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SHORT TITLE

EARLY MISSOURI SYNOD CATECHISMS

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1957

A HISTORY OF THE EARLY CATECHISMS
OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Practical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

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June 1957

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod has followed in the tradition of typical Lutheran groups in its concern and interest in the Small Catechism of Martin Luther. The Small Catechism summarizes the major teachings of Scripture. It serves as the basic educational medium.

Since the time of its completion in 1529, many have set themselves to the task of writing expositions of this catechism, mostly in question and answer form. Many of the individual precincts in Germany had their own basic form. Various German theologians also tried their hands at formulating expositions.

So it was that in the early years of United States history, the immigrants came into this country with their own individual catechisms. Each group generally brought over the catechism it happened to have been using in Germany. The various German Lutheran groups who were to band together as The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod also came over with their individual catechisms.

The purpose of this study was to determine which catechisms were used, the extent of their use, and their general characteristics. More precisely, the aim was to determine the factors which led the Missouri Synod to adopt its own catechism only eleven years after its organization. The study continued from there with an examination of the first official catechism and the way in which it was received.

Outside of a few brief articles in Missouri Synod periodicals, very little has been done in this particular area. This study was made in connection with a research project assigned to the writer as a graduate fellow at Concordia Seminary. The purpose was to gather references on confirmation instruction in the following two areas: (a) The confirmation of children; (b) Lutheran catechisms used in the United States and Canada.

The writer scanned all Missouri Synod periodicals of the early years, as well as all synodical and district reports. He also scanned the Lutheran Standard, a publication of the American Lutheran Church. In general, he looked through any type of source which might have contributed to this study. A great amount of effort had to be expended in locating and identifying the catechisms referred to in the sources since they were not always clearly defined.

This study was primarily historical, although brief overviews of the doctrinal contents have also been provided. There were definite limitations. Not every problem was solved; not every catechism was located and identified. Limitations of time also prevented the writer from making as intensive a doctrinal study of these catechisms as might have been done.

In summary, it can be said that the primary concern in the Missouri Synod was for a catechism which was in conformity with the Lutheran Confessions; a catechism which helped to create and preserve a solid unity of doctrine among its members. There was also a considerable concern for a catechism which was sound pedagogically and suited to the age level of the learner.

CHAPTER II

EARLY INTEREST IN THE CATECHISM

The Purchase of Nine Hundred Catechisms

The Saxon immigrants¹ were interested in a sound catechism from the beginning of their organization. They especially purchased nine hundred catechisms in Germany to take with them to the new country. The bill, dated October 27, 1838, came from the bookbinding establishment of Albert Schmidt in Dresden. It listed an order for twenty-five copies bound in leather with gold trim, fifty copies bound in black leather with brown-sprinkled trim, and 825 copies bound with leather backing and corners.² The catechism they purchased was the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism³ which enjoyed wide-spread usage in the Missouri Synod for many years. More on this catechism appears in chapter four.

The First Synodical Convention

In addition to a few articles in Der Lutheraner, continued traces of catechism interest were evident at the First Synodical

¹This particular Saxon immigration occurred in 1838 under the direction of Pastor Martin Stephan.

²"Belege Zur Cassenföhrung Des Herrn Fischer In Dresden," dated October 27, 1838, bound manuscript no. 6, Concordia Historical Institute, St. Louis, Missouri.

³D. Martin Luthers Kleiner Catechismus, auf Churfl. Durchl. zu Sachsen (Dresden und Leipzig: Christian Gottlob Hilscher, n.d.)

Convention of 1847. At this convention, Pastor Theodore Brohm made the announcement that a publisher in New York, a certain Mr. Ludwig, had available an unaltered edition of Luther's Small Catechism. The price was \$4.50 per hundred. The reaction was quite favorable. The convention immediately resolved to call this to the attention of all the congregations.⁴ This catechism appears to have been a tract edition. The writer was unable to locate a copy of it, however.

Further interest in the catechism was shown at this first convention. The president was asked to supervise catechetical instruction. He was to attend Sunday catechizations and to note whether the children and catechumens were held to memorize the text of the Small Catechism, to grasp its correct meaning, and were able to defend it with prooftexts. He also was to see whether catechism sermons were being preached and to recommend them especially. Finally, he was obligated to note the manner in which the catechism was taught in the schools.⁵

Among his many other duties, the visitor was to visit Lutheran households and to inquire whether they had the catechism, together with other books, and whether they made regular use of them. Negligent parents were to be duly admonished to begin immediately with the training of their children in

⁴The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Erster Synodal-Bericht (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1847), p. 6.

⁵Ibid., p. 10.

the catechism.⁶ The director of the Missions-Commission had to make it his duty to see that religious instructions were based upon the catechism.

Interest in the use of the catechism was evident in the constitution of the newly organized synod which was adopted at this convention. One of the conditions under which a congregation could join the synod was the promise to make exclusive use of doctrinally pure catechisms.⁷

The constitution further stated that one of the duties of the synod was to see to it that there was always available a good edition of the catechism, based on the original Luther text, and a book of pertinent Scripture passages. The synod was to see to it that a catechumen was confirmed only if he could recite by heart at least the text of the catechism and if he understood it well enough so that according to 1 Cor. 11:28 he was capable of examining himself in his preparation for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.⁸

The Periodicals

The first indication of catechism usage to appear in Der Lutheraner was in 1845. In the report on the activities of the

⁶Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁷Die Neue Verfassung oder Constitution der deutschen evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio, u. a. Staaten (St. Louis: Druckerei der evang-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St., 1855), p. 3.

⁸Ibid., pp. 8-9.

school at Altenburg, catechism instruction was mentioned.⁹ In 1847, an article depicted the nature of the catechism and how Luther intended that it be used in the church, school and home.¹⁰ The first advertisement of a catechism appeared in 1848. An unaltered edition was advertised for ten cents.¹¹ At the second synodical convention in 1848, the goals of Der Lutheraner were discussed. One of the delegates demanded that a criticism of the Evangelical catechism be published in this periodical.¹²

The contributions of Pastor K. Roebbeln should be noted because of his continual interest in the catechism. He wrote on the fifth and sixth chief parts.¹³ Later, while in Germany, he participated in a catechism controversy in Hannover and sent regular reports of its progress to America.¹⁴

Perhaps the most noted pioneer in the early days was Ernst

⁹C. H. Loeber, "Die Lutherische Lehranstalt zu Altenburg in Perry Co., Mo.," Der Lutheraner, I (July 26, 1845), 93-95.

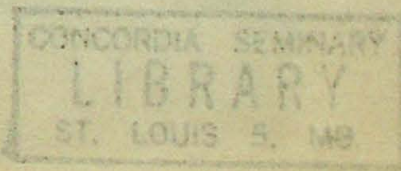
¹⁰"Die tägliche Katechismusbüchlein nach Dr. Luthers Rath und Vorbild," Der Lutheraner, III (May 4, 1847), 95-97.

¹¹"Bücher und Pamphlets zu haben in der Expedition des Lutheraner um die beigetzten Preise," Der Lutheraner, V (May 29, 1848), 160.

¹²The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zweiter Synodal-Bericht (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1848), p. 25.

¹³K. Roebbeln, "Katechismuslehre," Der Lutheraner, XII (January 2, 1856), 76-78.

¹⁴Lehre und Wehre, I, passim.



G. Wm. Keyl. In 1848, he contributed an article with guidelines for the devotional use of the catechism.¹⁵ In the following year, he wrote an article on the custom of catechism services and sermons.¹⁶ In 1851, there appeared an article on the use of the catechism in worship.¹⁷ Keyl's contributions also appeared in Lehre und Wehre. There he wrote on the historical development of Luther's catechisms,¹⁸ the value of catechism sermons,¹⁹ and an all-inclusive article which showed a number of ways to use the catechism in church, school, and home.²⁰ His most notable contribution was his catechism. A study of this appears in chapter five of this study.

Christenlehre

Further interest in the catechism was evident in the

¹⁵E. G. W. Keyl, "Ueber die tägliche Hausandacht," Der Lutheraner, IV (March 31, 1848), 113-15.

¹⁶E. G. W. Keyl, "Die ursprüngliche Gottesdienstordnung in den deutschen Kirchen lutherischen Bekenntnisses," Der Lutheraner, V (June 26, 1849), 172-74.

¹⁷E. G. W. Keyl, "Die alten bewährten Masregeln der luth. Kirche zur Reichlichen Übung des Wortes Gottes," Der Lutheraner, VII (February 4, 1851), 89-92.

¹⁸E. G. W. Keyl, "Ueber die ursprüngliche Gestalt des kleinen Katechismus Luthers," Lehre und Wehre, I (April, 1855), 135-28, 149-57.

¹⁹E. G. W. Keyl, "Anweisung zu Katechismuspredigten," Lehre und Wehre, III (March, 1857), 65-70.

²⁰E. G. W. Keyl, "Die fleiszige Uebung des Katechismus in der lutherischen Vorzeit," Lehre und Wehre, VI (March, 1860), 65-76.

practice of Christenlehre, common at that time. The manner in which this was conducted varied. Some made it a Sunday afternoon session. Others incorporated it into their morning worship. Both children and adults were to attend. In most instances, the adults observed and listened as the children and recent confirmands were examined by the pastor.

This agency with its high ideals failed to sustain lay interest: This was a matter of great concern to the early church leaders. In the 1858 convention of the Central District, a plea was made for a more frequent and thorough usage of the catechism. The method suggested was to use Christenlehre more frequently so that people would have the chance to review what they had learned in confirmation class.²¹ In the same year, the Eastern District convention showed similar concern.²² In 1861, the Northern District attempted to do something about its problem by setting forth a long list of proposals.²³ The chief problem with this method of instruction lay in the attempt to teach every age level in one combined class. Finally no one knew for whom it was intended.

²¹The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Bericht Ueber die vierte Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1858), pp. 13-14.

²²The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Verhandlungen der vierten Sitzungen des Oestlichen Districts (New York: H. Ludwig, 1858), pp. 14-17.

²³The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Bericht ueber die siebente Jahresversammlung des Nördlichen Districts (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1861), pp. 14-18.

