

1-1-1958

## Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols

Arthur Carl Piepkorn  
*Concordia Seminary, St. Louis*

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



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Piepkorn, Arthur Carl (1958) "Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols," *Concordia Theological Monthly*. Vol. 29, Article 1.  
Available at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/ctm/vol29/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Print Publications at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Concordia Theological Monthly by an authorized editor of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

# Concordia Theological Monthly



J A N U A R Y • 1 9 5 8

73675

# Concordia Theological Monthly

*Published by The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod*

EDITED BY THE FACULTY OF CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
ST. LOUIS, MO.

*Until further notice address all communications to the Editorial  
Committee in care of Victor Bartling, 801 De Mun Ave.,  
St. Louis 5, Mo.*

## EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

VICTOR BARTLING, PAUL M. BRETSCHER,\*  
RICHARD R. CAEMMERER,\* MARTIN H. FRANZMANN,  
ALFRED O. FUERBRINGER, GEORGE W. HOYER,  
ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN, WALTER R. ROEHRS,\*  
MARTIN H. SCHARLEMANN, LEWIS W. SPITZ,  
LORENZ WUNDERLICH

\* On leave of absence

## CONTENTS

### FOR JANUARY 1958

	PAGE
SUGGESTED PRINCIPLES FOR A HERMENEUTICS OF THE LUTHERAN SYMBOLS. <i>Arthur Carl Piepkorn</i>	1
JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH IN MODERN THEOLOGY. <i>Henry P. Hamann, Jr.</i>	25
BRIEF STUDIES	38
HOMILETICS	46
THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER	55
BOOK REVIEW	61

CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY is published monthly by Concordia Publishing House, 3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis 18, Mo., to which all business correspondence is to be addressed.

\$3.50 per annum, anywhere in the world, payable in advance.

Entered at the Post Office at St. Louis, Mo., as second-class matter. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 5, 1918.

PRINTED IN U. S. A.



# Concordia Theological Monthly

---

VOL. XXIX

JANUARY 1958

No. 1

---

## Suggested Principles for a Hermeneutics of the Lutheran Symbols<sup>1</sup>

By ARTHUR CARL PIEPKORN

### A. GENERAL

1. The Symbols have various intended uses. They can serve as a legal club, in order to enforce conformity with their teaching by a clergyman or instructor who has solemnly committed himself to teach and practice according to them, under pain of dismissal for having obtained money or other emoluments under false pretenses. But this is certainly an *opus alienum*. Their proper office includes serving as a *norm* of teaching and of administering Sacraments,<sup>2</sup> to which an individual solemnly and voluntarily committed to them strives conscientiously to conform; as a *symbol*, that is, an identification among Lutherans, since they are the constitutive factor of the Lutheran Church as a denomination; as a *witness* to the way in which the authors of the Symbols (as well as their present-day spiritual posterity) understood and interpreted the Sacred Scriptures on controverted points; and as a *confession*, that is, a classic formulation of our own grateful response to the divine revelation.

---

<sup>1</sup> Theses presented for discussion to the faculty of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., at its annual retreat, Sept. 12—13, 1957. See also P[aul] M. B[retscher], "Theses on the Lutheran Confessions," *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XXIV (March 1953), 216—220; Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Significance of the Lutheran Symbols for Today," in *Seminarian*, Vol. 45, No. 10 (June 2, 1954), pp. 32—43.

<sup>2</sup> See fn. 13 below.



2. All these uses call for a clear understanding of what the Symbols are actually saying, that is, for a defensible exegesis based on sound hermeneutical principles.

3. The Symbols are precisely intended to be a Catholic interpretation of the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and the New Testament.<sup>3</sup> The latter are not identified in the Symbols with the Word of God<sup>4</sup> in a one-for-one equation.<sup>5</sup> But for the authors of the Symbols the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and the New Testament *are* the Word of God,<sup>6</sup> which alone is able to establish articles of faith.<sup>7</sup>

4. The prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament<sup>8</sup> are the sole norm, judge, rule, standard, and

---

<sup>3</sup> Thus the Constitution of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod reads: "Article II—Confession. Synod, and every member of Synod, accepts without reservation: . . .

"2. All the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a true and unadulterated statement and exposition of the Word of God, to wit, the three Ecumenical Creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed), the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the Smalcald Articles, the Large Catechism of Luther, the Small Catechism of Luther, and the Formula of Concord."

<sup>4</sup> "Word of God" has various meanings in the Symbols, and it is not always easy to fix the meaning precisely. In addition to being a synonym for the Sacred Scriptures, the following meanings for "Word [of God]" can be documented: (1) As a description of the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity (AC I 6); (2) as a synonym for "Gospel" (Ap IV 67; LC Preface 11; FC Ep 4); (3) as the formal object of the sacred ministry (Ap XIII 11); (4) as the subject matter of the Christian proclamation (AC VIII 2 [Latin]; SA-III IV; LC V 31; FC Ep II 13; SD XI 76); (5) as a generic designation for the preached Word and the Holy Sacraments (FC SD II 50); (6) as a component of a Sacrament (Ap XIII 5; SA-III V 1; SC IV 1; LC IV 18, 45; V 4).

<sup>5</sup> "The Word of God" and the Sacred Scriptures seem to be differentiated in Ap XII 49 (where *verbum Dei* is defined as *quod gratiam offert*); XXIII 28, where 1 Tim. 4:5 is alluded to ("*coniugium . . . est sanctificatum verbo Dei, hoc est, est res licita et approbata verbo Dei, sicut copiose testatur Scriptura*"); and FC SD VIII 96 ("*[das] reine Wort Gottes, der heiligen Propheten und Apostel Schriften und unser christliche[r] Glaube und Bekenntnis*").

<sup>6</sup> Note, for instance, the equivalence of *Gottes Wort* and *Sacra Scriptura* on the title pages of the German and Latin editions of the *Book of Concord*. (Hans Lietzmann [editor], *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930*, 3d edition [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1956], p. 1; hereafter this work is abbreviated *Bekenntnisschriften*.)

<sup>7</sup> SA-II II 15.

<sup>8</sup> The Symbols do not operate with the category of "canonicity." They do not quote or cite Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 2 Kings, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Song



touchstone of doctors and doctrine.<sup>9</sup> At the same time the Symbols also are described as a rule and norm in the territories of the estates subscribing to the Symbols.<sup>10</sup> Since the days of Abraham Calov a distinction has commonly been made between *norma normans* and *norma normata*. Considerable merit attaches to the other distinction, between *norma primaria* and *norma secundaria*. The Symbols, as the *summarischer Begriff, Grund, Regel und Richtschnur*, the *compendiaria doctrinae forma, fundamentum, norma atque regula*, participate in the normative character of the Sacred Scriptures in that they reproduce the doctrinal content of the latter. In both cases the term "norm" implies more than criterion or standard. It should be understood as a synonym of "form" in its philosophical sense; that is, as a norm the Symbols are to give form to, to inform, our theology.

5. As the central *exegetical* criterion in the Sacred Scriptures is *was Christum treibt* (John 5:39 b; 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2; 2 Tim. 3:15; 2 Peter 1:16-21), so the central exegetical criterion of the Symbols is the article "that we can obtain forgiveness of sins and righteousness before God not through our merit, works or satisfaction, but that we obtain forgiveness of sins and become righteous before God by grace for the sake of Christ through faith if we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for His sake our sins are forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us, inasmuch as God wills in His sight to regard and reckon this faith as righteousness" (AC IV [German]).

