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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea

Documents

on points of doctrine as they were recorded in connection with the merger of the Hauge Synod, the Norwegian Synod, and the United Norwegian Church, 1908—1917.

The committees appointed by the Hauge Synod, the Norwegian Synod, and the United Norwegian Church met for a continuation of the negotiations Tuesday, the 7th of April (1908), in Our Savior's School Hall. The meeting lasted two days.

The negotiations carried on here concerned the doctrine of the Call (*Kaldet*) and Conversion (*Omvendelsen*). These doctrines had been discussed at two meetings in 1907 and were concluded at this meeting, and the committee here releases the results of its discussions. The theses published here are, as regards the Call, based on (Pontoppidan's) *Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed*, Qu. 478, and as regards Conversion, on Qus. 677 and 680.

All theses were accepted unanimously.

Concerning the Doctrine of the Call (*Kaldet*)

1. Natural man is in a state of spiritual sleep and spiritual death.
2. In order that a person thus spiritually sleeping and spiritually dead may be converted and saved, God calls him through His Gospel.
3. When God thus calls men, He by His Word touches their hearts; i. e., those persons who are called (*kaldes*) cannot escape perceiving the influence of the call in their hearts through the Law and the Gospel, in other words, certain unavoidable thoughts and feelings.
4. Through His call God reveals to the one who is called His mercy; i. e., He instructs the one who is called concerning this, that there is mercy for sinners.
5. Through His call God offers to the one who is called His grace, and this offer is meant equally earnestly toward [lit., over against] all those who are called; i. e., God offers this grace to all who are called with the sincere purpose [earnest intention] that He will grant it and that he who is called shall accept it.
6. When God through His Word calls, He in the same instant gives power to make this grace one's own.
 - a. Man has by nature or of himself no strength, power, or ability to make this proffered grace his own or to accomplish anything toward his own conversion. Cf. also Rom. 7, where the apostle describes natural man and his lack of strength toward that which is good.
 - b. Neither does man before regeneration receive any inherent power which he now has as his own and whereby he now himself can decide in favor of grace.
 - c. But God's call is an efficacious call, which works powerfully on the heart of him who is called, so that he who is called now through the offered grace, under the influence of the Spirit of God and because of the power which now by the call is working on him, has a full opportunity and real possibility to become converted or can convert himself.

can repent of his sin and believe on Christ. And this opportunity and possibility is equally great for all who are called, whether they follow [heed] the call or not.

Conversion (*Omvendelsen*)

1. In his natural state man has fallen away from God, is a stranger to His grace, yes, even hostile to Him.

2. In his natural state man is also altogether impotent spiritually, dead in sin.

3. No ability, or power, is found in man of himself to change this tragic condition nor to cooperate in the least toward any change.

4. The great change which must occur in the person who is fallen away from God and dead in sins the Scripture calls conversion.

5. To convert oneself (*omvende sig*) is to turn from darkness to light, from Satan's power to God, and this comes about by knowing, and repenting of, one's sins and by believing in Jesus. Therefore there belong two parts to conversion: 1) regret [sorrow] (*Anger*) and contrition over sin and 2) faith in the Lord Jesus.

6. In order that man can come to the acknowledgment of his sinful state and to sorrow and repentance over it, God uses His Law, which through its conviction and judgment works on the understanding, will, and conscience; and this Law man must hear and consider.

7. If a person by the working [operation] of God through the Law has arrived at the acknowledgment of his sin and damnation [God's judgment on sin], he is nevertheless thereby not yet converted; for such a person can still, contrary to God's intention, either be brought to despair or become self-righteous or revert to the old life of sin.

8. When the Law has overcome a man's heart so that he will humble himself before [it will accept] God's judgment, it causes brokenness of heart or regret over sin and in this manner becomes a schoolmaster unto Christ.

9. Solely and alone through the drawing of God in the Gospel, without force [any coercion], that person who by the working [operation] of the Law has arrived at the acknowledgment and contrition over sin is now brought to faith in Christ and thus entirely converted and changed; "of a darkened understanding is made an enlightened understanding, and of a rebellious will is made an obedient will; and this Scripture calls to create a new heart, Ps. 51, 12."

