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Miscellanea

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Miscellanea

How Doctor Walther Dealt with Doctrinal Aberrations in 1850

It was in the year 1850, only three years after the establishment of the Missouri Synod, that Professor Walther, then President of the Missouri Synod, delivered a very serious and searching synodical address. After touching upon a number of other matters, such as the loss of some prominent members of Synod by death, he took up the question of doctrine, stating outright that the temptation to false doctrine was a major menace to the young body. He very pertinently asks whether the members of Synod had truly appreciated the blessing of the pure doctrine. He answers his own question in the negative and then enumerates a few instances in which doctrinal aberrations had made their appearance. He refers in particular to false teaching on the doctrine of the Church and the Christian ministry, describing the position of the errorists in the words: "They derive the ministry from the power of ordination by preachers, which they declare to be a divine ordinance; they make the office and the ministry of those who are only to be the stewards of the mysteries of God a special privileged *station* above that of the lay priesthood; they concede to the preachers of the Gospel a power and lordship *de iure divino* also in those matters which are neither commanded nor condemned in the Word of God; they change the *Christocracy* of the congregation of saints and elect, of the free one who is the mother of us all, of the Jerusalem which is above, into the *aristocracy* of a church-state, and so, in the final analysis, make the efficacy of the Word and the Sacrament dependent on the office of him who is in charge of the means of grace. . . . The time when the members of our Synod can be quiet spectators of the battle occasioned by this tendency is past. The call to battle for or against has come also to us." *

"We are here in no manner dealing with *adiaphora*, regulations, usages, ceremonies, and questions of policy, concerning which Christian wisdom decides; we are rather dealing with *doctrine*, with something that is not ours, but belongs to God, with the name and the honor of God, with something concerning which it is not in our power to give up and to yield for the sake of love and of peace, with that of which one point is worth more than the whole world with all its wisdom and with all its treasures, with that by which the true Church alone is recognized, with its highest treasure in which all its other treasures are contained, with the talent that is entrusted to her and concerning whose faithful use and protection she will be obliged to give a serious reckoning to God, with the purity of that heavenly seed upon whose purity the purity of faith and of life, of all the light of souls, of all the comfort of conscience and the hope of eternal life depends. Here the old proverb finds its application: *Amicus usque ad aras*, 'a friend as far as the altars'; yea, above all, apostolic admonition applies to us: 'A little leaven leav-

* The reference here is to a specific case. See *Concordia Historical Institute Quarterly*, XVI:80 f.

eneth the whole lump,' Gal. 5:9, and what Luther writes on this in the following words: 'As in philosophy, if one makes a small mistake at the beginning, a great and measureless mistake eventuates: thus it happens also in theology, namely, that a small mistake might spoil and falsify the entire Christian doctrine. For with regard to the doctrine everything is so exactly circumscribed and definitely measured off that one can neither add thereto nor take therefrom without great and noticeable damage. Therefore the doctrine should be like a fine, complete golden ring, in which there is no flaw or crack, for as soon as such a ring gets a flaw or crack, it is no longer whole. All articles of our Christian faith are one, and conversely one is all, and if one yields one, then most certainly the others will fall individually; for they are all closely connected and belong together.' So far the quotation from Luther.

"If this be true—and who among us would deny it—then it follows, in the second place, that, although the Church does not reject (von sich stoest) those who err from weakness, yet in an orthodox individual church (Partikularkirche), and hence also in our synodical group, it is impossible that various teachings concerning these points can be taught as equally acceptable (unmoeglich, verschiedene Lehren als gleichberechtigte gefuehrt werden koennen). If a Church should want to permit this, she would thereby give up her existence; she would no longer be able to apply the Word of the Apostle to herself that the Church is the pillar and foundation of the truth; she would thereby place herself in line with those unionistic churches whose characteristic is the equal acknowledgment of truth and error in her midst (gleiche Berechtigung der Wahrheit und des Irrtums in ihrer Mitte ist), in spite of all hypocritical protestations which these mixture churches (Mischmaschkirchen) raise against this accusation as groundless. Above all, therefore, that apostolic word applies also to us: 'I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.' 1 Cor. 1:10. Therefore our Luther also writes, and properly so: 'Life may indeed be sin and unrighteous, but the doctrine must be perfectly right and certain and without sin. Therefore in the Church nothing must be preached but the certain, pure, and only Word of God. Where that is missing, we no longer have the Church.' (Opp. Hal. Tom., XVII:1686.)

