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Theological Observer. – Kirchllich Zeitgeschichtliches

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Theological Observer — Kirchl. Zeitgeschichtliches

I. Amerika

What Is This Word of God which Is in the Bible or Back of the Bible?—Those who refuse to identify the word of Scripture with the Word of God insist that the Bible still is a valuable book because it contains the Word of God or has the Word of God back of it. But they seem to be unable to tell us what exactly this Word of God back of the Bible is. We have been waiting all these years for a clear, definite definition of their "Word of God." We had hoped that the wise men gathered at Edinburgh last year for the World Conference on Faith and Order would be able to formulate their ideas on this matter in a plain statement. The editor of the *Christian Century* sat in with them, and this is what he learned: "The concept of the 'Word of God' was one of the most difficult upon which the conference expended its effort. Happily there appeared to be no literalists in the conference. The Bible, taken as a book, was not regarded as synonymous with the Word. The Word produced the Bible. 'A testimony in words is by divine ordering provided for the revelation uttered by the Word [surely an awkward, if not a meaningless, sentence]. This testimony is given in Holy Scripture, which thus [italics mine] affords the primary norm for the Church's teaching, worship, and life [a *non sequitur* surely].' But the Word itself—what is it? 'It is ever living and dynamic and inseparable from God's activity. God reveals Himself to us by what He does, by that activity by which He has wrought the salvation of men and is working for their restoration to personal fellowship with Himself.' I like this immensely; only I wish it had not been made obscure by the far-fetched necessity of connecting it up with the concept of 'Word.' God's action in history, in the Church, and in our own individual lives is indeed the ground of man's salvation; but it overstrains the meaning of 'Word' to make it bear the meaning of action. To theologians it can be made plain enough by quoting John: 'In the beginning was the Word, . . . and the Word was God'; but for other types of intelligence that seems a long way round. Though the Bible was held subordinate to the Word, it was held up as the norm of the Christian faith and practise." (*Chr. Cent.*, Sept. 8, 1937, p. 1096.)

Editor Morrison seems to be dissatisfied with the results of the deliberations of his brethren at Edinburgh on this point. The remarks in brackets in his quotation from the statement of the conference ["surely an awkward, if not a meaningless, sentence," etc.] indicate that. He thinks that the brethren, in defining the term, only obscured its meaning. He himself is on the side of those who make the Bible subordinate to the Word. He is happy that "there appeared no literalists in the conference." But he is not happy that the conference was unable to define the concept 'Word of God' which is in and back of the Bible for the benefit of the common "types of intelligence."

Several things are clear to us. We see that the men of Edinburgh

refuse to identify Scripture and the Word of God. "The Bible was held subordinate to the Word." Furthermore, it is clear to us that, if the activity of God is His Word and that this activity is still working, it ought to produce an expanded Bible and keep on producing enlarged Bibles, containing new revelations. But the point in question, the definition of their "Word of God," we can grasp as little as the keen-witted editor of the *Christian Century*.

By the way, the statement that "happily there appeared to be no literalists in the conference" is not quite accurate. Professor Zwemer was there. But perhaps Dr. Morrison did not notice him. Perhaps Dr. Zwemer did not speak loud enough. The *Lutheran Herald's* report of the conference contains this paragraph: "The doctrine of the Word of God brought additional difficulties. The emphasis on the Word seemed too much limited to the idea of 'Logos,' the Word made flesh, of John 1. The Word of Scripture did not receive quite the emphasis that the Lutherans wanted to give it. Verbal inspiration was definitely rejected, being interpreted by every one as mechanical dictation. When an Anglican bishop wanted to inject the statement that the Scripture is 'not an infallible source' of knowledge, Professor Zwemer of Princeton immediately answered that the injection of this phrase would bring violent schism into the Church because of 'all of us who still believe in plenary and verbal inspiration.' The Bible was indeed accepted as a means of grace, but the inspiration of the Bible was not extended to the entire Scripture." (*Kirchliche Zeitschrift*, 1937, p. 692.)

