

CONCORDIA
THEOLOGICAL
QUARTERLY

CTQ

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Editorials

HERMANN OTTO ERICH SASSE, D. THEOL., D. D.
July 17, 1895 - August 9, 1976

It was not until the August 1976 issue of the *Lutheran Theological Journal* arrived from Australia in December that we learned of the tragic circumstances surrounding the death of a truly great confessional Lutheran saint. On the pages following we are reprinting the obituary written by the Reverend H.F.W. Proeve, Secretary of the Lutheran Church of Australia. There is little that any member of our staff could add.

Dr. Sasse's life was mainly associated with the University of Erlangen in Germany and Luther Seminary in Australia. If any American institution could claim him, however, it would be Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne (Springfield). For he spent some time as a guest lecturer among us, as well as visiting the campus on several other occasions. According to what we have learned, the largest lecture-room on the Springfield campus was daily filled to capacity with those desiring to hear him.

On the three occasions that we met him, we were impressed with his sadness. He did not speak about his emigration from Germany, but it must have weighed heavily on him. In 1959 he was introduced to the San Francisco Convention of the Missouri Synod by the late Dr. John W. Behnken. At that time and again in the years 1964-1965, when he was again in the United States, he spoke of the plight of confessional Lutheranism. He saw that the Missouri Synod was internally weakening in theology. Everyone except the Missouri Synod, indeed, was aware of this sickness and of the impending catastrophe that would follow her demise. While other denominations realized the importance of the Missouri Synod and her heritage as a continued confessional leaven in the world, the Missouri Synod herself seemed unaware that she was selling her birthright. Dr. Sasse's pessimistic attitude had not changed when he came to Springfield again in 1967 for his last visit.

Before that time the faculty had awarded honorary doctorates only in connection with the June graduation. An exception was made for Dr. Hermann Sasse. He was awarded his doctorate at the morning chapel service in Immanuel Lutheran Church in the presence of the students and faculty. President J.A.O. Preus spoke glowingly of Dr. Sasse's achievements. At the back of the church after the service, Dr. Sasse with tears in his eyes received congratulations from those in attendance. We do not recall that Hermann Sasse ever returned again to the Springfield campus, but he certainly did not forget this

Seminary. When Pastor Wiebusch, Vice-President of the Lutheran Church of Australia, was awarded the doctorate of our Seminary at a general convention of that church, Dr. Sasse, wearing the Springfield hood, posed with Dr. Wiebusch. Dr. Sasse was, then, both a professor and an alumnus of Concordia Theological Seminary.

Those who rejoice in the survival of confessional Lutheranism as a force in the Lutheran Church of Australia and The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod owe a great debt to this man. It would be tragic if this great debt were not partially paid by a small word of gratitude. But perhaps Dr. Sasse received everything he wished. In the last ten years, he did see a great confessional resurgence in the Missouri Synod. The church which seemed destined to lose its self-identity by dissolving into the ecumenical movement and to lose its heritage by an indiscriminate use of the assumptions of higher criticism has come to its senses and has begun to reverse the tide of liberalism. Some regarded Dr. Sasse as a theological nuisance, an anachronistic oddity. But if one confessor of truth has been taken from us, he has left many disciples behind, intent on following in his footsteps. The tribute offered here is not a perfunctory one, but a tribute offered by one who saw that in Hermann Sasse confessional theology was still a live possibility in the Lutheran Church. We would be hard pressed to find a greater confessional hero in our time.

dps

HERMANN OTTO ERICH SASSE

This short account of the life of Dr. Sasse, who died August 9, 1976, is adapted from the obituary compiled by the Revd H.F.W. Proeve, Secretary of the Lutheran Church of Australia.

Dr. Sasse was born on July 17, 1895, at Sonnewalde, in Lower Lusatia, Germany, as the son of Hermann Wilhelm Heinrich Sasse and his wife Maria Magdalene, nee Berger. He was baptized in the church of his birthplace on August 2, 1895, by Superintendent Hengstenberg; and on March 22, 1910, he was confirmed in Berlin-Friedenau by Pastor Gornandt.

Meanwhile his education had begun in the public school at Laage, in Mecklenburg, and continued on the secondary level (*Gymnasium*) at Lubeck Krotoschin, Breslau, and Berlin. His three and a half years of studies at the University of Berlin in the faculties of theology and philosophy culminated in his passing the first theological examination in 1916, and—following war service 1916-1918—his second theological examination *pro ministerio* in 1920. Continuing his academic studies during his ministry, he obtained the degrees of Licentiate (now called Doctor) of Theology in Berlin, 1923, and

Master of Sacred Theology following studies at Hartford Theological Seminary, Connecticut, USA, 1925-1926. In addition, the University of Erlangen conferred on him a Doctorate of Theology (*honoris causa*) in 1933, and more recently, in 1967, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois, conferred on him a Doctorate of Divinity.

Following his ordination to the Holy Ministry on June 13, 1920, in the St. Matthai Church, Berlin, by General Superintendent Kessler, Dr. Sasse first served for about 14 years in the parish ministry. Initially an assistant pastor in Advent Church, Berlin, and at Templin (1920-1921), he took over his first pastorate in Oranienburg, north of Berlin, where he had a parish of 10,000 souls in two churches (1921-1928), and then served as the pastor of St. Marien Church, Berlin, and as the *Sozialpfarrer* (welfare pastor) of Berlin (1928-1933). Even after his parish ministry ceased, the theologian remained at heart a pastor who cared for souls. During World War II, 1939-1945, he served part-time as a hospital chaplain; and here in South Australia it was a constant burden on his heart that his compatriots who were post-war immigrants should receive adequate spiritual care in their mother tongue. He himself gave the local pastors of his Australian spiritual home, Immanuel Church, North Adelaide, as much assistance as possible in this work.

During his studies at Hartford, and as a result of his reading, particularly in Wilhelm Loehe's *Three Books on the Church*, a theological development began which was to have a profound influence on Dr. Sasse's own life and career, and through him in wider circles. He had been serving within the circles of the Evangelical Church of the Union (the Prussian State Church), but his continued studies made him a convinced, confessional Lutheran. In May 1933 he took up duties as Professor of Church History, History of Dogma, and Symbolics in the University of Erlangen, Bavaria, serving there for about 15 years, until he emigrated. These were the years in which he was personally and deeply involved in the confessional aspects of church activity in Germany. He was one of the leading men in the establishment of the Confessional Church in Berlin in 1934, and provided the preparatory work on which its Bethel Confession was based. When the debate and negotiations of succeeding years culminated in the formation of the Evangelical Church in Germany in 1948, Dr. Sasse became a member of the Lutheran Free Church, and in the following year accepted a call as lecturer at Immanuel Theological Seminary of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church in Australia. He took this step under the conviction, in his own words, that 'where the Altar of our Lutheran Church is, there is our home'.

With his wife and family he arrived in Melbourne on September 11, 1949, on the *Surriento*, and was installed in his lectureship in the field of Church History on October 12. When the seminaries of the two former Lutheran Churches were amalgamated to form Luther Seminary of the Lutheran Church of Australia at the beginning of 1968, he continued to serve for another two years until the end of 1969, thus completing 20 years of service in the Australian institutions. Until his death he was an honorary and honoured member of the Faculty.

Dr. Sasse's retirement was not a signal for him to enter into inactivity. Although increasing age brought with it a handicap of physical infirmity, it did not much dim his mental and spiritual keenness; and his written contributions in particular continued to make him a teacher in the Church. The books, pamphlets, articles, reviews, and editorial work that came from his pen in the past 56 years, as listed in a recent bibliography, total almost 450 entries. They include such valued books as *Vom Sakrament des Altars* (Concerning the Sacrament of the Altar), which he edited and to which he contributed; *Here I Stand; This Is My Body*; and articles in the monumental *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* and in a number of theological encyclopaedias. He shared his theological insights and his assessment of ecclesiastical developments through contributions to a wide range of periodicals and other publications, both Lutheran and non-Lutheran, in Europe and England, North America, and Australia; and for varying periods of time during the years 1929 to 1938 he edited three or four periodicals. A selection of his articles was published in Germany, under the title *In Statu Confessionis*, as a 70th birthday tribute. A second volume was added last year to provide a two-volume 80th birthday tribute.

The breadth and depth of his knowledge and learning was known and appreciated in wide circles throughout the Christian Church. In 1927 he attended the World Conference on Faith and Order at Lausanne, Switzerland, and edited the German report of this Conference. He was a member of the Faith and Order Continuation and Executive Committee until 1936, and a member of the British-German Theologians Conference until the same year. He was active in the Lutheran World Convention, but was prevented by police action from attending its Assembly in Paris in 1935. He served as a guest-lecturer at the Wartburg (Dubuque) and Concordia Theological (St Louis) Seminaries, and twice at Concordia Theological (Springfield) Seminary. He lectured to many church groups and at many tertiary institutions in the cities of Australia, and in New Zealand centres. Through his voluminous correspondence he maintained close contact with eminent churchmen of many branches of the Christian Church in the world.

We remember with gratitude to God that in our Australian Church we were privileged to benefit from his presence. The universal respect in which he was held by all Lutherans in this land and his knowledge of the Scriptures and of the dogmas of the Church enabled him as a member of the Intersynodical Committee of the UELCA to make a very substantial contribution to the discussions which by God's grace led to the establishment of one Lutheran Church of Australia in 1966. Since then he has been a consultant of its Commission on Theology and Inter-Church Relations, and a participant as recently as the Friday before his death in the Roman Catholic-Lutheran dialogue in which one of its working committees is engaged.

It was in the difficult inflationary years, while he was the pastor at Oranienburg, that Dr. Sasse married Charlotte Margarete Naumann, the date being September 11, 1924. The marriage was blessed with two sons and one daughter. The daughter, Maria, died while the family was still in Germany; and his wife predeceased him on March 4, 1964.

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COMING BACK TO THE ROOTS

Concordia Theological Seminary was established in 1846 and in its 130-year history has had four addresses—Fort Wayne, St. Louis, Springfield, and now Fort Wayne again. Perhaps no other educational institution in the United States has had this kind of history and survived. The return to Fort Wayne has been made easier by the knowledge that the seminary has returned to its birthplace. Nearby still stands the home of Pastor Wyneken, pioneer Lutheran pastor in Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio, and the seminary's first professor and president. In November the seminary accepted formal photographs of the three men who were most important in the history of the seminary - Wilhelm Loehe of Neuendettelsau, the seminary's founder; Pastor Wyneken, the seminary's first head; and August Kramer, the one man who served at all three Fort Wayne, St. Louis, and Springfield locations, maintaining continuity in a period of geographical change.

The time has come for The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod to pay more heed to the theological heritage of Wilhelm Loehe, who is as much responsible for the Synod's origins as anyone else. In his small German village he trained pastors for the German immigrants. Later that training program was transferred to Fort Wayne. Wilhelm Loehe is still revered in Germany as a pastor, theologian, and humanitarian. The centennial of his death was

commemorated by special postage stamps. Neuendettelsau is still the location for a seminary, a hospital, and other institutions of mercy. In Fort Wayne, Missouri Synod Lutherans support a large parochial school system, a high school, a hospital, a home for the aging, and other charitable establishments. These institutions too reflect the spirit of Wilhelm Loehe.

Wilhelm Loehe always wanted to be thought of as a pastor. Nothing prevented him from visiting the sick. He was especially remembered for praying with the dying. Yet he was not one of those clergymen who are so busy with administration and parish activities that they have no time for theology. Loehe was an eminent theologian. His *Five Books on the Church* have been translated into English and are currently being published by Fortress Press. Many of his writings have been edited for publication in German, and a scholar is currently working at bringing this task to completion. His published liturgical writings are classical and are in the best tradition of the Lutheran Church. His agenda in translation could without difficulty be used in our churches. The services contained there are orthodox, confessional, and catholic.

Wilhelm Loehe provides a model for each graduate of Concordia Theological Seminary as a pastor, theologian, humanitarian, liturgist, and scholar. There is no antithesis between being a pastor and a theologian. A pastor who is not a theologian is a personality-technician. A theologian who is not a pastor is an academician. In Loehe, the roles of pastor and theologian were one. This concept of the ministry is the heritage of Concordia Theological Seminary. With this spirit Loehe served the Lutheran church 130 years ago, and with this same spirit Concordia Theological Seminary still seeks, by the grace of God, to serve the church today.

