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Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

I. Amerika

Conferences between the Representatives of the U. L. C. A. and the A. L. C. — In the *Minutes of the Tenth Biennial Convention of the United Lutheran Church in America*, which was held in Columbus, O., October 14—21, we find a report of the Special Commission on Relationships to American Lutheran Church-bodies. While no statement could be made on a meeting with representatives of the Missouri Synod, since up to that time none had been held, the discussions with representatives of the A. L. C. are reported on at some length. On account of the importance of this section of the report we reprint it here.

"The two meetings with the commission of the American Lutheran Church were marked by free and frank discussion of the matters that seem, at the present time, to be obstacles to closer relationships.

"An initial difficulty arose from the fact that the commissions of the two bodies were working under different instructions. Your Commission was definitely charged to work for the organic union of the Lutheran church-bodies in America on the basis of the Lutheran Confessions, while the commission of the American Lutheran Church was instructed only to seek the establishment of pulpit- and altar-fellowship between the two bodies, a matter which presents no problem at all to the United Lutheran Church, inasmuch as it already grants full and free pulpit- and altar-fellowship to the members of the American Lutheran Church.

"This difference in objectives did not, however, prevent the discussion of differences, as it is self-evident that things which would prevent pulpit- and altar-fellowship would also prevent organic union. Nevertheless, your Commission has endeavored constantly to make it clear that organic union is the objective which the United Lutheran Church desires to obtain.

"The commissioners of the American Lutheran Church expressed it as their belief that there were just three matters holding the two church-bodies apart. These were the different attitudes of the two bodies toward secret societies, the difference in practise concerning pulpit- and altar-fellowship with non-Lutherans, and a difference of view concerning the Scriptures. No fault was found with the official utterances of the United Lutheran Church on any of these subjects. The doctrinal basis of our Church and the Washington Declaration of 1920 were declared to be satisfactory, but it was objected that the practise of the United Lutheran Church was not in harmony with these official statements, and new statements on these three points were asked.

"The statements on the first two points, unanimously adopted by the two commissions are as follows:—

"1. That all persons affiliated with any of the societies or organizations designated in the Washington Declaration of the U. L. C. A. as 'organizations injurious to the Christian faith' should sever their connections with such society or organization and shall be so admonished, and members of our churches not now affiliated with such organizations

shall be warned against such affiliation. Especially shall the shepherds of the flock be admonished to refuse adherence and support to such organizations.

"2. That pastors and congregations shall not practise indiscriminate pulpit- and altar-fellowship with pastors and churches of other denominations, whereby doctrinal differences are ignored or virtually made matters of indifference. Especially shall no religious fellowship whatsoever be practised with such individuals and groups as are not basically evangelical.

"Agreement has not yet been reached upon the third point. When attained, the agreements on all points will be submitted for approval.

"(Signed for the committee)

"CHARLES M. JACOBS, *Secretary*" A.

American Antiatheistic Association.—In the *Religious Digest* (January, 1937) Dr. T. Darley Allen, president of the American Antiatheistic Association (309 W. 72d St., New York City), is quoted in explanation of the society under his direction. A few paragraphs may interest our readers. Dr. Allen writes: "The American Antiatheistic Association has been organized to combat the rapidly growing menace of atheism, there being facts indicating that its propaganda can be successfully met, to a large degree, by interesting lectures and articles upon the evidences of religion, a subject with which comparatively few persons are familiar."—"In one year, in Great Britain, 600,000 anti-infidel books were circulated and lectures on Christian Evidences were delivered in London and other cities that did much to undermine the work of atheists and agnostics. In ten years, when Christians made extraordinary efforts to inform the public on the evidences of religion, organized infidelity in Great Britain decreased more than 40 per cent. C. J. Whitmore reported that out of twenty prominent lecturers, editors, and other workers in the propagation of infidelity whom he had known in twenty years' experience in London, sixteen had renounced 'free thought' and become preachers or lay workers in the ranks of Christianity."—"Not only are multitudes led to renounce belief in religion because of infidel propaganda, but a large percentage of them become hostile to all Christian influences and so are not likely to attend church or go where they will hear the Gospel or come under the power of Christian preaching."—"We think therefore that our organization meets a need in these days, when in high school, in college, and upon the street infidels are sparing no effort to bring men and women, and especially young people in their formative years, under the influence of antireligious propaganda."—"We shall be glad at any time to send an ordained minister to any church or club to tell of our work and to speak of the 'menace of atheism' or by a lecture on 'God,' 'Why Jesus Came,' or 'The Finality of Calvary' to show that Christianity has nothing to fear from its critics and that, as expressed by Joseph Barker, once the great head of organized unbelief in Great Britain and later a Christian, 'infidelity is madness and the religion of Christ is the perfection of wisdom and goodness.'"—It may be well for our pastors to seek contact with the organization and obtain some of its pamphlets and other publications for their own use in witnessing against atheism and its perils.

