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### The Implications of the QUIA Subscription to the Lutheran Confessions

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE QUIA SUBSCRIPTION  
TO THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

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A Thesis Presented to  
the Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of Systematic Theology

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity

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by  
George A. Loose  
January, 1945

Approved by:

A. E. Meyer  
Paul W. Bretcher

## OUTLINE

Introductory Remarks: The purpose of this paper is to clarify what the implications of the quia subscription to the Lutheran Confessions are.

- I. Necessity of a subscription.
  - A. Necessity for the individual.
    1. Bible commands confession.
    2. Necessity to clarify understanding (position).
  - B. Necessity for congregation.
    1. Laymen's function of judging doctrine.
    2. Confession needed that this function may be exercised.
- II. Status of Confessions.
  - A. Relation to Bible.
  - B. Proper position as witnesses.
- III. Quia or quatenus.
  - A. Quatenus is no subscription.
  - B. Various forms of quatenus.
    1. Hartwick Synod.
    2. Reformed Church.
    3. Loehe.
    4. Iowa Synod.
    5. Evangelical Synod.
    6. Buffalo Synod.
    7. Rationalists.
- IV. Matters not included in the quia subscription.
  - A. Not all things. Quotations to show this.
  - B. Authors of quotations.
  - C. Use of proof passages.
  - D. Line of argumentation.
  - E. Exegetical problems.
    1. Definition of term.
    2. Semper Virgo.
      - a. Luther's view.
      - b. Not mentioned in the German text, which is the binding and authoritative one.
    3. Antichrist.
      - a. Statements in the Confessions.
      - b. Luther and his followers did not consider the Pope the one and only antichrist.
      - c. Luther did not consider the statements on the antichrist doctrinal matters or Confessional material.
- V. Extent of quia subscription.
  - A. All doctrinal statements.
  - B. Does it include incidental statements?

- C. Do we subscribe to substance only or to the form also?
- D. Does quia include also conclusions derived from statements in the Confessions?

VI. Authority of the Confessions and private judgment.

- A. No clash between the right of private judgment and the authority of the Confessions.
- B. Subscription not a Verpflichtung in the false sense.
- C. The only binding power of the Confessions is the binding power of the truth on a conscience.
- D. Agreement with Confessions necessary for one who subscribes.

Have they held and profess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as laid down in the Symbols contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to wit, the three Symbolical Books, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, the Small and Large Catechisms, and the Formula of Concord, to be the true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures?

This question is put to every candidate and pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Missouri, Ohio, and other States at the time when he enters into the holy ministry. If the above question is answered in the affirmative by a candidate, he, by answering in the affirmative, has declared the Confessions above to be his Confessions. An affirmative answer to the above question is taken to be a quia subscription to the Confessions listed. In a quia subscription the candidate subscribes to the Confessions inasmuch they are in agreement with the Word of God. The same quia is used in contradistinction to a quatenus subscription, or a subscription so far as the Confessions agree with the Word of God.

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE QUIA SUBSCRIPTION  
TO THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS

"Dost thou hold and profess the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as laid down in the Symbols contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the same, the Smalcald Articles, the Small and Large Catechism, and the Formula of Concord, to be the true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures?"

This question is put to every candidate and pastor of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States at the time when he enters into the holy ministry. If the above question is answered in the affirmative by a candidate, he, by answering in the affirmative, has declared the Confessions above to be his Confessions. An affirmative answer to the above question is taken to be a quia subscription to the Confessions listed. In a quia subscription the candidate subscribes to the Confessions because they are in agreement with the Word of God. The term quia is used in contradistinction to a quatenus subscription, or a subscription in so far as the Confessions agree with the Word of God.

All who enter the ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States must subscribe to the Confessions with a quia.

Before a candidate can subscribe to the Confessions with a quia, two things are necessary: First, the candidate must know what the Confessions contain in order to determine whether he is in agreement with them or not. If the candidate does not have this necessary knowledge of what the Confessions contain, when he subscribes with a quia, would he not be guilty of oaths in uncertain things? Second, the candidate must understand just what the extent of a quia subscription is supposed to be. The object of this paper is to clarify what is involved in a quia subscription.

### NECESSITY

The question has been raised, "Is it necessary that we have Creeds and subscribe to them?" This can be answered from Scripture itself. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16, 15. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 10, 32. "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." 1 Peter 3, 15.

Every Christian must hear and respond to the command of God that we should confess Him and His truth before men. Ordinarily the confession of God before man may be oral, but there are times when it becomes necessary to confess Him in writing too. The authors of the Confessions found it necessary to formulate formal documents to present the truth and refute error. Thus the Confessions grew in obedience to God's command to confess Him and His truth. The process through which a Confession grows has been aptly described in this way: "The Rule of Faith is God's voice to us, faith is the hearing of that voice, and the confession, our reply of assent to it."

There are some so-called anti-credal church bodies

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1. Krauth, Charles P., The Conservative Reformation and its Theology, p. 166

which object strongly to human Confessions or Creeds. The Disciples (Campbellites) assert: "That the insistence on human creeds is largely responsible for this divided state of the Church; that the inspired New Testament, instead of human creeds, should be made the rule of doctrine and life." <sup>2</sup> Some of the other bodies which have declared themselves against creeds are the Christian Union, the Plymouth Brethern, and the Winebrennerians.

Dr. C. P. Krauth shows the untenable position of anti-creedal bodies thus:

As the Creed is not, and cannot be the Rule of Faith, but is its Confession merely, so the Bible, because it is the Rule of Faith, is of necessity not its Confession. The Bible can no more be any man's Creed, than the stars can be any man's astronomy. The stars furnish the rule of the astronomer's faith: the Principia of Newton may be the confession of his faith. If a man were examined as a candidate for the chair of astronomy in a university, and were asked, "What is your astronomical system?" and were to answer, "I accept the teaching of the stars," the reply would be, "You may think you do - so does the man who is sure that the stars move around the world, and that they are not orbs, but 'gimlet-holes to let the glory through.' We wish to know what you hold the teaching of the stars to be? Do you receive, as in harmony with them, the results reached by Copernicus, by Galileo, by Kepler, by Newton, La Place, and Herschel, or do you think the world one great flat, and the sun and moon mere pendants to it?" "Gentlemen," replies the independent investigator, "the theories of these astronomers are human systems - man-made theories. I go out every night on the hills, and look at the stars, as God made them, through a hole in my blanket, with my own good eyes, not with a man-made telescope, or fettered by a man-made theory;

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2. Engelder, Th., Arndt, W., Graebner, Th., Mayer, F. E., Popular Symbolics, pp. 304 ff.



and I believe in the stars and in what they teach me: but if I were to say or write what they teach, that would be a human creed - and I am opposed to all creeds." "Very well," reply the examiners, "we wish you joy in the possession of a good pair of eyes, and feel it unnecessary to go any further. If you are unwilling to confess your faith, we will not tax your conscience with the inconsistency of teaching that faith, nor tax your own with the hazard of authorizing you to set forth in the name of the stars your own ignorant assumptions about them."<sup>3</sup>

Obviously, no matter what the contention, there can be no such thing as a non-confessing Christian or group of Christians.

There is yet another reason why a confession of faith is essential. When a congregation calls a pastor, the care of the souls of the parishoners is entrusted to this man. The eternal welfare of their souls is at stake. This is not to be taken lightly. Laymen must be absolutely certain that their leader will preach and teach the Word correctly. The divine right and duty of passing judgment on doctrine belongs to the laymen as well as to the ministry. Paul takes for granted that the laymen are exercising this right when he writes to the Galatians (1,8): "Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

Moved by a controversy on the doctrines of the Church and the ministry, Walther prepared a series of theses on

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3. Krauth, Charles P., loc. cit.

"The Church and Ministry." In these theses he sets forth the principle that laymen are to exercise their right to pass judgment on doctrine. "According to divine right the function of passing judgment on doctrine belongs indeed to the ministry of preaching. However, also the laymen have this right, and for this reason they also have a seat and vote with the preachers in church courts and councils.

Proof from the Word of God

"No proof is needed that the function of passing judgment on doctrine belongs to the public ministry or preaching; for without this function they could not at all discharge their office. However, there is irrefutable evidence in God's Word that by the establishment of the special office for passing judgment on doctrine this right has not by any means been taken away from laymen, but the exercise of it has been made their most sacred duty.

"This is proved, first, by all those passages of Holy Scripture in which this judging is enjoined also upon ordinary Christians. For instance, thus writes the holy Apostle Paul: 'I speak as to wise men; judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?' etc., 1 Corinthians 10: 15,16. Again: 'Try the spirits whether they are of God,' 1 John 4;1. Compare 2 John 10:11; 1 Thessalonians 5;21.

"The proof is furnished, furthermore, by all those passages in which Christians are exhorted to beware of false prophets, such as Matthew 7:15,16; John 10:5, and in

such passages in which they are praised for their zeal in testing doctrine, for instance, when we are told regarding the Bereans: 'These are more noble than those in Thessalonia, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether those things were so,' Acts 17:11.

"Lastly, we have an account in the Acts of the Apostles stating that at the first apostolic council laymen were not only present but also spoke, and that the decisions reached on this occasion were made by them as well as by the apostles and elders and were sent in their name as well as that of the apostles. Hence there is no doubt that laymen have a seat and voice in church judicatories and at synods with the public ministers of the Church.

W. H. T. D." <sup>4</sup>

In order to exercise this right and duty to pass judgment on doctrine, the members of a congregation must have a statement from the prospective pastor as to his understanding of Scripture doctrine. If the statement of the candidate is in conformity with what the congregation considers the correct exposition of Scripture, then the members may, with good conscience, call him as their pastor.

The statement of doctrine which the churches of the Missouri Synod have accepted as the correct exposition of

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4. Dallmann, Wm., Dau, W. H. T., Engelder, Th., Walther and the Church, p. 85 ff.

