

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

4-15-1937

The Sola Scriptura with Special Reference to the Denial by the Methodist, Quakers, and Swedenborgians

Harold Merklinger

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir_merklingerh@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [History of Christianity Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Merklinger, Harold, "The Sola Scriptura with Special Reference to the Denial by the Methodist, Quakers, and Swedenborgians" (1937). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 3.

<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/3>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact seitzw@csl.edu.

THE SOLA SCRIPTURA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS DENIAL
BY THE METHODISTS, QUAKERS, AND SWEDENBORGIANS

A Thesis presented to the
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Divinity

by

Harold A. Merklinger

Concordia Seminary,

April 15, 1937

26489

Approved by

J. Theodore Mueller.

52283

BV
4070
C169

52283

THE SOLA SCRIPTURA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS DENIAL
BY THE METHODISTS, QUAKERS, AND SWEDENBORGIANS

83
1937
v.4
c.2

I. The Holy Scripture is the Word of God.

A. The holy writers were the instruments of God.

B. The Bible's own testimony to its divine inspiration.

1. As to the Old Testament.

2. As to the New Testament.

3. Inspiration extends to the whole Bible, also to the words.

II. As the Word of God Scripture contains everything we need to know for our salvation.

A. In What respects Scripture is not complete

1. It is not an encyclopedia--does not teach everything.

2. It does not reveal everything about God.

3. It does not reveal everything man would like to know.

B. In what respects Scripture is complete.

1. It is complete in respect to its purpose--to lead us to salvation.

2. It contains only truth and no falsehoods, since it is God's Word.

3. It contains everything we need to know to be saved.

4. The Scripture proof.

5. It contains that (3) in a rich measure.

6. It contains everything so that it forbids addition or subtraction.
7. The testimony of the Lutheran Church as to this doctrine.

III. Scripture has clearly revealed everything we need to know for our salvation.

A. What is not meant by the clearness of Scripture.

1. That there are no dark and obscure passages, difficult and incomprehensible.
2. That even in those that treat of our salvation there are dark passages.

B. What is meant by this doctrine.

1. Everything required for our salvation is clearly stated.
2. That Scripture interprets itself.
3. That it is clear for all men.
4. That we should not confuse clearness with reasonableness.

C. Scriptural proof for the doctrine.

1. Scripture ascribes clearness to itself.
2. Scripture is clear because it calls itself the Word of God.
3. Scripture is clear because it orders all men to seek their salvation in it.

D. What the claritas Scripturae does not deny.

1. That man must carefully search its contents to understand it.
2. That the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit is necessary to understand it.

IV. Holy Scripture demands our unqualified obedience and adherence.

- A. Because it is God's Word.
- B. Because it is our sole Norm of faith.
- C. Because we need no other form of revelation of His Word.
- D. Because God has closed His revelation with regard to salvation to man.

V. The Denial of the sola Scriptura by the Methodists, Quakers, and Swedenborgians.

A. The Methodists.

- 1. Methodists deny the sola Scriptura when they teach the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. The Holy Spirit gives man a feeling in his heart that he is a child of God.
 - b. Methodists make this feeling an absolute requirement for assurance of salvation.
- 2. The error involved.
 - a. Feeling is too treacherous to use thus.
 - b. Because some do not have that feeling they think that they are lost.
 - c. God's way is that we receive our assurance from His Holy Word.

B. The Quakers.

- 1. For the Quaker the inner light is the source of all truth.

2. Scripture is not really God's Word.
3. Scripture is not the rule of faith and life.
4. Scripture is to be interpreted through the inner light.
5. Scripture does not have regenerative powers.
6. The inner light makes salvation possible without knowledge of Christ.

C. The Swedenborgians.

1. Swedenborg's writings are the principal source of all saving knowledge.
2. Not all the Books of the Bible are God's Word.
3. Swedenborg alone is able to interpret Scripture.

THE SOLA SCRIPTURA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ITS DENIAL
BY THE METHODISTS, QUAKERS, AND SWEDENBORGIANS

The sola Scriptura is a doctrine of fundamental importance. Faithful adherence to Holy Scripture as the sole source of Christian doctrine makes any church body an orthodox Christian church; deviation therefrom makes that organization a sect.¹ Even a hurried glance at the numberless religions and "isms" that surround us will convince one of the truth of that statement. In some form or other each of these bodies bids adieu to the authority of Scripture and resorts to some other norm. In the case of the Roman Catholic Church, tradition, the councils, and the pope are made bases of doctrine in addition to Scripture. The Reformed bodies subject Scripture to the authority of reason; the Quakers seek the inner light; the followers of Joseph Smith accept the new revelations of the Book of Mormon. And so all down the line, from the subtly erring Christian denominations to the most quixotic of cults, the result is always the same--when-
ever they err, it is because they have departed from the sola Scriptura.

1. Parteiungen innerhalb der christlichen Kirche haben ihren Grund in nichts anderem als in der Tatsache, dass die Schrift als einzige Quelle und Norm der christlichen Lehre verlassen wird. F. Pieper, Christliche Dogmatik, Band I, 33.

The purpose of this paper is once more to establish the doctrine of the Sola Scriptura, to prove that Holy Scripture alone and nothing else can be made the basis of Christian doctrine and practice. Then it will be shown how three of the eighteenth century enthusiastic bodies--the Methodists, Quakers, and Swedenborgians--deviate from this doctrine.

Only a superficial glance at the works of Emanuel Swedenborg will assure one that Swedenborgianism is crass Enthusiasm. The followers of Swedenborg look upon him as a divinely sent messenger who made known to his fellow-men the revelations which God gave him. Of the authority of Swedenborg's revelations Bishop Pendleton wrote in 1897:

The Lord has made His Second Coming in the writings of the New Church (essentially Swedenborg's), revealing Himself therein, in His own Divine Human, as the only God of Heaven and earth. In those writings, therefore, is contained the very essential Word, which is the Lord. From them the Lord speaks to His Church, and the Church acknowledges no other Authority, and no other law.¹

With Swedenborgians it is no longer sola Scriptura but Scripture and new revelations with particular emphasis and stress upon the revelations of Emanuel Swedenborg.

1. Quoted in C. W. Ferguson, The Confusion of Tongues, p. 348. The parenthetical insertion is my own.

The Quakers are consistent Enthusiasts who carry their doctrine of the illumination of the Holy Spirit to a logical conclusion. Since the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture, the Bible is only a "declaration of the fountain, and not the fountain itself, therefore not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge." Yet Scripture "may be esteemed a secondary rule subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty."¹ "The inner light is sufficient to effect salvation even where there is no acquaintance with the historical facts of Christianity."² Thus the inner light and not Scripture is made the real source of all religious knowledge.

To be classed among the Enthusiasts are also the Methodists. Enthusiasts they are, for they teach that he who does not have the immediate testimony of the Holy Spirit in his heart and does not feel grace cannot be sure of his salvation. What Methodists mean by the testimony of the Spirit John Wesley explains in one of his sermons:

By the testimony of the Spirit, I mean, an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my

-
1. Apology of Robert Barclay, Prop. III--Schaff, Creeds of Christendom, Vol. III, p. 791.
 2. Principles of Quakerism, quoted in Popular Symbolics, p. 383.

spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God.¹

In this essay, then, the sole authority and sufficiency of Scripture will be established and the errors of the above mentioned enthusiasts regarding this doctrine pointed out and refuted, errors against which we must ever be on guard in order to preserve the purity of Christian doctrine. They are by no means dead to-day. Periodically they flare up in new dress, as Buchmanism amply testifies.

I. HOLY SCRIPTURE IS THE WORD OF GOD

The Bible has one feature which distinguishes it from all other written works, and that is that it is the Word of God, God's divinely inspired revelation. Holy Scripture does not contain God's Word in the sense that together with the Word of God there are also human instructions. No, the Bible actually is God's Word and nothing other than His revelation to mankind.