J. T. M.

The President of the Augustana Synod on the Inspiration and Infallibility of the Bible.—In his address at the installation of the professor of Old Testament Language and Literature in Augustana Seminary, Dr. P. O. Bersell said: "The Old Testament is a vital and indissoluble part of the canon of the Holy Scriptures. It bears within itself the testimony of the God-given word. Did we notice? In the first six verses of the Book of Zechariah, which we read at the beginning of this service, such expressions as 'the Word of the Lord came' and 'thus saith the Lord of hosts,' occurred no less than seven times. That's typical. And the Old Testament is accepted and accredited by Jesus and the apostles, and its inspiration and infallibility are part of the creed of evangelical Christendom today as always." (*Luth. Comp.*, Dec. 5, 1936.) "The inspiration and infallibility of the Old Testament"—that is a most important *and*. It does not mean much in the present day when a man declares for the "inspiration" of the Bible. The most pronounced Liberal will cheerfully admit that the Bible is "inspired." Was not Goethe, too, inspired? The signers of the notorious Auburn Affirmation did not hesitate to declare: "We all believe from our hearts that the writers of the Bible were inspired of God." Discussing this part of the creed of the Presbyterian Liberals, the *Presbyterian* of April 19, 1928, said: "It is clear, however, that this does not mean that they were so inspired of God as to preserve them from error in their statement of facts or as to render them authoritative in their statement of doctrine. The Affirmers are united in holding that the General Assembly 'spoke without warrant of the Scriptures or of the Confession of Faith' in asserting that 'the Holy Spirit did so inspire, guide, and move the writers of Holy Scripture as to keep them from error.' . . . The inspiration, then, that this creed ascribes to the Bible is such as leaves us free not only to regard certain of its statements of facts as untrustworthy, but to reject its explanation even of recorded facts which we accept as historical." "Inspiration of the Bible" does not mean much. But "inspiration and infallibility" means a real inspiration, a verbal, plenary inspiration.

We should like to quote, for a different reason, another passage from Dr. Bersell's address. "Our seminary still requires the study of the Hebrew language on the part of those who are to receive the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. That study and that degree is not indispensable for service as a pastor; but our seminary still maintains the high ground that this is one measure of the intelligence quotient in Biblical scholarship. How long in this sense the prophets will live among us I do not know. But this I do know that, when the study of Old Testament literature will be dropped from the curriculum of our seminary, then it will no longer be a Lutheran institution." This last statement might be phrased somewhat differently, but the meaning is clear. E.

"Do Not Trust in Feeling.—My friends, do you think you can control your feelings? I am sure, if I could control my feelings, I never would have any bad feelings; I would always have good feelings. But bear in mind Satan may change our feelings fifty times a day, but he cannot change the Word of God; and what we want is to build our hopes of heaven upon the Word of God. When a poor sinner is coming up out

of the pit and just ready to get his feet upon the Rock of Ages, the devil sticks out a plank of feelings and says, 'Get on that'; and when he puts his feet on that, down he goes again. Take one of these texts: 'Verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.' That rock is higher than my feeling. And what we need is to get our feet upon the rock, and the Lord will put a new song in our mouths." Luther might have written this. It was written by D.L. Moody. Speaking of the Moody Centenary, which is being celebrated this year, *Conc. Theol. Month.* said in its last issue: "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." The gem here presented is given a prominent place in *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 1936, page 186.

