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Theological Observer — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches

I. Amerika

Etwas über die alten Inter-synodalen Verhandlungen; auch über das *intuitu fidei*. — Der Nekrolog D. C. C. Hein, der in der Julinummer der „Theologischen Quartalschrift“ erschienen ist, erwähnt diese beiden Gegenstände; veranlaßt uns, diesen Nachruf hier abzudrucken: „... Es war besonders ein Übelstand der Kirche, der dem Entschlafenen zu Herzen ging und an dessen Hebung er mit Aufbietung aller seiner Kräfte arbeitete. Das ist die Zerrissenheit und Zersplitterung zumal der lutherischen Kirche in unserm Lande. Dabei war D. Hein allem Unionismus feind, der, wie er sich ausdrückte, eine Einigkeit vorspiegelt, wo doch keine besteht. Auf den Versammlungen des Inter-synodalen Komitees, das zur Veröffentlichung der sogenannten Chicagoer Thesen führte, war es gerade D. Hein, der oft vor allzu schneller Annahme irgendeiner der vorgelegten Thesen warnte, weil sie möglicherweise trotz anscheinender Übereinstimmung doch vielleicht nicht von allen Komiteegliedern in gleichem Sinne verstanden werde. Es war D. Hein, der auf dem zweiten lutherischen Weltkonvent die unpopuläre Lehre von der Verbalinspiration vortrug. Wiederum war es D. Hein, der die Bildung der Amerikanisch-lutherischen Kirche, an deren Zustandekommen ihm doch sehr viel lag, nach Kräften verzögern half und nicht eher in den Zusammenschluß seiner Synode, der früheren Ohio-synode, mit den Synoden von Buffalo und Iowa einwilligte, bis die auftauchende Unklarheit in eben der Inspirationslehre behoben war. Wiederum war es D. Hein, der, von seiner Synode zur Begrüßung der Vereinigten lutherischen Kirche Amerikas nach Savannah gesandt, sich nicht scheute, in freundlicher, aber doch unmißverständlicher Weise der W. L. A. ihre unlutherische Praxis in wesentlichen Stücken als Haupthindernis der erstrebten Einigung vorzuhalten. Dies muß anerkannt werden, wenn man auch die Tatsache, daß er sich zum Gang nach Savannah bereit fand, als einen Fehlschritt bedauern mag. Sein Zeugnis wäre kräftiger gewesen, wenn er es nicht nur in Worten abgelegt, sondern auch durch die Tat des Fernbleibens unterstrichen hätte. . . .

„Nachtrag. Vorstehendem fügen wir noch einen Passus aus dem inzwischen in der „Kirchlichen Zeitschrift“ (Juni 1937) erschienenen Nachruf D. Reus hinzu: „In dem Prädestinationsstreit hatte sich die Ohio-synode mit andern — auch Iowa — zu einseitig auf die *praedestinitio intuitu fidei* festgelegt. Wer die damalige Situation kennt, versteht das und kann es konstatieren, ohne damit über die damals leitenden Männer ein unfreundliches Urteil abgeben zu wollen. Es war die Theorie der Dogmatiker des 17. Jahrhunderts gewesen, und die wollte man nicht ohne weiteres als unlutherisch gebrandmarkt sehen. Ich weiß nicht, wann D. Hein zu der Erkenntnis durchdrang, daß die Annahme einer *praedestinitio intuitu fidei* nicht Schriftlehre, sondern menschliche Konstruktion ist; aber es war erfreulich, zu sehen, wie er in den inter-synodalen Verhandlungen wohl dafür eintrat, in welchem Sinn allein das *intuitu fidei* nicht schriftwidrig ist, dann aber entschieden betonte, daß das, was Schrift und Bekenntnis Erwählung oder Prädestination nennen, nichts mit dem *intuitu fidei* zu tun hat.“ Diese Erklärung, in der offensichtlich jedes Wort sehr sorgsam abgewogen ist, verdient allgemeine Be-

assung. Die hier desavouierte Intuituslehre war es, die seinerzeit die Synodalkonferenz spaltete. Die Verantwortung für den unheilvollen Miß in der lutherischen Kirche Americas trifft demnach nicht die Bekämpfer dieser von Menschen konstruierten Lehre. Sie traten für die Wahrheit der Schrift ein. R." E.

