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## Theological Observer. – Kirchllich Zeitgeschichtliches

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**Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches**


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**I. Amerika**

**Meeting of the Representatives of the U. L. C. A. and the Missouri Synod.** — It was a historic occasion when on November 23 and 24, 1936, in the Hotel Statler, Detroit, Mich., representatives of the U. L. C. A. and the Missouri Synod for the first time held a conference to see whether the obstacles preventing the establishment of pulpit- and altar-fellowship between the two bodies and their cooperation and eventual union could be removed. The colloquents for the U. L. C. A. were Dr. F. H. Knubel, Dr. C. M. Jacobs, Dr. H. F. Offermann, Dr. H. H. Bagger, Dr. P. H. Krauss, Mr. E. F. Eilert, Mr. J. K. Jensen, and Mr. E. Rinderknecht; for the Missouri Synod: Dr. Th. Engelder, Dr. W. Arndt, Dr. C. F. Brommer, Pastor F. H. Brun, and Pastor K. Kretzmann. Mr. Rinderknecht was chosen chairman.

The first subject to be discussed was that of Lutheran solidarity, the desirability of which was ably presented by Dr. Knubel, a presentation which evoked expressions of agreement from all. After this the chief topic of the conference was entered upon, the doctrine of the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. The *Brief Statement* of the Missouri Synod, treating of this doctrine in its opening paragraphs, was made the starting-point. In the course of the conference Dr. Jacobs presented a statement which in its substance had been approved by his colleagues. It became apparent that there was a disagreement between the colloquents as to this doctrine. The discussions were marked by friendly courtesy and utter frankness. Whether, when, and where future conferences will be held has not yet been determined.

*Joint Statement of the Secretaries*

Was ist gemeint? In der „Kirchlichen Zeitschrift“ für Oktober 1936 findet sich ein von P. Otto B. Heiß, wohl Glied der Vereinigten Lutherischen Kirche, gehaltener Vortrag, der neben vielem Guten auch manches bringt, was Kopfschütteln hervorrufen muß. „Kirchliches Bekennen und kirchliches Handeln“ ist der Titel. Was uns unverständlich oder auch verlehrt erscheint, ist erstlich einmal der folgende Passus (S. 578): „Dieses Verständnis der Bekenntnisse verpflichtet uns nun nach zwei Seiten. Einmal: Die Nachfolge Jesu kann bei einem Menschen ernst sein, nur die Deutung falsch. Der Herr hat deshalb auch seine Jünger unter Katholiken und Sektierern, und das drohnende ‚damnamus‘ Roms und Missouris gegen die leibste andere Deutung der Nachfolge ist bei aller prinzipiellen Verschiedenheit eine Verletzung der Gemeinsamkeit der Sache Jesu.“ Rom und Missouri in einem Atemzug genannt — der Dieb tut weh. Doch, aufrichtig gesagt, wir würden etwas darum geben, könnten wir erfahren, worauf sich der Verfasser bezieht. Was ist es, was hier Missouri zur Last gelegt wird? Beweiß doch nicht die Ansicht, daß nur in der Lutherischen Kirche wirklich Jünger Jesu, also solche, die dem Heiland in Wahrheit nachfolgen, anzutreffen sind. Wenn Missouri irgendeine Lehre mit aller Kraft vertreten hat, dann ist es diese, daß überall, wo noch Christus ge-



predigt wird, selbst im papistischen und calvinistischen Lager, es Nachfolger Jesu gibt. Es ist allerdings wahr, daß Missouri jede Abweichung von der Lehre Jesu verwirft. Ist P. Heid etwa bereit zu erklären, daß ihm ein Abgehen von Jesu Wort etwas Gleichgültiges ist? Sein Artikel hätte wenig Sinn, wenn er solch eine Haltung den Worten des Erlösers gegenüber verteidigen wollte. Oder will er sagen: Bei der Nachfolge Jesu kommt es nur auf den guten Willen an? Ist er wirklich auf den Standpunkt gekommen, daß er behauptet: Alle Wege führen zum Himmel, so lange es dem Wanderer mit seinem Pilgern nur ein rechter Ernst ist? Eines so krassen Unglaubens möchten wir ihn nicht beschuldigen. Also was wollen die Worte: „Die Nachfolge Jesu kann bei einem Menschen ernst sein, nur die Deutung falsch“ und: Missouri verurteilt „auch die leiseste andere Deutung der Nachfolge Jesu“? Missouri hält dafür, daß, wer an Jesum als seinen Heiland glaubt und sich unter sein Wort beugt, selbst wenn er noch in diesem oder jenem Stück oder auch in vielen Stücken irren sollte, sein Jünger und Nachfolger ist. Verwirft nicht auch P. Heid jede leiseste andere Deutung der Nachfolge Jesu? Was ist der Sinn seiner Polemik? fragen wir noch einmal.

Positiv verwirrend wirkt es, wenn S. 579 vom Verfasser gesagt wird: „Nein, die Schrift allein genügt als Bekenntnis nicht, weil sie weder ein Lehrbuch der Dogmatik (17. Jahrhundert) noch ein Gesetzbuch ist, wie Rom und Genf meinen, sondern in erster Linie Geschichte und ihre Deutung bietet, von der wir aber durch Jahrhunderte getrennt sind, so daß wir einer Norm bedürfen, nach welcher die Schrift gedeutet werden muß. Das empfand man auch schon in der Urgemeinde, sonderlich als der Kampf mit der Gnosis brennend wurde. Taufbekenntnis, regula fidei und das Bischofsamt, das waren die Stützen der Kirche in der Auseinandersetzung mit der Gnosis, die sich geradefogt wie die Kirche auf die Schrift berief. Deshalb hat sich auch folgerichtig in der Reformationszeit die lutherische Kirche nicht mit dem Formalprinzip, sola Scriptura, begnügt; denn das hatten die Schwarmgeister auch. Ja selbst das Tridentinum zitiert gern und viel die Schrift. Sondern zu dem ‚die Schrift allein‘ trat das sola fide hinzu. Nur wenn die Schrift von diesem Gesichtspunkt aus gelesen wird, daß sie mir Antwort geben soll auf Luthers Frage: ‚Wie kriege ich einen gnädigen Gott?‘ dann allein habe ich die Schrift verstanden. Sie ist niemals ein Lehrbuch der Naturwissenschaften noch ein Gesetzbuch für das soziale und nationale Leben noch ein Wahrsagebuch, um das Geheimnis der Zukunft zu enthüllen; also weder das, was teils die alten Dogmatiker und heute noch manche Lutheraner in Amerika noch was Rom und Genf noch was die Schwärmer aus ihr gemacht haben.“

