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## Theological Observer. – Kirchllich Zeitgeschichtliches

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**Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches**


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**I. Amerika**

Bejaht die Heilige Schrift, was sie verneint? Die Heilige Schrift lehrt z. B. klar und deutlich, daß nicht alle Menschen selig werden. „Er wird sie voneinander scheiden, gleich als ein Hirte die Schafe von den Böden scheidet. . . . Und sie werden in die ewige Pein gehen; aber die Gerechten in das ewige Leben“, Matth. 25, 32. 46. Nun gibt es aber lutherische Theologen, die so reden, als ob die Heilige Schrift die ewige Verdammnis eines Teils der Menschheit und daneben das schließliche Seligwerden aller Menschen lehre. So stellte der lutherische Bischof von Seeland, Dänemark, D. S. Martensen, die Sache dar. In der Übersetzung seiner Dogmatik von William Utvid lauten seine Worte: „Is this condemnation eternal, or may we venture to entertain the hope that there will be in the end a conversion even of the lost, a universal restoration, ἀποκατάστασις (Acts 3, 21), a redemption of all moral beings, so that God may be, in the fullest and widest sense, ‘all in all’? The Church has never ventured upon this inquiry; she seems to be restrained in her examination, not only by the declaration of Holy Writ, but also by a feeling, if not a conviction, that the Christian consciousness of salvation in all its fulness would lose its deepest reality were the doctrine of eternal condemnation surrendered. It must, however, be allowed that the opposite doctrine of universal restoration has been espoused at various periods in the history of the Church and, moreover, that it, too, finds some foundation and sanction in the language of Holy Scripture; that it has not always sprung merely from levity, as has often been the case, but from a deep conviction of humanity, a conviction growing out of the very essence of Christianity. We have full warrant therefore for saying that, the more deeply Christian thought searches into this question, the more does it discover an antinomy, i. e., an apparent contradiction, between two laws equally divine, which, it seems, cannot find a perfectly conclusive and satisfactory solution in the present stage, the earthly limits, of human knowledge.“ (*Christian Dogmatics*. Translated 1886, p. 475.) Auch D. Paul Althaus glaubt, daß die Schrift bejaht, was sie verneint. In seiner 1933 neu aufgelegten Schrift „Die letzten Dinge“ sagt er S. 175—189: „Drei verschiedene Zukunftsbilder trägt die dogmatische Überlieferung uns zu: den dualistischen Ausgang in ewiges Leben und ewigen Tod, die Vernichtung der Heillosen, die Wiederbringung aller. . . . Das bedeutet zunächst negativ: Die große Frage wird nicht biblisch entschieden. Es ist bezeichnend, daß jede der drei genannten Lehren Gedanken der Heiligen Schrift für sich anführen kann, wenn auch in verschiedenem Maße. . . . Die christliche Eschatologie kann daher auf den Gedanken eines möglichen doppelten Ausgangs der Menschheitsgeschichte nicht verzichten, um der Gewissenserfahrung an Christus willen. . . . Unsere Gedanken können aber auch den Weg gehen, den 1 Petr. 3, 19; 4, 6 und das kirchliche Bekenntnis zum descensus Christi ad inferos zunächst im Blick auf die alttestamentliche Menschheit weisen: Christus wird jenseits der Grenzen unserer Geschichte (wo und wann, ist uns verborgen) allen, die er in der Geschichte mit dem Evangelium nicht erreichte, noch begegnen und