10. When a man is not converted, man alone bears the [entire] responsibility and guilt, because he would not, that is, he, in spite of the fact that God, through the call (*Kaldet*) makes it possible for man to be converted or to convert himself, he opposes, and makes impossible, the work of the Holy Ghost both in Law and Gospel, something that a man can do at each step (point) [a process which a man can nullify in each instance].

11. When a man is converted, the honor [glory] belongs to God alone, because He throughout, from beginning to end, without any cooperation on the part of man, works conversion in that man who is converted (lit., converts himself), i. e., acknowledges his sin and believes [trusts] in Christ.

See also Eph. 2, 1—10 and Rom. 3, 20—28, where the apostle describes conversion as a gracious act of God, for which the honor belongs to God alone.

The Madison Settlement

Regarding the doctrine of election the union committees have agreed to subscribe to the following:

1. The union committees of the Synod and the United Church acknowledge unanimously and without reservation that doctrine of election which is presented in Article XI of the Formula of Concord (the so-called first form of doctrine) and in Pontoppidan's *Sandhed til Gud-frygtighed*, Qu. 548 (the so-called second form of doctrine).

2. Since both the negotiating church-bodies recognize that the Formula of Concord, Article XI, presents the pure and correct doctrine of the Word of God and the Lutheran Church concerning the election of the children of God to salvation, it is deemed unnecessary to church unity to draw up new and more extensive theses regarding this article of faith.

3. Since, however, in the presentation of the doctrine of election two forms of doctrine have manifestly been used, both of which have gained prescriptive right and recognition within the orthodox Lutheran Church, in that some, in agreement with the Formula of Concord, let the doctrine of election comprehend the entire salvation of the elect, from the calling to the glorification (Formula of Concord, Art. XI, Thor. Expl., 10—20), and teach an election "to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," while others, like Pontoppidan, in conformity with John Gerhard, Scriver, and other acknowledged teachers in the Church, define election rather as the degree of final glorification, with faith and perseverance wrought by the Spirit as its necessary pre-supposition, and teach that "God has predestinated all those to eternal life who from eternity He has seen would accept the proffered grace, believe on Jesus Christ, and remain steadfast in this faith unto the end"; and since neither of these two forms of doctrine presented in this manner contradicts any doctrine revealed in the Word of God, but each does full justice to the order of salvation as elsewhere presented in the Word of God and the Confession of the Church, we hold that this fact ought not to cause any division in the Church nor disturb that unity of Spirit in the bond of peace which God desires should prevail among us.

4. Since, however, during the doctrinal controversy among us, words and expressions have been used—rightly or wrongly attributed to the one party or the other—which seemed to the other side a denial of the Confession of the Church or to lead to such denial, we have agreed to reject all erroneous doctrines which seek to explain away the mystery of election (Formula of Concord, Thor. Expl., Art. XI, 39—44) either in a synergistic manner or in a Calvinizing way; in other words, [we reject] every doctrine which either, on the one hand, would weaken man's feeling of responsibility as regards (lit., over against) the acceptance or rejection of grace.

5. On the one hand we reject

a) The doctrine that the mercy of God and the most holy merit of

Christ is not the only cause of our election, but that there also in us is a cause thereof on account of which God has elected us to eternal life;

b) The doctrine that in the election God has been determined by, or has taken into account, or has been directed by, the good conduct of man or by anything which man is or does or omits to do "as of himself or by his own natural powers";

c) The doctrine that the faith in Christ, which is indissolubly connected with election, is wholly or in part a product of, or dependent upon, man's own choosing, power, or ability (however, compare Formula of Concord, Art. XI, Thor. Decl., 35 and 44);

d) Or that this faith is the result of a power and ability imparted to man by the call of grace, a power now dwelling in, and belonging to, the unregenerate heart, to decide in favor of grace.