Zunächst ist doch der zu Anfang dieses Paragraphen auf die Dogmatiker des 17. Jahrhunderts gemachte Angriff nicht gerechtfertigt. Diese teuren Gottesmänner hatten allerdings ihre Schwächen und Gebrechen, wie wir die unfriegen haben, aber man kann ihnen nicht zur Last legen, daß sie aus der Bibel ein Lehrbuch der Dogmatik gemacht hätten. Um nur eins zu erwähnen, in dem Fall hätten sie kaum selber so viele Dogmatiken geschrieben, wie es tatsächlich der Fall war. Freilich eins haben sie getan: sie haben ihre Beweise immer aus der Schrift genommen. Wenn sie damit aus der Bibel ein Lehrbuch der Dogmatik gemacht haben, dann wollen wir den Ausdruck nicht beanstanden. Aber will der Verfasser ihnen das zum



Vorturf machen? Wenn er gegen Ende des Paragraphen sich noch einmal über die alten Dogmatiker und auch über „manche Lutheraner in Amerika“ beschwert, so möchten wir wünschen, daß er etwas genauer gesagt hätte, worin ihm diese den eigentlichen Charakter des Bibelbuches antasteten. Unser Wissen haben weder die alten Dogmatiker noch hat irgendein Lutheraner in Amerika je direkt oder indirekt erklärt, die Heilige Schrift sei „ein Lehrbuch der Naturwissenschaften“ oder „ein Gesezeslobeg für das soziale und nationale Leben“ oder „ein Wahrheitsbuch, um das Geheimnis der Zukunft zu enthüllen“. Daß wir alle Weissagungen der Schrift als göttliche Wahrheit ansehen, will der Verfasser hoffentlich nicht kritisieren. Ist dies nicht auch einer der nicht gerade seltenen Fälle, wo mit Hilfe der Einbildungskraft ein Strohhalm errichtet wird, dem man dann mit Leichtigkeit den Garauß machen kann?

Ferner scheint es uns, daß der Verfasser in diesem Abschnitt allerlei durcheinanderwirft. Die Schrift allein genügt als Bekenntnis nicht, sagt er. Das ist richtig. Aber der Grund, der angegeben wird, ist nicht zutreffend. Die Schrift genügt nicht als Bekenntnis, weil sich alle christlichen Parteien darauf berufen und darum die Parole „Wir stehen auf der Schrift!“ ziemlich nichtsagend geworden ist. Was er als Begründung anführt, ist vielmehr eine Antwort auf die Frage, wie es kommt, daß so viele Leute, die sich angeblich auf die Schrift stellen, diese nicht verstehen. Ferner ist es doch nicht so, daß wir, weil wir „durch Jahrhunderte von der Geschichte der Schrift und ihrer Deutung“ getrennt sind, einer Norm, die Schrift zu erklären, bedürfen, während dieses Bedürfnis in den Anfangsjahren der Kirche nicht vorhanden gewesen wäre. Wenn man das *sola fide* eine Norm der Schriftauslegung nennen will (und um die Terminologie wollen wir uns nicht streiten), so darf man nicht aus dem Auge verlieren, daß diese Norm im Jahre 70 geradezu zu Recht bestand wie 1670.

Der Verfasser führt überhaupt eine merkwürdige Sprache. „Die Lutherische Kirche hat sich nicht mit dem Formalprinzip, *sola Scriptura*, begnügt, denn das hatten die Schwarmgeister auch . . ., sondern zu dem ‚die Schrift allein‘ trat das *sola fide* hinzu.“ Warum verfährt der Schreiber nicht etwas mehr säuberlich? Wenn er behauptet, die Lutherische Kirche habe sich nicht mit dem Formalprinzip, *sola Scriptura*, begnügt, weil das die Gegner auch hatten, so fragt man unwillkürlich: Welches andere Formalprinzip haben die Lutheraner noch hinzugenommen? Will er sagen, das *sola fide* sei ein weiteres Formalprinzip? Wir sehen, bei ihm geht es durcheinander. Anstatt darzulegen, daß die Lutheraner sich allerdings mit dem Formalprinzip *sola Scriptura* begnügten, während im Unterschied von ihnen die Papisten die Tradition und die Lehrentscheidungen der Kirche und die Schwärmer die Vernunft und die „innere Stimme“ hinzunahmen, springt er mit einem Mal auf ein ganz anderes Gebiet über, auf das des Lehrinhalts selbst, wie ihn die Väter aus der Schrift schöpften. Wir vermuten fast, daß, was der Verfasser sagen will, dieses ist: Die Schrift war den Lutheranern die einzige Norm; aber wohl gemerkt! die rechtsverständene Schrift, die Schrift, insofern sie „Christum treibt“, insofern sie das *sola fide* lehrt. Damit wäre dann nicht ein zweites Formalprinzip genannt, sondern vielmehr das eine genannte eingeschränkt oder vielleicht auch beschrieben. Darüber ließe sich dann viel sagen. Solch einen Ausspruch könnten wir ohne



weiteres untersuchen; es könnte sich aber auch dahinter viel Irrtum verbergen.