To get back to our question, What is this Word of God which is in the Bible or back of the Bible? Perhaps Dr. E. G. Homrighausen, elected to a professorship in Princeton Seminary, can tell us. Dr. Homrighausen, who according to *Christianity of Today* (November, 1937) declares that "few intelligent Protestants can still hold to the idea that the Bible is an infallible book," proceeds to answer our question in this wise: "The Bible is not the actual Word of God, but merely a human witness to what the Word of God did in and with men and history. The words of the Bible are not to be believed because they are in the Bible. In reading the Bible, there comes to me a strange language, there confronts me a real God, and there emerges before me something about life that I do not discover anywhere else. It is because the Scriptures do this that they are 'sacred.' Not all the Bible does this for me. There is much in the Bible like chaff, or rather like the seemingly insignificant parts of a watch. There is a residue in the Bible that remains intact in spite of all its inaccuracies, its antedated cosmology and science." This definition is similar to the Edinburgh declaration, — What God did in and with men and history and what He does to me while I am reading the Bible, that is the Word of God, — and Dr. Morrison would say that it is just as obscure as the Edinburgh definition. — Perhaps Professor Homrighausen can make the matter clear to his colleague Professor Zwemer while they are comparing their lectures.

E.

How an American Presbyterian Appraises Barthianism. — That Karl Barth, coming from the Reformed camp, does not carry all adherents of Reformed theology with him is evident from some trenchant criticisms

of his teachings published in the *Presbyterian* by Dr. David S. Clark and here submitted. His fling at German writers need not be taken too seriously because we do not believe that the Germans have managed to monopolize vagueness and obscurity. Dr. Clark's own sentences might be quoted as evidence. However, his strictures on Barth's doctrine concerning the Word of God are as justified as they are illuminating. He writes in part:

"The Achilles heel of Barthian Theology is his doctrine of Scripture, especially of inspiration. The formation of the written word is a 'paradox' in Barthian language. A paradox is a contradiction. The written word has a human and a divine element, which, according to Barth, are in contradiction. The human letter, or writing, is the human element, and as it is wholly human and contradicts the divine, it is imperfect, and therefore an infallible word is impossible.

"Barth is willing to admit that the influx of the divine revelation to the prophet's mind is of God and is infallible. But the efflux, resulting in the writing of the Word, is only human and faulty. All this is due to an inadequate view of inspiration and a neglect of the testimony of the Scriptures, which are our only source of information.

"One error of Barth in this is an inheritance from the philosophy of Hegel. We observe in studying Hegel's philosophy that he called a difference a contradiction. A human element and a divine element are different, but not a contradiction. If you are a semipantheist, you will identify the human and divine. If you are a normal theist, you will recognize an almighty immanence and a supernatural providence that can guarantee an infallible efflux and produce an infallible Word.

"Barth's conception of the Word of God is subjected to a tenuous refinement like Kant's '*Ding an sich*,' till it is difficult to get one's fingers on it. The written word is not the Word of God, according to Barth. The spoken word is not the Word. It is something in and through and behind all this.

"Here is the German's tendency to go back of the thing to the thing behind the thing, which always results in vagueness. A good example is the recent Form Criticism. It all has an unsettling tendency.

"Somewhat more confusing is Barth's dialectic, which he inherited from Hegel, who borrowed it from Fichte. It is called 'logic'; but in our estimation it is not logic at all. When a conclusion necessarily results from the combination of major and minor premises, we call that logic. But the German scheme of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis is to our mind an invalid process, because there is no necessary connection in thought between the synthesis and the other terms. But perhaps we may say casually that a German would not be indigenous without some idiosyncrasy. The tendency to mere speculation and vagueness is confusing to an American who looks for conciseness and terse expression. Theology as a whole is capable of simple and lucid statement. Job said: 'Oh, that my adversary had written a book!' But we may say: 'Oh, that the German critics would talk United States!'

"Barth deserves praise for exalting the sovereignty and authority of God; but his doctrine of Scripture is fatal to any sound theology." A.

The Shakers Rapidly Disappearing.—The Associated Press recently reported the death of two members in the Shaker colony at West Albany, N. Y. Only four members remain in this "family." In response to an inquiry in the fall of 1932 we were informed that about 100 members remained in the five Shaker colonies, but that this number was rapidly diminishing. In this letter Elder Shepherd added the plaintive note: "Our work seems to be drawing to a close." The Shaker Society, founded by "Mother" Ann Lee in 1776, is significant not only because it represents the most successful experiment in Communism, but especially because its religious tenets are weird and unnatural. The entire Shaker system is built on perverted sex notions. According to their official handbook, sexual lust in Adam and his descendants is the cause of human depravity, and therefore absolute celibacy is the only means of attaining redemption and perfection. Article X in the *Synopsis of Doctrine*, based on a literalistic interpretation of Luke 20:34 ff., considers it perfectly normal and righteous that the natural family on which the world relies for social order and continuance should be dissolved and pass away before the family of Christ. But the divine institution of matrimony cannot be set aside without impunity. Writing against the celibacy of the Roman priests, Melancthon said that God avenges the contempt of His own gift and ordinance in those who prohibit marriage. (Apology, XXIII:53.) History speaks a clear language concerning the ultimate fate of those groups which ignore marriage, either by advocating celibacy (Conrad Beissel of Ephrata, Geo. Rapp of the Harmonists, Jos. Baumler of the Separatists, "Father Divine") or by practising free love (Charles Fourier and Saint-Simon of France, the Oneida Community, House of David, Theosophy, etc.). F. E. M.

