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I. Amerika

Statement in Connection with the Revised Constitution of the New York State Constitutional Convention. (Issued by the Albany District Evangelical Lutheran Pastoral Conference, Missouri Synod.) — In connection with the proposed revision of the New York State Constitution, particularly at this time with regard to the amendment which would provide bus transportation for parochial, or religious, schools of any churches, we submit the following statement:

1. Our interest is merely that of American and Lutheran citizens who feel constrained, also by the very history of their Church, to contend for the clean and clear separation of Church and State.

The framers of the Constitution did well indeed to write into it the principle of separation of Church and State. It is a distinctly American issue, which, however, is also Scriptural. It is one of the most precious possessions and heritages of America, for which she may be justly grateful. History (present-day history in Europe not excluded) shows conclusively that confusion and violation of this principle has led to sorrow and hardship, damage and destruction. And both the Church and the State suffer through mingling of Church and State.

2. We are convinced that such measures as support of parochial and religious schools by State or Federal funds, requesting State money to supply text-books, for example, or as the Constitutional Convention recommended, running busses to church-schools, are the beginning of the ultimate and complete overthrow of the principle of the separation of Church and State. We realize well enough that the State benefits by the Church's schools and that Christian citizens supporting these schools carry an extra tax burden, but we contend for the clean cleavage of Church and State nevertheless, also in this respect, for it is the only sound course to follow. We, the Lutheran Church of the Missouri Synod, have several thousand parochial schools, but we are convinced that we should not ask the State to support them.

The position of all American as well as Christian citizens, of whatever church-body, should be clear and decisive. Parochial, or religious, schools are private schools and should ask nothing of public treasuries. It may seem insignificant to divert small sums of public money for denominational, or sectarian, purposes, but experience has shown that beginnings must be resisted. Once the principle of demanding the clear-cut separation of Church and State is surrendered, the complete usurpation of public money for religious purposes will be inevitable.

3. We submit further that so vital a matter as requesting State money for church-schools (running busses for them) should be clearly stated in the amendment on which the voters are to vote on November 8. The ordinary voter will hardly know, when and if he votes for Amendment 1, that he is also voting for such a controversial matter as bus transportation.

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The same vagueness, or lack of definiteness, applies to the Eighth Amendment, which provides for social-welfare services to be extended alike to denominational as well as the public schools. The Constitution as revised does not clearly state what may be included in social welfare for parochial, or religious, schools. The State is already, and has been, pledged to the support of the health and physical well-being of needy children, whether Jewish, Protestant, or Catholic, since they are American children and a vital part of the nation and public welfare.

Why does not the revised Constitution speak definitely or set limits as to what is implied or meant? Does it mean, for example, maintaining clinics in our Lutheran, Catholic, Jewish, Episcopalian, and other schools? It could be argued, for instance, that a good summer vacation is essential to health and welfare; therefore it could be argued again that the State should pay the expenses of Episcopalian, Jewish, Lutheran, Catholic, etc., children at the respective camps during summer.

Section 8 of Article VII, on State finances, indicates what hidden powers and dangers there are in this part of the revised Constitution. It reads: "Subject to the limitations on indebtedness and taxation, nothing in this Constitution contained shall prevent the Legislature from providing . . . for health and welfare services for all children, either directly or through subdivisions of the State, including school districts." We are informed that this sweeping provision is open to such wide interpretation that legal authorities have advised it will enable the Legislature to provide funds for building and equipping all kinds of private and religious schools, paying salaries, and provide for various services which the churches or schools may consider necessary, under the guise or claim of "welfare services" or "educational purposes." If the Constitution does not permit such interpretation, why not say it? Why not say what we mean?

It is easily foreseen how far-reaching such a broad, vague, and indefinite section in the Constitution may be. And if it is argued that bus transportation is also a matter of health and welfare, then, of course, there will be no end to the limits of the demands made on the State. The State favors religion as a whole without discrimination, as for example, through tax exemption. It is already pledged to support the health and welfare of all needy children who apply. Let well enough alone.