In Summa, der Verfasser ist auf dem Kriegspfad gegen die alten Dogmatiker und Missouri, das ist klar. Aber nicht so klar ist, was er an ihnen auszusetzen hat und ob er wirklich die Stellung der Angegriffenen versteht. ¶

**Auburn Affirmation.** — In the *Presbyterian* of July 16, 1936, the interested reader will find the complete text of the often-mentioned Auburn Affirmation. It was "released for use in the religious weeklies beginning January 6, 1924." The Affirmation constitutes the reaction of the liberal element of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America against what the signers call "persistent attempts to divide the Church and abridge its freedom." The signers say: "At the outset we affirm and declare our acceptance of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as we did at our ordinations, 'as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.'" From the body of the document we quote a few of the more important statements: "By its law and its history the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America safeguards the liberty of thought and teaching of its ministers. At their ordinations they 'receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this Church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures.' This the Church has always esteemed as sufficient doctrinal subscription for its ministers. Manifestly it does not require their assent to the very words of the Confession or to all of its teachings or to interpretations of the Confession by individuals or church courts. . . . Of the two parts into which our Church was separated from 1837 to 1870 one held that only one interpretation of certain parts of the Confession of Faith was legitimate, while the other maintained its right to dissent from this interpretation. In the Reunion of 1870 they came together on equal terms, 'each recognizing the other as a sound and orthodox body.' The meaning of this, as understood then and ever since, is that office-bearers in the Church who maintain their liberty in the interpretation of the Confession are exercising their rights guaranteed by the terms of the Reunion. A more recent Reunion also is significant, that of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, in 1906. This Reunion was opposed by certain members of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America on the ground that the two churches were not at one in doctrine; yet it was consummated. Thus did our Church once more exemplify its historic policy of accepting theological differences within its bounds and subordinating them to recognized loyalty to Jesus Christ and united work for the kingdom of God." Under the heading "Concerning the Interpretation of the Scriptures" the authors say, for instance: "There is no assertion in the Scriptures that their writers were kept 'from error.' The Confession of Faith does not make this assertion; and it is significant that this assertion is not to be found in the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed or in any of the great Reformation confessions. The doctrine of inerrancy, intended to enhance the authority of the Scriptures, in fact impairs their supreme authority for faith and life and



weakens the testimony of the Church and the power of God unto salvation through Jesus Christ. We hold that the General Assembly of 1923, in asserting that 'the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide, and move the writers of Holy Scripture as to keep them from error,' spoke without warrant of the Scriptures or the Confession of Faith."

The Affirmation furthermore declares that the General Assembly, without concurrent action of the presbyteries, has no authority to declare what the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America believes and teaches and that for the General Assembly to say that any doctrine is an essential doctrine is an unconstitutional procedure. It objects to the judgment of the General Assembly which stated that "doctrines contrary to the standards of the Presbyterian Church" had been preached in the First Presbyterian Church of New York City (the reference being to the preaching of Dr. Fosdick). It furthermore states that the signers are unwilling to let the five doctrinal statements of the General Assembly of 1923 (having to do with the inerrancy of the Scriptures, the virgin birth of our Lord, the substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection of Christ, and His performance of real miracles) be used as tests "for ordination or for good standing" in the Church. How Modernism expresses itself on these doctrinal points can be seen from these words of the authors: "We all hold most earnestly to these great facts and doctrines: we all believe from our hearts that the writers of the Bible were inspired of God; that Jesus Christ was God manifest in the flesh; that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, and through Him we have our redemption; that, having died for our sins, He rose from the dead and is our ever-living Savior; that in His earthly ministry He wrought many mighty works and by His vicarious death and unfailling presence He is able to save to the uttermost. Some of us regard the particular theories contained in the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1923 as satisfactory explanations of these facts and doctrines. But we are united in believing that these are not the only theories allowed by the Scriptures and our standards as explanations of these facts and doctrines of our religion and that all who hold to these facts and doctrines, whatever theorizing they may have employed to explain them, are worthy of all confidence and fellowship."

When one has read these statements, one is not surprised to learn that they caused a great storm of indignation in those circles of the Presbyterian Church where the Scriptures are still regarded as the infallible Word of God. A.

**Lutheranism Appraised by an Outsider.**—What the non-Lutheran religious press, especially those papers which espouse a liberal theology, gave especial attention to in the proceedings of the convention of the United Lutheran Church in Columbus was the debate which featured the convention's discussion on the attitude of the U. L. C. toward social issues. The *Christian Century* not only published a lengthy report on the meeting, written by one of the members of its staff who was in attendance, but it submitted to its readers a long editorial having the heading "New Stirrings within Lutheranism," in which the U. L. C. and its policy as well as Lutheranism in general is examined. It is inter-



esting to see what view Charles Clayton Morrison, who presumably wrote the editorial, takes of Lutheranism and the various Lutheran church-bodies in America. We quote from the editorial: "The attitude which has been characteristic of the Lutheran Church toward other churches and toward their common social responsibilities is well known. In a word, Lutheranism has been the most denominational of denominations. The inheritors of a rich historic tradition, Lutherans have for the most part looked upon it as a prize to be guarded rather than a good to be shared. No other Protestant Church has been more concerned to keep intact and clearly marked every item which differentiates it from other groups, just as no other has gone farther in claiming divine sanction for its form of government, its doctrines, and its liturgy. Non-Lutherans have usually been excluded from Lutheran Sacraments and non-Lutheran ministers from Lutheran pulpits. The Lutheran Church has been perhaps the least cooperative of all the larger Protestant churches in the various interdenominational endeavors. But Lutheranism is by no means a unit in America. There are seventeen denominations of Lutherans, of which the United Lutheran Church, whose delegates met at Columbus, is the largest and most aggressive. For some time there have been signs in this Church of revolt from the traditional position of denominational aloofness and exclusiveness, although its official pronouncements continue to reaffirm the ancient divisive dogmas and although a majority of its members still hold to them; nevertheless a growing minority of ministers and laymen have been disregarding them in practise or, as they would probably prefer to say, have been reinterpreting them in more generous terms. Thus there has come about in the United Lutheran Church a measure of pulpit- and altar-fellowship with other Protestants which the official declarations of the Church forbid. And by tolerating such practises, the United Lutheran Church as a whole has departed somewhat from its announced position. These tendencies in this particular branch of Lutheranism toward doctrinal tolerance and toward fellowship with other churches, may be unimpressive to one altogether outside the Lutheran camp. But inside they are seen to have considerable importance. This appears in the fact that it is these tendencies which more than anything else stand in the way of a unified Lutheranism in this country. The report to the recent convention by the special commission on relationships with other American Lutheran church-bodies shows that it is because the more conservative Lutheran groups are not convinced (in spite of the pronouncements, which they find satisfactory) of the doctrinal fidelity and denominational exclusiveness of the United Lutheran Church that they are still unwilling to consider organic union with it. This same report reveals how far such union is from realization and how wide are the divergences among the Lutheran groups when it tells of the meeting of the unification commission of the United Lutheran Church with that of the American Lutheran Church, the next largest Lutheran body. It seems that the two commissions met with different understandings of what they were to accomplish. The United Lutherans, instructed to find a basis for organic union, were surprised to discover that the only question the representatives of the American Lutheran



Church were authorized to discuss was whether they might not under certain conditions be willing to maintain altar- and pulpit-fellowship with their fellow-Lutherans. For them union was not in the picture at all.