6. On the other hand we reject

a) The doctrine that in the election God acts arbitrarily and without motive, so that He points out and counts indiscriminately a certain arbitrary number of individuals and ordains them to conversion and salvation, while all the others are passed by;

b) The doctrine that the will of God regarding our salvation is of two kinds, one revealed in the Scriptures in the general order of salvation and another, different from this and unknown to us, which concerns only the elect and imparts to these a deeper love, a more effective calling of God, and a larger measure of grace than are brought to those who remain in unbelief and condemnation;

c) The doctrine that, when the resistance which God in conversion succeeds in removing from those who are saved is not removed from the others, who finally are lost, this difference in result has its cause in God and in a different will regarding salvation in His act of election;

d) The doctrine that a believer can, and ought to, have an absolute certainty of his election and salvation instead of an assurance of faith built upon the promises of God and joined with fear and trembling and with the possibility of falling from grace, which, however, by the grace of God, he believes will not become a reality in his case;

e) To summarize, all views and doctrines concerning election which directly or indirectly would conflict with the order of salvation and would not give to all a full and equally great opportunity of salvation or which in any manner would violate the Word of God, which says that "God will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth," from which gracious and merciful will of God all election to eternal life has its origin.

On the basis of the above settlement the union committees submit to their respective church-bodies to adopt the following

Resolution

WHEREAS, Our Confession establishes that "for the true unity of the Church it is sufficient that there be agreement in the doctrine of the Gospel and in the administration of the Sacraments"; and

WHEREAS, Our former committees, by the grace of God, have attained unity in the doctrines concerning the calling, conversion, and the order of salvation in general, and [since] we all confess as our sincere faith

that we are saved by grace alone, without any cooperation on our part; and

WHEREAS, The negotiations of our new committees have led to a satisfactory settlement concerning the doctrine of election and to an unreversed and unanimous acknowledgment of the doctrine of election which is presented in the Formula of Concord, Thor. Decl., Art. XI, and in Pontoppidan's *Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed*, Qu. 548; therefore we hereby

Declare, That the essential unity now attained concerning these doctrines is sufficient for church union.

May Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant us the grace of His Holy Spirit that we all may be one in Him and ever remain steadfast in such Christian and God-pleasing unity! Amen.

"Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende"

(Vol. 44, No. 2, p. 36 f., Jan. 10, 1917)

§ 2. The Joint Committee expresses joy and thanks to God and the aforementioned men [namely, Prof. C. K. Preus and Rev. I. B. Torrison in their report dated October 4, 1916] for the brotherly spirit which appears in the document [the Preus-Torrison overture] and for the stated desire to participate in the union of the three conferring bodies and to work together with them for the attainment of the purposes aimed at by the union.

§ 3. The Joint Committee, however, feels that it is for certain reasons prevented from following the procedure [considers itself, on certain grounds, free to disregard the suggested procedure] suggested in the aforementioned overture [a special settlement between the three conferring bodies, on the one hand, and a group of men and congregations belonging to one of the bodies, on the other hand], mainly because it would cause misunderstandings and difficulties.

§ 4. But as far as the essential content is concerned, the Joint Committee will nevertheless accommodate the aforementioned overture in that it hereby recommends to its respective synodical conventions that they accept the following motions:

"This convention is expressly cognizant of the three reservations concerning § 1, § 3, and § 4* in the Settlement, which are included in the overture from Prof. C. K. Preus and Rev. I. B. Torrison, and declares that in the aforementioned overture there is found nothing that is contrary to Scripture or the Confession, but considers the position expressed in the overture as a satisfactory expression for unity in faith; wherefore the group of men and congregations whose position is maintained in the aforementioned overture are invited to join the new body on a basis of full equality and mutual fraternal recognition."

NOTE. — It is self-evident that the above resolution must not be interpreted in such a way that the Settlement [Agreement—*Opgjoer*] between the three contracting parties thereby has been limited or altered.

There are grounds for hope that the pending union, which for so long has been the object of the prayers of the Church, may be accomplished without new schisms of our Synod and congregations. In behalf of which there should be continued prayer.