sie zur Scheidung und Entscheidung vor sich stellen. . . . Die Lehre von der Apokatastasis oder Wiederbringung, wenn sie den Anspruch macht, erschöpfende Beschreibung des Endes zu sein, ist und bleibt Wortwitz. . . . Wir flüchten, was die Menschheit anlangt, von dem schweren Ernste der Entscheidungsfrage immer wieder zu der Gewißheit der gnädigen Macht, die alle heimführt" (von uns unterstrichen). „Wir müssen jedes Menschen mit beiden Gedanken gedenken" (Unterstreichung im Original). „Wir müssen beide Gedanken, den des doppelten Ausgangs und den der Apokatastasis, bilden. . . . Fr. Traub erklärt es für unmöglich, die Apokatastasis und den doppelten Ausgang zugleich zu vertreten." Althaus erklärt daraufhin eines teils: „Gewiß kann nur das eine wahr sein", aber anderenteils auch: „Wir dürfen glauben, mit Furcht und Zittern. Dieser Glaube wagt den Ausblick der Apokatastasis, und so ist es gewiß zuletzt ein Gedanke, in dem wir enden." Also: „Die Lehre von der Apokatastasis ist und bleibt Wortwitz." Und trotzdem: „Die gnädige Macht führt alle heim." Auch D. Adolf Köberle scheint zu glauben, daß die Schrift bejaht, was sie verneint. In seiner 1936 erschienenen Schrift „Das Evangelium und die Rätsel der Geschichte" schreibt er S. 70—73: „Verwerfung oder Allversöhnung. Werden alle an der vollendeten Königsherrschaft Gottes einmal Anteil haben dürfen, oder wird ein Teil der Menschheit davon ausgeschlossen sein? . . . Das neutestamentliche Wort redet mit unheimlichem Ernste. Es sagt uns, es kommt einmal ein letzter Tag der großen Rechenschaftsablegung. Dann wird Gott richten ohne Ansehen der Person. Spreu und Weizen werden voneinander geschieden. Die faulen Fische werden weggeworfen. Von den zehn Jungfrauen werden fünf vor verschlossener Tür zum Hochzeitsaal stehen und vergeblich Einlaß begehren. . . . Nun hat es freilich in der Kirche Christi nie an Stimmen gefehlt, die darauf hingewiesen haben, daß sich im Neuen Testament doch auch Worte einer allumfassenden Hoffnung und Ver söhnung finden. . . . Auch Schrifttheologen wie Zingendorf, Bengel und Blumhardt sind dafür eingetreten, daß Gott „alle Menschen beschloßen habe unter den Unglauben, auf daß er sich aller erbarme", Röm. 11, 32. Sie haben darauf hingewiesen: das neutestamentliche Wort *aionios*, das wir gern mit ‚ewig‘ übersetzen und wodurch die Kirche zu der Lehre von der ewigen Verdammnis gekommen sei, dieses Wort bedeute in Wahrheit ja: einen Weltzeitalter-Abschnitt lang während. . . . Wir werden um die Tatsache nicht herumkommen, daß sich im Neuen Testament im Blick auf unsere Frage zwei Linien finden, die wie Parallelen nebeneinander herlaufen und sich für unser Denken und Erkennen erst einmal in der Ewigkeit schneiden werden. Weil wir Menschen mit Gott durch unsern Ungehorsam in Widerspruch geraten sind, darum können wir auch die Wahrheit Gottes nur im Paradox, in der Antinomie, in der Dialektik zweier Worte, zweier Sätze recht fassen und zum Ausdruck bringen. Im Reich der göttlichen Vollendung wird es solche Spannungen zum Zeugnis der Wahrheit nicht mehr bedürfen. In dieser Weltgestalt aber wird eine Theologie, die das Schwergewicht der Sünde ernst nimmt, nicht darum herumkommen, die Wahrheit im Widerspiel zweier Aussagen recht zu bezeugen. . . . Wir dürfen im Blick auf andere Menschen, deren schweres, angefochtenes, versuchungsreiches Leben uns das Herz oft in tothem Erbarmen bewegt, die Gewißheit festhalten, daß Gott größer ist als unser Herz, daß Gott will, daß allen Menschen geholfen werde und sie zur Erkenntnis der Wahrheit kommen.“

Wir können uns nicht in die Denkweise dieser Theologen hineinbeugen. Den Gedanken zu bilden, daß schließlich die Wahrheit, daß nicht alle Menschen selig werden, und die Wahrheit, daß alle Menschen selig werden, einen Gedanken bilden werden, ist den meisten Menschen unmöglich. E.

**The Third Convention of the American Lutheran Conference.** — This body, composed of the American Lutheran Church, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, the Lutheran Free Church, the United Danish Lutheran Church, and the Augustana Synod, met in Columbus, O., in its regular biennial convention on November 11, 1936, and the days following. The *Lutheran Companion*, to which we are indebted for our information on this meeting, points out that the American Lutheran Conference represents one-third of all the Lutherans in the United States and Canada, "a confirmed membership of approximately one million." Dr. T. F. Gullixson of St. Paul, Minn., the President, preached the convention sermon on the theme "Wider Horizons and Higher Loyalties." His report showed "that there are now sixteen standing commissions and committees at work on various projects of mutual endeavor." Among the various papers presented the one by Dr. L. W. Boe, president of St. Olaf College, seems specially noteworthy, because it treated the theme "Problems in Lutheran Coordinations and Possibilities." As a member of the Commission of Lutheran Cooperative Endeavor he stated that, "till the question of pulpit- and altar-fellowship with other Lutheran bodies has been settled, the commission found itself unable to move in the direction of practical cooperation with them. He urged that the American Lutheran Conference be given authority to act in matters of fellowship on behalf of the constituent synods and that the commission he represented be given an enlarged mandate to permit it to initiate fellowship negotiations with other Lutheran bodies." To understand this matter, one must bear in mind that, for instance, the representatives of the Missouri Synod are holding meetings not with representatives of the American Lutheran Conference, but with representatives of merely a part of the American Lutheran Conference, namely, the American Lutheran Church. We suppose that the authority which Dr. Boe contended for would have to be given by the constituent bodies of the American Lutheran Conference.

On social work Rev. S. C. Michelfelder of Toledo, O., chairman of the Commission on Inner Missions, reported that "the Government is taking over the major part of the social work in the nation." He declared "that among church-owned Inner Mission institutions 29 per cent. of the hospitals are Lutheran, 24 per cent. of the hospices, 24 per cent. of the settlement houses, 80 per cent. of the day-nurseries, and 90 per cent. of the homes for the aged." "The effort to rally the youth of the Conference will reach a culmination next summer, Dr. N. M. Ylvisaker said, when the First National Youth Convention of the American Lutheran Conference will be held in Minneapolis, following conventions of the five constituent groups." Dr. Ylvisaker is a member of the Commission on Young People's Work. Dr. Gullixson was reelected President. Concerning pensions for pastors, it was decided "to recommend to the Congress of the United States to repeal the clause in the Social Security

Act which excludes persons engaged in religious, benevolent, or educational work from the provisions of that measure. This would mean that ministers and other servants of the Church would become eligible to Government old-age pensions if the Congress should act favorably on the recommendation. It would not affect the workings of the Church Ministerial Pension Funds, however, but would supplement these." We quote a few more paragraphs of special interest:—

"Following a graphic presentation of Canadian affairs by Dr. J. R. Lavik, in which it was made clear that the church-leaders in Canada are unanimous in the opinion that an independent Lutheran Church should be established in Canada, the Conference voted to request the Commission on Canadian Affairs to 'seriously study the possibility of a joint theological seminary' in Canada. It was felt that the establishment of such an institution, training a native-born clergy, was essential for the future of the Church in that country. The writer of this article [Dr. E. E. Ryden], reporting for the Committee on a Common Lutheran Liturgy, told the convention of the preliminary work of that group. He expressed the opinion that one of the primary needs of the Lutheran Church in America is a common form of worship and voiced the hope that in the ultimate liturgy evolved in this country something of the spirit of the liturgies of the churches of Northern Europe may be preserved."