"Do not trust in feeling"—that is genuine Lutheran theology. Let us look a while longer at this part of Luther's theology. Prof. E. Sommerlath writes in the *Allg. Ev.-Luth. Kirchenztg.* of January 1: "Aller Psychologismus, jedes Sichberauschen am Erlebnis, an der Gewalt der Gefuehle und am Aufwallen der Andacht ist ihm [Luther] feiger Selbstbetrug. Die Gewohnheit des Menschen unserer Tage, an der Waerme, an dem Hitzegrad seiner Erlebnisse die Wirklichkeit zu messen, ist ihm fremd. Er reflektiert nicht ueber sein Schuldgefuehl, sondern redet von der objektiven Verhaftung in des Teufels Reich. . . . Darum geht es auch nicht um Friedensgefuehle, sondern um die unumstoesslichen *Tatsachen*, mit denen uns Christus erloest hat. Auf das Gefuehl kommt es nicht an. Es ist Gnade, wenn Gott etwas *fuehlen* laesst, aber Glaube kann sein mit Fuehlen, ohne Fuehlen, ja gegen alles Fuehlen. Ja, das Gefuehl truegt gar oft. Denn 'es ist ein Wunderding: wer da keine Suende hat, der fuehlt und hat sie, und wer da Suende hat, der fuehlet sie nicht und hat keine.' (W. A., 18, 493, 18 ff.)" Look up this reference for further study in the St. Louis ed., IV, 1682.

"Do not trust in feeling," says Moody; says Luther: "God will not have us rely on anything else or cling with our heart to anything that is not Christ in His Word, be it never so holy and full of the spirit. Faith has no other foundation on which to stand. . . . What are you about—running hither and thither and torturing yourself with anxious and despairing thoughts as though God had withdrawn His grace and there were no longer any Christ, and you could have no peace unless you find Him in yourself and feel that you are holy and without sin: all that is of no avail; it is altogether lost labor and toil. . . . All is lost and your quest for Christ is futile; only one thing serves and that is that you turn away from yourself and all human comfort and yield yourself entirely to the Word." (XI, p. 453 ff.)

"Satan may change our feelings," says Moody, and Luther says: "If, therefore, you are guided by your feeling, it is impossible that you can maintain yourself. You feel that God has forsaken you? . . . Satan would have you guided by what you feel, not by that which you do not feel. Therefore you must live by faith; that is, you must not heed your feeling, but stand up against these devilish thoughts firm and unmoved." (IV, 1268.)

"Es ist Gnade, wenn Gott etwas fuehlen laesst" — in God's own way. Luther: "Faith clings to things that it does not see, feel, or apprehend by means of the senses. It is rather a trusting reliance on God, on whom it is willing to risk and stake everything, not doubting that it will win; and that is certainly the outcome. *And the feeling and sensation will come, too, unsought and undemanded, in and by this faith and reliance.*" (XI, 1577.) E.

Do We Deserve It? We speak of praise expressed in a recent article of the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod). Discussing the question whether it would not be better for the Lutheran Church of America to have bishops rather than presidents, and proposing the plan of dividing the whole Lutheran Church of America into twenty-nine dioceses, the author says: "I am further in favor of organic union of all Lutherans in the United States, to be accomplished only by forgetting small, petty differences and sentimentalities of the past and gathering under the truly Lutheran progressive banner of the Missouri Synod with its unsurpassed dogmatic stability, its splendid parochial-school system, and its closed Communion — providing the Synodical Conference agreed to the form of government as above advocated." The plan of the writer may appear so Utopian as to put it outside the sphere of serious consideration and discussion. We are referring to the article because of the characteristics ascribed to our Synod: truly Lutheran progressiveness, unsurpassed dogmatic stability, splendid parochial-school system, and closed Communion. The words quoted, written by a friend in an opposing camp, are deeply humbling and should result in some heart-searching in our own midst. A.

Something about the Mennonites. — Mr. G. R. Alexander, in charge of a question-and-answer service on Social Security for the readers of a metropolitan daily, writes in the *Saturday Evening Post* of February 6: "From an utter stranger the postman recently brought me a very thought-provoking letter. 'I am writing in behalf of the thousands of Mennonites who work in industries covered by the Federal Social Security Act,' it said. 'As a people, we have no objection in the least to giving the Government an account as provided by law. But we have conscientious scruples in regard to receiving the benefits. It has always been customary for each congregation to take care of its own poor, which is also Scriptural, according to Matt. 26, 11. What we especially plead for at this time is that some provision be made to allow us to pay our regular dues in the regular order as provided by the law, but to be exempted from receiving the benefit.'" Later on in the article Mr. Alexander comments on this case thus: "The Mennonites have conscientious scruples, and always have had, against insurance in any form. Yet they are law-abiding to the extent that they are willing to 'render unto Caesar' the tax if only they can be exempted from its returns in the form of old-age pensions and unemployment insurance. But should they pay — as the board ruled they must — for something their religion will not permit them to buy?" Our readers will be particularly interested in one point presented in this case. On account of that point the matter is here presented. It is the statement: "It has always been customary for each congregation to take care of its own poor." E.