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FORT WAYNE SEMINARY SPONSORS ILCW SEMINAR

Concordia Theological Seminary extends a cordial invitation to all Lutheran pastors to participate on April 21 and 22 in a seminar on the new forms proposed by the Inter-Lutheran Commission on Worship for the celebration of Holy Communion. The next pages contain more detailed information about the program of the seminar.

The CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY has attempted to respond in an intelligent way to some of the materials

produced by the ILCW. Our assistant editor's comments in the last issue brought varied comments. The editor and others have taken up certain theological points in past issues of THE SPRINGFIELDER. The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod is the last of the three large Lutheran groups in the United States to take official action on the new worship forms. This matter might very well become the major issue at the Dallas Convention. Both those favoring and opposing the new forms are predicting victory for their point of view. Such statements are really quite premature, since a large percentage of the people have not even learned of what is involved.

The emotional element involved in changing hymnals and worship forms can never be underestimated. People have become accustomed to hymns and prayers to which some theologians and liturgical scholars might take exception. For many the hymnal rather than the Bible is the focal point of their religious life. The changes in the Book of Common Prayer brought riots and upheavals in sixteenth century England. It was the discovery by the Elector of Saxony that the Calvinists posing as Lutherans were planning to put a Calvinistic prayerbook in his wife's hands that caused him to dismiss the faculty at Wittenberg. The hymns and the liturgy are the theology of the people, and they are usually greatly concerned about keeping what they have. Luther knew this and he was very cautious and sensitive in introducing the liturgies that had to accompany the Reformation to make it complete in the lives of the people.

Concordia Theological Seminary is aware of its responsibilities to the Missouri Synod and to the liturgical legacy of the seminary's founder, Wilhelm Loehe. This year the seminary is offering the first in a series of seminars on issues of immediate, direct, and current concern to the church. The seminar arranged for this first year centers around the liturgy of Holy Communion. Liturgy is matter of concern for the entire Lutheran Church in the United States and is not of parochial dimensions alone. Recognized scholars from all synods and representing differing stances will participate. The program indicates that all sides will be heard from.

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Concordia Theological Seminary

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM SERIES

First Annual Symposium

"The ILCW as Factor in Lutheranism"

Thursday, April 21 - Friday, April 22, 1977

THURSDAY

11:30 - 1:00	Registration in the Auditorium Lobby
11:30 - 12:45	Lunch in Cafeteria
1:00 - 1:05	Welcome by Dr. Robert D. Preus, President Concordia Theological Seminary
1:05 - 1:50	"Introduction to the <i>ILCW</i> : A Historical Perspective" <i>Presenter</i> : Dr. Leigh Jordahl, Professor of Church History, Gettysburg Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
2:00 - 2:45	"The Theology of the Eucharistic Prayer" <i>Presenter</i> : Dr. Robert Jensen, Professor of Systematic Theology, Gettysburg Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
2:45 - 3:00	Coffee Break
3:00 - 3:30	<i>Respondent</i> : Dr. Gottfried Krodel, Department of Religion, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana
3:30 - 4:00	<i>Respondent</i> : Dr. Gerhard Foerde, Professor of Church History, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota
4:00 - 4:30	<i>Respondent</i> : Professor Bjarne Teigen, President Emeritus, Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota
4:30 - 5:30	Discussion
5:30 - 6:00	Vespers in the Kramer Chapel The Rev. Charles Evanson, Officiant
6:00 - 6:30	Koinonia in the Faculty Lounge for Registered Participants
6:30 - 8:30	Symposium Banquet <i>Speaker</i> : Dr. Oliver Olsen, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania "The Liturgical Crisis in the Lutheran Church Today"
8:45 - 9:30	Symposium Concert in the Kramer Chapel Concordia Cappella, Professor Daniel G. Reuning, Director
9:30	Reception in the Student Commons for Registered Participants

FRIDAY

7:00 - 8:00	Breakfast in the Cafeteria
8:00 - 8:30	Matins in the Kramer Chapel
8:30 - 9:15	"The Theology of the Offertory" <i>Presenter:</i> Rev. Hans Boehringer, Pastor, Faith Memorial Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, Indiana
9:15 - 9:45	<i>Respondent:</i> Dr. Lowell Green, Professor of History, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina
9:45 - 10:15	<i>Respondent:</i> Dr. Kenneth Korby, Department of Religion, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana
10:15 - 10:30	Coffee Break
10:30 - 11:30	Discussion
11:30	<i>Summation:</i> The Reverend Charles Evanson, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

All meetings shall be conducted in the Auditorium.

Concordia Theological Seminary

ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM SERIES

The Reverend Daniel G. Reuning, Coordinator

The 1977 Symposium Staff

Major Presentations

- Dr. Leigh Jordahl, Professor of Church History, Gettysburg Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
 Dr. Robert Jensen, Professor of Systematic Theology, Gettysburg Theological Seminary, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
 Dr. Oliver Olsen, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
 Rev. Hans Boehringer, Pastor, Faith Memorial Lutheran Church, Valparaiso, Indiana

Respondents

- Dr. Gottfried Krodel, Department of Religion, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana
 Dr. Gerhard Foerde, Professor of Church History, Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saint Paul, Minnesota
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 Dr. Kenneth Korby, Department of Religion, Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana
 The Reverend Charles Evanson, Redeemer Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Fees-Meals-Housing-Transportation: Registration fee \$20.00 includes banquet. A Registration fee of \$25.00 includes banquet and room. Breakfast and lunch are available for a nominal cost at the cafeteria. Fort Wayne is serviced by Delta, United Airlines, and Amtrak. Transportation from the terminals will be provided by notifying the seminary of your time of arrival.

Information: For further information, write: The Reverend Daniel B. Reuning, Concordia Theological Seminary, 6600 North Clinton, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46825.

New Wine In Old Bottles

ROBERT G. HOERBER

After thirty years of teaching and publishing in the area of the Greek classics, and recently privileged to transfer his attentions to New Testament studies, the author is reminded of the phrase of our Lord, "new wine in old bottles" (Matt. 9:17)—the "new wine being the newer subject of Biblical exegesis, and the "old bottles" representing the older methods of classical scholarship, especially in the nineteenth century. The further I delve into New Testament studies, the more I become aware of the similarity between these two periods of alleged scholarship—nineteenth-century classical scholarship and much of twentieth-century Biblical studies. Please do not misunderstand. The author is *for* scholarship—true, genuine, scientific scholarship. Not everything put in print, however, even in professional journals and books, under the threat of "publish or perish," represents true scholarship. Genuine scholarship is rare. Much of what passed for "scholarship" in the Greek classics in the nineteenth century was based largely on subjective opinion, not objective logical conclusion. The same may be said for much of the alleged "scholarship" in Biblical studies of the twentieth century. One prime difference is that classicists have tried and tested the subjective premises of the nineteenth century and have found many of them wanting, while Biblical exegesis to a large extent is still under the influence of assumptions formerly followed by classicists, but now discarded. To be specific, let us look more closely at an example of nineteenth-century "scholarship."

PLATO'S DIALOGUES AND SUBJECTIVE OPINION

The approach to the dialogues of Plato furnish an excellent example of nineteenth-century *subjective* "scholarship." Since the thirty-five dialogues seemed to some students of Plato to contain discrepancies, varying approaches to similar topics, and differences in style, two questions assumed prime importance in interpreting Plato. First, the genuine dialogues had to be separated from spurious treatises. Second, the genuine writings had to be placed in the chronological order in which they had been written. Only then could authentic statements be placed into a sequential order, to determine the evolution of Plato's thought, variations, and mental development. The logic behind such an approach appeared so scholarly that practically all Platonic scholars of the nineteenth century concentrated on the two questions of the authenticity and of the chronological order of the dialogues.

Robert Hoerber is professor of New Testament at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, and was formerly professor of classics at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. This essay was prepared as a lecture to the students of Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois.

That the criteria by which these students of Plato judged the question of authenticity were their subjective opinions rather than scholarly evidence is clear from the results of their varying conclusions. No major disagreement on the genuineness of the Platonic canon appeared before the nineteenth century, when Kant's philosophy gave impetus to the speculative mind. Friedrich Ast, for example, accepted only fourteen of the thirty-five dialogues as genuine, presumptuously regarding as spurious, among other dialogues, such compositions as the *Laws*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Meno*, *Laches*, *Charmides*, and *Lysis*. Socher, by contrast, accepted as authentic twenty-four treatises, including several rejected by Ast (e.g., *Laws*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Meno*), but rejected such basic dialogues as the *Parmenides*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman* (which had been accepted by Ast). K. F. Hermann and Stallbaum concluded that there were twenty-eight genuine compositions of Plato, while Susenich asserted that only twenty-four were authentic. Munk put his stamp of approval on twenty-three, and Ueberweg accepted only twenty-two of the thirty-five compositions, rejecting the *Parmenides*.¹

Subjective judgment was the primary standard on which these scholars based their varying conclusions. They studied Plato, his tenets, his approach to questions and his manner of treatment in a few dialogues, expecting all genuine compositions to have the same characteristics and to betray signs of a mental development. The dialogues which did not in their estimation measure up to these characteristics, or did not fit into a previously conceived plan of Platonic development, they were prone to pronounce spurious. It is only natural that such subjective judgment should produce numerous contradictory views on the genuineness and chronological sequence of basic Platonic works and should lead to the rejection by some scholars of such dialogues as the *Laws*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Parmenides*, and *Statesman*.

PLATO'S DIALOGUES, STYLOMETRY, AND LOGIC

The extremely subjective criteria of nineteenth-century Platonic scholarship have happily been replaced in part by more objective attempts to arrange in sequence the dialogues which are assumed to be authentic. Two basic criteria have been stylometry and the alleged development of Plato's logic. Aristotle states that the *Laws* was Plato's last work; scholars have noted numerous peculiarities of style in this and the other dialogues. Those dialogues which contain stylistic traits most similar to the *Laws*, Plato's last composition, are placed toward the end of his life, while the treatises which differ greatly in stylistic characteristics are put early in Plato's career as an author. Likewise, it is assumed that Plato's principles of logic grew and developed during his career. Some

dialogues contain faint, undeveloped, poor, and even fallacious reasoning, while others exhibit logical arguments which are sound, good, much improved, and equal to a philosopher. The former treatises then must belong to Plato's early career, and the latter are supposedly specimens of Plato's thought after more mature development in the study of logic.²

Although the criteria of stylometry and logic are more objective than subjective opinion, yet it must be noted that even these criteria are based on two presuppositions—namely, that Plato was not aware of erroneous reasonings in composing early treatises, and that stylistic peculiarities in dialogues have the same implication as in narrative. Both presuppositions fail to recognize that Plato wrote dramatic dialogues in *fact* as well as in *form*. That is, Plato purposely could have varied his style and his logic to suit the characters participating in each dialogue. When Socrates, for example, in the *Meno* discourses with a neophyte in philosophy who has been exposed merely to a few lectures by a skeptical sophist, Gorgias, the style and logic of that dialogue are suited to the personality of the dialogist. Any loose logical arguments on the part of Socrates serve to portray the mental deficiencies of Meno, not the embryonic logic of Plato. Also, stylistic peculiarities could depict purposely the variations in the style of the speakers, rather than a development in the writing ability of the author. Striking evidence is the difference in style, approach, and arguments in the *Republic*, *Laws*, and *Menexenus*, the genuineness of each of which Aristotle substantiates.³

PAUL'S EPISTLES AND THE TÜBINGEN SCHOOL

Having glanced briefly at some examples of the "old bottles"—the subjective opinions and presuppositions of previous classical scholarship—let us recall that we are not to put "new wine" in these "old bottles"—that is, we are not to employ secular presuppositions in our approach to Biblical studies. If subjective opinion and untested assumptions have been discarded by classical scholars, we are to be wary, lest we be misled by similar suppositions in our study of the Holy Scriptures.

One of the most glaring examples of subjective opinion in Biblical studies was the acceptance by the Tübingen school of only four of Paul's Epistles as genuine—namely, Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians—rejecting the remaining nine as spurious. These scholars of the nineteenth century based their judgment merely on subjective opinion. They formulate in their minds certain ideas—based on their study of Romans, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, and Galatians—ideas which they labelled Pauline. Since the other letters contained what they considered non-Pauline thoughts, these Epistles they termed

spurious, notwithstanding the solid evidence of early church tradition and of textual criticism. I mention the example of the Tübingen school, because the methods and conclusions of such an approach are rejected today by all reliable students of the Bible as most unscholarly, since the basis of their approach was subjective opinion pure and simple.