Scripture doctrine is the Book of Concord of 1580. Accordingly, before a pastor can be called to a church of the Missouri Synod, the members must determine whether he also considers the Symbols in the Book of Concord of 1580 the correct exposition of Scripture doctrine. The way in which this is determined is by asking the question presented on page one of this treatise.

*[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible due to fading and bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It appears to be a continuation of the text from the first paragraph.]*

## STATUS OF CONFESSIONS

To avoid the danger of either overestimating or underestimating the place of the Confessions, the student of the Confessions must understand correctly their relation to the Bible. The Holy Scripture is the one and only absolute norm of faith, the one and only Book which is inspired by the Holy Ghost, the one and only Book in which there is no possibility of error. The Confessions are regarded by the Lutheran Church as secondary norms (norma normata, norma secundum quid, norma secundaria, norma discretionis).

The Confessions themselves state how they should be regarded. "Other writings, however, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever name they bear, must not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, but all of them together be subjected to them, and should not be received otherwise or further than as witnesses, (which are to show) in what manner after the time of the apostles, and at what places, this (pure) doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved."<sup>5</sup>

There have been and, it is feared, still are those who attempt to give the Confessions authority far above that which they claim for themselves, a tendency which smacks of the Roman church. Mylius, Hutter, and others spoke of the

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5. Formula of Concord, Concordia Triglotta, p. 777

Confessions as being *θεοπνεύματος*, inspired. In defense of the use these men made of the term inspired, it has been said that they had no intention of putting the Confessions on a plane with the Bible but they merely wished to indicate that the Holy Ghost stood by in the writing.<sup>6</sup> While it may be that this was their purpose, the use of this terminology was unfortunate, to say the least. The word *θεοπνεύματος* is used in Scripture to describe the divinely inspired words of the Bible, and it is wrongly applied to any other writing. Doubtless it can be correctly stated that the Holy Ghost stood by in the writing of the Confessions, just as He stands by in the life and work of all Christians - to speak of any further guidance than this is to elevate the Confessions to the status of a norma normans.

Furthermore, the Confessions may not be used to establish a doctrine. Scripture alone does this. Such is the correct and traditional view of our Church. "Dasz die recht-glaebige Kirche in ihren Symbolen nicht eine zweite Norm neben die Schrift stellt, beweist sich auch klar damit, dasz sie mit "quia" auf ihre Symbole verpflichtet, das heiszt, sie verpflichtet ihre Lehrer auf die in den Symbolen enthaltenen Lehren, nicht weil sie in den Symbolen, sondern weil sie in der Schrift stehen."<sup>7</sup>

The authors of the Confessions were human beings, and as

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6. Pieper, Franz, Christliche Dogmatik, Vol. I, p. 433.

7. Pieper, Franz, op. cit., p. 427.

such were subject to error. For this reason there is also the possibility of error in the Confessions. The Bible is God's Word, and is in no sense a product of man's fallible reasoning. However, the theological system which we arrive at by comparing Scripture with Scripture, the Confessions which we produce, do involve man's reasoning in so far as they are human expositions of the Scripture truths, and as such they are subject to error. This fallible element is present in all Confessions, therefore Confessions will always lack divine authority. Let no one think that this is a blow to the faith of the Lutheran Christian. Faith has for its basis nothing other than God's infallible Word. The intellectual explanation of that faith is quite another thing.

A most serious misuse of the Confessions is this, that one approaches the Scripture with some preconceived notions as to what they can and must say on a certain subject because that is what the Confessions say on the subject. We must not let our Confessions or anything else limit our study of the Scriptures or pre-determine what we shall learn in them. "The documents are confessions; they are writings in which men have confessed their faith. They are not dictators of belief."<sup>8</sup> "The object of a creed is not to find out what God teaches (we go to the Bible for that,) but to show what we believe."<sup>9</sup>

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8. Davis, Henry Grady, What Does Confessional Subscription Involve?, Lutheran Church Quarterly, Oct. 1940, p. 369.

9. Krauth, Charles P., op. cit., p. 184.

Another way in which the Confessions have been misused is this, that they have been used as a basis for convicting a person of error. Scripture alone decides what is true and what is false in doctrine. It is a mistake to say that a person is wrong "because he differs from the Confessions." Of course, those who accept the Confessions as their Norma Normata can be shown that they are at variance with the exposition of Biblical truths which they have declared to be their own and the correct one, but when we deal with errorists who refuse to accept the Confessions as the correct exposition of Scripture, we cannot appeal to the Confessions to establish their error. The errorist must be shown his error on the basis of Scripture.

The Confessions of the Lutheran Church are "witnesses" of the truth. they were drawn up by men to express their convictions regarding Bible truth. The value of those writings is this, that they have been found to be reliable witnesses of the truth and correct expositions of Scriptural doctrine. Throughout the years and centuries these Confessions have been checked against Scripture, and have been found to present Scriptural doctrine correctly. Convinced of the fact that the Confessions present Scriptural doctrine correctly, the Lutheran Church has accepted the Confessions as a Norma Normata, the norm which presents the authoritative Lutheran view of Scriptural doctrine. The Confessions are the official presentation of Lutheran doctrine.



The correct status of the Confessions has been stated. They are "Witnesses" of the truth. This can be seen from the way in which they came into being. At a time when the truths of the Bible were obscured and error was rampant, a group of sincere Christians felt their Scriptural obligation to testify against this error. Their witness took the form of the Confessions. Three of these, the Ecumenical Creeds or Confessions came into being in the early centuries after Christ when the Church struggled for existence. The others date to another time when strong testimony was necessary. Nor is this unique with these documents. Witnessing has continued to the present day and will continue as long as there are Christians on earth. It is not at all inconceivable that a time will come when the Church on earth will come when the Church on earth will find it necessary to include in its Confessions other witnesses of truth against error. Our Confessions do not pretend to be a complete presentation of all truth against all error. The reason why these particular "witnesses" have been taken as our Confessions is because they have been tried through centuries and have been found to be valuable and valid expositions of Biblical truth. Agreed on this point, we are now ready to subscribe to these Confessions. But what shall be the manner of subscription?

## QUIA OR QUATENUS

Should the Confessions be subscribed to because (quia, quia) they agree with God's Word, or should they be judged in how far (quatenus) they do agree and be subscribed to in this way? There have been and still are those who feel that a quatenus subscription is all that can ever be asked of a Christian. The line of reasoning may run thus: There is a human element involved in every Confession, the possibility of error is ever present, therefore Confessions must always be accepted with the reservation "in so far as they agree with Scripture." They reserve the right of private judgment. That right is granted! The point is this: use your judgment and come to some decision, do the Confessions agree with Scripture or don't they? If you feel they do, subscribe. If you feel they do not, don't subscribe.

A quatenus subscription is no subscription at all. One could subscribe to anything at all on that basis. The Koran can be accepted in so far as it agrees with Scripture. A document drawn up by Satan himself could be subscribed to in so far as it agrees with Scripture - and if there were nothing in it which agrees with Scripture, nothing would be subscribed to. Such a quatenus subscription is no declaration of what a person believes. It is saying just this, "I believe what the Bible teaches." Very well, but then you are right back at the point where you started, without a Confession. Once more in the place of Dr. Krauth's

would-be astronomer.

There can be only one motive for wishing to "subscribe with a quatenus." A desire to be in the Lutheran Church and yet teach doctrines contrary to hers. The history of this quatenus brings that out. It was advocated by the Pietists, who wanted to be considered teachers of the fundamental doctrines, while yet they taught their own feelings. Later the Rationalists wanted to subscribe to the Confessions with a quatenus, but they wanted to teach what their reason said, and not be subject to God's Word at all.

There have been various more subtle forms of such a quatenus subscription. The General Synod's Constitution, Article 3, Section 3: "All regularly constituted Lutheran Synods holding the fundamental doctrines of the Bible as taught by our Church, not now in connection with the General Synod, may, at any time, become associated with it."<sup>10</sup> Apparently what the joining members considered fundamental was up to them.

The Hartwick Synod went even farther. This is their so-called Confessional subscription: "Do you believe, that the fundamental doctrines of the Bible are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal Articles of the Augsburg Confession?" (History of the American Lutheran Church by Hazelius p. 187. 297.)<sup>11</sup>

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10. Quoted from Walther, C. F. W., Warum sind die symbol-Bücher unserer Kirche von denen welche Diener derselben werden wollen, unbedingt zu unterschreiben?, p.7.

11. Ibid.

The Reformed Church also, Zwinglian leaders, and Calvin himself were willing to subscribe with a quatenus.<sup>12</sup> They stated that one might subscribe to the Confessions as interpreted by Scripture. Thus removing from the Confessions their very purpose, of interpreting Scripture.

Pastor Loehe and his followers also erred here. They felt that the Confessions should be accepted, but reserved the right of interpreting them themselves. This is beating around the bush. If the Confessions are to be accepted, they must be accepted in the plain sense of the words with which they speak.

Similarly the Iowa Synod reduced their Confessional subscription to a quatenus with their "historical acceptance."

"...So koenen wir allein die historische Auffassung fuer die richtige, der Natur der Bekenntnisse entsprechende erkennen."<sup>13</sup>

With such an acceptance is understood that not all of the doc-

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12. Dr. C. P. Krauth states that "Calvin subscribed to the unaltered Augsburg Confession, and acted as a Lutheran minister under it. 'Nor do I repudiate the Augsburg Confession (which I long ago willingly and gladly subscribed) as its author has interpreted it.' So wrote Calvin, in 1557, to Schalling. Two mistakes are often made as to his meaning, in these much-quoted words. First: The Confession he subscribed was not the Variata. Calvin subscribed at Strasburg, in 1539. The Variata did not appear till 1540. Second: He does not mean or say that he then subscribed it as its author had explained it." (Krauth, C. P., Conservative Reformation, p. 180.) It must be born in mind, however, that Calvin did not give a statement as to what his understanding of this subscription was. Obviously, judging from Calvin's later course of action, he did not intend his subscription in the sense of a quia subscription.