The "Honesty" of Liberals. — Mrs. Pearl Buck, who recently resigned as a missionary (in China) of the Northern Presbyterians, in consequence of pressure by the Fundamentalists of that denomination, is a voluminous, but clever author, whose *Good Earth* has been cinematized and will thus be presented to millions throughout the world. Recently another novel by Mrs. Pearl Buck appeared, entitled *The Exile*, which was published in serial form in the *Woman's Home Companion*. In a criticism on that novel submitted by Mrs. Nettie Du Bose Junkin to the *Woman's Home Companion* (but unfairly rejected by that periodical) it is pointed out that *The Exile* grossly misrepresents two Presbyterian missionaries. *Christianity Today* has now published Mrs. Junkin's criticism, and from it we quote parts to show the utter dishonesty of modernistic writers, also when they compose other than theological writings. Admittedly Pearl Buck based her story on facts in the lives of her parents, Dr. and Mrs. Sydenstricker, and by inserting herself into the book, she has tried to convince her readers that hers is a reliable account of their life. But just in that way she, as Mrs. Junkin shows, makes "unfair and cruel impressions," detrimental to the Christian faith and profession. A few examples will prove this. Andrew Stone (the hero of the story) as a missionary is cold and distant with the converts, while Dr. Sydenstricker (who is represented by the fictitious Andrew Stone) as man, friend, and preacher was greatly beloved by the Chinese. Andrew Stone does not love his family, because his mind is "on the souls of men, always their souls." Dr. Sydenstricker loved his family and on his itinerating trips was always talking about his loved ones. Andrew Stone does not enjoy a joke and suppresses his wife's bubbling merriment, but Dr. Sydenstricker was noted for his jokes and was good company. Andrew Stone is so devoted to the printing of his Chinese New Testament that his wife and children are deprived of many needful comforts. Dr. Sydenstricker and his family had as many comforts and as nice a home as other missionaries. As Andrew Stone is a misrepresentation of the writer's father, so Carrie Stone of *The Exile* is a misrepresentation of her mother. Carrie Stone does not love her husband, while Mrs. Sydenstricker was a devoted wife, who always admired her husband and lived in joy and happiness to the end of her life. In the heart of Carrie Stone there is bitterness against God, while Mrs. Sydenstricker drew all the closer to the heart of the heavenly Father as her trials increased. Carrie Stone teaches the Chinese only social improvements, while Mrs. Sydenstricker taught and preached the Gospel. Carrie Stone lives striving to find God; she does not think her prayers are answered and never trusts the loving Savior, dying without Him and hoping that her good life might bring her a reward. But Carrie Sydenstricker, the mother of Pearl Buck, died trusting in the atoning blood of Jesus Christ and happy in the anticipation of life everlasting through faith in Christ Jesus. "What reason can there be for writing such a story, and about one's own parents?" queries Mrs. Junkin, the writer of the criticism. But does not the answer perhaps lie in the very Modernism of Pearl Buck? Andrew Stone and his wife Carrie are the reflections of her own unbelieving mind and instruments by which she means to spread her modernistic propaganda.

Or can it be true that, when writing of her saintly parents, she misrepresented them because she so greatly hates orthodox Christianity? Certainly, those who read *The Exile* will not cherish the orthodox Christian missionaries who go into the world to preach the Gospel, but will regard them as bigoted, disagreeable, hateful people, not worthy of any consideration at all. It is quite likely that *The Exile* was meant to be a subtle means to suppress orthodox mission-work in China and to foster and further the modernistic mission-work of which Pearl Buck herself is a champion.