6. We are dealing in the Symbols with *πνευματικά* (1 Cor. 2:14), prayerfully written down by individuals who through Holy Baptism possessed the gift of the Holy Ghost, so that they understood what He spoke by the prophets and apostles (LC IV 49). To the extent that any given passage of the Symbols is concerned with such *πνευματικά*, we must be prepared to approach and to

---

of Solomon, Lamentations, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Zephaniah, Haggai, 3 John, and Jude; they do cite 2 Maccabees, Tobit, and the Sibylline Oracles.

<sup>9</sup> FC Ep, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 1, 7; SD, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 3, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Preface to the FC (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 761, lines 18 [German] and 22 [Latin]; p. 752, line 22); FC Ep, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 6; SD, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 10.



discuss these πνευματικῶς, imploring our heavenly Father in Christ for the gift of His Spirit, for an illuminated understanding, a devout will, purified affections, and the *officium Spiritus Sancti mnemonicum*, which our Lord promises in John 14:26.

7. In the public teaching of a Lutheran clergyman or instructor, he must interpret the Sacred Scriptures according to the Symbols and not vice versa.<sup>11</sup> This does not mean that he is in any way prevented from considering every possible legitimate interpretation that can be placed upon any given passage or group of passages of the Sacred Scriptures. If in the process, however, he were to come to a definitive conclusion incompatible with the teaching of the Symbols, he would be bound in conscience and in moral honesty to withdraw from the church which imposes such an obligation upon him. On the other hand, the obligation to interpret the Sacred Scriptures according to the Symbols does not permit an individual to set forth as doctrine a position that merely reflects his understanding of the Symbols.<sup>12</sup>

8. The interpreter of the Symbols needs to be familiar with the Sacred Scriptures—particularly the passages that are referred to in the Symbols—in their original languages, in the Vulgate, and

<sup>11</sup> [Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther,] *Antwort auf die Frage: Warum sind die Symbolischen Bücher unserer Kirche von denen, welche Diener derselben werden wollen, unbedingt zu unterschreiben?* (St. Louis: A. Wiebusch und Sohn, 1858), 11. This essay, adopted by the Western District of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in the year of publication, has ever since constituted the customary interpretation of the ordination promise required of pastors, professors, and teachers in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. It has been abridged in English by the Rev. Prof. Alexander William C. Guebert under the title "Why Should Our Pastors, Teachers, and Professors Subscribe Unconditionally to the Symbolical Writings of Our Church?" in *CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY*, XVIII (April 1947), 240—253.

<sup>12</sup> By way of example we may cite from Gunnar Rosendal, *Den apostoliska tron*, II (Malmö: Förlaget Pro Ecclesia, 1951) — without wishing to disparage any of the admirable features that characterize this series of meditations — the rendering of AC VIII, "sacramenta et verbum propter ordinationem et mandatum Christi sunt efficacia," as "Ordet et Sakramenten äro effektiva på grund av ordinationen eller prästvigningen. Här torde effektiv vara detsamma som valid, giltig. Prästvigningen giver validitet åt ämbetshandling. (The Word and the Sacrament are effective on the basis of the ordination or consecration as priest. Here 'effective' would seem to be the same as 'valid, lawful.' The ordination as priest gives validity to the official acts)" (p. 285). However, as the German translation (now in the Staatsarchiv at Nuremberg, SIL 68 Nr. 6) of an earlier Latin draft of the Augustana indicates, *ordinationem* is used in the sense of *Einsetzung*, "institution" (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 62, line 23).



## HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES OF LUTHERAN SYMBOLS

5

in the German translation of Martin Luther, as well as with the traditional interpretations of the passages in question.

9. The Symbols are to be interpreted as reflecting the unchanging *regula veritatis christianae* or *analogia fidei catholicae* which we have in the *religio catholica* (Symbolum Quicumque vult, pars. 1, 2, 19). (The Latin Formula, Solid Declaration, Von dem summarischen Begriff, title, speaks of the *analogia verbi Dei*.)

10. All the Symbols stand in a continuous chain of Catholic witness. The Reformation and post-Reformation periods possess per se no superior authority. We are Catholic Christians first, Western Catholics second, Lutherans third.

11. Our concern is primarily the discovery of the doctrinal content of the Symbols, strictly understood as the reformulation and reproduction of the doctrinal content of the Sacred Scriptures on the issues in question. This is not an exclusive concern, however, inasmuch as our clergymen at the time of Holy Ordination are committed to conformity with the Symbols not only in their teaching but also in their administration of the Sacraments.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>13</sup> a. From "The Order for the Ordination of a Minister," in *The Lutheran Liturgy* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n. d.), pp. 106—107:

"Dost thou accept the three Ecumencial Creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian—as faithful testimonies to the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and dost thou reject all the errors which they condemn?

"I do.

"Dost thou believe that the Unaltered Augsburg Confession is a true exposition of the Word of God and a correct exhibition of the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran Church; and that the Apology of the Augsburg Confession, the two Catechisms of Martin Luther, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord—as contained in the Book of Concord—are also in agreement with this one Scriptural faith?

"I do.

"Dost thou solemnly promise that thou wilt perform the duties of thy office in accordance with these Confessions and that *all thy teaching and thy administration of the Sacraments* shall be in conformity with the Holy Scriptures and with the afore-mentioned Confessions? *{Italics not original.}*

"I do."

b. From "The Order for the Installation of a Minister" (ibid., 112):

"Wilt thou preach and teach the pure Word of God in accordance with the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and adorn the doctrine of our Savior with a godly and holy life?

"Yes, with the help of God."

c. The corresponding questions in "The Order for the Installation of a Professor" (ibid., pp. 123, 124) agree verbatim with the questions reproduced above from "The Order for the Ordination of a Minister," except that the third question omits the words "and thy administration of the Sacraments."



## B. COMMON HERMENEUTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. The purpose of a hermeneutics of the Symbols is to facilitate the discovery of the sense of the text for oneself and for the purpose of communicating it to others.

2. The sense of the Symbols is that which the writers intended to communicate to the readers through the words which they employed.

3. The meaning of a passage of the Symbols should be extracted by a consideration of the passage itself, by an examination of the context, and by the investigation of parallel passages.

4. Where the author of a Symbol or a passage thereof is known, his private writings can legitimately be used to clarify the intention of passages and concepts in the symbols which require such clarification. Such a procedure should be employed with due caution, however, since authors of public documents of the church may have been restrained from expressing in such documents opinions which they felt at complete liberty to voice in their private writings. Such parallels from private writings ought likewise to be drawn as far as possible from documents roughly contemporaneous with the symbolic passage in question.

5. In general, it is to be presumed that in a given passage the writers are using words and terms univocally. At the same time the meaning of the words used in the Symbols ought not to be invested with too great precision, nor ought absolute consistency in the use of terms be presumed. The Symbols themselves point to the varying meanings of *natura*, *regeneratio*, *vivificatio*, *Evangelium*, *Buss*, etc.<sup>14</sup>

6. Since the Symbols are produced in the same Catholic tradition and since they are all intended to be reproductions of the doctrinal content of the Sacred Scriptures, the various parts ought

d. The corresponding questions in "The Order for the Ordination and Commissioning of a Missionary" (ibid., pp. 127, 128) agree verbatim with those reproduced above from "The Order for the Ordination of a Minister."

e. From "The Order for the Installation of a Teacher" (ibid., p. 132):

"Dost thou promise to discharge faithfully all the duties of thine office, in accordance with the Word of God and the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, according to the ability which God giveth?