13. Walther, C. F. W., op. cit., p. 8.

trines in the confessions, but only those which were included therein as a result of the doctrinal controversies are to be accepted as binding. Obviously there is here a great subjective element, the question being, what do you consider an outgrowth of doctrinal controversy? Consider the disastrous result of such a subscription. The eleventh Article of the Formula of Concord would be eliminated as that was not the point under controversy at the moment. Under such a subscription one could deny the inspiration of Scripture, this also not being under discussion. The freedom granted under such a subscription would, no doubt, be welcomed by many who at this time are seeking to deny the inspiration of the Bible.<sup>14.</sup>

The subscription of the Evangelical Synod (since 1934 the Evangelical and Reformed Church) is also a quatenus subscription. This church came into being through a fusion of the Lutheran Church and the German Reformed Church in 1817 (Prussian Union). They wish to accept both Confessions of the Lutheran Church and those of the Reformed Church. In the points where these are in agreement, the doctrine is considered binding. Where, however, there is disagreement, either doctrine may be held. This is very obviously a false subscription; there is no declaration of confession at all. A congregation calling such a pastor would have no idea whether they had a Lutheran or a Reformed theologian, and the differences between the two are essential. Moreover,

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14. Pieper, Franz, op. cit., p. 429.

there is no clarification as to which points of doctrine are to be considered in agreement and which are differing or open to the choice of the individual. The Evangelical Synod serves as a good illustration as to what is the inevitable result of a quatenus subscription, or a policy of non-declaration of doctrine. The tendency in this Church has ever been to greater laxity in doctrine and practice throughout the years. At present this laxity has shown itself in extreme unionistic tendencies, e.g., their judging with the Reformed Church in the United States of America in 1934, and their contemplated union with the Congregational and Christian Churches.<sup>15</sup>

There is no longer any thought given to doctrinal unity in the Evangelical Synod, and nothing else than this could be expected, because the church had its foundation on indifference in doctrinal matters, as is evidenced by their confessional oath.

One of the most misused terms in theology is the term "open question." If the present writer understands this term correctly, it is properly used to designate a point on which no one may bind another's conscience. This term has been misapplied by some to any point of doctrine which is under controversy. The Buffalo Synod as represented by their pastors Grabau and von Rohr was guilty of emasculating the confessional oath in this way.<sup>16</sup> They expressed the sentiment that any doctrinal matter in the Confessions on which

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15. Mayer, F. E., Syllabus Comparative Symbolics, p.30.

16. Walther, C. F. W., op. cit., p.11.

there was a difference of opinion should be declared an open question. If this were adopted as the understanding of the confessional oath, there would be no end, unless it were to declare the whole of our doctrinal system an open question. Carried to its logical conclusion, an atheist could enter the church, question every doctrine, and have each declared an open question.

Still another form of subscription which destroys the purpose of the oath is that of the Rationalists. They wish to obligate themselves not to the 'letter' but the 'spirit' of the Confessions. Now this much is true, that "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." If anyone were to try to interpret the Confessions to the letter and disregard the spirit, he would be as far from the true interpretation of them as it is possible to get. The 'spirit' or thought is the important thing. The letters, however, are essential in communicating the thought, and must be retained and studied in order to get the thought and spirit. This is not the understanding of the Rationalists. By 'spirit' they mean their own spirit or understanding, not the understanding of the Confessions. In case there is any doubt that the Rationalists desire to teach their own understanding rather than the understanding of the Confessions, let us look at where each places emphasis. Beyond reasonable question, the emphasis of the Confessions is on doctrine. Their purpose is to testify to and teach pure doctrine. The Rationalists are not concerned with doctrine at all. Their purpose is to make

religion a moral or ethical system. The emphasis is on life. They advocate a religion of "this world" significance rather than one of "yonder world".

None of these quatenus subscriptions will accomplish the desired purpose of maintaining and guarding the true Lutheran doctrine. The quia subscription is the only subscription.

...wahrhaftig jedoch, dass die Symbole ohne Ausnahme  
...die Kirche in Bezug auf  
...die Unterzeichnung der Sym-  
...besteht.

...die Kirche in Bezug auf  
...besteht.

...die Kirche in Bezug auf  
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...die Kirche in Bezug auf  
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...besteht.



## MATTERS NOT INCLUDED IN THE QUIA SUBSCRIPTION

Although a quia subscription to the Confessions is the only subscription, this does not mean ~~that~~ every statement in the Confessions. There are a number of statements in the Confessions which are not necessarily included in a quia subscription. The following quotations bring out this principle.

"Festhaltend jedoch, dass die Symbole eben Glaubens- oder Lehrbekenntnisse sind, muss die Kirche im Gegentheil auch nothwendig alles das, was nicht Lehre betrifft, aus dem Kreise dessen, worauf sich die Unterschreibung der Symbole bezieht, ausschliessen."<sup>17</sup>

"Die Verpflichtung bezieht sich nicht auf Dinge, die in das Gebiet der menschlichen Wissenschaft gehoeren."<sup>18</sup>

"There are, of course, statements in the Confessions to which we cannot subscribe with a quia, because the Confessions are not infallible."<sup>19</sup>

"Subscription to these articles does not mean that every occasional remark is confessional substance. In all of the more extensive writings the reference is always to the Augsburg Confession and to the legitimate development of this Confession."<sup>20</sup>

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17. Walther, C. F. W., op. cit., p. 2

18. Eckhardt, E., Homiletisches Reallexikon nebst Index Rerum, p. 341.

19. Mayer, F. E., Subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, p. 35.

20. Neve, J. L., Introduction to the Symbolical Books of the Lutheran Church, p. 34.

"A true confessional subscription does not involve our maintaining that every word, every statement, every idea in the Confessions is infallible Scriptural doctrine."<sup>21</sup>

Among the statements in the Confessions not subscribed to with a quia are a number of quotations in the Confessions which are falsely attributed to different authors. In the eighteenth Article of the Augsburg Confession is found the quotation: "We grant that all men have a certain freedom of will in judging according to (natural) reason", wrongly attributed to Augustine. It has been found to be a quotation from the old writing "Hypognosticon." In the twentieth Article is found a quotation from Leo attributed to Ambrosius, as is also one in Article six. It goes without saying that one who subscribes to the Confessions is not bound to accept Augustine and Ambrosius as the authors of these writings. Nor does exception in any way affect the validity of subscription, for these exceptions do not touch the confessional substance of the Confession at all. The above, and similar errors in the Confessions, fall into the sphere of historical inaccuracies, which are not binding.

While there can be no difference of opinion in regard to the doctrines which are set forth in the Confessions, yet there are places where we may, and do differ as to the proofs adduced from them for these doctrines. We may find other and better proofs, a quia subscription does not bind us to accept

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21. Davis, Henry Grady, op. cit., p. 363.

the doctrine as being proved by these passages, but only to accept the doctrine. A good example of a passage which we do not accept as properly used to prove the doctrine is found in the Formula of Concord,<sup>22</sup> where II Corinthians 6,1 is used as follows:

From this, then, it follows that as soon as the Holy Ghost, as has been said, through the Word and holy Sacraments, has begun in us this His work of regeneration and renewal, it is certain that through the power of the Holy Ghost we can and should cooperate, although still in great weakness. But this (that we cooperate) does not occur from our carnal natural powers, but from the new powers and gifts which the Holy Ghost has begun in us in conversion, as St. Paul expressly and earnestly exhorts that as workers together with Him we receive not the grace of God in vain, 2 Cor. 6,1. But this is to be understood in no other way than that the converted man does good to such an extent and so long as God by His Holy Spirit rules, guides, and leads him, and that as soon as God would withdraw His gracious hand from him, he could not for a moment persevere in obedience to God. But if this were understood thus that the converted man cooperates with the Holy Ghost in the manner as when two horses together draw a wagon, this could in no way be conceded without prejudice to the divine truth. ( 2 Cor. 6,1)."

This passage was used in the above manner to refute the wrong use which the synergists made of it.<sup>23</sup> The thing that the passage is used to prove, however, is binding, namely: the teaching that it is with the guidance of the Holy Spirit only that we are able to continue in obedience to God.

In connection with such an unusual use of a passage, we would here re-state a rule of Scripture interpretation

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22. Concordia Triglotta, p. 907. Formula of Concord, Art. II, Of Free Will.

23. The synergists misused 2 Cor. 6,1 as a proof for this assertion that after the Holy Ghost has made a beginning of conversion in man, man can then exercise his free will and from his own natural powers can meet God.

which should be kept in mind throughout this discussion. The "Rule of Faith" or general teaching throughout Scripture is the first basis for our interpretation of any passage. There are no contradictions in the Bible, consequently it is wrong to force a contradiction by arbitrary interpretation of a passage which seems unclear to us.

"Contra hanc fidei regulam nihil quicquam in Scripturae interpretatione proferendum, ac proinde si vel maxime non possumus proprium cujusque loci sensum a Spiritu sancto intentum semper assequi, sedulo tamen cavere debemus, ne quidquam contra fidei analogiam proferamus."<sup>24</sup>

Closely related to the above is this also, that we are not bound by the line of argumentation which the Confessions use in a given case.

