritage of sound, pure doctrine' becoming moldy in its hands. It needs to interpret the eternal verities of God in the terms of the age." If we understand common English, this means that the doctrine handed down to us out of the Bible by Luther through the Confessions needs to be developed, readjusted, improved, to conform with the Kantian and the related and the opposed philosophies. Pure doctrine—this is how the essay speaks of it: "If half the zeal that has been spent on preserving the letter of *reine Lehre* had been focused upon the production of such scholarship, the Lutheran Church would in actual leadership and not in hollow boasting prove itself to be the Church that was 'born in a university.'"—Just a few more examples to show what is meant by "new truth." "The narrowness of Luther's horizon is betrayed by his contemptuous references to 'the heathen and the Turks,' implying that these people and their religions may be quite disregarded." "Our people know, for example, that the Lutheran Church in the past has condoned war, but they do not know whether it should still do so in the changed modern situation, when even the State, through the Kellogg-Briand Pact, has formally outlawed war." "Corresponding to the social changes which challenge Christian scholarship to-day are the equally rapid and thorough intellectual changes. Just as the Church has had to ungear itself from the Ptolemaic world and adjust itself progressively to the Copernican, Newtonian, and Darwinian worlds, so it must now define its relation to the Einsteinian world." "Our leaders are beginning at last, many decades after Rauschenbusch, to speak about Christianizing the social order, but with much of the overhopeful *naiveté* of the early advocates of the social gospel." We now know what the term "new truth" means. It means just that. Just read the statement once more and note the contrasted terms: "not content with *ready-made doctrine*, but ever searching the Scriptures for *new truth*." There must not be a fixed body of doctrine. Since Scripture is not inerrant, the decisive word has not yet been spoken. There must be progress in doctrine.

We fully agree with the general thesis of the essay: "Lutheranism can never and nowhere dispense with scholarship." And there is room for great improvement in this field. But there is no room in the Lutheran Church for a scholarship which can be bought only at the expense of the verbal inspiration and the absolute inerrancy of the Bible and which demands that not the Bible alone, but also science and philosophy must shape the doctrine of the Church. That would mean ultimately the loss of every doctrine. And that learning, scholarship, science, philosophy which

requires for its existence and growth the sacrifice of the inerrancy of the Bible is of no use to the Church.

What are the prospects for a Lutheran union in the face of this persistent attempt by leaders of the Lutheran Church to rid it of the doctrine of verbal inspiration? To put it another way: how much peace and good will would prevail in the body which formed an alliance and fellowship and left the question of the verbal inspiration *in statu quo*? One party bases the certainty of the saving doctrine—and all that goes with that—on the absolute inerrancy, the verbal inspiration, of the Bible. The other party insists on destroying the belief in the verbal inspiration and absolute inerrancy of the Bible. Will the first party invite a pastor of the second party—in order to practise pulpit-fellowship—to occupy its pulpit and pour contempt on what the worshippers cherish more than their lives? Will the second party spread among its people church periodicals which denounce the denial of the inerrancy of the Bible as a fatal error, or will they warn against such publications as the *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*? They must take the second alternative. Then what becomes of the union?

Two final remarks. First, in view of the sharp disagreement on the vital doctrine of inspiration (and other doctrines) we cannot understand the statement in the Savannah Resolutions: "It is our sincere belief that we already possess a firm basis on which to unite in one Lutheran Church in America and that *there is no doctrinal reason why such a union should not come to pass.*" Second, we never could understand how Lutherans could characterize the matters separating the synods as mere "trivialities."

E.

The Modernism of Kagawa.—Toyohiko Kagawa, the well-known Japanese Christian (?) socialist and reformer, has come to the United States for a six months' lecture tour, purposing to make clear to the churches of our country his mission in Japan and his views on the Gospel. Kagawa is extremely popular both in Japan and in America. His work in the slum settlements of Tokyo, Osaka, and Kobe, his testimony to the insufficiency of Shintoism in redeeming souls, and his unselfish devotion to his missionary activities call for high praise. Up to this time he has written over fifty books, and through his literary earnings he has largely supported his social work in the slums of populous Japanese cities. But Kagawa is not an orthodox Christian, as the *Sunday-school Times* (November 16, 1935) points out. Quoting from Kagawa's outstanding book, *Love the Law of Life*, the *Times* cites the following unchristian, modernistic statements: "Love knows no death. This is the meaning of the cross." "The atonement means a reaction in which self is melted in the perfect crucible called Christ." "There exists a Being in the universe, great beyond our power to imagine. Whether this Being should be called God or not I do not know." "Belief in evolution is faith in the progressive entrance into an ever-expanding freedom—from seed to shoot, from bud to flower, from anthropoid to human, from man to son of God. What a courageous faith!"—In his book *The Religion of Jesus* Kagawa writes this: "The true, deep meaning of redemption is that Jesus apologized to God for all the failures and sins of mankind, taking responsibility for them on Himself." Again, "We do not know in what form the resurrection [of