The report does not say whether there was a discussion, which is so urgently needed, of the question how to bring about greater confessional loyalty in some of the constituent synods. A.

Meeting of the Presbyterian Church of America.—Now there are available more complete reports on the second meeting of the General Assembly of the newly founded Presbyterian Church of America, whose strong leader was the well-known Dr. Machen. The *Presbyterian* of November 19, 1936, writes about this meeting: "Philadelphia, already full of Presbyterian history, was the meeting-place for the Second General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of America last week. President J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., D. D., of Wheaton College was elected moderator. Dr. Buswell is a premillenarian. The Westminster Confession of Faith was accepted as it was prior to 1903. The 1903 revision was repudiated except in two particulars, viz., the statement naming the Pope as Antichrist and the sentence naming it a sin to refuse lawful oaths, both deleted in the revision. The 1903 revision in these two particulars was approved and these passages left out of the Confession of Faith as adopted. The 1903 revision of the confession was seriously opposed at the time of its adoption. We believe the late Prof. Benjamin B. Warfield, D. D., opposed it, among many others. When passed, however, little or nothing has since been said with reference to it until recently."

The *Christian Century* draws attention to the fact, implied in the foregoing, that in its confessional declaration the Presbyterian Church of America returns to unmitigated Calvinism and that it rejects the declaratory statement which was added to the Westminster Confession by the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1903,

in which declaratory statement "the love of God to all mankind and His gift of His Son to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world and His readiness to bestow His saving grace on all who seek it" are set forth. While we admire the noble courage of the founders of the Presbyterian Church of America and their zeal for the truth as they see it, we deplore that their study of the Scriptures has not led them to see that consistent Calvinism is incompatible with the sweetest truths of God's holy revelation. A.

**The Preaching Mission Criticized by a Modernist.**—The editor of the *Christian Century* undertakes to give an appraisal of the Preaching Mission in a long editorial published December 2, 1936. He finds some things to commend, for instance, that "the preachers represented the top level of pulpit power in America" and that there was "a participation of Lutheran and Episcopalian clergymen in the mission." He waxes quite eloquent and says: "Taking the preaching by and large, it can be said that our generation has not experienced a more powerful presentation of the Gospel in its many aspects. There was no discrimination against any vital and devout group or school of thought. Liberals and Conservatives, social gospelers and personal gospelers, academic scholars and practical workers, all seemed united in a common faith and a common purpose." But he finds two features which he must criticize. For one thing, "the technique and doctrinal presupposition of the old revivalism were too much in evidence." He has in mind that the "team," particularly Dr. Stanley Jones, employed the "well-worn conversion-here-and-now devices." The critic quite well says: "These devices represent an attempt to produce the new birth in a vacuum." The second criticism is one which everybody who knows the *Christian Century* might expect to be voiced by it. The critic is disappointed because the missionaries did not proclaim the necessity of all Christians to unite. "Had Stanley Jones brought to the front as a major element of his message the paragraph dealing with church unity in one of his addresses,—had he, for example, delivered as an entire address the powerful call 'Christians of America, unite!' which was published a year ago in the *Christian Century*,—nobody would now be skeptical as to the enduring results of the mission." That here we have merely another instance of a blind person trying to lead another blind one should be evident to all who read the Scriptures with an open mind. The critic, however, is not altogether pessimistic. Since the Federal Council engaged in this nationwide endeavor, he thinks it is not unreasonable to hope that from a Home Mission enterprise the Federal Council will proceed to Foreign Mission enterprise and that a united effort in a preaching mission may be the prelude to united efforts in the administration of missions at home and abroad. Just as if an outward cooperation of Christians would solve our problems! A.

**Roman Catholic Laymen Study Thomas Aquinas.**—Says the *Commonweal* of December 18, 1936: "Because we have been lost in things rather than sought their fundamental relationships, we find ourselves in an intellectual, moral, economic, and social traffic jam today. As a consequence Behn is right when he says: 'A time which like ours must deal in sober earnest with so many things is passionately interested in the

problems of philosophy. Many people I know are looking for guidance.' We know of no better guide than St. Thomas Aquinas. This conviction gave birth two years ago to the Catholic Thought Association. A varied group of the laity sought the help of St. Thomas's religious brothers, the Friars Preachers, to reinterpret for them the teachings of St. Thomas in the light of modern needs. The immediate result has been the development of a number of Thomistic centers throughout the country where courses are given in and on the great work of Aquinas. The Catholic Thought Association aims to make his teachings more widely and deeply known and applied."

Thomas Aquinas, also called Dr. Angelicus, was born about 1225. His chief literary work is his *Summa Theologiae*. As late as 1879 Leo XIII, in an encyclical, recommended the study of Thomas Aquinas. It is noteworthy that even today groups of laymen are formed for this very purpose.