"Under these circumstances it is natural that a strong temptation to go some distance in meeting the demands of the more reactionary Lutheran bodies should be felt within the United Church. Nation-wide Lutheranism is a step toward world-wide Lutheranism, which is obviously the ideal of the official leaders of the denomination. But this step will be a costly one if it involves the surrender of the small, but significant progress the United Lutheran Church has made toward a cooperative relationship within American church-life. What is vitally important is a united Christendom; but a united Lutheranism, if it is also to be an isolated Lutheranism, would represent not progress, but reaction. There is every indication that the forward-looking leadership within the United Lutheran Church is quite aware of this fact and will not permit the sacrifice of the gains their denomination has made."

The editor of the *Christian Century* thinks it a hopeful sign with respect to Lutheran participation in the solving of economic and social difficulties that at the Columbus convention there was at least a strong debate on the question to what extent the Lutheran Church might cooperate in the endeavors which are so dear to the *Christian Century* and that a vigorous minority opposed the negative course which was approved by the convention. We feel that the last paragraph of the editorial should be quoted also: "When the president of the convention said, 'The need of the present moment . . . is that in all nations Christians unitedly insist that the Government must not interfere with the property and full freedom of the Church,' he was evidently thinking of the German Church; but he defined the need in terms which the contemporary experiences of that Church prove utterly inadequate. The Church cannot be content merely to be let alone. If the tragic and heroic experiences of thousands of German Christians during recent years teach anything, it is that the attempt to maintain the Church in isolation from the social order is doomed to failure and that for the Church to refuse to invade the order of the 'secular' is to invite an invasion of its own sacred precincts. America needs a Lutheran Church which, without surrendering any of the values which belong to its tradition, will commit itself to building here and now the kind of social order in which alone those values will have some chance of survival. To be free, the Church must do more than insist upon its own freedom — it must demand, and help create, the kind of society in which all men shall be free."

Our readers, we are sure, will rather agree with President Knubel than with the editor of the *Christian Century* in the clash of opinions which we view in the last paragraph quoted. To the careful consideration of all U. L. C. A. ministers and officials we commend the statement of the editorial that "there has come about in the United Lutheran Church a measure of pulpit- and altar-fellowship with other Protestants which the official declarations of the Church forbid" and that "by tolerating such practises the United Lutheran Church as a whole has



departed somewhat from its announced position." The *Christian Century* is right when it holds that these tendencies, more than anything else, "stand in the way of a united Lutheranism in this country." That Dr. Morrison, a non-Lutheran, is ignorant of the earnestness with which confessional Lutherans have always insisted that their particular form of government and their liturgy are not claimed to rest on divine sanction, we can understand. He is a very busy man, edits two religious journals, lectures a great deal, and his chief interest is not doctrinal theology, but, if we mistake not, philosophy and sociology. What surprises one is that he does not see that, where the Church has very actively participated in politics and largely dominated the social life of the nation, for instance, in Russia, Spain, and Mexico, the ultimate results, as we view them now, have been most unsatisfactory. A.

**The Challenge of the New Atheism.**— Writing editorially in *Christianity Today* (November 16, 1936), Miss Maude Howe has this to say of the New Atheism which is being spread in America: "The New Atheism invites into its membership every cult and ism that will deny Calvary. We can therefore realize the menace of this planned propaganda to build up world revolution on a foundation of atheism. The New Atheism is not the classical freethought of the seventeenth century in any sense of the word, but it is a far more subtle and dangerous thing and already claims a membership of over seventeen million members in sixty-four countries, working, as so many atheists have told me personally, night and day to bring about world revolution. The American Association for the Advancement of Atheism received a charter in 1925, and five times a similar charter has been tried in Canada. We pray that it may never be granted and are watching to cut across the application every time. We praise God for authorities in many cases sympathetic to the Christian faith. Members of the New Atheist cult visit hospitals and even in some cases help peddlers to propagate atheism as they go from door to door. In almost every well-known school and college in the world there is an atheist member. They even have atheist workers in Christian organizations. They have atheist members attending churches to offset appeals from a Christian pulpit. Every one of these statements can be proved up to the hilt. To disprove the New Atheism and check its pernicious work, the International Christian Crusade was organized in Canada in 1928. By now it has spread to several other countries. In one year the International Christian Crusade received over five thousand letters from those losing faith or such as were concerned about the lack of faith in their loved ones."

Today pastors must watch especially young people attending colleges and universities where atheism in the form of evolutionistic materialism is being spread throughout the country. Unofficial reports which we have seen have reported the number of faculty members and students at American universities voting the Socialist and even Communist tickets as alarmingly high. As Pastor Voronaef, a Russian refugee, recently said in a lecture, delivered here in St. Louis: "Poor people! They do not know what they are voting in."