Reporting on the Meeting of the Augustana Synod in Omaha, June 14—20, the *Journal of the American Lutheran Conference*, August, 1937, p. 60, says: "Far-reaching in its effect upon the Augustana Synod's relations with other Lutheran church-bodies was the recommendation regarding unionism and the Galesburg Rule—'Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only'—now known as the 'Minneapolis Theses.' 'Some of the pastors and churches of the Augustana Synod have given offense and have compromised their synod in the eyes of fellow-Lutherans by their loose practices in regard to secretism or unionism,' reported Dr. Bersell. Approval was given the 'Minneapolis Theses' when the synod resolved that . . . 'we are distressed to learn of the disregard by some pastors of the so-called Minneapolis Theses and urge our pastors not to compromise this covenant.'" E.

Episcopalian Confusion Concerning Marriage.—That one extreme begets another is confirmed by the present attitude of a number of Episcopalians who, horrified by the looseness and laxity which is in vogue concerning divorces, are discussing the question whether it is ever right for the Church to sanction the marriage of people that have been divorced. Fifteen clergymen have drawn up, and signed, a statement which they on April 17 mailed to the "160 bishops and 6,200 priests" of their Church. The statement reads as follows:

"(1) We firmly believe that for Christian people marriage after divorce is contrary to the law of our Lord Jesus Christ as declared in the gospels and revealed by guidance of the Holy Ghost during the long life of the Church. We recognize that some scholars think that this prohibition does not apply to the innocent party in a divorce secured on grounds of adultery, and, this matter being doubtful, we admit that there may be a legitimate question about the right of the Church to bless re-marriage in such cases, but in no others.

"(2) We deny that any authority in the Anglican communion has power to change, by canon law or otherwise, the teaching on this matter as given by the Lord for the governance of Christians.

"(3) We are sure that the passage of canons which in any way modify for Christians the divine law in respect to marriage after divorce will result in the raising of grave doubt, in the minds of many, about the faithfulness of the Anglican communion to its divine Master, and this to the grave injury of the cause of Christ.

"(4) We request that concerning the solemnization of marriage after divorce only such action be taken as will insure strict obedience, by all who share communion in our Church, to the standard laid down by Jesus Christ Himself."

Commenting on this statement, the *Living Church* says: "The Anglican Church, in the providence of God, has so far maintained the

highest standard of any religious body in regard to Christian marriage. In some parts of the Anglican Church remarriage after divorce is not permitted for any reason. Our own Church recognizes the exceptive clause and permits remarriage to the innocent party after a divorce for adultery, though it does not require its clergy to solemnize such a marriage. Moreover, legitimate grounds for annulment are recognized, and the proper discretion is given to a bishop or ecclesiastical court in such cases. Finally, strict justice is tempered by mercy in the provision that 'any persons who have been married by civil authority or otherwise than as this Church provides may apply to the bishop or to the ecclesiastical court of their domicile for the recognition of communicant status or for the right to apply for Holy Baptism or confirmation.' The marriage law of our Church is not ideal, but it does maintain the Christian marriage standard. If it needs any amendment at all, it is in the direction of greater strictness rather than greater laxity in upholding that standard. Christian marriage is the lifelong, indissoluble union of a baptized man and of a baptized woman. Once consummated, that union cannot be severed except by death. In 'hard cases' it may be necessary for husband and wife to live separately, and in extreme cases Christians may properly apply to the civil courts for divorce. Nevertheless, even after divorce they are still, in the eyes of God and the teaching of the Church, man and wife. No amount of civil or ecclesiastical legislation can change that simple fact."

Here truth and error are thoroughly mixed. There is no doubt that Christ spoke the exceptive clauses in question. There is no doubt furthermore that the innocent party involved in a divorce on account of adultery may remarry. Finally, there is no doubt that the Bible acknowledges malicious desertion as a just cause for divorce. A.

Child Labor Amendment.—As we all know, strenuous efforts are being made at present to secure the approval of sufficient State Legislatures to incorporate the so-called Child Labor Amendment in the Constitution of the United States. From the *Presbyterian Guardian*, which published a long article on this subject, we take over the statements that appear most significant to us:—

"That amendment has often been called the Child Labor Amendment, and its advocacy has sometimes been carried on under the guise of humanitarianism, as though the amendment were just intended to prevent sweat-shop conditions or the like. As a matter of fact, it is just about as heartless a measure as anything that could possibly be conceived. It provides that 'the Congress shall have power to limit, regulate, and prohibit the labor of persons under eighteen years of age.'" "Some people have a sort of notion that the amendment merely refers to gainful employment, but that is not at all the case. The word 'labor' was expressly insisted on in the wording of the amendment as over against the word 'employment.' A large number of other changes intended to reduce the powers given to Congress to some sort of rational limits are also voted down according to the wishes of the radical elements that determined the wording. The amendment gives to any officials whom Congress may choose to appoint power to enter into the homes

of the people and to regulate or prevent altogether those home activities of children and youth without which there can be no normal development of family life.