J. H. C. F.

**Distortion of History.**—Under this title *Christianity Today* (January, 1937) quotes *The Life of Faith*, a London publication, which calls attention to the tendencies in modern authors to make out that the Reformation was a *European disaster*. It cites as one illustration the recent book *Characters of the Reformation* by Hilaire Belloc, in which the assertion is made: "Europe with all its culture is now seriously imperiled and stands no small chance of being destroyed by its own internal disruptions; and all this is ultimately the fruit of the great religious revolution which began four hundred years ago." The periodical then urges all Protestants to lose no opportunity of reaffirming their unflinching belief that in the Reformation we have one of those turning-points in history which have been responsible for the enlightenment and enrichment of the whole world. The appeal is indeed important. Especially the religious values of the Reformation need reemphasis today, when even Protestant churches are prone to treat the Biblical doctrines of Luther and his fellow-reformers with contempt. Hilaire Belloc is right in calling the Reformation a "religious revolution." As such only it counts for us so far as we are Christians. The social, educational, economic, political, and other advantages that came to the world through Luther's work were but by-products, which must never receive pre-eminent emphasis, no matter how important they may seem. J. T. M.

**Meeting of A. L. C. and Mo. Synod Representatives.**—The Intersynodical Committee, consisting of representatives of the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church, held its third meeting in Chicago, January 4 and 5. All members were present except Dr. C. C. Hein, who was represented by the First Vice-President of the American Lutheran Church, Dr. Em. Poppen. The discussion of a paper on Unionism, submitted by Pastor F. H. Brunn of Rockford, Ill., at the last meeting, was completed. But the committee resolved to continue its study of church-fellowship and cooperation at its next meeting. The consideration of the Minneapolis Theses was completed, and the committee continued its doctrinal discussions on the basis of the Intersynodical (Chicago) Theses of 1928 and the *Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod*, published in 1932. Another meeting will be held in April of this year.

Finden sich Kenotiker in der Lutherischen Kirche Amerikas? Diese Frage drängt sich uns ganz unwillkürlich auf, wenn wir in einer Besprechung von Lenski's *Gospel Selections of the Ancient Church* im „Kirchenblatt“ vom 5. Dezember 1936 lesen: „Nicht jeder Prediger, der in seiner Dogmatik zu Hause ist, wird Lenski in allem beipflichten. Wenn der Verfasser von Jesu im Stande seiner Niedrigkeit redet als von dem, der nicht sündigen konnte, der allwissend und allmächtig war, so geht Schreiber dieses nicht mit, weil sich das nicht verträgt mit seinem — aus der Schrift [?] geschöpften — Begriff des Wesens der Entäußerung Jesu.“ Der Rezensent ist N. C. Hüter. Wir fragen noch einmal: Will sich eine falsche Kenosis in die Lutherische Kirche Amerikas einschleichen? Oder will man festhalten an dem klaren Wort Gottes von der Sündlosigkeit Jesu und an der Tatsache, daß Jesus auch im Stande der Erniedrigung der Sohn Gottes im Vollbesitz der seiner menschlichen Natur mitgeteilten göttlichen Eigenschaften war, daß er sich aber des fortwährenden Gebrauchs dieser Eigenschaften enthielt? Vgl. hierzu diese Zeitschrift, Band II, 244 ff.; VI, 413 ff. S.

**Biennial Meeting of the Federal Council of Churches.**—It was in Asbury Park, N. J., that the Federal Council of Churches held its biennial meeting December 9—11, 1936. We are told that twenty-three denominations were represented. The meeting brought to a close the administration of Dr. Ivan Lee Holt of St. Louis, who had served as president during the last two years. His successor is Dr. Edgar De Witt Jones of Central Woodward Christian Church, Detroit. What Dr. Holt stressed in his farewell address was the proposition which unionists have always contended for, that Protestants must become more united. That such a union must not be effected at the expense of doctrine he, of course, did not bring out. At the meeting there was a good deal of talk of “a common faith, a common conscience, and a united Church.” But from the reports available it does not appear that the representatives assembled succeeded in escaping the nebulousness which, as a rule, surrounds the use of these terms. Congratulations were exchanged on what was effected by the National Preaching Mission, which had lasted three months and had been concluded the day before the Federal Council met. Fifteen of the leaders in this mission came to the meeting and reported in person on what had been achieved. The Committee on Evangelism which had arranged the National Preaching Mission was instructed “to make plans for the conservation of results already achieved and for the extension of the program both to cities not visited this year and to areas of American life which the mission did not succeed in touching adequately, notably industry and education.” On the question of peace the Council, as might be expected, made a strong statement, and in order not to expose itself to the criticism that by maintaining chaplains in the Army and Navy it was contradicting its own position in favor of peace, it was resolved that a special commission be created to take counsel with religious leaders, be they Protestant, Catholic, or Jewish, and with the chaplains in the service and other persons involved, in order “to prepare a plan embodying such a modification of the status of the Army and Navy chaplains as will make clear that they are a part of the regular ministry of the churches rather than of the armed services of the nation.” A.