"...So faetzt auch eine unbedingte Unterschreibung keineswegs die Anerkennung mit in sich, dass keine in den symbolischen Buechern fuer die reine Lehre gegebene Beweisfuehrung einer Vervollkommung faehig oder mit andern Worten, dass auch die Form, die Methode und der Procesz der Beweisfuehrung vollkommen und daher ein jedgr treue Kirchendiener verbunden sei, der in den Symbolen befolgt und keiner andern Methode sich zu bedienen. Nicht anders urtheilen unsere Vaeter von einer unbedingten Unterschreibung der Symbole. Der alte rechtglaebige und scharfsinnige Straszburger Theolog Johann Conrad Dannhauer (gest. 1666) schreibt: "Mag es sein, dass solche (Symbole) nicht zur Festhaltung aller Umstaende, Redeweisen, Beweisfuehrungen, Anfuehrungen verbindlich machen: so musz doch der Lehrgehalt oder die Substanz der Lehre feetgehalten werden so, wie sie shriftlich niedergelegt ist, und nicht nur, insofern also sie dem Privatuertheil

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24. Gerhardt, Ioannis, Loci Theologici, Locus Primus, Caput XXV, De Interpretatione Scripturae Sacrae, p. 238, par. 532.

mit der Schrift uebereinstimmen scheinen mag; in welcher Weise man ja auch den Koran unterschreiben koennte."<sup>25</sup>

As an example of a line of reasoning from which some differ, we quote that used in the Formula of Concord on the "body". "For this reason, too, all three evangelists... unanimously and with the same words and syllables repeat concerning the consecrated and distributed bread these disciple clear, firm and true words of Christ: This is my body, altogether in one way, without any interpretation (trope, figure) and change. Therefore there is no doubt that also concerning the other part of the Sacrament these words of Luke and Paul: This cup is the new testament in my blood, can have no other meaning than that which St. Matthew and St. Mark give: This (namely, that which you really drink is my blood of the new testament, whereby I establish, seal, and confirm with you men this my testament and new covenant, namely, the forgiveness of sins."<sup>26</sup>

It is not necessary here to declare with an oath that this line of argumentation follows logically, and proves what it sets out to prove.

In case someone should feel some incidental statement in the Confessions regarding church ceremony, church order, or church government binding, it might be stated here that such statements are included also among those statements to which

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25. Walther, C. F. W., op. cit., p. 4.

26. Concordia Triglotta, p. 991, Formula of Concord Art. VII Of the Holy Supper.

we do not subscribe with a quia. The fathers who gathered together the Confessions included in the Book of Concord recognized that such things as church ceremonies fell into the class of "things in which we have Christian liberty." For that reason Luther's Tauf Buschlein and Trau Buschlein were not included as a part of the Book of Concord.

The Confessions themselves make it clear that human ceremonies are not binding on the individual, but rather fall into the class of "things in which we have Christian liberty." Article VII of the Augsburg Confession states: "Nor is it necessary that human traditions, rites or ceremonies be everywhere alike." <sup>27</sup> For a fuller discussion of church rites and usages compare Article XV of the Augsburg Confession and Article X of the Formula of Concord. In passing it may be noted, however, that there are certain rites and usages which ought to be observed. In Article XVI of the Apology of the Augsburg Confession we read: "And nevertheless we teach that in these matters the use of liberty is so controlled, that ... without a reasonable cause <sup>28</sup> nothing in customary rites be changed." For the sake of good order and out of charity the individual should abide by the existing usages and rites unless there is good reason to change these.

Furthermore: the Confessions make some statements on matters outside the realm of Scripture which we will call

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27. Concordia Triglotta, p. 47.

28. Op. cit., p. 329.

secular opinions. Such secular opinions are not included in a quia subscription. E.g. That the authorities may throw out of the country those who do not wish to learn the catechism. That the papists are called asses. That garlic ruins the effectiveness of magnet.

Finally there is one more important item which is included among those which we do not subscribe with a quia subscription. Points of exegesis or exegetical problems in the Confessions are not binding for the individual.

In order to understand correctly what is meant by exegetical problems, it is essential that we have a definition of exegesis, and see how it differs from doctrine. "The term exegesis (from ἐξηγήσασθαι, to lead out, to expound) is borrowed from classical usage: the expounders of the oracles of Delphi, and the sacred rites in Athens, were called 'exegetes'."<sup>29</sup>

### Semper Virgo

One statement in the Confessions which is quite generally included among the listings of exegetical problems is the "semper virgo" statement. In the Smalcald Articles, the First Part, division IV we find this statement in the Latin text: "...et ex Maria, pura, sancta sempervirgine nascetur."<sup>30</sup>

The following quotations will serve to show that the statement regarding Mary quite generally is considered an exegetical problem.

29. Schaff, Philip, Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, p. 783.

30. Concordia Triglotta, p. 460.

"We cannot demand of a Lutheran to accept the Semper Virgo, because that is an exegetical problem which cannot be solved."<sup>31</sup>

"Wir haben auch das semper virgo (Kon. 299), das clauso utero (Kon. 668) den Traducianismus (Kon. 579) mit unterschreiben. Wer das nicht unterschreiben will, kann das vorher anzeigen."<sup>32</sup>

Another interesting comment on Part I, paragraph IV of the Smalcald Articles was found in a marginal note to this paragraph. The note had been given by Dr. F. Bente (c.1905). "Auf diese 'semper' ist man nicht verpflichtet, und wer ihm nicht glaubet ist kein Ketzer aber ein Pedant." While the opinion expressed in this comment is perfectly in agreement with the former thoughts expressed, there is the added element of a sort of stigma attached to those who do not accept the "semper." To attach such a "slight condemnation" to those who do not subscribe to the "semper" is out of order. If this point is not binding, one is free to accept or reject it without having the term Pedant applied to him.

When the question of the "semper virgo" is brought up, it is sometimes replied that "Luther didn't really accept the "semper virgo"; he was merely making a concession to current expression when he included it in the Smalcald

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31. Mayer, F. E., Subscription to the Lutheran Confessions, p. 35.

32. Eckhardt, E., op. cit., p. 341.



Articles." The following quotations from Luther should solve the question.

1516

Also ist die heilige Jungfrau nicht nur eine Gesalbte, sondern sie ist sich sowohl als allen selbst die Myrrhe und Kraeftige Bitterkeit; und ist demnach kein Faulnisz in ihr, weil sie selbst die Myrrhe ist.

Auch hier gibt Luther der Maria zu viel Ehre. (Die Redaktion der Saint Louiser Aufgabe.)<sup>33</sup>

1516

Also muessen auch wir ihr (Maria) und uns Glueck wuenschen, weil der Herr Groszes an ihr gethan; denn was er ihr gethan, hat er auch uns gethan. Denn sie hat nichts, was auch wir nicht haben; denn sie traegt den Sohn Gottes in ihrem Schoosz und wir tragen ihn im Herzen; sie ist die leibliche Mutter, und er selbst, Jesus, hat gesagt: "Wer den Willen meines Vaters thut, der ist meine Mutter, Bruder und Schwester"; er ist gesaeuget worden mit den Bruesten der Jungfrau, wir saegen eben denselben mit reinen und keuschen Gedanken; sie umfasst ihn mit ihren keuschen Armen, wir aber unfassen ihn mit eifrigen Affekten und Begierde der Liebe. Er selbst, der Geliebte, wohnt beides zwischen ihren und unsern Bruesten. O glueckselige Mutter! O wuerdigste Jungfrau! gedenke an uns, und mache, dasz der Herr auch diese grosze dinge an uns thue.

Hier hat Luther der papistischen Meinung und Tradition zu viel nachgegeben. (Die Redaktion der Saint Louiser Ausgabe.)<sup>34</sup>

1519

Von diesem Jacobus, der vom dem Volke gewoehnlich der kleinere Jacobus genannt wird, sagt Eusebius im zweiten Buche seiner Kirchengeschichte, Cap. 1, dasz er der Bruder des Herrn genannt worden sei, weil er ein Sohn Josephs war, welcher gleichsam fuer den Vater Christi gehalten wurde.<sup>35</sup>

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33. Luthers Saemmtliche Schriften (St. L. Ed.), Vol. XII, c. 1791.

34. Op. cit., Vol. XII, c. 1733

35. Op. cit., Vol. VIII, c. 1402

Aber wir ... verstehen es so, dasz dieser Jacobus ein Bruder des Herrn, das ist, ein Mutterschwesterkind oder vielmehr ein Vetter des Herrn genannt sei, weil er ihm aehnlich war an Tugend und Weisheit, als dasz er nach dem Fleische sein Verwandter waere...<sup>36</sup>

Dasz also des Evangelisten Worte gar nichts sich ziehen auf dasjenige, das nach der Geburt, sondern auf das nur vor der Geburt geschehen ist. Denn der Prophet und Evangelist, dazu auch Sanct Paulus, handeln diese Jungfrau nicht weiter, denn bis sie die Frucht von ihr haben, um welcher willen sie Jungfrau und alles ist. Nach der Frucht lassen sie die Mutter fahren und sagen nichts von ihr, wie es mit ihr worden sei, sondern nur von der Frucht. Darum kann sich aus diesen Worten nicht Schliessen, dasz Maria nach der Geburt ein Weib worden ist, darum es auch nicht zu sagen, noch zu glauben ist. Denn alle Worte zeigen, nur das Wunder an, dasz sie ehe schwanger worden und geboren hat, denn sie beschlafen ist.

Auch hat solche Weise zu reden die gemeine Sprache, als wenn ich spraeche: Pharao glaubte Mose nicht, bis er im rothen Meer ersoff. Hie folgt nicht, dasz Pharao geglaubt hat hernach, da er ersoffen war, sondern das widerspiel, dasz er nimmermehr geglaubt habe. Also wenn Natthaeus sagt, Joseph habe Maria nicht erkannt, bis sie ihren (ersten) Sohn gebar, folgt nicht, dasz er sie hernach erkannt habe, sondern das Widerspruch, dasz er sie nimmermehr erkannt habe.