Or was the basis entirely subjective? If we look a little deeper, we may observe that behind subjective opinion was a basic philosophical assumption—the assumption of the nineteenth century that the key to the understanding of history, philosophy, and religion was development. The development in political theory, the development in scientific progress, the development in the industrial revolution of that time were immense. Hegel, furthermore, had taught that “the movement of human thought followed the dialectic pattern in which a position (thesis) was countered by an opposite position (antithesis) and from an interaction of these two emerged a new insight or aspect of reality (synthesis). Hegel saw in the history of religion the evolution of Spirit in its dialectical apprehension of the divine, from nature religions, through religions of spiritual individuality, to the Absolute Religion, which is Christianity.”⁴ As the assumption of progressive development no doubt lay behind the attempt of the classicists to see a development in Plato’s thought, logic, and style, so the same assumption of Hegelian dialectics influenced the approach to development in early Christianity. Paul, taking the position that the Christian is freed from the Law, represents the *thesis*. James and Peter, taking the opposite position that the Law was permanently valid and an essential element in Christianity, represented the *antithesis*. Apostolic Christianity, therefore, so it was claimed, must be read as a conflict between Pauline and Petrine Christianity, from which conflict emerged in the second century the Old Catholic Church, which represented the *synthesis*, or a harmonization of thesis and antithesis, of Paulinism and Petrinism.

ACTS AND HEGELIAN ASSUMPTIONS

It was against the background of the Hegelian concept of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis that the Acts of the Apostles was viewed as a second-century document which bolstered the synthesis or harmonization of Paulinism and Petrinism. It is true that an impressive list may be drawn up of parallel Petrine and Pauline events in the Acts of the Apostles, which might seem to argue for the Hegelian approach. Both Peter and Paul healed the lame and the ill, both opposed magic, both raised the dead, both were imprisoned and released miraculously, both were beaten by authorities, both ward off attempts to be worshipped, both addressed the Council at Jerusalem, both were encouraged by visions to continue to

preach, both observed Jewish ceremonies, both appeared before the Sanhedrin. But when more objective facts—rather than assumptions—are studied, the conclusion is established that the Acts of the Apostles is a first-century treatise—not a second-century document. I am referring, of course, to the work of Sir William Ramsay, who began his career under the assumption that the Acts of the Apostles was a more or less fictional account with an “axe to grind”—namely, to bolster the synthesis or harmonization of Petrine and Pauline factions. His archaeological research, however, soon convinced him that the objective facts of correct titles for provincial officials and geographical borders point definitely to an earlier composition of the Acts of the Apostles. Harnack is a good example of the influence of facts rather than assumption on the dating of the Acts of the Apostles. He also assumed at first that it was a second-century document, a view which he expressed in a volume dated 1887. Ten years later, however, he designated the period between 78 and 93 A.D. as the date of composition. After another nine years Harnack suggested the year 80 A.D., and finally in 1910 he concluded that the Acts of the Apostles was written before 64 A.D.⁵

ACTS AND TODAY'S SCIENTIFIC AGE

So we see that not only can purely subjective opinion be misleading, but also assumptions derived from contemporary thought may be equally misleading. We again employ the dating of the Acts of the Apostles as case in point. Today we are living in a scientific age. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of the test-tube and the laboratory experiment. Natural laws of physics and chemistry must be adhered to. The assumption that all events must agree with the laws of nature and ordinary human experience has permeated much of current theological thought and Biblical scholarship. The power of predicting future events is, therefore, questioned. Passages in the Old Testament which predict future events, therefore, must have been composed after the event, merely giving a false impression that these events were predicted at an earlier time.

A similar argument is used by many today in dating the Acts of the Apostles. Acts is the second volume of a two-volume work, Luke-Acts. Acts no doubt was written after the Gospel of Luke. But Luke gives a vivid description of the fall of Jerusalem, which occurred in 70 A.D. The Gospel of Luke, therefore, must have been written after the event—that is, after 70 A.D.—and the second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, should not be dated before about 80-85 A.D. The argument is based on the current assumption that the two-volume work of Luke-Acts could not have been composed until after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., mainly because the

power of supernatural prediction is denied to the authors of Scripture—and also is denied to our Lord and Savior, who foretold the destruction of Jerusalem in the Gospels.

We, of course, who accept Jesus as the Son of God, true God as well as true Man, as our Savior who possessed the supernatural power to heal, raise the dead, rise from death Himself—we have no problem in accepting in Jesus the ability to predict future events. But for the moment, let us examine the argument concerning the dating of the Acts of Apostles merely on the human level—even on the assumption that supernatural prediction of future events is impossible. I refer not to a theologian, but to a classicist who has no theological “axe to grind.” The question is discussed by C. H. Rieu in the introduction to the Penguin translation of the Acts of the Apostles as follows:

. . . The date of the writing of Luke's Gospel and the 'Acts' is still usually assessed as in the 80's A.D. The main argument for this late date hinges on the date of the Jewish war with Rome, 66-70, and the sack of Jerusalem by the Romans (70) which terminated it. The argument runs: Mark, the earliest Gospel, gives Jesus' prophecy of disasters in Judaea in general terms (chapter 13), but Luke is far more specific. In Luke 19:43 Jesus is recorded as saying 'Your enemies shall fix a palisade around you', and in 21:20f. 'When you see armies closing round Jerusalem, know that her desolation is at hand. . . Pagan feet will tread Jerusalem till pagan days are done'. Luke, it is argued, altered the version he found in Mark to make the prophecy fit the facts after the event. Therefore Luke wrote his Gospel after 70 A.D., and his second book the 'Acts', after that. The argument is not conclusive. The description of the siege and the sack are in general terms and could apply to almost any siege of any town. Jerusalem had been sacked and the Holy of Holies desecrated four times in the previous 500 years, and it did not need Jesus to prophesy that Jewish intransigence was leading to war with Rome, or who would win.

The same author continues:

The evidence seems to point to the period of Paul's imprisonment in Rome, namely 60-62, for the composition of the 'Acts', and Luke's Gospel too. It is unlikely that Paul was kept in prison for more than two years, and likely that he was either set free or tried and acquitted. In 64 Nero began the dramatic persecution of the Christians for which he is chiefly famous. In 67, it is thought Peter and Paul were martyred. Can anyone who reads the last eight chapters of 'Acts', which describe Paul's capture,

preliminary trials, and journey to Rome for trial by the Emperor, believe that if Luke had known of Paul's trial or acquittal or condemnation he would not have mentioned it? Or that the 'Acts', with its cool defence of Christianity, its calm optimism about it, and its unfeigned approval of Roman rule and law, was written after Nero's lions had been let loose on the Christians? Or that Luke knew about the martyrdom of Peter and Paul when he was writing? Or that he would have refrained from mentioning or hinting at retribution to come on the Jews if he had known about the sack of Jerusalem? It may be taken as likely, then, that the 'Acts' was written when the reader imagines it was written, during the two years of Paul's imprisonment described in the final paragraph, and the date for that we can fix with some certainty as 60-62. And the material for the 'Acts' and the Gospel was probably collected in Judaea during Paul's captivity in Caesarea, 57-59.⁷

THE GOSPELS AND MODERN ASSUMPTIONS

The assumptions of our current scientific age have affected also the approach to the accounts of the life of our Lord which constitute the Gospels. It is assumed by many twentieth-century students of the New Testament that historical reality must be understood only in terms of unbroken historical causality. All ideas of supernatural acts—not only the predictive power of Christ, but also His real incarnation, virgin birth, miracles, bodily resurrection, etc.—are *ipso facto* unhistorical, i.e., mythological. The Gospels, therefore, present a theological picture of Jesus that cannot be historical, but must be mythological. It is the function of the student of the New Testament to "demythologize" the Gospel accounts—to ascertain the theological truths by separating the mythological additions.

The argument of many current critics may be summarized briefly. The death of Christ occurred at approximately 30 A.D. The Gospels, which allude to the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., must have been written some time after 70 A.D.—possibly as late as 80-85 A.D. During the intervening fifty years the historical Jesus became "mythologized." That is, the words and deeds of Christ were told and retold numerous times. In the retelling of these events the historical facts gradually became embellished, changed, and distorted. Additions were made to historical fact. The Gospels, therefore, represent the "mythologized" Christ. The Gospels are a portrayal not of the historical Jesus, but rather of the faith of the church about fifty years after the death of Jesus. The Gospels; then, include much of "myth," of non-historical additions—yet these additions contain theological truths.

Two accounts in the Gospels may serve as illustrations. At the baptism of Jesus the Gospels tell of the appearance of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and the sounding of a voice from heaven declaring: "This is my beloved Son". According to many current interpreters, the Gospels do not relate historical facts at this point, but additional embellishment by the early church. These interpreters would "demythologize" the Gospel accounts by asserting that the appearance of a dove and the voice from heaven are merely later distortions added through the telling and retelling of the event of Jesus' baptism. Yet, they would hasten to add, that the mythologized account is true in that it teaches a theological truth, although not historical facts. The theological truth taught in the embellished version of the baptism in the Gospels is that Jesus is the chosen One, the Anointed One, whom God has picked to reveal His will to man.

Another account of interest in this connection is the transfiguration. Our Gospels relate that Jesus took Peter, James, and John to a mountain and that there appeared to them Moses and Elijah. Again, numerous current interpreters of the New Testament claim that the Gospels do not present historical facts here; for the details in the account of the transfiguration as recorded in the Gospels do not square with the knowledge and assumptions of our scientific age. The appearance of Moses and Elijah, these moderns would claim, in an additional embellishment which resulted from the telling and re-telling of a historical incident. Yet, they would hasten to add, the mythological embellishment teaches a theological truth—namely, that Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Law, which is represented by Moses, and the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophets, which is symbolized by Elijah.

PLATO AND MYTH

This use of myth as a form of presenting truth, although not historical fact, goes back to Plato. Since Plato held to a dualistic world—a world of eternal, unchanging, perfect Forms or Ideas beyond and above the world of the senses—it is only natural that myth plays an extraordinary role in his dialogues. For Plato myths were symbolic of the reality existing beyond the perceptive world. Plato's myths are the product of great imaginative and inventive power, which both fuses traditional elements to create new philosophical and mythical statements, and also produces completely new mythical constructs as being the only adequate means to express true thoughts. Plato uses reason (*logos*) as the dialectical presentation of thought, and myth (*mythos*) as the illustration of the metaphysical. Myth, to Plato, carries the arguments of reason beyond the frontiers of conceptual knowledge. This distinctive union of reason and myth in Plato is linked with the fact that his philosophy is a

doctrine of salvation—the destiny of the human soul. Plato, to be sure, presents *rational* arguments for the immortality of the soul in dialogues such as the *Phaedo*. But he also depends largely on myth—the myth of Er in the *Republic*, the myth of creation in the *Timaeus*, the myth of the tripartite soul in the *Phaedrus*—to illustrate philosophical truths which are beyond the realm of logical proof.

Plato's use of myth to carry the arguments of reason beyond the frontiers of conceptual knowledge may be seen, for example, in the myth of Er at the conclusion of the *Republic*. The soul of Er, a man who has been killed in battle, is transported to a meadow, where he sees a gap in the earth leading downward, and a corresponding gap in the heavens above. Souls of individuals lately deceased are departing through the two gaps, after judgment has been passed on them, to receive their respective punishments or rewards. There are also two similar gaps from which other souls are returning either from heaven or from Hades, after a period of rewards or punishments, to choose a type of life for their next existence on earth. Er observed these souls making their choice and then passing on to a new birth, to a juncture with a new physical body, before he is allowed to return to life and to report his experience. This myth is not meant to represent historical fact, as if there ever were a person Er, who had such an experience. Plato employs the technique of the myth to teach truths which are beyond the realm of conceptual knowledge—such as the immortality of the soul, rewards and punishments for the good and evil respectively after death, personal responsibility for human actions in contrast to any fatalistic determinism.