The district president stated that confusion was evident in the titles given by different people for this agency. Some called it Kinderlehre, thinking only of the children; others called it Katechismusexamina, thinking only of the confirmed youth; still others called it Christenlehre, thinking of it as something also intended for adults.²⁴

The Fort Wayne Pastoral Conference

In a regular conference in 1849, the Ft. Wayne pastoral conference made special efforts to restore the catechism to its honored position so that it would again enjoy more widespread usage. They decided to take steps in this direction by stressing the catechism's importance and excellence, introducing it into preaching, conducting Sunday afternoon Christenlehre, stressing it in the parochial school, referring to it in private communion announcements, referring to it in private pastoral care, urging its use in family devotions, and encouraging Der Lutheraner to print more catechism sermons and studies.²⁵ This matter probably was discussed in other pastoral conferences also, even though there is no official record of it.

²⁴The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Bericht ueber die achte Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1862), pp. 3-9.

²⁵"Auszug aus dem Protokolle der am 26 und 27 September zu Fort Wayne abgehaltenen vierteljahrlichen Prediger-Conferenz des Fort Wayner Conferenz-Districtes," Der Lutheraner, VI (November 13, 1849), 41-43.

J. F. Buenger

In the parochial school, J. F. Buenger, a pastor in St. Louis, conducted his religion classes strictly according to Luther's Small Catechism. He insisted that all children procure this catechism, even if their parents were not members of one of the Missouri Synod churches. He realized that some parents did not send their children to the parochial school for the purpose of religious instruction. Nevertheless, he insisted that they would have to follow every school rule, especially this one on the catechism.²⁶

The Indian Catechism

It was especially among the Franconians in Michigan that mission work with the Indians was conducted.²⁷ Here again, the catechism came into prominence. At the 1848 convention of the Missouri Synod, it was reported that some of the Indian children had already memorized the catechism according to the Indian translation.²⁸ The early missionaries did some of the translating themselves. Missionaries A. Craemer and J. F. Auch translated the catechism into the Chippewa

²⁶C. F. W. Walther, Kurzer Lebenslauf des weiland ehrwürdigen Pastor Joh. Friedr. Bünger (St. Louis: F. Dette, 1882), p. 59.

²⁷The Franconians emigrated from Bavaria in Germany under the direction of W. Loehe of Neuendettelsau.

²⁸The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zweiter Synodal-Bericht (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1848), p. 19.

language²⁹ and Edward R. Baierlein translated it into the Ojibway language.³⁰

Summary

Thus it is evident that Luther's Small Catechism prevailed in the Missouri Synod. Its leaders were interested in promoting it as much as possible. Their chief concern however, was that they adopt only such catechisms as were completely according to the Lutheran Confessions. The following chapter illustrates this.

²⁹Walter P. Schoenfuhs, "Edward Raimund Baierlein," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXVII (January, 1955), 154.

³⁰Charles F. Luckhard, Faith In The Forest (Sebewaing, Michigan: C. F. Luckhard, c.1952), p. 61.

CHAPTER III

UNSUITABLE CATECHISMS ARE REJECTED

It is quite difficult to give a complete picture of the pattern of rejection or acceptance of the various catechism editions. In pioneer days, records were not always carefully kept and those few which were, have been lost or at least were inaccessible. Nevertheless, the information available shows the concern of the early church leaders for a doctrinally pure catechism.

Ottomar Fuerbringer

The efforts of Pastor Ottomar Fuerbringer are recorded in the history of St. Salvator congregation in Venedy, Illinois.

A rationalistic hymnal and catechism had been in use in the congregation for some time. Tactfully and diplomatically the pastor, in congregational meeting, church service, and in private pointed out its glaring errors. He advised the use of the new purely Lutheran hymnal and catechism published here in America in preference to re-ordering the old from Germany. The matter finally took such a course that the majority of the members openly rebelled against the conservatively Lutheran stand of their pastor, and he was threatened with bodily injury. The disastrous result was a split in November, 1842, with the pastor and about six families moving to "Brockschmidt's Hill," now Venedy.¹

The people who settled in this area came originally from Hannover, Germany, so the catechism referred to very likely was

¹E. J. Saleska, History Of St. Salvator Evangelical Lutheran Congregation At Venedy, Illinois, 1842-1942, p. 10.

a Hannover catechism,² a study of which appears later in this chapter.

Francis Arnold Hoffmann³

Francis Arnold Hoffmann did much toward spreading the cause of true catechetical instruction in this country. It was not so in his early years, however. During his first years at the school in Addison, Illinois, Teacher Hoffmann instructed the children according to the old Hannoverian State-Church catechism. In later years, however, after he had been a frequent visitor in the home of a Missouri Synod pastor in Chicago, he introduced the Small Catechism of Luther published by Ludwig in New York.⁴

He possibly exerted the same influence when he served the congregation at Schaumburg, Illinois. This congregation had brought with them a Hessian rationalistic catechism. There was

²The writer found two publications of a Hannover catechism, either of which may have been the one referred to. Katechismus der Christlichen Lehre, Zum Gebrauch in den Evangelischen Kirchen und Schulen der Herzogthümer Bremen und Verden (Stade: H. A. and G. E. Friedrich, 1836). Katechismus der Christlichen Lehre, Zum Gebrauch in den Evangelischen Kirchen und Schulen des Königreichs Hannover (Hannover: G. C. Schlüter, 1835).

³Karl Kretzmann, "Francis Arnold Hoffmann," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XVIII (July, 1945), 37-54. In 1840, at the age of eighteen, Francis Arnold Hoffmann emigrated to this country. He began by teaching in a parochial school in Addison, Illinois. In 1843, he received his colloquy and became and ordained minister. His first parish was at Schaumburg, Illinois. In 1851, he resigned for reasons of health.

⁴Albert G. Merrens, "Early Lutheran Settlers And Schools In Northern Illinois," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXI (January, 1949), 181-82.

a period of instruction during which there was much difficulty and strife. Very likely, Pastor Hoffmann began this instruction, but never saw its completion because of his resignation in 1851. In 1853, the congregation finally introduced the Lutheran catechism published by Ludwig in New York.⁵

The Pommeranian Catechism Controversy

At the 1848 convention of the synod, advice was sought by sixteen members of the congregation at Preistatt, Wisconsin. They had had a dispute with their pastor, the Rev. H. G. W. Keyl. He had proposed that a certain Pommeranian catechism no longer be used because it did not contain Luther's teaching on confession. In addition, the doctrine of the office of the keys was not taught in the same way as in the older conventional catechisms.

The point at issue in the latter case lay in this question and answer in the Pommeranian catechism.

How can a man forgive sins? Answer: Man certainly does not forgive sins because of his own person as a man, but rather because of the office [Amtswegen], upon the command of Jesus, as Scripture says, "whoever sins ye forgive, they are forgiven. Receive ye the Holy Ghost." For just as the Son of Man has power to forgive sins, so has he ordained the same power in the office of the ministry, as He says, "As the Father hath sent Me," etc.⁶

⁵Albert G. Merkens, Ibid., 181-82.

⁶The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zweiter Synodal-Bericht, 1848 (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1848), pp. 22-23. Translation by the present writer.

According to the report, there was no real doctrinal controversy involved. Pastor Keyl did not deny that the office of the ministry had the right to forgive sins. Neither did these sixteen members deny that Christ had given this power to forgive sins to the whole Christian Church as well. Rather, the latter had felt that the doctrine of the office of the keys should never be de-emphasized or overthrown. Because the Pommeranian catechism emphasized this doctrine especially, they wished to retain it.

The convention decided that it could not go along with the retention of this catechism for the following reasons:

(1) This catechism gave the impression that the power to forgive sins lay solely in the office of the ministry. This was what Pastor E. F. L. Krause, a predecessor of Pastor Keyl, had taught in this congregation and had caused all sorts of difficulty; (2) There was no reason for departing from the old and Scriptural (Matt. 18:17-18) teaching of the office of the keys, as it was contained in the conventional Lutheran catechisms; (3) Using this catechism, with its altered modes of expression, violated Luther's principle (in his introduction to the catechism) that because of the less educated people, it was best to remain with one standard catechism form; (4) The sixteen members themselves agreed that the power of the keys had not been given exclusively to the office of the ministry. They had shown this by their citations of Luther and the Pommeranian church ordinances.

The synod further advised Pastor Keyl to use the Book of Concord and other truly confessional Lutheran witnesses to show that the office of the ministry has only the outward exercise of this power of the keys, which was given to the entire church. The synod furthermore asserted that Pastor Keyl and the congregation, as members of the synod, were bound to the symbolical books in their entirety. Therefore, since the Pommeranian catechism failed to include the very important teaching of confession, Pastor Keyl had no other choice but to insist upon an "unabridged" edition.

The report concluded with the hope that these sixteen members would join in with the rest of their fellow-members in assenting to the truth of the above-mentioned reasons, protect themselves from every manner of controversy, and remain in unity with their fellow-members, as well as the entire truly confessional Lutheran Church.⁷

This did not settle the matter, however. At the 1850 convention, it was discussed once more. These sixteen members were by no means satisfied with the advice given by the synod. Rather, they had interpreted this advice to mean that the synod had completely rejected the Pommeranian catechism and had even refused the power of forgiving sins to the office of the ministry. So they came to this convention with the demand that the synod take back everything it had said.

⁷ Ibid.

The synod refused to do this since it felt that it had said nothing amiss. However, it allowed for the possibility that its advice could have been misunderstood. First of all, the synod recognized that in its report it had said that it could not go along with the retention of this catechism. However, the synod did not mean to reject it completely. Then also, a few mistakes had been made. Instead of the word, "ministers," the word "office of the ministry" had been used. The synod was trying to make clear that the power to forgive sins did not belong exclusively to ministers. It did belong to their office, however, though here also, not in an exclusive sense.

The convention recommended that the Pommeranian catechism be abandoned because of its use of the expression, "because of the office" (Amtswegen). This term could too easily be misunderstood. The controversy with the Buffalo Synod on this doctrine was still a matter of concern to them. They felt strongly opposed to the unevangelical and un-Lutheran teaching that the pastor did not act in the name of the congregation, but rather as an intercessor between God and man. They definitely wanted nothing to do with anything which might cause anyone to believe this false teaching.

Their advice was that these sixteen members do all they could to reconcile themselves with the rest of the congregation. They closed however, with a concession.