"The third point to which I feel constrained to refer is that the doctrines with which we are now concerned do not belong to those which have not yet been broached in the Church, but rather to those which have not only been elaborated upon by our most enlightened divines in their private writings in a clear and unmistakable manner according to the Word of God, but concerning which our entire Church in her public Confessions has already made a common, definite declaration before the whole world. Yea more, we are here dealing with doctrines about which the great battle of the period of the Reformation revolved and in which the character of our Church is properly reflected. If we want to yield in these points, we should seriously consider whether we do not actually leave the Church, whether we do not

cease to be its faithful members and servants, whether we are not breaking the precious vow which we have made with reference to the Confessions of our Church and acknowledge over against the enemies of our Church that the battle of our fathers (four) hundred years ago was at least in part unjustified, a battle *for* errors and *against* the truth.

"The fourth point of which I want to remind you is finally this one: Although the points in controversy do not concern any fundamental articles of the Christian faith and therefore all of us are certainly far from designating as heretics, in an uncharitable and harsh manner, those who err therein, they nevertheless are connected with the fundamental articles of our Christian faith in such an intimate manner that aberrations concerning them will necessarily in their consequences finally subvert the foundation of faith." (*Vierter Synodal-Bericht der deutschen Ev.-Luth. Synode von Missouri, Ohio und anderen Staaten vom Jahre 1850, 119—121.*)

P. E. K.

The Christocentric Theory of Inspiration

The question of inspiration offers one of the most acute and important problems in the entire field of Christian doctrine. Although it does not, as a matter of fact, exceed in importance the doctrine *stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, that of the justification of the poor sinner by the grace of God in Jesus Christ alone, yet, in a manner of speaking, even this doctrine depends for its certainty upon the foundation of verbal inspiration. Without an infallible and inviolable Word no doctrine is safe, for if subjective considerations hinder the acceptance of a truth of Holy Scriptures in one case, just what guarantee have we that the same attitude will not be assumed in another case? It was Philip Schaff who stated that the Reformation gave us an infallible Bible, thereby removing from the Church the tyranny of men who not only changed large parts of Holy Writ according to their own preconceived notions, but even had the temerity to add traditions of their own choice for the guidance of people who were, for the most part, kept in willful ignorance of the full truth.

The difficulty with which we are confronted in the matter of inspiration is largely a man-made one, since it grows chiefly out of the attempt of men to find a reasonable explanation or theory of the process involved in *theopneustia*. The adjective is used in the Bible, 2 Tim. 3:16, and the process is referred to scores, yea, hundreds of times. The Bible also clearly states what is involved in this process of inspiration. But men have endeavored, particularly in their fear of being accused of teaching a mechanical inspiration, to limit the scope of the *theopneustia* in one way or another, either by restricting it to certain kinds of subject matter only or to the transmission of ideas alone. Hence we have the Intuition Theory, the Theory of Divine Direction and Assistance, the Illumination Theory, the Dynamic Theory, the Theory of Subject Inspiration, the Theory of Partial or Limited Inspiration, the Theory of Progressive Revelation, the Theory of a Wider Conception of Inspiration, and others.*

* See *The Foundations Must Stand*, pp. 5—11.

From time to time another theory has been suggested by various writers, a theory which includes many features of other theories, as listed above, but differs from most of them in the emphasis which it places upon one particular feature. Even as it sounds very plausible and reasonable to think of inspiration as a heightening, an intensification, of the mental and spiritual powers of the human authors concerned, namely, in the sense that they, indeed, received divine guidance and direction, that the subject matter was suggested or given to them, even by a so-called progressive revelation, but that, after all, not all parts of the Bible were given by inspiration in the same divine way, that not all the information offered in its pages is a product and result of God's inbreathing, and, above all, that verbal inerrancy cannot be claimed for the Bible, since the writers, owing to the limitations of memory, insufficient information, and inadequate scientific knowledge, were subject to error, particularly in non-doctrinal matters, so the Christocentric theory of inspiration is now being advocated as offering both a solution of the entire difficulty and as a basis for agreement among various Christian denominations, specifically the Lutheran bodies of America.