How did men come into possession of this Book of which God is the author? It did not suddenly appear in some miraculous manner, but God had it written through

1. The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, Vol. 1, p. 94.

His instruments, men who were divinely inspired by the Holy Spirit. As proof of the inspiration of the writers of the Bible we have clear and direct testimony. In Psalm 95, 7. 8 we read: "To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Of this passage the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews says: "Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."¹ What the Psalmist wrote is ascribed by Hebrews to the Holy Ghost. It is not a contradiction but proof that the Holy Spirit used the Psalmist as His instrument. St. Paul says of Is. 6, 9. 10: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers."² In Matt. 1, 22.23 the words of Isaiah to Ahaz regarding the promise of the virgin's son, Is. 7, 14, are recorded as "spoken of the Lord by the prophet." Likewise compare Ps. 41, 9 with Acts 1, 16; Ps. 2, 1 with Acts 4, 24. 25. But the passage that definitely proves the inspiration of the writers of Holy Writ is 2 Pet. 1, 19-21.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

1. Heb. 3, 7.8.

2. Acts 28, 25-27.

If the writers of Holy Scripture "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," then they consequently did not write of their own accord, but were impelled (*ψεεόμενοι*) to write by the Holy Ghost. They were His instruments chosen by God for this sacred task. Of this they were themselves aware as we see from 2 Sam. 23, 2: "The spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue." In 2 Tim. 3, 16 the apostle declares that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

But can we say that also of the New Testament? Yes, we also have sufficient proof that the books written by the apostles are in an equal degree God's Word. For that Eph. 2, 20 furnishes us with authority: "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone." Here the words of the Old Testament written by the prophets are placed on an equal plane with the words of the New written by the apostles. Both, St. Paul says, are the basis of Christian faith and were written for that purpose. Furthermore, St. Paul said of the words which he and his colaborers personally had delivered to the Christians as "which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."¹

There is yet another incontestable proof of the in-

1. 1 Cor. 2, 13.

piration of the New Testament. This is affirmed in 1 Pet. 1, 10-12, where we are told that the prophets of the Old Testament, through the spirit of Christ who was in them testified beforehand of the "grace that should come unto us" in the New Testament. Then the apostle goes on to say: "which (things) are now reported unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." The meaning of these words is clear. Not only the words of the prophets in the Old Testament but also the words of the apostles in the New are the words of the Holy Spirit.^{1.} There is, then, sufficient proof to maintain that also the New Testament is the divinely inspired Word of God.

Furthermore, no part of Holy Scripture is "more divinely inspired" than another, but inspiration extends equally to all parts of Holy Writ. Christ and the apostles refer to all parts of Scripture as the Word of God, for whenever they quoted it, they gave equal credit to all parts of it as such. Jesus Himself put the seal to this doctrine when he said, "Scripture cannot be broken."^{2.} With that statement Jesus did not confine the truth of Scripture to any one doctrine or portion of Scripture, but He meant that to be understood as valid

1. What is Christianity and Other Essays, p. 225.

2. John 10, 35.

for the entire Bible. As God's Word no part of Scripture can be broken. And when we say that inspiration of Scripture extends to all parts in an equal degree, we also include the individual words. Differently expressed, we say that inspiration of Scripture is a verbal inspiration. The Bible itself maintains that its very words are inspired. Dr. Pieper shows that 2 Pet. 1, 21 clearly teaches the verbal inspiration.

Nach dieser Stelle haben die heiligen Menschen Gottes unter dem Getriebensein vom Heiligen Geist (φερόμενοι ὑπὸ πνεύματος ἁγίου) nicht bloß gedacht oder Betrachtung angestellt, sondern geredet (ἐλάλησεν), das ist, Worte hervor gebracht. Das hier von den geschriebenen Worten der Heiligen Schrift die Rede ist, wird im vorhergehenden Verse (v. 20) ausdruecklich gesagt, wo die von den heiligen Menschen Gottes hervorgebrachten Worte als "προφητεία γερῶν" als Weissagung der Schrift, näher bestimmt werden.^{1.}

Quenstedt shows that 2 Tim. 3, 16 likewise clearly teaches the doctrine.^{2.} Christ and the apostles frequently argue from the very words of Scripture. In the above quoted passage, John 10, 35, Jesus said that the Scriptures dare not be broken, not even in respect to a

1. Chris t. Dog., I, p. 262.

2. Neque enim dicit apostolus, πάντα ἐκ γραφῆ sunt θεόπνευστα, sed πάντα γραφῆ θεόπνευστος ut ostendat, non modo res scriptas, sed etiam ipsam scripturam esse θεόπνευστον. Et quidquid de tota Scriptura dicitur, idem etiam de verbis ceu parte Scripturae non postrema necessario intelligendum non suggestum vel inspiratum divinitus, dici non posset. I, 107.

single word, *θεοῦ*. He was referring to the word
 ὁ ἁγίος of Ps. 82, 6. St. Paul gives us a similar
 proof, but he goes even a step further. In Gal. 3, 16
 he argues from the number (grammatical) of one word
 σπέρματι . It is not σπέρμασιν but σπέρματι
 Charles Hodge says in regard to the verbal inspiration:

The very form in which the doctrine of inspiration
 is taught in the Bible assumes that the organs of
 God were controlled by Him in the words which they
 used. "I have put my words in thy mouth." Jer.
 1, 9.1.

The Bible is, then, in every way God's Word,
 the two expressions being synonymous. It is this doctrine
 that gives the Bible its supreme authority in matters of
 faith and doctrine. This feature of the doctrine will,
 however, be further discussed in Part IV, where we shall
 see that Scripture demands of us complete and absolute
 obedience and adherence.

II. AS THE WORD OF GOD SCRIPTURE CONTAINS EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW FOR OUR SALVATION

If the Bible is God's Word--which we saw that it
 is--and if God has revealed a plan of salvation, then
 we should surely expect to find in in Scripture. We
 shall see that that deduction is Scriptural. The Bible

clearly teaches the sufficiency of Scripture, that is, that everything that a man needs to know to make him wise unto salvation is contained therein. Because the Bible is the Book of God, it is complete and cannot be improved, augmented, or revised in any way as to its contents--something which cannot be said of any other book.

When we assert, however, that the Bible is a perfect and complete book, we do not mean that Scripture is an encyclopedia teaching everything that man can possibly know. For example, Scripture is not a handbook on natural science, though what it says in regard to that subject is absolutely correct, as the test of time has shown. Concerning this Luther once said;

In zeitlichen Dingen und die den Menschen angehen, da ist der Mensch vernuenftig genug, da darf er keines anderen Lichts, denn der Vernunft. Darum auch Gott in der Schrift nicht lehrt, wie man Haeuser bauen, Kleider machen, heiraten, kriegen, schiffen und dergleichen tun soll, da ist das natuerliche Licht genugsam zu.l.

As much as we should like to know all the mysteries of God, Scripture does not reveal everything about Him. St. Paul's words "Now we know in part" shall

1. Quoted in F. Pieper's essay Von der Vollkommenheit und Deutlichkeit der Heiligen Schrift, erster Synodal-Bericht des Min. u. Dak. Distrikts, 1882, p. 23/

ever remain true. With that same apostle we shall always be compelled to cry out: "Oh the depths of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"¹. Cur alii prae aliis? That is a question that will always remain a hidden mystery of God. He does not tell us why. We wonder why God permits millions of heathen to die in spiritual darkness, or why one man is converted on his death bed, while his next-door neighbour has been a child of God since his infant days. No, not even in regard to God does Scripture tell us everything.

Not does Scripture reveal everything that man's reason would like to know. Much that is now hidden to man in the kingdom of Grace will be revealed to him only in the Kingdom of Glory. Thus one always wonders why God permits evil to befall him while others He apparently lets prosper. Except for wide, general principles². Scripture does not enlighten man on that subject. In that sense Scripture is not perfect.

Scripture is, however, quite complete and sufficient in that it contains everything we need to know for our

1. Rom. 11, 33.

2. Rom. 8, 28.

eternal salvation. Scripture was given to show us the way to eternal life, and with regard to that purpose it is complete and all-sufficient. Concerning the record which St. John made of the Life of our Lord he wrote: "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."¹ Whenever a man asks, "What must I do to be saved?" he will find the answer by turning to Scripture. "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."² "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope."³ Which hope? The Christian hope, the hope of eternal life, that which sustains Christians in this life. To give and to sustain this hope is the purpose of Scripture.

Nor does Scripture deceive us when it tells us that it is complete as to its purpose to bring man to salvation. Scripture does contain all we need to know for our salvation. The Bible amply attests this fact.