What straddling of the issue of Church and State separation leads to is apparent from the grant of seventeen (17) acres of land to Christian Brothers' Academy (Roman Catholic), and the grant of St. Margaret's Hospital (Episcopalian), both on New Scotland Avenue, in Albany, N. Y. It leads to discrimination. For, by the same token, Jews, Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Adventists, Lutherans, Mennonites, Russellites, Mormons, Quakers, Shakers, etc., — and who will name them all? — could ask for land, property, payment of salaries, etc. Furthermore, if Church and State are not kept separate and the churches ask for and accept support from the State, then the church-bodies must not be surprised if the State interferes or has something to say. What happened in Germany and Spain, for example, and elsewhere can happen here. Finally, it is a historical fact that both Church and State fared best where

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they were kept separate. Here in America, for instance, the Roman Catholic Church, the Lutheran, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and other churches, developed to a greater extent than in any similar part of the world in a similar period of time. Let the churches beware of the danger they invite and the deadening formality that comes through State-subsidized or -regimented religion. If we do not watch the beginnings, we do not know what the end will be. It may lead to blood and tears.

If we need public health clinics, let the children of *all* schools be brought to them and thus be serviced. But for this we do not need a revision in the Constitution, that is, a revision with inherent unlimited or undefined power.

THE ALBANY DISTRICT EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN PASTORAL CONFERENCE, MISSOURI SYNOD

Signed by its members: Otto C. Busse, Karl Schleede, Herman M. Mohr, Lloyd A. Hasselbach, Harold Johnson, Louis J. Roehm, Ernest L. Witte, Theodor A. Schulze, Elmer F. Giese, G. Albert Schulze, Paul G. Prokopy, Martin Duchow, James F. Taylor. Released at Albany, N. Y., October 10, 1938. Endorsed October 11, 1938, by the Evangelical Lutheran Pastoral Conference of the Atlantic District, Missouri Synod, assembled in conference at Brooklyn, N. Y., October 10–12, 1938.

Church Statistics. — The religious papers draw attention to the compilations of Dr. H. C. Weber published in the *Christian Herald* with respect to the strength of our various religious denominations and their increase or decrease in membership during the last year. One of our exchanges summarizes the chief facts thus: "There are 42 Protestant bodies having a membership of over 50,000. These reported a total net gain of 356,005 during the past year and a present membership of 35,879,311. The Roman Catholic Church gained 491,549 and now has 21,322,688. If only members over thirteen years of age are counted, the Protestant bodies gained a few more, 386,210, while the Roman Catholic gain is turned into a loss of 464,742. These last figures must be considered as containing a considerable element of conjecture. If they mean anything, — and Dr. Weber is a very careful man, who, though he cannot do the impossible, can come as near the facts as any one, — they mean that the Roman Church lost nearly half a million among its adults but came out with a favorable total by adding nearly a million children to its rolls. Protestant churches, on the other hand, have gained considerably more than a third of a million adults but have actually fewer children on the church books by 30,000 than a year ago." A.

Convention of the U. L. C. A. — In its convention at Baltimore, Md., October 5—12, nearly 550 delegates of the U. L. C. A. gathered. The election of officers resulted in the reelection of the president, secretary, and treasurer, Drs. Knubel, Greever, and Miller, respectively. A good deal of attention was given to the matter of intersynodical relations and the *Declaration* of the commission negotiating with other synods on the Word of God and the Scriptures. The *News Bulletin* of the National Lutheran Council says: "Though there was evident an almost unanimous agreement on the part of the assembled delegates that Lutherans of America are one in faith and that they ought to march shoulder to shoulder in the cause of Christ, rather vigorous expression was given

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to the point that the initiative in future intersynodical negotiations ought to come from the other branches of Lutheranism. Voice was given to the prevailing attitude that the United Lutheran Church has been constantly disappointed in its overtures to other bodies. Spokesmen declared that they would like above all else to proceed together in active fellowship and cooperation with all Lutherans, but that, unless their advances received friendly encouragement, the Church would not be deterred in its determination to march forward alone."

At the meeting it was reported that the universal appeal conducted by the Board of American Missions in celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Church had netted more than $410,000. It was predicted that this sum "will increase to more than one million dollars by the time of the 1940" convention. The Board of Foreign Missions could report that in the past decade it had been able to wipe out a deficit of nearly half a million dollars.

Concerning the new pension plan the *News Bulletin* reports: "The present plan of the Church provides that all ministers share alike in receiving benefits. The new plan proposes that pastors and congregations each contribute to the fund five per cent. of the pastor's salary. The retirement age would be fixed at sixty-five years; but retirement at that age would be voluntary. For totally or partially disabled, pensions would be provided and also pensions for widows and orphaned minors. The plan will go into effect when five hundred of the 3,500 congregations of the United Lutheran Church have accepted its provisions. The convention, however, voted to refer that plan back to a special committee with instructions to restudy it and present a plan whereby equal pensions would be paid to all."