Kirchliche Gemeinschaft setzt Einigkeit in allen Stücken der Lehre und Praxis voraus. In „Lehre und Wehre“ 1904, S. 371, erschien ein Item mit dieser Überschrift, das noch immer sehr zeitgemäß ist. Die Aufforderung, doch ja diese Aussprache in „Lehre und Wehre“ nachzulesen, würde kaum ihren Zweck erreichen, schon deswegen nicht, weil viele Leser unserer Zeitschrift die alten Jahrgänge von „Lehre und Wehre“ nicht besitzen. Wir dürfen uns daher die Mühe nicht verbrießen lassen, jenes Item hier zum Ausdruck zu bringen. Es lautet:

Kirchliche Gemeinschaft setzt Einigkeit in allen Stücken der Lehre und Praxis voraus. Das betont mit Recht P. Offermann im „Lutherischen Kirchenblatt“ von Reading. Er schreibt: „Der ‚Lutherische Bionsbote‘, ein in der Generalsynode herausgegebenes Blatt, bringt in seiner Nummer vom 2. Juni einen letzten Artikel über die intersynodale Konferenz. Veranlassung hierzu hat ihm ein Satz gegeben, der in einem meiner Artikel über die Pittsburgher Konferenz zu lesen stand und der wörtlich so lautete: ‚Kirchliche Gemeinschaft zwischen einzelnen Synoden ist [aber] wesentlich Bekenntnisgemeinschaft; sie setzt voraus, daß die betreffenden Synoden in allen Stücken der Lehre und Praxis völlig miteinander übereinstimmen und sich daher als bekennnistreue Lutheraner gegenseitig anerkennen können.‘ Dem ‚Bionsboten‘ ist namentlich der zweite Teil dieses Satzes ein Dorn im Auge. Er gibt sich nämlich alle Mühe zu betreiben, daß die Forderung einer völligen Übereinstimmung in Lehre und Praxis als Vorbedingung kirchlicher Gemeinschaft ein Ainding sei, ein Verlangen, dessen Absurdität jedem billig denkenden Menschen bei genauer Prüfung von selbst einleuchten müsse. Die von ihm ins Feld geführten Gründe lassen sich etwa in folgende Sätze fassen: 1. Was man zur Bedingung kirchlicher Gemeinschaft machen will, war und ist in Wirklichkeit ihr größtes Hindernis. 2. Die Forderung einer völligen Übereinstimmung in Lehre und Praxis wird mit Ausnahme Missouris von keiner lutherischen Synode vertreten und ist erst kürzlich wieder von Iowa entschieden zurückgewiesen worden. 3. ‚Wie will man eine solche Forderung auch schriftlich [sic] begründen?‘ 4. Wo will man das Ende finden, wenn man einmal anfängt, von allen Stücken der Lehre zu reden? 5. Übereinstimmung in der Praxis ist vollends ganz unmöglich. 6. Wichtige Fragen der kirchlichen Praxis sind allerdings Stanzelgemeinschaft mit Andersgläubigen und die Stellung zu den Logen. 7. Aber selbst hinsichtlich dieser Fragen bestimmte Vorschriften zu machen, widerstreitet der christlichen Freiheit, ist Synodalhierarchie, Gewissens knechtschaft und päpstliche Anmaßung. 8. Schlußermahnung: ‚Werdet nicht der Menschen Knechte!‘ Es ist nicht meine Absicht, diese Punkte im einzelnen zu widerlegen. Ich habe sie lediglich zitiert, um an einem Beispiel zu zeigen, wie selbst ‚konservative‘ Männer in der Generalsynode über das Bekenntnis als Grundlage aller wahren Einigkeit heute noch denken und schreiben. Will der ‚Bionsbote‘ konsequent sein, so muß er ja aus jenen Sätzen den einfachen Schluß ziehen, daß zur kirchlichen Gemeinschaft überhaupt keine Übereinstimmung in Lehre und Praxis nötig ist, daß jede Verpflichtung auf das Bekenntnis, welcher Art sie sei, die christliche Freiheit beeinträchtigt und daß deshalb eine religiöse Gemeinschaft, in welcher jeder glaubt, lehrt und handelt, wie es ihm gefällt, das höchste Ideal der christlichen Kirche darstellt. Der ‚Bionsbote‘ scheut sich natürlich, diese Konsequenzen zu ziehen. Aber seine ganze Beweisführung läßt sich

doch nur vom Standpunkte eines verschwommenen Unionismus verstehen, der prinzipiell für die Gleichberechtigung aller Richtungen eintritt und der alle Glaubenswahrheiten auflöst in subjektive Meinungen. Dies ist auch in der Tat der Standpunkt der Generalsynode. Wohl schreibt der „Bionsbote“: „Als Lutheraner nehmen wir ja alle die Augsburgische Konfession als unser Hauptbekenntnis an.“ Aber wie wenig ist doch eigentlich damit gesagt! Der lutherische Charakter einer Synode wird durch die bloße Annahme der Augsburgischen Konfession noch keineswegs verbürgt, wenn nicht dafür gesorgt ist, daß ihre Glieder auch wirklich danach lehren und handeln. Nun wird jeder, der die Zustände in der Generalsynode einigermaßen kennt, mit bezuggen, daß man sich dort im großen und ganzen herzlich wenig darum kümmert, was die einzelnen Pastoren lehren und welche Praxis sie befolgen. Gewiß, man unterschreibt die Augsburgische Konfession (warum sollte man auch nicht?), man läßt sie gelten — als ein Aushängeschild; aber damit hat es auch sein Bewenden. Es bleibt dem Belieben jedes einzelnen überlassen, wieviel oder wie wenig er schließlich für seine Person von ihr annehmen will. Die Synode hat nichts dagegen, wenn ihre Glieder bekennnistreue Lutheraner sein wollen. Sie hat aber auch nichts dagegen, wenn ihre Pastoren grundstürzende Irrlehren verbreiten, mit gottlosen, unchristlichen Gesellschaften sich verbinden und allerlei Sektenprediger auf ihre Kanzeln lassen. So herrscht allerdings in der Generalsynode völlige Freiheit, aber es ist nicht die Freiheit in der Wahrheit. Der Jammer heutzutage ist, daß man in unserer Kirche überall den Pinsel der Schönmalerei führt, daß man sich selbst und andere durch schöne Reden täuscht, während man gegen offensbare Schäden und Gebrechen in der eigenen Mitte beharrlich die Augen zuschließt. Der „Bionsbote“ könnte seiner Synode einen wirklichen Dienst leisten, wenn er gegen jeden Unfug im eigenen Lager, gegen jede Religionsmengerei, gegen alle ungesunde Lehre und unlutherische Praxis ein kräftiges, mannhaftes Zeugnis ablegen wollte.“ — So weit das Item in „Lehre und Wehre“.