Concerning the *ἱερὰ ῥημάτα* 2 Tim. 3, 15, says *τὰ δυνάμενα σε σοφίσαι εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ* . More will be said concerning this passage as proof for the doctrine later on.

-
1. John 20, 21.
 2. John 5, 39.
 3. Rom. 15, 4.

When Paul parted from the elders of Ephesus, he gave them this assurance: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."¹ What does he mean by "all the counsel of God"?

Der Rat Gottes ist hier nicht der geheime, oder verborgene Rat Gottes, sondern die Erloesungsratschluss, das, was der Mensch wissen muss, um selig zu werden. Er hat den ganzen Rat, also alles und jedes, was zur Seligkeit zu wissen noetig ist, den Ephesern verkuendigt und nichts verschwiegen habe. Damit begruendet der Apostel die Aussage, dass er rein sei von allem Blut, das heisst, nicht die Schuld daran trage, wenn die Epheser dennoch verloren gingen. Hiernach muss jedermann zugeben, dass Pauli Predigt alles das enthielt, was uns Menschen zur Erlangung der Seligkeit zu wissen noetig ist.²

Had he not told us so, it would be difficult indeed to maintain against the teachers of new revelations, that that, to which Paul here refers, agrees with that recorded in Scripture. St. Paul confesses before King Agrippa: "I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come."³ By Moses and the Prophets St. Paul meant, of course, the Old Testament. Accordingly, then, St. Paul tells us that his preaching contained nothing other than that which the Old

1. Acts 20, 26.27.

2. Pieper, Min. Dak. Dist., p. 27.

3. Acts 26, 22.

Testament had foretold. What holds true for the Old holds also for the New. If Scripture contains "all the counsel of God", then it is sufficient for our salvation.

It was stated above that according to 2 Tim. 3, 15 "Holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Scripture, as the succeeding verses tell us, has other purposes. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." What man needs to know to be saved he cannot find in his own heart. It must be learned, and that Scripture teaches him, for it is "profitable for doctrine". As this passage shows us, it is also profitable to refute the errorists, to admonish, and to correct.

Wir lernen hier: die Schrift, als und weil von Gott eingegeben, ist nuetze zu allem, was wir brauchen, um den Glauben und so die Seligkeit zu erlangen; sie ist eine Quelle, die immer und reichlich fließt und nie versiegt und das rechte Lebenswasser hat, welches ins ewige Leben quillt.¹

In Luke 16, 19-31 Abraham told the Rich Man in Hell that Moses and the Prophets were quite sufficient to show men the way to Heaven, and that those who will not

1. J. K nstmann, Die Bibel ist alleinige Quelle und Norm in Glaubenssachen, p. 8.

listen to the Bible will listen to nothing else either, not even if it should be a man raised from the dead.

Scripture is sufficient also in this that it contains the way of salvation, not merely in a faint or sparing way, but in the richest and fullest manner. That which man needs is told him not only once but hundreds, yes, thousands of times. We can even say that everything in Scripture is written for our salvation. According to 2 Tim. 3, 15 it is *πᾶσα γερὰν* that is "profitable for doctrine". Not just certain parts of the Bible but "all Scripture" is able to make us wise unto salvation. In speaking of Abraham's faith as it is reported in Genesis 17, St. Paul wrote the Roman Christians: "Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised Jesus our Lord from the dead."¹. All sixty-six of the Bible's books point us to Jesus, in whose name alone there is salvation.

Again, the perfection of Scripture consists also in this that the Bible contains only truth and no falsehood whatsoever. If it contained error and lies mixed with the truth, then he who searches Scripture to find his eternal salvation would be compelled to read with the

1. Rom. 4, 23.24.

greatest of care and in a critical way, or, as Dr. Bente puts it, "mit ausgebildeten eigenen Judiz und cum grano salis."1. But as the Word of our Holy God, the Bible must be without falsehood or error and consequently absolutely reliable. One need not, then, read Scripture with a scrutinizing eye to cull the counterfeit from the genuine. "The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them (marginal reading 'it', i.e., 'every one of them!') from this generation."2.

Perfect in every way, Scripture forbids any addition or subtraction therefrom. If the contention of the Enthusiasts were true that the Bible is not sufficient to lead us in the way of truth to obtain eternal life, then Scripture would not forbid additions to itself, but would much rather ask that Christians continually seek new revelations of God and look to their own hearts for the assurance of salvation. Instead, it binds Christians to the Word of God. If Scripture is not sufficient for salvation, Jesus' words "search the Scripture!" would be hollow mockery and He a liar.³ Then He also lied when

1. F. Bente, Warum sollen wir uns in der Zukunft dem modernen Fortschritt in der Kirche ernstlich vermeiden? 39ten. Syn.-Ber. des West. Dist., 1897, p. 39.

2. Ps. 12, 6.7.

3. John 5, 39.

He told His disciples: "If ye continue in my words, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."¹ Nor did our Saviour speak the truth when He said, "Blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it!"² St. Paul was a wolf in sheep's clothing, if Scripture is not sufficient for salvation, when he urged the Thessalonians: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught whether by word or by epistle."³

Scripture goes even farther; it clearly forbids additions to the Word of God. "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you."⁴ Solomon applies the words of Moses to the entire Scripture: "Every word of God is pure; he is a shield unto them that put their trust in them. Add thou not to his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."⁵ "So gewiss die Heilige Schrift Gottes Wort ist, so gewiss gilt dies Gebot, zu derselben nichts hinzuzufuegen...denn was uns zur Selig-

1. John 8, 31.32.

2. Luke 11, 28.

3. 2 Thess. 2, 15. This passage does not support the Roman doctrine of tradition. On *παιδείας* Thayer says: "A giving over which is done by word of mouth or by writing; objectively, what is delivered, the substance of the teaching; so of St. Paul's teaching; in the plural of the word of a written narrative." St. Paul's written and oral word coincided as to their contents.

4. Deut. 4, 2.

5. Prov. 30, 5.6.

keit zu wissen noetig ist, dass weiss allein Gott."¹.

Likewise Scripture forbids subtraction from the Word. St. John attaches severe punishment to the mutilation of Holy Writ. "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."² What is here said of the Book of Revelation refers equally to the entire Scripture. Revelation tells of the future history of the church, and, would anyone add thereto, he would have to be omniscient like God Himself. The entire Scripture reveals the salvation of the church.

Paul's solemn words to the Galatians forbidding the teaching of doctrine not in harmony with his doctrine³ also applies to the whole Bible. Paul's Gospel message was no different from that which the Saviour Himself declared, nor contrary to that found in the Old Testament. Everything that is added to Scripture is in opposition to St. Paul's words and to the revealed plan of salvation.

1. Pieper, Min. Dak., p. 28.

2. Rev. 22, 18.19.

3. Gal. 1, 8.9.

If Scripture forbids the subtraction or addition to the revealed Word of God, then it binds men to it completely. Our Saviour clearly brought that out in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus referred to before.

The sola Scriptura is the cherished possession of the Lutheran Church. True Lutheranism knows no other authority than Holy Scripture, for they are sufficient for salvation. Say the Smalcald Articles: "We must firmly hold that God grants His Spirit or grace to no one, except through or with the preceding outward word."¹ So also the Formula of Concord: "We believe, teach, and confess, that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with all teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testament alone."² Gerhard, the Lutheran dogmatician says:

Perfectam esse Scripturam nostrae ecclesiae affirmant, perfectionis nomine intelligentes illud, quod Scriptura de omnibus, quae ad salutem consequendam sunt necessaria, plene ac perfecte nos instruat.³

Luther's whole life and work is a continual testimony to the sufficiency of Scripture. Luther could

1. S. A., P. III, VIII; 3; Trig. p. 495.

2. Epit. 1.7; Trig. p. 777.778.

3. L. de. Script. XVIII, 367.

never turn away from the Bible.

Ausser seinem Wort und ohne sein Wort wissen wir von keinem Christo, viel weniger von Christi Meinung. Denn der Christus, der uns ohne sein Wort seine Meinung vorgibt, das ist der leidige Teufel aus der Hoelle, der Christi heiligen Namen fuehret und darunter seine hoellische Gift verkauft.^{1.}

Ich gruende mich allein auf die heilige Schrift... denn ich glaube, dass in der Schrift der wahrhaftige Gott rede.^{2.}

Luther's watchword was "Es steht geschrieben!"