If you have become so accustomed to your Pommeranian catechism, you may retain it; but you will have to

permit the rest of the members to use the small Lutheran catechism and not make it a matter of controversy.⁸

The present writer was not able to determine or locate either this Pommeranian catechism or the small Lutheran catechism referred to in this controversy.

The Ludwig And Darmstadt Catechisms

At the same convention in 1850, a few individual resolutions were made. Among them was a resolution with regard to catechisms. This arose in an incidental way when someone mentioned a catechism published by Ludwig in New York.⁹

The synod felt it had to advise against this catechism for the following reasons: (1) The office of the keys, "which is found in the conventional small Lutheran catechisms," was not found in the edition by Ludwig; (2) A few sentences were missing from the morning and evening prayers; (3) Additions were made to the table prayers; (4) A change was made in the "Württembergischer Kinder-Examen."¹⁰

⁸The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Vierter Synodal-Bericht, 1850 (St. Louis: M. Niederschen, 1851), pp. 31-32. The translation is by the present writer.

⁹The title given in this report is "Kleine Catechismus des sel. Dr. Martin Luther, nebst den gewöhnlichen Morgen- u. Abendgebeten u. s. w." This catechism was very common in America and was used by the various synods and published by a number of concerns. It is said to have been the one published by Benjamin Franklin. See "Einleitendes Vorwort zur Katechismus-Erklärung," Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt, III (May, 1868), 274.

¹⁰Vierter Synodal-Bericht, 1850, op. cit., p. 39.

The writer failed to see much of a basis for any of these arguments. This catechism did contain the doctrine of the office of the keys. It did not contain the usual doctrinal statements, but it did include the three Scripture passages (Luke 10:13, Matt. 16:18, and John 20:22-23). There also seemed to be little basis for the complaint with regard to the morning and evening and the table prayers. Of course, there was no way of determining the standard of comparison. The same applied to the charge against the "Württemberg Kinder-Examen." The writer did compare this with an edition of the Württemberg catechism,¹¹ but the variations were very minor.

The following is a list of the contents: (1) The Small Catechism; (2) The Order Of Salvation (in the form of questions and answers); (3) The Order Of Salvation (in outline form); (4) A Brief Examination For Confirmands; (5) A Number Of Edifying Hymns; (6) The Augsburg Confession.

One statement bears a peculiarly un-Lutheran flavor.

Does faith also work sanctification and regeneration? Yes, for through faith the Holy Spirit is sent more and more, so that I can live and pray in a child-like and godly manner.¹²

¹¹Auszug der Katechistischen Unterweisung zur Seligkeit über den Brenzischen Katechismus, Im ganzen Königreich Württemberg eingeführt (Reutlingen: Fleischhauer und Spohn, 1860).

¹²Der Kleine Catechismus des seligen D. Martin Luthers, Nebst den gewöhnlichen Morgen-, Abend-, und Tisch-gebeten (New York: Heinrich Ludwig, 1845), p. 86. Translation by the present writer.

It is not difficult to see that the faith emphasis is much too strong.

To return once more to the 1850 convention, after this Ludwig catechism was rejected, a number of other catechisms were taken into consideration. After some deliberation, it was decided to have the old Darmstadt edition printed at the cost of the publishing house treasury.¹³ The present writer regrets that he was unable to locate this particular catechism. Nothing further is noted with regard to this resolution, so apparently, like many another resolution, it was never carried out.

In 1868, a contributor to the Schulblatt gave an extensive study on the history of this "Ludwig" catechism. He said that it was probably prepared by one of the early eastern Lutheran settlers. He also recognized that it was a catechism which was strongly influenced by Pietism. This was evident in that it contained the Freylinshausen Heilsordnung and a number of other citations. Nevertheless, the writer of this article stated that this catechism had been dear to him for the last twenty years. He even considered parts of the Heilsordnung to be very good. He admitted that he had used it successfully for many years and heartily recommended it to other teachers, especially beginning teachers.¹⁴

¹³Vierter Synodal-Bericht, 1850, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁴"Einleitendes Vorwort zur Katechismus Erklärung," op. cit., 274-76.

The Hannover Catechism

In 1854, Pastor E. J. M. Wege of Benton County, Missouri, contributed an article to Der Lutheraner which revealed much about the Hannover catechism¹⁵ and its status in that day. Pastor Wege pointed out that a large portion of those immigrants now representing American Lutheranism were reared in Hannover. They were trained by the Hannover catechism and it was quite understandable why they honored this book so highly and wanted to continue using it.

However, wrote Pastor Wege, people sometimes see so much good in something that they can no longer detect the evil. In the case of this catechism, people were so impressed with the mass of Bible passages that they could not see its false doctrine. Some had even gotten the notion that this Hannover catechism was the same as Luther's Large Catechism. That idea of course was terribly false. So it was that, since people had begun asking that this Hannover catechism be used in the schools, he felt it his duty not only to speak against it, but also to show the reasons why. That was what he hoped to do in this series of articles.¹⁶

The exposition of this catechism followed this doctrinal

¹⁵Katechismus der Christlichen Lehre, Zum Gebrauch in den Evangelischen Kirchen und Schulen der Herzogthümer Bremen und Verden (Stade; H. A. and G. E. Friedrich, 1836).

¹⁶E. J. M. Wege, "Der sogenannte grosse Hannöversche Landes-Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, X (February 28, 1854), 109.

pattern: (1) God and Holy Scripture; (2) Creation and preservation; (3) Man--according to his original and sinful state; (4) The redemption of mankind; (5) The sanctification of mankind; (6) The state of man and of the world in general; (7) The duties and morals of a Christian; (8) The sacraments.

This catechism obviously was an attempt to satisfy both Reformed and Lutheran tastes. Luther's expositions of the chief parts were placed separately at the end of the catechism, probably so that the Reformed would not have to expose themselves to them. Lutherans, on the other hand, could use them if they wished. The doctrinal statements on the means of grace and the real presence in the Lord's Supper carefully avoided saying too much lest one or the other side be offended. The catechism presented an inadequate if not false exposition of the doctrines of the inspiration of Scripture and of the deity of Christ. The criticisms in this study are those which have been pointed up by Pastor Wege.

A rather inadequate expression of the doctrine of Scripture is evident in this catechism. It speaks of God as having given assistance (Beistand) rather than inspiring the holy writers. It also implies that Jesus was merely using a mode of expression when He told the disciples in Matthew 10:20, "the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you."¹⁷

Wege also felt that it was inadequate in its exposition

¹⁷Katechismus der Christlichen Lehre, op. cit., p. 10.

of the deity of Christ. He objected especially to its reference of Jesus as "the son of a poor Jewish woman, with whom, however, God, in a mysterious way, had united Himself."¹⁸ It is true, there is an explicit statement that Jesus is the "eternal Son of God, God and man united."¹⁹ But, according to Wege, this statement is weakened when it is cited as a doctrine of Scripture. Since a false statement of Scripture has already been presented, this permits anyone who denies the inspiration of Scripture to deny this doctrine also.²⁰

Pastor Wege found reason to object to its presentation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The answer in the catechism avoided the use of the word "Trinity," but delegated it to a footnote.²¹ Even this footnote failed to present the doctrine adequately. It failed to make statements which would guard against all the major heresies. He also felt that delegating such an important doctrine to the footnotes negated its importance.²²

The catechism did not speak of the commandments as the whole law, but only as consisting of some of the most difficult laws to follow. In addition, the Scripture passage cited

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 171.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

²⁰ Wege, op. cit., X, 137-39.

²¹ Ibid., X, 140.

²² Ibid.

quoted only the last six of the ten commandments. Pastor Wege also criticized this catechism because it gave no reference to Luther's expositions which were placed in separate form at the very end of this catechism. By placing them in this way, the compiler of the catechism lead the learner away from Luther and never really let him see Luther's expositions.²³

Wege objected to the exposition of the Lord's Prayer because it failed to make the Lord's Prayer the basis of all prayer; because the explanation so stressed prayer to God the Father alone, that a person was led to wonder whether one need pray to the other two persons of the Trinity; because it gave a rather meager exposition of the petitions; and because it added, as a guide to "true understanding," a very much "watered-down" paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer.²⁴

In the presentation of baptism by the Hannover catechism, Pastor Wege also found cause for objection. Pastor Wege objected to the fact that it said nothing of the visible means. It spoke only of "promises," and said nothing of the "benefits." The sacraments were merely called "festal" ordinances rather than "holy" ordinances.²⁵ The catechism also defined the final goal of baptism as an initiation into the Christian faith, not as regeneration.²⁶

²³Ibid., X, 145-47.

²⁴Ibid., X, 153-55.

²⁵Ibid., X, 169.

²⁶Ibid.

In the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, there appeared to be an attempt to satisfy both the Reformed and Lutheran leanings. The objection to the series of questions and answers on this doctrine was that they did not definitely state the real presence. Both Reformed and Lutheran elements could use these to their greater satisfaction. The negative viewpoints were not presented, nor were the positive elements definitely stated.²⁷

The doctrine of the office of the keys and confession was omitted entirely from this catechism. Pastor Wege didn't mention this, but according to Missouri Synod thinking of that day, this would also have been a reason for anathematizing it.

²⁷Ibid., X, 201-02.

CHAPTER IV

SUITABLE CATECHISMS ARE USED

The Bavarian Catechism

Another catechism which merited consideration in this study was an edition printed in Bavaria.¹ It was of value to this study because of its owner, Pastor A. J. Ernst of Marysville, Ohio. This pastor was one of those who participated in the organization of the Missouri Synod. Very likely, he brought this catechism with him when he came over from Bavaria, Germany, in 1842. The writer failed to find anything on the history of this catechism as it was used in Germany or in America. Within the Missouri Synod, it never received any official sanction. There is no way of telling the extent of its usage in the Missouri Synod.

The following were its main parts: (1) The six chief parts, prayers, and table of duties; (2) Luther's wedding ritual for unlearned parsons; (3) Luther's baptism ritual; (4) The Christian questions; (5) A few other questions; (6) Brief explanations of confession and absolution; (7) Prayers before and after the sacrament; (8) A few questions with regard to good works; (9) Questions for children on the six chief parts; (10) The four general confessions of faith; (11) A booklet of Bible passages;

¹Der kleine Katechismus für die gemeine Pfarrherren und Prediger samt Christlichen Fragstücken für die, so zum Sacrament gehen wollen (Nürdingen: Beckschen Buchladen, 1780).