"I do so promise, with the help of God."

<sup>14</sup> FC SD I 51, 52; II 18—21; V 3—7.



to be interpreted in harmony with one another. We may express this principle in axiom form: *Symbola symbola interpretantur*, or, *Symbola sunt ex symbolis explicanda*.

7. Due attention should be paid to idioms, which ought to be understood idiomatically and not literally; for example, *ein Kind aus der Taufe heben* (Small Catechism, Preface, 11) means "to be a sponsor at Baptism."

8. Metaphors likewise should be understood metaphorically and not literally; for example, the designation of the Sacred Scriptures as "judge" (FC Ep, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 7, 8).

9. In translation we ought not to impose our dogmatic terminology, even if correct, on an earlier document; for example, "vom Vater in Ewigkeit geboren" in the Second Article of the Small Catechism (Creed, 4) is not strictly rendered by "begotten of the Father from eternity."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> So, for instance, "Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism," in *A Short Explanation of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism: A Handbook of Christian Doctrine* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, c. 1943), 100. It is unlikely that this version is consciously following the Latin Book of Concord (*a patre ante saecula genitus*). The original German accords with patristic terminology and with the Western dogmatic tradition. Compare the version of the Nicene Creed of 325 given by St. Hilary of Poitiers in his *Liber de synodis seu de fide orientalium* (358/359), 84: *natum ex Patre unigenitum . . . natum non factum* (Migne, PL, X, 536A); the anti Priscillianist formula known as *Libellus in modum Symboli* (Council of Toledo?, 440/447?): *Deum natum a Patre ante omne omnino principium* (John Dominic Mansi, *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, III, 1003B); the version of the Nicaeno-constantinopolitanum given by Marius Mercator in his *Impii Nestorii Sermo III* (Vth century): *natum ex Patre* (Migne, PL, XLVIII, 772B); the *Symbolum Nicaenum* of the Latin Book of Concord: *ex patre natum ante omnia saecula* (*Bekenntnisschriften*, 26, lines 7, 8); the reference to our Lord's twofold nativity in the letter of St. Leo the Great to Flavian of Constantinople under date of June 13, 449, chapters 2 and 4: "de aeterno natus coaeternus . . . et a paterna gloria non recedens novo ordine, nova nativitate generatus" (Migne, PL, LIV, 757B—759A, 766B); the reference in Canon 4 of the Lateran Council of 649: "unius domini nostri et Dei Jesu Christi duas nativitates, tam ante saecula ex Deo et Patre . . . quamque de sancta virgine" (Mansi, *Collectio*, X, 1151E); the *De Sancta Trinitate confessio* of Pseudo-Eusebius of Vercelli, Sections 1 and 2: "ex [Patre] . . . Filius nativitatem . . . accepit. . . Filium quoque de substantia Patris sine initio ante saecula natum . . . fatemur" (Migne, PL, XII, 959, 960), reaffirmed against the Priscillianists at the Eleventh Council of Toledo in 675 (Mansi, *Collectio*, XI, 133A); and the confession of faith of St. Leo IX in his letter to Peter of Antioch, *Congratulamur vehementer*, under date of April 13, 1053: "Verbum Dei aeternaliter natum ante omnia tempora de Patre . . . temporaliter natum de Spiritu Sancto et Maria semper virgine" (Mansi, *Collectio*, XIX, 662 B-C). Cp. on the liturgical side the *nova nativitas* of the Collect for Christmas Day (from the Gelasian Sacramentary) and Aurelius Prudentius' hymn, *Corte natus ex parentis* (IV/V century).

CONCORDIA SEMINARY  
LIBRARY  
ST. LOUIS 5, MO.



# 8 HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES OF LUTHERAN SYMBOLS

## C. PROBLEMS OF TEXT AND CANON

1. In spite of the Articles of Incorporation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod<sup>10</sup> and *The Common Confession*,<sup>17</sup> the authoritative text of the various Symbols according to the expressed intention of the Symbols themselves is not uniformly that of the *Book of Concord* of the year of our Lord 1580.

2. The authoritative text of the Preface to the *Book of Concord* is that of the Dresden editions of 1579/1580.

3. The authoritative text of the "Apostolicum" is that of the Latin Concordia, as representing the text which was in common use in the Western Church from the eighth century on.

4. The authoritative text of the "Nicaenum"—more accurately "Nicaenoconstantinopolitanum"—is that of the Latin *Book of Concord* as representing the text which had been increasingly in use in the Western Church from the sixth century on and universally in the West after 1014, when under German pressure it was introduced into the liturgy of the Church in Rome.<sup>18</sup>

5. The authoritative text of the "Symbolum Athanasii" is that of the Latin *Book of Concord*, as representing the text which had been in increasingly common liturgical use in the Western Church since the ninth century at least.

6. The authoritative texts of the Augsburg Confession are the German and the Latin versions presented to the Emperor Charles V on June 25, 1530. All subsequent editions, including the Variata of 1540, are to be interpreted in conformity therewith (Preface to the Formula of Concord [*Bekennnisschriften*, 750—752]). The Latin Apology operates with the Latin text, but appeals to the

<sup>10</sup> The Articles of Incorporation of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as amended in the convention held from June 20 to 29, 1956, read on this point: "Article II—Objects. The objects of this corporation shall be:

"a. To unite in a corporate body the members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church who acknowledge and remain true to the *Book of Concord* of the year of our Lord 1580 as a true exhibition of sound Christian doctrine."

<sup>17</sup> Part I, Article XI: "The Lutheran Confessions." "The Lutheran Confessions (Book of Concord, 1580) are true exhibitions of the truths of the Holy Scriptures."

<sup>18</sup> Compare the Marburg Articles, I: "und im Symbolo Nicaeno gesungen und gelesen wird bei ganzer christlicher Kirchen in der Welt" (*Bekennnisschriften*, 52, lines 31—32).



German text as authoritative in Article II 2. Via Elector August's authenticated copy of what was erroneously believed at Mayence to be the original (but is probably a copy, somewhat inexact, of the now lost original made for the archdiocesan chancellery), the copy presented at Augsburg underlies the German Concordia of 1580, while the *editio princeps* of April/May 1531 underlies the Latin Concordia of 1584. At the same time, the Formula of Concord in at least one place (SD II 29) cites the Augsburg Confession according to the Wittenberg quarto edition of 1531.