"The amendment does not merely give to Congress powers now possessed by State Legislatures. If indeed it did merely do that, it would certainly be bad enough. It would even then be the most extreme instance yet observed of that centralization of power which is such a menace to the life of our country; but as a matter of fact it does far more than that. No State Legislature, it is safe to say, now possesses, under the Constitution of the State (to say nothing of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States), power to prohibit altogether the labor of persons under eighteen years of age. Yet that is exactly the power that this amendment gives to Congress. . . . And it may well be held to have the effect of repealing any guarantees of liberty now in the Constitution which will conflict with it. That being so, this movement will practically wipe out the rights of the forty-five million persons under eighteen years of age in this country and the rights of their parents, so far as those persons are concerned. It will place those forty-five million persons under the despotic control of Government officials.

"Some people say that Congress can be trusted not to make unwise use of those powers. But we are really amazed when people advance any such argument as that. In the first place, the reposing of such implicit trust in the legislative branch of our Government is contrary to the heart and core of our Constitution. Our Constitution seeks to safeguard liberty by a system of careful checks and balances between the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. That balance is completely destroyed by this amendment. In the second place, Congress plainly cannot be trusted not to make unwise use of powers like those which are given today by this amendment. The events of recent years have shown that only too clearly. Just let a time of depression come, and just let casual majorities in Congress be unchecked by constitutional inhibitions, and just let the enemies of our free institutions fish in troubled waters, as they have done with such success during the present depression, and we shall see very soon how much Congress can be trusted. . . .

"As for the bearing of all this upon Christian education in the home as well as in the school, surely not many words are needed to point that out. Anything that attacks the family, as this amendment does, attacks the Christian religion. Small likelihood will there be, if this amendment is ratified, that the advocates of Christian education in this country will very long remain unmolested. The step is not a very long one from the ratification of this amendment to the compulsory youth movement of Hitler or the comprehensive slavery of the Soviet system."

The writer in the *Guardian* relates the history of the amendment, pointing out that it was approved by Congress and sent to the States in 1924. Since discussions showed that the measure was of a radical nature, up to 1931 only six States had ratified it, while thirty-eight Legislatures, after consideration in either one or both houses, had rejected it. In the period of the depression its proponents again became very active, and at the time when the *Guardian* article was written, twenty-four States had

given their approval. Twelve more were then needed for adoption into the Constitution.

From the *Presbyterian* we reprint parts of a letter which appeared in the *New York Times* against the amendment. The writer of the letter, James Emery Brooks of Glen Ridge, N. J., says: "Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler has written a splendid letter to the governors of the nineteen States where legislatures are in session, opposing the proposed Child Labor Amendment. Instead of realizing the convincing force of Dr. Butler's statements, some of those favoring the amendment rushed into print to abuse Dr. Butler. . . . If this amendment should be ratified, the women of this country will be to blame for it. . . . They fail to see the sinister nature of the remedy they are favoring. They would not part with one thousand dollars for a piece of real estate without having the title examined, but they are willing to part with the rights, liberties, and happiness of forty-two million young people in this country without paying any attention to the opinions of the ablest members of the American Bar Association, who have examined the title of this amendment and have found it defective. They should be at least as careful of their children as they are of their money. . . . If adopted, this amendment would create a condition far worse than now exists, or ever did exist, in the days when child labor really was a problem. Very few of the people who favor the amendment are actuated by an ulterior motive. Most of them believe they are doing right. May they open their eyes and their ears before it is too late!"

The *Presbyterian* then gives the resolution of the American Bar Association, adopted at its annual meeting August 30, 1933, with respect to this measure: "Resolved by the American Bar Association that the proposed Child Labor Amendment to the Constitution of the United States should be actively opposed as an unwarranted invasion by the Federal Government of a field in which the rights of the individual States and of the family are and should remain paramount. It should also be based on the ground that the Constitution should not be encumbered by prohibitory legislation. We maintain that notwithstanding difficulties encountered in the control of child-labor products in interstate commerce, the cure for the admitted evil must be sought through State legislation, in connection with which the attention of the public should be drawn to the uniform Child Labor Act approved by this association in 1930."

We ought to add that in the "Open Letters Column" of the *Lutheran* a vigorous rejoinder to the article printed in the *Presbyterian Guardian* appeared, in which the many organizations that favor the Child Labor Amendment are enumerated. The writer of the letter holds that the wording of the amendment is proof that the fears voiced in the *Presbyterian Guardian* are unfounded.