(12) Questions and answers about the Lutheran Confessions.

A look at its contents revealed that all sorts of features were included in this catechism. Thus, the exposition of the six chief parts was rather brief and was supported with only occasional Scriptural references. The exposition of the office of the keys was nearly complete. Particularly noteworthy was the fact that it listed four, rather than three, confessions of faith. To the three ecumenical creeds were added the symbols of Augustine and Ambrose. These symbols were an attribute of praise to God in which some of the key doctrines were confessed.

The Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism

Another of the catechisms used within Missouri Synod circles was what was commonly known as the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism.² This was the catechism which was brought over from Germany and enjoyed usage in Missouri Synod circles for many years.

The reasons for the first writing of this catechism were set forth in the introduction written by John George III, prince of Saxony, on February 11, 1688. Since the beginning of his reign, he had wished to raise the standards of religious instruction. In 1683, he had commissioned the pastors of Cross Congregation in Dresden to work up an explanation of the catechism which would be strengthened with Scripture passages.

²D. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus, auf Churf. Durchl. zu Sachsen (Dresden und Leipzig: Christian Gottlob Hilscher, n.d.)

After its publication, he made every effort to make it the official catechism of Saxony. In fact, he forbade the printers to sell any catechism other than this one.³

The parts of the catechism were as follows: (1) The introduction by Prince John George; (2) On the observation and proper usage of this catechism; (3) Luther's introduction; (4) The six chief parts, table of duties, and Christian questions; (5) The explanation of the catechism; (6) A list of Bible passages which were to be memorized at the various seasons of the year.

Certain general characteristics of this catechism could be noted. First of all, in the explanation, the answers to the questions were extremely long and often in lengthy and involved sentences. A very long list of proof passages often accompanied the answer. Many of the passages were lengthy, supplying not merely the point of "proof," but also much of the context. Although the catechism listed all six chief parts as they are commonly enumerated today, yet in its explanation, it recognized only five, considering the office of the keys and confession to be a part of the sacrament of the altar.⁴ Another factor particularly noteworthy was its concern for the application of doctrine to life. After the statement of many of the doctrines, two standard questions were used: (a) How does this doctrine assist us in leading a Godly life?; (b)

³ Ibid., pp. 1-25.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 70-71.

How is this doctrine a powerful comfort to us?

The Dresden catechism was declared to be the official catechism of the congregations in Freistatt and Milwaukee, Wisconsin. It had been forced on them by their pastor, E. F. L. Krause. At both congregations, he had insisted and, for the most part, forced the people to sign to the acceptance of it as the official catechism.⁵ This was simply one of many other ways in which Krause capitalized on his overly high estimate of the authority of a pastor.

This catechism served as the center of controversy at Trinity Congregation in Buffalo, New York. There, an element in the congregation

declared that the old Lutheran Dresden Catechism, which was being used in school, to be false, coarsely slandering the same. They were joined by the two schoolteachers, Zion and Dreier, who did the same before the children. For this offense they were admonished and finally removed from office, as the admonition failed. This so-called Roggenbuck* [sic] faction finally had to be excommunicated from the Christian congregation. This notice they received in writing. Hereupon they came together on a certain day in an open place near the church and burned the notification of their excommunication, which they termed a papal bull, together with the Dresden Catechism and Pastor Grabau's name.⁶

According to the editor, Roggenbuck claimed that the Dresden catechism taught falsely concerning the person of Christ.

⁵Roy Suelflow, "The First Years Of Trinity Congregation, Freistadt, Wisconsin," Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XVIII (October, 1945), 89-91.

⁶Johann A. Grabau, "Johannes Andreas August Grabau," Translated from the German by E. M. Biegner, Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly, XXIV (October, 1951), 127.

Generally however, the Dresden catechism seemed to be recognized as being in conformity with the Lutheran Confessions. Why then wasn't it retained and declared to be the official catechism of the Missouri Synod? This is difficult to determine. J. A. Grabau, the leader of the Buffalo Synod, said that Missouri was just trying especially hard not to appear "Grabauisch." Missouri, in return, insisted that the catechism had been used in the years 1840-1845, but had gradually disappeared because it could no longer be obtained. The Buffalo Synod had printed a new edition of this catechism,⁷ but had not permitted it to be placed upon the open market, least of all, according to Missouri, into the hands of Missouri people. And according to the writer of the article, it was impossible to get Grabau to release this catechism to them.⁸

Later on, Missouri did in fact use parts of the Dresden catechism to make the necessary adjustments to its first official catechism, commonly known as the Dietrich,⁹ especially on the doctrines of the church and the ministry. Of course, no reason was given for not simply printing their own copies of this catechism instead of compiling a new one.

⁷Dr. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus, auf Charfl. Durchl. zu Sachsen (Buffalo: G. Zahn, 1845).

⁸"Das 'Informatorium' und unser Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XIV (June 29, 1858), 180.

⁹Dr. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus in Frage und Antwort Gründlich ausgelegt von Dr. Johana Conrad Dietrich (St. Louis: August Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1859).

Undoubtedly, many other catechisms were in use during these early years. But there is little historical evidence of them. In a rather extensive article appearing in 1868, approval was given to a rather lengthy list of catechisms. Although they did receive recognition in this article, there was not much evidence of their usage.¹⁰

¹⁰"Einleitendes Vorwort zur Katechismus-Erklärung," Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt, III (May, 1868), 264-74. The catechisms listed in this article were the following: Tetelbach-Golden Kleinod, 1569; Salomonem Glassius-Kurzer Begriff der Christlichen Lehre, 1644; Das Nürnbergische Kinderlehrbüchlein; Justi Gesenli-Katechismus-Fragen, 1631; Michael Walther-Katechismus, 1661; Mecklenburgisches Katechismus, 1717; J. W. Peterson-Spruch-Katechismus; J. Sötfleisch-Kurze Einfältige Frage und Antwort, 1686; J. Wigand-Das Kleine Corpus Doctrinae, 1564; Höfer's Himmelsweg; J. Conrad-Katechismus-Fragen; Frankfort Katechismus; Spener's Katechismus; Herford; Boeck.

CHAPTER V

EARLY ORIGINAL CATECHETICAL WORK

Wyneken's Spruchbuch

Already in its second convention in 1848, the Missouri Synod entered upon its first catechetical endeavor. A need was felt for a book which would contain those Scripture passages which were pertinent to the chief doctrines of the Missouri Synod. Pastor F. K. D. Wyneken was entrusted with the job as editor of such a Spruchbuch. To assist him in this endeavor, the synod appointed a standing committee, consisting of Pastors Wm. Sihler, E. G. W. Keyl, A. Cramer, and C. F. W. Walther. They were to give consorial aid to Pastor Wyneken.¹

Wyneken apparently set himself to the task immediately. Already during the next year, Der Lutheraner advertised its appearance. The price was set at \$1.80 per dozen copies.²

There was no way of telling just how this catechism was intended to be used nor how extensively it actually was used. It consisted purely of Bible passages categorized by brief headings according to the standard catechism arrangement.³

¹The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zweiter Synodal-Bericht, 1848 (St. Louis: Arthur Olshausen, 1848), 26.

²"Spruchbuch zum kleinen Katechismus Lutheri," Der Lutheraner, V (May 1, 1849), 144.

³Fr. Wyneken, Spruchbuch zum kleinen Katechismus Lutheri (Baltimore: J. Neuten Kurtz, 1852).

It appeared as if the inductive method could have been employed with this catechism, but there was no evidence of this.

Keyl's Catechism

Without a doubt, the chief exponent of catechetical work among the Missouri pioneers was Pastor E. G. W. Keyl. His frequent contributions on catechetical instruction to the periodicals were mentioned already in chapter two.

His greatest contribution was his own four-volume catechism exposition which was based on the writings of Luther and the symbolical books. The four volumes made their appearance in the years 1853, 1857, 1860, and 1868 respectively.

Keyl stated the reasons for his effort in the introduction to the first volume. He recognized that there had been many collections of Luther's catechetical writings. However, he knew of no collection of Luther's catechetical writings which were not accompanied by strange additions. According to his knowledge, the first attempt at this sort of thing appeared three years previously. This work was done by C. N. Koehler in Germany. Keyl, however, had not become acquainted with it until he had already completed his first volume. So now he felt that it would be well for him to go on with his writing anyway so that some effort along this line would also be made in this country. His ultimate goal was "to place the shining light of Luther's writings upon a candle-stick, so that it may give light to everyone who is in the household

of faith."⁴

He restricted himself to two basic sources, Luther's writings according to the Walch edition and the New York edition of the Book of Concord. In preparing this work, he placed all the quotations, of which there were about 2500, on individual slips of paper. Then came the big job of classification. Some quotations were too extensive; others too narrow. Some quotations contained too much non-pertinent material; others were unsuitable when they were taken from their context. Others, for a number of reasons, weren't clear enough.

Keyl omitted some of the topics which ordinarily appeared in the introductory sections of the catechism expositions such as the doctrines of Holy Scripture, Law and Gospel, sin and the punishments for sin. He did this not only to save space, but also because nowhere in Luther's writings did he find an example of this type of arrangement. He desired to stay with the spirit of Luther.⁵

In the same year of the publication of the first volume, 1853, a review appeared in Der Lutheraner. The writer, Pastor A. Hoyer, wished to do all he could in promoting this catechism so that many sales could be made at the coming synodical

⁴E. G. W. Keyl, Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den Symbolischen Stellen, I (Nördlingen: C. H. Beck, 1853), p. vi.

⁵Ibid., pp. vi-xii.

convention.⁶ The catechism was not completed by the time of the convention in June of that year. However, it was announced that Pastor Keyl was working on it. The convention wished him the Lord's blessings in his endeavor.⁷

The completion of the first volume was announced in October, 1853. The price was set at \$1.00 per volume. This announcement urged all pastors, teachers, heads of houses, and confirmands to buy and read this "precious inimitable gift."⁸

A lengthy review appeared in December, 1853. Some had already remarked that a volume of 440 pages on the ten commandments was a bit lengthy. However, Hoyer realized how selective Keyl had had to be in order to reduce it to its present size. Hoyer rated it as a book suitable for every age level.⁹

In November, 1855, Lehre und Wehre carried an announcement by H. Ludwig in New York that the second volume by Keyl was ready for printing. The price was to be \$1.00. Printing would begin as soon as five hundred orders were solicited.¹⁰

⁶A. Hoyer, "Anzeige eines neuen wichtigen Buches," Der Lutheraner, IX (May 10, 1853), 125.