The new church calendar proposed by the Federal Council is discussed by the *Living Church* (Dec. 11, 1937) as follows: "It is interesting to compare it with that of our own Church. The seasons are, in general, the same—Advent, Christmastide, Epiphanytide, Lent, Eastertide (which includes Ascensiontide and Whitsuntide). However, the Federal Council calendar has extended Whitsuntide to the Sunday after Trinity, which is designated 'The First Sunday in Kingdomtide.' This new season of Kingdomtide continues to the end of the Christian year, the last Sunday in Kingdomtide being designated also as 'Thanksgiving Sunday.' The Federal Council defines Kingdomtide as a 'word coined to stress Jesus' ideal of the kingdom of God on earth.' . . . Other divergencies in the designation of the Sundays between the Federal Council calendar and that of our own Church are the observance of the Fourth Sunday in Advent as 'Christmas Sunday' and the continued numbering of the Sundays after Epiphany through Septuagesima, Sexagesima, and Quinquagesima. This latter also seems to us unfortunate as it eliminates the season of preparation for Lent, so that the followers of the new calendar will jump directly from the joyous Epiphany season to the penitential Lenten one without the gradual transition that the Church provides in her calendar. The Federal Council calendar does not include any specific commemorations of saints, though it does designate November 1 as All Saints' Day and also (rather surprisingly) No-

ember 2 as All Souls' Day. We are delighted to see this latter commemoration, which has unfortunately been dropped from our own *Prayer-book* calendar, though the observance of it in the Church is wide-spread. Other fixed festivals are Christmas Eve, the Nativity, the festival of the Christening (January 1), Twelfth Night (January 5), Epiphany, Presentation, the Annunciation, the Transfiguration, and Reformation Day (Oct. 31). . . . Among the more important special days are Race Relations Day, Brotherhood Day, the World Day of Prayer, Rural Life Sunday, Nature Sunday, Bible Sunday, and so on. Among the special commemorations a new one is festival of the Christian Home, observed the second Sunday in May and intended to take the place of Mother's Day. We like this change in emphasis, since Mother's Day has become so commercialized. The Church's true Mother's Day is the Feast of Annunciation. Reformation Day is taken from the Lutheran calendar. The inclusion of this commemoration in a Protestant calendar is understandable, but we should have preferred to see the designation of the last Sunday in October as the Feast of Christ the King. This festival, instituted in the Roman Catholic Church by the present Pope, is one that should appeal to all Christians, and that we should like to see made universal. It would have been a fine gesture of catholicity on the part of the Federal Council to adopt it. On the whole we think that the Federal Council calendar is an exceptionally fine one, and we hope that it will be widely adopted throughout Protestantism. Its wide-spread use should be a hopeful step in the direction of the ultimate reunion of Christendom." E.

Pastor's Tribute to a Pastor.—From the Rev. C. W. Seville, a member of the Nova Scotia Lutheran Synod, comes this tribute to the late Pastor Eric Hedeem of Topeka, Kans., who was killed in an automobile accident: "I learned to know and to love Pastor Hedeem while I spent ten months in a Topeka hospital in the course of four major operations. He administered to me the Sacrament of the Altar and was indeed a spiritual father to me. The joy of our Lutheran faith with peace in Christ Jesus—oh, our eternal God-man Substitute! Pastor Hedeem's passing was a great blow to me; yet the passing of Enoch and Elijah were great blows to their friends, too. Pastor Hedeem was a manly pastor, full of the grace and love of Christ in his heart. When he walked into a sick-room, we always felt that he was conscious of his mission as an ambassador of Christ. What a blessing for a congregation to have such a man of God!" This is printed not only as a tribute to the memory of Pastor Hedeem, but as a reminder to all pastors of the exalted character of their calling and of the deep significance of their spiritual ministrations to those who are sick or distressed.