NEW TESTAMENT AND MYTH

Other ancient authors, in addition to Plato, employed myth in various ways. Myth was used by the Greek poets such as Homer and Hesiod—largely for the enhancement of their poems. It was used in the mystery religions to bolster the faith of the adherents. It was used for allegorical reinterpretation by some Stoics. There existed also cases of frivolous mockery, criticism, and rejection of the use of myth on ethical and rational grounds. But there is no fundamental repudiation on religious grounds until we come to the New Testament.

In the New Testament there are five occurrences of the noun *mythos*—four in the Pastoral Epistles and one in 2 Peter. In each case the term occurs in a negative statement, with complete repudiation of *mythos*. It is the means and mark of an alien proclamation, especially of errors combatted in the Pastoral Epistles. The *mythoi* are invented stories or fables destitute of truth. Here are the five passages:

1 Timothy 1:4, "Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith."

1 Timothy 4:7, "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness."

2 Timothy 4:3-4, "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."

Titus 1:14, "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth."

2 Peter 1:16, "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty."

Note the derogatory descriptions of myth—or, as translated in the King James' Version, fables—they are classified with endless genealogies, described as profane and old wives' fables, as opposed to sound doctrine and truth, as Jewish fables that turn from the truth, and as cunningly devised or invented.

It is highly probable that these myths or fables referred to in the Pastoral Epistles and in 2 Peter derived from an early form of Gnosticism which flourished on the soil of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity. Of fundamental significance is the antithesis between myth and truth. Also in Philo and in Origen myth is the direct opposite of truth.⁸ In general, there can be no doubt that the church in every age has insisted that there can be no relation between the *Logos* of the New Testament and myth. Myth as such has no place on Biblical soil, either as a direct impartation of religious truths or as symbol. Myth is not a form of religious communication. In the Bible we have from first to last the account and narration of facts, plus revealed interpretation of these facts. The essential theme is the same throughout, namely, what God says and what God does; neither of these things is myth, a symbol of truth. To Plato myth may be a symbol of eternal verities which are independent of all history. The central symbol of the Gospel, however, is the Cross, and this embodies a hard and unromantic historical reality. No myth can be interpreted into or imposed upon this symbol in any form, for the *logos* of the Cross would be made of no effect (1 Cor. 1:17). Nor can this

symbol be separated from its personal representative or historical setting, for without Christ at Golgotha the cross is indeed *kenos mythos*, a meaningless symbol or pagan sign.

Is there another way to make myth at home in the Biblical world? This question has to be faced in view of the current situation in Biblical studies. In spite of the facts adduced above, there have been and are many attempts to introduce myth into Christian terminology as something opposed to historical truth and yet containing positive value. Even when myth is used positively it tends to imply merely human interpretation.

MYTH IN CURRENT CLASSICAL STUDY

The question remains as to why the term "myth" was chosen for a theory in New Testament studies, although this term is so fraught with anti-Biblical connotations both in the New Testament and in early church history. A ready answer might be Plato's use of myth as a description of eternal verities which are beyond the concepts and rational proof of the material world of perception. The parallelism between Plato's use of myth and Bultmann's contention of seeing theological truth, but not necessarily historical mundane fact, in the Gospels may have played a part—even a substantial part—in the selection of the terms "myth," "demythologizing," etc. But one wonders whether another element did not play an extremely large part in the use of the term "myth" in recent New Testament studies. I am referring to the use of the term "myth" among current students of Greek mythology.

Students of Greek mythology distinguish three general types of stories, largely according to their development. One type is labelled *saga*, from the Scandinavian word for "tale" or "story." These stories supposedly originated with historical events. They are the results of legends developed around a historical person or event. Aeolus, for example, became in Greek mythology a character who controlled the winds with the power to soothe or excite them according to his pleasure. The origin of Aeolus, according to students of mythology, was probably a historical character who understood the techniques of sailing and who could tell the changes of weather and winds from the signs of the atmosphere. Through the telling and retelling of his unusual accomplishments, the historical character of ages past soon developed into a mythological character who controlled, and not merely foretold, the weather. Another example of *saga*, of legend growing up around a historical event, is the Trojan War. There did occur in history a conflict between the Greeks and a town on the Dardanelles. This conflict was apparently due to economic causes—the attempt by Troy to assess a tax or tribute on all Greek ships passing through the Dardanelles. Later romanticism, however, altered

the economic cause of the war into a struggle over the return of a beautiful woman, Helen, the wife of Menelaus.

A second type of mythological story is labelled *märchen*, from the German word meaning "fairy tale." Its sole purpose is to amuse or entertain. It did not develop from any historical person or event. It is a story pure and simple and makes no pretense at being anything else. *Märchen* would be the imaginative accounts of giants, witches, dragons, nymphs, etc. that inhabit forests, seas, and rivers. Parallels in modern mythology would be the fairy tales of Baron von Münchhausen.

There is also a third type of mythological story, which is called *myth proper*. It attempts to *explain* a name, a custom, or to *teach* a philosophical truth. The account of Icarus, for example, who escaped from Crete through the use of wings supplied by his father Daedalus—and then unfortunately fell into a sea and drowned—explains and accounts for the late name of that sea—the Icarian Sea. Another example of *myth proper* is the story of Cronus, the father of Zeus. Cronus had dethroned his father, Ouranus, as king of the gods and was told that some day he would be dethroned by one of his offspring. To avoid such a fate Cronus decided to devour each offspring of his at birth—and so he did devour, or swallow, each of his first five offspring—Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon—until he was tricked at the birth of his sixth offspring Zeus. According to many current students of mythology, this story is a *myth proper* in that it serves to teach a truth—although the events are not historical truth. The name Cronus means time. So the story of Cronus devouring his offspring teaches the philosophical truth that time destroys whatever it brings into existence. It is this use of "myth," as an explanation or a mode of teaching truth, which is parallel to the use of the terms "myth" and "demythologizing" in New Testament studies—a form conveying a theological truth, but not necessarily historical fact.

NEW WINE IN NEW BOTTLES

"New wine in old bottles"—our Savior advises against this combination, whether the "old bottles" are subjective opinions, or assumptions of scholarship supposedly based on contemporary scientific and rational premises. Nor are we to equate Biblical accounts with myth, whether myth is based on Plato's use of the term as beyond the *logos* of logical human narrative, or derives from the use of the term by current students of Greek mythology as a mode of teaching truth, but not historical fact. For, while Plato views *mythos* as on a higher plane than *logos*, many contemporary New Testament scholars regard *mythos* as a *distortion* of the *Logos*, the Word that became flesh. Jesus advises, not "new wine in old bottles,"

but "new wine in new bottles." For we have a new *Logos*—a Savior who, in addition to His work as our Redeemer, prepared His disciples to carry on the work of the kingdom of God, and who in His high-priestly prayer thought of all future generations in God's kingdom—including us of the late twentieth century—when He said: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them who shall believe on me through their *logos*," i.e., their word (John 17:20). The *Logos*, Christ, has given us the *logos* of the apostles and prophets, their written word, our Scriptures, which is inspired truth—not merely containing truth, or teaching truth through myth. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God" (2 Timothy 3:16). The new *Logos*, Christ, is comprehended and comprehensible only through the Biblical *logos*, inspired Scripture, which contains fact, not mythological fiction, and which harmonizes with true, genuine, unbiased scholarship.

The basic ingredient of "new wine in new bottles" —the reverent approach to Scripture as God's holy Word—is and must remain the Biblical teaching of inspiration. But inspiration, critics will maintain, is a matter of faith and not of history. These critics wish to place faith and history in opposite categories. Whatever, for example, in the Gospels speaks to Christian faith, they claim cannot be historically true, but must represent merely the faith of the church a generation after Jesus' death when the synoptic Gospels were composed. This assumption, however, does not stand the test of genuine scholarship. Let us in conclusion bring out several points of genuine scholarship as applied to the accounts of the synoptic Gospels.

CONCLUSION

The idea that faith and history are antithetical is a false assumption alien to true historiography. True history is not a mere chronicle of facts, dates, events, and persons. Most historians today admit that all good history is *interpreted* history. History always tries to understand the meaning of the events. The fact that a writer has a viewpoint does not mean that he is a poor historian and distorts the facts to support his interpretation. An unbeliever could not have written a gospel. He could report Jesus' words and deeds, but he would do so in a context of doubt and scepticism that would view Jesus either as a charlatan or as a deranged person. Only a believer could write a gospel which presents the good news of what God has done in Jesus. So the current trend to place faith and history in opposite categories is a false assumption, not substantiated by genuine scholarship.

Another false assumption of many current critics is that the Gospels represent a fourth stage in development—not (1) the historical Jesus, not (2) the early Jewish church, not (3) the

Hellenistic Jewish church, but (4) the Hellenistic Gentile church. Again, these alleged stages do not emerge clearly from our historical sources, but are the result of a methodology based on a set of presuppositions as to how history must have unfolded. This methodology does not take into account the fact that the Gospel tradition throughout its entire life was under the control of eyewitnesses who had seen and heard Jesus (1 Cor. 15:6). The Gospels assumed written form within about a generation after Jesus' death, when eyewitnesses were still in the church. The controlling influence of eyewitnesses is a fact of genuine scholarship that is too often ignored by many current critics.

As can be substantiated by genuine scholarship, the Gospels contain many evidences that the tradition was not completely recast by the faith of the early church, but does embody sound historical truth. Although in the early church, for example, the title "Christ" soon became a proper name for Jesus, in the synoptic Gospels Jesus avoided the title "Messiah" or "Christ." His favorite designation for himself was "the Son of Man," a title which apparently was not picked up by the early church. Again, while the early church called Jesus "the Son of God," in the synoptic Gospels Jesus does not attribute this title to Himself, but only the veiled term, "the Son." Also, Jesus was called the "Servant" (*pais*) in the early church (Acts 3:13, 26; 4:25, 30), but this usage was not read back into the synoptic Gospels. Other evidence in addition to the varied terms for Jesus likewise substantiates the view that the Gospel tradition is historically sound and not the creation of early Christian theology. I refer to the fact that the synoptic Gospels have little to say about the meaning of Jesus' death, although the redemptive meaning of Jesus' death was a central theological tenet in the early church. I refer to the fact that the Lord's Prayer in both Matthew and Luke contains no word that is uniquely Christian. I refer to the fact that the Sermon on the Mount has not a word about the grace of God. I refer to the fact that the synoptic Gospels do not attempt to answer one of the most pressing issues in the early church—the terms under which Gentiles might enter the church.

Genuine scholarship, based upon such facts, does not reject the Biblical portrait of Jesus in favor of a hypothetical historical Jesus; genuine scholarship rather substantiates the Gospel portrait as basically sound and in harmony with the Scriptural teaching of inspiration. Genuine scholarship merely substantiates, however; it does not prove. For we are dealing with "new wine in new bottles"—the reverent approach to Scripture as God's holy Word. Our faith, while merely substantiated by genuine scholarship, is in the final analysis the divine work of the Holy Spirit. It can come only by hearing,

and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). The *Logos*, the Word that became flesh, is revealed to us through the *logos* of the apostles and prophets.

The Smokescreen Vocabulary

ARMAND J. BOEHME

When reading theological works today, it is necessary for the reader to exercise a great deal of caution and discernment. Often contemporary theologians use the traditional terms of orthodox Christianity, but do so with changed meanings attached to them. In order to understand what these theologians are really saying, one must know what definitions they give to the words they use. The situation in our own Synod at the present time is an example of this problem. People on both sides of the controversy say, "I am totally committed to the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God." However, to understand what these words mean for the moderates in our church, it is necessary to carefully define the words *inspired*, *infallible*, *Word of God*, *Holy Scripture* and the *Bible*. This study will attempt to carefully examine and define the orthodox position of the Holy Christian Church and then compare it with the position of the moderates in our church. Several examples will follow of what redefined terminology can do to orthodox theology.