⁷The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Siebenter Synodal-Bericht, 1853 (St. Louis: Moritz Niedner, 1853), p. 16.

⁸"Katechismusauslegung," Der Lutheraner, X (October 25, 1853), 39-40.

⁹A. Hoyer, "Katechismusauslegung," Der Lutheraner, X (December 6, 1853), 60-62.

¹⁰"Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den Symbolischen Büchern," Lehre und Wehre, I (November, 1855), 353.

Apparently, there must have been some difficulty in obtaining the necessary orders. The announcement of its appearance came first in December, 1856. This notice stated that it would appear in six weeks.¹¹ Five months later, however, this catechism's¹² arrival was first announced. The reviewer recognized the high cost (\$1.00), but reminded readers that something like this was far more important than many other things in life. He used a warning from Scripture (Luke 19: 42-44) and one from Luther to make use of opportunities such as this for spiritual growth, lest they regret it later on.¹³ A contributor to Lehre und Wehre also urged more people to buy this catechism. He went on to say that it would be a sad commentary on the church if Keyl's work would have to be discontinued because of a lack of interest.¹⁴

The 1858 Central District convention discussed the poor sale of Keyl's catechism. Everyone at the convention was urged to do what he could to encourage its use.¹⁵

¹¹"Katechismusauslegung," Der Lutheraner, XIII (December 30, 1856), 79.

¹²E. G. W. Keyl, Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den Symbolischen Schriften, II (New York: H. Ludwig, 1857).

¹³"Katechismusauslegung," Der Lutheraner, XIII (May 5, 1857), 149.

¹⁴"Lutherisch-theologische Pfarrers-Bibliothek," Lehre und Wehre, IV (July, 1858), 205-11.

¹⁵The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Bericht über die vierte Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts, 1858 (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1858), pp. 21-22.

At the 1859 convention of the same district, it was revealed that the chief difficulty behind the failure of sales of the first volume was its high cost. So now the second volume was to be made available at the much lower price of fifty cents. The convention resolved to do everything possible to increase the spread of this second volume. The convention appealed to J. H. Bergmann of New York to make a second printing of this volume and to sell it at a greatly reduced price. They felt that this was possible if he would simply make use of the old printing plates.¹⁶ In December, 1859, the announcement appeared that it would go on sale at this price as soon as 250 orders were solicited.¹⁷ In 1860, a volume published by Ludwig appeared.¹⁸ Whether Bergmann actually obtained Ludwig's plates and left Ludwig's name as the publisher or whether Ludwig refused Bergmann and published it himself is not clear.

In June, 1860, the coming of the third volume was announced. A plea was made that as many as possible buy this volume. The publisher presented the following table to show how greatly the cost could be reduced if there were enough subscribers.

¹⁶The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Bericht über die fünfte Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts, 1859 (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1859), pp. 62-63.

¹⁷"Wiederabdruck des zweiten Theils des Keyl'schen Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XVI (December 13, 1859), 71.

¹⁸E. G. W. Keyl, Katechismusauslegung aus Fr. Luthers Schriften und den Symbolischen Schriften, II (New York: H. Ludwig, 1860).

| | | |
|-------------|----|-------|
| 500 orders- | 75 | cents |
| 740 | " | -60 " |
| 1000 | " | -45 " |
| 1500 | " | -40 " |
| 1750 | " | -38 " |
| 2000 | " | -36 " |

The same article promised to announce the cost when all the orders had been taken.¹⁹ The present writer failed, however, in finding any such announcement in later issues. There is therefore no way of telling what developed from this venture. The third volume appeared on schedule in 1860.²⁰

The arrival of the fourth volume²¹ came in June, 1868. The price was \$1.00 per copy. The review stated the importance of owning a volume such as this and urged as many as possible to purchase it.²²

In 1880, a review of all four volumes appeared.²³ The review reported that the Missouri Synod's "Concordia-Verlag" had undertaken the reprinting of the first two volumes, volume

¹⁹"Katechismusauslegung," Der Lutheraner, XVI (June 26, 1860), 181-82.

²⁰E. G. W. Keyl, Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den symbolischen Büchern, III (New York: H. Ludwig, 1860).

²¹E. G. W. Keyl, Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den symbolischen Büchern, IV (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1868).

²²"Vierter Band von Keyl's Katechismus-Auslegung," Der Lutheraner, XXIV (June 15, 1868), 159.

²³"Katechismusauslegung aus Dr. Luthers Schriften und den symbolischen Büchern," Der Lutheraner, XXXVI (December 1, 1880), 184.

I in 1878 and volume II in 1880. Nothing was said of the printing of the latter two volumes, although they were also offered for sale. From the copies available, it seems that volumes III and IV were not published until 1889. If this was the case, it may possibly be assumed that before this, copies from the first printing were still available. The price was set at \$1.00 for each volume.

The First English Catechism

The Lutheran Standard reported an English translation of the catechism done by St. Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Congregation of Baltimore.²⁴ The Ohio Synod periodical called it a translation made up expressly for this congregation. Attached to it was a translation of the regular service of the church according to the liturgy of the Missouri Synod. The Lutheran Standard went on to say that "this congregation gives promise of stirring up the dry bones in that headquarters of American Lutheranism."²⁵

In a succeeding edition, this catechism was advertised for sixty cents bound in paper and eighty cents bound in cardboard. The following comment was added,

We are glad to hear that this new congregation, despite the difficulties which they have had, and must still

²⁴The Small Catechism Of Dr. Martin Luther For Ministers And Pastors (Baltimore: Hanzsche and Company, 1857).

²⁵"Book Notices," Lutheran Standard, XV (September 30, 1857), 3.

encounter with the old mother congregation, are determined to go on. Cannot the brethren of the Missouri Synod do something to encourage this goodly enterprise at their present Synodical meeting? We hope they will.²⁶

The present writer failed to find any such endorsement in Missouri Synod literature.

This catechism was composed of a translation of the en-chiridion. Remarkably enough, the exposition of the office of the keys had the identical form which appeared in the Missouri Synod's first official catechism. In the copy available to the writer, the liturgy was not included. The translation into English was quite different from the translation which was later accepted by the Missouri Synod.

²⁶"Luther's Smaller Catechism," Lutheran Standard, XV (October 14, 1857), 2.

CHAPTER VI

THE FIRST OFFICIAL CATECHISM

Early Steps

Although these catechetical efforts had been made by Keyl and Wyncken, there still was no official catechism for the Missouri Synod. Various catechisms had been put to use, many of them catechisms which had been brought over from Germany. The leaders realized that for the sake of doctrinal uniformity, one official catechism should be adopted.

The matter was first given consideration at the Eighth Synodical Convention in 1854. The convention asked Pastor Keyl to present the report of an eastern pastoral conference on this matter, but he did not happen to have it with him. Thereupon, C. F. W. Walther called attention to the catechism by Conrad Dietrich. He pointed out that this catechism was defective only in the articles on the church and the ministry. His proposal was that this part be substituted with sections from a "good, old" catechism and then have this revised catechism sent to the printers.

Thoughts were raised against this proposal. Someone proposed that instead of this, a well-qualified member of the synod prepare a more contemporary catechism which would meet the needs of the time. This proposal was extended so that not one person, but the entire St. Louis pastoral conference (which

at that time was a rather small group of people) was commissioned to this task.

As the matter was discussed more and more, it was finally decided that the St. Louis pastoral conference work through the Dietrich edition. They were to re-set it in the pure language of the church and to make changes where the statements did not apply to the times so that a suitable model of saving doctrine would be available.

The manuscript was to be sent to the district conventions for a critical examination. The stipulation was made, however, that not every criticism would have to be considered. Three years later, it would be given its final examination by the synodical convention and then hastily sped to the presses.¹

Of the four districts, only one gave official mention of its duty. In 1855, the Eastern District decided to remain with the decision of the synod to use the Dietrich edition.²

At the Ninth Synodical Convention in June of 1857, official action was to be taken on this catechism. Early in the convention, the hope was expressed that this catechetical effort would help to keep the synod under the blessed influence

¹The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Achter Synodal-Bericht, 1854 (St. Louis: Druckerei der evangelisch-lutherischen Synode von Missouri, Ohio und andern Staaten, 1854), P. 10.

²The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Erster Bericht des Oestlichen Districts, 1855 (St. Louis: Druckerei der evang.-luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio u. a. St., 1855), pp. 9-10.

of the catechism.³

Later on, the pastoral conference presented its work to the convention for examination. The convention delegated this task of examination to a committee. The committee was instructed to give special attention to the section on the doctrines of the church and the office of the keys. It was felt that because of the times, this section would need a more detailed exposition.

After the committee had studied it and had given it official sanction, the convention resolved to accept this catechism just as it had been prepared by the St. Louis pastoral conference. Someone remarked that the catechism was too sparsely equipped with Bible passages. The synod asked Walther to supplement the present edition with more Bible passages. The wish was also expressed that this catechism be sent as quickly as possible to the printers, that the best possible paper be used, and that this catechism take the general format of the small hymnal.⁴

In the official minutes, the work of translating was always referred to as the work of the St. Louis pastoral conference. It seems though, that Walther did most of the work. The evidence, while not conclusive, points in that direction.

³The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Neunter Synodal-Bericht, 1857 (St. Louis: August Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1858), p. 15.

⁴Ibid., p. 58.

J. L. Gruber, a contemporary,⁵ says that it definitely was Walther who did the translating.⁶ Walther himself, in a letter to Pastor H. Fick, said that he had the job of editing and correcting the catechism.⁷ So Walther seems to have done the work, with perhaps a minimum of help from others. At any rate, Walther, for some reason or other, did not let official credit be given to him in the catechism.