Brief Items.—At the Southern Baptist convention, held in New Orleans in May, the president of the organization, reelected to head it again, Dr. John R. Sampey of the Louisville Theological Seminary, issued a warning against participation in union movements, which, he averred, are embarrassing to Baptists because of their aversion to "proxy religion," that is, the violation of the principle of "the competency of the individual

to do business with God through Christ alone." Nevertheless he urged that the Baptists be represented in Oxford and Edinburgh this summer. This branch of the Baptist Church reports that in its foreign service it has 415 missionaries, 944 ordained native and 1,437 unordained native workers. It no longer appoints as missionaries people who are not graduates of a standard college and seminary.

What marvelous depths Roman Catholic theological argumentation can reach may be seen from this paragraph cited by the *Presbyterian* from a Belgium paper: "We believers ought to listen when the animals speak to us in the name of God. When cocks crow and the hens cackle, when the sheep bleat and the cows low, when the birds sing, they are simply calling out to us, who are created for eternity, 'Do not eat me on Fridays! Do not eat me on other fast-days!' Do we understand their language?"

The cause of unionism was furnished much water for its mill by the action of the Archbishop of Canterbury, spoken of thus by Canon Anson Phelps Stokes of the Washington Cathedral, Washington, D. C.: "I am convinced that the spirit of the Oxford Conference, which had its climax in the final Communion service, in which, with the approval of the Archbishop of Canterbury, all baptized communicants were invited, represented the essential unity of Christian churches in a most impressive way." The *Presbyterian* finds a fly in the ointment because no "non-episcopally ordained delegate" was asked by the archbishop to assist him in this Communion service. Thinking of the course of the archbishop who communes with non-Anglicans but refuses to let one of their pastors assist him, one is reminded of the "blind guides which strain at a gnat and swallow a camel."

A writer in the *Presbyterian* says: "Professor Virgilius Ferm, Professor of Philosophy in the College of Wooster, O., has recently issued a book entitled *First Chapters in Religious Philosophy*. The book has been reviewed by Joseph D. Ryan in the columns of the *Presbyterian* and by Prof. D. M. Allan, Ph. D., in the *Union Seminary Review*, Richmond, Va. Both reviewers agree that the author is an extreme Liberal. One reviewer does not recommend it to the general or evangelical reader. The other concludes that the author's theism is substantial, but his Christianity tenuous. The subjects treated are: God, Values, Good and Evil, Soul and Body, Human Freedom, Prayer, and Immortality. The evolutionary science and modern critical scholarship are accepted as verities not needing present proof." Not having read the book of Dr. Ferm, we are not in a position to say whether the above unfavorable judgment is justified or not. Since Dr. Ferm, according to the *Lutheran World Almanac* of 1933, is a ministerial member of the Augustana Synod, the allegations of the critic quoted take on special significance and should be investigated by the proper authorities.

When, as an exchange relates, the Unitarian congregation Church of Our Father in Portland asked to be admitted to membership in the Portland Council of Churches, many Christian people saw in this a challenge and vigorously opposed the granting of the request. Some of them stated that, if the Unitarians were admitted, seventy-five per cent. of the other

churches would withdraw from the Council. The Unitarians then resolved to revoke their application. But now the liberal elements in the churches are bestirring themselves and demand the Unitarians should be invited to become members. A struggle between the would-be Bible Christians and the Liberals lies ahead, which, if it comes, may be the very best thing that could happen to the Portland Council of Churches.

How Dr. Bersell of the Augustana Synod thinks some of the difficulties of church-work should be removed he expressed in the following paragraph of his address to his synod:

"These points are important in my judgment: 1. That the matter of recommending ministerial candidates to a vacant congregation be left exclusively to duly constituted synodical or conference officers or boards; 2. that authority be vested in some official or group of officials of synod or conference to adjust 'maladjustments' in the relationship of pastors and congregations; 3. that it be made easier for older pastors to get a call to a church by means of the option of an automatic termination to the permanent call at a satisfactory retirement age." If all congregations voluntarily accept such an arrangement and abide by it, very well. It cannot be imposed on them *iure divino*.

In Albany, N. Y., where for the last twelve years schoolchildren had been released one hour every week for religious instruction, objection has suddenly been raised to this plan. The State Commissioner of Education has ruled that only one half hour a week can be granted. The trouble was caused by the inability of Roman Catholics and Protestants to agree on the particular hour which was to be set aside for this purpose.

The mother of Joseph Stalin, Russian dictator, attended church last Easter. In commenting on this action Stalin explained that she had been brought up in an age when the church seemed a necessity, but she would not be permitted to do so again. Furthermore, she would not be permitted to use the name Stalin again. Her name should be that of her husband, Schugaschwilli. A short time later, on June 4, she died.