Item, Pharao ueberfiel das rother Meer, ehe denn er hinaus kam. Hie folgt auch nicht, dasz Pharao darnach sei hinaus kommen, da das rothe Meer ihn ueberfallen hatte, sondern vielmehr, dasz er nicht sei hinaus kommen. Also folgt auch nicht, dasz Maria hernach beschlafen sei, da Matthaeus sagt: "Es fand sich, dasz sie schwanger war, ehe denn sie miteinander zu Haus sassen", sondern vielmehr, dasz sie nicht beschlafen sei."<sup>37</sup>

36. Op. cit., v. VIII, c. 1403.

37. Op. cit., v. XX, c. 1806.

1527

Diweil aber die Jungfrau Maria auch vom Vater und Mutter natuerlich geboren ist, haben ihrer viele wollen sagen, dass sie auch in Erbsuende empfangen sei; doch dieselbigen halten das eitracchtiglich, dass sie im Mutterleibe geheiligt sei und dass ihre Eltern ohne Lust und Begierde empfangen haben...

Also haelt die Jungfrau Maria das Mittel zwischen Christo und anderen Menschen. Denn Christus, da er empfangen ward und lebte, ist er gleich denselben Augenblick voller Gnade gewesen. Die andern Menschen sind ohne Gnade beide in der ersten und andern Empfagnisz. Aber die Jungfrau Maria, wiewohl sie der ersten Empfagnisz nach ohne Gnade war; doch nach der andern Empfagnisz war sie voller Gnade. Und das nicht unbillig; denn sie auch ein Middle gewesen zwischen aller Geburt; denn sie ist geboren von Vater und Mutter, sie aber hat geboren ohne Vater...

Das wollen nun diese Worte, da der Engel Gabriel zu ihr sagt: "Gebenedeiet bist du unter den Weibern." Denn man konnte zu ihr sprechen: "Gebenedeiet bist du," wenn sie je unter der Vermaledung gelegen ware; es war auch recht und billig, dass diese Person ohne Suende enthalten wuerde, von welcher Christus nehmen sollte das Fleisch, das da ueberwinden sollte alle Suenden. Denn das heiszt eigentlich gebenedeiet, was mit goettlicher Gnade begabet ist, das ist, was do ohne Suende ist.

Man wuerde sehr irren, wenn man denken wollte, Luther habe geglaubt, Maria sei keine Suenderin gewesen und auf einem anderen Wege selig geworden also andere Menschen. Sie war eine Suenderin wie andere Menschen, die durch viel Truebsal im Glauben an Christum zur Seligkeit gefuehrt wurde. Dies war Luthers Lehre. (Die Redaktion der Saint Louiser Ausgabe.)<sup>38</sup>

1538

Hier bekeemert man sich nun, wie der Herr Christus habe koennen Brueder haben, so er doch ein einiger Sohn Mariae war, und die Jungfrau Maria Keiner Kinder mehr Mutter is gewesen. Da sprechen

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38. Op. cit., Vol. XI, cc. 1959 - 1961. (To establish date, cf. Vorrede to Vol XI cc. 13-14.)

nun etliche, Joseph habe zuvor, ehe denn er Maria gefreiet, auch ein Weib gehabt, davon er Kinder erzeugt hat, die man hernach des Herrn Christi Brueder genannt; oder, dass Joseph neben Maria noch eine Frau hat gehabt, wie es denn bei den Juden zugelassen war, dass die zugleich zwei Weiber haetten. Denn also liest man auch im Buch Ruth, dass wenn irgend ein arm Kind war, so liess man's sitzen, un ward nicht gefreiet. Das gefiel Gott ueber, und befahl, man sollte dieselbigen auch versorgen; derhalben mussten die naechsten Freunde und Verwandten die Muhmen, so Waisen und arm waren, heirathen. Also ist Maria auch ein armes Waisichen gewesen, die Joseph von Not wegen genommen hat; denn da sie arm war, so wollte sich niemand ihrer annehmen. Diweil denn dieselbigen von Joseph geboren und von den anderen Frauen, so waeren sie halbe Brueder des Herrn Christi. Also haben etliche vorgegeben, aber ich halte es mehr mit den anderen, die da sagen, dass Brueder hier Vettern heissen; denn die Juden un heilige Schrift heissen alle ihre Vettern Brueder. Es sei ihm aber, wie ihm wolle, so liegt nicht groez daran, es gibt dem Glauben nichts, so nimt's ihm auch nichts, Gott gebe, es sind seine Vettern, oder Brueder, von Joseph geboren.<sup>39</sup>

We note that Luther here clearly states that the view which one holds regarding the 'brothers' of Jesus makes no difference and is not a doctrinal matter. This statement was written one year after the Samicald Articles, in which writing the much-discussed semper virgo statement appears.

#### 1544

...Da ja auf dem Concil zu Chalcedon dies gar recht beschlossen worden ist, dass Maria θεοτόκος, das ist, eine Mutter, die Gott gebiert, genannt werden solle; nicht eine Mutter des Sohnes Davids in solcher Weise, dass Gott ausgeschlossen sei, sondern θεοτόκος, eine Gottesfaererin.<sup>40 41</sup>

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39. Op. cit., Vol. VII, cc.1776-1777.

40. Op. cit., Vol. VI, c. 664.

41. It was at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 that the epithet *θεὸς παρθενοῦς* was first authoritatively applied to Mary.

1546

Sie (Maria) ist in der Geburt un nach der Geburt, wie sie Jungfrau war vor der Empfängnis und Geburt, also auch geblieben.<sup>42</sup>

Without a doubt these quotations definitely establish the fact that Luther did accept the semper virgo. It is of interest to note Luther's earlier statements about the virgin, and then to see how they were modified and changed as he grew farther away from the Roman church. It should be noted, however, that as late as 1527 the statements of Luther in regard to Mary were of such a nature as to be questioned in the Lutheran Church. There can be no doubt that remnants of the Roman doctrine of the virgin Mary clung to Luther for many years after he had broken from that church. This is not an unusual or alarming thing. It must be kept in mind that Luther's reformation was not a planned and premeditated thing, but rather a progressive conviction that there were doctrinal errors in the Roman church which had to be corrected. First Luther saw the central error in the Roman system, and attacked their doctrine of justification. Quite naturally some time would elapse before the Roman doctrine regarding Mary would come into consideration and the error be condemned.

It is of great significance that there is no mention of semper virgo in the German text of the Smalcald Articles.

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42. Op. cit., Vol. XII, c. 1226.

The Latin reading is: "Filius ita factus est homo, ut a Spiritu Sancto sine virili opera confiperetur, et ex Maria, pura, sancta sempervirgine nascetur." Contrast this with the reading of the German text. "Dasz der Sohn sei also Mensch (ge)worden, dasz er vom Heiligen Geist ohne maennlich zu tun empfangen und von der reinen, heiligen Jungfrau Maria geboren sei."<sup>43</sup>

If it can be established that the German text is the authoritative one and the one which is subscribed, all difficulty with the Confessional statement about the semper virgo will disappear. It has been established above that the semper virgo is an exegetical problem which cannot be solved, but if the statement were not found in the authoritative text of the Confessions, it would be unnecessary even to show that the semper virgo is an exegetical problem.

The Confessional reference to Mary as semper virgo is found only in the Latin text of the Smalcald Articles. Luther's original copy of the Smalcald Articles was in the German language. This copy was Completed near the end of 1536 and contained many insertions and corrections. Spalatin made a clean copy of what Luther had written, this too in the German language. This copy is the one which was presented for discussion and was then signed by the confessors. The Latin

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43. Concordia Triglotta, p. 461.

44. "The original draft of Luther's own pen, which shows by the crossing out of words and numerous corrections how the author wrote and thought, has been preserved in the library of Heidelberg university. It has been published in facsimile by the librarian, Dr. Karl Zangenmeister under the title: "Die Schmalkaldischen Artikel vom Jahre 1537. Nach Dr. Martin Luther's autograph." The copy made by Spalatin, which received the signatures, is preserved in the Weimar archives." -Neve, J. L., op. cit., p. 356.

text of the Book of Concord is a poor translation from  
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the German, probably made by Selnecker.

There is no room for debate as to which language is  
the original and authoritative one of the Smalcald Arti-  
cles. The German manuscript is by far the more valuable  
one, as well as the one which is involved in the Confes-  
46  
sional oath.

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45. Neve, J. L., op. cit., p. 364.

46. The wording of the question which constitutes the  
confessional oath is this: "Dost thou hold and profess the doct-  
trine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as laid down in the  
Symbols contained in the Book of Concord of 1580, to wit.."  
The Symbols contained in the Book of Concord of 1580 were  
written in the German language only. "The printing of the of-  
ficial German edition of the Book of Concord was begun in 1578,  
under the editorship of Jacob Andrea. The 25th of June, 1580,  
however, the fiftieth anniversary of the presentation of the  
Augsburg Confession to Emperor Charles V was chosen as the  
date for its official publication at Dresden and its promul-  
gation to the general public.

There was no Latin edition of the Book of Concord in  
1580. "Even before the close of 1580, Selnecker published  
a Latin Concordia containing a translation of the Formula of  
Concord begun by Lucas Osiander in 1578 and completed by  
Jacob Heerbrand. It was a private undertaking and, owing to  
its numerous and partly offensive mistakes, found no recog-  
nition... The necessary revision of the Latin text was made at  
the convention in Quedlingburg during December, 1582, and  
January, 1583, Chemnitz giving material assistance. The re-  
vised edition, which constitutes the Latin textus receptus  
of the Formula of Concord, was published at Leipzig in 1584."

Since the German edition of the Book of Concord was the  
only one in existence in the year 1580, and since the Book  
of Concord of 1580 is the one subscribed we conclude that the  
German edition is the one subscribed. - Bente, F., op. cit.,  
p. 5.