Christ] did come. Whether it was in the flesh, as the gospels teach, or in the spiritual body, as Paul tells us, it makes no difference. Anyway Jesus was truly revived in the hearts of His disciples. Here is the beginning of Christianity. From this as a starting-point the Gospel of Jesus has spread over the whole world. The disciples believed that Jesus revived in the flesh, when they themselves revived spiritually." The situation of Christianity in Japan is at present extremely critical, as Prof. Enkichi Kan of Tokyo points out in a well-written article published in the *Evangelisches Missionsmagazin* (November, 1935, Basel Missionsverlag). Both Shintoism and Buddhism are now being revived in Japan and are taking on socialized forms to counteract the Christian socialism championed by such men as Kagawa. The greatest peril now threatening Christians in Japan is, as Professor Kan shows, the almost unavoidable syncretism which recent developments force upon them. Japanese Christians themselves are demanding of the mission boards the return of the old-style missionaries and are asking for up-to-date missionary advisers. In Christian Japanese circles there have been in recent years three manifest tendencies: one decidedly *communistic*, seeking to Christianize the communistic leaven that came to Japan from Russia; another, a *liberalizing* tendency, represented by Kagawa, who finds himself in hearty accord with the notorious Laymen's Commission's *Rethinking Missions* and who seeks to stress Christian socialized activity without emphasis on the doctrinal truths which the old-style missionaries inculcated; and finally, a more positive religious tendency in the direction of German Barthian theology. Professor Kan writes: "*Etwa Ende 1932 fing der Kommunismus an, an Einfluss zu verlieren und die dialektische Theologie Oberhand zu gewinnen. Seither hat sie in zunehmendem Mass die Aufmerksamkeit der Studenten gefesselt. Es sind schon viele Buecher darueber in Japan erschienen, insbesondere die Uebersetzungen der Werke von Karl Barth, Brunner, Gogarten, Thurneysen und Bultmann. Auch die wichtigsten Werke von Kierkegaard befinden sich im Druck.*" Again: "*Die christlichen Missionen haben die andern Religionen nicht bekehrt; im Gegenteil, sie haben die andern Religionen belebt.*" And: "*Das eine ist sicher, dass Japan gegenwaertig an einem Wendepunkt in der Geschichte der Missionsarbeit steht. Wir brauchen Missionare neuen Stils, solche, die bereit sind, Ratgeber zu sein fuer die eingebornen Arbeiter, nicht als Vaeter, sondern als Brueder und Freunde.*" Certainly, the leaven of unbelief is working ceaselessly and potently in Christian circles everywhere, both at home and abroad, and our own spiritual and moral reaction can be only that of greater and more devoted missionary witnessing to the old divine truths. Barthian theology certainly can save neither the West nor the East. J. T. M.

Father Divine. — Slowly the population west of the Hudson is apprized of something the New Yorkers undoubtedly have known long ago, that in one of the sections of the great metropolis, called Harlem, a strange religious phenomenon is to be witnessed, the deification of a living Negro preacher called Father Divine by his followers. In the *Christian Century* Rev. Edwin Buehrer writes at length about the blasphemous show in Harlem and gives this information on the past of the so-called Father Divine: "Father Divine, formerly known as Joe Baker, spent his boyhood in Ala-

bama. For a number of years he preached in Sayville, Long Island, and attracted a considerable following. Then, arrested for maintaining a nuisance and released on bail, he journeyed over to Harlem and became an instant success." Concerning the present work of this false prophet our informant says: "He does not openly boast that he is God, but he so declares himself by implication in every address he makes to his adoring worshippers. He cheerfully forgives all those who confess their sins. He urges them to relax their 'conscious mentality' and to trust and obey him. He encourages them to pray to him and assures them that, although he may be elsewhere 'in the body,' he can nevertheless hear them and answer them. He promises peace and brotherhood and material abundance to all those who will renounce everything for him. His followers hang on his every word and respond with vigorous handclapping and joyous exclamations. When he finishes, he turns around abruptly, strides through the door, up the steps, and into one of his high-powered limousines to be sped away to some other meeting-place. The way is clear as he moves along, but many worshippers follow him for a final glimpse or, if possible, to touch him as he passes."

