

## THE SPRINGFIELDER

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## Editorials

### *Cleveland Post Scripta*

CLEVELAND is history. It was also history-making. As one who had never attended a convention before in an official capacity, I must say that I was greatly impressed. As one who also had the vantage point of viewing Cleveland from the interior of Committee #3 on Doctrine, I am also greatly impressed. A few points stood out.

### *The Open Hearings*

Seldom in modern ecclesiastical history has any church body so boldly and yet fearfully bared its bosom to all who cared to speak. We venture to say that there are few church bodies which would have dared do such a thing. Any member of synod could say what he felt had to be said. Committee #3 sat in a kind of jury box listening to the evidence. It is too bad that all could not hear the deliberations of the committee, because the speeches were heeded. We think a word of admiration should be said for those brave and often lonely men who spoke from their hearts, especially when their words were unpopular. We have some brave souls in synod. Then, too, it is most impressive that 2000 men of our church, not only officials, professors, pastors, and teachers, but laymen from all walks of life would take an additional two days of their precious time to come and discuss doctrine. Let no one say we have lost our interest in theology and doctrine. It was somewhat like the Altenburg Debate on an enormous scale. The general effect was salutary and encouraging.

### *The Convention Itself*

The hall was huge. The opening communion was a wonderful demonstration of the Communion of Saints, with over three thousand attending. We hope it is more than a mere piece of folk piety that we still retain the old custom of having one local congregation serve as host to the convention. This time it was old *Zions Gemeinde*, which dates back to Schwan's time. Among all the officiants stood the pastor of this old, inner-city congregation where the pastor still wears the Beffchen and whose confirmands on Trinity Sunday were so well trained that one of our college presidents after the service enrolled one of the boys in a prep school.



The running of the convention was an amazing piece of field generalship by both the local committee under Springfield's Werner Jurgens and by the 210 group who chose the committees, set up the order of business, and ran the day by day progress of the convention. A great amount of business was transacted, much of it intricate, all of it important, a great part of it well understood by the voters. We felt that insufficient preparation had been done by the planners for the \$50,000,000 collection; but nearly all other groups had done their home-work well.

### *Doctrinal Matters*

Nearly all delegates probably would agree that the most dramatic event at the convention was the apology of Prof. Scharlemann for the disturbance he has caused in the church by his essays. Several delegates expressed dissatisfaction at the fact that Scharlemann did not recant a theological error, while others were quick to point out that his apology pertained to his actions and the method of his essays but not their doctrinal content, while still others felt that his use of the term "completely free of error" still did not cover the question of whether he means inerrancy in matters of fact or inerrancy of purpose, what we have commonly called the efficacy of Scripture. Time will have to tell, but the courage of the man must be admired. We feel that putting the questions raised by Scharlemann into the hands of the new and already burdened Commission on Theology and Church Relations is the only method of dealing with this and related matters. Neither Committee #3 nor the convention could hold a heresy trial, and history will be happy that we did not try.

Other doctrinal matters were also of great interest. We rescinded Resolution 9 of San Francisco and in its place put another resolution stating our adherence to the Brief Statement and other doctrinal statements of the past, and claiming our right as a synod to pass such statements without in every case having to add to the confessional clause of the constitution. We hope that this tangled issue of constitutionality has now been unwound. At least we still seem able to pass resolutions which if they do not claim to bind our members at least charge them with lovelessness if they fail to teach according to them. It is a matter of law or gospel. Time again will tell which succeeds better. Amazingly, the resolution to dra-

up a constitution looking forward to a new version of the National Lutheran Council went through without debate. Perhaps delegates realized that there is still a long and rocky road between a constitution, be it ever so good, and full doctrinal agreement and church fellowship among Lutherans.

### *The Election*

It had to come finally. Our Great White Father, as so many people have affectionately called him, is no longer at the helm. He handled the convention like a veteran navigator. It was a joy to behold. But it is perhaps more than we should expect that Dr. Behnken as the last member of the class of 1906, after 56 years in the ministry, should continue to run the biggest parish of them all. But old Missouri will never be the same again. He has left his mark. We shall miss him. The Romans would have called him *Paterfamilias* or perhaps more nobly *pater patriae*, but in our poor Latin we put it best if we say *Vale, Pater Albus*. To our new *Praesis*, Dr. Harms, we wish God's richest blessing in this day of our church's need and its greatest opportunity. Dr. Harms is a man of wisdom, patience, and vision. He will need them all, but with God's grace he will succeed.

We are into the 46th Triennium. God grant that it may be more peaceful, more progressive, more adventurous, more glorious than any we have known.

J. A. O. P.