Concerning control of the seminaries it was resolved that the ownership should remain with the individual synods which own the institutions at present, but that a commission of theological education should be appointed controlling the curricula, standards of scholarship, and kindred affairs. — The proposed budget of two million dollars was accepted. In the last two years the income was $3,161,628 and the expenses $3,025,658. The next convention is to be held in Omaha, Nebr.

Missourians will assure the U. L. C. A. that their unwillingness to establish fellowship with this body is not due to an extreme fondness of isolation but to the earnest desire to prove loyal to the Word of their heavenly Master. A.

Bible Presbyterian Church. — Followers of the late Dr. Machen, who withdrew from the Presbyterian Church a few years ago, have apparently settled their dispute with Church and State authorities over nomenclature by formally organizing as the "Bible Presbyterian Church."

Lutheran Companion

Progress of the Minor Sects. — Nobody can look about him in the cities and villages of our country without observing that denominations which are often referred to as "little sects," like the Nazarenes and other Pentecostal bodies, are spreading at a very rapid rate. In the *Christian Century* of August 24 a member of the Board of Home Missions of the Congregatinal and Christian Churches, Mr. Thomas Alfred Tripp, dis-

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cusses this point under the heading "Shall the Holy Rollers Win the Farmers?" He says: "In broad outline, the more mature Protestant churches are not proving very effective in holding poor farmers, low-income renters, share-croppers, rural-relief clients, and village 'slum' dwellers. Meanwhile the newer Holy Roller sects are springing up and growing rapidly among these disadvantaged folk everywhere. There are of course notable exceptions to this general picture, but in the main it is a correct one." The author holds that the more well-to-do and the less privileged groups do not mix, as a rule. One of the evils affecting the farmers, according to Mr. Tripp, is what is called tenancy, or the short period which a renter stays in a certain community. "Tenancy often, if not usually, involves poverty, and because they have not clothes that are good enough, many of these people refuse to enter the churches owned and operated by the well-to-do." Others, according to Mr. Tripp, simply declare that they do not find a message for themselves in the old churches.

Mr. Tripp continues: "Can mature Protestantism meet this dilemma? Some radicals say, 'No. We must start class churches for the disadvantaged.' A few conservatives, on the other hand, while expressing the opinion that it is an impossible task, suggest that the mature Protestant churches should seek to win the higher cultured groups and let the Holy Rollers cultivate the masses. 'We cannot get the two classes together in our lodges and bridge clubs,' they argue. 'Why try to do so in the church?'" He very correctly observes: "If our churches are determined to limit themselves to the 'best people,' — usually those with money, *bourgeois* culture, and family tree, — they are signing their own death-warrant, because the 'best people,' under this definition, constitute a class that is becoming smaller with the years. Besides, we cannot but feel that if our Protestantism were endued with essential Christianity, it would give a sensitivity to the needs of the disadvantaged and the drawing power which could reach across cultural lines with more effectiveness than a card club." He concludes: "If we are unwilling or unable to perform our duty toward the unfortunate rural peoples, we can only be deeply thankful that the little sects stand, even if inadequately, between us and a completely secularized countryside."

Our comment is that the situation plainly indicates the social gospel is not the power of God unto salvation. If we are not blind and can still read the handwriting on the wall, we shall earnestly pray God to keep us in the footsteps of St. Paul, preaching Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. A.

Fundamentalism on the March. — Under this heading Rev. Dr. Paul W. Rood, president of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, reports in the *Sunday-school Times* (Sept. 25, 1938) an increasing interest in Christian confessionalism among American church-members. The meeting of the association was held in Waterloo, Iowa, last May, and among the speakers were Dr. W. B. Riley, militant and able Fundamentalist leader, Dr. W. L. Wilson, Dr. Robert G. Lee of Memphis, Tenn., and Dr. Dan Gilbert, author of *Crucifying Christ in Our Colleges* and other anti-Modernism books.