Was P. Offermann 1904 dem indifferentistischen „Bionsboten“ und der indifferentistischen Generalsynode vorhielt, müssen wir heute den Indifferentisten in der Vereinigten Lutherischen Kirche und ihren Gesinnungsgeossen in andern Synoden vorhalten. Kümmert sich die Vereinigte Lutherische Kirche darum, wenn Lehrer ihrer Gemeinschaft grundstürzende Irrlehren verbreiten und Pastoren allerlei Sektenprediger auf ihre Kanzeln lassen? Sie hält die einzelnen Synoden ihres Verbandes dafür verantwortlich. Aber kümmert sie sich darum, wenn die einzelnen Synoden sich nicht um solche Zustände kümmern? E.

**Dr. Machen Deceased.**— It was with profound sorrow that we received the news of the demise of Prof. J. Gresham Machen on January 1. Since he was still in the zenith of his powers, being only fifty-five years old at the time of his death and his services as a champion of the authority of the Bible against the attacks of modern Liberalism were apparently still sorely needed, we here face one of the questions pertaining to the great God's guidance of human affairs which we cannot answer. Professor Machen had endeared himself to conservative Christians by his courageous and bold defense of the Holy Scriptures and by his willingness to suffer ignominy and financial loss rather than prove unfaithful to what he believed to be the truth. The account of the war

he waged against the tendency represented by the infamous Auburn Affirmation and against false Liberalism in general, marked by his withdrawal from Princeton and founding of Westminster Seminary and culminating in the establishment of an Independent Board of Missions and of a new church-body, the Presbyterian Church of America, forms a stirring chapter in recent church history. Even his opponents cannot help admiring his integrity, firmness, fortitude, and eminent scholarship. While he was a Calvinist and pulpit- and altar-fellowship with him was out of the question for us, we benefited by his splendid writings, especially his books entitled *Christianity and Liberalism*, *The Origin of Paul's Religion*, and *The Virgin Birth*.

A few sentences from an editorial in the *Presbyterian* of January 7, a paper edited by friends of Dr. Machen, who, however, did not join him in setting up a new church-body, will be appreciated: "Dr. Machen was a vigorous personality, a great scholar, yet a very humble and warm-hearted Christian. . . . He was a master of all the foremost writings of the destructive critics who did so much to undermine Christian faith, and he taught the riches of the Word with understanding as well as personal belief. He saw the poverty of the general position which was so popular a few years ago, but which has now left its votaries discomfited and bereft in the time of great need. He was a man of Reformation proportions. The Lord's hand may now appear more plainly with the servant called home, either perpetuating the denomination he started with greater power or directing these noble men back to our own Church."

A.

**Brief Items.**—That in Spain the atrocities violating the law of religious freedom are not by any means confined to the so-called Loyalists, or Government people and troops, can be gathered from a report parts of which were printed in the *Lutheran Companion*. Of eight paragraphs we quote two: "At Ibaheerando, in the Caceres Province, scores of Protestants have fallen before rebel firing squads. The most well-known Protestant of Caceres, Don Luis Cabrere, was one of the first to die." "At Santa Amalia many Protestants were singled out by Fascist officers and shot down by Riff troops when they took the village." The *Lutheran Companion* adds: "Early this year the Madrid government passed the first freedom-of-worship law in Spanish history. By this enactment all creeds and denominations in Spain were granted religious freedom. Bitter opposition from the Roman Catholic Church, which has kept an iron grip on the country through the centuries, developed immediately, and the Fascists promised to wipe the new law from the Spanish Constitution should they succeed in seizing power. Soon afterwards the revolution was launched by them. It is not difficult, therefore, to discern the sinister shadow of the Roman Catholic Church behind the present bloody effort to destroy democracy in Spain.—When the present king of England was still merely the Duke of York, he was elected Grand Master Mason of the Grand Lodge of Scotland. On November 30, 1936, the installation occurred. Royalty is not a badge of safety against all sorts of foolishness.—In the conflict in the Methodist Church between the Liberal wing of the clergy preaching the social gospel and the Conservative wing