Our first inquiry concerns the word *inspired* or *inspiration*. The Christian Church from the earliest of times has defined *inspiration* as a quality of Scripture, its nature, its substance, what it is (God-breathed, *theopneustos*).¹ The Lutheran Church fathers also held to this definition of *inspiration*:

This agency of God, by means of which the Holy Scriptures were produced, we call *Inspiration* . . . "Divine inspiration was that agency by which God supernaturally communicated to the intellect of those who wrote, not only the correct conception of all that was to be written, but also the conception of the words themselves . . ."²

The inspiration of Scripture was considered to be not a theory but a doctrine of Scripture . . . As a doctrine of Scripture, the inspiration of Scripture becomes a matter of confession, a divisive article of faith; to deny the inspiration of Scripture is un-Lutheran.³

The church fathers of the LCMS held to the same definition of inspiration:

By confessing the doctrine of inspiration, we declare our belief—based on the words of the Bible itself—that the Holy Spirit exercised a special influence by which He guided His chosen instruments to speak the things He desired them to speak, and to write the things He desired them to write, in the precise manner and in the very words

in which He desired these things to be spoken or written.⁴ This same definition is seen in our Synodical catechism:

"By inspiration of God" means that God the Holy Ghost *moved* the holy men *to write*, and *put into their minds*, the very *thoughts* which they expressed and the very *words* which they wrote. (Verbal Inspiration.)⁵

In Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord, Part I (FCFL I), leaders of the moderate group in our church define inspiration in a far different way:

Accordingly, the inspiration of the written Word pertains to the effective power of the Scriptures to bring men and women to salvation through the Gospel. We affirm, therefore, that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God.⁶

Orthodox Lutheran writings define inspiration as what Scripture *is*. But FCFL I defines it as to what Scripture *does*, in reality a definition of the *divine efficacy* of Scripture (the work of the Holy Spirit in leading people to Christ). Although the *efficacy* of Holy Scripture is obviously connected with its *inspiration*, the terms are not interchangeable.

When Lutheran theologians speak of the Spirit's operation associated with the *writing* of the Scriptures, they use the term "inspiration"; when they speak of the Spirit's operation *through* the Scriptures as the Word of God to produce acceptance of and obedience to Scriptural teaching, they use the term "divine efficacy" . . . therefore, it is a confusion of the relationship between inspiration and Biblical authority to say that the inspiration of the written Word of God pertains to the effective power of the Scriptures to bring men and women to salvation through the Gospel.⁷

This distinction of terms has been muddled by the moderates who accept what the Bible *does* (efficacy of Scripture), but are doubtful as to what it *is* (inspired). Thus, by changing the definition for *inspiration*, they can accept the word without believing its true meaning.

Since the inspiration of Scripture is a doctrine of the Bible and an article of faith, this redefinition by the moderates has caused a division in the unity of the church. Moderates feel that differences "regarding the precise manner of inspiration and the exact nature of inerrancy should not be divisive of our fellowship."⁸ Here we see a clear break with orthodox Lutheran theology, for as was quoted earlier, "the inspiration of Scripture becomes . . . a divisive article of faith; to deny the inspiration of Scripture is un-Lutheran."⁹

The next word to be studied is *infallible*, which is a synonym for

"inerrant"; Webster defines the terms as "incapable of error," "not erring." The early church fathers held that Scripture was "exempt from error."¹⁰ The Reformers were of the same opinion. "God's Word is not false and does not deceive" (FCE, VII, Part 13; "Believe the Scriptures, they will not lie to you" (LC, V, 76); "God does not lie . . . and the Word of God cannot err" (LC, IV, 57). For the Bible "cannot contain discrepancies or contradict itself" (LC, IV, 50; FCSD XI, 34-35). Luther shows that if ANY word of Scripture were false, the whole of Scripture would crumble and the Gospel would be lost, along with the assurance of forgiveness of sins through the sacraments, since they derive that power from the Word of God in the sacrament.¹¹ In fact, Luther confessed and believed in the absolute inerrancy of Scripture.¹² Our Lutheran forefathers held the same doctrine:

Inspiration and inerrancy are concomitants: the idea of an erring Scripture, an erring Word of God, is simple nonsense, a *contradictio in adjecto*. "Whatever is inspired by God," says Quenstedt, "is to be believed simply on account of itself and is quite above all criticism; it is true for all times and immutably so; it is free from all error and untruth. An inspired falsehood is an impossibility, since God cannot lie either directly or through others." To orthodox Lutheran theology, therefore, any charge against the truthfulness of Scripture is an attack on the truthfulness of God.¹³

Hence it follows, that everything that is contained in the Holy Scriptures is altogether, and in every particular, true and free from all error.¹⁴

Our church confesses the same belief in our Synodical catechism: "Every word of the Bible is *God's Word*, and, therefore, the Bible is without error."¹⁵ The Brief Statement of 1932 reaffirmed this position:

Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and secular matters, John 10:35.¹⁶

The moderates, however, see the inerrancy of Scripture a bit differently:

The reliability or "inerrancy" of the Scriptures cannot be determined by twentieth century standards of factuality. Nor do the Scriptures link the work of the Holy Spirit with this kind of "inerrancy." The purpose of the Spirit imparted by our Lord is to lead us into the whole truth about what God was doing in Jesus Christ, that we

might be redeemed and He may be glorified. In disclosing that Truth God does not err, and in achieving that purpose the spirit active in the Word does not lead us astray...¹⁷

Here is a subtle redefinition of *inerrancy/infallibility* on the part of the moderates. The above quotation states that one is inerrantly lead to Jesus Christ through the Scripture. Inerrancy goes only so far as the Gospel in the narrow sense. For FCFL, the Holy Spirit does not lead us astray only insofar as He reveals Christ.

From a reading of the rest of FCFL I, it is obvious that the authors and signers do not accept or believe that the Bible is free from all errors, but actually feel that the Holy Spirit and God's Word can be mistaken in matters of history. On page 29 FCFL I states that God does not have to fulfill all of His promises in order to be truthful (God can lie?); historical discrepancies are taken for granted (pp. 25-26); the Bible is stated to contain only imperfect human words (pp. 13, 37, 40, 41); certain isolated miraculous details are said to lack authenticity (truthfulness) (p. 19). Obviously FCFL I does not define *inerrant/infallible* as "without error in all its parts," but only "without error in showing the Gospel." Professor James M. Childs, moderate respondent at the April 1975 Convocation put it bluntly:

It is the judgment of many of us, who have studied this matter for many years, that the whole witness of Scripture to itself, both in its declaratory statements and in the character of its text, does not support the use of inerrancy as indicating flawlessness or factual precision in all parts of Scripture.¹⁸

The moderates in synod favor an error-filled "inerrant" Bible, which Lutheran orthodoxy rejected at its inception—once again an example of how a redefinition of terms can negate their actual meaning.¹⁹

Our attention now turns to the *Holy Scriptures* or the *Bible* (terms that are used interchangeably in orthodox Lutheran writings).²⁰ Orthodox Christianity has always held that the Scriptures are the *Word of God*:

If there ever was a general consent of the Church Catholic on any question, it exists on this. East and West, from the earliest to the latest times, concurred in assigning to Scripture a pre-eminence which consisted in its being—as no other collection of writings is—the Word of God.²¹

Chemnitz, in the *Examen*, quotes many church fathers to show this very point.²² The orthodox theologians of the early and medieval church all "regarded Scripture as the very Word of God in which God infallibly communicates divine truths."²³

Martin Luther unequivocally accepted the Scripture as the Word of God. "The two terms 'the Scriptures' and 'the Word of God' are, according to Luther, perfectly synonymous."²⁴ Even Paul Althaus, a critic of Luther's position, had to admit this point from his research:

This view of faith accords with the fact that although Luther criticized the Bible in specific details, he nonetheless followed the tradition of his time and basically accepted it as an essentially infallible book, inspired in its entire content by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore "the word of God," not only when it speaks to us in law and gospel . . . but also—and this is a matter of principle—in everything else that it says. Seen as a totality, its historical accounts, its world view, and all the miracle stories are "God's word" given by the Holy Spirit; they are therefore all unquestionable truths, to be "believed" precisely because they are contained in the book.²⁵

Althaus is not the only Luther scholar to reach this conclusion. A. Skevington Wood reaches the same conclusion in his book, *Captive to the Word*:

For the most part Luther adhered to his original practice of using "God's Word" as an equivalent for the Bible. He referred regularly to "Sacred Scripture" or "Holy Writ," each of which he brackets with "God's Word". He spoke of "Divine Scripture" or "God's Scripture", which again he associated with "God's Word". He often called the Bible simply "God's Book".²⁶

Luther even went beyond the statement that the Bible was the very Word of God to believing that the words recorded in the four Gospels, as spoken by Jesus, were in reality Jesus' actual words spoken in a given historical situation:

. . . the chief and foremost thing in the sacrament is the word of Christ, when he says: "*Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you.*" Likewise also, when he took the cup, he said: "*Take and drink of it, all of you, this is the cup of the new testament in my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me.*" Everything depends on these words. Every Christian should and must know them and hold them fast. He must never let anyone take them away from him by any other kind of teaching, even though it were an angel of heaven (Gal. 1:8).²⁷

The very words of Christ were Luther's only defense against the Sacramentarian heresies. His unshakeable confidence in the

historicity of these words is coupled with his tenacity in insisting that they be believed.

The Confessions also equate Scripture and the Word of God. The preface to the Book of Concord is an excellent example of the confessional use of "the Word of God" as a synonym for "Holy Scripture."²⁸ Orthodox Lutheran theologians felt the same way:

Unequivocally and without reservation the orthodox Lutheran theologians call Scripture the Word of God . . . A typical definition of Scripture as God's Word is given by Gerhard: "Holy Scripture is the Word of God, reduced to writing according to His will by the evangelists and apostles, revealing perfectly and clearly the teaching of God's nature and will, in order that man might be instructed from it to life everlasting."²⁹

Our Synod's position was delineated by Dr. Pieper in his *Dogmatics*, where he powerfully shows from passages of Holy Scripture that the Bible is the Word of God.³⁰ He states that "Scripture and God's Word are therefore actually to be 'identified' . . . Holy Scripture and the Word of God are interchangeable terms."³¹ Dr. Engelder follows in this same tradition of orthodox Christianity and equates the Bible with the Word of God. He shows the grave errors that creep into the doctrines of the Church when so-called theologians no longer believe the Bible is in its entirety the Word of God, but only contains the Word of God.³² The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod officially holds to this orthodox belief that "the Bible is God's Word."³³ In the Common Confession adopted by the Missouri Synod in 1950, our church acknowledged ". . . the Holy Scriptures in their entirety as the inspired Word of God . . . We, therefore, recognize the Holy Scriptures as God's inerrant Word, and this *Word of God alone shall establish articles of faith*."³⁴

Now, Dr. Paul Bretscher, a leading moderate, in *After the Purifying*, acknowledges, to be sure, that Synod's official doctrinal position equates the Bible with the Word of God.

In the prevailing theology of our Synod, however, the Word of God is taken to mean the Holy Scriptures. And Scripture is the Word of God, not because its Gospel is the Word of God, but because God is the true author of every word in the Bible . . . Inevitably, then, the Scriptures are regarded as broader than the Gospel.³⁵

Bretscher clearly states, however, that the feelings of the moderate minority on this point differ greatly from the prevailing beliefs of the members of Synod:

But what do the members of the Synod have in mind when they hear and use that phrase, "the Word of God"? To many, perhaps most, it means the inspired and inerrant

Scriptures, with God as the true Author of every word. To a minority, however, "the Word of God" means the Spirit's proclamation of grace in Christ to sinners . . .³⁶

Bretscher goes further:

The Word of God, meaning Christ and the Gospel which proclaims Him, is the true glory and authority of the Bible. For the sake of that message, it is proper to call the Holy Scriptures "the Word of God."³⁷

The moderates no longer accept that the Bible *is* the Word of God. They only allow the Bible to be termed "Word of God" because of the Gospel contained in it. In other words, for the moderates, the Bible only *contains* the Word of God, an obvious departure from orthodox Lutheran theology. The moderates have thus lost sight of the fact

. . . that the *Sola Scriptura* of the Reformation depends on the firm belief that the Bible *is* the Word of God. Where this belief is shaken or even abandoned, the authority of Scripture collapses. This is the tragedy of modern Protestantism. We cannot deal here with the process of the collapse. We only note that first the theologians and then one after another of the churches severed Scripture from the Word in their official statements of faith. They were satisfied with the assumption that the Word is only contained somewhere in the Scriptures, or that the Scriptures are only a record of a past revelation in the mighty acts of God which were the true Word of God. Or we hear that under certain circumstances the Bible can become the Word of God.³⁸

Luther himself is brought into the controversy as Reverend Thomas Strieter, a moderate spokesperson, states that "the Word of God for Luther is always ultimately Christ."³⁹ Strieter does not accept the fact that Luther equated the Scriptures with the Word of God. This is an amazing assumption in light of Luther's statement:

The Holy Scripture is the Word of God, written and (as I might say) lettered and formed in letters, just as Christ is the eternal Word of God cloaked in human flesh. And just as Christ was embraced and handled by the world (*in der Welt gehalten and gehandelt*), so is the written Word of God too.⁴⁰

Luther asserts clearly that "Scripture is the Word of God."