Lutheran Companion, Dec. 9, 1937

Brief Items.—On November 1 Dr. Melancthon William Jacobus, dean emeritus and acting president of Hartford Theological Seminary, departed this life, eighty-one years old. His special field was the New Testament. He became well known as one of the scholars that issued the *Funk & Wagnalls Bible Dictionary*.

The Anglican Church mourns the loss of the Rev. Dick Sheppard, who at various periods of his life was vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, dean of Canterbury, and canon of St. Paul's in London. He had just been elected lord rector of the University of Glasgow, but did not have the opportunity to deliver his rectorial address. He was a pronounced pacifist.

Now that the Oxford Conference lies several months behind us, it becomes known that not all participants were enthusiastic about what happened there. The Rev. B. I. Bell, canon of St. John's Episcopal Cathedral, Providence, R. I., stated in a letter printed in the *New York Times* that there was more division than unity at Oxford, and furthermore, that the British "were shocked," the orthodox East "was scandalized," the Scandinavians "were dazed," and the Americans "were taken in." The presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church in our country, the Rev. James de Wolf Perry, who likewise attended the conference, stated that in his view the most significant finding of the Oxford Conference was "that the Church's function in the modern world is personal and not institutional, to Christianize the individuals and thus to correct evils attaching to the social, political, or economic structure." If this report, taken from the *Christian Century*, is correct, many members of the conference must have seen a strange light.

In the *Living Church* we read the following in a correspondence sent from Youngstown, O.: "Upon invitation of the Rev. L. W. S. Stryker, rector, seventy members of the Ministerial Association of Youngstown attended a celebration of Holy Communion November 4 in St. John's Church here. Participants included members of the Presbyterian, United Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Christian churches. The Rev. F. H. Atkinson, rector of St. John's, Sharon, was the celebrant, assisted by the Rev. G. V. Higgins, rector of St. Andrew's, Youngstown, and the Rev. Messrs. A. J. Rantz and Paul Schwartz, curates, respectively, of the local parish and of St. John's, Sharon. The Rev. Mr. Stryker acted as instructor, explaining the history, meaning, and order of the service before the service began, and again at the sermon period. All the men made their communions and expressed deep appreciation of this privilege." These Episcopalians probably wished to salve their conscience by keeping the administration of the Sacrament in their own hands. But what of the sanction which they gave to the divergent teachings of the clergymen whom they invited to commune? And how did the Lutheran or Lutherans feel who participated?

In Russia, as the *Lutheran Companion* reports, help of the trade-unions is being enlisted to revive the fight on religion, although the Red Government is especially concerned over its failure to root out faith among peasants in the rural districts. Significant of the trend in Russia are reports to the effect that, whereas the Militant Godless League four years ago had an enrolment of five million members, it now has only two million enrolled. The writer, in concluding his comments, appropriately quotes Ps. 2.

All the Baptist churches in Rumania have been closed, if the government's decree, to be made effective on October 15, was enforced. This

word came indirectly from the Baptist World Alliance office in London. The Northern Baptist Convention of this country promptly appealed to the State Department "to intercede on behalf of (in the name of) six million Baptists in America, and officials promised to cable Bucharest immediately." At this writing the reason for the suppression has not been disclosed.—*Lutheran Standard*.

In a report of a Baptist meeting held in Scotland, Mr. Ernest Brown, member of Parliament and the Minister of Labor, delivered an address concerning which a correspondent of the *Christian Century* writes: "He quotes Scripture with fluent ease, giving chapter and verse without reference to notes. His statement that it is easier to preach a sermon on peace than a sermon about the saving of the soul evoked a ready response from his audience." Yes, people usually find a social gospel sermon more interesting than a discourse on the topic "What Must I Do to be Saved?"

On its new campus near Chestnut Hill, Philadelphia, Westminster Seminary recently dedicated the J. Gresham Machen Memorial Hall. President Edward H. Rian, of the board of trustees, gave the address.

Exchange

From Russia comes the news that the purges which are going on in that harassed country are now being extended to the clergy, some of whom are accused of working against the interests of the Soviet Government and of being foreign enemies. The announcement says that seven bishops have been put in prison, being accused of serving as spies of Germany and Japan. This particular phase of the purge is directed both against leaders of the Greek Orthodox Church and leaders of other churches.

The *Presbyterian Banner*, a paper more than a hundred years old, in December announced its intention to become defunct. The management had been able to finance the paper during the last fifteen years merely through the generosity of a friend who paid the huge deficits. The paper urged its readers to subscribe for a new monthly which is to be published by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *The Pageant*.