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Of his long report we quote the following statements: "The presence of many young preachers who are determined to be faithful to the Lord brought joy to our hearts." — "Another reason for the extraordinary Waterloo Convention was the deep spiritual hunger manifested by so many convention visitors. One minister told an audience of eighteen hundred people that his church was going to have a new minister as a result of this convention. It was a time of spiritual renewal and refreshing." — "Evangelism was a predominant note. Tract distribution, personal and public evangelism, were constantly emphasized. We were not only contending for the faith, but also propagating it." — "The theme of the convention, *Fundamentalism on the March!* was not only on every speaker's lips but in every speaker's heart, and the whole convention was moved and swayed by the theme. In no other convention have we seen such enthusiasm, love, loyalty, unity, aggressiveness, and determination. We went forth from Waterloo determined to organize the twenty million Fundamentalists of America into city, county, and State associations, to provide a fellowship for all evangelical believers and an opportunity to express themselves unitedly in an effort to evangelize the nation and the world during the next decade. We serve notice on Communists, Modernists, evolutionists, and compromisers that Fundamentalism is on the march. We urge the twenty million Fundamentalists of the nation to stand together and march together and work together and pray together for a nation-wide revival that will save our nation from debacle and bring multitudes to the Christ of Calvary and the empty tomb. Satan has instigated a great forward movement to capture the world by evolution in the realm of philosophy, by Communism in the realm of political economy, and Modernism in the realm of religion. Christ is calling His followers to rally to the banner of the cross and aggressively, sacrificially, and speedily to give every man, woman, and child in the world at least one opportunity to accept Christ as Savior and Lord. Christ is on a march around the world and is looking for followers who will catch His vision, exemplify His spirit, and follow His example. Many have received a vision of Christ and heard His call, and consequently — *Fundamentalism is on the March!*"

The Fundamentalist groups in our country are greatly controlled by religious enthusiasm. But if in spite of this and other faults they show so much boldness in witnessing against the plague of Modernism, should not we Lutherans excel the more in clearly and courageously confessing the vital truths of salvation which the divinely inspired Bible sets forth for the salvation of sinners redeemed by Christ's blood? J. T. M.

The Protestant Episcopal Church and the Reformed Episcopal Church Conferring on Union. — According to an article by Bishop Wilson in the *Living Church* the two bodies mentioned, represented by commissions, held a conference with a view to healing the breach which has kept them apart. Bishop Wilson is a member of the Protestant Episcopal commission on Approaches to Unity. On the origin and present status of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Bishop Wilson says: "It will be remembered that the Reformed Episcopal Church broke away from our own Church in 1873 at the time when the 'ritualistic controversy' was disfiguring the ecclesiastical landscape. The only serious doctrinal

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issue was the use of the term 'regeneration' in the office for Holy Baptism. The Rt. Rev. Dr. George D. Cummins, Assistant Bishop of Kentucky, led the secession and resigned from the House of Bishops. The break has persisted down to the present day. The Reformed Episcopal Church is small in numbers, totaling about 8,000 communicants, with approximately 65 clergy. Their work is all east of the Mississippi River, with headquarters in Philadelphia. They have some work among the Negroes in South Carolina and a small foreign field in India. They operate a theological school in Philadelphia." Concerning the point on which Episcopalians are most sensitive, the bishop writes: "There appears to be little reason for questioning their orders. Bishop Cummins was one of our own bishops, and he consecrated two new bishops for the Reformed movement before he was deposed from our ministry. They have been very careful to observe their episcopal orders. On one occasion, when they were reduced to two bishops, they invited in a Moravian bishop to make up the third in conferring orders on newly elected bishops. At times in the past they have received ministers from non-Episcopal churches into their own ministry with no additional ordination, and there is a provision for such reception in their prayer-book. But they assured us that there were no such instances in their ministry at the present time. At the close of the conference it would have been hard to find reasons which would justify the continuance of our present division." The action which Bishop Wilson advocates is indicated in these words: "Recognizing certain points of non-agreement, could we not erect a formal concordat by which we would (following the example of our Methodist brethren) come together under the generous title of 'the Episcopal Church,' of which the Reformed Episcopal would be one part and the Protestant Episcopal another part? We would each retain our corporate titles for legal purposes and would each conduct our own internal affairs just as we do now. But there would be full intercommunion. Our bishops would share in the consecration of their bishops and theirs in ours. Their bishops would be invited to sit in our House of Bishops and ours in theirs. Clergy could move freely back and forth, accepting the calls to parishes in either direction, and communicants would be received without discrimination. Their candidates for holy orders could attend our seminaries, and *vice versa*. We would each carry on our work in our own way and let the intermingling solve its own problems over a period of years." The article announces that another meeting will be held. A.