of the laymen opposing such preaching, the laymen are winning out according to latest information. One of the latter said: "The radicals in the boards are slowly being eliminated. The bishops of the Church see our point of view and are working with us. . . . Our friends are being seated in the various committees and boards as vacancies occur. We are more than satisfied with the matter as it is today." Is this probably one of the numerous cases where the bread-and-butter argument proves more potent than intellectual considerations?—That the various setbacks which Roman Catholicism has suffered recently have not as yet made it an exemplar of modesty can be seen from the following words of one of its champions, Patrick F. Scanlan, managing editor of the *Brooklyn Tablet*, whom the *Living Church* quotes as saying: "The Catholic Church is the mother of modern democracy. Communism is the antithesis of democracy because it destroys the natural rights of man. Democracy stands for liberty, particularly religious liberty. Our Church has gained and flourished where democracy rules. In the United States we enjoy democracy; our system has no more ardent champion of it than the Catholic Church." How these claims can be made by a representative of the Church which staged some of the bloodiest persecutions known in history and which established the terrible inquisition, is beyond us.—The Moody Centenary is attracting a good deal of attention. The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago is sponsoring ambitious plans looking to the observance of this centenary throughout 1937. While Moody's theology was not altogether Scriptural, the force and simplicity with which he preached the great tidings of redemption have always been justly admired.—Has Karl Barth undergone a radical change? Wilhelm Pauck, now professor of Church History at Chicago Theological Seminary and a man who formerly wrote about Barth in enthusiastic terms, has reached the conclusion, as we see from a review of his in the *Christian Century*, that "Barth is no longer a dialectical theologian." He charges him with having become "an undialectical supernaturalist and Biblicist, who defends the principle of the divine sovereignty to such a degree that the possibility of defining religion as a God-man relationship is entirely excluded." This probably means that Barth has made some further progress on the road toward conservative views in theology. It is a hard blow, however, when his former admirer says that Barth now is "utterly uninteresting."—We have been told repeatedly that Catholicism is putting forth strong efforts to conquer the Scandinavian countries. What they have accomplished up to date is thus summarized in an article printed in the *N. L. C. Bulletin*: "In Iceland there are 8 priests for four to five hundred members, in Norway 34 priests for 2,750 Catholics, in Sweden 23 priests for 4,300 Catholics, in Finland 8 priests for 2,000 Catholics, and in Denmark 85 priests for 25,000 members." The authority drawn on by the *Bulletin* maintains that the figures for the members are far too high.—It is reported that the Auburn Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) of Auburn, N. Y., will affiliate with the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School (Baptist) at Rochester, N. Y., and that Auburn intends to move to the Colgate-Rochester campus and house itself in a building which is to be erected there. Both institutions belong to the Liberal wing. Since with them doctrine does not matter



as others do 'Britannia,' 'La France,' and the 'Fatherland' and that they have not taught that the name of India was the name of God. Anyhow, it is a sign of the times that India also is going the way of all the world in its deification of the nation."—The press reports that the Roman Catholic bishop of Fort Wayne, Dr. John Francis Noll, is the chairman of a national committee consisting of Catholics and Protestants which plans to erect a large statue of Christ in Washington, D. C. The intention is to render, by the erection of this statue, a strong testimony of rejection of Communism. It is hoped that citizens of the United States as well as the whole world will see here a declaration that the United States wishes to abide by the principles of Christianity.—The religious situation in Mexico seems to have improved. The Mexican correspondent of the *Christian Century* reports: "The national government continues to show a more moderate policy with regard to the Church. Both in Mexico City and in Guadalajara the churches and priests seem to enjoy more liberty in the matter of services than at any other time in the past five years. Laws limiting such services still exist, but they are not enforced. Masses are well attended, and church-bells are allowed to announce them. . . . I think it would be safe to guess that not more than three or four states are now prohibiting or seriously limiting church services."—The Pope, as the religious press states, is wooing Protestants to join him in a war on Communism. Whatever views a person may entertain as to the greatness of the menace which Communism just now represents, it seems that everybody should scrutinize well the person and the motives of the wooer before entering upon an alliance.—The total number of foreign missionaries from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden has now reached the 1,500 mark, with 8,200 native missionaries assisting. The total number of Christians on their foreign fields is 311,000, and the annual budget is ten million crowns. (*News Bulletin of N. L. C.*)—The Society of the Godless in Russia is now making a talkie in ten languages which aims to present to Russian millions a dialog between a Communist laborer and Christ, Jehovah, Mohammed, and Buddha. The title of the film is "Why I Am Godless." The International Association of Atheists met this fall at Prague in convention, having representatives from twelve lands. They have decided to have an international button or symbol of infidelity. On this symbol these words are to be inscribed: "Religion is an opiate to the people." Literally: "Religion is opium to the people." The Society of the Godless in France is now baptizing its new members and giving them "red" baptismal certificates. The certificate, issued also and especially to infants, has a picture on it of an athlete who is about to break to pieces a cross. The sponsors promise to protect the child against the indoctrination of the Church and to be an example to the child of hostility to the Church. These matters are reported in the *News Bulletin of the N. L. C.* What words can express one's indignation and sadness when reading of such blasphemous activities!—Writing on Christian education in New Zealand, a gentleman from that country who procured abundant information on the way in which Christian education is carried on in the various countries of the world says: "The most virile churches in the United States of America are the Lutheran and the Roman Catholic, due, it is

stated, to the fact that these churches insist upon their children's being educated in their own church day-schools. It is the tradition of Protestantism to establish church day-schools, using the Bible as a textbook. In the United States of America mass education in the State schools has been condemned." Speaking of the situation in England, he says: "Almost half the children in England are educated in church day-schools, and in recent years nearly half the schools in England have been closed, whereas in the United States of America, with a mainly secular and materialistic education system, new schools are being opened owing to the increase in juvenile crime." A.