Now, on the day of ordination a candidate for the Lutheran ministry in our midst is asked, "Dost thou believe the canonical books of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" The candidate then replies, "*I do so believe.*"⁴¹ Perhaps it is due to

their desire to give an affirmative answer to this ordination question that the moderates have felt constrained to redefine the terminology within it. But such a tactic is actually an evasion rather than an answer to the church's question. All this redefinition of theological terms relating to the Bible leads, moreover, to many other deviations from the traditional theology of the Synod. Several brief examples follow:

Dr. Alfred von Rohr Sauer, in his Bible-study of the book of Jonah⁴² for ELIM-PERCA (moderate educational group), concludes that the book is only a parable or a didactic narrative and not factual history (p. 2). He does not believe that the Jonah in the book is the prophet Jonah who lived during the age of Jereboam II (p. 3). He questions whether God really performed the miracles found in Jonah, and states that the evidence is negative (pp. 4-5). He further concludes that the book is strikingly similar to "some very well-known fairy tales" (p. 4). He implies that Jesus was too uninformed to know that the events recorded in the book of Jonah are not factual (pp. 5-6). Luther affirmed otherwise.⁴³

The moderates are also led to question whether the actual words of Jesus are recorded in the Bible. Dr. Frederick W. Danker concludes in his commentary on Luke, "therefore it is impossible to recover without argument the very words of Jesus spoken on a given historical situation."⁴⁴ This statement jeopardizes the power of the Gospel to forgive sins through the sacraments. Christ's commands to baptize and to eat and drink His body and blood become suspect and doubtful, as these commands are attributed to Him only in two specific historical situations (Ascension Day and Maundy Thursday). These words of Christ, recorded in the Bible, are what give the sacraments the power to forgive sins. If these words are doubted or become suspect, then the forgiveness of sins dispensed through them is lost. Luther, however, stood on the exact words of Christ, and defended them and the Gospel message they spoke against all attack.⁴⁵

Dr. John Tietjen, president of Seminec and focal point for many moderates, goes even further in an interview in the October 5-6, 1974, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. In response to the question, "What is your devil then?" Dr. Tietjen replied:

The devil of doubt. Really basic doubt. Not did Jesus actually walk on water, but the question of whether the really basic tenets of the Gospel are true: that God exists, that He is actively involved in the history of the world, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

From Jonah, to Jesus' words, to the truth of Jesus' ultimate victory over death, the moderate movement from redefined terminology to doubting theology is clear. We can only hope and

pray that if some men wish to hold to a different theology that they openly and honestly invent new terms, rather than attempt to cover their doubts by a smokescreen of words that can only confuse and cover the clear theological differences that exist.

FOOTNOTES

1. Herman Sasse, "The Inspiration of Scripture," in J. W. Montgomery, *Crisis in Lutheran Theology*, Vol. II (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1973), pp. 13-14. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, Committee trans. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), pp. 265-276. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration," in Carl F. Henry, ed., *The Revelation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), pp. 205-217. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 60-64. C. H. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 53-106, 147-174. H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), pp. 12, 18, 381-385. P. E. Kretzmann, "The Inspiration of the New Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. II, No. 9 (September, 1931), pp. 655-666, No. 10 (October, 1931), pp. 754-761. Siegbert W. Becker, *The Scriptures: Inspired of God* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1971). Wm. Jurgens, ed., *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1970), pp. 69, 74, 76, 177, 192, 203. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948). L. Gaussen, *Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, n.d.).
2. H. Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. by C. A. Hay & H. E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 39.
3. Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 274. See also pages 254-403. E. F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 17-25, 154-160; this book contains excellent studies of Luther's concept of inspiration and inerrancy, as well as Chemnitz. Robert D. Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1955), pp. 26-49. See also Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-298 for a discussion of Luther's doctrine of inspiration; see also pp. 303-306 for a clear discussion of the results of a denial of the inspiration of Scripture. Alan M. Stibbs, "The Witness of Scripture to Its Inspiration," in Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-118.
4. L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, eds., *The Concordia Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 77; see also p. 78. Walter F. Albrecht, "Holy Scripture the Word of God," in Theo. Laetsch, ed., *The Abiding Word* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 1-34. Erwin Lueker, ed. *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), pp. 413-414. Dr. C. F. W. Walther boldly confessed the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, see Robert D. Preus, "Walther and the Scriptures," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 11 (November, 1961), pp. 670-677. For an excellent discussion of the relationship between the doctrine of the Incarnation and inspiration see Olav Valen-Sendstad, *The Word That Can Never Die*, trans. by N.A. Madson, Sr. and Ahlert H. Strand (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 26-53. J. A. O. Preus, *It Is Written* (St. Louis: Con-

cordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 15-19, 31-40, 48, 52-55. David P. Scaer, *The Apostolic Scriptures* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 11-17.

5. *Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 41. Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-228. J. A. O. Preus, "A Study Edition of A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles," CTCR Document (St. Louis: n.n., 1972), pp. 18-20, 26-29.
6. *Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord*, Part I (n.p.: n.n., n.d.), p. 36. The moderates also use the term inspiration in a blanket way for all the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian as well as the inspiring of the authors of the Bible to write. In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian that helps his preaching, teaching, witnessing, etc. is placed on the same level as the inspiration of the writers of the Bible. The moderates see very little, if any, difference between the two things.

This phenomenon is seen in the ELIM document just released by John D. Frey, "Is the Bible Inerrant?" (Prairie Village, Kansas: n.n., 1976), pp. 20-21, 28-34. On page 32, Frey declares that Paul ascribes "inspiration, not just to the apostles, but to all Christians of all generations . . . the Holy Spirit stands behind the Christ-centered message of every sincere disciple, witness and pastor." In their confessional document (*Faithful I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37), too, the moderates equate the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian (illumination) and the unique work of God the Holy Spirit in moving holy men to write (inspiration). Pieper clearly saw this damaging error among the modernist, liberal clergy of the 1920's. Dr. Pieper writes (*op. cit.*, p. 283):

We have seen that it is a characteristic of modern theology to place the inspiration of Scripture essentially on the same level with the illumination of all Christians; to assume with reference to the knowledge and teaching of the truth, not a specific difference, but only one of degree between the writers of Holy Scripture and all Christians with their teachers; and to argue that as the illumination does not make Christians and their teachers inerrant, so, too, the inspiration of the holy writers does not guarantee the inerrancy of Scripture, though, of course, the writers of Scripture did enjoy a richer measure of the Holy Ghost. Luther, on the other hand, holds that there is not merely a difference in degree, but a specific difference between illumination and inspiration, between illumined teachers of the Church and the inspired writers of Scripture. What the inspired writers of Holy Scripture teach is out and out God's own Word; as to the enlightened teachers of the Church, such as Luther and the rest, they teach God's Word only inasmuch and insofar as "we repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the Prophets and Apostles." (St. L. III: 1890).

Hence, we see that to equate illumination with inspiration—as the moderates have done—is either to elevate man's words to being God's Word, or to pull God's Word down to the level of all other human discourse; both are a denial of the orthodox Christian doctrine of inspiration.

7. "The Inspiration of Scripture," CTCR Document (n.p.: n.n., 1975), p. 15.
8. *Together In Mission*, Vol. II, No. 1 (May, 1975), p. 4. *Report of the Advisory Committee on Doctrine and Conciliation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), pp. 1-32.
9. R. Preus, *Post-Reformation*, *op. cit.*

10. Kelly, *op. cit.*, p. 61. See also J. A. O. Preus, *Written, op. cit.*, pp. 24-28, 56-60. Scaer, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67. Pierre Ch. Marcel, "Our Lord's Use of Scripture," Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-134. "If there was one point of universal agreement among all of these (Calvin, Tridentine decrees, pre-Reformation Scholasticism) aside from the nude assertions of the Ecumenical Creeds, it was the authority, the inspiration, and the inerrancy of the Sacred Scriptures. It is not surprising, therefore, that we do not have an explicit article on the Sacred Scriptures in the Lutheran Symbols." Note well how all parties at the time of the Reformation were in agreement here! Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Position of the Church and Her Symbols," in "Essays on the Inspiration of Scripture," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXV (October, 1954), p. 740. "The infallibility of Scripture was the consensus of the church irrespective of denominational affiliations until long after A.D. 1700." Helmut Echter Nach, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the 'Autopistia' of Holy Scripture," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (April, 1952), p. 260. "Study the sacred scriptures which are true and given by the Holy Spirit. 3. Bear in mind that nothing wrong or falsified is written in them." St. Clement, "Letter to the Corinthians" (45, 2-3), in Robert M. Grant, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, trans. Holt H. Graham (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965), p. 74. "Neither does Scripture falsify anything, nor does the Holy Spirit deceive His servants, the prophets, through whom He is pleased to announce to men the will of God." St. Hippolytus of Rome, "Commentary on Daniel" (4,6), in Jurgens, *op. cit.*, p. 164; see also pages 11, 65, 88, 175. "The apostles, being disciples of the truth, are apart from every lie. For a lie has no fellowship with the truth, any more than light with darkness, but the presence of one excludes the other." Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" (Book III, 5,1), in Cyril Richardson, ed., *Early Christian Fathers* ("The Library of Christian Classics," Vol. I; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 376; see also pp. 370-375.
11. "Neither does it help them to assert that at all other points they have a high and noble regard for God's words and the entire gospel, except in this matter. My friend, God's Word is God's Word; this point does not require much haggling! When one blasphemously gives the lie to God in a single word, or says it is a minor matter if God is blasphemed or called a liar, one blasphemes the entire God and makes light of all blasphemy. There is only one God who does not permit himself to be divided, praised at one place and chided at another, glorified in one word and scorned in another. The Jews believe the Old Testament, but because they do not believe Christ, it does them no good. You see, the circumcision of Abraham (Gen. 12:10 ff.) is an old dead thing and no longer useful. But if I were to say that God did not command it in its time, it would do me no good even if I believed the gospel." LW 37, 26. See also pp. 131, 308.
12. M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1944); reprinted in *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (August, 1960). See especially chapters 5 and 6 which are titled, "Luther Never Admitted Any Error In Scripture." and "Even Those Parts of Scripture That Do Not Concern Our Salvation Were Considered Errorless By Luther." John W. Montgomery, "Lessons From Luther on the Inerrancy of Holy Writ," in J. W. Montgomery, ed., *God's Inerrant Word* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1974), pp. 63-94. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-114.
13. R. Preus, *Post-Reformation, op. cit.*, p. 342; also pp. 339-362. R. Preus, *Inspiration, op. cit.*, pp. 76-87. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-224.
14. Schmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 39.
15. *Small Catechism, op. cit.*, p. 41. Walther confessed and believed the inerrancy of Scripture, see R. Preus, *CTM, op. cit.*, pp. 685-691. J. A. O.