M. O. WEE IVAR YLVISAKER PEDER TANGJERD

* Since [there are those whose suspicions have been aroused by the expression] objections have been raised especially against the expression "feeling of responsibility as regards the acceptance or rejection of grace," we refer, so far as the meaning of the aforementioned expression is concerned, to the declaration of Dr. Stub and Dr. Kildahl in 1914, acknowledged and made public by the Joint Committee, reading as follows:

By the words "feeling of responsibility as regards the acceptance or rejection of grace" it is not to be said (nor do the words say so) that a person stands in the same relation to the acceptance of grace as to the rejection of grace, since the acceptance flows from a source entirely different from [the source of] rejection. That a person accepts grace, which is the same as to believe, is the work of God alone; that a person rejects grace is of man alone; or, in other words, therein man alone is the cause, and for this man alone must bear the guilt. The following paragraphs in the Settlement prove this inasmuch as the acceptance of grace, or faith, is ascribed to God solely and alone, while the rejection of grace is ascribed to man alone.

With these words reference is made—as the context itself and the words "responsibility" and "over against" substantiate—to the same as the Formula of Concord presents when it declares that there are those who say "that, since they are unable of their own natural powers to convert themselves to God, they will continue to oppose God altogether or wait until God converts them by force; or since they can do nothing in these spiritual things, but everything is the operation of God the Holy Ghost alone, they will regard neither Word nor Sacrament, they will neither hear nor read until God, immediately, instills into them His gifts, so that they can truly feel and perceive in themselves that God has converted them." (Formula of Concord, Sol. Decl., Art. II, § 46.)

The intention is therefore, on the one hand, to bring home the fact that man has obligations over against the means of grace or over against the grace which God in the means of grace offers for acceptance and that the feeling of this obligation should be especially emphasized because God in the Gospel is present with His grace and gives what man of his natural ability can neither take nor give (Formula of Concord, l. c., § 47 ff.), and, on the other hand, for the same reason to inculcate the feeling of his own guilt and fault when grace is rejected.

Two Minorities [The Synod Minority Petition]

Report of 1917, p. 460

1. The Norwegian Synod Minority

Communication from Prof. C. K. Preus and Rev. I. B. Torrison

A communication from the above-named men was received by the Joint Committee assembled in Minneapolis, October 10, in respect to which the following decisions were made:

From Prof. C. K. Preus and Rev. I. B. Torrison the Joint Committee has received the following overture:

"TO THE COMMITTEE ON UNION:

"Urged on by various considerations and from various quarters, the undersigned take leave to present this overture to the Committee on Union:

"There are three things in 'Settlement' [Agreement] accepted by the annual conventions of the United Church, the Hauge Synod, and the Norwegian Synod to which the minority in the Norwegian Synod finds that it cannot for conscience' sake subscribe.

"In the hope that great distress and confusion may be avoided and that we may enter the union, as we much desire, and in the hope that by the grace of God it shall still be possible for us to join with you in the furthering of the cause of the Church, we submit the question to you if it may not be possible for the three parties to accept as a settlement with us a settlement wherein these three things which cause us distress of conscience are omitted or changed; namely, Art. I of 'Settlement' [Agreement] be omitted; 'O' in the reference in Art. III shall be omitted, so that it will read: 'Art. XI, 1—20' instead of 'Art. XI, 10—20' and the last part of Section 4 shall be changed so as to read: 'or, on the other hand, weaken man's feeling of duty as regards [over against] the acceptance of grace or of guilt for the rejection of grace' instead of 'or, on the other hand, would weaken man's feeling of responsibility as regards [over against] the acceptance or rejection of grace.'

"If the Committee on Union would recommend this to the respective bodies, we entertain hope that they will vote in favor of it.

"If this overture, or proposal, is accepted, it is our intention to enter the union, aid in the realization of it, do what we can to get as many as possible into the union, and endeavor to make it a blessing to our Lutheran Church."

(Then follows the revised wording of "Settlement," as per above suggested changes, which document is known as the *Austin Settlement*.)

The invitation acknowledges the position of the Minority, inasmuch as it does not find anything therein which is contrary to Scripture and the Confession, but considers it an adequate expression of unity in faith and gives the expression "responsibility over against the acceptance or rejection of grace" a satisfactory explanation.

The footnote added to the invitation does not of course alter or contradict the content of the invitation.

The Minority hereby accepts the above invitation with the prayer that God will direct this step to a blessing for His Church.

This is the acceptance.