We say that this theory, at first blush, seems to be very appealing and intriguing. For its catchword is, in a phrase coined by Luther (but used by him in a different connection), that we are to regard only those sections of Holy Writ as divinely inspired "that emphasize Christ and point to Christ," "was Christum treibet." The contention is that the teaching of the Apostles, Evangelists, and Prophets is sure, correct, infallible, only in so far as it pertains to the person and work of Christ. If we understand this position correctly, the only sections of the Bible that have any doctrinal value in the domain of Biblical theology and dogmatics are those in the fields of theology proper, Christology, soteriology, and pneumatology, to which we may have to add parts of eschatology. A large part of the historical material contained in Holy Writ, most of the ethical precepts, and certainly all references to so-called insignificant details would have to be discarded. Even our blessed Savior does not escape the criticisms which are directed against plenary inspiration. In His references to the miracle of Jonah, for example, or in His clear assumption of demoniac possession, He either "accommodated Himself to the prevailing assumptions," or He spoke in a form of "kenotic ignorance." Under those circumstances, of course, the teacher of Holy Scriptures cannot adduce proofs from any part of the Bible on the strength of "It is written," for such quoting "of Scripture to prove certain points of doctrine are in line with the scholastic dogmaticians."

Before we continue with our analysis of the Christocentric theory of inspiration, let us state at once, and with the greatest emphasis, that Luther was not the parent of this child. His expression "was Christum treibet" did not give evidence of a more liberal attitude toward the Holy Scriptures and verbal inspiration. This misconception of Luther's position is due to the fact that men do not distinguish between Luther's evaluation of the various parts of the Bible for doctrinal purposes and their *divine origin*, between his emphasis on the fundamental doctrine of the atonement and of justification and his criticism of books which do not stress this doctrine. Apart from Luther's attitude toward certain anti-

legomena he distinguished between *degrees of importance* in the Bible, but he did not differentiate between inspired and non-inspired sections or between inspired and non-inspired books. That Luther believed in verbal and plenary inspiration to a degree where he would not permit so much as one word, one jot, one tittle of Scripture text to be changed can be demonstrated from hundreds of passages from his writings.

Every Lutheran theologian knows, of course, or should know that there are various degrees of importance in various statements and even in various books of the Bible, namely, so far as the doctrines pertaining to faith and life are concerned. The difference between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, for example, is recognized by practically every textbook in Lutheran dogmatics. Also: While theological problems do not come into consideration in our discussion, since they are not, properly speaking, within the scope of doctrinal teaching, we recognize textual difficulties and *cruces interpretum*. But in either case the doctrine of *inspiration* is not involved, but only questions of copyists' errors and of inadequacies of grammatical and linguistic understanding.

We have likewise always known and taught that there is a difference as to the writer's personal knowledge of the matter which God caused him to write, that the Holy Ghost either a) made use of the personal historical knowledge of the writers, so that the narrative at times assumes even an autobiographical aspect, or when He caused the writers to quote from books not included in the canon, the strangest examples of this kind being the quotations from heathen authors; or b) caused the inspired writers to codify matters of a believer's experience and thus produced codes of ethics for the guidance of men in a God-pleasing conduct; or c) gave the inspired writers information in which the entire subject matter as well as the form in which this subject matter was presented were a matter of revelation in the narrowest sense of the term, so that the writers found themselves under the necessity and compulsion of studying their own books in order to determine just what the Holy Ghost who spoke through them signified.

Furthermore, it is true that the Bible places special emphasis on those truths which we commonly place under the heading of Christology and soteriology. Let us, for example, take the Gospel of Matthew. In chap. 1:23, on the basis of Old Testament prophecy, the virgin birth of the Savior is emphasized, in 2:6 the place of His birth, in 2:15 the incident of the Egyptian sojourn, in 4:15 the Galilean ministry, in 8:17 the Savior's miracles of healing, in 12:18-21 His entire ministry, in 13:35 His teaching by means of parables, in 21:5 His entry into Jerusalem, in 21:42 His rejection by the Jewish people, in 22:44 His lordship, in 26:31 the flight of the disciples on the night of the betrayal, in 27:9 the price of the betrayal. This test may easily be extended to embrace the entire New Testament, and it will be found that Jesus Christ is truly the heart of the Gospel, in both parts of the Holy Scriptures, as He Himself repeatedly stated and as the Apostles declared in their great sermons establishing the identity of the Messiah.