On the basis of these findings it can be definitely stated that there is nothing whatsoever binding about the statement of the Latin text regarding the semper virgo. The "doctrine" of the semper virgo is no doctrine, but, as before stated, an exegetical problem on which Scripture has not spoken. It may therefore be termed an "open question" in the widest sense of this broad term.

### Antichrist

A number of passages in Scripture speak of a phenomenon which, in ecclesiastical language, is customarily referred to as the "antichrist." These passages fall into two classes:

One, the passages in which the term "antichrist" appears. These are: I John 2,18 "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time." I John 2,22 "Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son." II John 7 "For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist."

Two, the passages in which the term "antichrist" does not appear, but to which the term is applied. These are: Daniel 7,24.25; 8,23-25; Matthew 24,5.23.24; II Thessalonians 2, 3.4.8-10; Revelation 13,1; 17,1-18. Although the term



"antichrist" does not appear in these passages, it has been applied to them by the Church, and so the term in its present usage is more of an ecclesiastical term than a Biblical one.

A casual examination of the passages reveals that at least one passage (I John 2,18) speaks of more than one antichrist. One notes also that none of the passages identify the phenomenon with an event or person in history. Yet, when all has been said, it is evident to Bible theologians that the Roman Catholic pontiff most satisfactorily is the historical counterpart to that phenomenon in Scripture. This was the opinion of many theologians even before the Reformation. It was also Luther's view.<sup>47</sup>

The question arises whether the quia subscription to the Symbolical Books necessarily demands subscription to the statements in these books which refer to the Pope as the antichrist. There are a number of references in the Confessional writings in which the Pope of Rome is called the antichrist. On the basis of these references the Lutheran Church has held that the Pope of Rome is the antichrist. A few of the outstanding references concerning the antichrist in the Confessions are here quoted.

Apology, Art. XV, 18: "If the adversaries defend these human services as meriting justification, grace, and the remission of sins, they simply establish the kingdom of Anti-

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47. It might be stated here that when the statement that the Pope is the antichrist is made by many theologians today, they use the term "antichrist" as an ecclesiastical term, basing their judgment on the second group of passages listed above, in which the term "antichrist" does not occur. The passages in which the term "antichrist" does appear (those in I John) are often considered as referring to a different phenomenon.

christ."<sup>48</sup> Smalcauld Articles, Part II, Art. IV: "This teaching shows forcefully that the Pope is the very Antichrist."<sup>49</sup> Smalcauld Articles, "Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope": "And the marks (all the vices) of Antichrist plainly agree with the kingdom of the Pope and his adherents."<sup>50</sup> Smalcauld Articles, "Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope": "On this account they ought to desert and execrate the Pope with his adherents as the kingdom of Antichrist."<sup>51</sup> Smalcauld Articles, "Of the Power and Primacy of the Pope": "... It is necessary to resist him (the Pope) as Antichrist."<sup>52</sup> Smalcauld Articles, Part II, Art. IV: "Therefore, just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure his apostle, the Pope or Antichrist, in his rule as head or lord."<sup>53</sup>

Although Luther and the rest of the confessors did consider the Pope "antichrist", they did not conceive of the Pope as the one and only antichrist for all time. They did not presume to add their judgment to the Scriptural doctrine of the antichrist and call their conclusions the one and only possible application of the Scriptural descriptions of the antichrist. It cannot be shown anywhere in the Confessions that the Confessors conceived of the Pope as the one and only antichrist, nor can this be shown from their other writings, but rather the opposite can be demonstrated; namely, that Luther and his followers tolerated and held other views in addition

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48. Concordia Triglotta, p. 319, 18.

49. Op. cit., p. 475, 10.

50. Op. cit., p. 515, 39.

51. Op. cit., p. 521, 57.

52. Op. cit., p. 517, 41.

53. Op. cit., p. 475, 14.

to that of the Pope as antichrist.

The statement in the Smalcald Articles, Part II, Art. IV is probably the strongest statement on the Pope as the antichrist found in the Confessions. It reads in the German (which, as shown above, is the authoritative and binding language)

"Dies Stueck zeigt gewaltiglich, dasz er der rechte Endechrist oder Widerchrist sei."<sup>54</sup> While at first glance this statement

may seem to indicate that Luther here brands the Pope as the one and only antichrist, a careful investigation of the words will show that it does not. The argument hinges on the word

"rechte". It cannot be shown that the word "rechte" is always used in the sense of a "one and only" possible conception.

Other statements of Luther indicate that he did not use it in that sense in reference to the Pope as the Antichrist. Quoted are a few of the many statements of Luther which indicate that he believed the Pope to be an antichrist, not the antichrist (one and only).

"Dazu wissen sie auch, wofuer wir sie halten, naemlich, dasz wir beide, den Pabst und den Tuerken, fuer den rechten Antichrist halten und verdammen."<sup>55</sup> Note that Luther here applies the term "recht" to the Turks as well as to the Pope.

"Denn der Antichrist, das ist, der Pabst und Tuerke erheben sich nicht ueber Gott, wie er ist in seinem goettlichen Wesen, ein unbekannter und verborgener Gott, wie ihn Jesaia Cap. 45,15 nennt: sondern ueber den Gott, der durch das Wort

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54. Op. cit., p. 475,10.

55. Luthers Saemtliche Schriften, St. Louis Edition, Vol. I, 649:202.

verkuendigt und sich durch die Gottesdienst offenbart hat.

"Denn zugleich der Pabst und Tuerke des Wortes und Gottesdienstes nicht allein nicht achten, sondern sind ihm feind und verfolgen es."  
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Others of the Confessors agreed with Luther's view that the Turk was to be included in the antichrist. Melancton in his Daniel Commentary of 1543 (p. 167a) writes: "Mohammed must be included in the term Antichrist." Veit Dietrich in his "Summarium" on II Thessalonians 2 in the Altenburger Bibelwerk wrote in 1544, "When the Roman empire fell, then both the Pope and Mohammed, who without doubt are the true Antichrist, arose."

Furthermore, Luther tolerated and did not condemn views other than his on the antichrist. Luther wrote: "To me there is no doubt any more that the Pope with the Turk is Antichrist; believe what you will."  
57 This seems to indicate that our great defender of Scripture did not consider the "Pope as the antichrist" a Scriptural doctrine.

Another evidence of Luther's tolerant attitude toward views of the Pope which differed from his view is found in the Smalcald Articles. In Part II, Article IV Luther says: "Therefore just as little as we can worship the devil himself as Lord and God, we can endure

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56. Op. cit., Vol. I, 1062:221,222.

his apostle, the Pope or Antichrist, in his rule as head<sup>58</sup> or lord." Yet when Melancton signed these very Smalcald Articles, he added to his signature this conditional statement: "I, Philip Melancton, approve the above article as right and Christian. But of the Pope, I hold that if he would allow the Gospel, for the sake of the peace and general unity of Christians, who are now under him, and may be under him hereafter, the superiority over bishops, which he has in other respects, could be allowed to him, according to human right, also by us." Apparently there was no protest to Melancton's adding this statement to his signature, for we have no record of protest; his statement was permitted to stand. Certainly Luther would not have permitted such a statement as Melancton's to be included in the subscriptions to his Smalcald Articles (which are the writings in which he most frequently and definitely applies the term antichrist to the Pope) if he had considered his statements regarding the Pope as antichrist doctrinal substance or confessional material.

If the statements in the Confessions are not doctrinal substance, then they must fall into the class of exegetical problems or points of exegesis. Falling into the class of exegetical problems, the Confessional statements regarding the Pope as antichrist are statements which one does not necessarily subscribe with a quia.

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58. Concordia Triglotta, p. 475,14

To further demonstrate that the statements regarding the Pope as antichrist are exegetical problems, let us review the manner in which the conclusion that the Pope is the antichrist has been reached by some.

The substance of the argument ordinarily used to prove that the Pope is the antichrist, when put into syllogistic form reads about as follows:

Major premise: The antichrist elevates himself above God, sits in the Temple of God, changes God's laws, etc.

Minor premise: The Pope at Rome elevates himself above God, sits in the Temple of God, changes God's laws, etc.

Conclusion: The Pope is the antichrist.

A logical analysis of the above syllogism shows it to be invalid and untrue, the middle term being undistributed. To render the line of argumentation at least formally correct it would have to read about as follows:

Major premise: Everyone who elevates himself above God, sits in the Temple of God, changes God's laws, etc., is the antichrist.

Minor premise: The Pope at Rome elevates himself above God, sits in the Temple of God, changes God's laws, etc.

Conclusion: The Pope is the antichrist.

The major premise of both of the above syllogisms is Scriptural doctrine. Scripture says this in clear words. The minor premise, however, is an historical judgment; a judgment made by human beings. The conclusion, therefore, involves human judgment as well as the clear prophecy of Scripture, and so falls into the class of exegetical problems.

Professor M. Guenther apparently classified the teaching on the antichrist as an exegetical problem. He said: "Was die Lehre vom Antichrist betrifft, so glauben wir nicht, dass sie ein primaerer Glaubensartikel sei, ohne dessen Kenntniz man nicht zum seligmachenden Glauben kommen kann, wie die Lehre von Christo, von der Erloesung; wir halten sie auch nicht fuer einen secundaeren Glaubensartikel, sondern fuer ein Dogma, fuer einen Glaubenssatz. Vergleiche Guenther, Theol. did. pol. IV. c. 16. s. 2. p. 1688."<sup>59</sup>

Using the term "Dogma" in contrast to "secundaeren Glaubensartikel", Professor Guenther apparently means "Dogma" in the sense of "an official opinion of the church."

Though it may be ever so clear to one that the Pope is the true, one and only antichrist, yet it must always be remembered that such a conclusion involves human judgment, and therefore may not be considered binding on one who subscribes to the Confession with a quia.