Since that time much has been said and written concerning these matters. Various attacks have been directed against us. Our manner of dealing (in these things) has been misinterpreted. This has pained us. We have not replied. On the one hand, we did not want to engage in a controversy with those who had stood at our side, and, on the other, we wanted to await the decision of this convention.

Now the invitation has been extended by this body, and we are convinced that it grants us what we have desired, if not according to the letter (*formaliter*) then according to the content (*realiter*) as it is expressed. And though it is true, as Rev. Holden Olsen has just stated, that there remain expressions which are wrong and should be corrected, still we do not want to assume the responsibility for a schism so long as the explanation which has been offered shows that that which has been intended, *viz.*, the doctrine, is correct.

It is hardly necessary for me to add that I have been and am loyal to the synod and its principles; and when I now feel that I with a good conscience can join the new body, it is because I am convinced that these principles are maintained in our agreement and that we shall in our future work as in the past have the opportunity to testify to the truth.

I wish to express my thanks for the courtesy shown us, and I pray God graciously to bless our labors together.

Hereupon the assembly rose and sang the hymn "Praise to Thee and Adoration" (*Lov og tak og evig äre*), and the chairman offered a prayer of thanksgiving.

Constitution for the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America

Chapter I. Name, Confession, and Church Rites

§ 1. The name of this church-body shall be: The Norwegian Lutheran Church in America.

§ 2. This church-body believes, teaches, and confesses that the Holy Scriptures, the canonical books of the Old and New Testament, are the revealed Word of God and therefore the only source and rule of faith, doctrine, and life.

§ 3. As a brief and true statement of the doctrine of the Word of God this body accepts and confesses the Symbolical Books, or confessional writings, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway: a) the ancient symbols: the Apostolic, Nicene, and Athanasian creeds; b) the unaltered Augsburg Confession and Luther's Small Catechism.

§ 4. In regard to church rites, it is left to each congregation to decide for itself. But in order that there may in general be uniformity also in the matter of church rites, this body recommends that the congregations use the ritual of the Lutheran Church of Norway, modified according to the present common usage among us.

The so-called Austin Settlement, with the preface as above, bears the signatures of C. K. Preus and I. B. Torrison and is dated October 4, 1916, at Decorah, Iowa.

In regard to this appeal the Committee on Union submitted the following to the conventions of the three church-bodies in 1917 (see *Annual Report*, 1917, p. 463):

"The Annual Convention is expressly cognizant of the three reservations in regard to §§ 1, 3, 4 in 'Settlement' which are contained in the overture from Prof. C. K. Preus and Rev. I. B. Torrison and declares that there is nothing in the overture which conflicts with Scripture and the Confession, but regards the stand expressed in the overture as an adequate expression of unity in faith, wherefore that group of men and congregations whose stand is maintained in the aforementioned overture are invited to join the new body on a basis of full equality and mutual fraternal recognition."

From the Synodical Report, 1917

"Prof. C. K. Preus: I request the opportunity to state that I accept the invitation which the synod now has issued to us who could not formerly join. I speak also for Rev. Torrison and others, who have said that they would agree to this if it were accepted by the synod.

"There was perhaps no one who, when we were together at the stirring meeting last year, expected that we would attain that which has been attained. It was also unexpected that the deliberations which led to this result were inaugurated.

"Two men from the United Church, Dr. Kildahl and Professor Boe, met us, Rev. Torrison and myself, in Decorah. It was an entirely private and informal discussion. We conversed frankly with one another and did not try to gloss over anything. And without any previously organized plan we reached such agreement in that which is essential to us, namely, doctrine, that we felt we owed it to the cause and to the Church to do what we could to avoid schism, and we permitted ourselves to send in an overture to the Joint Committee (Committee on Union). The committee, however, found that they could not grant our request as it was formulated, but assured us that they, as far as the contents were concerned (*realiter*), were acceding to our wishes by a proposed resolution. This we could not accept. But the Joint Committee had elected a subcommittee to confer with us. With this subcommittee we met in Austin, and we agreed on that [document], which later on was adopted by the Committee on Union and transmitted to us in the form of an invitation to join . . . us and those who shared our position. A footnote was added by the committee, which, however, did not alter the content of the invitation.