We believe and confess, therefore, that the Messianic prophecies are the very heart of the Old Testament. For that reason the great majority of the quotations used by the Evangelists and Apostles are what we

commonly designate as the primary type, the ones which even the Jewish commentators acknowledged as referring to the great Deliverer. It is said of Jesus on Easter Day, when He encountered the disciples on the way to Emmaus: "And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in *all the Scriptures* the things concerning Himself." Luke 24:27. The same claim is made by Peter in his sermon in the Porch of Solomon: "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all His Prophets, that Christ should suffer, He hath so fulfilled. . . . Yea, and *all the Prophets* from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days." Acts 3:18, 24.

While this is true, however, and while we acknowledge God's purpose in emphasizing those sections of the Old and the New Testament which stress the person and the work of the Savior, Scripture just as emphatically speaks of all other parts of its writings as inspired. It is significant, for example, that the secondary Messianic prophecies include scores of items which are in the category of history, ceremonial law, ecclesiastical customs, and ethical concepts which are absolutely necessary for the proof presented by the New Testament writers. The Letter to the Hebrews, for example, bases a large part of its argumentation on points which certainly are of minor significance, as when the word *today* is stressed, chap. 3:13-15, or the story of Melchisedec is made a pivotal point, chap. 5:6, 10; 7:1 ff., or when the individual parts of the Old Testament sanctuary are enumerated as, in part at least, symbols of Christ, chap. 9:1 ff., when, in fact, the entire letter presupposes the correctness of every part of the Old Testament account in order to emphasize the superiority of the New Testament covenant.

Or let us take the case of Jesus in His capacity as prophet or teacher. He applies the phrase "It is written" or a similar expression to matters wholly outside the Christological and soteriological domain. He so quotes Deut. 8:3, which speaks of man's not living by bread alone; Deut. 6:16, which speaks of not tempting the Lord; Is. 6:9, which speaks of the judgment of obduration on the disobedient Jews; Is. 29:13, which speaks of the lip service offered by hypocrites; Gen. 2:24, which tells of the institution of holy marriage; Is. 56:7, which admonishes all men to regard His house as a house of prayer; Ex. 3:6, which refers to the patriarchs of the Jewish people. And, to mention only one more instance, we have John 10:35, where Jesus quotes Ps. 82:6, a statement concerning the temporal power of earthly rulers, and there erects the bulwark protecting His Word forever: "The Scripture cannot be broken." Throughout the Gospels the Lord is shown as accepting the entire Old Testament as the divinely inspired truth. He refers to historical data contained in various Old Testament books in a way which shows that He knew them to be facts divinely recorded. Elijah and Noah are to Christ historical persons because their story is found in the accredited writings of old. He finds a lesson in Saul's disobedience, Matt. 9:13, and speaks of the miracle of Jonah as a historical fact, Matt. 12:40. He is not unobservant of historical exactness in referring the rite of circumcision to the fathers rather than to Moses, John 7:22, 23. Again and again we find the phrases "It is written" and "It is written in the Prophets" and

"It is written in their Law" and "Have ye never read in the Scriptures?" and other expressions. We fully subscribe to the statements of a recent writer: "When Christ makes a reference to Old Testament narratives and records, He accepts them as authentic, as historically true. He does not give or suggest in any case a mythical or allegorical interpretation. The accounts of the Creation, of the Flood, of the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, as well as many incidents and events of later occurrence, are taken as authentic. . . . The utterances of Jesus Christ on this question of the divinity of the Old Testament religion and cults are unmistakable; and not less clear and decided in His language respecting the writings in which this religion is delivered. God is the Source in the directest sense of both the religion and the records of it." †