7. The authoritative text of the Apology is described as the edition "published in public print in 1531" (FC SD, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 6). This is clearly the Latin *editio princeps* of April/May, rather than the octavo edition of September. Justus Jonas' German paraphrase is to be regarded as a kind of commentary. At times the German Formula of Concord quotes Justus Jonas' German paraphrase of the Apology (for instance, SD II 31, which at this point is in almost literal agreement with the Latin original). Elsewhere the German Formula of Concord appeals explicitly to the Latin Apology (for instance, SD I 10). Again, in SD III 42, the German Formula quotes first Justus Jonas' German paraphrase where it agrees substantially with the Latin original, and goes on: "Und auf solche Meinung sagt die lateinische *Apologia*: 'Iacobus recte negat,'" etc., although the German paraphrase is not too inaccurate: "Darum ist das recht geredt, dass der Glaube nicht recht ist, der ohne Werke ist." Furthermore, in SD VII 11, the German Formula urges that the Apology not only is more explicit than the Small Catechism about the real and essential presence of our Lord's body and blood in the most venerable Sacrament of the Altar, but that it supports its position with quotations from 1 Corinthians 10 [:17] and St. Cyril. Thereupon the Formula proceeds to translate more or less verbatim from the Latin Apology. Justus Jonas' German paraphrase, however, has here, as elsewhere, omitted the patristic quotations.

8. The authoritative text of the Smalcald Articles is the *editio princeps* of the summer of 1538. This is explicitly brought out in connection with the Württemberg, Mecklenburg, and Henneberg opinions on the Torgic Book (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 835, n. 3).



9. The authoritative text of the *Tractatus* on the Authority and Primacy of the Pope is difficult to determine. The document is quoted, but not listed, in the Formula of Concord, apparently because its independent origin and Melanchthonian authorship had been forgotten, and it appeared to be only an appendix to the Smalcald Articles. Except for minor variants, the two quotations in the Formula conform to the 1537 manuscript German translation of Vitus Dietrich rather than either to the original Latin (as contained in Spalatin's manuscript of 1537 or in the anonymous Strasbourg *editio princeps* of 1540) or to the German *editio princeps* (published at Nuremberg in 1541). Scholarly theological works conventionally cite the Latin original. The issue is of minor importance, since Dietrich's translation is substantially faithful to the Latin.

10. The two catechisms of Martin Luther are received "as they were written by him and incorporated into his published writings (*tomis*)" (FC SD, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 8). The authoritative text would thus be substantially that of the Jena edition, specifically of Vol. 4 (1556) in the case of the Large Catechism and Vol. 8 (1558) in the case of the Small Catechism.

11. In the case of the Small Catechism this would imply the inclusion of the Preface of the Small Catechism (omitted from *A Short Explanation*) and of the complete section on "How One Should Instruct the Plain Layfolk to Make Their Confessions" (abridged in *A Short Explanation*). It would also imply the elimination from *A Short Explanation* of (a) the section headed "The Office of the Keys," which is not by Martin Luther but by Justus Jonas; (b) possibly the sections on the duties of parishioners and subjects in the Table of Duties, which were prepared not by Luther but by Schirlentz, his printer, in 1540 and 1542 respectively, but which seem to have been included in the editions of these and subsequent years with at least the tacit consent of Luther; and (c) the pseudonymous "Christian Questions," which never appeared in any edition of the Small Catechism during Martin Luther's lifetime (although the twentieth is a reworking of authentic pronouncements of Luther in the LC VI 75—82).

12. It would also seem to imply the inclusion of the *Marriage Booklet* of 1529 and the 1526 edition of the *Baptism Booklet*, both



absent from *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921). It was assertedly Andrea's intention to omit them from the *Book of Concord*, as belonging in the realm of church order rather than of doctrine. The Elector of Brandenburg and the Lower Saxon provincial churches, however, wanted the Small Catechism "unmutilated." The Electors of Saxony and of the Palatinate were dubious about including the two *Booklets* because of the negative attitude of the South Germans toward the exorcisms at Holy Baptism. The matter was never really settled. Technically the Dresden edition of 1580 was to be published with the two *Booklets* in a separate printing, with their place indicated by printing the foliations 169—173 on the last leaf containing the Small Catechism so that they could be included or omitted at the discretion of the competent political authority.<sup>19</sup> The proposal of

---

<sup>19</sup> The copies of the German *Book of Concord* available for examination at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., none of which have *Ein kurze Vermahnung zu der Beicht* after the Large Catechism, reveal the following:

a. *Copy in the possession of President Alfred O. Fuerbringer, D.D.*, title-page date: [1579]. Epitome title-page date: 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. (Final) colophon following the subscriptions: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1579. The Catalog of Testimonies is not included. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 173v, the Large Catechism begins on folio 174r. The title page corresponds in text to the form given in *Bekennntnisschriften*, xliii; this copy, from the library of the late President Ludwig Fuerbringer, D.D., is obviously the one described by F. Bente in *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), "Historical Introductions to the Symbolical Books," pp. 5, 6.

b. *Copy in the possession of the Systematics Department*. Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1580. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. Colophon on leaf following the subscriptions: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1581 (the printer's device, however, is dated 1579). Catalog of testimonies title-page date: 1580. Final colophon: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580. The Table of Duties in the Small Catechism ends on folio 169v. The *Marriage Booklet* occupies folios 170 and 171, the *Baptism Booklet* folios 172 and 173. The cover bears the blind-stamped name of Lambert Winthof; the back cover the year 1580. A bookplate on the inside front cover identifies a former owner as the Rev. Barthold Nicholas Krohn, pastor of St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Hamburg. Gift of the Rev. Harold Wunderlich, Ottawa, Ill., and the Rev. Prof. Lorenz Wunderlich, St. Louis, Mo.

c. *Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 A*. Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. Colophon on leaf following the subscriptions: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1579. Catalog of Testimonies title-page date: 1580. Final colophon: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 173v, the Large Catechism begins on folio 174r. This was the late President Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther's personal copy. It is bound with the 1580 Church Order of Elector August of Saxony (Leipzig: Hans Steinman, 1580).



Andreä that each of the Electors should sign a statement pertaining to the status of the *Booklets* in his domains as part of his subscription to the Symbols fell through when in 1583 Elector Louis VI

*d. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, uncatalogued.* Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. Colophon on leaf following the subscriptions: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1581 (the printer's device, however, is dated 1579). Catalog of Testimonies title-page date: 1580. Final colophon: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580. This interesting copy, unfortunately in a poor state of preservation and repair, has on the recto of the last leaf of the Table of Duties of the Small Catechism the foliations 169, 170, 171, 172, 173. The Large Catechism begins on folio 174r.

*e. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 Dr.* Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1580. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1580. Colophon on leaf following the subscriptions: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel (only!) 1580 (the printer's device, however, bears the date of 1579). Catalog of Testimonies title-page date 1580. Final colophon: Dressden, no printer's name(!), 1580. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 173v, the Large Catechism begins on folio 174r. This was the personal copy of the late Otto F. T. Hanser.

*f. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 Dresd.* Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. Colophon on leaf following subscriptions: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1579. Catalog of Testimonies title-page date: 1580. Final colophon: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 173v, the Large Catechism begins on folio 174r.

*g. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, 238.4 Dr (second copy).* Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. Colophon on leaf following the signatures: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1581 (the printer's device, however, is dated 1579). Catalog of Testimonies title-page date: 1580. Final colophon: Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 169v. The *Marriage Booklet* occupies folios 170 and 171, the *Baptism Booklet* folios 172 and 173. Date blind-stamped on front cover: 1580.

*h. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, uncatalogued.* Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. Catalog of Testimonies title-page date: 1580 (the Catalog follows immediately after the Solid Declaration). Final colophon (at the end of the Catalog of Testimonies): Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580. The colophon leaf with the printer's device does not appear in this copy. The *Register* and signatures follow the Catalog of Testimonies. This was the personal copy of the late President Francis Pieper, D. D.