The meetings which this colored leader conducts are called "peace mission" meetings, so we are informed. In one of the meeting-places inscriptions were displayed, reading: "Father Divine has brought peace to the nation. He is God. If you keep his saying, you will never taste death." "Father Divine, the most high God, is also creator of the universe. All glory and honor be unto his regal majesty, world without end." Dr. Buehrer finds the explanation of the success of this man, for one thing, in the sex appeal of his mission. He tells us that in the large audiences meeting the Father in the afternoon about eighty-five per cent. of the worshippers are women. "Mayor La Guardia's commission to investigate conditions in Harlem reports that of sixteen hundred families interviewed seven hundred had been broken up, with at least one of the parents missing. To these poor, exploited, unromantic lives, frustrated, disappointed, unhappy, and enslaved, Father Divine is the great father and lover and husband and friend." A second factor explaining why thousands of colored people flock around this preacher, Dr. Buehrer finds in the emphasis of this man on social equality. Father Divine stresses the brotherhood of man. If it cannot be found outside, it can at least be found inside the places where he conducts his meetings. There all meet on a plane of equality and brotherly love. In the third place, according to our informant, Father Divine offers material abundance to his devotees. It cannot be denied that the lot of Negroes in Harlem is pitiful. Not only is ninety-five per cent. of the property in that section owned by whites, but seventy per cent. of the Negroes have no jobs and are living in quarters and conditions which are miserable beyond description. One can understand why starving people are willing to become his "angels," because as such they are likely to get bountiful meals. And why should not a man have a numerous following who "sells chicken dinners with 'all the trimmings' to the public for ten cents each"? Where Father Divine obtains the money for thus providing for his followers Dr. Buehrer says neither he nor any other reporter is able to tell, and the mystery surrounding the income of the leader makes his followers all the more staunch in their conviction that he is divine. What is offered

in the meetings in point of songs, testimonies, and confessions is the veriest trash, we are told. When one reads Dr. Buehrer's description, one almost feels as though in Harlem conditions of ignorance obtained such as we are wont to associate with darkest Africa. May God have mercy on these poor deluded people! The note sounded by Dr. Buehrer accusing the white people through their exploitation of the Negro to be largely responsible for this sad spectacle is not altogether unjustified. A.

Lutheran Chaplaincies. — The record of Lutheran chaplains in the Army and Navy as of November 5, 1935, is as follows: Regular Army, 10; Navy, 4. For the Regular Army chaplaincy thirteen men have been approved, and for the Army Chaplains Reserve sixteen men have been approved, of whom six have been appointed. There are now twenty-four Lutheran Reserve Army Chaplains on duty in the Civilian Conservation Corps Camps. — N. L. C. B.

The Oxford Group Movement and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. — Under the heading *Oxfordgruppen* the editor of *Folkebladet* (September 25) reports a lecture which Dr. G. T. Lee, editor of the *Lutheran Herald*, delivered on the Oxford Group Movement before a group of pastors attending a summer course given under the auspices of Augsburg Seminary, the college and theological seminary of the Norwegian Free Church. To the Norwegians, Buchmanism just now is of special interest, since the response which the movement has met in Norway has been rather favorable. In his lecture Dr. Lee very correctly exposed the Oxford Group Movement as one which is both un-Lutheran and unconfessional (*uluthersk og bekjendelsesløs*), especially in the doctrines of sin and grace, since it teaches salvation by works instead of by faith. In opposition to Dr. Lee, Professor Wesvig, instructor at Luther Seminary, contended that the Oxford Group Movement is a great spiritual awakening (*en stor aandelig retning*), which has gripped the whole land and shows signs of ushering in a world awakening (*en verdensvaekkelser*). He expressed the opinion that it is both Lutheran and Christian and that it places due weight upon the Word and the Confessions. True, Buchmanism employs a new theological language, differing from the customary terminology; but also in this respect it is necessary to meet the demand of the times. But after all, Buchmanism stresses the necessity of the confession of sin and trust in the guidance of the Spirit of God in daily life. Hence, if Norwegian Lutherans refuse to receive it, then, the speaker maintained, Norwegian Lutherans might just as well quit singing the old well-known hymn learned in their childhood days "Jesus, Guide Thou My Thoughts." The movement, he contended in conclusion, changes men and makes them disciples of Jesus.

