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Theological Observer. - Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

The Inspiration of the Scriptures Once More. — The *Lutheran* publishes in three instalments an address delivered by Dr. E. E. Flack at the opening services of Hamma Divinity School on "The Interpretation of the Word of God." There are several paragraphs which we should like to quote and comment on.

"Ignorance of the Scriptures even among Christian people is appalling. The misunderstanding of their significance has led to confusion, indifference, and even to despair on the part of many. On the one hand, there are those who so circumscribe the Scriptures by dogmatic theories of inspiration that they fail to find a response in the otherwise open minds of earnest seekers after truth, especially among the youth. And on the other hand, there are those who so secularize the Scriptures in their thinking that they no longer constitute for them the singular seat of authority in religion, their bases being reason, experience, self-realization, and the assured results of scientific investigation." One wonders what is meant here by "dogmatic theories of inspiration."

Further on in the address the speaker says: "One can never adequately describe dogmatically just how God has imparted eternal truth nor how men's minds have received, retained, and recorded it. Neither the Scriptures nor the Confessions of the Church set forth a dogma of inspiration. Both repeatedly bear testimony to the fact, but the method they quite properly leave in the realm of mystery. No process of rationalization can produce a satisfactory definition. It is not a truth to be taught by a theory, but a fact to be apprehended by faith — faith in the Triune God, the Father who reveals, the Son who effects, and the Spirit who applies, redemption; in the Scriptures as the faithful revelation; and in the witness of the Church as the response to redemption." We fully agree with the author that inspiration is a mystery and cannot be described by us. If he, in speaking of dogmatic theories of inspiration, has in mind some man-made description of the process, we join him in calling such theorizing unjustified.

Later the author quotes with approval the doctrinal statement of the U. L. C. which refers to the Scriptures: "We receive and hold the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the inspired Word of God and as the only infallible rule and standard of faith and practise, according to which all doctrines and teachers are to be judged." Continuing, he says: "But a confessional statement, simple though it may be, constantly calls for explanation and interpretation. Since misunderstandings have arisen, the Church at the present time feels the need of examining and explaining anew her historic faith. In so doing, she begins with the Scriptures as the Word of God. Generally speaking, this is sufficient as a doctrinal declaration. This faith finds incontrovertible verification in the experience of Christian people of all ages, classes, and races the world over. It is not the universal Christian experience, however, that makes

the Bible the Word of God, but its own inherent quality as the God-given record of His redeeming grace, culminating in Christ, which finds recognition in the hearts of believers. Revelation is from faith to faith. But the Word of God is greater than the Book. In one sense it is identical with the Scriptures; in another, distinguishable from them. In certain passages in the writings of Luther we note the phrase 'the Word of God *and* the Scriptures' (cf. Holman Ed., I, 339), which indicates that he had a distinction in mind. Moreover, the Lutheran reformers spoke more particularly of the Scriptures than of the Bible, thereby avoiding Biblicism, or the reverencing of the Book as a thing in itself, which, in spite of the Christocentric faith of Luther, has developed, largely through the initial emphasis of Reformed theology, and has created no little confusion in the Church. Primarily and fundamentally the Word of God is the Gospel of Christ, the supreme personal revelation of God, who is set forth in the Scriptures. . . . The Scriptures are secondary, the means of grace through which the Spirit presents Christ to us. . . . It is Christ, the living Word, who gives to Scripture its authority. . . . Lutheran theology recognizes the primacy of the incarnation in Christian faith. We begin and end with Christ, the Alpha and the Omega of God's revelation. Of the two fundamental principles of the Protestant Reformation as later designated, the formal, or the authority of the Scriptures, and the material, or justification by faith, Lutheranism has emphasized the latter; Calvinism, the former. It was Luther's experience of justification by faith in Christ that constituted the starting-point of the Church of the Reformation. Calvinism was eccentric: it found its starting-point apart from Christ, in the divine decrees, and set forth a theory of inspiration that led to a peculiar Biblicism. With no less love for the Scriptures, the early Lutherans clung to their Christocentric faith and searched the Scriptures to find the Christ, in whom we have the ultimate authority. . . . Under the pressure of circumstances later dogmaticians set up the Bible in an external way in contrast with the outward Papacy, on the one hand, and with the position of the Enthusiasts, who sought authority in an inner light apart from Scripture, on the other, and thus permitted confusing conceptions to gain headway in the Church. We are under obligations to seek out anew the soul of Lutheranism in the experience of the Reformer and in the Confessions of the Church. Modern Lutheran research has done much toward the rediscovery of the faith that flowered in the Reformation. That faith unquestionably proceeds from Christ, who is the primary and central fact in revelation and redemption, and evaluates the Scriptures in relation to this eternal center of faith, subordinating the formal principle to the material. This is the genesis and the genius of Lutheranism. Herein lies her ecumenical character; for she recognizes the universal validity of Luther's experience of justification by faith in Christ, the Word of God Incarnate, not apart from, but preeminent in, the Holy Scriptures." On the whole we can say that we are in agreement with the author. Here and there his phraseology is somewhat ambiguous or at least not so clear as one should like it to be; besides, while he correctly points to the aberrations of the Reformed in their attitude toward the Bible, he should not have failed to emphasize that the Scriptures constituted the weapon with which Luther fought and conquered.

Expressions which aroused our positive dissent we found in the last section of the address: "When we speak of the authority of the Scriptures, we do not mean that they are independently authoritative. They have no authority either apart from Christ, who is the primary authority, or apart from the Church, in which Christ's power is operative. 'Ye are My witnesses,' says our Lord. 'The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit,' affirms Paul. Without the true Church, 'the pillar and ground of the truth,' which responds to the witness of the Spirit and thereby allows the magnetic circuit of saving grace to find fruition, the Bible would be only a book. . . . It is in the Church alone that the Word and Sacraments are operative." Here we are bewildered. If the author means that it is the Church's duty to proclaim the Gospel and to bring it to those who are without it, we of course agree with him; but if he should mean to say (we hardly can believe that this is in his mind) that the Bible, when sold by an unbelieving bookseller and bought by an unbeliever, has ceased to be the power of God unto salvation and to have authority, we strongly disagree.

Similarly we cannot understand the author when he says in one of his closing paragraphs: "The standard by which all dogmas and teachers are to be judged is not the Scriptures standing utterly alone, but the Word of God attested and authenticated in the Spirit-filled life of the early Church and projected through the centuries from faith to faith in the corporate mind of the true Church." Is it possible that the author here, like the Gnostics, holds that Christ had some teaching, esoteric teaching they called it, which was not put into the Scriptures? Does he hold that, after all, the Roman Catholic Church is right when it says: "Not the Scriptures alone, but the Scriptures and tradition"? The following sentence of the author seems to indicate that what he means to say is not anything of this sort: "The attestation, therefore, is three-fold: it is the witness of the Church, supported by apostolic testimony and certified in the Scriptures." It seems, then, that after all, according to the author's view, the witness of the Church does not have any authority for us unless it is certified in the Scriptures, which simply means, in spite of the many words used, that the Bible is the standard by which we judge dogmas and teachers. Again we say, we are sorry that the trumpet of the author has not given a more certain sound and that here and there its notes seem to be contradictory. A.