N. L. C. B.

Speaking to a class in Godlessness at Leningrad, Professor Schukowski declared that in the event of a European war the Russian communistic youth would march out in a war against Christianity, and the red flag of Communism should be hoisted over the cathedrals of St. Peter in Rome, Notre Dame in Paris, and Westminster Abbey in London. These great buildings would then be turned into atheistic museums like the old cathedral at Leningrad. — N. L. C. B.

The *Religious Telescope* tells of 433 higher-ranking students of an unusually superior high school near Philadelphia who were recently without warning asked to write out the Lord's Prayer, which has for many years been repeated every morning in that school. Forty-eight per cent. wrote it correctly. The other fifty-two per cent. produced amazing versions and variations, such as: "I will be done." "God will be done." "Give us no trespasses." "Deliver us from salvation." "Forgive us this day our daily bread." — N. L. C. B.

A pastor whose congregation banned church suppers and who in the *Christian Century* describes the immense progress which his church

made when it began to rely entirely on direct contributions, says that the committee which had been appointed to study the situation the church was in prior to adoption of the new course found "that only thirty per cent. of the members of this church were recognizing the obligations of their membership. We soon learned that this is a universal situation. What of the other seventy per cent.? What has the church been doing about them? What should the church do about them? What is possible for the church to do about them?" Following the recommendation of the committee, the congregation decided to get in touch with all the church-members for pledges. "At no time since the plan was adopted has there been less than eighty per cent. of the budget pledged nor less than seventy-five per cent. of the members pledging."

Southern Presbyterians, in convention assembled at Montreat, N. C., in May, heard a committee propose that these words of the Confession of Faith (Westminster) be omitted: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated or foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." The various presbyteries will have to vote on the question whether this motion is to prevail or not.

To our surprise Prof. W. Harvey-Jellie of the Presbyterian College at Montreal, Canada, maintains, in a series of articles on Calvin, that the doctrine of a double election was not taught by Calvin himself, but by overzealous disciples. He says, after having sketched the spread of Calvinism: "But meantime the attitude of the lay public became less sympathetic towards the stern aspects of the doctrine of predestination and divine election. Hyper-Calvinism, with its specious claim to be the logical result of the Genevan doctrine, was rendering the teaching of Calvin repellent to the simple believer by supplementing the reformer's statement of an election to salvation by the stern doctrine of a complementary election to damnation. The bald presentation of such a tenet almost inevitably awakened a popular revulsion, and there arose an extreme repugnance to a theological system which could generate so dark a proposition. It must no doubt be admitted that we have here reached a mystery which defies the mind of man to penetrate. It is the ancient dilemma of the relation between free will and determinism, which neither philosophy nor theology is capable of illuminating." That Calvin taught the doctrine here rejected can be seen from the quotations submitted in Fischer's *History of Doctrine*, in particular when he points to *Inst.* III, 21, 7.

In an argument, a few years ago, over the New Testament a newspaper reporter advised a young Jewish lawyer, Hyman Appelman, to learn more about that book before he tried to discuss it. Appelman took the advice, and as a result became a Christian. Already well educated, he is now approaching graduation from a Baptist seminary.

The Presbyterian

A report on Presbyterian mission-work in Korea says: "Presbyterians North and South do a major share of the Christian work in that

country, and much of their work has been educational. A truly great system of schools has been in operation for some years, but most of that system will disappear now because schools are being required to attend the shrines, and rather than bow at a heathen shrine we will simply close our schools." It will be remembered that Korea is under the dominion of Japan.

"The divinity school, especially if it is associated with a university, is confronted with a very practical question. Does it want its professors to maintain an attitude of academic calm and scientific disinterestedness under all conditions, so that their respectability in the eyes of their university colleagues may not be compromised? Or does it want them to be deeply concerned about remedying the conditions which their professional studies find to be wrong? Is the main object of a divinity school the advancement of pure scholarship in the fields of the theological sciences? Or is it the education of men who will both understand the nature of religion and be energized by a strong determination to make it effective for the salvation of individuals and society?" So writes the editor of the *Christian Century*, criticizing the dismissal of Prof. Jerome Davis in the divinity school of Yale because of insufficient scholarship. It is interesting to note that unwittingly Dr. Morrison champions the Lutheran view of theology as a *habitus practicus*. A.

Deaths.—The U. L. C. A. lost one of its prominent leaders when Dr. John A. W. Haas, president emeritus of Muhlenberg College in Allentown, Pa., died, Thursday, July 22, seventy-four years old. Dr. Haas, author of a number of books and pamphlets, was a conservative theologian. With respect to the Scriptures, however, he, too, was unwilling to defend the absolute inerrancy of the Bible.