Brief Items. — Writing in the *Presbyterian*, Dr. Charles A. Anderson, president of Tusculum College, Tenn., says: "We must not overlook the fact that the Presbyterian Church as well as many other denominations is facing a threatened oversupply of ministers. It has been reported in a New York paper that 'a canvass of the 289 presbyteries in the General Assembly showed there were 376 unemployed clergymen.'"

St. Paul's Chapel is the oldest church-building now standing in New York City. It was the second chapel to be erected by the mother church of Trinity when the growth of the parish necessitated still another edifice. The first chapel was St. George's, built on Beekman Street near Trinity Church in 1748, no longer standing. The present St. George's Church,

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in Stuyvesant Square, grew out of that early chapel of Trinity. The original building of Trinity Church itself was erected in 1696. This was destroyed by fire in 1776 and rebuilt in 1788-1790 and again in 1839-1846. . . . St. Paul's Chapel was built in 1764-1766. In addition the *Living Church*, from which the above is taken, remarks that two pews are of special interest, that occupied by George Washington and another one occupied by Governor Clinton.

From Bridgeport, Conn., comes the interesting news that the Episcopal church of that place will open a parochial school called St. John's Day-school. The rector says: "Conditions now prevalent reveal the necessity of religious-training education for children in addition to public-school education. St. John's will attempt to supply that need." This is said to be the first Episcopal parochial school in Connecticut.

The government authorities in Greece forbid non-Orthodox missionaries to enter that country. The intention is not to bar visiting clergymen of other denominations but to prevent proselytizing. The action is said to be aimed especially at the propaganda of the Russellites.

Hyde Park Baptist Church, Chicago, has two pastors, one a Baptist, who devotes himself chiefly to the administrative and educational aspects of the work, the other, an Evangelical minister, holding in that denomination the status of a local elder, who looks chiefly after the preaching. Strange to say, it is reported that the church has prospered under this dual leadership. It practises what is called "open membership." Evidently the tests that have to be met to become a member are not too exacting.

In Moscow the last Protestant church has now been closed. Its name was Church of Peter and Paul, and it was used by a German congregation. Its pastor, Rev. Strick, had been removed two years ago, but the members assembled there every Sunday seeking edification. The last Polish Catholic church had been closed a few days before, and all Greek churches have suffered the same fate. It seems that some "orthodox" churches are still permitted to hold services. A.

II. Ausland

Sir Ambrose Fleming Argues against Evolution. — In the current numbers of the *Sunday-school Times* Sir Ambrose Fleming, M. A., D. Sc., F. R. S., emeritus professor of Electrical Engineering of the University of London, president of the Victoria Institute or Philosophical Society of Great Britain, and bearer of a long string of other honorary and honorable titles, presents a series of four most interesting and instructive antievolutionistic articles ("What Is the Theory of Organic Evolution?" "The Divine Origin of the Bible"; "The Contrasted Creeds of Scripture and Science"), of which the first ("Science — True and False") appeared in the issue of October 30 (1938). Briefly expressed, he means to show in these articles why he, as a scientist and Christian, cannot accept the theory of evolution. Criticizing the "hypothesis of absolute uniformity," which he classifies among the "unconfirmed or imperfectly ascertained scientific hypotheses," he writes, among other things: "We know by large experience that there is an extensive uniformity in natural

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phenomena, which means that things happen in the same way at all times. If it were not for this general uniformity in nature, we should never know what may happen, and all human and animal life on this earth would be impossible. But now the 'scientific hypothesis of absolute continuity' goes far beyond this truth of the general uniformity in natural phenomena. It asserts that there has never been any difference in degree or mode of happening in the events in nature in the past from that which we observe at present. But there are many things which show that this assumption of absolute continuity in nature is not true. For instance, a vast amount of exact scientific research has shown that we cannot produce any living organism, animal or plant, except from a previously living animal or plant. *There is no possibility of spontaneous generation.* We cannot generate from non-living matter the smallest particle of living matter. This is an established truth of science. But if this is so, then it follows that at some time in some far distant past there *must have been a supernatural creation of living beings by a Creative Power.* — There is also another thing that cannot be spontaneously produced, and we call it *energy.* Heat is a form of energy. There are many forms in which energy makes its appearance, as, for instance, in the form of light or as an electric current. We find by scientific experiment that we can convert one form of energy into other forms, but *we cannot in these changes alter the total amount of the energy.* We can change it from energy of motion into heat or light or electric current, but we cannot increase or decrease the total amount of the energy in the smallest degree. It follows therefore that at some time in the past *there must have been a first production of creation of energy which is not taking place now.* — The same is true of material substances. What we call the mass, or, in common language, the weight, cannot be changed. We can put together various kinds of substances and by what are called chemical changes alter them into other substances; but the total weight remains the same. *We cannot* by any chemical actions alter the total mass. The inevitable conclusion from these scientific facts is that neither life nor energy nor matter is now being generated spontaneously, and hence at some past time there must have been some acts of creation by which matter, energy, and life came into existence. One of the most illustrious of the scientific men of the last century in England was the late Lord Kelvin. He said on one occasion: 'Science positively demands creation'; and all facts we know endorse and support this conclusion."