How often does he not point those to Scripture who would teach contrary to the Word of God.

Baier says: "Divinae providentiae consultissimum visum est, capita divinarum scripto comprehendere."^{3.}

Hear the words of Dr. Pieper as to his estimation of the Sacred Word:

In the darkness of this present world the Word of God alone sheds light on the question, "What must I do to be saved?" It is the only bridge that spans the abyss between earth and heaven and which finally guides us through the valley of death into life everlasting.^{4.}

Many more passages could be quoted from the writings of these princes of the Lutheran Church, but these quoted sufficiently show that the Lutheran Church

1. St. L. XVII, 2015.

2. St. L. XIV, 490.

3. Baier I, 105, Quoted in Pieper I, 234.

4. What is Christianity and Other Essays, p. 228.

has always upheld and taught the sufficiency of Holy Scripture.

To sum up, then, we can say that Scripture clearly teaches of itself that it contains all the extant revelations of God designed to be a rule of faith and practice for the church, and when the Lutheran Church insists on the sola Scriptura against erring sects, it is only teaching what the Bible itself asserts.

III. SCRIPTURE HAS CLEARLY REVEALED EVERYTHING WE NEED TO KNOW FOR OUR SALVATION

If it were a dark, obscure, and unintelligible revelation of God, it would not be sufficient. But Scripture repeatedly affirms that everything that man needs to know to obtain eternal salvation is clearly set forth in the written revelation of God.

Soll das Wort Gottes dem, der ohne Erkenntnis ist, die Erkenntnis geben, soll dasselbe ein Wegweiser sein, nach welchem ein Mensch den richtigen Weg gehen kann, so muss dasselbe die Art haben, dass er dem Menschen seinen Sinn erschliesst, demselben zum Verstaendnis bringt, und ueber demselben und desselben Meinungen keinen Zweifel laesst--kurz: das Wort muss deutlich sein... Ein Wort, das durch sich selbst niemandem sein Verstaendnis aufschliessen und geben kann, hiesse ja mit Recht eher Finsternis als Licht.1.

The definition of the claritas Scripturae was purposely limited to "everything that man needs to know for

1. Adolf Hoenecke, Ev. Luth. Dogmatik, I, p. 411.

salvation", because not all the contents of Scripture are entirely and equally clear. The perspicuity of the Bible does not deny that there may be and are dark passages which are difficult and incomprehensible. Luther himself admitted, "das ist wohl wahr, etliche Sprueche der Schrift sind dunkel,"¹ and yet Luther was a staunch defender of the clearness of Scripture. There are in Scripture many passages which are hard to understand, especially those which treat of chronological, geographical, and archeological matters, as Dr. Pieper points out.² In his essay before the Minnesota-Dakota District he designated as difficult such passages as Gen. 41, 43 (צָרָה); Ex. 39 (the description of the priest's garments).³ Such require diligent study and research. Many will remain obscure, and others will be explained only by future archeological findings and historical research.

At the same time we do not deny that there are passages in Holy Scripture which treat of articles of salvation which are difficult to comprehend. The Revelation of St. John was recorded by the Holy Spirit to make us wise unto salvation, but who is there who can say that everything in the Apocalypse is clear and in-

1. St. L. V. 335.

2. Christ. Dog., I, p. 391.

3. p. 39.

telligible for him? And yet such passages do not give the Enthusiasts ground for their claims, for, as will next be shown, there are innumerable clear passages in Scripture, and by them the more obscure must be judged. Augustine offers a reason for these indistinct portions: "It is wonderful and wholesome that the Holy Spirit has so arranged Holy Scripture, that He quiets the hunger through the clearer and by the more obscure wipes away satiety (*fastidia detergeret*)."¹.

What is not clearly stated in Scripture is not to be made an article of faith. On the other hand, everything that we need to know for our salvation is stated at least once in clear and explicit words. What could be more clearly revealed in Scripture than this, that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world to take upon Himself the body of a human being, to suffer and die in our place that we might live?

If the dark passages are subjected to comparison with the clear ones, the obscurity often entirely disappears. It is only the old principle which students of the Bible have always known: Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur. Scripture itself explains in clear, parallel passages what it means in dark and figurative passages. Dr. Pieper explains:

1. Quoted by Pieper in Christ. Dog., I, p. 392.

Finde ich daher an einer Stelle etwas den Glauben Betreffendes dunkel ausgedrueckt, so bleibe ich in der Schrift und schlage solche Stelle auf, in welchen der Heilige Geist eigentlich von der betreffenden Lehre handelt. Wenn ich dann aus der klaren Stellen den Glaubensartikel gefasst habe, so werde ich auch die dunkeleren Stellen dann meistens auslegen und verstehen koennen.^{1.}

Nor are Lutheran dogmaticians the only ones that teach the perspicuity of Scripture. Says Hodge, the great Reformed theologian:

It is not denied that the people, learned and unlearned, in order to come to the proper understanding of Scripture, should not only compare Scripture with Scripture, and avail themselves of all the means in their power to aid them in their search after the truth, but they should also pay greatest deference to the faith of the church.^{2.}

Luther says that it was the custom of the ancient church already to permit Scripture to interpret Scripture: "Die heiligen Vaeter haben die Weise, Schrift auszulegen, dass sie helle, klare Sprueche nehmen und machen damit die dunkeln, wankeln Sprueche klar."^{3.}

Here the enemies of the claritas Scripturae say that if Scripture were clear and interpreted itself as we Lutherans claimed, there would not be as many interpretations of Scripture as there are. The answer is, of course, that that is not the fault of Scripture but

1. Minn.-Dak., p. 41.

2. Op. cit., Vol. I, p. 184.

3. St. L. XX, 856.

of those who expound it. They no longer remain with the clear passages but turn off into the obscure and figurative, or subject Scripture to reason and their own personal opinions. Think of the American Constitution. One would hardly say that it is an obscure and dark document, and yet, look at the many interpretations held by learned lawyers regarding its contents. If it were true that only that is clear which cannot be twisted into various meanings, then there would be nothing clear and explicit in written word. If we remain with the advice of the Apology, we shall not go wrong: "Examples ought to be interpreted according to the rule, i. e., according to certain clear passages of Scripture, not contrary to the rule, that is, not contrary to the Scriptures."¹

The reason for incorrect interpretations is given us by Scripture itself in such passages as 2 Cor. 4, 3; 2 Pet. 3, 16. In the first passage we read: "But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." In the second passage St. Peter tells us: "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to understand, which they that are

1. Trig. p. 441; paragraph 60.

unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the Scriptures, unto their own destruction." Not the obscurity of Scripture but perverse human beings cause the many varied interpretations. So then we hold that Scripture is clear because it interprets itself. "Ist ein dunkeler Sprich in der Schrift, so zweifelt nur nicht, es ist gewisslich diesselbe wahrheit dahinten, die am anderen Ort klar ist."¹.

Again, Scripture is a clear book because it can be understood by all men. The Bible was not written for any chosen or select group, but for all men without exceptions, not for a particular class, not only for the educated nor only for adults, but for all men--rich and poor, learned and unlearned, young and old. Just as salvation is meant for all men, so also Scripture, which offers men salvation, has been written in such a manner that all men can grasp from it what need be known to be saved. If God had used only the scientific method of writing, then only those who understand that style of language could find their salvation, and the Bible would fail of its purpose. God has made use of a popular, easy style and method of presentation, so that Scripture should not be dark, unintelligible, and incomprehensible for the common man. What a child can understand that any grown-up

1. St. L. V, p. 338.

can grasp, no matter what station of life he may occupy. St. Paul reminded Timothy that he had known Scripture "from a child". How often do we not find direct commands in Scripture to teach the children the Word of God.^{1.} Scripture is therefore clear for all men.

Yet one must not confuse the clearness with the "reasonableness" of Scripture. By the claritas Scripturae is not meant that the contents of the Bible are clear but rather that these contents are clearly revealed. All articles of faith are contrary to human reason. St. Paul explains: "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery."^{2.} And again: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."^{3.} The whole doctrine of the incarnation and atonement is clearly taught, but who can understand it? Who understands the doctrine of the Trinity? Though these are doctrines contrary to human reason, yet they are all clearly taught in Scripture. To Erasmus Luther wrote:

Die Schrift bekennt einfach die Dreieinigkeit Gottes und die Menschheit Christi (des Sohnes Gottes) und die Sünde die unvergeblich ist. Hier ist nichts von Dunkelheit oder Zweideutigkeit. Wie es aber damit zugehe, sagt die Schrift nicht, und ist auch nicht noetig zu wissen. Die Sophisten behandeln hier ihre Traeume; die beschuldige und verdamme und sprich die Schrift frei.^{4.}

-
1. Cf. Ps. 78, 1-8; Deut. 4, 9; 6, 7.
 2. 1 Cor. 2, 7.
 3. 1 Cor. 2, 9.
 4. St. L. XVIII, 1862.