From Rome comes the news that the Pope has created five new cardinals. Three of them seem to be Italians, the fourth is a Frenchman, and the fifth a Briton. It is apparent that the Pope is very careful not to let the Latin countries, especially Italy, lose control of the college of cardinals.

The religious press carries the news that the town of Saloniki in Greece is to be given back the name it had at the time of St. Paul and is again to be known as Thessalonica.

It is sixty-five years ago that Rev. Paulin Gschwind, rector of the church of Starrkirch in Switzerland, was excommunicated for refusing to read the Vatican decrees of 1870 to his congregation. That action led to the founding of the Old Catholic Church in Switzerland. A celebration which was held in Starrkirch in October, 1937, to commemorate this event is evidence that Old Catholics in Switzerland have not become extinct.

In an article on Dr. John Bachman, who for sixty years was pastor of St. John's Church, Charleston, S. C., and who was better known as a scientist than as a theologian, being one of the friends of Audubon, we are told that he took an interest in the Negroes with whom he and his people came in contact. "His early acquaintanceship with slaves made him a power among the Southern Negroes. His sympathetic interest in their welfare is worthy of note even today; for the race problem, always difficult, is still not adequately solved. During his ministry in St. John's he trained three colored men for the ministry, one of whom became a missionary to Africa, another of whom died while ministering among his people in the South, and a third became a bishop in the Southern Methodist Church. Hundreds of Negroes attended his services in St. John's, sitting in the north gallery of the church." So writes the present pastor of St. John's in the *Lutheran*. Dr. Bachman, it may be mentioned, belonged to the South Carolina Synod.

In a Modernist paper we recently saw this sentence quoted: "The *obiter dicta* of preachers, at any rate in matters affecting the relations of Church and State, have done more harm in Christendom than any positive false teaching." While this is an overstatement, one cannot help wishing that all preachers might read it.

Press reports state that Judge Albert B. Maris, serving in a Federal court in Philadelphia, has decided that the school authorities of Minersville, Pa., have no right to keep children out of the public schools who on account of religious scruples refuse to salute the flag. The children in question belong to the sect called "Jehovah's Witnesses" (Russellites). While we certainly do not wish to hold a brief for the Russellites, we commend this decision because it upholds freedom of conscience. The judge is reported to have said: "Liberty of conscience means liberty for each individual to decide for himself what to him is religious. If an individual sincerely bases his acts or refusals to act on religious grounds, they must be accepted as such and may only be interfered with if it becomes necessary to do so in connection with the exercise of the police power, that is, if it appears that public safety, health, or morals, or property, or personal rights will be prejudiced by them." If that principle had been followed consistently, our country would not have witnessed the humiliating spectacle of parents who were deprived of their children, the latter being placed in State institutions because these people held that the salutation of the flag was a wicked thing.

Westminster Abbey has a new dean. It is Rt. Rev. Paul F. D. de Labilliere. On account of the prominence of his position religious journals take note of this appointment.

The well-known pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church in New York, Dr. William Pearson Merrill, at least realizes that, if people do not agree with each other in the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, they should not commune together. Speaking of the refusal of the Episcopalians to commune with members of other Protestant bodies (a refusal, however, which is not universally manifested), he writes in the *Christian Century*: "We can and should understand their position and attach small blame, if any, to their action. Nor should we insist on the

holding of intercommunion services under present conditions. . . . The Catholic who holds to that view of the Lord's Supper is perfectly consistent in refusing to participate in what to him is not the Christian Sacrament. But there is no defense possible for refusal on his part to submit the claim (that the officiant must have been properly ordained) to general and impartial investigation." Well said! A.