What Sir Fleming here expounds is of course nothing new nor anything complex in apologetic science; still such testimonies by *savants* bear repetition as long as our aggressive proponents of evolution continue to urge their erroneous claims in the name of scientific truth. Sir Ambrose Fleming is a reliable authority to quote against evolution, and the *Sunday-school Times* has done well in securing his witness against infidelity. J. T. M.

The London Freethinkers' Conference. — After opposition from the churches, some of whose members asked Parliament to stop the conference from opening, the World Union of Freethinkers opened its congress in London. A psychologist, a biologist, an archeologist, and other

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scientists discussed "Science and the Churches," arguing the incompatibility of Christian beliefs with the scientific outlook.

Dr. David Forsyth, president of the British Psychological Society, found that "the recent phenomenal decline of the churches" was due partly to the new study of comparative religion and partly to the new science of psychoanalysis, which had explained the religious mentality in terms of childish tendencies. The spread of education and of a medical rather than a spiritual interest in humanity had also helped the decline, he said.

Dr. Forsyth gave as examples the fall in church attendance and in the number of clergymen. The younger generation was freer now from religious prejudice; the position of unbelievers had strengthened from agnosticism to a scientifically tenable atheism.

Prof. J. B. S. Haldane argued, more technically, against recent attempts to refute materialism. He described himself as a materialist, one who believed that matter, or "unconscious nature," had preceded mind, or spirit. Antimaterialists said that there were self-contradictions in materialists' views of matter, but science accepted this charge and admitted that it had constantly to change its outworn definitions. Were science complete, its professors would have nothing more to discover, and they would merely be teaching science as it was; the inner contradictions remained, but he believed that the way to solve them was the scientific way.

Prof. Gordon Childe, the prehistoric archeologist, said that the doctrine of the fall of man was incompatible with the discoveries of prehistory.

A paper from the director of the Moscow Biological Museum, Mr. B. Zavadovsky, was read. This argued against the existence of a soul in man. Believers thought that the soul left the body at the instant of death, but experiments in Russia had shown that not only could organs cut away from a corpse continue to live but that the stopped heart of a man or animal could be revitalized. In such cases the soul must have been persuaded to reenter the body — an absurd notion, he said. Science believed that death was simply "a cessation of connection between the organs" owing to material conditions.

When the congress was resumed Sunday, Dr. J. H. Bridges (United States) thanked their religious opponents and critics for giving it a publicity which would have been beyond their own resources, financial and otherwise.

"We are particularly indebted," he said, "to the Archbishop of Westminster, who, thinking we might be in some physical danger, did his best to avert this by trying to suppress this gathering. His own Church is complaining of the persecution it is suffering in various European countries, but this slight logical inconsistency has escaped him."

So reports the *Manchester Guardian* of September 16, 1938. It is wise for the ministers of Christ to acquaint themselves with the arguments of atheists so they may not be unprepared when a clash comes. A.