In the February 9, 1858 issue of Der Lutheraner, the announcement appeared that the catechism would soon be released from the presses. A more precise report would appear in the following issue.⁸

The Dietrich Catechism

It is well at this point to supply more information on the history and background of this catechism. The author,

⁵Ludwig Fuerbringer, 80 Eventful Years (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c.1944). On page 228, Fuerbringer says, "Gruber at one time was a teacher in one of our day schools in St. Louis, but later left our church, first becoming a teacher in a congregation of the Wisconsin Synod in Oshkosh, and still later, when a split occurred on account of the Predestinarian Controversy, he joined the Iowa Synod. But these reminiscences contain so many inaccuracies, wrong judgments, and partisan views. . . ."

⁶J. L. Gruber, Erinnerungen an Professor C. F. W. Walther und seine Zeit (Burlington, Iowa: Lutheran Literary Board, n.d.), p. 12.

⁷Briefe von C. F. W. Walther, edited by L. Fuerbringer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1915), I, 112.

⁸"Der neue Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XIV (February 9, 1858), 103.

Johann Conrad Dietrich (1575-1639), was born at Gesunde, Hesse-Cassel, Germany. As professor at Gieszen, his abilities in catechetical work were evident in his lectures to students. He was requested to put his lecture material into book form. In 1613, his Institutiones Catecheticae appeared. This was a thorough Latin exposition of the catechism in question and answer form with extensive supplementary notes. Two years later, he published an edition for elementary schools, his Epitome Catecheticae. Along with this came a German translation of this work.⁹ Reu, in characterizing it, said it was written in a period of orthodoxy. The concern was not so much for theology as it is related to life, but rather that it be absolutely correct. Every trace of false doctrine which had ever appeared in the history of dogma was to be considered and refuted. This is what helped to give this catechism its rather doctrinaire and abstract character.¹⁰

The Missouri Synod Revision

The Epitome Catecheticae¹¹ was the basis of this catechism. Very little was omitted from it. Rather, it was expanded by the materials from the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism, Dietrich's

⁹"Einleitendes Vorwort zur Katechismus-Erklärung," Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt, III (May, 1868), 278-79.

¹⁰J. M. Reu, Dr. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus (Munich: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1929), pp. 151-54.

¹¹Conrad Dietrich, Epitome Catecheticae (German and Latin edition; Leipzig: Thomas Fritsch, 1709).

Institutiones Catecheticae, and materials from the Book of Concord. With regard to the latter source, some of the answers were direct quotations, especially in the section on the office of the keys; others, however, were of a more free nature and cannot be traced as easily. The Epitome Catecheticae had few Scripture references. These were supplied in the Missouri Synod revision. Although access to the German translation could be had, a new translation was made. The earlier German translation appeared to be a much more free rendering than that of the Missouri Synod revision.

It seems that the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism was generally used to explain some of the terminology of Luther. This was not the rule for its usage, however. The Institutiones Catecheticae was quoted whenever it was felt that the Epitome had left out a doctrine or the expansion of a doctrine which the editors considered too important to be missing.

There were a few significant doctrinal changes. Dietrich had placed the descent into hell under the state of humiliation. The new revision followed the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism and placed it under the state of exaltation. The section on the office of the keys was considerably expanded, especially on the possession and authority of the keys. Significant also were the many additions made in the presentation of the Lord's Supper. The appendix lists all the additions which were made in this new revision of the original Epitome Catecheticae.

The writer of the introduction to the revision freely admitted to all the additions. This was done, he wrote, because it was felt that the need of present conditions demanded that certain questions and answers dared not be missing from this edition. The basic principle, however, was to remain with that which was old and trustworthy. All the material was taken from the three sources.¹² The translations, said another writer, were accurate (wortgetreu) translations, not paraphrases.¹³

The selection of the proof-passages was also under the guidance of the old truly confessional catechisms. When it was necessary, words were added in brackets to help the reader see which part of the answer the passage was to prove.

The catechism was designed for every age level; parochial school children, confirmands, and grown-ups. Certain sections were to be considered only with the more gifted pupils, or with adults. These were marked with an asterisk. The same principle applied to the Scripture passages. All children were to memorize those passages which were printed out. Only the more gifted children were to memorize those which were merely cited.¹⁴

It was not intended to make the catechism take on a

¹²Dr. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus in Frage und Antwort gründlich ausgelegt von Dr. Johann Conrad Dietrich (St. Louis: August Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1858), pp. 1-11.

¹³"Kleiner Katechismus," Der Lutheraner XIV (February 23, 1858), 105.

¹⁴Dr. Martin Luthers Kleiner Katechismus, op. cit., pp. 11-111.

dogmatic and polemical character. Nevertheless, the editors felt that the fine doctrinal points which were too detailed for small children should also be included. Otherwise the lay people would have no standard text to which they could refer, should theological problems bother them later on. Besides that, they reasoned that unlearned material could best be learned from a familiar source. The governing principle was that the unknown can best be learned when it proceeded from the known.¹⁵

It was felt that unless the Missouri Synod follow a common model which would set the terminology, quantity of material, and mode of inculcating, utter confusion on the key doctrines would result. This was the basic reason for an official catechism. Only thus could a church body defend itself against other groups which would engage in controversy with them.¹⁶

Criticisms from the Buffalo Synod

Only four months after its release, J. A. Grabau, the leader of the Buffalo Synod, criticized the Missouri revision. He said that it was ridiculous to use a college-level catechism for confirmands. The retort, of course, was that only the simpler questions and answers were to be used with the confirmands. Grabau also said that they had merely adopted this catechism in order to avoid using the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism,

¹⁵"Kleiner Katechismus," op. cit., 106.

¹⁶Ibid.

the latter of which would make them appear too "Grabauisch," since the Buffalo Synod also used this catechism.¹⁷ This was answered as was mentioned in the previous chapter.

Six months later, another defense of this new revision appeared in Der Lutheraner. This time, it met the attacks of Pastor C. E. Hochstetter of the Buffalo Synod. Hochstetter attacked the catechism on four grounds: (1) In contrast to the original text, it made its own additions and alterations; (2) It made insertions from writings other than those mentioned; (3) It was a false translation which engaged in error; (4) It omitted whatever failed to suit its purposes.

The reply of Der Lutheraner to these accusations was that Hochstetter had failed to read the introduction of the catechism carefully enough. The sections which Hochstetter cited as being absent from the Institutiones Catecheticae were indeed absent. They were taken from one of the three other sources, as was frankly stated in the introduction.

Doctrinally, Hochstetter had one particular accusation. He felt that one very important question had been purposely omitted. He cited the question and answer in full. The reply to this was that Hochstetter was mistranslating the Latin original. He had called the church the "visible" assembly, and had also appended the expression, "according to the Word

¹⁷"Das 'Informatorium' und unser Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XIV (June 29, 1858), 180.

of God."¹⁸ Neither of these expressions occurred in the original. As to the complete omission of this question and answer, the writer of the article reasoned that Dietrich himself had omitted this question in his Epitome, so why should not the new revision omit it.¹⁹

About a year later, another article on this matter appeared in Der Lutheraner. Hochstetter had claimed that this word "visible" was in the original of his copy of the Institutiones Catecheticae. Missouri replied that they did not find this word in any of their copies, but they would nevertheless apologize for their accusation.²⁰

Buffalo came back and reported in their periodicals that Missouri had taken everything back and now admitted that this word "visible" did belong to the Dietrich edition. Missouri retorted that it had done no such thing. Missouri further went on to say that evidence showed that Dietrich did not use this term. In the introduction to the 1632 edition of his

¹⁸"Die Buffaloer Kritik unseres Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XV (September 7, 1858), 12-13. On page 13, Hochstetter's German translation reads as follows, "Was ist die Kirche? Sie ist die sichtbare Gemeine des Berufenen, welche sich zu dem Worte Gottes halten und die Sacramente nach der Einsetzung Christi gebrauchen." The original Latin was as follows, "Quid igitur est ecclesia? Est coetus hominum vocatorum amplectentium verbum Dei, & recte utentium Sacramentis." Conrad Dietrich, Institutiones Catecheticae (Lipsiae: Thomas Fritsch, n.d.), p. 365.

¹⁹"Die Buffaloer Kritik unseres Katechismus," op. cit., 14.

²⁰"Conrad Dietrich vom Recht den Bann zu verhängen," Der Lutheraner, XVI (October 4, 1859), 28-30.

Institutiones Catecheticae, Dietrich said that many alterations of his original had been made by others in previous editions. Now in this, the 1638 edition, he was going to remove all error and once more produce a pure volume. This edition, said Missouri, did not use the term, "visible."²¹

The reply to Hochstetter's accusations was stated more extensively in Lehre und Wehre. Hochstetter objected to question 521 of the revision. This question and answer were formulated from a statement in the notes of the Institutiones Catecheticae. "The right and power to call pastors belongs to the entire Church."²² This was expanded in the following way,

To whom then do the right and power to call ministers belong? To the whole Church; 1. Because the office belongs to the whole Church; 2. Because upon the whole Church is laid the duty of distinguishing pure teachers from deceivers and of departing from error; 3. Because this is shown by the custom of the Church in the election of Matthias and of the deacons and elders, wherefore the ancient Church pronounced all elections null which were effected without the consent of the people.²³

Missouri's defense for this action was that people in this country have both the duty and free privilege to call their own pastors. Therefore they considered it proper to take just this statement from its original position and put it into

²¹"Das 'Informatorium,'" Der Lutheraner, XVI (January 24, 1860), 92-93.

²²Institutiones Catecheticae, op. cit., p. 398.

²³Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism Explained In Questions And Answers By J. C. Dietrich (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1895), pp. 183-84.

an expanded question and answer form.²⁴

Hochstetter also objected to the citation of 1 Cor.1:21-23 under this heading since this citation did not occur in Dietrich. He said that inserting this passage at this position gave the doctrine an Anabaptist flavoring. The reply was that Chemnitz, Calov, Gerhard, and Dietrich himself (in another work) cited this passage under this doctrine.²⁵

The Criticisms of J. L. Gruber²⁶

As the footnote indicates, comments by this enemy of Walther cannot always be taken too seriously because of his personal prejudices. Yet J. L. Gruber's remarks about the catechism give at least one person's opinion of it. Gruber said that Walther himself was capable of writing precisely and clearly. Yet he expected this catechism, which was the official text in the Seminary, to serve as a text for confirmation classes. Gruber attributed this to the fact that Walther was so set on using sixteenth century modes of expression that he just simply could not see anything else. Gruber showed how technical, and for children, confusing the catechism was. He demonstrated this by showing how three somewhat dissimilar

²⁴"Die Buffaloer noch einmal über unseren Katechismus," Lehre und Wehre, V (November, 1859), 331-36.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 334-35.