- Preus, "Study Edition," *op. cit.*, pp. 31-34. R. Preus, "Notes On the Inerrancy of Scripture," in Montgomery, *Crisis*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-47; this article is also found in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6 (June, 1967), pp. 363-375. H. Roepe, "The Proper Use of the Bible," in Theo. Laetsch, ed., *The Abiding Word*, Vol. I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), pp. 67-84. Milton L. Rudnick, *Fundamentalism & the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 111-113.
16. "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 3. P. E. Kretzmann, *The Foundations Must Stand* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 69 ff. P. E. Kretzmann and Theo. Graebner, *Toward Lutheran Union* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), pp. 1-22. *ACDC, op. cit.*, pp. 1-32, 67-110. See also Robert G. Johnston, *The Scriptures: Sacred Fact or Pious Fiction?* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1970). J. W. Montgomery, "Biblical Inerrancy: What Is at Stake," and C. H. Pinnock, "The Inspiration of Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ," in Montgomery, *Inerrant Word, op. cit.*, pp. 15-42, 201-218. Paul Woolley, ed., *The Infallible Word* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967).
 17. *Faithful I, op. cit.*, p. 37. Robert H. Smith, Seminex professor, provides an interesting and informative view of the moderate (middle of the road) position on inerrancy. In *Currents In Theology and Mission*, Vol. II, No. 1 (February, 1975), p. 46, Smith describes Roman Catholic theologian, Raymond Brown, as a middle of the road theologian, "recognizing that the Bible can be fallible in matters of history, that the Bible utilizes many literary forms including fiction and parable, and that the Bible nevertheless is the inspired and inerrant Word of God's truth." See also the clear distinctions and differences between the moderate view of inerrancy and the orthodox Lutheran doctrine in "A Comparative Study of Varying Contemporary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation," CTCR Document (n.p.: n.n., 1973), p. 6. This report is all the more revealing when it is noted that a leading moderate spokesperson, Dr. Paul Bretscher, helped to write the moderate column of this document. Differences between the moderates and orthodox Lutherans are seen in other areas of theology throughout the rest of this document, which is also found in *Convention Workbook 1973*, pp. 435-448. *ACDC, op. cit.*, pp. 23-31. Kurt Marquart, "In the Name of God . . . What 'False Doctrine'?" *Christian News*, April 5, 1976, pp. 7-11.
 18. James M. Childs, Jr., "A Response to Dr. Tepker's 'The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures' " (paper presented at the April 1975 Convocation). For a reprint of this paper, see *Christian News* (April 21, 1975), p. 11.

Caution is also necessary when reading "Is the Bible Inerrant?" by John Frey, *op. cit.* This document cleverly redefines inerrancy so that it no longer means exempt from *all* error. This new definition of inerrancy is conditional—by the author's own admission (p. 42); the conditions being: (a) Does Scripture say what it intends to say? (b) Does what Scripture intends to say correspond to fact? This, of course, narrows inerrancy down to the Gospel since "it is the intent of Scripture to bear witness to Christ, lead us to faith in Him" (p. 41). And since what Scripture says corresponds to fact (i.e., Scripture *really* bears witness to Christ and reveals the way of righteousness), the Bible, therefore, *may be called* "inerrant," (p. 41). No matter how boldly the author may claim to confess the inerrancy of Scripture, his booklet states that he does not—unless one accepts his redefinition of the term "inerrant." The author calls the Bible "inerrant" even though he finds it filled with discrepancies, conflicts,

mistakes, contradictions, flaws, differences, diversity, variations, problems, differences in detail, disagreements, inaccuracies, deficiencies, oversights, misunderstandings, and a lack of precision.

The use of Scripture in this document calls to mind this statement of Luther concerning the Sacramentarians (LW 37,51; pp. 74, 110):

It is shameful, however, that they have not enough decency and honesty to admit openly what they really wish in their hearts . . . but allege instead that the Scriptures constrain them—which they know is not true, for they seize the Scriptures with guile and malice in order to use them as a cloak before the people, and under the guise of Scripture they spread their poison among the people.

For an evangelical Christian treatment of many of the passages used by Frey see W. Arndt, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), and W. Arndt, *Bible Difficulties* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971). Luther's statements concerning some of these passages can be seen in Reu, *op. cit.*, chapters 5 and 6. His conclusion—absolute inerrancy. Luther became disturbed with so-called theologians who became enamored with the supposedly contradictory passages in the Bible, were lead to doubt the authority of the Bible and would use such passages to "try hard to shake the reliability of sacred history," LW 6, 315. Luther warned those who thought it praiseworthy to pass unrestricted judgments concerning the dark and difficult statements of Scripture (i.e., as a result of these dark passages, the Bible must have mistakes, flaws, etc.) that this was "a disease of our nature against which an exegete of Holy Scripture should carefully guard himself." WA 42, 430, 35ff., quoted in Reu, *op. cit.*, p. 52. "It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself; it only appears so to senseless and obstinate hypocrites," WA 9, 356, quoted in Montgomery, *Inerrant Word, op. cit.*, p. 66. "Scripture cannot err," LW 40, 351. "The Word of God is the very wisdom of God and the absolutely infallible truth," LW I, 122. "Only Holy Scripture is to be considered inerrant," WA 34, 347; SL 13b, 1976, quoted in Klug, *op. cit.*, p. 109. See also LW 13, 383; LW 16, 96; LW 27, 324; LW 32, 11; LW 36, 343; LW 37, 49-51, 279; LW 45, 147. For an excellent treatment of Luther on the inerrancy of Holy Writ see Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-114. See also Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-303 for a clear refutation of the errors in Frey's booklet.

19. For an excellent discussion of the analytical and theological meaninglessness of a non-inerrant inspired Scripture in the light of the moderate redefinition of inerrancy, see John W. Montgomery, "Inspiration and Inerrancy; A New Departure." in J. W. Montgomery, ed., *Crisis In Lutheran Theology*, Vol. I (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1973), pp. 33-42. For a clear analysis of the theological differences between moderates and orthodox Lutherans, see John W. Montgomery, "Theological Issues and Problems of Biblical Interpretations Now Facing the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," *Crisis*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-109; especially pp. 95-100. C. H. Pinnock, *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967).
20. *Small Catechism, op. cit.*, p. 40; *Concordia Cyclopedia, op. cit.*, p. 77; Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
21. Pinnock, *Revelation, op. cit.*, p. 148. "The Medieval Western Church had never questioned the divine inspiration and authority of the canonical writings of the Old and the New Testament. In their conflict with Rome, the Lutherans could take for granted that they and their opponents ac-

- cepted the Bible as God's Word." F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America*, 4th ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 144.
22. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. by F. Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 150-163.
 23. Pinnock, *Revelation*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
 24. E. H. Klotzsche and J. T. Mueller, *The History of Christian Doctrine* (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1945), p. 169.
 25. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. by R. C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 50-51.
 26. A. Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), p. 140; see also pp. 141-143. Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 278 ff. Th. Engelder, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken* (Yuba City, Cal.: Scriptural Anchor Publications, n.d.), pp. 290-291, footnote 241. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-38.
 27. LW 36, 277. See also LW37, pp. 25, 28, 64, 79, 139, 149. J. Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1961), p. 260.
 28. F. Bente, ed., *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), pp. 5-25. "The Luth. Confessions do not include a separate systematic treatment of inspiration; they take for granted that the Bible is God's Word and the only infallible guide and authority," Lueker, *op. cit.*, p. 413. "The Lutheran Confessions take for granted that a Christian accepts the Scriptures as God' Word, both as God speaking in this Word here and now and as God's Word spoken in times past through the holy writers," Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 146. See also R. Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 23-37. A. Boehme, "Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord, Part I—A Study: In the Light of the Lutheran Confessions" (unpublished M. Div. thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary Library, Springfield), pp. 23-47. "We have seen on the basis of many quotations from the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church that the Lutheran confessors regarded Holy Scripture as the Word of God and that they used it as 'the pure, clear fountain of Israel,' from which alone they wished to draw their doctrine." F. Kramer, "Sacra Scriptura and Verbum Dei in the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2 (February, 1955), p. 92.
 29. R. Preus, *Post-Reformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 263; see also pages 264-273. R. Preus, *Inspiration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-23. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-178. Rudnick, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-74.
 30. Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-217.
 31. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
 32. Engelder, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-409.
 33. Erwin L. Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopdia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 512.
 34. *Ibid.*, p. 514.
 35. P. Bretscher, *After the Purifying* (LEA Yearbook, 1975), p. 63.
 36. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16. David P. Scaer finds that Bretscher considers any objective understanding of the Bible as the Word of God un-Christian, or at least sub-Christian, unbiblical, and unconfessional. Scaer finds Bretscher stating that in some portions of Scripture there may be no Word of God at all. David P. Scaer, "The Law-Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod Continued," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XL, No. 2 (September, 1976), p. 118, footnotes 25, 26; see also p. 115.
 37. *Ibid.*, p. 19; see also pages 41 and 77. Also *Faithful I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22;

here the moderates equate the Sacred Scriptures with the Gospel, for the Law is said to be biblical and true, but "something less than the Sacred Scriptures." In another article, Bretscher denies that Scripture can properly be called the Word of God, and claims that the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture are enemies of Christ and destroy the purity of the Gospel. Paul Bretscher, "What Is the Word of God?" *Missouri in Perspective*, Vol. III, No. 14 (May 10, 1976), p. 4. See also Paul Bretscher, "The Root of the Missouri Synod Turmoil," *Missouri in Perspective*, Vol. III, No. 20 (August 2, 1976), pp. 4A-4D.

38. Sasse, *op. cit.*, p. 16. For an excellent discussion of the proper relationship of the Gospel to Scripture, read all of "Gospel and Scripture." CTCR Document (n.p.: n.n., 1972). See also J. A. O. Preus, "Study Edition," *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26. *ACDC*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-66. See also K. Marquart, "The Swing of the Pendulum: An Attempt to Understand the St. Louis 'Affirmations and Discussions,'" and Horace Hummel, "Gospel and Bible," in *Affirm: Occasional Papers*, Spring, 1973, pp. 12-30.
39. Thomas Strieter, "Luther's View of Scripture in Light of the Crisis in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" (n.p., n.n.. n.d.), p. 14.
40. WA 48, 31; SL 9, 1770; quoted in Klug, *op. cit.*, p. 29. Other pungent quotes also show this truth (that Luther believed the Bible *is* God's Word!) which is so often denied by the moderates: "No other doctrine should be proclaimed in the Church than the pure Word of God, that is, the Holy Scriptures," SL 9, 87. "It is our unbelief and corrupt carnal mind which would not allow us to perceive and consider what God spoke to us in Scripture, or the Scripture is the Word of God," SL 9, 1818, quoted in Raymond F. Surburg, "Paul Bretscher's *After the Purifying*: A Review Article," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 (March, 1976), p. 214. "For Holy Scripture, which is God's Word, says so; and I abide by what it states," LW 22, 6.
41. *The Lutheran Agenda* (St. Louis: CPH, n.d.), p. 106.
42. Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "The Book of Jonah" (n.p.: n.n., n.d.—ELIM-PERCA Bible Study Guide).
43. LW 19, 36-39, 89, 102-104.
44. Fredrick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age According to Luke* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1972), p. xviii.
45. LW 37, 25-55: *passim*. The statement quoted above in footnote 44 does what Luther saw the Sacramentarians do, "tear God's Word away from the bread and wine, and let nothing remain but eating and drinking . . ." (LW 37, 141). Luther furiously fought the Sacramentarian's figurative interpretations, textual changes, and other attempts to sweep away the clear texts of Scripture, and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt "That These Words of Christ, 'This Is My Body,' etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics" who try to remove them from the Scriptures (LW 37, 13).

In the Large Catechism, Luther again shows that the ability of the Sacraments to forgive sins comes *only* from Christ's very words recorded in the Bible, and that the very words of Christ are *the chief thing* in the Sacraments (LC V, 1-4. 8-14, 31; IV, 1-5):

And all these are established by the words by which Christ has instituted it, and which every one who desires to be a Christian and go to the Sacrament should know . . . The words, however, are these: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night . . .

The chief point is the Word and ordinance or command of God . . . It is the Word which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament . . . For although the work is accomplished and the forgiveness of sins acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to

us in any other way than through the Word.

In the first place, we must above all things know well the words upon which Baptism is founded, and to which everything refers that is to be said on the subject, namely, where the Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Matthew, v. 19: Go ye therefore and teach . . .

The Small Catechism also emphasizes this interrelationship of Word and Sacrament. It asks how we receive the benefits of the Sacrament of the Altar: "We receive this benefit *only by believing these words*, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins . . . ' But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words 'for you' require all hearts to believe," *Small Catechism, op. cit.*, p. 202; see also pp. 176-177).

Danker's assertion places him in the same liberal theological camp as Eugene Brand, who stated that "the great commission can hardly be the actual words of Jesus," that baptism cannot be based "on the actual words of Jesus," and that to base baptism on the actual words of Jesus "would not stand up under New Testament scholarship." Brand's conclusions were reached through the use of the historical-critical methodology, which the moderates say must be used to get at the real meaning of the Bible (Carl Bornemann, "The Twenty-Seventh Institute of Liturgical Studies," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1 (June, 1975), p. 40). Hence, we see how redefined terminology, as well as historical-critical methodology, cause the loss of the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins.

See also A. Boehme, "A Study in Luther's Anti-Sacramentarian Writings," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (March, 1975), pp. 307-313.