So far, then, for what is meant by this doctrine. Now let us turn to see what the Bible has to say in defence of the teaching.

Scripture ascribes clearness to itself. It calls itself a light. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye will do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."¹ The prophetic word here referred to is, of course, the Old Testament. "The dark place" is the condition of man in this life, because by nature he knows nothing of spiritual matters. Consequently, Scripture must be clear, otherwise the Holy Spirit could not call the Old Testament a "light".

David sings: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."² נֶר-לְרַגְלִי דְבַרְךָ וְאוֹר לְזַמְתִּי בְּתִי : .
 נֶר , says Koenig in his Woerterbuch zum Alten Testa-
ment, is to be rendered as "Leuchte", eig., "Lampe" oder
 "Erkenntnisquelle". As parallel passages for that last
 meaning he gives Prov. 6, 23; 20, 27. Now the Word of God
 would not be much of a lamp and light to guide the feet
 of men along the path which they are to tread if it were
 a dark and faint light. Much less could it be a "fountain
 of knowledge" (Erkenntnisquelle). The fact that the Word

1. 2 Pet. 1, 19.

2. Ps. 119, 105.

of God is meant to be a guide also for the "simple"^{1.} and for "children"^{2.} shows that it must be a clear light if it is to guide them. The Johannine writings, which are especially attacked as dark and obscure, are not only comprehensible for the *πατέρες* and the *κεκρίσθη* but also for the *παιδία*.^{3.} If Scripture were not clear, then it would be insufficient as "sound doctrine both to exhort and convince the gainsayers."^{4.} Only clear passages can persuade the opponent.

Since in Part I it was shown that Scripture is God's Word, it follows logically that Scripture must be clear. In the Bible no one speaks to us but God Himself, and He is the omniscient, omnipotent God. Truly, God used fallible persons as instruments to record His Word, but He safeguarded against possible error by putting His message into their mouth.^{5.} A dark Word of God would be incompatible with its purpose.^{6.} God wanted to speak clearly to His children, and so he clearly revealed to them what was necessary for them to know for salvation. Indeed, so clearly did He reveal His will regarding man's

1. Ps. 19, 7.

2. 2 Tim. 3, 15.

3. 1 John 2, 14.15; Cf. Pieper. I, 387.388.

4. Titus 1, 9.

5. Ex. 4, 10-12.

6. John 20, 31.

salvation, that Christians can say: *εἰδῶμεν τὰ ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ χαρισθέντα ἡμῖν* .¹ If a person really believes that the Bible is God's Word, then he must automatically admit the claritas Scripturae.

The clearness of the Bible is presupposed because it orders all men to seek their salvation therein. It would be useless to search in an ambiguous or obscure Scripture. It orders not only the learned but all men to seek their salvation therein and to ward off false doctrine thereby. Jesus ordered the Jews to go to Moses and the Prophets for testimony concerning Himself: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me."² The same was said to the Rich Man in Hell. Timothy found Scriptures "able to make him wise unto salvation." The Bereans "searched the Scripture daily, whether those things were so" as Paul had told them.³ Paul encouraged the Thesalonians to stand fast in the doctrine as he had taught it to them by word and by epistle.⁴ "Ueberhaupt ist ja bei der Tatsache, dass die meisten apostolischen Briefe an ganze Gemeinden gerichtet sind und in den Gemeinden vorgelesen werden sollten, ihre Deutlichkeit vorausgesetzt."⁵

1. 1 Cor. 2, 12.

2. John 5, 29.

3. Acts 17, 11.

4. 2 Thess. 2, 15.

5. Pieper I, 387.

By Scripture, also, believers are ordered to avoid and refute error. 1 John 4, 1 says: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." Only by a clear Scripture can we try them. The same holds true of Rom. 16, 17. These passages would be bitter irony were Scripture dark and obscure.

So Scripture expressly states and implies that it is a clear book, a light able to make all men wise unto salvation.

Often the adversaries of this doctrine say that if the Bible would be clear, then it would be unnecessary to have commentaries and expositions of Scripture. Again we return to the parallel which the American Constitution presents. Volumes upon volumes of commentaries have been written concerning its interpretation, as the shelves of any good lawyer will reveal. And yet the Constitution is clear. The Bible does not deny its perspicuity when it orders men to diligently search and expound it. That is a particular gift of God given certain men.¹ It is the duty of the expounder to find out what is clearly revealed and thereby to explain Scripture.

The Enthusiasts say that we deny our own doctrine when we hold that Scripture cannot be understood except

1. Acts 18, 24.

the Holy Spirit enlighten us. That only proves the Divine and spiritual character of Holy Writ. David prays: "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of thy law."¹.

Er betet nicht: Mache dein Gesetz hell, sondern: Mache meine Augen Hell, damit ich die dort klar-
ausgesprochenen wunderbaren Dinge erkenne. David kannte den aeusseren Sinn des Gesetzes ganz genau; er erbittet sich aber hier die innere heilsame Erkenntnis.².

The light for which David prays is not to come into Scripture but into his own heart. We absolutely deny that natural man without the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit can understand Scripture.³ There is, as Luther says, an internal and an external perspicuity of Scripture.

Und dass ich kurz davon rede: Es ist zweierlei Klarheit und Dunkelheit der Schrift. Eine ist aeusserlich an der Schrift selbst, wie sie da liegt, und daselbst nichts Dunkeles oder Zweifelhaftiges, sondern ist alles durch die hellen Worte der Schrift klar ans Licht gegeben der ganzen Welt, was fuer Hauptstuecke die ganze Schrift in sich enthaelt. Die andere ist einwendig im Herzen, dass einer die geistlichen Sachen und Dinge, so die Schrift vorhaelt, erkenne und versthe. Und so du (Erasmus) von derselbigen redest, so ist kein Ding auf Erden, der den geringsten Titel von der Schrift verstehet oder siehet, ohne diejenigen, so Gottes Geist haben.⁴.

The fact that the enlightenment of the Holy Ghost is required to clearly understand Scripture does not nullify the perspicuity of Scripture.

1. Ps. 119, 18.

2. Pieper, Minn.-Dak., p. 65.

3. 1 Cor. 2, 14; Luke 24, 27.

4. St. L. XVIII, 1683.

No matter in which way we look at the Bible, we find that everything we need to know to be saved is clearly and unequivocally set forth in Holy Writ. This doctrine also must be held against the Enthusiasts who would have us believe that the Bible is a dead letter,, and that consequently one must await the direct illumination of the Holy Ghost to make us wise unto salvation.

IV. HOLY SCRIPTURE DEMANDS OUR UNQUALIFIED ADHERENCE AND OBEDIENCE

Because the Bible in distinction to all other books is the Word of God, the Lutheran Church renders Scripture its unqualified obedience and adherence. Lutherans know that when they turn to the Bible they there have God's infallible Word in which He reveals His will to man. When the Bible speaks, Lutherans hold its verdict as the final decision and abide by it.¹ If Scripture were not the infallible Word of God, so that we would be compelled to differentiate between truth and error therein, it could not demand of us the same loyalty. We would automatically become Enthusiasts of some stripe by making our reason, an inner light, or new revelations the sole judge. Fortunately, it is God's Word, and hence it can demand absolute and unswerving obedience.

1. Deut. 4, 2; 1 Pet. 4, 11.

The Bible is the sole norm for the formulation of doctrine and as a guide for life. What is not found in Scripture cannot be made an article of faith. Quod non est Biblicum non est theologicum. Christ and the apostles acknowledged and asserted the Divine authority of the Bible by quoting it as the only standard when controversies arose or doctrine was to be formulated,¹ thereby setting a good example for us to follow. The Saviour gives express command to remain with His words if we wish to be classed among His true disciples. "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."²

No other form of revelation of His will is necessary. By faithful continuance in God's Word we shall know the truth. In fact, the Bible pronounces its anathemas upon those who teach contrary to the revealed doctrines of Holy Writ.³ The extra-Biblical sources of doctrine of the Enthusiasts are not only unnecessary but--which is far worse--unscriptural.