J. T. M.



**A Good Article.**—While *Christendom*, the new quarterly issued by Willett Clark & Co. and edited by Charles Clayton Morrison, who likewise is the editor of the *Christian Century*, usually brings articles that have a modernistic tendency and are read with grief by one who in all simplicity adheres to the Gospel preached in the Holy Scriptures, the autumn, 1936, issue contains a surprise for conservatives, an article of a different type, by Nathaniel Micklem, professor of Dogmatic Theology at Mansfield College, Oxford, on the subject "On the Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion." The article is so well written, so sprightly and fresh in its presentation, so full of interesting historical and other pertinent allusions, that we read it with real gratitude. There are some erroneous statements in it, but its main thesis is right and hits the nail on the head. He finds the reason for the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion in the unwillingness of natural man, especially when his ego has become puffed up by a sense of his own wisdom and achievements, to say humbly: "Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to Thy cross I cling." Having quoted the words of the poet concluding with these lines, "Of all that Wisdom dictates this the drift, That man is dead in sin and life a gift," he ends his essay thus: "That is what the Master said: 'The publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom before you'; that is the reason for the aversion of men of taste to evangelical religion." A.

**The Convention of the Disciples.**—Last October the Disciples of Christ, the followers of Alexander Campbell, met in Kansas City for their international convention. About 2,500 persons attended. From the *Christian Century* we learn something about how these conventions are constituted. "It was not a delegate convention. Any member of a Disciples church could sit on the main floor and vote on all questions merely by registering his name and paying one dollar. For some reason there has always existed among the Disciples the strange idea that this is more 'democratic' than to have an assembly of deputies representing definite constituents. A few years ago a compromise was reached between the two ideas, and a small body of about 150 persons was created, called the Recommendations Committee. Its *personnel* is chosen by the State and provincial conventions on the basis of proportional representation. To this committee all resolutions are referred before the convention can take action. This plan works very well." Doctrinal questions, we are told, received but little notice. Even the matter of church unity was not much discussed. One of the chief resolutions passed refers to Army and Navy chaplaincies. The convention resolved "to renounce representation upon the chaplaincy commission of the Federal Council of Churches, which exercises the function of recommending Protestant candidates for chaplains commissions in the Army and Navy," and, secondly, to petition the Federal Council "to disband that commission and cease to exercise that function." These resolutions were passed over the head of the Recommendations Committee. The home of Alexander Campbell at Bethany, W. Va., where a few paces from the house is "his famous octagonal study, which has no windows excepting the glass roof," is to be preserved as a shrine. A.



The "Gospel" of the "Preaching Mission."—While there can be little doubt that some of the men who were active in the "Preaching Mission" brought their hearers genuine Gospel truths, it is clear that some of the promoters of the movement, at least in some cities, did not succeed in divorcing the movement from the social gospel. The editor of the *Church at Work*, bulletin of the Metropolitan Church Federation of St. Louis, writes in a recent issue on "The Objectives of the Mission": "To strengthen the foundations of Christian faith on the part of every member of the local congregation and to stress anew what it means to be a Christian. To reawaken and reinterest the 'marginal' members of the local church and to enlist them in active Christian service. To make new disciples for Jesus Christ, our Lord, and to enlist them in the working fellowship of the church. The preacher will preach for conversion and seek to add new members to the church. To bring into active fellowship of local congregations all those who have been members of the congregation in other communities, but who have neglected to transfer their memberships by letter. To send forth Christians into the world with a zeal for the redemption of every area of life that all human relationships may reflect the spirit of Jesus Christ and the redemptive purpose for which He came." That the last paragraph in particular reflects the attitude of the social gospel seems to appear from another paragraph, in which the editor reflects on the outcome of the services in St. Louis: "What will be the outcome? Has this spiritual elevation been high enough and real enough, so that it will eventually be instrumental in producing moral achievements? Can St. Louis abolish its slums, abandon its brothels, cast out its gambling, its graft, its political corruption? Can it really become a righteous city, a holy city, a city of God?" When will men learn to distinguish between main objectives and by-products? K.

An Old Division Recalled.—In the *Presbyterian* an aged pastor speaks of a separation which occurred in the Presbyterian Church a hundred years ago. At that time Conservatives and Liberals clashed over the question whether Presbyterians should continue to cooperate with the Congregational Church in conducting and supporting missionary societies. There had been a so-called "plan of union," according to which these two church-bodies worked together. The conservative element felt that this course was not proper and was not serving the best interests of their Church, and so they declared the old relation ended. Four synods at that time refused to acquiesce in this action and separated. It was thus that the New School body arose. In 1869, however, the two parties, Old School and New School, again united. What we cannot understand is that the writer in the *Presbyterian*, who himself belonged to the Old School and approves of the conservative course of the fathers in 1837, deplors the separation of Dr. Machen and his coworkers in 1936. A.

Interesting Foreign-Tongue Periodicals in Our Circles.—The polyglot character of the Lutheran Church is evident also from the various foreign-tongue periodicals published within the confines of our Synod. To two of these we wish to direct the attention of our readers at this



time, adding the wish that at least a few of our pastors would subscribe for them and thus support the noble cause which they represent. We refer to *Le Luthérien Français*, published by Pastor F. Kreiss of Paris, France, and to *Noticiero Luterano*, the organ of our Mexican Lutherans. Both monthly periodicals are written in a style so clear and in diction so simple that they are easily understood, and both offer their readers rich and varied reading-matter. The leading article in *Le Luthérien Français*, entitled "Nos Revendications" is a thorough and timely refutation of present-day materialism, as this has perverted not only the masses, both rich and poor, but also, in the form of secularism, the Church, and is, at the same time, an ardent plea for penitent return to the Gospel of Christ. "Que Dieu ouvre les yeux à une génération aveugle!" This closing prayer certainly applies also to our American people. A noteworthy series of instructive and interesting articles is appearing under the heading "Le Luthéranisme, son Histoire, sa Foi et sa Vie." The fifth article of the series treats the subject "Le Retour aux Traditions Liturgiques de L'Eglise Sauvera-t-il les Eglises Luthériennes?" The article refers to the witness of the French Lutheran paper *Le Témoignage* against the Reformed *Semeur*, which had attacked its opponent's "Romanizing tendencies." While *Le Luthérien Français* rejects the Calvinistic paper's criticism, it at the same time points out against *Le Témoignage* that not any kind of aping of Rome by the adoption of papistical liturgical forms, teachings, or conventions will save the cause of Lutheranism against unbelief, but persistent loyalty to God's Word. The article is very fine and timely and sounds a clear, sharp trumpet-tone against the offensive unionism in modern Franco-Lutheran circles. The article "Le Devoir des Chrétiens envers le Monde" presents to the readers the synodical essay discussed by our brethren in France at their last convention in February and points out the Christian's duty to fight boldly and faithfully against all enemies of the Gospel. The rest of the paper is devoted to church and other announcements.