If we turn to the other writings of the New Testament, we find the same consistent emphasis upon the *entire Scripture* as given by inspiration of God. St. Paul includes in his *typos didaches*, in his *corpus doctrinae*, for which he demands obedience of every believer, not only the Christological and soteriological sections, but the sum total of the subject matter which he presented in oral and written form to the congregations whom he served. The "form of doctrine" of Rom. 6:17 agrees with the "doctrine" spoken of in Rom. 16:17. In 2 Thess. 3:14 Paul places under his condemnation any man who does not obey his word by this epistle. In 1 Tim. 4:1 ff. the Apostle enumerates a series of teachings which are definitely in the field of Christian ethics and then bids his young disciple: "These things command and teach." V. 11. In 1 Tim. 5:17, 18 St. Paul supports his command to give double honor to the elders by two quotations which he introduces with the characteristic phrase: "For the Scripture saith," and it is very probable that the second quotation is taken from Luke 10:7. In 1 Tim. 6:1-5 the Apostle presents a part of the Table of Duties and then not only admonishes Timothy to teach and exhort these things, but adds the significant words: "If any man teach otherwise and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing . . . from such withdraw thyself." There can be no question of the Apostle's command and its implications here. Not only the doctrinal teaching, that which points to Christ, but everything that he received from the Lord for the purpose of teaching was included by him in the subject matter for which he claimed divine authority.

Our contention is that any reader of the Holy Scriptures who approaches the text without preconceived notions is bound to be convinced by the cumulative effect of the proof offered in the writings themselves. Practically every quotation is introduced with the words: "It is written," or "That which was spoken by the Lord," or "That which was spoken through Isaiah the Prophet," or, "Have ye not read in the Scriptures?" or, "Speaking in the Spirit," or a similar phrase. This last expression, incidentally, is one which should convince the most skeptical as to the

† William Caven, in *The Fundamentals*, IV:50, 52.

real authorship of the whole Bible, in all its parts, in all its words. For Holy Writ itself, time and again, refers to the fact that God the Holy Spirit is speaking and teaching through the holy writers. In Matt. 22:31 the Lord asks the Sadducees: "Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?" the reference being to Ex. 3:6. We note here both the *unto you* and *by God*, for here we have the real Author of Scriptures designated, and at the same time it is clearly stated that the words were intended for the present hearers. In Mark 12:36 the Lord says of the quotation from Ps. 110:1 that David said by the Holy Ghost. In Acts 1:16 the prophecy concerning Judas Iscariot, as found in Ps. 41:9, is ascribed to the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David. In Acts 4:25 it is said of the quotation from Psalm 2 that it was the Lord who spoke by the mouth of His servant David. In Acts 28:25 the Apostle Paul, in quoting Is. 6:9, states: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet unto our fathers." In Heb. 3:7 the writer states of the quotation from Ps. 95:7: "The Holy Ghost saith." In Heb. 10:15 the passage in Jer. 31:33 is assigned to the witness of the Holy Ghost. In 1 Cor. 2:13 the Apostle Paul declares: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth." In 1 Thess. 1:5 the same writer affirms: "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance." In 2 Pet. 1:21 it is definitely stated: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (Cp. 1 Pet. 1:11 f.) In 1 Tim. 4:1 the Apostle Paul introduces a new paragraph with the words: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly." And these testimonies could be corroborated by scores of other passages, for the self-testimony of Holy Writ on this topic is overwhelming.

Every honest searcher for Biblical truth must yield to the clear statements of the Bible itself. For the Old Testament we have the bulwark of inspiration, 2 Tim. 3:16: *pasa graphe theopneustos*, the entire Scripture, the documents which have been transmitted to us, the writings consisting of individual words, is God-breathed. And for the New Testament, we have the Lord's assurance and promise: *Hodegesi hymas eis ten aletheian pasan*, John 16:13, He, the Holy Ghost, will guide you, My chosen Apostles, into all truth.

On the basis of Scripture's own clear testimony we present the following conclusions. The so-called Christocentric theory of inspiration

1) destroys the effectiveness of Gospel preaching by substituting for the objective certainty of verbal and plenary inspiration a subjective impression which cannot produce the true conviction of faith;

2) directly contradicts the teaching of Christ, who, although Himself the Fountain and Source of all truth, nevertheless based His teaching, in both fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, on the very words of the inspired writers of the Old Testament Scriptures;

3) denies the self-testimony of Scripture, which makes God, specifically the Holy Ghost, the real Author of the entire text.