Finally, Holy Scripture demands our unqualified obedience because God has closed His revelation to man with regard to salvation. What is meant by that is this:

-
1. John 10, 35; Matt, 3, 3-10; 26, 59; Luke 24, 25-27; Acts 3, 20; 18, 28; 26, 22.
 2. John 8, 31.32.
 3. Cf. Part II, p. 16.

After the canon was completed, no new or immediate revelations were given man as a source of doctrine.¹ As Abraham refused to grant the brothers of the Rich Man a special revelation because "they have Moses and the prophets", so God wanted us to hear the sacred Scriptures only. "Alle Welt soll sich an die Offenbarung Gottes durch die Propheten und zuletzt durch den Herrn halten; John 8, 12; Heb. 12, 25."² The best proof, however, to show that revelation has been closed is the word of the Saviour spoken in His High-Priestly Prayer: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."³ That settles the matter beyond a doubt. "Er erklart damit seiner Apostel Wort fuer den Glaubensgrund der ganzen christlichen Kirche bis an den juengsten Tag."⁴ The Saviour was praying that His disciples might be sanctified, and then He followed with the passage quoted. He said that He was not praying for His disciples alone, that is the Apostles, but also for those who should believe on Him through the words of the Apostles. Dr. Pieper in this connection calls attention to the words of Luther on 2 Sam. 23, 2--"The spirit of

1. Cf. Quot. of Hollaz in Hoenecke, Op. cit., I, 232.

2. Ibid. p. 232.

3. John 17, 20.

4. Pieper, Chr. Dog., I, 235.

the Lord spake by me,"--

Solchen Ruhm duerfen wir noch niemand fuehren, der nicht ein Prophet ist. Das moegen wir tun, soferne wir auch heilig (sind), und den Heiligen Geist haben, dass wir Katechumenen und Schueler der Propheten uns ruehmen, als die wir nachsagen und predigen, was wir von den Propheten und Apostel gehoert und gelernt haben. Das heissen in dem Alten Testament der 'Propheten Kinder', die nichts Eigenes noch neues setzen, wie die Propheten tun, sondern lehren, das sie von den Propheten haben, und sind 'Israel', wie David sagt, denn er die Psalmen macht.^{1.}

Scripture leaves no room, therefore, for new revelations in any form. No doubt can attach itself, as we have seen, to the Lutheran teaching of the sola Scriptura. The Lutheran Church recognizes no other source or norm of doctrine than the written Word of God. The Bible contains all that is necessary to be known for salvation, because as God's Word it reveals His will to us in clear, unmistakable, and indisputable words what men must do to be saved. From the sola Scriptura no one may deviate in any way with regard to matters of faith. When in the remainder of this paper we look at the teachings and practice of the Methodists, Quakers, and Swedenborgians with regard to the sola Scriptura, we shall see that they have departed therefrom when they make things other than the Bible their source of faith.

1. St. L. III, 1890.

V. THE DENIAL OF THE SOLA SCRIPTURA BY THE METHODISTS, QUAKERS, AND SWEDENBORGIANS

A. THE METHODISTS

Though the Methodists theoretically stand solidly upon the sola Scriptura as the source of faith,^{1.} yet it is well known that "they are representatives of an unsound 'enthusiasm' in religion."^{2.} Methodists set aside Scripture when they teach that the Holy Spirit works immediately within the heart of man by putting into his heart a feeling that he is a child of God. They call this the witness or testimony of the Spirit. Here is what Wesley meant by the testimony of the Spirit:

I mean an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit, that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given Himself for me; that all my sins are blotted out; and I, even I, am reconciled to God.^{3.}

Thus the Holy Spirit is reputed to give the Christian the assurance of grace through new and peculiar sensations, impressions, and revelations within his heart

-
1. Methodist Articles of Religion A.D. 1784, Article V The Holy Scriptures contain everything necessary for salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith or be thought requisite or necessary for salvation. Schaff, OP. Cit., III, p. 808.
 2. Popular Symbolics, p. 285.
 3. Works, I, p. 94.

independently of the Word. The result of that is a devaluation of the Bible. In another of his sermons Wesley said; "We know that there is no inherent power...in the letters of Scripture read, the sound thereof heard... but it is God alone who is the giver of every good gift, the author of all grace."¹ Wesley speaks of the witness of the Spirit as:

the result of reason, or reflexion, on what we feel in our hearts. Strictly speaking, it is a conclusion drawn partly from the Word of God, and partly from our own experience;²

the testimony of our conscience that God has given us to be holy of heart, and holy in outward conversation. It is a consciousness of our having been received, in and by the Spirit of adoption, the tempers mentioned in the Word of God as belonging to His adopted children.³

To a good Methodist it matters little that Scriptures say that he, too, has been redeemed and that therefore he has the assurance that also his sins are forgiven, but everything depends upon how he feels. Both Whitefield and Wesley taught this dangerous doctrine that a person cannot be sure of his salvation until he has found a feeling of forgiveness in his heart and that one should not cease to strive for this feeling until he has received it. We are, therefore, not surprised when under

1. Beauties of John Wesley, p. 88.

2. Hastings, Enc. of Religion, III, 330.

3. Ibid., p. 329.

date of January 4, 1739, John Wesley wrote in his Journal:

My friends affirm I am mad because I said I was not a Christian a year ago. I affirm I am not a Christian now. Indeed, what I might have been I know not, had I been faithful to the grace then given, when expecting nothing less, I received such a sense of the forgiveness of my sins as till then I never knew. But that I am not a Christian at this day, I as assuredly know as that Jesus is the Christ. For a Christian is one who has the fruits of the Spirit of Christ, which (to mention no more) are love, peace, and joy. But these I have not. I have not any love of God. I do not love either the Father or the Son. Do you ask how do I know whether I love God? I answer by another question, 'How do you know that you love me?' Why, as you know whether you are hot or cold. You feel at this moment that you do or do not love me. And I feel this moment, I do not love God; which therefore I know because I feel it... Though I have used all the means of grace for twenty years, I am not a Christian.¹

The story of Wesley's conversion is well known.

It is interesting to note how much emphasis he put on his feelings at the time of his conversion. This is what he wrote in his Journal under Wednesday, May 24, 1738:

In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.²

-
1. Quoted in C. T. Winchester, The Life of John Wesley, p. 59.60.
 2. Hugh P. Hughes, The Heart of John Wesley's Journal, p. 43.

George Whitefield wrote in his Journal:

All this while I was assured God had forgiven me. It is a dreadful mistake to deny the doctrine of assurances--all ought to labour after it--I know numbers whose forgiveness is written upon their hearts, as it were with a sun-beam -- Oh! (says another) I cannot be freed from doubting, till I have more infallible assurances; --till I hear Christ speaking to me so that I am sensible in that very hour and that it is he that speaketh.¹

The following is a quotation from one of Wesley's printed sermons in which he treats the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. Notice that Wesley leaves no one in doubt that he means the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit without the Word of God, though he concedes the possibility of the Holy Ghost being able to work through the Scriptures:

Neither do I suppose, that he always applies to the heart, (though he often may), one or more texts of Scripture. But he so works upon the soul by his immediate influence, and by a strong, though inexplicable operation, that the stormy wind and troubled waves subside, and there is sweet calm; the heart resting as in the arms of Jesus, and the sinner being clearly satisfied that God is reconciled, that all his "iniquities are forgiven, and his sins covered."²

Note the overemphasis which Wesley places on one's feelings:

I rejoice because his Spirit beareth witness to my spirit, that I am bought with the blood of the Lamb; and that, believing in him, 'I am a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven'. I rejoice, because of the sense