*i. Concordia Historical Institute, uncatalogued.* Identical with *e* above. Gift of the late President John Schinnerer.

*j. Concordia Historical Institute, uncatalogued.* Identical with *c* above. From the library of the late Reverend W. O. Bischoff. The blank flyleaf bears the notation in a contemporary hand: *Laus Deo 1580 A(nno) D(omin)i 21 Augusti zalt 2 R(eichsthaler) 40 K(reutzer)*, which establishes the original purchase price.

*k. Concordia Historical Institute, uncatalogued.* Title-page date: 1580. Epitome title-page date: 1579. Solid Declaration title-page date: 1579. (Both the



of the Palatinate filed a copy without the *Booklets* and without the proposed declaration.

13. In the case of the Large Catechism application of the standard of the German Formula would involve omission of "A Short Admonition to Confession" (omitted from *Concordia Triglotta* also).<sup>20</sup>

Epitome and Solid Declaration title pages differ from the conventional title pages in types, in the woodcut devices, and in lacking the legend *Mit Churffürstlicher G(naden) zu Sachsen befreibung*. The Solid Declaration is followed by the *Register*, this by the Catalog of Testimonies (title-page date: 1580; colophon, corresponding to the final colophon of the other copies, Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1580). Then come the subscriptions, followed by the colophon leaf (with the usual printer's device): Dressden, Matthes Stöckel vnd Gimel Bergen, 1579. As in *b* above, the Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 169v, the *Marriage Booklet* and *Baptism Booklet* occupy the next four leaves, and the Large Catechism begins on folio 174r. The binding bears the blind-stamped date 1580 and the initials C. B. The fly-leaf bears the notation: *E(?) Weisbar, don(um) m(eorum) Parent(iu)m*. This volume is, unfortunately, in a very poor state of repair.

*l. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 Tub.* The title page, Epitome title page, Solid Declaration title page, and Catalog of Testimonies title page all read 1580. Colophon on leaf following subscriptions: Tübingen, Georg Gruppenbach, 1581. There is no final colophon. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 173v, the Large Catechism begins on folio 174r.

*m. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 Heid.* The volume title page, Epitome title page, and Solid Declaration title page all bear the date 1582. Colophon: Heidelberg, Johannes Spies, 1582. The Catalog of Testimonies is omitted. The Table of Duties of the Small Catechism ends on folio 175v, the Large Catechism begins on folio 177r, with a blank leaf between. Bound with the *Book of Concord* and from the same press (but both dated 1583) are *Apologia oder Verantwortung des Christlichen Concordien Buchs* and *Warbafte Christliche und gegründte Widerlegung der vermeynten Entschuldigung der Prediger zu Bremen*.

*n. Copy in the possession of the Reverend August R. Snelflow, S.T.M., Curator, Concordia Historical Institute.* This copy is a duplicate of the 1582 Heidelberg edition of the *Book of Concord* described in *m* above. It is clear from the contemporary binding that no other works were bound up with it. The copy has suffered some damage, and all leaves after folio e-iii of the subscriptions are missing.

The two copies of the Latin editions accessible for examination, both of which lack the *Marriage Booklet*, the *Baptism Booklet*, and the *Brief Admonition to Confession*, were:

*a. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 Sal.* Colophon: Leipzig, Ioannes Steinman, 1580.

*b. Pritzlaff Memorial Library, call number 238.4 Lei 58.* Colophon: Leipzig, Georgius Defnerus, 1584.

<sup>20</sup> Although this appendix dates back to the second 1529 edition of the Large Catechism, it comes into the German *Book of Concord* only in the Magdeburg edition of 1580 and into the Latin *Book of Concord*, via the *Corpus doctrinae christianae* (Jena 1571), only after 1584. The text is reproduced in *Bekenntnisschriften*, pp. 725—733.



14. The authoritative text of the Formula of Concord is that of James Andreä's final draft (*Urschrift*), as edited by him for publication in the Dresden edition of 1579/1580. It includes the Preface, the Epitome, and the Solid Declaration.

15. Not integral parts of the Symbols are:

a. The Catalog of Testimonies, although the product of Martin Chemnitz and James Andreä; and

b. The (*Saxon*) *Christian Visitation Articles*, although they are included by Carl Ferdinand William Walther in the constitution of Trinity Church, St. Louis, as part of the Book of Concord,<sup>21</sup> and are printed out in *Concordia Triglotta*.<sup>22</sup>

16. The interpreter of the Symbols should work with the best available text of the Symbols. Currently this is represented by the third edition of the bilingual Anniversary Edition of 1930,<sup>23</sup> now in its third edition (1930, 1952, 1956).

#### D. SPECIFIC SYMBOLICAL HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES AND PROBLEMS

1. The Symbols are not inspired. Even the theologians who predicated inspiration of the Symbols attributed to them only a *θεοπνευστία mediata*.<sup>24</sup> We have, therefore, to determine the intention not of the Holy Spirit but of human minds like our own. In a general way, at least, the authors of the Symbols and we stand in a common Catholic tradition. In detail, however, we may not posit a priori altogether identical points of view, exegetical principles, systematic theologies, or philosophical presuppositions.

2. The metaphysical presuppositions of the Symbols can be presumed to be those of the period in which they are written or of the schools from which the writer has come. Thus we can expect

<sup>21</sup> [Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther,] "Gemeinde-Ordnung für die deutsche evangelisch-lutherische Gemeinde ungeänderter Augsburgischer Confession in St. Louis, Mo., 1843," § 3, in *Der Lutheraner*, VI (March 5, 1850), 105.

<sup>22</sup> Pages 1150—1157.

<sup>23</sup> See fn. 6 above.

<sup>24</sup> See John George Walch *Introductio in libros ecclesiae Lutheranae symbolicos* (Jena: Vidua Meyer, 1732), pp. 925—927, who lists among those holding this view John Fecht (1636—1716), Philip Louis Hanneken (1637—1706), Gottlieb Wernsdorf (1668—1729), Theodore Dassov (1648—1721), John George Neumann (1661—1709), and Samuel Schelwig (1643—1715).



evidences of Martin Luther's Occamist background in his writings (for instance in the passage from his *Vom heiligen Abendmahl Bekenntnis* quoted in FC SD VII 92—103) and evidences of Aristotelianism in Philip Melanchthon and his pupils, Martin Chemnitz and Nicholas Selnecker.

3. We are not bound to the philosophical presuppositions of the Symbols. We need not hold to a cosmology which teaches that the sun and planets are moved by quintessential intelligences, as both parties to the controversy settled by Article VI of the Formula of Concord (SD VI 2.6) apparently assumed. We need not hold to a metaphysics which affirms that every existent is either a substance or an accident, or a speculative theology which asserts that every substance is either God or a creature of God (FC SD II 54—58).

4. The test of any reinterpretation of Symbolical doctrine in "common sense" terms or in terms of another philosophical system is its adequacy in accounting for the Biblical and empirical data that underlie the original formulation, that is, it must be congruent with a sound exegesis of the Sacred Scriptures, and it must reproduce accurately in the other philosophical idiom the concerns of the original.