J. T. M.

Statistics.—According to Dr. George Lynn Kieffer the Lutherans of the United States and Canada in 1935 contributed just two mills more per capita for benevolences than in 1934. He says that there are 16,772 congregations in the United States and Canada, with a membership of 3,194,304 confirmed persons, and that these contributed \$7,511,314, which makes a per-capita gift of \$2.351, while the last figures for 1934 read \$2.349. Adding all contributions made, those for congregational expenses as well as those for benevolences, one finds, according to Dr. Kieffer's figures, that the per-capita contribution in the United Lutheran Church in America was \$13.141, in the American Lutheran Conference \$13.041, in the Synodical Conference \$13.397, and in all other Lutheran bodies \$7.937. In December, 1935, the Lutherans in the United States and Canada numbered 12,522 pastors, 4,677,813 baptized members, 3,194,304 confirmed members, and 2,602,543 communing members.

A.

Brief Items.—When a correspondent of the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod) in the issue of January 14 urged his brethren to assist in combating "discrimination against the Lutheran Hour" and pleaded that "we Lutherans, regardless of synod, join in protesting such a situation (referring to the fact that every minute of the Lutheran Hour has to be paid for, while the National Broadcasting Company gives free time for a religious broadcast to the Federal Council of Churches, the Catholics, and the Jews), the editor appended this note: "Dr. Maier's messages are indeed splendid, and we urge all Augustana members to 'tune in' on WLW every Sunday afternoon at 3.30 o'clock. For the information of our correspondent, however, it should be stated that lack of cooperation with the Missouri Synod is not due to unwillingness on the part of other Lutheran groups, but to Missouri's own attitude of exclusiveness." The following issue of the *Lutheran Companion* contained an article by an Augustana synod pastor which spoke of the good impressions the author received when he visited a Missouri Synod church in Minnesota. We are grateful for these manifestations of good will; but candor compels us to ask the question, Can the exclusiveness of the Missouri Synod be blamed for the divided condition of the Lutheran Church in America? The Missouri Synod objects to the course of the Augustana Synod with respect to certain matters of doctrine and practice, and it holds that Augustana, by continuing in that course, erects barriers between itself and Synodical Conference Lutherans and that hence the excluding is done not by Missouri, but by the Augustana Synod. The unbiased observer will of course wish to know whether the strictures of the Missouri Synod are tenable and whether they pertain to

things concerning which the Word of God has rendered a decision. As to that question we have to say that among these matters is the question of pulpit-fellowship with heterodox people and that of chiliasm. Let these issues be examined in the fear of God and on the basis of the Scriptures and the Confessions, and then let the question be answered whether the charge of exclusiveness must be leveled against Missouri or its opponents.—On January 16 Clarence A. Barbour, president of Brown University since 1929 and at one time president of Rochester Theological Seminary and a leader of the Baptists, departed this life.—The Christian laity seems to be waking up here and there to a realization of its rights. In Newark, N. J., Rev. L. Hamilton Garner, minister of the Universalist Church of the Redeemer, was compelled to resign because of radical speakers whom he now and then presented to his congregation in a Sunday evening forum conducted in his church.—In the future doctrinal dissertations in Germany must always be written in the German language, which means that the venerable Latin may no longer be employed for this purpose. *Sic transit gloria mundi!*—Writing on the work of Dwight L. Moody, the centennial of whose birth is observed this year, the *Living Church* pays him this tribute: "He made many converts, not by sensational, revivalistic methods, but because of his ability to speak in the every-day language of ordinary life. Those who have personal recollections of his preaching or others who have read of his remarkable meetings in America and England, whatever their religious convictions, cannot fail to pay tribute to the genuineness and sincerity of his work. His power lay not merely in his own faith, but in his ability to express that faith in simple terms and to translate it into the common language of daily life. By comparison with the preaching from the pulpits of his day he is seen now as one of whom it may be said that he reflected the spirit of Him whom the common people heard gladly because He spoke as one having authority and not as the scribes." It reminds us that our sainted Pastor F. W. Herzberger, the unforgettable city missionary of St. Louis, many years ago made the statement that, as far as presentation was concerned, he took Moody as his model because of the simplicity and directness of his style.—It must be a difficult matter to crown a king. Westminster Abbey, where the coronation of King George VI is to take place some time in May, was closed to the public on January 4 and will remain closed to the time of the coronation in order that the necessary preparations may be made.—How much the personal equation counts in our endeavors to influence other people is brought out by Bishop Charles Fisk in a review which he writes of a book from the pen of H. F. Winnington-Ingram, Bishop of London. "After all, he [i. e., the Bishop of London] is himself the best argument for his beliefs. Looking back into his long life, he says that it is not so much what men have said which has convinced him as what these men have been and the impression their Christian character has left; in the same way it is his own experience which counts in this persuasive appeal, and the candor and sincerity of his argument finds its real strength in his sympathy and understanding and in the radiant conviction which gives hopefulness and joy to his long ministry."