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59. Guenther, M., Lehre und Wehre, Maerz 1876, Jahrgang 22, No. 3, p. 67.

At this time (December 1944) there is in the hands of the pastors and congregations of the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church a "Doctrinal Affirmation" which, it is hoped, may be a basis for union between these two bodies. This "Doctrinal Affirmation" has been accepted by the Missouri Synod's Committee on Unity and by a sub-committee on unity of the American Lutheran Church. For a careful, correct statement on the "Antichrist Question" compare pages 18 and 19 of this "Doctrinal Affirmation", where it reads in part: "Hence we subscribe to the statement of our Confessions that the Pope is the "very Antichrist" (Smalcald Articles. Triglotta, p. 475, #10; M., p. 208), which statement is a historical judgment based upon a clear prophecy of Scripture."

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60 60. Doctrinal Affirmation of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and other States and of the American Lutheran Church, 1944, pp. 18 and 19.



EXTENT OF THE QUIA SUBSCRIPTION

Having considered which matters are not included in a quia subscription, the question may now well be asked: "What is included in a quia subscription to the Confessions?" The first and most obvious answer to this is that every and all doctrinal statements are subscribed with a quia. There is little room for debate on this score, for if a quia subscription does not include the doctrinal statements in the Confessions, then it includes nothing at all. The purpose of the Confessions, as before stated, was to set forth correct Scriptural doctrine against error. The doctrinal material in the Confessions, therefore, is the Confessional material.

Yet even concerning the doctrinal material in the Confessions there are questions raised. <sup>61</sup> It is often asked: "Does the quia subscription to the Confessions necessarily include also the non-fundamental doctrines?" It is not the purpose of this paper to discuss which doctrines are fundamental, nor even to attempt to settle the question whether differences in non-fundamental doctrines are divisive of church fellowship. The question whether there is such a thing as a non-fundamental doctrine remains unsettled. What is of interest here, however, is the question whether one who subscribes to the Confessions with a quia is subscribing also to the so-called non-fundamental doctrines.

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61. Cf. page 15 of this thesis; paragraphs on the General Synod and the Hartwick Synod.

Those who do differ from the Confessions in teaching of non-fundamental doctrines may be tolerated as weak brethren who err in their weakness, and may so be allowed to remain in the Lutheran Church. The fact remains, however, that such as err in non-fundamentals do err. Their being permitted to remain in the Church does not indicate that they are relieved of the responsibility of correcting their error. So also those who differ from the teachings of the Confessions in non-fundamentals are in no way freed from the obligation of their Confessional oath. It still binds them to accept all doctrinal matters in the Confessions. As has been pointed out, the doctrinal material is the Confessional material in the Confessions.

Should one for the sake of argument grant that the non-fundamental doctrines in the Confessions are not binding, then at once would come the difficulty of deciding which doctrines are fundamental and which are non-fundamental. Who would be authorized to make this distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines? The individual? If everyone were authorized to decide for himself which doctrines are non-fundamental, then we would once more have returned to a quatenus subscription.

Dr. Walther has a sharp and discerning remark to make: "Man spricht ferner, bei einer Verpflichtung auf ein Lehr-Bekenntnisz koenne es sich doch offenbar nur um das Wesentliche nicht aber um das Unwesentliche in demselben handeln. Ich antworte: Ohne Zweifel! - Aber in einem Lehrbekenntnisz

gehört eben allen, was zum Lehrgehalt gehört, zu seinem  
Wesen, denn das Wesen eines Lehrbekenntnisses ist eben die  
62  
Lehre."

A statement by Dr. Mayer brings out the same thought accurately. He says:

Since our Confessions are the norma normata, our quia subscription naturally covers the entire matter contained in the Confessions. This lies in the very nature of the case. The Scripture doctrines constitute a corpus doctrinae, in which every doctrine stands in close relation to the core of the doctrinal system. The cor ecclesiae is the doctrine of justification by faith. That is fundamental. Every doctrine which is proclaimed in the church, must be brought into relation with this foundation. Strictly speaking there are no non-fundamental doctrines. Of course, we have employed this terminology, but in my opinion, it has been unfortunate. What is a non-fundamental doctrine? The usual answer is that any doctrine which does not affect the foundation of the faith, e.g. the doctrine concerning the Anti-christ. But immediately we are involved in a discussion as to the difference between non-fundamental doctrines, open questions, theological problems, exegetical questions. We shall do well to abide by the Confessions themselves in defining the extent of doctrine which must be accepted when the Augsburg Confessions declare in VII: For the true unity of the church it is sufficient to agree upon the doctrine of the Gospel and the administration of the sacraments. Any doctrinal statement which militates against this foundation is eo ipso false. The history of doctrine within the Lutheran Church has clearly indicated this. The Apology and Luther's Catechisms have the doctrine of justification by faith as their leit-motif. And especially the Formula of Concord shows clearly that every doctrinal aberration if consistently carried through will ultimately destroy the very foundation of the Gospel of Christ. We can assume that Calvin held the view of a double predestination theoretically, but if he accepted all the implications and logically carried them to their final conclusion, he overthrew the very foundation of the faith. We are so prone to ignore the fact that there are various degrees of Christian understanding, and are therefore willing to make the distinction between fundamentals and non-fundamentals in the interest of doctrinal indifference. In speaking of a quia

48

subscription to our confessions, we dare not think of the minimum of Christian knowledge necessary for salvation, but the maximum necessary for the Christian preacher. Our subscription requires that we accept every doctrine, whether fundamental or non-fundamental, which is revealed in Scriptures and confesaws in our Lutheran Confessions."<sup>63</sup>

There has been some discussion as to whether a quia subscription covers also those statements in the Confessions which are brought in incidentally but not discussed. Let us consider the two views.

Eckhardt says: "8. Auch alle beilaeufig darin ausgesprochenen Lehren - Dieselben werden in spaetern Bekenntnissen oft also Beweis angefuehrt."<sup>64</sup>

On the other hand Walch says: "...Ob die eydliche Verbindung auf die neben-Sachen der symbolischen Buecher gehe? ...Vors andere waere auch dieses wider die Absicht eines solchen Eyds, dadurch eine Obrigkeit weiter nichts sucht, also von dem Schwerenden eine Versicherung zu erhalten, er werdee bey der reinen Lehre baeiben, und das hat mit den neben-<sup>65</sup>lingen keine Connexion."

Once more, for an answer to this question it is necessary only to keep in mind the purpose for which the Confessions were written. They were written to be witnesses of doctrine, and as such all the doctrinal material in them is also Confessional material and included in a quia subscription. Now if these statements which are brought in inci-

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63. Mayer, F. E., op. cit., pp. 33 and 34.

64. Eckhardt, E., op. cit., p. 340.

65. Walch, Johann Georg, Der Historischen und Theologischen Einleitung In die Religions-Streitigkeiten Der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche. p. 160

dentally are statements on doctrinal points, then they must most certainly be considered binding on one who subscribes to the Confessions with a quia. If such incidental statements are not on points of doctrine, then they will come under the classification of "matters not included in the quia subscription", discussed earlier in this paper.

Dr. Walther has a statement which would apply here also.

"Man spricht ferner, man habe in den Symbolen doch offenbar nur das anzunehmen, was darin bekennd gesagt ist, da sie eben Bekenntnisse und nicht theologische Lehr-Compendium seien. Ich antworte: Jedenfalls! Aber es ist eben darin alles bekennd gesagt, was darin von Lehre vorkommt. Alle in den Symbolen enthaltenen Lehrentwicklungen sind eben durch ihre Aufnahme in dieselben von der Kirche zu Stuecken ihres Bekenntnisses gemacht worden. Kaeme es bei der Frage, ob etwas in den Bekenntnissen zum Bekenntnisses gehoere, auf die zuweilen in denselben gebrauchte Formel: "Wir glauben lehren und bekennen" und dergleichen an, so wuerde damit der groesste Theil des in unseren Bekenntnissen Enthaltenen, ja u. a. selbst die ganzen beiden Katechismen Luthers samt der ganzen Apologie von denselben ausgeschlossen sein."<sup>66</sup>

The next point to be considered is this, that the confessions must be subscribed "in rebus und phrasibus."<sup>67</sup>

66. Walther, C. F. W., op. cit., p. 16.

67. Concordia Triglotta, p. 22.

Krauth sets forth the same thought when he says: "Those who set them (the Confessions) forth and subscribe them must not only agree to use the same words, but must use and understand those words in one and the same sense."<sup>68</sup>

Taking a different view we find Prof. R. Seeberg (Berlin) who takes the position that confessional obligation does not include assent to the theological form of the creed. He quotes Luther who once said that he hated the homousios, but believed in the substance for which this term stood. (History of Doctrines I, p. 21; cf. 2nd edition, German, p. 10.)<sup>69.</sup>

Dr. W. Walther, late professor at Rostock, insists upon the distinction between substance and theological form, with the principle that the former is binding and the latter not. As an instance of this he says: "The Nicene Creed in its accepted form (385) begins with the words: 'I believe in one God, the Father almighty.' This has been corrected in the Athanasian Creed in such a way that the one God in whom we believe is not the Father, but 'the one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity' (Article in Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift, Oct. 13th, 1913 (Leipzig))."<sup>70</sup>

The question: "Must one accept both the form and the substance in a quia subscription, or is it sufficient to accept the substance only?" offers no difficulty to one who has subscribed to the Confessions and is in agreement with them. The important thing is that the matter in

68. Krauth, Charles P., op. cit., p. 163.

69. Neve, J. L., op. cit., p. 35.

70. Ibid.

which the form and substance is found is understood in the same case in which it is presented. If this is the case, one who subscribes will not feel fettered by the form, nor will he wish to free himself from it. In many cases concepts were put into a certain form for a very definite purpose. The form which was used was found to be of value because it presented the correct concept in a clear way, and in a way which eliminated the possibility of error creeping in - which possibility might exist if the matter had been put into a different form. The form used has been found valuable also for one who cares to defend correct doctrine today. On the other hand, we must not think that one who subscribes to the Confessions is, because of his subscription, limited to that form only which is used in the Confessions in presenting doctrine. It may, and often does happen that situations arise in which it is found necessary to present the same doctrine (same substance) in a different form to make it more clear at the time or to eliminate the possibility of a new error creeping in under the form used in the Confessions.