The Lutheran Free Church and Unionism. — When the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference* in its October, 1936, issue published an article on the Lutheran Free Church, it gave truly authentic information on this body; for not only is the Lutheran Free Church a constituent part of the conference in whose name the journal appears, but the writer of the article, H. C. Casperan, is a member of the Lutheran Free Church and represents this synod on the editorial board of the journal. For these reasons we hold that, if an indictment of the Lutheran Free Church is based on this article, the source of information cannot be said to be unreliable and colored by an unfriendly bias. Now let the reader look at the following paragraph taken from this article and see whether it does not contain evidence that the Lutheran Free Church is pursuing an unscriptural course: —

"In accordance with the principles of the Lutheran Free Church the hand of altar- and pulpit-fellowship is always extended to sister congregations of the Lutheran faith of whatever synod without further ado. It looks upon discussion about fine points of doctrine among Lutherans as futile and unnecessary and leading nowhere except to suspicion and division and consequent confusion regarding the salient and fundamental points of doctrine among Lutheran Christians. It is not unionistic in the loose sense of that term; but it does believe that Lutherans of all synods may meet and pray together without first having to sign a contract or document of doctrinal adjustment. It does not forbid its ministers to fellowship with pastors and church-members of the Reformed faith if found necessary and proper for the sake of Christian brotherliness and the work in general; the decision as to propriety and necessity is left entirely with the individual pastor and his own conscience."

We note, 1) that the Lutheran Free Church considers the name Lutheran a sufficient guarantee of spiritual unity and will not refuse to fellowship with synods and congregations and their members bearing that name; 2) that even with respect to the Reformed churches it erects no bars against fellowship with them. The apparent restriction concerning such fellowship, "if found necessary and proper for the sake of Christian brotherliness and the work in general," is meaningless as a restriction; for is there anybody who will engage in any fellowship at all without holding it to be "necessary and proper for the sake of Christian brotherliness and the work in general"? In the attitude of the Lutheran Free Church the American Lutheran Conference has a serious problem to deal with, and if it is not willing to lay itself open to the charge of indifference, it cannot avoid giving this its serious attention. A.

"What shall be Done with Our Call System?" — Under this heading a young Norwegian pastor, five years in the ministry, presents to the readers of the *Lutheran Herald* (Oct. 20) a problem which largely is also our own and deserves careful study in our circles, too. And properly it should be discussed not only at our pastoral conferences, but also in our voters' meetings and in general church assemblies. The writer's lines contain much emotional stress; evidently he has been so deeply offended at the unchristian treatment of the doctrine of the divine call by both congregations and pastors that the reader cannot but pity him in his mental anguish and spiritual distress.

But are not dozens of young (and old) pastors of our own Church in the same plight, and do we not owe them brotherly consideration in helping them to adjust themselves to the difficult problems which they face? Surely our answer must not be: "Well, young upstart brother, wait until you have been in the ministry twenty years longer; for then you will be able to grin and bear it the rest of your days," but we must give them a clear, helpful, Biblical reply, which does away with disorder and restores to order our practise regarding the calling of ministers and teachers. But let us see what the above young pastor has to say. He writes in part: —

"I left the seminary with very high ideals about the divine call. These five years have left me somewhat disillusioned after witnessing the dis-

respect shown the divine call by pastors and congregations. In two instances, places where I served temporarily while the congregation was vacant, I became greatly surprised at the attitude pastors took toward such a vacancy. Dozens of applications were received, and from the tone of some of these applications the reader would have every reason to believe that the applicant was applying for a position as a teacher in the local high school. Some even included pictures of their families, and there was no hesitancy in mentioning the different things they could do. It isn't only the pastor who is to be blamed, the congregation must also share in the responsibility for such a situation. I know of one case during a biennial meeting of our synod that a congregation held meetings every night of the week, not for the purpose of edification, but solely to select a candidate for their church. Have we come to the stage where the pastor must parade whatever oratorical abilities he may have in order to secure a call? Can one who knows he is preaching a trial sermon feel that such a call is truly divine? One committee of a large congregation called a pastor by long distance, asking him if he would come and preach a trial sermon. The pastor, holding the divine call sacred, naturally refused, and consequently he was told that his name would be stricken off the list of candidates. Are trial sermons to be the way in which pastors are to find new fields of labor? If so, where does the divine call enter in? One can perhaps excuse pastors who are desperate in seeking new places to serve and are forced to resort to any method to make a change. But is there not something radically wrong when such a state exists? Surely some adjustment can be made to avoid these humiliating practises, which cheapen the office of the holy ministry. We may question the methods of other church-bodies, but one is tempted to say that any system is better than the one we are suffering under. The situation in our call system is such that steps must be taken to bring about a change. Pastors should be given an opportunity to change their fields of labor without selling out those things held sacred from seminary days. There should not be a condition where a large percentage of our clergy desires to move and is unable to move because of lack of authority of any group to make the necessary adjustments.

"Furthermore, I believe that congregations should be taught to look upon their pastor not as a hired man, but as a servant called by God. He is worthy of his hire and should be assured an income that will care for his immediate needs and provide for his dear ones. I shall never forget the statement made by a consecrated pastor of a sister synod who looks forward to the coming winter months without a charge. He is a victim of staying too long in one field, suffering from the same system that we hold to, and the congregation which he served has without any reason told him to leave. He left a \$300-a-month job during good times to enter the holy ministry. Now, after ten years of service, his congregation refuses to pay him a living wage and took the alternative of telling him to leave. This consecrated servant said that in all his dealings with business organizations he has never been treated by business as he has experienced from this supposed-to-be Christian congregation. What an indictment upon a congregation which should above all others reveal a Christian spirit! One could go on and mention other incidents, but these

conditions should awaken us to the realization that something is wrong, and drastic steps should be taken.

"I know that there will be some reading this who will say, Here is one who entered the ministry because of the income. No just person can make such an accusation when common sense shows that one who spends seven to eight years in preparation, even more than one who is preparing for the medical profession, could go into any other profession and be assured of a better income and above all not be in a position where there is a daily sword over his head of being stranded at middle age. Consecrated servants have sacrificed, and are willing to do so, in situations that require cross-bearing. But God does not excuse congregations that capitalize upon the zeal of such a consecrated pastor and cause him to be a martyr when martyrdom is due to unchristian acts.