A.

II. Ausland

Die Unterschiede zwischen lutherisch und reformiert. In zwei sehr brauchbaren Flugschriften sind in der letzten Zeit auch dem Volk drüber die Unterschiede zwischen lutherisch und reformiert wieder neu vor Augen geführt worden. Wir beziehen uns hier auf zwei Flugschriften für das lutherische Volk: „Was unterscheidet uns Lutheraner von den Reformierten?“ von Lic. Fr. Priegel, Seminardirektor in Breslau; und „Lutherisch oder reformiert?“ von Hans Schomerus (Verlag des Martin-Luther-Bundes, Erlangen, 1933; der zweiten Reihe sechstes Heft, zweites Tausend). Beide sind beim Lutheran Book Concern, Columbus, O., zu haben, und beide könnten auch in unsern Kreisen mit Segen gelesen werden. Auch kosten beide nur wenige Cents. In beiden werden wir hier und da den Verfassern nicht zustimmen können, was aber den Wert der Flugschriften, aufs Ganze gesehen, nicht beeinträchtigt. — Dies soll nicht etwa eine Bücherbesprechung sein; immerhin ist auch für uns von Wichtigkeit, daß wir die abgrenzenden Differenzen zwischen lutherisch und reformiert im Auge behalten. Die Gefahr liegt nämlich nah, daß auch die lutherische Kirche hierzulande wie einst der Pietismus Bahnen einschlagen möchte, die ihren Ursprung in Genf haben. Führen wir uns daher einige wenige Gedanken vor, die besonders Priegel in seinem Flugblatt zu bedenken gibt. In bezug auf das principium cognoscendi in der Theologie unterscheiden sich die beiden Denominationen, wie Priegel darlegt, in der Theorie nicht. Und doch, schon hier bei der Bestimmung der Quelle der Lehre und des Maßstabs ihrer Beurteilung tritt uns gleich der trennende Grundunterschied entgegen, daß, während die lutherische Kirche in der Tat nichts anderes neben der Schrift gelten läßt, die reformierte Kirche in der Ausführung und Begründung der Lehre einen zweiten Maßstab neben der Schrift anerkennt, der der Vernunft entnommen ist. Hier schwebt nämlich den Reformierten der rationalistische Grundsatz vor, daß das Kreatürliche das Göttliche nicht aufzunehmen vermag. D. Pieper behandelt dies Prinzip in seiner „Christlichen Dogmatik“ sehr ausführlich, und die Sache ist es wert, daß man das von ihm Dargelegte sehr genau prüft und in sich aufnimmt. (Vgl. Christ. Dogm., I, S. 25 ff.) Gerade von hier aus erklärt sich auch der gegenwärtige Modernismus in den reformierten Kreisen. Zwinglis altes Axiom „Gott gibt uns nichts zu glauben auf, was die Vernunft nicht kapieren kann“ hat hier praktisch und konsequent seine Anwendung gefunden. — In der Lehre von Gott betont Priegel besonders einen Differenzpunkt zwischen uns und den Reformierten. In Christo Jesu ist uns Gott wesentlich Vater. Was uns mit Gott verbindet, ist das kindliche Vertrauen zu Gottes Vaterliebe. Priegel sagt sehr schön: „Wir wissen, daß uns das Herz unsers Gottes gehört.“ „Er ist mein Gott, wie Luther nicht müde wird immer wieder zu betonen.“ „In der Taufe sind wir in Jesu Christo, unserm Heiland, zu Gottes Kindern gemacht und in seine Liebes- und Gnadengemeinschaft aufgenommen worden.“ Anders aber sieht der Reformierte an diesem Punkt. Der Reformierte weiß wohl, daß Gott den Seinen der Vater ist; allein dieses Verhältnis verschwindet ihm fast völlig, weil er in Gott vor allem den Herrscher, den absoluten König, sieht, dem gegenüber der Gehorsam die notwendige und ausschlaggebende Haltung ist. Der Reformierte kommt zu Gott, nicht wie ein Kind zum Vater, sondern wie ein Untertan zum souveränen Despoten,