While *Le Luthérien Français* is rather dogmatical and controversial in contents, *Noticiero Luterano* is quite missionary and devotional, adapted to people who need the milk of Christian instruction. But its "newsy" columns give it a charm all its own. Its leading article (we quote from No. 1, Vol. II, October, 1936), "La Explosion que Derrumbo al Poder del Papa," shows how the Lutheran Reformation shook the power of the Papacy just because it brought to light the Scriptural doctrine of justification by faith. Other articles treat the following subjects: "The First Anniversary of *Noticiero Luterano*," "What Is Life?" ("A preparation for heaven"), "How to Judge Religions" ("What is their attitude toward the Biblical principles of *sola gratia* and *sola Scriptura*?") and "Anotaciones" (news brevities). Still more interesting perhaps than "Anotaciones" are the "Brisas del Campo" ("field breezes," i. e., "field reports") from San Antonio, Vanderbilt, and Three Rivers, Tex.; from Los Angeles, Cal.; from San Luis, Mo., and vicinity; from Chicago and New York, cities in which our Mexican Missions are represented. May God bless these missions and also our little Spanish mission paper, *Noticiero Luterano*, which costs but 35 cents a year and gives the reader \$35 worth of enjoyment and inspiration.

J. T. M.



**Statistics Regarding the Jews.**— In view of the continued hue and cry over the barbaric treatment which Jews receive in Germany, *Christianity Today* points out the fact that on April 1, 1936, the number of Jews living in Germany was still estimated by the *Reichsvertretung* at 409,000, while only about 93,000 Jews emigrated from Germany since June, 1933. These figures are fairly accurate since they were compiled by the German Emigration Department in cooperation with the *Hilfsverein der Juden in Deutschland* and the Palestine Office in Berlin on the basis of the number of emigrants assisted by these organizations. Of the 93,000 Jews who left Germany about 31,000 went to Palestine and 22,000 to other overseas countries. Eighteen thousand Jews who were not German citizens returned to their native countries in Eastern Europe. The others settled in England, France, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, and other European countries. Of the overseas countries, besides Palestine, the United States received 9,500 Jews, Brazil 4,500, Argentina 2,000, and South Africa 3,000. While in Germany there are still 409,000 Jews, Great Britain has only 340,000. In 1935 there were about 395,000 Jews in Palestine. Figured by continents, there are about 9,736,000 Jews in Europe, 560,000 in Africa, 936,000 in Asia, 5,031,000 in North and South America, and 27,000 in Australia and New Zealand. Throughout the world the Jews today number about 16,291,000, as Dr. Erwin Rawicz states in the *C.-V. Zeitung* of Berlin. J. T. M.

## II. Ausland

**Mission-Work in Abyssinia.**— Dr. Adolf Keller of Geneva, Switzerland, writes on this topic as follows (we take the communication from the *Presbyterian*):—

"The executive committee of the European Central Office for Inter-church Aid, meeting at Geneva on August 28, heard a most interesting report from a missionary who has returned from Abyssinia. Two hundred evangelical missionaries were there in missionary work. Sweden, Switzerland, America, Great Britain, the Society for Propagating the Gospel, Germany, and other countries had missionary interests in the country. It is pioneer work. When the war began, many missionaries were called to the capital. Those near the frontier had to leave the country. The evangelical missionaries are pessimistic in looking towards the future. The missionaries represent for the Italian government an element of peace and pacification.

"The natives hate naturally the religion of the conqueror. 'Rather become Mohammedan than Catholic,' can often be heard. It is hoped that the government will allow evangelical missionaries to continue their work to a certain extent. Such a policy would be in harmony with Italian religious legislation, which has granted religious liberty to certain categories of Protestants, especially in the law of the *Culti ammesse* of 1929.

"The plan exists therefore to found a Waldensian colony in Abyssinia whose task would be to form a nucleus for evangelical colonization.

"The missionary who reported to the committee brought good news from his former flock, which is keeping together as before.



"Of course, a great Roman propaganda is now starting. The Abyssinians are of the Coptic or Monophysite religion, as one knows. Their chief, 'the Abuna,' is always elected from one of the Coptic monasteries in the Libyan Desert. The Roman Church goes very far in recognizing not the dogma, but the rites of other churches and has already formed among the Copts a Church united with Rome." A.