²⁶Fuerbringer, op. cit.

answers to define the concept of faith.²⁷

Faith is that act of the soul by which, having known the truth of God's Word, it confidently, by the power of the Holy Ghost, lays hold of the grace and mercy of God set forth in the Gospel promise, for the purpose of obtaining eternal life.²⁸

Faith means 1. Not only to have a knowledge of, and 2. Not only to give assent to that which is presented in the articles of faith and in the Gospel, 3. But also with undoubting confidence of the heart to approve it and find peace in it.²⁹

Believing in God means to be assured, with firm confidence of the heart, that God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is the one, true, living God, and that He is also my Father, Protector and Defender through Christ and for his sake, in whom He has adopted me as His child.³⁰

Gruber commented that this may have sounded clear and correct three hundred years ago, but for children of today, such a sentence construction was far too difficult. Besides this, said Gruber, here were three nearly identical questions according to content, and three differing answers according to form.³¹

Reactions within the Missouri Synod

After the appearance of the catechism, it was only natural that every effort would be expended toward making this the

²⁷Gruber, op. cit., p. 13.

²⁸Dr. Martin Luthers Small Catechism, op. cit., pp. 75-76.

²⁹Ibid., p. 86.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Gruber, op. cit.

official catechism. Walther's colleague, A. F. Biewend, was especially zealous in the establishment of this catechism. He wrote a number of articles endorsing this catechism. Many of them were criticisms of English publications.³²

Apparently, however, not everyone was immediately pleased with this catechism. As was previously stated, some of the delegates at the convention would have preferred to have a completely new catechism instead of the Dietrich, as Walther had suggested. Now, just nine months after the release of the new "Dietrich," an anonymous contributor to Der Lutheraner wrote an article in question and answer form. He wrote the question in the form of a letter and seemingly listed all the complaints that were already being made about this catechism.

Synod has republished Conrad Dietrich's Small Catechism. We have the book; we have introduced it; my children have it. Now guess what difficulty perplexes me at the moment. Do not laugh at me. What to do with the book I know as little as my pupils. Are the children to learn only the proof passages? What purpose, then, do the questions and answers serve? If they are to learn also the questions and answers, how is this possible? Hardly one or two will accomplish this. Am I to have them merely read the questions and answers? Of what use will that be? However, if I am to explain the questions, I hardly know what to explain; everything is so clear and plain. Then again, many things seem to me to be wanting which I had found in Spener, or in the Dresden Catechism, or in Ruth, etc. There are no terse applications such as one finds scattered in those catechisms. In some places, the matter is brief and condensed, in others it is too much expanded. And how lumbering are some of the answers! In fine, I am disgusted. And when my disgust and perplexity occasionally is great, I am angry at heart because Synod did not

³²H. C. Wyneken, Adolf Fr. Th. Biewend (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1896), p. 81.

publish a different catechism, one elaborated for the needs of our time, etc.³³

The question was answered in a cynical and yet rather warm manner. It pointed out the difficulties in adapting oneself to anything new. Time, however, would work out these difficulties, was the answer given. Thereupon suggestions for the manner of teaching this catechism were presented.³⁴

Further bewilderment over the way in which to teach this catechism was evident in an article entitled, "Another method for treating Conrad Dietrich's Catechism." The author said that it was well, for the most part, to follow the instructions given in the introduction to the Dietrich. However, more could be said on the long answers. It was too much to expect the children to memorize the long answers and yet the children were to be able to give an account of them. So it was suggested that the important parts be underlined and subdivided so the children would not have to memorize every word. It was further suggested that a guide for this sort of thing be done by one person and then presented to pastoral conferences or synodical meetings. This would prove useful in several ways: (1) The great number of self-appointed masters with their peculiar modes and methods would perish and would be strictly

³³"Frage und Antwort in Briefen über unseren Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XV (November 30, 1858), 57-58. Translation by the author of "The Missouri Synod And Dietrich's Catechism," Theological Quarterly, X (July, 1906), 129-52.

³⁴Ibid.

bound to the catechism; (2) The woes and agonies of the children would be at an end; (3) The contents of the catechisms would be brought much nearer to their grasp; (4) Children in New York and San Francisco, in New Orleans and Lake Superior would return the identical answer to a given question.³⁵

Already at the synodical convention of 1864, there was a request for an epitome of the new revision. With the situation as it pertained in most of the schools, it was impossible for the children to master the entire Dietrich. The matter was handed over to a committee. The committee proposed that Professor J. C. W. Lindemann of Addison, Illinois, be requested to prepare an epitome of one of the chief parts of the catechism and present it to the Ft. Wayne pastoral conference for an opinion. The report was accepted.³⁶

Lindemann apparently wrote to Walther on this matter. In the following year, Walther wrote a letter to Lindemann in which he stated his opinions on the matter. Where the Dietrich was too difficult, he advised that the enchiridion simply be used, with perhaps a few extracts from the Dietrich. Above all, a person should feel obliged to take up the definition of the main theological terms such as repentance, faith, justification, sanctification, etc. Walther candidly confessed,

³⁵"Auch eine Behandlung des Conrad Dietrichschen Katechismus," Der Lutheraner, XXI (September 15, 1864), 13.

³⁶The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zwölfter Synodical-Bericht, 1864 (St. Louis: Aug. Wiebusch u. Sohn, 1867), p. 7.

however, that he couldn't see that the difficulties with using the Dietrich were as great as many claimed them to be. He did recognize, however, how difficult it was to apply the proof passages in a number of instances. He wondered whether some didn't approach this catechism in a manner much too systematic and analytic and thus cause themselves all sorts of difficulty.³⁷

Much of the reaction to this catechism was negative. However, there were occasional instances in which the reaction was positive. This was especially so at the Eastern District Convention of 1865. There it was felt that the Dietrich was necessary because the Small Catechism simply did not explain all the doctrines. Whereas with the Dietrich, all the necessary doctrines were taught. It was granted that the language was a bit difficult at times, but according to their opinion, that could be overcome with a bit of intensive application. "If a person doesn't want to take the trouble to study it thoroughly, he will have no other choice but to complain."³⁸

Three years later, the matter was discussed again at some length. This time the discussion revolved around the necessity of an epitome of the Dietrich. Some pastors complained that it was very difficult to use the Dietrich in classes. It certainly was far too difficult especially for the less-gifted

³⁷ Briefe von C. F. W. Walther, op. cit., I, 216.

³⁸ The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Verhandlungen der elften Jahresversammlung des Oestlichen Districts, 1865 (New York: H. Ludwig, 1865), pp. 43-49.

students. So an abridgment of some sort was definitely necessary. Other pastors, however, feared that if an epitome was adopted, the "original" Dietrich would soon disappear. Someone suggested then that this could be avoided by combining the epitome in a volume with the "original." The discussion did not get beyond this.³⁹

An Abridged Edition

In 1870, an epitome was finally published by the publication board of the synod.⁴⁰ The 611 questions were reduced to 154 in this abridgment. The elaborate presentation of the doctrine of election was dropped. Other sections were shortened considerably. The writer found only two copies of this catechism, both first editions. The catechism must have sold quite well, though. A contributor to the Theological Quarterly mentioned having a tenth edition of this catechism which bore an 1883 date.⁴¹ The present writer found no reviews nor editorial comments on this catechism, however. There also seem to be no cues by which one can determine how extensively this catechism actually was used.

³⁹The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Verhandlungen der dreizehnten Jahresversammlung des Oestlichen Districts, 1868. (New York: H. Ludwig, 1868), p. 28.

⁴⁰Auszug aus dem Katechismus von Dr. Johann Conrad Dietrich. (St. Louis: Druckerei von Missouri, Ohio u. a. Staaten, 1870).

⁴¹"The Missouri Synod And Dietrich's Catechism," op. cit., X, 152.

Further Developments

In 1876, it was reported that many pastors and teachers desired a commentary of the Dietrich edition. This matter was discussed at a number of conventions and conferences. Since it was felt that for the time being a commentary could not be written, they decided that all requests for explanations of the various parts of the catechism be sent to Walther. The St. Louis pastoral conference would then prepare the explanations and publish them in the Schulblatt.⁴² In the same year, a Spruchbuch was published which contained just those passages quoted in the Dietrich. This was another attempt toward aiding the pastors and teachers in the job of simplification.⁴³

Some pastors and teachers tried to remedy the situation by using the Caspari catechism.⁴⁴ This idea was not too well received by a writer for the Schulblatt. In a series of articles he pointed out the serious doctrinal deficiencies of this catechism. Above all, he was convinced that the cause of doctrinal unity could best be strengthened by the usage of one, not many catechisms.⁴⁵ In 1884, this same opinion was voiced

⁴²"Zur Erklärung des Dietrich'schen Katechismus," Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt, XI (March, 1876), 72-73.

⁴³"Spruchbuch zu dem Katechismus von Dr. Johann Conrad Dietrich," Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt, XI (April, 1876), 121.

⁴⁴K. H. Caspari, Dr. Martin Luthers kleiner Katechismus (Erlangen: Theodor Bläsing, 1861).

⁴⁵"Caspari oder Dietrich?" Lehre und Wehre, XXV (October, 1879), 297-301, 327-36, 353-64.

by a large assembly of teachers in the eastern part of the country.⁴⁶

Despite the many conservative and commendatory opinions of the Dietrich, the momentum of opinions for a new catechism were increased. At the 1886 convention of the Western District, this began to take the form of definite proposals. It was reiterated that no attempt would be made either to alter the Dietrich or to cast it aside. Then followed a threefold proposal which in a way is a reflection on the Dietrich: (1) A shorter and simpler edition should be prepared for use in the schools; (2) The faculty of the Seminary was to begin with it immediately so that it could be presented to the next convention; (3) This new catechism was to follow the wording of Luther's expositions as closely as possible.⁴⁷ In the same year, the Central District came with a similar proposal.⁴⁸

In the following year, the matter was brought before the synodical convention. However, it was tabled because of a number of special and important reasons.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ "Die vereinigte Lehrerkonferenz aller lutherischen Lokalkonferenzen des Ostens," Evangelisch-lutherisches Schulblatt, XIX (March, 1884), 36-37.