Upon this notorious defense of Buchmanism, Dr. Vigness, editor of *Lutheraneren*, arose and spoke in the same vein as did Dr. Lee, pointing out in particular the modernistic tendencies of the Oxford Group Movement. "Against Buchmanism," he said, "we must be on our guard. We must cling to the old paths and not stray from Lutheran principles." So far the report on the discussion of the Oxford Group Movement at the summer-school. The editor of *Folkebladet* then discusses the movement in a general way, stating that many were against it, but making it clear also that he himself is favoring it. In *Lutheraneren* (September 18) Dr. Vigness, under the heading "Buchmanism," makes his own report on the discussion of the Ox-

ford Group Movement at the summer-school. Pointing out the fact that many in the Norwegian churches are championing the movement, he writes: "At the same time there are men also who have the insight to see the Modernism in the movement. A man such as Dr. Hallesby will have nothing to do with it, for he calls it a "crossless gospel." A gospel without the cross of Christ! It is really a civility to call it a gospel. In the strict sense of the term it is not a gospel at all. Dr. Hallesby is right in his designation of the message of Buchmanism as a "crossless gospel." Referring to Harold Begbie's book *Life Changers*, he quotes Begbie as saying: "These doctrines, viz., that Christ came into the world to bring about a reconciliation between God and man and that on the basis of Christ's sufferings God is now willing to receive our heartfelt conversion from sin [?], may be true or false; but their acceptance is not essential for the attainment of this wonderful experience of conversion." Now, Buchmanism has promoted the sale of this book and thus stands behind its statements. Moreover, Buchmanism follows this principle in its practise. It produces its "change of life" not by the Gospel of Christ's redemptive work, but by "sharing," "confession," "life-changing," "guidance," etc. For the adherents of the Oxford Group Movement these factors serve as their "means of grace." So far *Lutheraneren. Evangelisk Luthersk Tidende*, from which we have quoted these various reports, uses the occasion to point out the "terrible fruits of unionism" (*hvilke skraekkelige frugter unionismen baerer*). It says: "In the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America the editors of the church-papers and at least one theological professor stand in opposition to each other in the doctrine of conversion and justification before God, or, in other words, in the doctrine of the way to salvation. It is just this that counts in the condemnation of Buchmanism. Now, we see that the editors are united in rejecting Buchmanism, but, as we have pointed out before (in previous numbers of the *Tidende*), they are not united in the doctrine of conversion. The one teaches that natural man has the ability and power to help along in his conversion, which the other denies. And if *Folkebladet* is correct in reporting, as it probably is, then the theological professor teaches that a sinner is converted without the means of grace which God Himself has instituted and is saved without faith. What confusion! All these are leaders and teachers in a church-body that should teach and defend the way to salvation. But each has his own doctrine, and all point in different directions. What a delusion is not practised before the people! *Lutheraneren* is very cautious not to mention that one of the theological professors of the church-body has, in a public meeting, defended the error salvation without faith in Christ. The *Lutheran Herald* is silent on the whole matter, so far as we know. With such a practise of the teachers and leaders of the Church, is it to be wondered at that the people are trained to complete vagrancy [*fuldstaendig loesgjaengeri*] in spiritual matters? And upon vagrancy follow unbelief and denial [*vantro og fornegtelse*]."

J. T. M.

Facing in the Right Direction. — The editor of the *Living Church*, in commenting on the meeting of the house of bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church held recently in Houston, Texas, and in enlarging on the vexing questions confronting that body, says: "It is noteworthy, how-

ever, that, in spite of these important matters to which the bishops had to give consideration, they began their sessions by devoting the better part of the first day to meditation on spiritual matters, led by Bishop Hobson, chairman of the Forward Movement Commission. It is always a great temptation for any church synod to be so occupied with administrative and legislative details that little or no opportunity is provided for the more important spiritual matters with which the Church is concerned. The house of bishops has set a splendid example to all of us in this respect." Let us hope that the grand old custom bequeathed to us by our fathers to spend a good portion of the time at our synodical conventions on doctrinal discussions and contemplation of divine truths, will not die out and that, where it has become somewhat of a shadow, the former prominence will again be accorded to it. A.