Die „deutsche Bekenntnisfront von den Grundsätzen der Reformation gewichen“. Diese Anklage gegen die deutsche Bekenntnisfront hat mit Recht Prof. Dr. G. Koch vor einiger Zeit im „Lutheraner“ („Zur Lage der europäischen Freikirchen“) erhoben. Als man ihn deshalb zur Rede setzte („Ich muß doch mit ganzem Eifer betonen: die Bekenntniskirche in Deutschland kämpft einzig und allein gegen den sich breitmachenden Unglauben, ja die Bekenntnistreuen in Deutschland kämpfen den heldenhafteften, aber auch den herrlichsten Kampf um Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr“), nahm die „Freikirche“ den Kampf für Dr. Koch auf (Werner Schwinge, Pastor der freikirchlich-lutherischen Gemeinde in und um Breslau). Ihre kurzen, aber schlagenden Zitate haben auch Wert für uns hierzulande, eben weil die Bekenntnisfrontler drüben, wie so manche Theologen in der Vereinigten Lutherischen Kirche, die Schriftlehre von der Verbalinspiration so scharf angreifen. Nur einige Belege für die Bekenntnisfrontler drüben. Bekenntnisfrontler Karl Warth: „Die Bibel ist ein menschliches Dokument mitten in der ganzen Religionsgeschichte. Wir dürfen uns nicht wundern, in der Bibel dauernd Texten zu begegnen, die dem Wahrheitsbegriff der Geschichtswissenschaft nicht standzuhalten vermögen, sondern die der Historiker eben nur als ‚Sage‘ oder ‚Legende‘ wird bezeichnen können.“ Für den Bekenntnisfrontler Warth gibt es also in der Bibel Sage und Legende. Für wahr, ein sehr heldenhafter Kampf um Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehr! Bekenntnisfrontler D. Zänker, schlesischer Landesbischof (in einer Ansprache vor der Lutherakademie in Sonderhausen, 1935), redet von dem „Gespenst der Verbalinspiration“. Nach Zänker ist es Aufgabe der Pfarrer, der „Verbalinspirationstheorie“ den „Boden zu entziehen“ und damit einen „Gewinn zu erzielen“. Bekenntnisfrontler Pfarrer Lic. Dr. Ulrich Bünzel schreibt (in seinem Heftchen „Das Alte Testament“): „Das Alte Testament ist ehrl. gegen sich selbst. Es will kein von Gott selbst diktiertes irrtumsloses Buch sein. Da es Menschen geschrieben haben, enthält es selbstverständlich Schreibfehler, auch geschichtliche und naturwissenschaftliche Irrtümer.“ Bekenntnisfrontler D. Bäum, württembergischer Landesbischof, sagte auf einer großen „Evangelischen Woche“ (abgedruckt in der „N. G. L. R.“): „Vom Glauben leben heißt aber für die Theologie nicht mehr wissen wollen, als es Gott uns durch sein Wort kundgetan hat. Eine mit den Mitteln der Logik gewonnene Sicherheit war z. B. die altorthodoxe Verbalinspirationslehre. Gerade an ihrer verhängnisvollen Wirkung, an dem Zerstückungsprozeß, der mit durch sie eingeleitet wurde, sieht man, wie wenig sich die Kirche auf menschliche Sicherungen, seien sie dogmatisch, seien sie rechtlicher Art, verlassen kann.“ Ferner Bekenntnisfrontler Pfarrer Vogel, der in Berlin im Auftrag der Bekenntnenden Kirche Dogmatik lehrte, aber im Rahmen der Bekenntnisfront in Breslau seinen Flug über Genf und Basel nahm und mit Calvin und Warth für die fürchtbare, gotteslästerliche Zornwahl eintrat, derzufolge gewisse Menschen „von Ewig-



Zeit her nach Gottes unumschränktem Machtwillen zum Zorn und Gericht in ewiger Hölle glückselig sind". Ähnlich schreibt auch der Bekenntnisfrontler Hans Engelland (in einem Artikel „Allein aus Gnaden" in Heft 37 der „Bekennenden Kirche"), daß „Gott nach seinem Vorsatz beruft und nicht beruft, nach seinem Vorsatz erwählt und verwirft" usw. Wo Bekenntnisfrontler so schreiben, kann man nicht sagen, daß sie den heldenhaftesten Kampf um Gottes Wort und Luthers Lehre kämpfen. Gewiß, manches schöne Wort stammt jetzt bei diesem Entscheidungskampf aus ihrer Feder; aber wo sie z. B. die wörtliche Eingebung der Heiligen Schrift leugnen oder auch die calvinische Irrlehre von einer ewigen Bornwahl lehren, da machen sie mit den Feinden des lutherischen Bekenntnisses pax und blafen an diesem Punkt Rückzug. Es ist nötig, daß wir uns diese Punkte merken.

J. T. W.

**Geschlossene Kirchen in Mexiko.** Über die gegenwärtige kirchliche Lage in Mexiko berichtet die katholische „Schönere Zukunft": In ganz Mexiko sind derzeit nur 576 Priester zum Gottesdienst und zur Ausübung der Seelsorge gesetzlich zugelassen. Die Abhaltung von Gottesdiensten ist in den 33 Diözesen des Bundesstaates und in dem noch hinzukommenden Apostolischen Vikariat nur in 1,231 Kirchen gestattet. 1,460 Kirchen stehen offen, ohne daß in ihnen Gottesdienst gefeiert werden dürfte. In den Staaten Sonora, Zacatecas, Vera Cruz, Colima, Chiapas, Tabasco, Campeche und Quintana Roo sind überhaupt keine Kirchen geöffnet. In der Bundeshauptstadt selbst stehen 31 Kirchen offen. Die Tatsache, daß seit dem 15. März v. J. 105 bereits geschlossene Kirchen wieder eröffnet wurden, besagt nicht sehr viel, weil die gehässigen Gouverneure der einzelnen Staaten diese entgegenkommende Maßnahme der Bundesregierung in ihrer Wirkung dadurch abzuschwächen, bzw. illusorisch zu machen suchen, daß sie aus eigener Machtvollkommenheit Gottesdienst und Seelsorge viel weiter einschränken, als es die Bundesgesetze tun. (N. C. L. R.)

**Religious Situation in Russia.**—Conrad Hoffman, Jr., reports from German missionary sources the following facts concerning "Religious Martyrdom in Russia": "It is estimated that the number of Orthodox priests killed, imprisoned, or exiled to date by the Soviet authorities exceeds 40,000. Of the 24,000 Evangelical Russian preachers, on the basis of conservative estimates, fully 12,000 are in prison or exile. Of 200 Evangelical ministers only eight are still in office in Soviet Russia. Four of these are Russian Germans, three are Finns, and one an Estonian. Of Roman Catholic priests of German origin ten of the twenty-six who were still officiating in November, 1935, continue to minister in the interests of the churches, whereas of Catholic priests of Polish origin only four of the thirty that officiated in 1934 are still in office."