5. A distinction must be made between institutions and ceremonies that exist and are valid by divine right<sup>25</sup> and those that exist merely by human authority.<sup>26</sup>

6. Those portions of the Symbols which refer to humanly established ceremonies and institutions are not binding in the sense that such ceremonies are of the essence of the Lutheran Church (procedures at elections, consecrations, and ordinations; the pericopic system; the ecclesiastical year; the relative dignity of feasts; head covering for female worshipers; the ancient collects and chants; Eucharistic and other vestments; candles; the use of Latin in the service; chanting the Psalter; the sign of the holy cross; the customary ceremonial at the Mass; folded hands; solemnization of marriage in front of the church; exorcism and the white chrisom

<sup>25</sup> AC XXIII 13 (Latin), 24; XXVII 24; Ap VII 41; Tractatus 65, 67; SC IV 1, 4; V 28; VI 2, 4; FC SD VII 80, 83, 84.

<sup>26</sup> AC VII 3; XV 1 (German); Epilog to XXI 2 (Latin); XXVI 1; XXVIII 55; Ap XI 8; XIII 78.



at Holy Baptism; Baptism by immersion, etc.).<sup>27</sup> But the doctrinal implications that may underlie such humanly established ceremonies and institutions are binding (for example, the necessity for a rightfully constituted ministry, individual absolution as an individualization of the generalized proclamation of the Gospel, the designation of the blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of God to safeguard the dogma of the incarnation, and the availability of the Holy Communion to meet the needs of the people).<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, references to such humanly instituted ceremonies and institutions in the Symbols may legitimately be cited to demonstrate their complete consistency with sound, historic Lutheran doctrine and practice (for example, self-communion of the celebrant, a celebration of the Holy Eucharist at the main parochial service[s] every Sunday, episcopal polity, reading the banns of marriage in advance, definition of the term "sacrament" to include more than Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, fasting before receiving Holy Communion, and private confession).<sup>29</sup>

7. The number of literary genres in the Symbols is limited. Apart from Biblical quotations, poetry occurs only to an extremely limited extent, always in very brief quotation and always clearly identifiable.<sup>30</sup> The bulk of the Symbols is sober theological exposition. Extensive portions of the Symbols, however, were originally homiletical productions; this is true of almost the entire Large Catechism. Other portions of the Symbols are homiletic in purpose, even though they may never have been delivered as sermons. The Prefaces to the Catechisms and to the Smalcald Articles, the other additions which Martin Luther made to the Smalcald Articles between the time of their subscription by the theologians in 1536—37 and their publication in 1538,<sup>31</sup> many passages in Justus Jonas' paraphrase of the Apology, notably among his Ger-

<sup>27</sup> AC XV 1; XX 40; XXIV 2; XXVI 40; XXVIII 56, 57; Ap XV 40, 42, 43; XXIV 1—3, 50—51; Tractatus 70, 71; SC Appendix I; Traubüchlein 7; Taufbüchlein 11, 12, 15, 17, 27, 29; LC I 74; FC SD X 30, 31.

<sup>28</sup> AC V; Tractatus 67; LC VI 46, 48; FC SD VIII 24; XI 37, 38.

<sup>29</sup> AC XI 1; XXIV 34 (German); Ap XI 3, 4; XIII 2—17; XIV 1, 5; XXI 34; XXIV 1, 6 (German), 40; SA-III VIII 1, 2; SC VI 10; Traubüchlein, 6; LC VI 37.

<sup>30</sup> AC XX 40; Ap XXIII 3; FC Ep I 8; SD I 1, 23.

<sup>31</sup> SA-II 5, 13—15, 26—28; III 42—45; VIII 3—13.



man expansions of, and additions to, the original Latin text, and some of the flights of rhetoric in Philip Melanchthon's Apology are of the same type. Here we have to realize that the appeal is more to the will than to the intellect and that the authors are allowing themselves the liberty in the use of words, the metaphors and the rhetorical devices (such as hyperbole) which orators tend to assume along with toga or gown.

8. We are to understand the witness of the symbols as the voice of the *damals Lebenden* (FC, Ep, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 7), to be interpreted in the terms of their situation.

9. The historical backgrounds of the Symbols play a significant role in their formulation. For this reason the interpreter of the Symbols needs to be familiar with the history of the church and of Christian thought, and with the doctrinal systems and the theological vocabularies current from the second through the sixteenth centuries, with special reference both to the first seven centuries of this period, the era in which the so-called Catholic Creeds achieved their present form, and to the last four centuries, the era in which the situation came into being which evoked the Lutheran Reformation by way of reaction and protest. The Lutheran particular creeds have their own historical backgrounds, with which the interpreter must acquire fairly detailed familiarity, as far as possible at the hand of primary sources. Regrettably the primary sources are not universally accessible.

10. Familiarity with the original languages in which the Symbols are written is vital. These languages are ecclesiastical (rather than classical) Latin and the *Frühneuhochdeutsch* of the sixteenth century (rather than nineteenth- or twentieth-century German).

11. Due consideration should be given to the fact that the Augsburg Confession and the Formula of Concord are political as well as religious documents. The Smalcald Articles, the Tractatus, and (at Schmalkalden in 1537) the Apology are the only documents signed exclusively by theologians. While the Formula was signed by its six chief author-revisers as well as by thousands of clergymen, the legal subscriptions to the Formula and to the *Book of Concord* were exclusively those of estates of the Empire (three electors, two prince-bishops, a count palatine, dukes, margraves,



counts, barons, and city administrations). The Augustana likewise was signed originally by estates (an elector, a margrave, three dukes, a landgrave, a prince, and the administrations of two cities) and only subsequently (at Schmalkalden in 1537) by theologians. This accounts for the occasionally somewhat Erastian cast of the Augustana and the Preface to the Formula. Some of this is reflected in the Apology likewise, which in its original form was designed as the reply of the Evangelical estates to the Emperor's refutation of the Augsburg Confession.

12. In the absence of persuasive objective evidence, it is impermissible to assume that later dogmatic definitions and distinctions are implicit in passages of the Symbols where such definitions and distinctions are not explicit.

13. The articles of the Symbols are not dogmatic discussions based *de novo* on exegetical surveys of the applicable Biblical data. They are for the most part contributions to continuing discussions, the terminology of which had already been fixed and filled with significance in the course of previous controversy. Hence it may not be presumed that a term common to the vocabularies both of theology and of the Sacred Scriptures is being used in an exclusively Biblical sense.

14. The later Symbols are to be interpreted by the earlier Symbols, not vice versa. The Formula of Concord and the questions put to candidates for Holy Ordination and for installation as professor establish a clear hierarchy of symbols: the Catholic Creeds are *summae auctoritatis*; the creed par excellence of the Lutheran Reformation is the Augsburg Confession; the other Lutheran Creeds are not new and independent documents but have relevance only as interpretations of the Augsburg Confession.<sup>32</sup>

15. If a later symbol misunderstands an earlier symbol, we are not committed to such a misunderstanding as far as the earlier symbol is concerned, but we are committed to the doctrinal content of both symbols. Thus the Large Catechism interprets the words *sanctorum communionem* in the Apostolicum as an ex-

<sup>32</sup> FC SD, Von dem summarischen Begriff, 4—9 (note the Latin version of par. 4); 11—13, 20; cp. the Preface to the Formula of Concord (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 751, lines 8—28; 760, line 37, to 761, line 28). See also fn. 13 above.



planatory apposition to *sanctam ecclesiam catholicam* and proposes to render them "a holy community" (LC II 49). But it is becoming increasingly clear that *sanctorum communionem* originally referred to participation in the Holy Eucharist.<sup>33</sup> Granted that this is a fact, we are committed by the words *sanctorum communionem* in the Apostolicum to an affirmation of the importance of participation in the Holy Eucharist and by the words "a holy community" in the Large Catechism to an affirmation of the imputed and inherent sanctity of the Christian community.