## II. Ausland

Die Lage in Deutschland. D. Martin Willkomm gibt in einem Artikel der „Ev.-Luth. Freikirche“ vom 13. September 1936 wertvollen Aufschluß über Vorgänge im protestantischen Lager Deutschlands. Er schreibt: „Innerhalb der sogenannten ‚Bekennenden Kirche‘ ist ein heftiger öffentlicher Kampf ausgebrochen. Es bekämpfen sich mit scharfen Waffen die ‚Dahlemer Richtung‘, als deren Wortführer Hans Rasmussen auf dem Plan tritt, und die ‚Lutheraner‘, für die Hermann Sasse in Erlangen vom Leder zieht. Der Kampfplatz ist die ‚Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung‘ des D. Raible in Leipzig. In ihren Spalten kommen beide Kämpfer ausführlich zu Worte, ohne daß der Herausgeber klar zu erkennen gibt, auf welcher Seite er steht. Rasmussen hat ‚wider die Lutheraner‘ geschrieben, Sasse antwortet in einem überaus scharfen Artikel ‚wider das Schwärmertum.‘“ Indem Sasse zitiert wird, wird gezeigt, daß er an den Gegnern tadelt, daß sie die Beschlüsse ihrer Synoden als Gottes Wort ansehen und daß sie Synkretismus treiben. Wie sehr er mit dem letzteren Stück recht hat, wird einem sofort klar, wenn man bedenkt, daß diese Gegner aus Reformierten, Uniten und Lutheranern bestehen. Allerdings führt dann der Artikel in der „Freikirche“ aus, daß der Vorwurf des Synkretismus Sasse selber trifft, weil er sich nicht von falschen Lehren in eigenen Lager löst. D. Willkomm schließt mit den Worten: „Der notwendige Kampf gegen Unionismus und Entfremdung kann erfolgreich und mit gutem Gewissen nur geführt werden von der festen Grundlage des irrumslosen, vom Heiligen Geist eingegebenen Wortes der Schrift aus, und — wenn man im Glauben sich nicht scheut, auch die praktischen Folgerungen zu ziehen, auch auf die Gefahr hin, daß, wie einst bei Gideon, nur ein kleines Häuflein sich sammelt um die Lösung ‚Sie Schwert des Herrn und Gideon!‘ (Richt. 7, 20.)“ A.

Bible-Reading in Some New Zealand Schools.—The following is a letter which appeared in the *Presbyterian* of October 15 and is interesting enough to be given space in this magazine:—

“Editor, the *Presbyterian*: Some New Zealand education boards, in order to provide for Bible-reading in the schools (of a non-compulsory character), are assembling the children at nine o'clock, but start the legal secular work at ten minutes past nine. This allows any teacher who desires to do so to open his class or classes at 9 A. M. with the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, the singing of a hymn, and the reading of a portion of the Bible to the scholars (without sectarian comment). Parents of scholars who do not desire their children to take part in this

Bible-reading send their children to the ten-minutes-past-nine opening. A hymn is written on the blackboard, and, according to a statement made by the Rev. E. O. Blamires, secretary of the New Zealand Bible-reading in Schools League (No. 32 Crawford Road E. 3, Wellington, N. Z.), this voluntary system is working splendidly. No doubt the Ten Commandments are taught in some of the schools.

"I would suggest that, if this system is tried in the United States, the Australian system for Jewish and Roman Catholic scholars should be followed, viz., the Jewish children assemble in a separate room and receive instruction in the Old Testament from the Rabbi; the Roman Catholic children, in a separate room, receive religious instruction from their priest.

"The Minister of Public Instruction in Sydney, Australia, can furnish full details.

"There is a feeling that the Roman Catholics should get a share of the State school tax in order to support their own schools.

"I hope you will excuse this liberty; but I have visited your country, and I know that about two-thirds of the children in the national schools of America do not receive Bible instruction.

"The present New Zealand government is being approached with a request for a national referendum on Bible in schools in order to legalize it and have the Bible-reading in the regular school-hours, with a conscience clause for teachers and parents. Samuel Pearson." A.

„Wacht und Weide.“ Vor uns liegt das vierte Heft des ersten Jahrgangs dieser neuen theologischen Zeitschrift unserer Brüder in Brasilien, die übrigens, um dies gleich hier zu betonen, nach dem jetzigen Kurs nur etwa 60 Cents kostet, wie uns von Porto Alegre aus mitgeteilt worden ist. Um so mehr raten wir Freunden der Mission in Südamerika in den Vereinigten Staaten, dieses interessante Blatt zu bestellen und auf diese Weise das Unternehmen zu fördern. Der erste Artikel, von P. Aug. Gedrat, befaßt sich mit der Lehre von der Kirche, besonders heutigen deutschländischen Meinungen gegenüber. Ferner finden wir da Artikel über die „Betbrüder oder Gemeinschaftsleute“ von P. L. Wenzel; über „Die liturgischen Farben“ von Dr. Jahn; „Aus einem Kettenbrief“ von P. G. Wilde; sodann Predigtentwürfe, eine Leichenpredigt in portugiesischer Sprache von P. R. Haffe und „Nachrichten und Bemerkungen“, auch eine „Festordnung für die Einweihung einer neuen Kirche“. Hier lesen wir auch, daß der Satz der Predigt in portugiesischer Sprache zurückgestellt werden soll, weil man daran denkt, später eine Predigtsammlung in der Landessprache herauszugeben, ein fürwahr ebenso wichtiges wie fortschrittliches Werk. Gott gebe den Brüdern in Südamerika Mut und Freudigkeit zur weiteren gesegneten Arbeit in ihrem schweren, aber doch herrlichen Evangeliumsdienst! J. L. W.