"As a young pastor who desires to continue serving the Master and not leave the ministry because of the precarious future which we now have under the present system, and also pleading to hold high our ideals of the divine call, let us as pastors and congregations exert every effort to restore a Christian order, not only in the calling of servants to this high office, but also make the necessary adjustments, so that every pastor is in position to meet his expenses and care for his loved ones."

J. T. M.

Is the Social Gospel Waning? — In writing about the so-called "National Preaching Mission," which began in Pittsburgh September 20, when a group of men headed by Stanley Jones and George W. Truett and Ivan Lee Holt started a series of meetings to be held in all the large cities of our country, Dr. John Knox of the staff of the *Christian Century* says that the emphasis of the renowned preachers was not on the social gospel. On the contrary, he summarizes the message of these so-called "missioners" thus: "We must go back to the spiritual Gospel of our fathers. We have talked enough for a while about social, economic, and political matters; we need now to cultivate the roots of the Christian life. The authentic message of the preacher is the Gospel of individual redemption through the grace of God in Christ. If we can get men saved, everything else will work itself out." Commenting on this, Dr. Knox very characteristically says: "This message, so familiar to all who belong to the Protestant evangelical tradition, was presented with rare sincerity, winsomeness, and effect. There is no doubt that the hearts of hundreds warmed to it; my own heart did. But as a presumably adequate and relevant answer to the needs of our time it left me, I must confess, utterly dissatisfied. Of course, one who knows the men who compose this mission will not need to be told that several of them show genuine concern about some of the social responsibilities which the Christian Church can evade only at the cost of its life and our world's life. I shall refer later to two exceptional addresses in this regard. But this concern, I think it can be fairly said, lay either at the periphery of their messages, or else their messages lay at the periphery of the program. The National Preaching Mission *considered as a whole* did not speak in Pittsburgh a strong, sure, unequivocal word about the responsibilities of the Church for the character of our civilization. Although there was much said, and truly earnestly

said, about sin and repentance, there was little, if any, attempt to bring about contrition for our terrible social sins. I do not believe it is wrong to say that the Preaching Mission is in conception, at any rate in some measure, a conscious and sound reaction against what has frequently passed as the social gospel."

The two exceptions that the writer had in mind were the addresses by Bishop Freeman of Washington (Episcopalian) and Stanley Jones. The feature which Dr. Knox is complaining of is certainly not due to any lack of interest on the part of the "missioners" in the growth and development of social justice, but—so we are inclined to believe and hope—to the conviction of at least some of them that, before society can be changed, the individual must be changed and that the required change in the individual is brought about only through faith in Jesus Christ, the Savior.

A.

The Chicago Quadrilateral.—Episcopalian papers remind us that fifty years have passed since the House of Bishops of their Church issued an official declaration in which four points are mentioned as essential to the union of Christian denominations. The four points published October 30, 1880, are:—

"1. The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as the revealed Word of God. 2. The Nicene Creed as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith. 3. The two Sacraments—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him. 4. The historic episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church."

As we are writing this, word comes from Chicago, where the Episcopal bishops are assembled, that a revision of the Chicago Quadrilateral, which a few years after its issuance was adopted by the Lambeth Conference also, is to be formulated. Whatever declaration will be published will have special importance, because not only the bishops of the United States are attending the Chicago meeting, but likewise those of other countries in the New World, so that the meeting has been called the "Little Lambeth of the West." It will be interesting to see, if a new pronouncement should be formulated, whether this, too, will cling to the unscriptural principle of the "historic episcopate" and make acceptance of it an essential condition of union.

A.

The Present Status of the Evolution Theory.—An editorial in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* discusses this subject as follows: "The corner-stone of this unscriptural Protestantism is the theory of evolution as it has affected the whole realm of human thinking, scientific, philosophical, and religious. It has foisted upon human history an interpretation of the development of the race wholly unwarranted by the facts. A great service to the Church is being performed by writers such as Dr. Hale and Amos of England, who reiterated the fact that true scientists are abandoning the claim of proofs upon which the theory of evolution must continue to stand and that it is the liberal theologians, who have rewritten their theologies to conform to this discredited theory, that are unable to extricate themselves from the errors of the many implications of this false philosophy.

They are behind the times in the realm of science. Professor Schwarze of New York University, member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, has said in one of Mr. Olsen's broadcasts: "The evolutionary theory is held only by the unthinking, those who have not followed the latest developments in scientific research, or by those who, because of enmity in their hearts against God, deliberately present (particularly to young and immature minds) this evident delusion as established science. Real scientists have recognized the fact that evolution cannot be proved, whether or not they accept the Bible as God's revelation regarding life and its origin. It may seem strange that men will still cling to a theory that is unprovable and really unscientific, but sinful men would rather believe in it than in an omnipotent God."

In the same number of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, in a sample broadcast of the Mid-week Forum Hour of Station WMAC, New York, quotations from a number of great scientists are submitted which are pertinent, all testifying that science cannot answer our deepest questions and that what the evolution theory tried to solve by a natural explanation is still unsolved except for those who follow divine revelation. When Professor Einstein was asked what science had to say about moral truth, he replied: "Practical philosophy would mean a philosophy of conduct, and I do not think that science can teach men to be moral. I do not believe that moral philosophy can ever be founded on a scientific basis. Of that I am certain. The content of scientific theory itself offers no moral foundation for the personal conduct of life." In his autobiography Mr. H. G. Wells says: "I cannot adjust myself to secure any fruitful peace. Here I am at sixty-five, still seeking for peace. There is no rest for us before the goal." Dr. Henry Pritchett, for a quarter of a century president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, made this admission: "The man of science awaits some convincing proof of personal immortality, and until such proof can be secured, he neither believes nor disbelieves in it. He simply puts this question aside as one for the present unsolved and, as far as he can see at this moment, unsolvable by any means available to thinking men. What the future may reveal he does not attempt to say; what may await him after death he knows not." Prof. Robert A. Millikan, winner of the Nobel prize in physics in 1923, stated: "Concerning what ultimately becomes of the individual, science has added nothing, and it has subtracted nothing. That problem is entirely outside the field of science now." And finally, Dr. George Sarton, Associate in the History of Science in the Carnegie Institution of Washington, author of *An Introduction to the History of Science*, says: "The wonders of science are innumerable; they are such that the wildest dreams of the Arabian tellers seem childish in comparison; and yet, when it comes to the mysteries of life and death, which are man's supreme concern, what do we know? Whence do we come, and where are we going? Is the universe created or uncreated? Is it eternal, or did it begin at some time? No scientist can answer these questions. He is about on the same level as a child, except that he is more fully aware of his ignorance. Even as money can buy everything except the things which really matter, even so science can explain everything except the essential mysteries of life." A.