16. We are not bound to affirm any inerrancy of the Symbols in historical or scientific matters, such as its ascription of *De vocatione gentium* to St. Ambrose, the *Hypomnesticon* to St. Augustine, *De coena Domini* to St. Cyprian, or *De venerabili sacramento altaris* to St. Thomas Aquinas; the circumstances surrounding the Smalcald Articles' origin as reported by the Formula of Concord; Martin Luther's repeated misquotation of St. Augustine, his incorrect Biblical references, and his hazily remembered citations from St. Jerome; the assumption that the magnetization of iron can be suspended by rubbing the magnet with garlic juice; or the Formula's misunderstanding of some of Martin Luther's statements in his commentary on Genesis which explicitly refer to the *Papistae* and the *adversarii* as being directed against *etlichen unter den Seinen*.<sup>34</sup>

17. Where the Symbols do not cite one or more passages of Sacred Scripture in support of a theological conclusion, an individual is not bound to the acceptance of such a conclusion as a doctrine, unless he holds that the conclusion is adequately supported by Holy Writ. For example, if an individual does not regard Song

<sup>33</sup> See Theodore von Zahn, "The Articles of the Apostles' Creed. XI. 'The Communion of Saints,'" in W. Robertson Nicoll and Charles Cuthbert Hall, eds., *The Expositor: A Theological Magazine*, American edition, IV (Aug. 1898, to Jan. 1899) (New York: Dodd, Mead and Co. [1899]), 148—155, translated by C. S. and A. E. Burn from the second edition of *Das apostolische Symbolum*. For recent discussions of the issue and for references to earlier literature see J. F. Badcock, *The History of the Creeds*, 2d ed. (London: S. P. C. K., 1938), pp. 243—272, and Werner Elert, *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsächlich des Ostens* (Berlin: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1954), pp. 5—16, 166—181.

<sup>34</sup> See AC XVIII 4; XX 14, 30; Ap XXIV 62, 76; SA-II IV 4, 9; III V 1; X 3; LC III 113; IV 18; VI 10; FC SD I 22; IV 28 (cp. the Weimar edition of Luther's works, 43, 254, 37; 255, 37; 256, 15; et passim).



of Solomon 4:12; Is. 7:14; 66:7; Ezek. 44:2, and Luke 1:34, 35 — the traditional passages cited by the Fathers, though not by the Symbols — as proving the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God, with its corollary that she bore our Lord *inviolata virginitate et clauso utero*, he cannot on the strength of the Symbols<sup>35</sup> be compelled to affirm this opinion as a doctrine strictly so called. At the same time we cannot hereticize an individual who holds such a theological opinion as the Virgin Birth (as distinguished from the virgin conception) of our Lord.<sup>36</sup> The article of our Lord's descent into the netherworld presents something of a parallel. The Symbols do not document their presentations with any passages of Sacred Scripture. The intensely interesting and significant sermon of Martin Luther in the chapel of the electoral castle at Torgau in 1533, to which Article IX of the Formula of Concord refers us, cites only Ps. 16:10 ("Thou wilt not leave My soul in Sheol") and Matt. 16:18 ("The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it") in the portions copied out in Andrea's final draft.<sup>37</sup> Beyond the implications of such passages we cannot establish an article of faith on this point. Article IX of the Formula of Concord is commendably careful here.

18. We are not bound to the exegesis which the Symbols give of any particular passage which they choose to interpret. Thus we need not believe that Psalm 119:1 refers to the Law in its strict sense (FC Ep VI 2) or that the scope of Gen. 17:4-8, 19-20 includes infant Baptism (FC Ep XII 8). This does not mean, however, that we are free to reject a *doctrinal* conclusion which

<sup>35</sup> FC SD VII 100; VIII 24.

<sup>36</sup> To call these Symbolical passages lapses of the pen of individuals who had not succeeded in throwing off the last vestiges of their medieval training overlooks the fact that it is precisely a second-generation Lutheran theologian, Nicholas Selnecker (1530—1592), who, as translator of the Smalcald Articles, described the Mother of God as *semper virgo* in SA-I IV and, as editor of the Latin Formula of Concord, at least retained (the actual translation may go back to two contemporaries, Luke Osiander [1534—1604] and James Heerbrand [1521—1600]), in SD VII 100, the expansion of Luther's phrase *do er von seiner Mutter geboren ward into de sanctissima virgine Maria, matre sua, natus esse*. Cf. Francis Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, II (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1917), 366—367; Reintraud Schimmelpfennig, *Die Geschichte der Marienverehrung im deutschen Protestantismus* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1952), pp. 9—51.

<sup>37</sup> *Bekentnisschriften*, pp. 1050—52.



the Symbols draw from their interpretation (even erroneously) of one or more passages, or that we may justify rejection of a doctrinal conclusion by a disavowal one by one of the passages that the Symbols cite in its support. Thus it would be precarious indeed to reject the rule that the Reformers extracted from the Words of Institution, *Nibil habet rationem sacramenti extra actionem divinitus institutam* (FC SD VII 85), on the ground that a sober exegesis of the Words of Institution does not necessarily yield such a rule.

19. We are not bound to assert as doctrine strictly so called any opinions which the Symbols affirm as historical judgments concerning the fulfillment of prophecy after the cessation of public revelation. An example is Philip Melancthon's stated conviction that the prophecy of the Sibylline Oracles *Pudicus facie ubique regnabit* was fulfilled in Charles V (Ap XXIII 3), and his implied belief that the prophecy of John Hilten of Eisenach had been fulfilled in Martin Luther (Ap XXVII 1—4).

20. Citations and quotations in support of a thesis of the Symbols are not to be pressed beyond the point for the confirmation of which they are invoked. Where incidental formulations are quoted without criticism, however, it may be presumed that the authors of the Symbols did not regard these formulations as inconsistent with the evangelical faith.

21. An appeal to words of Martin Luther that have not been incorporated in the Symbols, when they are referred to without quotation or precise specification of the passages that the authors have in mind, must be understood only with reference to the light that the cited word casts upon the question at issue.<sup>38</sup>

22. Sometimes the private convictions of authors and translators show through their work. This is extensively the case with Justus Jonas' German paraphrase of the Apology; just how extensively, is something that needs to be further investigated. The Epitome of the Formula of Concord by James Andreä is subtly slanted to conform to his own theological emphases; in Article IX,

<sup>38</sup> For example, *De servo arbitrio* and Luther's commentary on Genesis 26 in FC SD II 44, or his *Lehr- und Streitschriften vom heiligen Abendmahl* in SD VII 3.



for instance, of the Formula the Epitome and the Solid Declaration do not say precisely the same thing. In his original translation of the Smalcald Articles Nicholas Selnecker elaborated Martin Luther's text with patristic quotations.

23. Differences in the formulation of the same article of faith in works or chapters of composite authorship should be noted but not placed into unwarranted antithesis to each other. Cases in point are the respective formulations of Martin Chemnitz and James Andreä concerning the omnipresence of our Lord's human nature in Article VII and predestination in Article XI of the Formula of Concord.