1. G. Lavington, The Enthusiasm of Papists and Methodists, Vol. I, p. 33.

2. The works of the Rev. John Wesley, Vol. I, p. 94.

of God's love to me hath, by the same Spirit, wrought in me to love him, and to love for his sake every child of man, every soul that he hath made. I rejoice because he gives me to feel in myself 'the mind that was in Christ; simplicity, a single eye to him, in every motion of my heart; power always to fix the living eye of my soul on him who 'loved me, and gave himself for me'... In this I likewise rejoice, yea, and will rejoice, because my conscience beareth me witness in the Holy Ghost, by the light he continually pours in upon it, that I 'walk worthy of the vocation wherewith I am called'... I rejoice because I both see and feel, through the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that all my works are wrought in him, yea, and that it is he who worketh all my works in me. I rejoice in seeing through the light of God, which shines in my heart, that I have power to walk in his ways, and that through his grace, I turn not therefrom to the right hand or to the left.¹

This teaching of the Methodists that a person is not truly converted unless he first feel the forgiveness of sins wrought in him through the direct testimony of the Holy Spirit ignores and discards the sufficiency of Holy Scripture. A believer can and should be certain that his sins are forgiven for the sake of Christ and that God is gracious unto him, but this certainty does not rest upon one's feelings, which easily deceive, but is firmly founded upon the words and promises of God.² Just how deceiving one's feelings may really be Dr. Pieper brings out when he writes:

Wenn wir ein Gefuehl des Glaubens haben, halten wir Gott fuer gnaeddig und wollen wir ueber die

1. Ibid., p. 105.106.

2. Rom. 5, 1; John 15, 31; 1 John 3, 20.

Mauern springen. Ist das Gefuehl des Glaubens geschwunden, und empfinden wir statt dessen im Gewissen die Anklagen des Gesetztes, so halten wir Gott fuer ungnaedig und wollen wir verzweifeln, gerade als ob es kein Evangelium gaebe, das allein um Christi Gerechtigkeit willen Vergebung der Suenden zusagt.^{1.}

Even Whitefield and Wesley admitted the treacherous nature of feeling: Says Wesley: "Visions might come from God and might not." And again: "He discovered among his hearers wiles of Satan, as never entered into his heart to conceive."^{2.} Whitefield conceded: "that Satan transformed himself into an Angel of Light whereby he (Whitefield) followed the suggestions of the evil spirit in whatever he (Satan) did."^{3.}

Wesley offered this advice to those who would distinguish between the feeling wrought in man by the Holy Spirit and that wrought by the Evil One:

By the present marks we may easily distinguish a child of God from a presumptuous self-deceiver. The Scriptures describe the joy in the Lord which accompanies the witness of the spirit as a humble joy, a joy that abases to the dust; that makes a pardoned sinner cry out, 'I am vile! What am I, or my father's house? Now mine eye seeth Thee, I abhor myself in dust and ashes!...'... There is a soft yielding spirit; a mildness and sweetness, a tenderness of soul, which words cannot express. But do these fruits attend that supposed testimony of the Spirit, in a presumptuous man? Just the reverse. The more confident he is of the favour of God, the more is he lifted up; the more does he

1. Chr. Dog., I, 242.

2. Lavington, OP. cit., II, p. 88.

3. Ibid., II, p. 88.

exalt himself; the more haughty and assuming is his whole behaviour. The stronger witness he imagines himself to have, the more overbearing is he to all around him; the more incapable of receiving any reproof; the more impatient of contradiction.¹

To secure oneself from delusion, Wesley claims, God gives us two witnesses, that of the Holy Ghost and of our own spirit.

God gives us two witnesses, that we are his children. And this they testify conjointly. Therefore, 'what God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.' And while they are joined, we cannot be deluded: their testimony can be depended on. They are fit to be trusted in the highest degree, and need nothing else to prove what they assert.²

The danger in feeling is this: Because some do not have feelings in the same degree as others, they regard themselves as rejected and forsaken of God. Accordingly Wesley tells of "some who utterly refused to be comforted, till they should feel their souls at rest."³ The opposite is also true. A person of a rather bold and confident nature falsely trusts in his groundless feelings as the voice of the Spirit and settles into a state of self-righteous security.

The Christ ordained method is that he who would be sure of his salvation must turn to the Word of God.

1. Wesley's Works, I, p. 90.

2. Ibid., p. 99.

3. Lavington, Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 3.

When in His High Priestly Prayer He said: "Neither pray I for these alone but for them also which shall believe on me through their word,"¹. He clearly bound all men to His Word if they would have saving faith in Him. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God,"² also holds men to the Bible for the way of salvation. Scripture rejects all faith that is not built upon the Word of Christ recorded in Sacred Writ and describes such faith as built upon the "wisdom of men",³ and those who teach otherwise as "proud knowing nothing."⁴

So when the Methodists say that only those are truly converted who have passed through a serious struggle under conviction of sin and have experienced the inward assurance that they have passed from death to life, they nullify the sufficiency of Scripture, because they thereby deny that Scripture tells us everything that we need to know to be saved. It is withdrawing from Scripture the most important thing for the individual sinner--that he that believes the Promises shall be saved.

B. THE QUAKERS

While Methodists are enthusiasts because they rely on the inner feeling for their assurance of salvation

1. John 17, 20.

2. Rom. 10, 17.

3. 1 Cor. 2, 5.

4. 1 Tim. 6, 3.

and conversion, the Quakers are Enthusiasts because they claim that the "inner light is sufficient to effect salvation even where there is no acquaintance with the historical facts of Christianity."¹.

It is not so easy to give a satisfactory view of the doctrines of the Quakers because they have no authoritative creed or exposition of doctrine to which all who call themselves Quakers subscribe. Their prominent writers differ in their views on even some of the more important points, so that the opinions of any one writer, or even a group of them, can not be taken as representative of the tenets of all Quaker bodies. For instance, in the matter under discussion the Orthodox Quakers make the inner light subordinate to the Scriptures, many of the earlier members of this sect made the written subordinate to the inner word, while Barclay and others try to make the two coordinate.² However, in this paper we shall follow the views of Robert Barclay because he did more than any other to reduce the principles of the Society's founder, George Fox, to order and to publish them for the public. In the opinion of Schaff, Barclay's fifteen theological theses or propositions, which are the text of his Theologiae Christianae Apologia, contain the most authoritative summary of the principles and doctrines

1. Pop. Symb., p. 383.

2. Hodge, Op. cit., I, 94.

or the Religious Society of Friends.^{1.}

Quakerism's ruling principle is the universal inner light.^{2.} It is also called the "seed", "the Word of God," and "the indwelling Christ". This supernatural and divine inner light is the direct illumination of the heart and mind by the Spirit of God for the purpose of salvation. It is for that reason that their teaching militates against the sufficientia Scripturae.

First of all, they hold that the inner light is the source of all truth. Even Scripture itself has proceeded from the inner light. Barclay writes in his third proposition of his Apology concerning the Holy Scripture:

From these revelations of the Spirit of God to the saints have proceeded the Scriptures of truth, which...because they are only a declaration of the fountain and not the fountain itself, therefore they are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge, nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners. Nevertheless, as that which giveth a true and faithful testimony of the first foundation, they are and may be esteemed a secondary rule, subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty.^{3.}

Apparently Barclay has never read 2 Pet. 1, 19-21.

1. Schaff, Op. cit., III, 789.

2. Penn calls it "the fundamental principle which is the corner-stone of their fabric." Schaff, I, 808.

3. Ibid., I, 791.

In reading Barclay's Apology and his Catechism one notices that he is careful not to say that Scriptures are the Word of God. So one is not surprised to find in his Animadversiones ad exercit. Nicolas Arnold that he says that Scripture cannot really and in an outward manner be called the Word of God.¹ That is a denial of all those passages which identify the Bible with the Word of God.²

Scripture is not the sole rule and norm of faith and life for the Quakers.

The testimony of the Spirit is that alone by which the true knowledge of God hath been, is, and can be only revealed.³

They (Scriptures) are not to be esteemed the principal ground of all truth and knowledge nor yet the adequate primary rule of faith and manners...They are and may be esteemed a secondary rule subordinate to the Spirit, from which they have all their excellency and certainty...And seeing we do therefore receive and believe the Scriptures, because they proceed from the Spirit, therefore also the Spirit is more originally and principally the rule.⁴

"Scripture cannot be considered the principal ground of all truth, for the Spirit is the first and principal leader."⁵ For the Quaker the inner light

1. Quoted in Guenther, Op. cit., p. 80.

2. Cp. Is. 6, 9.10 with Acts 28, 25; Ps. 110, 1 with Mark 12, 26.

3. Schaff, op. cit., II, 790.

4. Ibid., p. 791.

5. Quoted from Barclay in Pop. Symb., p. 383.

opens the sense of the spiritual mysteries; it convinces and converts; it gives victory over sin, and brings joy and peace. Thus the Spirit is the primary source of all religious truth and knowledge.