In Germany Dr. Wilhelm Zoellner, who from 1935 till last January served as chairman of the Reich Church Commission, died July 17, seventy-seven years old. For twenty years he had been general superintendent of the Protestant District of Westphalia.

On July 8 Dr. C. J. Bengston, who for almost twenty years served as editor of the *Lutheran Companion* (Augustana Synod), departed this life. A.

National Lutheran Radio Week.—"Preach the Gospel to every creature," Mark 16, 15. In harmony with this majestic command, given the Church by the risen Christ, the Synodical Radio Committee last year called into being National Lutheran Radio Week, a very successful venture. The Reformation Week, October 31 to November 6, has been designated as N. L. R. W. for 1937. The purpose? *The inauguration of Lutheran broadcasts in every locality where a radio station is available, daily, or as often as possible, during this one week, preferably throughout the year.* Inasmuch as station managers generally make their plans early, contacts with them and preparations for the programs should be made as soon as possible.

Through the instrumentality of the American Lutheran Publicity Bureau negotiations are pending with the National Broadcasting Company, the Columbia Broadcasting System, and the Mutual Broadcasting System to secure time on the major chains for Lutheran Week.

Rev. G. Christian Barth, Cincinnati, O., member of Synod's Board of Directors, will sponsor a globe-encircling sacred Lutheran DX (distance) program over WLW, 700 k. c., 500,000 watts, namely, during the night of Thursday, November 4, and the morning of Friday, November 5, 2—2.30 A. M., E. S. T.; 1—1.30 A. M., C. S. T.; 12—12.30 A. M., M. S. T.; 11—11.30 P. M., P. S. T. The speaker will be Dr. J. W. Behnken, President of the Missouri Synod. The program will also be broadcast over WLW's short-wave station W8XAL. Tune in; tell others; and write Pastor Barth, c/o WLW, Cincinnati, O., U. S. A., after the program.

"Their line is gone out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world." Ps. 19, 4.

HERMAN H. HOHENSTEIN

Secretary of Synodical Radio Committee

II. Ausland

Das Hebräische an den höheren Lehranstalten in Bayern. Wie aus einer Mitteilung in der „Allgemeinen Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirchenzeitung“ hervorgeht, hat letzten Winter das Staatsministerium die Aufhebung des hebräischen Wahlunterrichts an den höheren Lehranstalten in Bayern verfügt. Daraufhin hat der dortige evangelisch-lutherische Landeskirchenrat, dessen Vorsitzender Bischof Meiser ist, eine Bitte an das Staatsministerium für Unterricht und Kultus gerichtet, woraus wir einige Sätze hier abdrucken:

„Durch diese Maßnahme wird die wissenschaftliche Ausbildung des Pfarrernachwuchses, auf die auch der Staat bisher großen Wert gelegt hat, ganz außerordentlich erschwert. Die Kirche kann nicht darauf verzichten, von ihren Dienern eine gründliche, auch wissenschaftlich-sprachliche, Kenntnis des Alten Testaments zu fordern. Denn sie ist die Verkünderin einer geschichtlichen Religion. Der Herr der Kirche ist als Glied eines bestimmten Volkes in die Welt eingetreten. . . . Daraus ergibt sich auch, daß die künftigen Diener der Kirche imstande sein müssen, das Alte Testament sprachlich richtig zu erfassen. Die Erwerbung der hierzu nötigen Kenntnisse kann aber nicht ohne großen Schaden erst der Universität zugewiesen werden. Die Zeit des Theologiestudiums ist durch die Notwendigkeiten des Arbeitsdienstes, der Wehrpflicht an der nationalpolitischen Erziehung ohnehin schon viel stärker als früher beschränkt, während der Umfang desselben ganz erheblich gewachsen ist. Kann der Theologe künftig erst auf der Universität mit dem Hebräischen beginnen, so geht ihm notwendigste kostbare Zeit fürs Studium verloren. Er ist auch erst nach ein paar Jahren so weit, daß er sich wissenschaftlich mit dem Alten Testament beschäftigen kann. Die deutsche evangelische Theologie hatte — nicht zuletzt durch ihre gründliche sprachliche Schulung — bis heute die führende Stellung im Weltprotestantismus. Diese Führerstellung wird bedroht, wenn der deutsche Theologe künftig nicht mehr die Zeit hat, dem Studium der Theologie gründlich obzuliegen. Es würde auch im evangelischen Ausland zweifellos sehr Aufsehen erregen, wenn die Anforderungen an die sprachliche Ausbildung der deutschen Theologen, die den Ruhm der deutschen Theologie mit begründet haben, von der Kirche bedeutend herabgesetzt werden müßten. Unsere höheren Schulen haben von jeher ihre Ehre darein gesetzt, dem künftigen Studenten neben der allgemeinen Bildung auch noch besondere, für sein Einzelstudium notwendige Kenntnisse auf dem Wege des Wahlunterrichts zu vermitteln. Wie für das Studium