II. Ausland

Die Deutschen Heiden. „Nachdem bei den ‚Deutschen Christen‘ so viel vom biblischen Glauben gestrichen ist, wird nun auch der Glaube an ein ewiges Leben im biblischen Sinn gestrichen. So schreibt ein Vertreter der nationalkirchlichen D. C. in Württemberg, Studienrat Starck in Ludwigsburg, im ‚Deutschen Sonntag‘ über ‚Tod und Unsterblichkeit‘: ‚Glauben wir an ein persönliches Fortleben nach dem Tode? Welch falsche Frage, der man ihren Ursprung im Theoretischen anmerkt! Der als Werkzeug sich Gott zur Verfügung Stellende hat ein ganz anderes Lebensgefühl und Selbstbewußtsein als der Egoist und Materialist. Die, die träumen von einem persönlichen Fortleben im Jenseits voll ewiger Glückseligkeit, frei von aller Not und Trübsal, sind nichts anderes als Egoisten und himmlische Materialisten. Der dem Leben gehorsam Dienende hat eigentlich kein Selbstbewußtsein, sondern ein Volks- und Lebensbewußtsein. Er fühlt sich immer als ein Teil des Ganzen. Und nur als ein solches Stück Gottes hat er ewiges Leben. Dem, der Ewigkeit in sich trägt, ist nicht wichtig, daß er fortlebt (aus Angst oder Sehnsucht), sondern daß er weiterwirken darf als ein Teil jener ewig schaffenden und ringenden Kräfte, die das Weltall immer neu gestalten.‘ Das heißt mit andern Worten: Du bist tot und bleibst tot. Christus aber spricht: ‚Wer an mich glaubt, der wird leben, ob er gleich stirbe.‘“ (A. E. L. N., 1937, S. 1079.) Man nennt drüben die „Deutschen Christen“ „deutsche Heiden“. Diese Bezeichnung ist noch zu gut für diese Leute. E.

Kindertaufe. Auf der Wöllner Theologischen Lehrkonferenz (vom 30. August bis zum 3. September 1937) trug Prof. Dörne (Leipzig) in seinem Referat über „Offenbarung Gottes in der Taufe“ auch folgendes vor: „Eine besondere Besprechung fordert die kirchliche Praxis der Kindertaufe. Aus dem Neuen Testament ist sie weder als tatsächliche Ordnung der ältesten Christenheit noch als Befehl Christi zwingend zu begründen. Die neutestamentliche Praxis zeigt Glaube und Taufe in unmittelbarem Weieinander. Wird dieses Weieinander zum Gesetz erhoben, so entsteht der Baptismus. Ein Versuch, diese zum Gesetz erhobene Praxis des Neuen Testaments mit der Kindertaufübung der Kirche in Einklang zu bringen, ist die spekulative Hypothese des Kinderglaubens. Auch Luther hat sie vertreten, freilich seit 1529 die Kindertaufe von dieser Hypothese unabhängig gemacht. — Gegenüber allen diesen Ablehnungen und Fehlbegründungen hat die Kindertaufe ihr theologisches Recht im Universalismus und in der Unbedingtheit der Gnade. Gott hat die Welt mit sich versöhnt. Und seine Gnade geht dem Glauben immer voraus. Verstehen wir mit Luther das ganze Christenleben als eine Übung der Taufe, so kommt der Glaube nicht zu spät, indem er der Taufe nachfolgt. — Damit ist die Entscheidung darüber, ob die Kirche hier und jetzt zur tatsächlichen Übung der Kindertaufe das Recht hat, nicht vorweggenommen. Soll überhaupt Kindertaufe geübt

werden, so muß diese auch die ganze und wirkliche Taufe bleiben; die Kindertaufe darf nicht zu einem nur propädeutischen Akt herabgedrückt werden." (Allg. Ev.-Luth. N. Z., 1937, S. 1074.)