In keeping with the sola Scriptura the Lutheran says: "Scriptura Scripturam interpretatur." "No," says Barclay, "by the inward testimony of the Spirit we do alone truly know them."¹.

It is the true interpreter of the Bible, which without it remains a sealed book. It holds in this respect the same position which the Roman Catholic Church assigns the unwritten traditions.².

Because even the learned themselves derive no real advantage from studying the Scripture, if they are destitute of the inner light, the Quakers attach little importance to the private reading of the Bible, but of late times, the conclusions of modern criticism have led the Friends to an increased interest in Bible study.

Quakers are consistent when they deny that the Scriptures are the power of God unto salvation.³ For that reason they hold that not only Christians, who have heard the Word of God, but also the heathen can ultimately be saved by virtue of this inner light which creates

1. Schaff, Op. cit., III, 791.

2. Ibid., I, 869.

3. Guenther, op. cit., 92.

light of the Holy Spirit "which is absolutely necessary for the kindling of true faith."

C. SWEDENBORGIANS

The saddest case of departure from the sola Scriptura on the part of these three sects is that of the Swedenborgians, because, as was stated in the beginning, their error has left not a single doctrine untouched.

If one were to believe Swedenborg's own words, then all people prior to his new revelations were in deepest spiritual darkness, for he writes in the introduction of his Arcana Coelestia:

That this is really the case in respect to the Word that it is impossible for any man to know except from the Lord, wherefore it is expedient here to premise, that, of the Lord's mercy, it has been granted me now for several years to constantly and uninterruptedly in company with spirits and angels, hearing them converse with each other and conversing with them. Hence it has been permitted me to hear and see things in another life which are astonishing and which never before came to the knowledge of any man or entered into his imagination. I have thus been instructed...particularly concerning the doctrine of faith which is acknowledged throughout all heaven, on which subjects, by the divine mercy of the Lord, more will be said in the following pages.¹

Since Scripture has been dark and obscure for all men until the time of Swedenborg, it is not very difficult to see that the writings of Swedenborg are

1. Arcana Coelestia.

placed on the same level as the Bible. In fact, Swedenborg boldly asks:

Who in the Christian world would have known anything of Heaven and Hell unless it had pleased the Lord to open the spiritual sight of some person or other and to show and teach him?¹

We all know who it was, according to Swedenborg, that received this knowledge and is now able to impart it to others. He is, as we have seen Emanuel Swedenborg himself! He thereby sets up his revelations as of equal, yes, of superior authority to Scripture. That surely is not teaching all nations "all things whatsoever I have commanded you."² It is almost as though St. Paul had Swedenborg in mind when he wrote: "For though we or an angel from heaven teach any other doctrine than that which we have declared unto you, let him be accursed."³ If Swedenborg's claims were true, then the Saviour and St. Paul were fearful liars when they directed their followers to Scripture to seek eternal life.⁴

According to Swedenborg the word of Scripture is an eternal incarnation with its threefold sense: natural; spiritual, which refers to the Kingdom of God; and celestial, which pertains to the Lord Himself.⁵ He

1. Swedenborg, The True Christian Religion, 851.

2. Matt. 28, 19.20.

3. Gal. 1, 8.

4. John 5, 39; 2 Tim. 3, 15.

5. Swedenborg, T.C.R., 6.

alone, as a divinely sent messenger, is able to reveal the spiritual, deeper, inner sense of the Scriptures, because he alone was able to see the correspondence between the natural and spiritual things.^{1.}

Then on the basis of these differing senses of Scripture Swedenborg felt himself capable of culling out those books of the Bible which are not in the strict sense truly the Word of God. He writes:

In the sacred Scriptures the 'books of the Word' which embrace 'the law, the prophets, and the psalms' of the Old Testament and the 'four Gospels and Revelation' of the New Testament are shown to have in internal sense throughout being dictated by the divine spirit to the human writers without their intervention, and clothed in natural symbolic language exactly corresponding to the spiritual and universal truths within, just as nature is a symbolic clothing with matter of the forces and forms of the divine love and wisdom. The other books of the Bible are inspired and useful for the church but are not the divine word itself in the sense above named. By the word man is brought into association with the angelic societies in heaven who are in the spiritual sense.^{2.}

There is really little more that need be said to show that the Swedenborgians deny the Sola Scriptura. Theirs is surely a gross case of departure from the Bible as sole source and norm of faith and life. Scripture is not in its entirety the Word of God; to it must be added the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg if one would know saving truth; its natural sense is dark and obscure and

1. Introduction to Coelestia Arcana.

2. The Four Leading Doctrines, quoted in Klotsche, op. cit., p. 319.

can only be enlightened by the new revelations divinely given to him. In every way they depart from doctrine of the Scripture. We know, however, that only they who continue in Christ's words are truly His disciples.

In conclusion, there is only this to add that we remain steadfastly with the Scriptures, our only source of Christian doctrine, faith, and life. Let us learn the lesson which the discussion of these three errorists has brought to our attention--that whenever the sola Scriptura is abandoned, either minutely or grossly, then practically anything can be taught as doctrine. Luther already drew an important lesson from church history in regard to this doctrine.

Ihr lieben Deutschen, kauft, weil der Markt vor der Tuer ist, sammelt ein, weil es scheint und gut Wetter ist. Denn das sollt ihr wissen: Gottes Wort ist wie ein fahrender Platzregen, der nicht wiederkommt, wo er einmal gewesen ist. Die Juden haben ihn gehabt, aber hin ist hin, sie haben nun nichts. Paulus brachte ihn gen Griechenland, aber hin ist hin, sie haben nun den Tuerken. Rom und lateinisch Land hat ihn auch gehabt, aber hin ist hin, sie haben nun den Pabst. Und ihr Deutschen muesst nicht denken, dass ihr ihn ewig haben werdet, denn der Undank und die Verachtung werden ihn nicht lassen bleiben. Darum greifet zu und haltet fest, wer greifen und halten kann. Faule Haende muessen ein boeses Jahr haben.¹

One's own feelings fluctuate and deceive;
the "inner light" is the vain imagination; Swedenborg's

1. St. L. X, 464.

new revelations only lead further from the truth. Our glory and our confidence is in the sola Scriptura.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."¹ To the Bible let us ever firmly hold fast!

1. Matt. 24, 35.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Christian Dogmatics, J. T. Mueller; St. Louis, 1934.
- Christliche Dogmatik, F. Pieper; 3 vols., St. Louis, 1917-1924.
- Die Bibel ist die alleinige Quelle und Norm in Glaubenssachen, J. Kunstmann; Zwickau.
- Ev. Luth. Dogmatik, A. Hoenecke; 4 vols., Milwaukee, 1909.
- Systematic Theology, C. Hodge; 3 vols., New York, 1885.
- Warum sollen wir uns in der Zukunft dem modernen Fortschritt in der Kirche ernstlich widersetzen?
F. Bente; 34 Synodal-Bericht des Westlichen Distrikts, 1897.
- What is Christianity and Other Essays, F. Pieper; St. Louis, 1933.
- Concordia Cyclopedia; St. Louis, 1927.
- Concordia Triglotta; St. Louis, 1921.
- Confusion of Tongues, C. W. Ferguson; Grand Rapids, 1936.
- Christian Symbolics, E. Klotz; Burlington, 1929.
- Creeds of Christendom, P. Schaff; 3 vols.
- Methodist Articles of Religion, John Wesley; 1784.
- Apology, Robert Barclay.
- Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, J. J. Hastings; New York, 1928.
- Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, Schaff-Herzog; New York, 1912.
- Populaere Symbolik, M. Guenther; St. Louis, 1881, 2nd Ed.
- Popular Symbolics; St. Louis, 1934.

Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists, G. Lavington;
2 vols., London, 1754.

John Wesley; the Man, his Teachings, and his Work, Cen-
tennial Sermons.

The Heart of John Wesley's Journal, edited by P. L.
Parker, New York.

Luthers Werke, St. Louis Edition.

Swedenborg's Works, New York, 1888.

Wesley's Works.