Deaths. — When in December, 1935, A. T. Polhill died, being seventy-three years old, one of the famous "seven" of Cambridge who went to China in the eighties of the last century passed on to his reward. We are told that Mr. Polhill, who became a missionary of the China Inland Mission, in his youth was a famous athlete. The field in which he worked was Western China. — In Germany Prof. Reinhold Seeberg of the University of Berlin died late in 1935. He had studied at Dorpat and Erlangen. After having served as professor at Erlangen, he, in 1898, came to Berlin. The works by which he is best known are his *History of Dogma* and *Christian Dogmatics*. In his theology he was of the mediating type. — On December 2, 1935, Dr. James H. Breasted, the well-known Egyptian scholar and director of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, died in New York, having just returned to this country. The cause of his death is said to have been a streptococcus infection which came upon him during the homeward voyage. He was seventy years old. A.

II. Ausland.

Volkskirche oder Freikirche? Prof. C. C. Fendt von der Capital University in Columbus, der einen längeren Besuch in Deutschland gemacht hat, sagt in seiner Schilderung „der religiösen Lage in Deutschland“ unter anderm folgendes: „Mehr als drei Viertel der deutschen Pastoren sind sich darin einig, daß die Lehre der Kirche sich einzig und allein auf die Heilige Schrift und die Bekenntnisse der Reformation zu gründen hat. . . . Doch gehen ihre Ansichten über die Organisation weit auseinander. Einige der Leiter, z. B. Niemöller, eifern für eine ‚Freikirche‘ ohne Aufsicht, Schutz oder finanzielle Unterstützung von Seiten der Regierung. Es sind ihrer nicht viele; doch stehen sie meistens an starken Stadtgemeinden, wo ihr Plan durchführbar sein dürfte. Auf dem Lande findet dieser Plan weniger Anklang, weil die Pastoren fürchten, daß ihre Kirchen ohne staatliche finanzielle Unterstützung nicht bestehen könnten. Diese wollen die Volkskirche beibehalten, eine Kirche für alle Volksgenossen und von allen unterstützt. Sie lassen sich den Schutz und die Unterstützung von Seiten des Staats gefallen, wollen sich aber in Lehre und Predigt nicht dreinreden lassen. Sie scharen sich um die drei Bischöfe, Marahrens von Hannover, Meiser von München und Burm von Stuttgart. Sie nennen sich ‚Bekennnistreu‘ oder die ‚Bekennnisfront‘. Ihr Führer ist Bischof Marahrens. In sei-

nem Stand zur Lehre wird er von mehr als drei Vierteln der Pastoren und von fast allen Professoren der Theologie unterstützt. Sollte er aber für eine vom Staat vollständig unabhängige Freikirche eintreten, was er noch nicht getan hat, so würde sein Anhang sofort auf einen geringen Bruchteil zusammenschrumpfen." (Kirchenblatt, 2. November 1935.) *The Christian Century* vom 9. Oktober 1935 sagt: "The most immediate threat of the 'Reichsminister of Church Affairs' (Kerrl) touches the income of the Church. That is the weakness of the opposition's position. It is still a State Church. It still depends upon the state for the funds for its support. So long as this remains true, its struggle for independence from state control may be heroic, but it is hopeless. There is only one remedy: cut loose from state support." D. Neu berichtet: „Professor D. Sasse, Erlangen, konnte nicht am Weltkonvent (in Paris, 1935) teilnehmen; ihm wurde von der deutschen Regierung die Ausreiseerlaubnis verweigert, weil er die Kirchenverfassung von 1933 zu stark angegriffen hätte." (Kirchenblatt, 16. November 1935.) Ob ihm die Ausreiseerlaubnis verweigert worden wäre, auch wenn er Mitglied einer Freikirche gewesen wäre, wissen wir nicht.
E.

Heidnische Heiratsanzeigen und anderes! Nach dem Bericht des „Reichsboten" (15. September 1935) finden sich in Ludendorffs Zeitschrift allerhand Anzeigen, die zu denken geben.

Ein noch nicht elfjähriges Mädel fragt an: „Hei! Wer nimmt mich Heidin während der Ferien unentgeltlich in Pflege?"