Wir fragen verwundert: Mit welchem Recht behält man die Kindertaufe bei, wenn man den Beweis für ihre Einsetzung aus Matth. 28, 19 und den andern Stellen nicht für zwingend ansieht und so nicht getwöhnt ist, daß die Taufe auch für die Kinder bestimmt ist? Die von Prof. Dörne für Beibehaltung der Kindertaufe angeführten Gründe geben dem Gewissen keinen Halt. Wenn die Kindertaufe nicht göttlich eingesetzt ist, mit welchem Recht darf der Apostel sagen, daß Christus die Kirche (zu der auch Kinder gehören) reinigt durch das Wasserbad im Wort, Eph. 5, 25 f.? Wir fragen verwundert: Wie kann man von „einer spekulativen Hypothese des Kinderglaubens“ reden, da der Herr doch ausdrücklich von Kindern redet, „die an mich glauben“, Matth. 18, 6? ja, von „Säuglingen“, die ihn loben, Matth. 21, 16? Und wir fragen verwundert: Wenn man dafürhält, daß die Lehre vom Kinderglauben eine spekulative Hypothese ist und doch die Kindertaufe beibehält, wie darf man die Warnung aussprechen, die Kindertaufe ja nicht zu einem nur propädeutischen Akt herabzudrücken? Auch Luther hätte sich über das Lehrurteil Prof. Dörnes gewundert. Er sagt: „Wo wir nicht . . . können beweisen, daß die jungen Kinder selbst glauben und eigenen Glauben haben, da ist es mein treuer Rat und Urteil, daß man stracks abstehe, je eher je besser, und taufe nimmermehr kein Kind.“ (XI, 490.) Luther hat gewiß nicht die Lehre von dem Kinderglauben als eine spekulative Hypothese behandelt. „Wenn die Kleinen zur Taufe gebracht werden . . . und der Priester mit ihnen handelt an Christi Statt, so segnet er sie und gibt ihnen den Glauben und das Himmelreich.“ (XI, 493.) Darf man von einem Kinderglauben reden? „Des haben wir starke und feste Sprüche: Matth. 19, 13—15; Mark. 10, 13—16; Luk. 18, 15. 16. . . Diese Sprüche wird uns niemand nehmen noch sie mit gutem Grund niederlegen.“ (XI, 491.) Luther hat auch dies gesagt: „Diese Neuen sagen auch, daß die Kinder keinen Glauben haben, wie der Papst, sondern daß man harren soll, bis sie groß werden.“ (XI, 1721.) Bekanntlich hat Luther auch im Großen Katechismus über Kindertaufe und Kinderglauben nicht Hypothesen aufgestellt, sondern feste Sprache geführt. — Um der Meinung entgegenzutreten, als könnten die alten Schriftbeweise für Kinderglauben und Kindertaufe bei scharfsinniger Exegese nicht bestehen, mögen einem der neuesten Kommentare, aus Lenskis Matthäusauslegung, hier Platz finden: “When Jesus adds the word about receiving ‘one such little child,’ we find it impossible, in spite of what the commentators say, to make this exclude actual children. . . . Those who eliminate children in v. 5 (Matt. 18) of course do so also here, v. 6. Often this is done because of τῶν πιστευόντων εἰς ἐμέ, the unwillingness to admit that children are able to believe. The exegesis thus becomes dogmatic. As capable as a little child is of natural trust toward mother, father, etc., so capable it is of having spiritual trust in its heart. Not the discursive features make faith what it is, but this essential quality of trust. As it remains in sleep, coma, insanity, senility, so it can go back to earliest infancy, Luke 1:41, 44. Delitzsch, *Biblische Psychologie*, 353.” (S. 664. 667.) “God perfects praise (brings forth perfect praise) ‘out of the mouth of babes and

sucklings,' Matt. 21:16. . . . God will have the praise due Him, even if inanimate stones, inarticulate babes must offer it, to the shame of men. It is useless for Delitzsch to dodge this meaning by making 'olei mean babes old enough to play and yoneq sucklings of similar age, since Hebrew mothers suckled their babes for about three years. The latter would include not only babes nearing the end of their suckling age, but equally those just born. . . . These efforts merely try to figure out how praise can be gotten out of the mouth of these babes. Delitzsch makes them old enough to lisp praise; the others go farther and get the praise when the babes are grown up. But neither the psalm nor the use Jesus makes of it bothers about this how. . . . That the psalm, like all the Scriptures, makes room for infants in the kingdom ought to be plain." (S. 796 f.) "The universality of the Commission (Matt. 28:19) comes out in τὰ ἔθνη, 'all nations,' of the earth. . . . What diversity among the nations of the earth—race, color, location, climate, traits, achievements! Yet they are all embraced by this command; for all are sinners, all have souls, all need, and are capable of, salvation through the grace of God. . . . He sees His Church established among the nations, children thus entering it in infancy, and by Baptism. . . . Baptism enriches the person by the gifts of the Gospel; it is not a mere act of obedience to a command on the person's part. Hence, again, children may be baptized as well as adults; both can be equally blessed with the contents of God's blessed revelation." (S. 1153. 1156.) E.