Episcopal Church Not Moving toward Rome.—That Rome is vitally interested in regaining the ecclesiastical ground it has lost in England is a matter about which there is no dispute. Nor can it be denied that there are many Episcopalians in England and America who earnestly desire the Anglican Church to return to the bosom of "Mother Church." That, however, the Episcopal Church is not moving toward Rome is the claim which is made by Bishop Stewart, as reported in *Christianity To-day* (September, 1936), where we read: "While making a plea for Christian unity, Bishop Stewart, in his charge to the ninety-ninth annual diocesan convention, Chicago, on February 4, declared pointedly that the Church can never submit to Rome to accomplish such unity. Referring to the recent call for church unity issued by twenty-nine members of the Church, the bishop termed this an 'out-and-out piece of pro-Roman propaganda,' adding: 'As a result of this the rumor went abroad that the Episcopal Church was swiftly moving toward submission to the Holy See. Nothing could be farther from the facts. The Anglican Communion, which includes the Episcopal Church, is like the Orthodox Eastern Church both catholic and apostolic; yet neither of these communions is in communion with the Holy See.'" In denying the infallibility of the Pope, which, as Bishop Stewart said, can never be accepted by the Church, he stated: "There are, it is true, many differences between our communion and Rome, but the root of the difference is in the enormous claims of the Bishop of Rome to be, by divine appointment, the sovereign Pontiff of the whole Church of Christ, the sole fountain of jurisdiction, so that no bishop can have rightful authority except as it is given him by the Pope. This claim, which cannot be sustained by appeal to Scripture or to the early Church, reflects not the mind of Christ, but the mind of an ecclesiastical Caesar, and it is put forth with astonishing effrontery to-day in a world which no longer recognizes the divine right of kings. By all means let us pray for the reunion of all Christians, including our brethren [*sic!*] of the Roman communion, and let us keep ourselves free from that ignorant prejudice which strangely confuses Catholic teaching and practise and ceremonial with that of the Latin Church and which flames into passion at even the suggestion of similarities. But let us also keep it clear and make it clear that, if we are Catholics in faith and order, in sacramental life and sacramental worship, we are also protestants against every claim of the Roman hierarchy to substitute a part for the whole, substitute the Holy Roman Church for that article of our belief which we profess—the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, which includes Rome and Canterbury and a great deal besides." (*Sic!*)

This expression shows both the strength and the weakness of Anglican opposition to Rome. True Anglicans oppose Romanism chiefly because of the question of supreme authority in the Church. Modern Anglicanism thus holds to the original *status controversiae*, i. e., that between Henry VIII and the Popes of his time. The weakness in Anglican opposition to Rome lies in its failure to realize the importance of the doctrinal issues at stake as well as in its inability to judge what is Christian doctrine. If the question of authority were settled between Anglicanism and Romanism, the other differences could easily be adjusted, at least so far as the majority of Anglican communicants come into question. J. T. M.

Plans of the Universal Christian Council on Life and Work. — Next year, July 12—26, the World Conference of Non-Roman Churches will be held in Oxford, England. The chairman of the great gathering will be the Archbishop of Canterbury. The following subjects have been put on the program for discussion: —

"1) The Church and the Community, in particular the relation of the Church to the common life of man as shaped by national tradition, expressing itself in characteristic folk-ways and determined by current standards and values.

"2) The Church and the State, including consideration of the Christian view of the State, of the claims of the contemporary State, and of the Christian conception of freedom of conscience.

"3) The Church, Society, and the State in Relation to Economic Order, including the various new proposals for the regulation of man's economic life.

"4) The Church, Society, and the State in Relation to Education. This will have to do with the particularly acute and pressing difficulties which have arisen as the State has increased its claims over the whole of the citizen's outlook and training.

"5) The Universal Church and a World of Nations — nationalism, international relations, the Church as a supranational society, Christianity, and war."

We are told that the churches which will participate will be represented by three hundred regularly elected delegates, who in their deliberations will be assisted by one hundred invited expert consultants and four hundred associates identified with the various kinds of church activity. As the program indicates, the social gospel will be altogether in the foreground.

A.

Congregationalists Elect a Woman Superintendent of Churches. The Middle Atlantic Conference of Congregational and Christian Churches, according to the *Christian Century*, has elected Mrs. David E. Brown one of the thirty-seven superintendents of American Congregationalism, putting her in charge of the field which comprises New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The report says: "As superintendent of ninety churches, 23,518 communicants, and a constituency of more than seventy thousand people, Mrs. Brown is at once chief executive for the promotion of the interests of all the national and foreign boards, the conference representative of the boards in matters of church-building grants, ministerial pensions, and sick-relief; director of conference programs for evangelism, social action, religious education, and young people's activities, and chief representative of the denomination in interchurch relationships of the area. Through the office of the superintendent are conducted the relationships of the conference with the General Council. She is also the consultant of churches and ministers in the settlement of pastors." Mrs. Brown, in other words, is a "pastor at large." What the Bible has to say on the position of women in the Church in 1 Cor. 14 and 1 Tim. 2 apparently no longer is of any importance to these people.

A.

Deceased. — The church-papers report that the American Lutheran Church (to be more specific, the section of the American Lutheran Church which formerly constituted the Ohio Synod) recently lost two prominent

men through death, Dr. L. H. Schuh, from 1901 to 1912 president of Capital University and at the time of his death pastor emeritus of St. Paul's Church, Toledo, O., and Dr. J. G. Kroening, once upon a time Missouri Synod professor at Springfield, Ill., and Milwaukee, Wis., and from 1908 to 1927 professor of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, Minn., an institution of the Ohio Synod. Dr. Kroening reached an age of eighty-five years. A