dem sich der Mensch bedingungslos zu unterwerfen hat. So auch wieder jetzt Karl Barth. Selbst das Evangelium ist nicht die frohe Botschaft, mit der Gott uns zu sich locken, unser Herz gewinnen will, die uns das Geschenk der Gnade bringt (der Reformierte kennt bekanntlich keine Gnadenmittel im lutherischen Sinn), sondern es ist der fordernde Anspruch Gottes an uns (so auch gerade Hodge: „Das Evangelium ist die Darlegung der Bedingungen, unter denen uns Gott auf- und annehmen will“). So ist auch der Glaube nicht das vertrauensvolle Ergreifen der Gnade (so lutherisch), sondern er ist Gehorsam (so auch wieder Barth). Und so wird denn in prakt. der Glaube zu einer menschlichen Leistung, was Luther ja immer so heftig bekämpft hat (der Arminianismus, das heißt, der reformierte Pelagianismus, ist darum auch nicht etwas dem Calvinismus Fremdes, Außenstehendes, sondern etwas, was als eine Art corollary dem praktizierenden Reformierten vor Augen schwebt). — Inhalt des göttlichen Majestätswillens ist für den Reformierten, sehr einseitig gefaßt, die göttliche Ehre, die Selbstverherrlichung Gottes (Barth: „Dem sola fide muß das soli Deo gloria übergeordnet bleiben“). Der Selbstverherrlichung Gottes diene wesentlich die Schöpfung; ihr dient aber auch der von Gott selbst geordnete Sündenfall; denn Gottes Herrlichkeit zeigt sich viel glänzender in der Seligmachung von Sündern (hier nämlich kommt die souveräne Gnade Gottes zur Geltung), als wenn die Sünde nie in die Welt gekommen wäre. Allerdings, für den Menschen ist die Sünde eigentlich deswegen Sünde, weil sie als Ungehorsam Gottes Ehre verlehrt (was ja an sich nicht verkehrt ist, aber doch von den Reformierten ganz einseitig betont wird). Die Wiederherstellung der Ehre Gottes kommt immer in erster, die Rettung der sündigen Menschen erst in zweiter Linie in Betracht. — Die Heiligung ist dem Reformierten nicht Ausdruck der Liebe und Dankbarkeit gegen Gott, eine edle Frucht, die der rechtfertigende Glaube notwendig hervorruft, sondern vorwiegend ein Gehorsam, der der Ehre Gottes dient. — Von hier aus verstehen wir auch die Lehre von der Prädestination, wie sie besonders Calvin entwickelt hat, eine Lehre, die wohl in manchen reformierten Bekenntnissen abgeschwächt, aber nie eigentlich aufgehoben ist (selbst nicht im Heidelberger Katechismus, auch nicht in der Helvetischen Konfession). Doch, der Raum mangel zwingt uns abzubrechen. — Nur noch einen Punkt wollen wir hier erwähnen. Lic. Priegel schreibt: „Auch der Reformierte betont mit großem Ernst die Heiligung, ja betont sie wohl noch stärker als wir [?], nicht nur, weil er in ihr den Nachweis seiner Erwählung sieht, nicht nur, weil er in der sichtbaren Kirche die Gemeinde der Heiligen zur Darstellung zu bringen sucht, sondern weil er alle Lebensgebiete als Gebiete ansieht, in denen durch Gehorsam gegen Gottes Willen Gott selbst verherrlicht werden soll, so z. B. auch das öffentliche Leben in Handel und Gewerbe und in der Politik. . . . Ist Gott der allgebietende Herr, dann muß über alle sein Wille zur Anerkennung und Durchführung gelangen. Seinen Willen entnehmten die Reformierten auch für diese Gebiete der Heiligen Schrift, besonders dem Alten Testament und der Gesetzgebung Moses. Daher wird z. B. in England das jüdische Sabbatgebot auf die Sonntagsfeier übertragen und mit aller Strenge durchgeführt. Ebenso haben sich die Reformierten, auch von der Kirche wegen, gern in der Politik betätigt. Luther betont dagegen stets sehr nachdrücklich, daß die Kirche mit Politik nichts zu tun habe. Auch auf wirtschaftlichem Gebiet will der Refor-