Ein Angriff auf die Verbalinspiration in der „A. E. L. K." Unter der Überschrift „Der Angriff des Humanismus auf die christliche Weltanschauung. Zum Kampf um das Christentum im anglikanischen Sprachgebiet"

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erlaubt sich Superintendent i. R. D. Fr. Schultzen-Hannover einen ungerechten Angriff auf die Verbalinspiration, der hierzulande nicht übersehen werden sollte. Soweit der Artikel sich sachlich innerhalb seines eigenen Gebiets bewegt, enthält er viel Wahres und Lehrreiches. Wir zitieren aus dem Artikel, Raummangels wegen, nur das Nötigste. „In der Bibel, in den Propheten und vor allem in JEsus Christus, erscheint uns nicht nur göttliche Inspiration, sondern Gottes Selbstoffenbarung in Geschichte und Gnade. Diese allein kann Licht geben gegenüber den Rätseln der Welt. Alle Formen der christlichen Religion" (gemeint sind wohl: alle christlichen Kirchengemeinschaften) „finden in der Bibel solche Offenbarung." „Verdunkelt war sie [die Offenbarung] zeitweilig etwas durch die Lehre von der Verbalinspiration, die Einssetzung von Gottes Wort und Schrift, die Luther fremd war und mit einem geschichtlichen Verständnis der Schrift sich nicht verträgt. Das Evangelium bedarf keines unfehlbaren Kanons; es bezeugt und bestätigt seine Wahrheit selbst. Die Bibel ist kein einheitliches Buch; auch im Neuen Testament läßt sich eine Fortentwicklung der Gedanken feststellen." Diese Sätze enthalten den Angriff auf die Verbalinspiration, der hier gerügt werden soll. Der an der lutherischen Theologie recht orientierte Christ fragt sich: Inwiefern und warum verdunkelt die Lehre von der wörtlichen Eingebung der Schrift denn die Offenbarung Gottes? Steht es nicht so, daß die Lehre von der Verbalinspiration sie eher nur klären kann, eben weil wir hier Offenbarung in Gottes eigenen Worten haben? Es ist doch eine sehr ungesunde Logik, die so argumentiert, wie es hier geschieht. Ferner, daß die „Einssetzung von Gottes Wort und Schrift" Luther fremd war, ist eine geschichtliche Unwahrheit, die längst zurückgewiesen worden ist (wir erinnern nur an D. F. Piepers „Christliche Dogmatik", Bd. I). Auch daß eine solche „Einssetzung" sich nicht mit dem geschichtlichen Verständnis der Schrift verträgt, ist pure Fiktion, es sei denn, daß der Schreiber mit „geschichtlichem Verständnis" eine unlutherische Anschauung bemäntelt. Daß die Verbalinspiration ein „geschichtliches Verständnis der Schrift" unmöglich machen soll, ist ein gedankenloses Gerede. Weiter, daß das Evangelium seine „Wahrheit selbst bezeugt und bestätigt", ist allerdings wahr; denn hier findet sich das **testimonium Spiritus Sancti**. Hätte nun aber Gott selbst nicht für einen unfehlbaren Kanon gesorgt (Eph. 2, 20; 1 Petr. 1, 10—12; Joh. 17, 20 usw.), wer von uns blinden Menschen könnte dann wissen, was das Evangelium eigentlich ist? Wer könnte z. B. Schiedsrichter zwischen dem Christ Luther und dem Unitarier Harnack sein in der Beantwortung der Frage „Was gehört ins Evangelium?" Ein unfehlbarer Kanon ist uns armen, durch die Sünde blind gemachten, von Natur geistlich toten Menschen allerdings sehr nötig, und daß Gott uns einen solchen in Gnaden beschert hat, sollten wir dankbar anerkennen und sein Wort nicht undankbar verwerfen. Schließlich ist es auch nicht wahr, daß „die Bibel kein einheitliches Buch ist", weil sich auch „im Neuen Testament eine Fortentwicklung der Gedanken feststellen läßt". Die theologische Einheitlichkeit des Neuen Testaments ist eine Tatsache, die die ganze christliche Kirche in ihren öffentlichen und privaten Schriften je und je anerkannt hat. Der Heiland des Matthäusevangeliums ist kein anderer als der der Offenbarung, und der Heilsrat bei Paulus differiert nicht von dem bei Johannes. Eine eigentliche „Fortentwicklung der Gedanken" findet sich im Neuen Testament nicht; die Heilsordnung bleibt dieselbe von Matthäus bis Johannes. Offenbar fühlt

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der Schreiber selber, daß eine Einschränkung nötig ist; denn gleich darauf lesen wir: „Tatsächlich ist doch die Bibel eine organische Einheit." Warum dann solche Polemik gegen die Verbalinspiration?