P. E. KRETZMANN

An Overture for Lutheran Unity

In the *Lutheran Outlook* of January, 1944, an overture for Lutheran unity is printed which was adopted by the executive committee of the American Lutheran Conference in Chicago, Ill., January 7, 1944. Since we are eager that our readers should be informed concerning this statement, we at once reprint it. It is our intention to submit comments on it at some future date.—

Our churches, with common consent, do teach . . .

Article I, Augsburg Confession

1. Our Lutheran Church is rightly jealous of the integrity of its doctrine and practice, rightly wary of indifferentism or latitudinarianism, no matter what emergencies may arise.
2. Therefore our Lutheran Church has set up great historic standards for its doctrine and practice, and has always insisted upon genuine and wholehearted acceptance of these standards by all who would share its name and fellowship.
3. Since some important points of doctrine and practice which were not issues in the sixteenth century and therefore were not included in the confessional writings of that period have more recently become issues affecting inner unity, our Lutheran Church bodies have rightly required and provided supplementary statements, or theses, on occasion in order to testify to their unity and to reassure one another thereby.
4. We believe that the Minneapolis Theses, the Brief Statement and Declaration, and the Pittsburgh Agreement, all of which we believe to be in essential accord with one another, have made sufficiently clear the position of the three major groups within American Lutheranism; we believe that no additional theses, statements, or agreements are at this time necessary for the establishment of pulpit and altar fellowship among Lutherans.
5. We acknowledge the holy earnestness in confession of faith and the high-minded purpose in declarations as to church practice in the Lutheran pronouncements indicated above. We, the constituent synods of the American Lutheran Conference, severally and collectively reaffirm our sincere and wholehearted adherence to our mutual pledge as to doctrine and practice in the Minneapolis Theses. We as earnestly expect of those with whom we seek complete fellowship that their doctrine and practice shall conform to their respective declarations.
6. We submit the above statements to other Lutheran bodies with a view to the establishment of pulpit and altar fellowship. We append for examination a copy of the Minneapolis Theses as an enunciation of our position in doctrine and practice. (The Chicago Theses as hereinafter quoted, originally adopted on March 11, 1919, by representatives of the Augustana Synod, the Buffalo Synod, the Iowa Synod, the Joint Synod of Ohio, the Lutheran Free Church, the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, the United Danish Church, and the United Lutheran Church in America, were re-examined and incorporated as Sec. IV of the Minneapolis Theses.)

A. THE MINNEAPOLIS THESES**I****The Scriptures**

The synods signatory to these Articles of Agreement accept without exception all the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as a whole, and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God, and submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

II**The Lutheran Symbols**

1. These synods also, without reservation, accept the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not in so far as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Lutheran Church, as this has found expression in response to the exigencies arising from time to time.

(The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, in agreement with the position of the Lutheran Church of Norway and Denmark, has officially accepted only the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism. This position does not imply that the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in any way whatsoever rejects the remaining symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, as the constant reference to them in her theological literature amply testifies, but since the other symbolical books are not known to her constituency generally, it has not been deemed necessary to require formal subscription to the entire Book of Concord.)

2. Adherence to our confessions pertains only to their doctrinal content (i. e., the doctrines declared to be the divine truth and the rejection of opposite doctrines), but to these without exception or limitation in all articles and parts, no matter whether a doctrine is specifically cited as a confession or incidentally introduced for the purpose of elucidating or proving some other doctrine. All that pertains to the form of presentation (historical comments, questions purely exegetical, etc.) is not binding.

III**Church Fellowship**

1. These synods agree that true Christians are found in every denomination which has so much of divine truth revealed in Holy Scripture that children of God can be born in it; that according to the Word of God and our confessions, church fellowship, that is, mutual recognition, altar and pulpit fellowship, and eventually co-operation in the strictly essential work of the Church, presupposes unanimity in the pure doctrine of the Gospel and in the confession of the same in word and deed. Where the establishment and maintenance of church fellowship ignores present doctrinal differences or declares them a matter of indifference, there is unionism, pretense of union which does not exist.