in andern Fakultäten, geschieht das auch seit alters für das Studium der Theologie durch den hebräischen Sprachunterricht der höheren Schulen. Es wäre eine *Ausnahme*, die sehr bittere Empfindungen wecken würde, wenn jetzt in Bayern nur den künftigen Theologen diese Möglichkeit der Vorbereitung aufs Hochschulestudium genommen würde." E.

The Oxford Conference.— It will be difficult fully to evaluate the discussions and resolutions of the Oxford meeting held in July this year, which was supposed to be ecumenical, till complete reports of the proceedings have been published. From an interesting account sent the *Christian Century* by Charles Clayton Morrison, its editor, attending the Conference, we take over some items that appear enlightening. Five subjects, so he says, were made the foci of the deliberations: "Church Unity"; "Church and State"; "Church and Ecumenical Order"; "Church, Community, and State in Relation to Education"; "The Ecumenical Church and the World of Nations." Reading these titles one does not feel surprised to hear Dr. Morrison say that at the conference there was agreement on the thesis that the Church must accept responsibility for the creation of a Christian civilization. While Prof. Emil Brunner, rated as a Barthian, spoke for the "withdrawal of the Church from the field of social action and its concentration upon the saving of souls by the preaching of an individualistic Gospel," Dean W. R. Matthews of St. Paul's, London, immediately followed him with a message of the opposite tenor, and Barthian influence did not thereafter become evident. While Dr. Morrison was a member of the section that had to do with the relation of the Church to the community, he writes: "I am also drawn by my peculiar interests to the section dealing with education, for it is my belief that the modern Church must assume far greater responsibilities for the education of its children than in the past. It was a blunder of magnificent proportions when the Protestant churches complacently committed to the State the education of their children." With reference to the discussions pertaining to "Church and State" he writes: "The Church must find for itself a new apologetic which will both affirm its social responsibility and avoid any dependence upon the State or upon temporal instrumentalities for the discharge of this responsibility. This is the basic problem of the Oxford Conference. It is being solved by an analysis of the relation in which Church, State, and community stand to one another and by affirming at one and the same time the complete independence and autonomy of the Church and its responsibility for the salvation of man throughout the whole fabric of his social relationships. It thus avoids Calvin's error of claiming superiority for the Church over the State by affirming the sovereignty of God over the State. And it avoids Luther's error of dividing the common life of man into two domains, the inner and the outer (which resulted in the granting of absolute supremacy to the State in the political and social order), by affirming the unity of the inner and the outer life of man and the sovereignty of God over both." It could easily be demonstrated that Morrison does not understand Luther, who by no means wished to make Christianity a plant which was to be segregated in a hot-house, never to be taken into the street and market-place. Witness his plea for Christian schools so that the nation might obtain Christian judges, magistrates, lawyers, teachers, and citizens.

Did the Conference propose to put the quietus on the preaching of the social gospel? Apparently not. Dr. Morrison writes: "How the Church is to discharge its responsibility to gain for God the sovereignty which is His alone has received many practical answers in the discussions and the formal reports of the sections. But the chief answer which is heard as a kind of refrain, recurring again and again, is: By being a Church. If the Church may not retire quietistically into the subjective region of individual piety, neither may it become a kind of state or a political party or any other sort of secular agency, using the instruments of the temporal order for spiritual ends. Its witness is to be borne by the realization of the divine community in its own life and by the carrying of this witness into the social order through the activities of its members, singly and in groups, in the multifarious relationships in which they stand—in the family, the school, the economic order, and the State. But this does not absolve the Church from the obligation to give guidance to its members and directly to the social community in respect of the concrete issues which arise. The Church cannot 'be a Church' in a vacuum. Its very being necessarily involves it in the common life of the community. Moreover, its own community is no other-worldly community, but the revelation of the true community of humanity. It is a sacramental [?] anticipation of the community which God lays for all mankind. The Church's ethics, both for itself and for its members as individuals, springs from this revelation of the divine will. Therefore the Church is responsible evermore to interpret its revelation of the will of God for the reordering of society at those points where the organized system under which men live shows any injustice and to strive for a better social order." If we understand Dr. Morrison correctly, he and the Oxford Conference want the Church to address itself not only to its members, but to the community in general by preaching morality to the unconverted to bring about better conditions. That, of course, is the social gospel.