Brief Items.—The Presbyterian Church lost a prominent minister when in September Dr. Edmund B. Chaffee died as he was delivering a lecture before the Minnesota Conference of Social Work. He was pastor of the so-called Labor Temple in New York, a \$750,000 institution. What he was particularly interested in were problems that had to do with social work.—Dr. H. McAlester Griffiths has resigned as editor of the *Presbyterian Guardian* to become the counsel of the Presbyterian Church of America in the suit brought against it by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. The new editors of the *Presbyterian Guardian* are Dr. J. Gresham Machen and Dr. Ned B. Stonehouse of Westminster Theological Seminary.—The Thirty-third International Eucharistic Congress is to be held in Manila February 3—7, 1937. It is thought that a million people will go to attend the Congress.—Prof. Adolf Deissmann of Berlin will soon observe his seventieth birthday. A fund is being raised in his honor. He is best known probably through his book *Licht vom Osten*. His studies in New Testament Greek have had a profound influence on grammatical and lexicographical views.—Writing on the subject "Hitler and Buchman," Prof. Reinhold Niebuhr of Union Seminary, in the *Christian Century* of October 7, publishes a devastating article on the latter, who was quoted by the press to have said: "I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler, who built a front-line defense against the antichrist of Communism." In the concluding paragraph of the article Professor Niebuhr says: "The Oxford Group Movement, imagining itself the mediator of Christ's salvation in a catastrophic age, is really an additional evidence of the decay in which we stand."—*Bibliotheca Sacra*, in its July-September number for 1936, carries an article which has the title "A Sketch of Mohammedanism," from which we take over a few sentences: "To-day 250 million people claim Mohammed as their chief prophet. In the British Empire there are more than one hundred million Moslems. When King Edward VIII was crowned and proclaimed to be, among other titles, 'the Defender of the Faith,' one could well have asked, 'Defender of what faith?' for there are more Moslems under the British flag than Christians. There are about ten publications for propagating Mohammedanism printed in English. . . . In our own country there are about thirty thousand Mohammedans. They are living principally in Brooklyn, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Sioux City, Iowa, Wheeling, W. Va., and Worcester, Mass. Of all non-Christians, Moslems are perhaps the most difficult to win to Christianity. They cling tenaciously to their faith. In forty years of Dutch Reformed missions among Moslems, for instance, there were fewer than forty converts. In all Egypt to-day, where missionaries have toiled long and hard, there are only about 110 living converts from Mohammedanism to Christianity."—There is an American Association of Theological Schools whose president is Dr. A. A. Brown, president of Drew University. Accord-

ing to a statement of Dr. Frederick C. Grant, president of Seabury-Western Seminary, Evanston, who is the vice-president of the association, the organization is striving to introduce higher standards in theological education. The association endeavors to do what the American Association of Universities has done for college education in the United States. "New and higher standards of admission have been set up and an accredited list of seminaries adopted."—In Chicago a decision was rendered lately by a judge of which all people who have an interest in the morals of our country will heartily approve. Somebody had taken moving pictures in a nudist camp and brought the films to the Eastman Kodak Company to have them developed. When this had been done, the Eastman Company refused to return the films to the owner, pointing out that they were indecent. The judge agreed that the kodak firm was justified in its stand and that it was proper for it to destroy the films.—The so-called "untouchables" in India are asking themselves whether they should become Christians or Mohammedans or embrace Sikhism. The Sikhs represent a community of about four hundred thousand living in the Punjab. Since the Sikhs are simply a Hindu sect, the union of the "untouchables" with them would not take the latter out of the fold of heathenism. We are told that Dr. Ambedkar, a leader of the depressed classes of India, advises these people to join the Sikhs. Since the "untouchables" number about sixty-five million, their accession to the Sikhs would mean an immense strengthening of this section of Hinduism. One's heart grieves at the thought that these people are advised to go from one darkness into another.—"The decree of the administrator of the former German New Guinea that native evangelists are not to be employed in carrying the Gospel to heathen tribes in the uncontrolled inland is, so we are informed, upheld by the federal government. The deputation that recently waited on Senator Pearce, the minister for Mandated Territory at Canberra, received a courteous hearing, but has since been informed that the decree of the administrator must stand. . . . This means that native workers are not allowed to be placed in the 'uncontrolled areas of New Guinea.'" These words are quoted from the *Australian Lutheran*, which, on account of the work which our Australian brethren are doing in New Guinea, is very much interested in the situation there. The report concludes with the words: "This means that the sword must precede the Gospel. What a cry of protest this should raise in Christian lands!"—A Baptist church in Philadelphia, called Temple Church, formerly served by the well-known Russell H. Conwell, has done a strange thing—it has called as its pastor Dr. Poling, a Dutch Reformed minister, who was baptized in infancy and, at that, not immersed, but baptized by affusion. He accepted the call with the understanding that, while the church will not itself practise any other baptism than that by immersion, it is willing to receive as members people who have been baptized by sprinkling and in infancy. This is additional proof that Baptists are surrendering their old positions.—Preparations are now being made for the taking of the 1936 religious census. It will be remembered that the religious census is taken every ten years. It is thought that two years will be required to complete the task, one year for actual field work and one for the tabulation of the data that have been gathered. 250,000 questionnaires will be sent out.—A German mission-paper reports that the Minister of Education in Nanking,

China, has issued an order according to which religion is no longer to be kept out of Chinese schools. We have not heard as yet whether our own mission-schools in the places where they were closed have been affected by the position of the Nanking government.—The unification movement of the Methodists, which endeavors to unite Northern Methodists, Southern Methodists, and the Methodist Protestant Church, struck a snag when the Eastern Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church recently voted against the plan looking to the uniting of the three bodies. It seems that the members of the Methodist Protestant Church are more conservative than many of the people in the Methodist Episcopal churches. However, ten conferences of the Methodist Protestant Church have approved the plan. The total number of conferences that must vote in favor of the plan if it is to be ratified by the Methodist Protestant Church is sixteen.—The Episcopalian House of Bishops, which recently was in session, did not hesitate to reverse the action of one of its members, Bishop Wilson of Eau Claire, who had granted to a certain Dr. John William Torok the status of a bishop in the Episcopalian Church. It was pointed out by them that, while this man claimed to have the title of bishop, no individual bishop possessed the power to give him the status of bishop in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America.—Quite refreshing is an article in the *Living Church* of August 8 on the topic "The Atonement—a Dead Subject?" The writer quotes a certain dean who made this slighting remark: "I think we spend too much time on dead subjects. . . . I have heard of a seminary where a whole term—or was it a whole year?—was given to a course on the Atonement." The writer very well says: "If we are to be taught in seminary that the atonement is a dead subject and not the living, flaming, eternal fact it was to St. Paul or the burning reality it was to St. Francis, then perhaps we had better shut the seminaries."—Baltimore was given a thirty-foot statue of Martin Luther, unveiled October 31 by the daughter of the German ambassador Dr. Hans Luther. The statue is placed in Druid Hill Park and cost fifty thousand dollars. The donor is the late Arthur Wallenhorst, who as a watchmaker, goldsmith, and dealer in precious stones had become quite wealthy. One part of the base has the words "Ein' feste Burg," another, "The gift of a jeweler of Baltimore." The inscription in front is simply "Martin Luther." Pastor Evers of Baltimore describes the statue thus: "Martin Luther is shown stepping forward firmly and quickly, holding in his left hand the Book of books, his right hand raised in greeting and blessing."—The editor of the *Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung*, Dr. Laible, recently celebrated his eightieth birthday. We see from the September 25 issue that Lutheran leaders sent him greetings and expressions of gratitude for his work. A.