24. Where a formulation has finally been adopted in the face of formal objection, or where there is evidence of a deliberate change in an original draft, particular emphasis may properly be placed upon such a thesis. By way of an example of the former, we have the express statement in the Preface to the Formula of Concord, deliberately refusing, in contrast to the position of Tilemann Hesshusius and the Helmstedt theologians, to apply the *condemnationes* of the Formula to "those persons who err in their simplicity and do not blaspheme the truth of the divine Word, far less entire churches"—those of England and Navarre are meant—"inside or outside the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation" (*Bekennnisschriften*, p. 756). An example of the latter is the change in SA-III VI, where the thesis that "in the Communion bread and wine are the true body and blood of Christ" increases greatly in positive force if we realize that Martin Luther struck out the word "under" before "bread" in his original draft.<sup>39</sup>

---

<sup>39</sup> A very curious passage in this connection is FC SD II 22, where the absence of the words *non activam sed passivam* after *capacitatem* was made the subject of an acrimonious exchange. The words are in the Suabian Concordia, the Saxon-Swabian Concordia, and the Torgic Book. In Andreä's final manuscript copy that underlies the printed Formula of Concord they have been struck out, written in again in the margin, and struck out again—all apparently by Andreä. They are absent in the 1579/1580 edition of the German Book of Concord as well as in the 1580 Latin Book of Concord. In 1583 Andreä asserted that in all conscience, and speaking as in the sight of God, he did not know how they had got out of the passage, except that possibly it was the fault of the transcriber. He promised to insert them in the next edition, and they occur in the Latin Concordia of 1584. Significantly they are missing again in Polycarp Leyser's important edition of 1598.



25. Due weight must be given to the fact that the Lutheran particular creeds were written with a heightened sense of eschatological awareness.<sup>40</sup>

26. Where no obvious, intrinsic, and persuasive reason exists for interpreting the parallel passages of the Latin and German versions of the Augsburg Confession differently, the presumption should be that the intention of the parallel passages is the same.

27. The Latin Concordia of 1584 is designed to reproduce the sense and contents of the German *Book of Concord* of 1580. Accordingly the translations in either ought to be looked upon as official commentaries on the originals.<sup>41</sup> At the same time the translations ought not to be superordinated above the originals.<sup>42</sup>

28. Where the confused syntax of a passage in the original makes it impossible to construe the passage, it is legitimate to draw upon the translation. By way of example we may cite FC SD VI 1: "1. Nachdem das Gesetz Gottes nicht allein darzu nützt, dass dardurch äusserliche Zucht und Ehrbarkeit wider die wilden, ungehorsamen Leute erhalten; 2. desgleichen, dass durch solches die Menschen zu Erkenntnis ihrer Sünden gebracht; 3. sondern auch, wenn sie durch den Geist Gottes neugeboren, zu dem Herrn bekehret, und also ihnen die Decke Mose aufgedeckt, in dem Gesetz leben und wandeln: hat sich über diesem dritten und letzten Brauch usw." It is impossible to construe 2 and 3; the Latin

<sup>40</sup> AC XXIII 14; Ap, Preface, 19; XXIII 54, 55; XXIV 47; SA, Preface, 15; II IV 10; Tractatus 42; FC, Preface (*Bekenntnisschriften*, p. 740, lines 5, 6); Ep IV 18.

<sup>41</sup> Such a control of the German original by the Latin version is instanced in the rendering of *Niessung*, which normally corresponds to *sumptio*, by *usus* (although *niessen* is rendered by *sumere*) in the quotation from the "Wittenberg Concord" of 1536 in FC SD VII 14, 15. The source of the two texts is difficult to determine. The German text of 1580 departs extensively from that reproduced (without indication of source) in the Walch edition of Luther's Works, XVII, 2529—30. The Latin text of 1580 and 1584 is closer to that reproduced in *Corpus Reformatorum*, III (Halle: C. A. Schwetschke et Filius, 1836), 75—77 (based on the 1562 Leipzig edition of Melancthon's works, Crell's version of 1574, and the manuscript copy sent to the Elector of Saxony and preserved at Weimar), although it shows signs of having been conformed to the German.

<sup>42</sup> The translations in the Formula frequently agree with the German against the originals when earlier Symbols are quoted. For example, in SD II 37, where the German quotation has substituted *beilet* for the original *bolet*, the Latin Formula reads *sanat* where the Latin version of the Large Catechism reads *adducit*.



reorganizes the passage thus: "Cum constet triplicem esse legis divinae usum (I. Lege enim disciplina externa et honestas contra feros et indomitos homines utcunque conservatur. II. Lege peccatores ad agnitionem peccati adducuntur. III. Denique qui per spiritum Dei renati et ad Dominum conversi sunt, et quibus iam velamen Moisis sublatum est, lege docentur, ut in vera pietate vivant et ambulent): Orta est de tertio illo usu," etc.<sup>43</sup>

29. Obviously exceptional locutions can be corrected at least tentatively in the light of the translation. For example: *Unsere Kirche* in FC SD X 3 would be a unique example of the use of the term *Kirche* in a denominational sense; since the Latin reads *ecclesias nostras*, it is probable that we have to do with a case of imperfect editing of the German text or a slip of the copyist's pen.

St. Louis, Mo.

---

<sup>43</sup> A parallel is the much-debated passage in the Explanation of the Second Article in the Small Catechism: "Ich gläube, dass Jesus Christus . . . sei mein HERR, der mich verlornen und verdammpten Menschen erlöset hat, erworben, gewonnen und von allen Sunden, vom Tode und von der Gewalt des Teufels, nicht mit Gold oder Silber, sondern mit seinem heiligen, teuren Blut und mit seinem unschuldigen Leiden und Sterben, auf dass ich sein eigen sei," etc. Another participle, such as *frei gemacht*, may well be posited after *Gewalt des Teufels* on the basis of the Latin translation(s) of 1529: *redemit et ab omnibus peccatis, a morte, a potestate Satanae liberavit*; see also LC II 30. For the sake of completeness, the other possibilities may be noted in passing:

a. That the *und* after *gewonnen* is a primitive intrusion resulting from a typographical error (so Ernst Gerstenmaier, "Der zweite Artikel in D. Martin Luthers Kleinem Katechismus," in Ernst Gerstenmaier and Otto Stroh [editors], *Gottes Wort soll obschweben* [Friedberg: Carl Bindernagel, 1937], p. 270; and many older editors and commentators as far back as the Jena edition [1558];

b. That a typographical error has inverted the order of words and that the original sequence was that of two early Low German editions (Major's diglot of 1531 and the Magdeburg edition of 1534), which read: *verworuen, gewonnen unde vorlöset hefft* (so Johannes Meyer, *Historischer Kommentar zu Luthers Kleinem Katechismus* [Gütersloh: C. Bertelsmann, 1929], p. 316);

c. That the last *und* means *und das* or *und zwar* (suggested by Otto W. F. Albrecht in the Weimar edition of Luther's works, 30/1, 366, note 2), although, as Meyer has pointed out (*ibid.*), this is documentable for Middle High German but not for Luther himself or his period. For the earlier literature see Meyer, *op. cit.*, 315, 316; for a criticism of Meyer's position see Gerstenmaier, *loc. cit.*