2. They agree that the rule "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only, and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only" is not only in full accord with, but necessarily implied in, the teachings of the divine Word and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. This rule, implying the rejection of all unionism and syncretism, must be observed as setting forth a principle elementary to sound and conservative Lutheranism.

IV

Points of Doctrine

In 1920 all synods with the exception of the Buffalo Synod (to which they had not been submitted) adopted theses on:

1. The Work of Christ
2. The Gospel
3. Absolution
4. Holy Baptism
5. Justification
6. Faith
7. Conversion
8. Election

(See Chicago Theses)

After discussion of these theses the representatives present came to the conclusion that we are in full agreement in all essentials pertaining to these doctrines.

V

The Lodge Question

1. These synods agree that all such organizations or societies, secret or open, as are either avowedly religious or practice the form of religion without confessing as a matter of principle the Triune God or Jesus Christ as the Son of God, come into the flesh, and our Savior from sin, or teach instead of the Gospel, salvation by human works or morality, are anti-Christian and destructive of the best interests of the Church and the individual soul, and that, therefore, the Church of Christ and its congregations can have no fellowship with them.
2. They agree that a Lutheran synod should not tolerate pastors who have affiliated themselves with any anti-Christian society. And they admonish their pastors and congregations to testify against the sin of lodgery and to put forth earnest efforts publicly and privately to enlighten and persuade persons who are members of anti-Christian societies to sever their connection with such organizations.

VI

Recognition

The representatives of the synods here present agree that the synods accepting these articles are one in doctrine and practice, recognize each other as truly Lutheran and may enter into pulpit and altar fellowship.

B. THE CHICAGO THESES**(The parts included by reference in the Minneapolis Theses)****1. In Regard to the Work of Christ, Redemption, and Reconciliation:**

Jesus Christ, God and Man, has not only for the benefit of, but in the place of, the human race, taken upon Himself the sins of the world with the just penalties for them. In the place of the world and for its benefit, He has by His holy life fulfilled the Law, and by His suffering and death, by His blood, paid the penalty for the whole world, truly and completely satisfied the divine justice; redeemed the world from guilt and punishment of sin, and brought about the reconciliation of God, whose wrath had come upon mankind on account of sin and whose justice required satisfaction.

2. In Regard to the Gospel:

The Gospel is not only a story, a narrative of what Jesus Christ has done, but at the same time it offers and gives the result of the work of Christ—above all, forgiveness of sin. Yea, it even at the same time gives the power to accept what it offers.

3. In Regard to Absolution:

Absolution does not essentially differ from the forgiveness of sin offered by the Gospel. The only difference is that absolution is the direct application of forgiveness of sin to the individual desiring the consolation of the Gospel. Absolution is not a judgment passed by the pastor on those being absolved, declaring that they now have forgiveness.

4. In Regard to Holy Baptism and the Gospel:

The Holy Ghost works regeneration of the sinner both through Baptism and the Gospel. Both are therefore justly called the means of regeneration.

5. In Regard to Justification:

Justification is not an act in man but an act by God in heaven, declaring the repentant and believing just, or stating that he is regarded as such on account of imputation of the righteousness of Christ by faith.

6. In Regard to Faith:

Faith is not in any measure a human effort. Faith is an act of man in so far as it is man who believes. But both the power to believe and the act of believing are God's work and gift in the human soul or heart.

7. In Regard to Conversion:

Conversion as the word is commonly used in our Lutheran confession comprises contrition and faith, produced by the Law and the Gospel. If man is not converted, the responsibility and guilt fall on him because he, in spite of God's all-sufficient grace through the call, "would not" according to the Word of Christ, Matt. 22:37: "How often would

I have gathered thy children even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not."

If a man is converted, the glory belongs to God alone, whose work it is throughout. Before conversion or in conversion there is no co-operation of man, but at the very moment man is converted, co-operation begins through the new powers given in conversion; though this co-operation is never independent of the Holy Spirit, but always "to such an extent and so long as God by His Holy Spirit rules, guides, and leads him." Form. Concord.

8. *In Regard to Election:*

The causes of election to salvation are the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ; nothing in us on account of which God has elected us to eternal life. On the one hand we reject all forms of synergism which in any way would deprive God of His glory as the only Savior. On the other hand we reject all forms of Calvinism 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 to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2:4.