"Inasmuch as matters had progressed thus far, we felt that we owed it to our friends to give them an account of what we had done. A meeting was called in West Hotel (Minneapolis) the 17th and 18th of January this year [1917] of those of whom we thought that they shared our position in the matter, and we placed before them the invitation. The majority of those present agreed to accept the proposed invitation and adopted the following resolution, which I owe to them to present here. The resolution reads as follows:

"In accordance with an agreement reached between the subcommittee of the Joint Committee and Prof. C. K. Preus and Rev. I. B. Torrison the Joint Committee of the three conferring synods has resolved to recommend a resolution to the respective annual conventions to extend an invitation to those individuals and congregations which share the position of the above-mentioned men to join the new body."

Ein interessantes historisches Dokument

In einem Buche unsers verstorbenen D. Pieper fand sich ein Brief, der einige historische Bedeutung hat und darum hier mitgeteilt wird:

„Sr. Hochwürden Hrn. Präses Schwan, Cleveland, Ohio, U. St. America.

„Hochwürdiger Hr. Präses!

„Unsere am 10. März in Giedera bei Albany in Neusüdwales tagende viktorianische luth. Zweigsynode hat mich beauftragt, mich von neuem an Sie um Zufendung eines ev.-luth. Reisepredigers zu wenden für die vielen von Südastralien eingewanderten und einwandernden Deutschen, früher Gliedern unserer Gemeinden. Diesen mir dringlich gemachten und von dem Versprechen, für Reisekosten und Verjorgung des Reisepredigers aufkommen

zu wollen, begleiteten Auftrag erfülle ich hiermit, indem ich Sie herzlich ersuche, uns einen geeigneten Mann so bald wie möglich zu überweisen. Das Bedürfnis ist groß, und die notgedrungene Lösung unserer bisherigen kirchlichen Verbindung mit der Hermannsburger Mission läßt uns die missourische Synodalkonferenz als einzige Zuflucht unsers vereinsamten australisch-lutherischen Zions übrig.

„Wenn es einer förmlichen Berufungsurkunde bedarf oder bedürfen wird, so kann solche erfolgen, sobald ich von Ihnen hören werde, daß Sie eine Person für den Dienst eines Reisepredigers, der voraussichtlich bald zum ständigen Pfarrer werden würde, geeignet und willig gefunden haben.

„Bis zu Ihrer gefälligen Entgegnung verbleibe ich Ihr in rechtem einigen Glauben verbundener

„C. W. Schürmann

„Hochkirch, Victoria, Australia, 18/3/92“

P. C. S.

Shortened Services

TO THE EDITOR: — Anent shortened services urged by a *long* article in the *Living Church*, January 2, and a footnote suggesting that a celebration could be said in fifteen minutes instead of thirty, the following skit may be interesting. It appeared in a church-paper many years ago:

“There are some people who are always crying out for the ‘shortening of services.’ In fact, there is a real danger, if they had their way, that our services might be cut down to almost nothing or so mutilated as to be scarcely recognizable. Following is an ancient liturgical skit which appeared in a leaflet at Strassburg, in 1775.

“The suggestion is made that the clergy might say the alphabet, out of which the offices are composed and ask God to put the letters together in their right order and accept the alphabet in place of the office. The skit follows:

“**Ritus Brevissimus Recitandi Breviarium pro Itinerantibus et Scrupulosis**

“Dicatur: Pater et Ave.

“Deinde: A B C D E F G H I K L M N O P Q R S T U V X Y Z.

“V. Per hoc alphabetum notum,

“R. Componitur Breviarium totum.

“Tempore Paschali, dicitur. Alleluia.

“OREMUS

“DEUS, qui ex viginti quattuor literis totam sacram Scripturam et breviarium istud componi voluisti, iunge, disiunge et accipe ex his viginti quattuor literis matutinis cum laudibus, primam, tertiam, sextam, nonam, vespertas et completorium; per Christum Dominum. Amen.

“Signat se dicens: Sapienti pauca.

“V. In pace in idipsum.

“R. Dormiam et requiescam.”

Portland, Oreg.

(REV.) E. H. CLARK

(*The Living Church*, April 3, 1937)