On the question of pacifism the Conference was and remained divided, some members holding that war never may be participated in by Christians (their spokesman being Canon Charles E. Raven), while others, led by the Archbishop of York, contended that there is "such a thing as a just war and that loyalty to the Christian faith is not violated by a Christian citizen's participation in it."

The Conference seems to have almost unanimously taken the position that "the Church is fully independent of the State, that it must not accept a privileged position at the hands of the State, and cannot yield to the State's dictation."

Whether the doctrine of the vicarious atonement of Christ was acknowledged as being the center of all Christian teaching such reports as have reached us do not say.

All of us see at once, of course, that the Conference was an exponent of unionism, which fact was emphasized in the joint Communion service held at the conclusion.

The state churches of Germany were not officially represented, their government having refused them permission to attend. The Conference sent them a letter which expressed sympathy with them in their present

struggles and voiced the thought that, after all, the Church is one and that, if one member suffers, the others suffer also. Since in this communication the Roman Catholic Church in Germany is alluded to as being subjected to persecution as well as the Protestants, it has been criticized quite freely by German Protestant spokesmen. Besides, there are other features of the Conference which failed to receive the endorsement of some church leaders in Germany. The *Allgemeine Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung* has published an article on the Conference which deserves careful reading. We append here the last part of it.

“Ein Urteil ueber das Gesamtergebnis ist erst moeglich, wenn saemtliche Akten vorliegen. Nur soviel koennen wir schon heute sagen, dass es doch ein grosses Ereignis war, wenn hier das Weltweite des Christentums und des Evangeliums in Erscheinung trat, wenn ferne Brueder sich die Haende reichten und in einer Welt des Unglaubens die Welt des Glaubens einen sichtbaren Ausdruck fand. ‘Dass sie alle eins seien’, dieses Gebet Christi leuchtete durch diese Weltkirchenkonferenz hindurch. Freilich auch das andere, das wir von Stockholm her kennen, blieb nicht im Hintergrund, das Bestreben und die Hoffnung, die Welt Christus zu unterwerfen. Man muss immer bedenken, dass der Geist des angelsaechsischen Christentums das Wort fuehrte. Es waren doch nicht bloss geistliche Toene, sondern auch irgendwie politische Toene, die da und dort aufklangen. Man moechte die Kirche zu einer Macht bringen, zu einer Weltmacht gegenueber den Maechten der Welt; in diese Linie gehoert auch der Drang nach Organisationen, einer die Welt umfassenden Organisation, durch Einrichtung eines ‘Oekumenischen Rates der Kirchen’. Werden sich alle Kirchen von diesem Rat beraten lassen? Wird es nicht zu Schwierigkeiten mit dem Staat fuehren, wenn eine uebernationale ‘Organisation’ in das Leben der Kirche dareinredet? Hat nicht bereits die ‘Botschaft’ gezeigt, wie angelsaechsisches Denken sich nicht ueberall mit deutschem Denken deckt? Schon Landesbischof Dr. Ihmels warnte in Stockholm, die Kirche auf das Geleise weltlicher Machtansprueche zu fuehren; er betonte stark: ‘Mein Reich ist nicht von dieser Welt.’ Und dies Reich wird nicht auf dem Wege menschlicher Organisationen gebaut. So sehr wir es begruessen, wenn die Christen in aller Welt Fuehlung zueinander nehmen, einander staerken, mit ihren Gaben einander dienen, so wuenschen wir doch, dass man sich der Schranken bewusst bleibe, die das Wort Gottes aufzeigt. Die Einheit der Kirche ist Sache des Glaubens, nicht des Schauens; und ihr Bau waechst empor im schlichten Gehorsam gegen das Wort, in Verkuendigung des Evangeliums und im Tragen des Kreuzes. Die Kirche wird nie *ecclesia gloriae* in dieser Welt werden; *ecclesia crucis*, das ist ihr Ruhm, das ist ihre Verheissung.”

There is no doubt in our mind that much of what is stated in the above excerpt is true. That the writer, the editor of the *Allgemeine Ev.-Luth. Kirchenzeitung*, Dr. Laible, does not see the unionism involved in the Conference and that he seems to hold that being an Anglo-Saxon necessarily implies doing church-work after the method of the Reformed, if church-work is engaged in at all, instead of merely pointing out that in Anglo-Saxon countries Reformed theology is predominant, are points we note with regret.

A.