Ein Vater möchte seine achttjährige Tochter nur von einer „blonden nordischen Heidin bester Herkunft" betreut wissen.

Eine Heiratsanzeige lautet: „Deutsch-völkischer Antichrist, dreißig Jahre alt, sucht gleichgesinntes Mädel."

Eine Heiratslustige inseriert: „Welcher deutschgläubige Heide hat Lust, ebensolche Heidin auf Radfahrt zu begleiten?"

Eine Geburtsanzeige hat folgenden Wortlaut: „Am 3. im Feuert 1935 vermehrte sich unsere Heidenstippe um einen kräftigen und gesunden Jungen. Hei!"

Von Heiden kann man nichts anderes als Heidnisches erwarten. Es ist gut, daß das längst in Deutschland vorhandene Heidentum jetzt offener zutage tritt. Freilich macht das Heidentum alle seine Kräfte mobil, um für das Heidentum zu „missionieren". Für jedermann liegt es nunmehr klar vor Augen, daß man ganz zu Unrecht vom deutschen Volk als von einem christlichen Volk redet. Das deutsche Volk ist weithin heidnisch. Daraus ergibt sich für unsere Kirche die erhöhte Verpflichtung, das Wort Gottes laut erschallen zu lassen.
(Ev.-Luth. Freikirche.)

The Oxford Group Movement in Denmark. — Writing on this subject in the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, January, 1936, Rev. John M. Jensen says: "The year of 1935 may truly be described as the 'Oxford Year in Denmark.' . . . This paper is an attempt to discover, if possible, the reasons why the Oxford Group has made such an impression upon a country which is Lutheran and where ninety-five per cent. of its population belong to the Lutheran Church. . . . The Primate of Denmark, Bishop H. Fuglsang Damgaard, a man of great learning and piety,

in welcoming the Groupers gave them the key of the church. The Dean of the Diocese of Copenhagen, Dr. Theol. Paul Brodersen, was quickly 'changed,' and he became an ardent advocate of the movement. . . . In nearly every town of Denmark there now is one or more local 'groups.' A large number of pastors and Christian lay workers have been converted to the movement. . . . It should also be noted that the reason for the success of Buchman in Denmark was the fact that so many influential churchmen endorsed his work. Bishop Damgaard says that 'the Oxford Movement emphasizes life and tries to be a living faith.' That does not mean that it has no doctrine. The Group builds upon the completed work of Christ as it is presented to us in the New Testament. Once I asked Dr. Buchman what he deemed the most essential point in his Christian faith. Immediately he answered: 'Justification by faith.' The Oxford Group has united the Lutheran doctrine of resting securely in the justification by grace with the aggressiveness of the Reformed Church and its strong desire for activity. It has acquired and absorbed into its life valuable parts of the different confessional views that have arisen out of the Reformation. Finally the bishop recommends 'guidance' as it is practised within the Group. A long list of names of Danish pastors could be given. Their testimony would run parallel to that of the bishop. Yet we are somewhat perplexed that the Oxford Group is so uncritically received by these men. The message of Dr. Buchman is, to say the least, very peculiar if looked at from a Biblical point of view. . . . A number of leaders think that even though the Group has many defects, it has so many good points that may be acquired, and then we shall try to change the Group to get a clearer vision of the atonement. However, this attitude seems somewhat naive. In effect it means: Let the Group first swallow us; then we shall swallow the Group afterward. . . . The more conservative Lutheran leaders, such as the men from the 'Centrum' wing and the men who have been influenced by Karl Barth, generally hold that the positive contribution of the Group is its emphasis upon a man's personal relation to God. The 'quiet hour' is a valuable help to live a surrendered life. And they hold that the church-members have learned anew that 'ye shall be my witnesses.' . . . One of the clearest analyses of the situation has been given by the young professor N. H. Söe. In a little book, *Luther and Oxford*, he states that the Lutherans may learn a few things of 'Oxford,' but he finds that the movement on the whole has very little use for the cross of Christ, and that the Christian hope has little or no place in the message of the Group. . . . Even though I personally hold the same view as Professor Söe, I believe that the stir created in the Church of Denmark will bear fruit. It is not the direct work of the Group that I believe in. I am afraid of that. I am afraid of a Christianity that does not go deeper than the Oxford Group does. But the valuable work of the Group in Denmark is that it has caused the Church to rethink its problems."

E.