## AUTHORITY OF THE CONFESSIONS AND PRIVATE JUDGMENT

One of the most common, persistent and also most untrue arguments against subscribing to the Confessions with a quia runs along this line: A quia subscription to the Confessions militates against the universal priesthood of believers. It is the God-given right and duty of every Christian to study Scripture and arrive at his own conclusions as to what they teach. No man has the right to tell another that his interpretation of Scripture must conform to a certain set interpretation such as a Confession sets forth.

Professor C. von Palmer puts the thought that Confessional subscription is opposed to private judgment in this way: "Here two perfectly equal and unimproachable rights confront each other: the interests of the association to which the individual belongs and into whose service he enters, and on the other hand the interests of the freedom of conscience."<sup>71</sup>

The error of the argument that Confessional subscription militates against the right of private judgement lies in a faulty conception of the Confessional obligation. Those who argue in this way think of a Confessional subscription as a yoke which is laid upon them and binds them. In Germany under the State Church, the term Verpflichtung often had the connotation of a yoke. Professor C. von Palmer un-

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<sup>71</sup> von Palmer, C., Subscription to the Confessions and Orthodoxy of the Candidate for the Ministry, p. 583.



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wittingly shows that he views the Confessional subscription as a Verpflichtung by quoting a number of early subscriptions as found in Germany which were in the nature of a Verpflichtung.<sup>72</sup>

"In Europe, where Church and State have always been united, and where the Confessional obligation has ultimately been to the State, the matter of Verpflichtung early assumed a serious, if not overshadowing, importance. For such Verpflichtungsformeln, see Koellner, I, 122 sq."<sup>73</sup>

The simple answer to the argument that the Confessional subscription militates against private judgment is this: the Confessional subscription is not a Verpflichtung in this false sense. When a candidate is contemplating entering the ministry he should never ask himself the question: Am I willing to forget my opinions and give up my right of private judgment to the Confessions?" But rather he should ask himself this question: "Have I, in the careful exercise of my private judgment come to an understanding of Holy Scripture which is the same as that taught in the Confessional writings of the Church?" If this latter question can then be answered with a "Yes", there will be no thought that the candidate who subscribes to the Confessions is being put under a yoke. A man whose understanding of Scripture is that of the Confessions will receive the Confessions with joy and be a joint witness with them. There will be no question as to whether

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72. Ibid.

73. Schmauk, Theodore E., & Benze, T.C., The Confessional Principle and the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, p. 56.

he is above the Confessions or under the Confessions. He will be one with them.

"It is not by giving up the right of private judgment, but by the prayerful exercise of it .... that we have reached that faith which we glory in confessing."  
74

If there should be a case where one who is a candidate for the ministry does not feel in agreement with the Confessions, he is still free to exercise his judgment as he pleases, but then he may not enter the Lutheran ministry. If one who does not feel that the Confessions are the correct exposition of Scripture enters the Church which holds these Confessions, he is violating the Biblical command that he should not tolerate error, and if he asks the Church to accept him even tho he is not in agreement with the Confessions of the Church, then he is asking the Church to violate the command not to tolerate error. If one differs from the Confessions of the Church, he must separate to be honest, and not abuse the right of private judgment to teach error.

"If you go, you are free. But if you stay in our house, you are bound by the law of our house, which is our Confession, or, rather, by the Scripture, which is our only rule, but of which our Confession is the faithful, trusty, convenient, tested, proven, and accurate witness."  
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74. Krauth, Charles P., op. cit., p. 170  
75. Schmauk, T. E. & Benze, T. C., op. cit., p. 82.

"The representatives do not lose their freedom in entering the service; they are free to be true to the principles in whose interests they serve, and they are free to quit the service. They are not free to be untrue to the principles and to continue in the service."<sup>76</sup>

"Es wird hierzu keiner schlechterdings gezwungen, und wenn ihm die Unterschrift ist, so kann er wegbleiben und eine andere Lebensart suchen. Hat er sich aber einmal dazu erklart, und er weicht nachher von derselben ab, so kann er den Charakter eines ehrlichen Mannes nicht behaupten, oder er musz ab danken und sein Amt niederlegen."<sup>77</sup>

The above quotations must not be understood however to say that there is no room for further investigation; for clearer exposition of Scripture; more accurate statement of doctrine.<sup>78</sup> Each generation will have new witness to bear, and this is welcomed in the church when done in the proper way. Schmauk says: Is there no freedom? "Is there no room to be left for the development, progress and adjustment of the Faith under the new light, new scholarship, and the new conditions which each successive generation brings with it?"

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76. Schmauk, T. E. & Benze, T. C., op. cit., p. 88.

77. Walther, C.F. W., Pastorale, p. 68.

78. As an example of such a clearer exposition and more accurate statement, we think of the intuitu fidei. This term was employed by the Lutheran Church for years, but was then discarded when it was seen to have a false connotation.

Yes, there is large room - the Church must welcome all new light, new research, and new progress; but its confessional principle and its safety as the only protection of Protestantism against individualism - require that such new teaching be not private, or experimental, or a prerogative of one or a few; but that it first be tested by the Church, and be officially formulated and accepted before it be taught." <sup>79</sup>

Actually when men come together and join in a mutual confession, the nature of that Confession will be that of a contract, but rather it will be regarded as a mutual witness. Christians who see eye to eye in the Bible do not have to come together to find or formulate some sort of agreement under which they can join together, they rather come together to express an agreement already existing between them. When this is the condition which exists, the situation will be one expressed by Walther in this way: "Hat er den Glauben der Kirche, so kann er diese Forderung nicht fuer ein Gesetzjoch ansehen; es kann ihm vielmehr nichts anders, als seines Herzens Lust und Freude sein, den glauben, den er in seinem Herzen traegt, auch oeffentlich und feierlich mit dem Munde zu bekennen, und heilig zu versprechen, dass er denselben und keinen andern Glauben predigen wolle bis an seinen Tod." <sup>80</sup> Or again as expressed by Sartorius: "Hence he does not submit in his ordination

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79. Schmauk T. E. & Benze, T. C., op. cit., p. 91.

80. Walther, C. F.W., Warum sind die symbolischen Buecher unserer Kirche von denen, welche Diener derselben werden wollen, unbedingt zu unterschreiben?, pp. 18&19.

to some law of faith, forced upon him by some higher or extrinsic authority; but the purport of his obligation, in giving his consent to the forms of doctrine contained in the symbols, is essentially this: that the minister, being called to the service of a public confession of the truth of the Gospel, first acknowledges these truths as his own personal faith. The ceremony of his consecration, the laying on of hands of the ordaining minister and of the assisting brethren, indicates the fellowship of the ministerial and witnessing office to which he is dedicated.<sup>81</sup>"

As has been stated above, the binding power of the Confessions is not one of force; it is not in the nature of a yoke set upon the neck of the one who subscribes. Properly speaking, the only binding power which the Confessions have is the binding power of the truth. One who has been convinced of the truth of the Confessions will be conscience-bound to abide in them and teach according to them. The binding power which the Confessions have on the individual is none other than the binding power which truth has on the conscience of one who knows the truth. "The unity of the Church does not consist in subscription to the same Confessions, but in the acceptance and teaching of the same doctrines. It is not subscription to Confessions of faith that is desired so much as to the faith of the Confessions."<sup>82</sup>

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81. Sartorius, Ernst, Ueber die Notwendigkeit und Verbindlichkeit der kirchlichen Glaubensbekenntnisse, p. 42.

82. Jacobs, Distinctive Doctrines of the Lutheran Church in the United States, p. 94. (Quoted from Schmauk, op. cit. p.6)

Finally a word must be said about what the meaning of a Confessional subscription is for the individual. A Confessional subscription means that the individual's studies from the Scriptures to the Confessions have led him to a conception of the Bible truths which agrees with that set forth in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church. One who subscribes has, therefore, a very serious obligation. Before a person can subscribe to the Confessions, he must know what is in them. He must have a real knowledge of what it is to which he is subscribing. He must remember that the Confessions do not tell him what he must believe, but they do tell him whether what he believes makes him a Lutheran. Then it is up to him to determine by a careful study of the Confessions whether he truly is a Lutheran.

It must be recognized that a young candidate for the ministry will often feel that although he has made a careful study of the Confessions, his understanding of the whole doctrinal material in the Confessions is a yet incomplete. In such a situation must the candidate refuse to subscribe? Neve answers: "If the candidate for ordination is in harmony with Lutheranism in such fundamentals he can subscribe with a quia... Even the Doctrines more remote from the center have been formulated in entire agreement with the central doctrine of justification."

Let everyone seriously consider the Confessions of the Lutheran Church, and ask himself the question: "Are they mine?" If they are, then the individual is a part of the Church and will repeat with joy the words of the Confessors: "Since now, in the sight of God and of all Christendom, we wish to testify to those now living and those who shall come after us that this declaration herewith presented concerning all the controverted articles aforementioned and explained, and no other, is our faith, doctrine, and confession, in which we are also willing, by God's grace, to appear with intrepid hearts before the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ, and give an account of it; and that we will neither privately nor publicly speak or write anything contrary to it, but, by the help of God's grace, intend to abide thereby: therefore, after mature deliberation, we have, in God's fear and with the invocation of His name, attached our signatures with our own hands."

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