J. T. M.

Karl Barth on the Oath Demanded of German Pastors. — It may interest our readers to read a portion of Dr. Karl Barth's advice to the German Evangelical pastors on the question of the oath required of them by the National Socialist State. The oath is identical in wording with that required of all German state officials: "I swear I will be loyal and obedient to the leader of the German Reich, Adolf Hitler, obey the laws and fulfil the duties of the office I hold, God being my Helper." He writes:

"My opinion and my counsel amount to this, that the oath should not be taken either with or without reservations. It should not be taken before either a legitimate or an illegitimate ecclesiastical authority nor yet before a state authority. It should not be taken with or without the German Christians.

"The responsibility for arriving at a right judgment concerning the meaning of every oath required of us rests with the authority which demands such an oath. In this case the authority is that of the illegitimate ecclesiastical government, *i. e.*, of the National Socialist State, which empowers it. The question before ministers today cannot be how they would or could interpret the oath, but how National Socialism requires it to be interpreted. Every other way of explaining the question would mean an evasion of the decision required and ultimately an evasion of the Christian witness which God demands. Every oath accepted on the individual's interpretation (by means of mental reservations) must embarrass the conscience of the one who takes it, placing him both inwardly and outwardly in a false position towards the one who requires it of him and concealing instead of proclaiming the message which the Church has to declare before all people.

"National Socialism has clearly expressed in what sense it understands the oath and in what sense it requires it to be taken. The oath required of the ministers is essentially the same as that which National Socialism demands of its civil servants, of its army officers, of the leaders and members of the S. A., the S. S., the Hitler Youth, and of the members of the labor camps, etc. Thus it requires the inclusion of the ministry of the Church in the ranks of the totalitarian state forces, and it requires it as an unconditional inclusion. It requires the unconditional and complete acknowledgment of the present system of government, including its underlying philosophy and the ethics necessary for its maintenance and development as well as the practical outcome of National Socialism in the past and in every possible situation in the future. It demands that Adolf Hitler should become the law, conscience, and standard of the one who subscribes to the oath in every relationship. It forbids even the most secret doubt concerning the authority which is embodied in Adolf Hitler. He who does not understand the oath thus understands it differently from National Socialism and its only appointed interpreter.

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"He who takes the oath in this, the only possible, way has at the same time under solemn invocation of God expressly contradicted the First Commandment, has expressly denied not only his baptismal and ordination vows but in addition all that underlies these things as witnessed to in the Old and New Testaments. The fact that the oath or one identical with it has been taken by innumerable Christians in all professions since 1934 cannot be of any consequence for the decision required of the ministers, because it is clear that these Christians either mistook the essence of the totalitarian state's claim or they accepted the oath under mental reservation. Both positions are seen to be unsound, and it is time that the Church should see this. . . . The ministers in question have the opportunity of fulfilling a great task, carrying with it a promise from God. The task is to call to repentance the multitude of Christians who have taken the oath and to bring them to reconsider their decision and to change their mind through the example contained in the long-looked-for witness of the Church.

"In 1935 the National Socialist State punished me with dismissal because I intended to make additions, such as those which today stand in question, to the oath required of me as a state official. It has also in advance expressedly forbidden 'declarations, questions, or addresses,' and it (*i. e.*, the Chief Evangelical State Church Council in its address) has in advance and clearly explained the subordination of the 'entire charge accepted by ordination' under the 'obligation towards Leader, people, and Reich' as the meaning of the oath today required of ministers. It has already said therefore quite clearly that it is not prepared to accept an addition to the oath which denies just this subordination. This being so, and — may it not be added? — with Martin Niemoeller still in a concentration camp, should one not recall Matt. 7:6 ('Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet und turn again and rend you'), if the ministers of the Word of God seek for some other interpretation of the oath instead of refusing the oath categorically? This form of witness is today demanded of us."

"This counsel," concludes Dr. Barth, "is written in the full and depressing consciousness that I live on the other side of the German frontier, and thus I am personally unable to share in the danger and the promise of the way indicated. I realize the responsibility regarding the consequences of such advice. No one who reads this and yet acts otherwise need feel condemned by me. The temptation to act otherwise and then to seek to justify oneself theologically would be a great temptation to me also if I were exposed to it. It may well be that many will fall; yet no one will have the right to cast stones at them. Yet I could not do less than say to all those who seek my advice that I can see nothing but a temptation in taking the oath in any form whatsoever. In a spirit of true friendship therefore I desire to warn every one against this temptation and pray God that many may have strength to resist it."

W. G. Polack

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