mierte dem Reich Gottes dienen und Gott verherrlichen. Darum ist er bestrebt, möglichst viel zu verdienen, damit er möglichst viel für Gottes Reich verwenden kann. Der Gedanke, daß Arbeit lediglich eine Tätigkeit zur Erzeugung wirtschaftlicher Werte ist, ist im reformierten Schottland entstanden, während doch der Lutheraner Freude an der Arbeit haben will, die doch aus dem Paradies stammt. Dadurch, daß man auf reformierter Seite glaubt, durch die Arbeit in Wirtschaft und Politik das Reich Gottes bauen zu können, ist es zu der in unserer Zeit so großen Gefahr gekommen, daß das Reich Gottes, daß die Kirche immer mehr säkularisiert, das heißt, verweltlicht, wird.“ Etwas anders behandelt Schomerus das Thema, aber auch hier findet der Leser immer wieder wichtige Winke und Gedanken, die des Studiums wert sind. Wir nennen nur einen: „Reformierter Glaube ist immer eine wohl begründete Überzeugung; lutherischer Glaube ist ein gewisses Vertrauen, das gar keiner Gründe bedarf.“ J. L. M.

Ein mutiges Bekenntnis gegen die Deutschen Christen, die sich nicht nur in Thüringen, sondern auch andernorts in Deutschland zu einer Nationalkirche unter Losagung von der Lehre der Bibel und dem lutherischen Bekenntnis zusammenschließen, hat die Bekennende Ev.-Luth. Kirche gemeinschaftlich mit dem lutherischen Pfarrerkreis am 14. Oktober zu Güstrow, in Mecklenburg, abgelegt, das wir hier in kurzen Auszügen wiedergeben. Wir lesen: „1. Eine Kirchenleitung, die sich von der Heiligen Schrift und den lutherischen Bekenntnissen scheidet und Irrlehren duldet, sie in der Kirche durchzusetzen bemüht ist und ihnen selber folgt, kann in der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche nicht ertragen werden. Darum ist der deutsch-christliche Oberkirchenrat nicht unser Kirchenregiment; denn er stellt sich außerhalb der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Das hat sich jetzt offen gezeigt. 2. Es gibt für uns nur das eine unverfälschte und unverkürzte Evangelium. Weil wir gebunden sind an Gottes Wort, müssen wir nein sagen zur Irrlehre. Weil wir gebunden sind an unsern Herrn Jesum Christum, müssen wir nein sagen zu einer solchen Nationalkirche, wie man sie jetzt errichten möchte. Alle Gemeinden der Ev.-Luth. Landeskirche in Mecklenburg ermahnen wir: Steht fest im Glauben unserer Kirche! Laßt euch nicht verwirren! prüfet die Geister an Gottes Wort! Es gibt nur einen Weg zur Einheit der Kirche: unser deutsches Volk muß sich bekennen zum Evangelium; unser deutsches Volk muß sich Mann für Mann entscheiden für den, der gesagt hat: ‚Ich bin der Weg und die Wahrheit und das Leben; niemand kommt zum Vater denn durch mich‘, Joh. 14, 6. Gottes Heiliger Geist stehe uns bei, daß wir alle, Kirchenleitung, Pastoren und Kirchengemeinden, treue Zeugen dieses Herrn werden! Und der Herr der Kirche wird allen treuen Zeugendieft segnen und schaffen, daß zu seiner Zeit werde ein Hirte und eine Herde.“ Gewiß herrliche und auch gewiß treu gemeinte Bekenntnisworte. Immer klarer aber wird es, daß in Deutschland eine wahre lutherische Bekenntnissynode nur da bestehen kann, wo die Kirche vom Staat unabhängig ist und daher nach Gottes Wort und dem lutherischen Bekenntnis auch frei und ungehindert handeln kann, wie dies nötig wird. Auch die Landeskirche in Mecklenburg muß sich schließlich dem Staat und seinen Verordnungen fügen, wenn das Geld zum Unterhalt der Kirche aus dem Staatsfädel kommt. Gerade wegen der Verquickung von Staat und Kirche erleidet die lutherische Kirche Deutschlands jetzt ihre Radenschläge; sie ist eben Staatsdienerin. J. L. M.