II. Ausland.

Die Stellung der Bekennenden Kirche verurteilt. In der Bekennenden Kirche haben sich Lutheraner, Reformierte und Unionsleute vereinigt. In der „Allgemeinen Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung“ findet sich ein Artikel, der hierüber ein scharfes Wort sagt. Wir zitieren einen Teil davon:

„Das Dasein und die Arbeit des Rates der Evangelisch-Lutherischen

Kirche Deutschlands stellt an die Bekennende Kirche mit Nachdruck die folgenden Fragen:

„1. Auf Grund welchen Bekenntnisses bist du ‚Bekennende Kirche‘?

„2. Verhüt nicht die wahre kirchliche Einheit in der Einheit der kirchlichen Lehre?

„3. Ist es nicht eine vom Bekenntnis gebotene und im Kirchenkampf bewährte Erkenntnis, daß eine bekennnisgebundene Kirche eines bekennnisgebundenen Kirchenregiments bedarf?

„Denn zunächst steht fest:

„1. Die Bekennende Kirche hat kein Bekenntnis, es müßten denn die theologischen Erklärungen von Barmen und Dahlem und die schon während der Synode von einem Teil der Synodalen abgelehnte Erklärung von Bad Driburg als die noch bescheidenen Ansätze eines neuen Bekenntnisses gewertet werden. Was ist aber dann mit den Bekenntnissen der Reformation, die bekanntlich bekennnisgebundene Kirchen verpflichten? Wie steht es mit der inneren Kontinuität der Bekenntnisse, wie mit ihrer Übereinstimmung mit den Zeugnissen von Barmen, Dahlem, Driburg?

„2. Die Einheit der Bekennenden Kirche ist keine Einheit in der Lehre. Sie ist Einheit der Kampfgenossenschaft gegen einen gemeinsamen Feind, und sie ist Einheit in der Abwehr einer bestimmten Irrlehre. Wiewohl die Abwehr von Irrlehren immer in Position und Negation zu geschehen hat, begründet sie noch keine volle Kirchengemeinschaft; denn sie ist nur dort, wo die gesamte Lehre einmütig bekannt wird. Auch zwischen denen z. B., die eins sind in der Abwehr der arianischen Ketzerei und in dem Bekenntnis zur wahren Gottheit und Menschheit Christi, besteht keine volle oder überhaupt keine Kirchengemeinschaft.

„3. Die Bekennende Kirche entbehrt bis heute eines bekennnisgebundenen Kirchenregiments, da sie es in einem beträchtlichen Teil ihres Gebiets unterlassen hat, trotz der sie bindenden Synodalbeschlüsse die Organe der Kirchenleitung ernstlich bekennnismäßig zu gliedern. Es geht nicht an, diese Aufgabe hinauszuschieben, bis eine Bekenntnisunion da ist.“

Was der Schreiber hier mit Kirchenregiment meint, ist nicht recht klar. Wenn er die Einrichtung eines Kirchenregiments im gewöhnlichen Sinne des Wortes als von Gott geboten ansieht, so können wir nicht mit ihm stimmen. Sein Kampf gegen Duldung der Irrlehre ist lobenswert. A.

Theologie, Konfession, Glaube. Einen unter dies Thema gestellten Vortrag, gehalten von Landesbischof D. Burm-Stuttgart auf der Deutschen Evangelischen Woche in Stuttgart, bietet die „A. E. Z. N.“ ihren Lesern dar. Der Vortrag zeigt überzeugend, wie sehr gegenwärtig in Deutschland die Bekenntnisfrage im Zentrum steht. (Man vergleiche die von Schlatter, Rüttger und Strathmann verbreitete Broschüre „Müssen wir heute lutherisch oder reformiert sein?“) Er zeigt aber auch, daß trotz aller guten Erkenntnis in bezug auf das Bekenntnis und dessen hohe Bedeutung, man sich drüben nicht dazu ermutigen kann, gegen den anerkannten Irrtum Stellung zu nehmen, was nicht nur der christliche Glaube selbst, sondern auch schon die allgemein geltende Ehrlichkeit erfordert. So kann z. B. D. Burm äußerst schön über die Bedeutung des lutherischen Bekenntnisses schreiben, er kann aber auch ebenso schnell wieder einlenken, wenn es an die praktische Ausföhrung des durch das Bekenntnis gegebenen Pflichtenfordernisses geht. Wir

Lassen einiges aus dem Vortrag, dem Leser zur Prüfung vorgelegt, folgen. D. Wurm schreibt: „Warum Konfession? Dem nicht im kirchlichen Leben stehenden, mit der Art und Geschichte seiner Kirche nicht Vertrauten, erscheint die Konfession wie ein überbleibsel aus längst vergangener Zeit, wie jene Bollschranken, die so lange die deutschen Länder getrennt hatten. . . . Ehe man kurzweg urteilt: „Was unsere Vorfahren vor vierhundert Jahren bewegte, geht uns nichts mehr an“ oder: „Die Antworten, die man damals auf die Fragen nach Gott und dem Heil gab, können nicht mehr unsere Antworten sein“, muß man doch prüfen, ob die Fragen und ob die Antworten so überholt sind, wie man es sich und andern einzureden versucht. Darüber herrscht wohl Einigkeit, daß der Ausgangspunkt für Luthers Kampf um das Evangelium und um die Kirche nicht die Konfession im heutigen Sinn war. Er kämpfte nicht um eine neue, sondern um eine erneuerte Kirche. Er protestierte mit den Seinigen nicht gegen, sondern für die Kirche. Er wollte nicht spalten, sondern die Christenheit im wahren Glauben vereinigen. . . . Warum aber, wenn es um den Glauben ging, endete die ganze Bewegung in einer Konfession, in der Abgrenzung einer Bekenntnisgemeinschaft? Das ist nur verständlich, wenn man die ganze Tiefe des Gegensatzes kennt, in dem sich Luther zur römischen Kirche infolge seiner an der Schrift geschärften Einsicht befand. Es ging ihm . . . im Grund nur um das e i n e, was er an der Kirche, ihren Lehren und ihrem Gottesdienst aussetzen hatte: daß sie nicht wirklich Gott die Ehre gab, daß sie Menschengebote und Gottesgebote nicht deutlich unterschied, daß sie menschliche Verdienste einschob, wo es rein um Gottes Gnade ging, daß ihr ihre Macht wichtiger war als die reine Heilsverkündigung und daß sie deshalb am Kreuz, das sie auf allen Wegen aufrichtete, tatsächlich vorüberging. . . . Nur wenn man sich das ganz klar macht, daß es in der Reformation nicht um diese oder jene Meinungsverschiedenheit ging, wie sie auch im Mittelalter immer wieder zwischen den verschiedenen Mönchsorden und ihren theologischen Schulen ausgefochten wurden, sondern um die ganz grundlegende, Herz und Gewissen aufwühlende Frage „Wie kann ich vor Gott bestehen, wie seines Heils teilhaftig werden? Lehrt uns die Kirche den wirklichen Gott und das wirkliche Heil, oder hat sie Menschengedanken an die Stelle von Gottes Wort gesetzt?“ versteht man die ungeheure Wucht dieses Angriffs, versteht man auch, daß er im Unterschied von allen früheren Oppositionsbewegungen in der Kirche kirchenbildend, nicht bloß gruppenbildend gewirkt hat. Es galt, von der grundsätzlichen Erkenntnis heraus, daß die bisherige Kirche über Gott und das Heil falsch gelehrt hatte, die Verkündigung in Predigt, Unterricht und Seelsorge schriftgemäß umzugestalten. . . . Diese Professoren samt den Fürsten und Ratsherren, die zu ihnen standen, waren Konfessoren im umfassenden Sinn des Wortes; sie bekannten nicht bloß eine Überzeugung, sondern sie bekannten die ihnen aufgetragene Wahrheit und den Gott der Wahrheit.“