⁴⁷ The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Siebenundzwanzigster Synodical-Bericht des Westlichen Districts, 1886 (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1886), pp. 59-59.

⁴⁸ The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Verhandlungen der siebenundzwanzigster Jahresversammlung des Mittleren Districts, 1886 (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1886), pp. 57-58.

⁴⁹ The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zwanzigster Synodical-Bericht, 1887 (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1887), p. 55.

Two years later, 1889, the Western District discussed this matter once more at their convention. They asked for a new, brief, easy-to-understand catechism which would be more faithful to the text of Luther's Small Catechism. The St. Louis faculty was once more requested to see just how this might be done.⁵⁰

At the synodical convention of 1890, the pastoral conference of the state of Missouri presented its memorial. A new catechism was requested for the following reasons: (1) The Dietrich offers far more material than is suitable for confirmands. The questions and answers were placed in such a close context that it was difficult to select only sections for study without confusing the minds of the children; (2) The Dietrich was written in a language designed for high school and college students, not children; (3) It would aid all concerned if this new catechism would remain close to Luther's expositions.

The committee which dealt with this matter reported that this issue had been alive for some time already. In 1884, the Seminary faculty had been requested to do something about this. In fact, it had been hoped that Walther himself would prepare it. However, after his death in 1887, the faculty had set this project aside as something which would have to be dealt

⁵⁰The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Zwanzigster Synodical-Bericht, 1889 (St. Louis: Luth. Concordia-Verlag, 1889), pp. 83-84.

with later.⁵¹

Then followed some concrete resolutions for a new catechism which appeared then in 1896 and was known as the "Schwan" catechism. Although definite statements were made that the Dietrich was not to be supplanted, nevertheless, as time went on, it was used increasingly less until it fell into almost complete disuse.

⁵¹The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Einundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht, 1890 (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1890), pp. 81-83.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

In this study, the writer attempted to discover the attitude of the Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod toward the various catechisms during its early years. He examined these catechisms and their literature. It was easy to see that the primary concern was for catechisms which were doctrinally accurate and complete; catechisms which would ward off all false doctrine; and ultimately a single catechism which would be a unifying factor for the various Lutheran colonies within the synod.

Because this emphasis was so strong, the leaders of this newly organized church body adopted for themselves an adaptation of the catechetical works of Johann Conrad Dietrich. This was a catechism which satisfied this desire to the hilt. In doing so, however, they seemed to have forgotten that his catechism would also have to be teachable to confirmation children. They became aware of this soon after its adoption. During all the years of its usage, dissatisfaction was expressed again and again. The catechism was much too difficult and far too technical for good teaching. It was not sound pedagogically because it tried to serve every age level.

W. Reu says of this catechism, thinking more specifically of the original publications of Johann Conrad Dietrich,

In itself it is an excellent book, helpful alike to student and pastor; but the author's method of dragging into it every technical term of dogmatics and history of dogma has had baneful consequences; even today we are not quite free from this injurious practice. In catechetical instruction the catechist found a welcome opportunity to review his dogmatics. This proceeding may have been salutary for himself, but the children were given stones rather than bread. Even the epitome of Dietrich's Institutions designed especially for school use and employed in some regions to our day, is far too doctrinaire.¹

The attitude expressed within the Missouri Synod over its own revision of the Epitome Catecheticae seemed to support Reu, even though few would express it in his bold terminology. This catechism must indeed have been difficult if one takes into account the various reactions of people toward it. In the opinion of the writer, the most significant was the request by the teachers for a commentary on this catechism. It seems strange for teachers to request a commentary for a catechism whose text was supposed to be simple enough for children to understand. Of almost equal significance were the requests for an abridged edition of this work.

In the light of this evidence, it was surprising to see A. C. Stelthorn still make this rather commendatory remark,

From a theological and Christian pedagogical standpoint, this the Dietrich was indeed an "excellent catechism" and has never been surpassed. Only it was quite elaborate and somewhat heavy in language for the children--not too elaborate or heavy, however, to serve those earlier generations well for years and years, although we

¹M. Reu, Catechetics or Theory and Practise of Religious Instruction, 2nd revised edition (Chicago: Wartburg Publishing House, 1927), p. 127.

are wont to think of them occasionally as less literate than our enlightened age.²

The desire for change seemed always to have been present. But the change itself was difficult to make. There were a number of reasons for this. Especially during the early years, the synod lacked the manpower to create a better catechism. As it kept on being used, it became endeared to many. It had provided much of the terminology whereby Missouri Synod Lutherans expressed their faith. It was only natural then that sentimental attachments began to grow.

This respect for sentiment was evident at the 1896 convention of the synod. There it was carefully stated that the adoption of a new catechism did not mean

a repeal of the former resolution of synod by which Conrad Dietrich's book was recommended for use to our congregations; for, no doubt, Dietrich will be used with blessed results also in the future, especially in the instruction of more advanced children. . . .³

It was to be some time before the Dietrich would be laid aside completely. A new catechism was published in April, 1896. During the first eleven years thereafter, 71,491 copies of the Dietrich revision were still sold.⁴ Today, however,

²A. C. Stellinghorn, "Origin And Anniversary Of The Schwan Catechism," Lutheran School Journal, LXXIX (January, 1944), 200.

³The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod, Einundzwanzigster Synodal-Bericht, 1890 (St. Louis: Lutherischer Concordia-Verlag, 1890), p. 113.

⁴"The Missouri Synod And Dietrich's Catechism," Theological Quarterly, X (July, 1906), 152.

the Dietrich catechism is a relatively little known book.

The writer attempted to be as thorough as possible in this study. Yet the completion of his study has lead him to believe that this was only the beginning of a valuable area of research. Historical problems still need to be solved. More of the catechisms need to be located and identified. A more intensive study of the theology as well as the pedagogy of these catechisms should be made. The writer leaves this to any who may wish to continue in this area of study.

APPENDIX

The Sources of the "Dietrich" Catechism

The following is a listing of the sources which were added to the Epitome Catecheticae to formulate the Missouri Synod edition. In some few instances, material was omitted from the Epitome. These also are listed. The exact references to the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism and the Institutiones Catecheticae are given. The others simply are listed as the Book of Concord, without trying to determine their location. Their designation is thus arbitrary. The number in the left-hand column is the question number in the Missouri Synod edition. In the right column is listed its source. DK represents the Dresdener-Kreuz Catechism with its corresponding question number. IC is the Institutiones Catecheticae with its page number and question number respectively.

| | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 4--DK, 1 (adapted) | 234--DK, 185 |
| 5--DK, 3 | 238--IC, 324:4 |
| 34-35--DK, 23-24 | 249--DK, 220 |
| 38--IC, 86-84 | 250--DK, 223 |
| 39-40--DK, 27-28 | 251--DK, 226 |
| 53--DK, 46 | 253-54--DK, 208-09 |
| 67--DK, 54 | 257--DK, 238 |
| 69--DK, 56 | 259--IC, 334:7 |
| 70-71--DK, 51-52 | 260--IC, 335:8 |
| 86-88--DK, 70-72 | 269--IC, 347:4-5 |
| 96--DK, 80 | 270--BC |
| 102--DK, 84 | 278--IC, 354:4 |
| 123--DK, 109 | 285--BC |
| 127--BC | 288--DK, 271 |
| 132--BC | 289--DK, 274 |
| 137--BC | 290--DK, 277 |
| 155--IC, 214:9 | 291--DK, 280 |
| 156--IC, 212:6 (adapted) | 293-94--DK, 283-84 |
| 160-62--IC, 220-22:1-3 | 295-97--BC |
| 163-64--BC | 298--IC, 370:4 |
| 165--IC, 222:4 | Omission from <u>Epit.</u> , p. 113 |
| 173--IC, 232:14 | 303-04--BC |
| 183-84--DK, 145-46 | 310--IC, 428:14 |
| Omission from <u>Epit.</u> , p. 71 | 315--IC, 435:8 |
| 191-93--DK, 157-59 | 328--IC, 464:11 |
| 194--DK, 162 | 331--BC |
| 195--DK, 165 | Omission from <u>Epit.</u> , p. 129 |
| 196--IC, 255:1 | 338--DK, 316 |
| 201-02--IC, 261:8-9 | 339--DK, 313 |
| 204--DK, 217 | 352--BC |
| 220--IC, 282:13 | 372--IC, 500:47 |

374-76--IC, 501:49-51
 380--Epit. ans. not used
 390--DK, 353
 402--DK, 371
 413--DK, 386
 415--IC, 512:90
 421-23--DK, 398-400
 428--IC, 516:104
 429-32--DK, 409-12
 434--DK, 417
 438--DK, 426
 445--DK, 430
 Omission from Epit., p. 163
 450-52--IC, 535-37:4-6
 454--BC
 455--IC, 540:9
 458-59--IC, 543:17-18
 462--DK, 437
 463--IC, 549:8
 471--BC
 474--BC
 475--DK, 446
 Omission from Epit., p. 171
 480-83--DK, 448-51
 484-85--IC, 565:24
 486--DK, 462
 487--DK, 458
 488--DK, 443 (adapted)
 489--DK, 456
 490--DK, 472
 496--BC
 502-04--BC
 509--BC
 510--DK, 491
 511--IC, 406:13-15 (adapted)
 512-14--BC
 515--BC
 516-18--IC, 397:3-5
 519--BC
 520--IC, 398:6
 521--IC, 398:6 (from notes)
 522--John 20:23
 523--DK, 493
 524-25--BC
 526--DK, 495
 527--IC, 407:15
 528--BC
 529--DK, 500
 530--DK, 479
 531-32--DK, 439-90
 533--DK, pp. 24-25
 534--BC
 535--DK, pp. 523-24
 536--DK, pp. 527-28
 551-55--IC, 523-604:15-19
 564--IC, 613:33
 566--BC
 572-74--BC
 575--IC, 622:43
 578-81--BC
 583--BC
 587-88--DK, 525-26
 589--IC, 634:51
 590--IC, 635:55
 593--DK, 529
 596--DK, 533
 599--DK, 536
 603-04--BC
 Omission from Epit., pp. 202-05

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