Das evangelische Pfarrhaus als Pflegestätte hoher Erbbegabung. Aus einem Artikel in der „Deutschen Allgemeinen Zeitung“, verabsaft von dem Staatsminister a. D. Dr. Hartnack über die „hohe erbbiologische Bedeutung des evangelischen Pfarrhauses“, zitiert die „N. C. Z. N.“ die folgenden interessanten Angaben: „Dächte man sich alle die weg aus dem deutschen Geistesleben, deren Wiege in einem Pfarrhaus stand oder deren Großeltern oder Vorfahren Pfarrer oder Pfarrerskinder waren, so hätten wir sehr bemerkenswerte Lücken zu beklagen. Wir wären mit unserm Geistesleben und unserer Kulturkraft sicher nicht da, wo wir sind, wenn nicht Luther das evangelische Pfarrhaus gegründet hätte.“ Hartnack weist dann nach, daß „bei umfassenden Prüfungen der geistigen Leitung sich ergeben hat, daß Pfarrerskinder dabei an der Spitze standen und noch stehen“. Zur Erklärung dieser Tatsache schreibt Hartnack weiter: „Jeder Mensch hat die Hälfte seiner Anlagen von seinem Vater und die Hälfte von seiner Mutter. Beide Seiten sind ganz gleich beteiligt am körperlichen und geistigen Erbgut des jungen Menschen. Hochbegabte Väter werden weniger begabte Kinder haben, wenn sie unbegabte Frauen heiraten. Je mehr aber beide Eltern oder alle vier Großeltern Träger hohen Erbgutes sind, desto größer ist die Wahrscheinlichkeit höherer Begabung in Kind oder Enkel. Nun gibt es wohl, aufs Ganze gesehen, keinen Stand, der eine besondere Frauenwahl vornähme, wie der Pfarrerstand. Der werdende oder gewordene Pfarrer pflegt sich seine künftige Frau besonders darauf anzusehen, ob sie auch wirklich imstande ist, den vielen Aufgaben gerecht zu werden, die einer Pfarrfrau in der Gemeinde warten, wie Leitung der Frauenvereine, Liebestätigkeit, Rat und Hilfe in Unglück und Verzweiflung usw. Kein Stand ist so wie der Pfarrerstand darauf angewiesen, ebenbürtige Gefährtinnen neben sich zu

haben. Und so ist es verständlich, wenn die Pfarrhausjugend deswegen besonders hoch zu stehen pflegt, weil ein immerhin hoher Begabungsdurchschnitt der väterlichen Seite mit einer Auslese auch auf der mütterlichen Seite zusammenrifft. Die Erbüberlegenheit der Pfarrersöhne beruht ganz zweifellos auf der Weiderseitigkeit der geistigen Auslese. Zu der überlegenen Erb-anlage kommt nun die zahlenmäßig größere Stärke des Nachwuchses. Bei den Protestanten haben wir überdurchschnittlich fruchtbare Ehen der Pfarrer (als eine Auslese), auf der katholischen Seite aber ein Abschneiden der begabten Erbketten durch lange Generationen hindurch in Gestalt des Eheverbots der Geistlichen. Der Zölibat nimmt der katholischen Bevölkerung in jeder Generation etwa 7.7 Prozent ihres Begabtenstandes. Das macht, fortgesetzt durch alle Generationen, seit der Zeit, in der das protestantische Pfarrhaus geschaffen wurde, gut sechzig Prozent Verlust am katholischen Begabtenvorrat." Nach unserer Meinung sollte mehr als die genannten biologischen Tatsachen der Segen betont werden, den Gott auf die Frömmigkeit im Pfarrhaus und die christliche Erziehung darin legt. In der Pfarrerehe gelten eben nicht die Regeln, die im Kuhstall Anwendung finden. Das endgültige Resultat, das der Schreiber angibt, dürfte vielleicht so ziemlich stimmen.

J. E. W.

The Religious Situation in Russia. — "The Church in Russia is passing through new experiences according to a report in *Faith and Freedom*, the organ of Dr. Schabert's Work Committee:

"According to the official figures, published by the Soviet Government itself, a total of 14,000 churches and chapels were closed in 1935, and 3,700 priests, preachers, and other servers of the churches condemned, twenty-nine of them to death. On the other hand a renewal of spiritual life is appearing everywhere. In the province of Swerdlovsk (formerly Jekaterinenburg) the population has applied to the authorities with the request that the atheist propaganda be stopped. This movement began in the industrial districts, where almost the whole population consisted of factory workers. During the church festivals, work in the factories must be interrupted. Collections are held among the workers to restore the churches and rebuild them. Many children go regularly to church. The correspondent of the *Komsomol* accuses several members of serious transgressions: church marriage ceremonies, baptism of children, and distribution of Christian reading-matter. At a meeting where a party propagandist was setting out the meaning of the new constitution, he said that freedom to attend religious services had been granted, trusting that not a single worker would go to church any more. But some one stood up at once to declare that there were many who would go. A Czech correspondent writes that he found a newly built church in almost every village in the neighborhood of Moscow. In some of the collective farms new club buildings are being set up to get the church, in which these are at present established, free once more. Naturally the atheists are doing all in their power to hold their ground and are continually forming new plans for stronger propaganda. Thus on the one side one sees a revival of religious opinion in Russia; and on the other, intensified campaign against church and religion. Relations become more and more acute." — *N. L. C. News Bulletin*.