Aus diesem Milieu ist, wie D. Wurm ausführt, das lutherische Bekenntnis gegen den Romanismus hervorgegangen. Leider ist man später des Kampfes müde geworden. D. Wurm schreibt: „Man darf wohl sagen, daß unter dem Eindruck der furchtbaren Opfer, die die konfessionellen Kämpfe gekostet hatten, der Kampf um die Wahrheit in dem höchsten Sinn, wie ihn das Neue Testament und die Reformation meint, erlahmte. Wie am Ende

des Weltkriegs jener Pazifismus aufkam, der alles von der Gnade und dem guten Willen der Sieger erwartete, der keinen Einsatz mehr wagte, weil die Sinnlosigkeit eines Kampfes um Ehre und Recht eines Volkes erwiesen schien, so gibt es auch einen geistigen Pazifismus, einen grundsätzlichen Verzicht auf den Kampf um die Wahrheit, der mit dem Wort 'Toleranz' seine Müdigkeit und seine Angst bemäntelt. . . . Unter dem Zeichen dieses Pazifismus standen die Auseinandersetzungen der evangelischen Theologie im eigenen Lager und im Verhältnis zu den geistigen Vorgängen in Zeit und Welt bis vor kurzer Zeit." Dieser Kampf ist nach D. Wurm wieder aufzunehmen gegen die reformierte Kirche. Er schreibt: „Wenn auch der Lehrunterschied zwischen lutherischer und reformierter Kirche sehr viel kleiner ist als der zwischen der römischen und der evangelischen Kirche, so ist doch auch hier die Wahrheitsfrage aufgeworfen, und es geht nicht an, sie zu ignorieren.“ Leider aber gibt Wurm hier keinen weiteren klaren Rosamenton, sondern zeigt eher, wie etwa bei aller Dissonanz der Lehre zwischen lutherischen und reformierten eine gegenseitige Achtung zwischen beiden bewahrt werden könne. Und darin liegt Wurms Schwäche. Er selbst schreibt: „Als mir Prof. Strathmann die Broschüre schickte, 'Müssen wir heute lutherisch oder reformiert sein?' schrieb ich ihm postwendend zurück: 'Nein, wir müssen es nicht sein, aber wir dürfen es denen, die es nach ihrer kirchlichen und persönlichen Führung sein müssen, nicht verwehren, es zu sein, und wir dürfen ihnen daraus keinen Vorwurf machen, als stellten sie die Konfession über die Schrift.'" Daß eine solche Stellung von Ja und Nein, Kampf und Nichtkampf nur Wirrwarr verursachen muß, zeigt die Geschichte. Die deutschen Theologen positiver Richtung befinden sich allerdings in einer merkwürdigen Stellung: sie wollen das Bekenntnis und wollen es auch nicht, Kampf und auch Frieden. So sehr hat sich der Krebsgeschade des Unionismus bei ihnen festgefressen. Aber auch noch etwas anderes. Wie man in der Frage zum Bekenntnis hin und her schwankt, so auch in der Frage zur Schrift.

Wir schließen, indem wir das folgende theologische Kuriosum aus D. Wurms Feder unsern Lesern unterbreiten: „Eine mit den Mitteln der Logik gewonnene Sicherung war z. B. die altorthodoxe Verbalinspirationslehre. Gerade an ihrer verhängnisvollen Wirkung, an dem Zerstörungsprozeß, der mit durch sie eingeleitet wurde, sieht man, wie wenig sich die Kirche auf menschliche Sicherungen, seien sie dogmatischer, seien sie rechtlicher Art, verlassen kann.“ Wir fragen uns: Warum dieser Hieb auf die Verbalinspiration in einem Artikel, wo es doch darauf ankommt, daß der Respekt vor der Schriftwahrheit gehoben werden soll? Und welche „verhängnisvolle Wirkung“, welcher „Zerstörungsprozeß“ ist wohl in der Geschichte der Kirche durch die Schriftlehre von der Verbalinspiration eingeleitet worden? Hier träumt doch wohl D. Wurm, und zwar sind es Fleischesträume, die er hat.

J. T. M.

Wahl des ersten deutschen methodistischen Bischofs. Bisher stand die Bischöfliche Methodistengemeinschaft in Deutschland unter Bischof D. Nilsen, der zu Genf in der Schweiz seinen Bischofssitz hat. Nun aber hat sich die Arbeit der Methodisten in Deutschland so erweitert, daß im September dieses Jahres Deutschland in der Person Dr. F. H. Mells von Frankfurt am Main seinen eigenen Bischof erhalten hat. Die Mitteilung findet sich in der „A. E. Z.“ (Jahrg. 69, Nr. 40), die darüber berichtet: „Die Zentralkonferenz der

Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche, die vom 16. bis zum 20. September in Frankfurt am Main tagte und aus kirchenordnungsmäßig bestellten Vertretern aller deutschen Gemeindeverbände zusammengesetzt war, hat Dr. F. S. Otto Melle (geboren 1875 in Thüringen), den bisherigen Direktor des Predigerseminars der Methodistenkirche in Frankfurt am Main, zum Bischof berufen. Die Verhandlungen wurden von Bischof D. Nülken geleitet, der in Verbindung mit Bischof Wade, Stockholm, Alt-Präsident D. Posthouse von der Methodistenkirche in England und einigen deutschen Distriktsuperintendenten die Weihe und Amtseinführung des neuen Bischofs vollzog. Die Gemeinden der Methodistenkirche in Deutschland sind damit von dem Mitteleuropäischen Sprengel abgetrennt und in einen deutschen Sprengel zusammengefaßt worden, dessen Leitung und Beaufsichtigung nun in den Händen Bischof Dr. Melles mit dem Wohnsitz in Berlin liegt. Ihm ist ein Kirchenvorstand zur Seite gestellt worden. Die neue Regelung ist mit Zustimmung des Reichskirchenministeriums erfolgt. Dem Werk der Methodistenkirche in Österreich, Ungarn, Bulgarien, Jugoslawien, Italien und der Schweiz steht Bischof D. Nülken, der zugleich das Seniorat im Bischofskollegium der Bischöflichen Methodistenkirche innehat, mit dem Sitz in Genf, 1 Rue des Photographes, auch weiterhin vor. An die Stelle des aus seinem Amt als Direktor des Predigerseminars der Methodistenkirche in Frankfurt am Main scheidenden Dr. F. S. Otto Melle ist der bisherige Dozent am Predigerseminar, Superintendent Dr. J. W. Ernst Sommer, M. A., als Direktor berufen worden.“

Nachdem der Methodismus in Deutschland früher seitens der Regierung manche Opposition hat erfahren müssen, ist er nun vom Reichskirchenministerium als ganz und gar evangelisch und somit auch als kirchengesetzlich berechtigt anerkannt worden. Der reformierte Einschlag wie auch der Unionismus dieser Kirchengemeinschaft hat ihr dabei gute Dienste geleistet.

J. E. W.

„Brüder“, aber doch keine Union! Auf der Genfer Calvinfeier lehnte der bayerische Bischof D. Meiser eine äußerliche Union mit den Reformierten ab, begrüßte sie aber dennoch als Brüder. Eine sehr feine Kritik solcher Stellung, wie sie Meiser eingenommen hat, gibt Rektor D. Willkomm in der „Freikirche“, und seinem Urteil muß jeder bekennnistreue Lutheraner ganz und gar beistimmen. Wir lesen:

„Bei einer Calvinfeier in Genf hat Landesbischof Meiser von Bayern eine Rede gehalten, die großes Aufsehen erregt hat und auf die auch wir, will's Gott, noch zurückkommen werden. Mangel an Zeit und Raum nötigen uns, heute nur ganz kurz folgendes zu sagen: Landesbischof Meiser lehnt eine Union mit der reformierten Kirche ab. Trotzdem nennt er — und er redet im Namen und als Vertreter der lutherischen Kirche Deutschlands — die Reformierten „Brüder“ und sagt, die Lutheraner in Deutschland hätten gewußt, was sie taten, wenn sie in den hinter uns liegenden Jahren des Kampfes und der Not so oft mit den reformierten Brüdern den Bruderamen getauscht hätten! Damit haben diese Lutheraner gerade das Gegenteil von dem getan, was Luther in Marburg, auf den sie sich doch berufen und den sie wegen seines Verhaltens dort loben, getan hat. Luther hat damals, am 12. Oktober 1529, an Joh. Agricola in Saalfeld geschrieben: Schließlich baten sie, daß wir sie wenigstens als Brüder anerkennen

sollten, und der Fürst [Philipp von Hessen] drang sehr darauf; aber es konnte ihnen nicht zugestanden werden.' Und vor seiner Wittenberger Gemeinde berichtete er auf der Kanzel u. a.: „... Denn wir haben Gottes Wort und den Text für uns, den sie nicht haben. Darum steht die Sache in einer guten Hoffnung. Ich sage nicht, daß eine brüderliche Einigkeit sei, sondern eine gütige, freundliche Eintracht, daß sie freundlich bei uns suchen, was ihnen fehlt, und wir wieder ihnen dienen. Wo ihr nun werdet fleißig bitten, wird sie auch brüderlich*) werden.' (Walch² 3, 321.) Und Luther wußte wohl, was er tat und sagte. Ihm war gerade in Marburg ganz deutlich geworden, daß die Reformierten nicht die Heilige Schrift allein als Glaubensnorm annahmen, sondern in Glaubenssachen die Vernunft dreinreden ließen. Und so ist's doch heute noch. Es ist nicht wahr, daß die reformierte Kirche ebenso wie die Lutherische „eine Kirche des Wortes“ wäre, wie jetzt von führenden Lutheranern in Deutschland immer wieder öffentlich behauptet wird. Diese Beurteilung der reformierten Kirche hat aber ihren Grund darin, daß diese „Lutheraner“ selbst nicht mehr wie Luther auf dem unfehlbaren Wort der Schrift stehen. Wäre die reformierte Kirche wirklich eine „Kirche des Wortes“, dann wäre auch kein Grund vorhanden, die Union mit ihr abzulehnen und den Reformierten die Bruderhand zu verweigern. Es ist aber leider so, daß nicht, wie Luther es damals hoffte, die Reformierten von den Lutheranern gelernt haben, sondern vielmehr umgekehrt: der reformierte Geist ist in die lutherische Christenheit Deutschlands eingedrungen und hat ihre Stellung zur Schrift und zu den aus der Schrift geschöpften Bekenntnissen erweicht und so dem Geiste der Union Tor und Tür geöffnet. Das „Luthertum“ Deutschlands ist in seinen führenden Männern von dem Grundsatz der Reformation Luthers „Die Schrift allein“ — abgefallen. Bei solcher Stellung ist der Kampf gegen die Union von vornherein verloren, ja ist eitel Spiegelschere. Und es wundert uns, daß selbst das Breslauer „Kirchenblatt“ das nicht sieht und von der Rede Meisers in Genf urteilen kann, sie sei „ebenso bekenntnistreu als friedliebend“ gewesen! Auch wir wünschen von Herzen mit Luther, daß es zum Frieden mit den Reformierten kommen möge; aber er kann nur kommen, wenn die Reformierten ihren Irrtum erkennen und die klare Schriftwahrheit annehmen. Die Wahrheit, daß es auch in der reformierten Kirche wahre Christen gibt, die um den Irrtum nicht wissen, leugnen auch wir nicht. Aber es dient zur Verwirrung der Gewissen, wenn man diese Wahrheit in diesem Zusammenhang vorbringt. Mit demselben Recht könnte man dann auch von der römisch-katholischen Kirche als einer „Schwesterkirche“ reden und ihr die Bruderhand reichen; denn auch dort sind Christen. — Bei den strengen Reformierten hat übrigens Meiser wenig Gegenliebe gefunden. Sie beschuldigen ihn trotz der dargebotenen „Bruderhand“ des „lutherischen Konfessionalismus“ und fragen, was dieser eigentlich wolle. So geht's den „Brüdenbauern“ auf kirchlichem Gebiet!“

J. F. M.

*) Sperrsatz von mir. — M. B.