N. L. C. N. B.

**Denmark's Reformation Quadricentennial.**—In the *National Lutheran Council News Bulletin* Dr. Alfred Th. Joergensen presents a brief, but interesting article on this topic. The real reformer of Denmark was Hans Tausen, born in 1494, a former monk who had studied at the universities of Rostock, Louvain, and finally under Luther at Wittenberg. Returning in 1524, he began his work in Southern Jutland. When he, some time later, protected by the king Frederick I, came to Copen-



hagen, a mighty conflict ensued with the adherents of Roman Catholicism. When the Diet at Augsburg met, the Danish people had a diet of their own in Copenhagen, at which the Lutherans presented a confession in forty-three articles, *Confessio Hafniensis*. When Frederick I died in 1533, a religious and civil war broke out, the Romanists endeavoring to seat a man of their persuasion on the throne. In 1536 Christian III, the son of the former king, who as a youth had heard Luther in Worms, gained the final victory, and the future of Lutheranism was assured. "On October 30, 1536, Lutheranism was officially introduced in Denmark, and Bugenhagen came from Wittenberg to assist the king in organizing the Church." In 1921, of the 3,267,831 inhabitants of Denmark, 3,200,372 were listed as Lutherans. At that time 22,137 Roman Catholics were counted. To observe the quadricentennial, special books have been written, and throughout the country on November 1 festival services in honor of the occasion were to be held. A.

**Africa Coming to the Front.**— Africa, known but a few years ago as the Dark Continent, is now numerically the most Christian continent of the non-Christian world. Protestant Christians number 8,638,514; their children under fourteen years total 2,616,890, and scholars enrolled in Sabbath-schools 2,087,989. The stronghold of Protestant Christianity is the Union of South Africa, where Christians number 4,000,000 and their children 1,500,000. The old-established and highly organized religions of Asia are not here to impede progress, except in North Africa, Northern Nigeria, and areas of West and East Africa, where Islam offers an unyielding opposition to Christian penetration. Africa offers a unique opportunity for the formation of its youth and children and thereby for influencing the future of the whole continent. The magnificence of the task and its great possibilities promote a rivalry not altogether without its uses between Roman Catholic and Protestant missions.— *World Survey Service*.

Die Beteiligung römischer Christen an heidnischen Zeremonien. Die „A. E. A.“ schreibt: „Es ist bekannt, welche Schwierigkeiten der Mission in Japan infolge der herrschenden Staatsreligion, des Shintoismus, immer wieder entgegenstehen. Er dehnt ja seine Verehrung unmittelbar auf das herrschende Kaiserhaus aus und ist so zu einer auch staatspolitisch verpflichtenden Form geworden. Wenngleich die religiöse Seite des Shintoismus hinter seinem Staatscharakter immer stärker zurücktritt, so besteht doch für die Christen die schwerwiegende Frage, inwieweit sie sich an seinen Zeremonien und Riten beteiligen dürfen (als Christen natürlich), oder es entsteht, wenn sie sich nicht daran beteiligen, für sie der Verdacht, sie seien staatspolitisch nicht zuverlässig. Nun hat zu dieser Frage die Congregatio de Propaganda Fide nach eingehender Untersuchung der Sachlage folgende Normen aufgestellt: 1. Die Bischöfe des japanischen Kaiserreichs mögen die Gläubigen davon unterrichten, daß die Behördenstellen und ebenso die Allgemeinansicht der Personen von einer gewissen Bildung den herkömmlichen Zeremonien in den vom Staat verwalteten Jinga einzig die Bedeutung der Vaterlandsliebe und der kindlichen Ehrfurcht vor dem Kaiserhaus und den großen Männern des Landes zuschreiben. Diese Zeremonien haben darum heute einen rein staatlichen Wert, und es ist den Katholiken erlaubt, an ihnen



teilzunehmen und sich gleich den andern Bürgern zu betragen, mit dem Vorbehalt, die eigene Haltung zu erklären, sobald dies durch falsche Anschauung darüber notwendig erscheinen sollte. 2. In gleicher Weise können die Bischöfe den Gläubigen erlauben, gleich allen andern an den Bestattungen und Heiraten sowie an den sonstigen japanischen Riten, die das japanische Gesellschaftsleben vorschreibt, teilzunehmen, wenn diese Zeremonien, obgleich vielleicht heidnischreligiösen Ursprungs, durch die örtliche Gewohnheit und nach allgemeiner Ansicht zu den Höflichkeitspflichten und zu den Erweisungen gegenseitiger Zuneigung geworden sind. 3. In den Eidesformeln über die Riten mögen die Priester überall dort, wo sie gebräuchlich sind, all das in die Praxis umsetzen, was die vorliegenden Anordnungen der Congregatio de Propaganda Fide in dieser Materie festlegen, und sich von jeder Auseinandersetzung fernhalten.“

Wert haben diese Entscheidungen auch für uns, weil sie auf dem Prinzip der Trennung von Staat und Religion aufgebaut sind und so in der Theorie wenigstens ein rechtes fundamentum dividendi zur Anwendung kommen lassen. Praktisch jedoch, wie evangelische Missionsberichte betonen, sind in den shintoistischen Zeremonien Religion und Kirche nicht so getrennt, wie es die römische Congregatio darstellt, und auch hierin zeigt der Papismus seine bekannte „Dehnbarkeit“ auf kirchlich-praktischem Gebiet, die er auch sonst in der Geschichte an den Tag gelegt hat, wo es galt, sich vorläufig zu bücken, um später der Welt sein siegendes Zepter zu zeigen. J. T. M.

**Religious Populations of the World.**— Just how large is the population of the world, and how many of the millions that people the globe are Christians? This question often confronts the pastor as he touches upon the topic in his missionary addresses. From *World Dominion* the *Christian Herald* quotes the following calculations as the “most authentic distribution of the religious populations available,” adding that it is a striking fact to be noticed that the world’s population has passed 2,000,000,000. The calculations of *World Dominion* are as follows: I. Christian Religions: Catholic, 350,000,000, or 17%; Orthodox, 150,000,000, or 7%; Protestant, 230,000,000, or 11%. II. Non-Christian Religions: Confucians, 350,000,000, or 17%; Hindus, 245,000,000, or 12%; Moslems (note their growth in the last two decades), 255,000,000, or 12%; Buddhists, 150,000,000, or 7%; Animists, 140,000,000, or 6%; Shintoists, 25,000,000, or 1%; Jews, 17,000,000 (also here a considerable growth), or 1%; non-classified, 128,000,000, or 6%. Altogether: 2,040,000,000. That means that 65 per cent. of the world’s population are still outside the pale of the Christian Church, which holds only 35 per cent. of the people that live upon earth. J. T. M.