46. If *Globe Democrat* is not available, the interview is also found in *Christian News*, October 14, 1974, p. 5.

The Real Presence in the Book of Concord

B. W. TEIGEN

As one studies the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as expounded on the basis of the Scriptures in the Book of Concord, one is struck by the profound mystery that confronts us here and with the inestimable blessings of the Gospel that are given us in the Lord's Supper. The words of Johannes Frank (1649) come home very strongly to us:

Now I sink before Thee lowly,
Filled with joy most deep and holy,
As with trembling awe and wonder,
On Thy mighty words I ponder,
How, by mystery surrounded,
Depths no man hath ever sounded,
None may dare to pierce unbidden
Secrets that with Thee are hidden.

Because of the fact that the Lord's Supper is "by mystery surrounded," the temptation to stray from the Scriptural doctrine is unusually strong, as is evidenced by the false positions that have arisen over the course of the centuries. One apparently is tempted to say too much or too little; and too often, because of the controversies which have swirled around this doctrine, one overlooks the fact that it was instituted by our Savior for our good.

I. THE REAL PRESENCE

The Real Presence of Christ is taught in all the Lutheran Confessions, beginning with the Augsburg Confession: "Our churches teach that the body and blood of Christ are truly present and are distributed to those who eat in the Supper of the Lord. They disapprove of those who teach otherwise" (AC, X). The words of the Small Catechism are well-known to us: "What is the Sacrament of the Altar? Instituted by Christ Himself, it is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ

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under the bread and wine, given to us Christians to eat and to drink" (SC, VI, 1. 2).

While Melancthon emphasized the *action* in the Lord's Supper, Luther placed a great emphasis on the *elements*: "We hold that the bread and the wine in the Supper are the true body and blood of Christ and that these are given and received not only by the godly but also by wicked Christians" (SA, III, VI, 1). These words emphasize that the Real Presence of Christ is in the bread and the wine. The Large Catechism does the same thing. Luther not only says that the Sacrament of the Altar is the true body and blood of the Lord Christ in and under the bread and wine, but he warns us not to be swayed by the fanatics who are certain that the bread and the wine cannot be Christ's body and blood (LC, V, 12); and he further reasserts that he is speaking of "that bread and wine which are Christ's body and blood and with which the words are coupled" (LC, V, 28).

After summarizing the former Lutheran Confessions and quoting generously from them and from Luther, the Formula of Concord sets forth the Scriptural proof for the Real Presence (SD, VII, 42-60). Christ's words are decisive, infallible truth, and therefore all men are to "listen to him" (SD, VII, 43). On the occasion of the institution of the Lord's Supper, "Christ selected His words with great deliberation and care in ordaining and instituting this most venerable sacrament," saying of the "blessed and proffered bread, 'Take eat, this is my body which is given for you,' and concerning the cup or the wine, 'This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for you for the remission of sins'" (SD, VII, 44). Since there is nothing in the context that indicates that they are "flowery, figurative, or metaphorical expressions," the words must be understood in a literal sense (SD, VII, 45). Further, we are "to believe in all humility" that Christ who instituted the Lord's Supper is able to do what He has promised and effect what He has commanded (SD, VII, 47). The words of institution are recorded four times (Matt. 26:26; Mark 14:22; Luke 22:19; 1 Cor. 11:25) in "simple, indubitable, and clear words," so that we must understand that our Savior "was speaking of His true essential body, which He gave into death for us, and of His true essential blood which was shed for us on the tree of the cross for the forgiveness of sins" (SD, VII, 49-53).

The force of these words of the Formula, it appears to me, is often overlooked and unexamined. But they set forth some very shocking propositions. It is a presence of Christ that is not merely the presence which Christ promised in the words "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Sasse, p. 368). Rather, in the consecrated

elements we receive, as Luther sings in his hymn on the Lord's Supper, "Thy holy body, Lord, the same Which from Thine own mother Mary came" (*The Lutheran Hymnary*, 156; cf. *The Lutheran Hymnal*, 313). In the Lord's Supper it is Christ's body and blood which He once gave and shed on Calvary and which He now as the exalted Christ gives to us; not only the Christ who was on the cross, but also He who sits at the right hand of God the Father is present in the Lord's Supper: "It is the true body and blood of the Lord Christ in and under the bread and wine which we Christians are commanded by Christ's words to eat and to drink" (LC, V, 8). It will be noted here that Luther emphasizes both the elements in the Lord's Supper and the action. The two go together.

St. Paul's explanation of the words of institution (1 Cor. 10:16; 1 Cor. 10:10) are a "special and manifest testimony to the true and essential presence and distribution of the body and blood of Christ in the communion." Therefore, "that which we break and bless is participation in the body and blood of Christ so that all who eat this bread and drink this cup truly receive and partake of the true body and blood of Christ" (SD, VII, 54). Paul cannot possibly be speaking of a "spiritual participation" or a "spiritual eating," because if he did, "he would not say that the bread but that the spirit of faith is participation in the body of Christ." Therefore, "the bread . . . is the common body of Christ distributed among those who receive the broken bread" (SD, VII, 55-59). This was the true intention of the Augsburg Confession, and Luther so understood it, as he testified in his last confession shortly before he died, and which is repeated again in the Formula: "I reckon them all as belonging together (that is, Sacramentarians and Enthusiasts), for that is what they are who will not believe that the Lord's bread in the Supper is His true natural body, which the godless or Judas receive orally as well as St. Peter and all the saints" (SD, VII, 33).

Lutheran theology, in holding that "the bread is the true body of Christ" or "a participation in the body of Christ," at times used other formulas. These formulas were: "*under* the bread, *with* the bread, *in* the bread, the body of Christ is present and offered" (SD, VII, 35; the last eight words are a Latin addition, Bente, p. 983). These phrases, as Hardt has noted, were not coined by the Lutherans but came from the Middle Ages, nor "were they intended to deny the superiority of the original, Biblical 'the bread is the body'" (Hardt, 1973, p. 5). As far as I know, the Reformers did not use the phrase, "in, with, and under," as is so commonly used today. The most commonly used terms were "under the bread" and "in the bread," although "with the bread" is occasionally used. But

this latter expression became suspect after Melancthon had diluted Article X in the 1540 *Variata* by dropping "*vere adsint*" and adding "*cum pane et vino*" (Schlink, p. 170). The Reformers were not introducing some new doctrine but used such phrases merely "to indicate the sacramental union between the untransformed substance of the bread and the body of Christ" and to "reject papistic transubstantiation" (SD, VII, 35). The term "sacramental union" did not mean that they no longer accepted the words of Christ in a strict sense and as they read; much less did they think that Christ's words, "This is my body" had "to do with a figurative predication but rather with an unusual one" (SD, VII, 38). By the term "sacramental union" they only wanted to say what Scripture says, namely, that the bread in the Lord's Supper is Christ's body without ceasing to be bread, and the wine is Christ's blood without ceasing to be wine. It may well be that today, as Hardt suggests, the expression "in, with, and under" is thought to mean something less than that the bread is the body (Hardt, 1973, p. 5).

As a further antithesis to the Reformed view that the Real Presence is a mere spiritual presence, the Formula of Concord demonstrates that Paul not only teaches the sacramental union, but also that the communicants receive the body and blood of Christ orally (*manducatio oralis*), and that the unbelievers truly receive the body and blood of Christ (*manducatio indignorum*) (SD, VII, 60). But the Confessions further add, to avoid misunderstanding, that this "oral or sacramental eating" is not to be understood in a "coarse, carnal Capernaïtic manner, but in a supernatural, incomprehensible manner" (SD, VII, 63; cf. also 127; and Ep., VII, 42).

An objection that had also been raised against the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence in the Lord's Supper was that since "Christ is at the right hand of God the Father," He could not at the same time be in the bread of the Lord's Supper. In replying to this objection of the Enthusiasts, Luther referred to the doctrine of "ubiquity," which is then taken over into the Formula of Concord (SD, VII, 91-106). Luther demonstrates that the "right hand of God" is everywhere (SD, VII, 95), and that, according to the Scriptures, Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, "in one person, undivided and inseparable," has at least three different modes "of being at any given place":

1. The comprehensible, corporeal mode, as when He walked bodily on earth and occupied space according to His size. He can still employ this mode "as He will do on the last day."
2. The incomprehensible, spiritual mode of presence, according to which He neither occupies nor vacates space

but penetrates every creature wheresoever He will. Christ employed this mode of presence when He left the closed grave and came through locked doors, in the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, etc.

3. The divine, heavenly, or repletive mode: Since He is one person with God, He is present in all creatures, in a mode according to which He fills all things. Hence, one cannot "deny in any way that God's power is able to make a body be simultaneously in many places, even in a corporeal and comprehensive manner" (SD, VII, 91-103).

Article VIII of the Formula of Concord, following close on the heels of the article on the Lord's Supper, deals with the person of Christ, showing that in the Incarnation there was a union of the human and divine natures without confusion or separation, and that the one person of Christ now exists in the two natures inseparably, but each nature retaining its identity.

This doctrine, however, was not to prove the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, since that is drawn directly from the Scriptures, but rather to show that the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper is not in conflict with any other doctrine revealed in Scripture. Chemnitz, one of the authors of the Formula, sets this forth very clearly in his *Examen* (1573). He asserts that we should hold to the simple, proper, and usual meaning of the words of Christ in the institution of the Lord's Supper, because "this meaning does not clash with a single article of faith. For it is certain that, because the whole fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily in the human nature of Christ, and the human nature of Christ has been exalted through His ascension above every name which is named, whether in this or in a future age, —that therefore Christ can be present with His body wherever He wills, and to do whatever He wills. Therefore the presence of the body of Christ in the sacrament does not conflict with the articles of faith, either of the true human nature or of the ascension of Christ."¹

At the conclusion of the Formula's statement of the Lord's Supper, the antitheses make clear the Lutheran doctrine of the Real Presence by, first of all, rejecting papistic transubstantiation, that is, "that the consecrated or blessed bread and wine in the Holy Supper completely lose their substance and essence and are converted into the substance of the body and blood of Christ, so that only the mere species of bread and wine, or their accidents without a subject, remain" (SC, VII, 108). This harmony with the Smalcald Articles where Luther rejects transubstantiation in what might be said to be rather mild terms: "as for transubstantiation, we have no regard for the subtle sophistry of those who teach that bread and wine surrender or lose their

natural substance and retain only the appearance and shape of bread without any longer being real bread, for that bread is and remains there agrees better with the Scriptures, as St. Paul himself states, 'The bread which we break' (1 Cor. 10:16), and again, 'Let a man so eat of the bread' (1 Cor. 11:28)" (SA III, VI, 5). On the other hand, the errors of the Sacramentarians, including those who "have the effrontery to penetrate our churches as adherents of the Augsburg Confession, regarding the true presence of the body and blood of Christ," are spelled out in great detail with twelve rejections, because they "are inconsistent with, opposed to, or contrary to the doctrine set forth above, based as it is on the word of God" (SD, VII, 111, 123).

II. HOW THE REAL PRESENCE IS EFFECTED

The Lutheran Confessions hold both to the reality of the body and blood of Christ and also to the reality of the bread and the wine in the Sacrament of the Altar, and they do this because, as Luther said, "As we said of baptism that it is not mere water, so we say here that the Sacrament is bread and wine, but not mere bread and wine such as is served at the table. It is bread and wine comprehended in God's Word and connected with it" (LC, V, 9). And Luther puts a further emphasis on this truth by saying: "If you take the Word away from the elements or view them apart from the Word, you have nothing but ordinary bread and wine" (LC, V, 14). Now Luther has in mind the words of institution which he regards as God's active and powerful Word of consecration. One must note that Luther is also here quite specific with regard to the relationship between the Word and the elements, as he is with regard to the Sacrament of Baptism, when he says about the Lord's Supper: "It is the Word, I maintain, which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine and constitutes it a sacrament which is rightly called Christ's body and blood. It is said, *accedat verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum*, that is, 'When the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament.' This saying of Augustine is so accurate and well put that it is doubtful if he said anything better. The Word must make the element the sacrament; otherwise it remains a mere element" (LC, V, 10). As can be seen from the context, Luther is thinking of the active, powerful Word of consecration of that divine majesty at whose feet every knee should bow. Fagerberg is certainly right when he says that the words of institution are regarded by Luther as the words of consecration whereby bread and wine become something other than ordinary bread and wine (Fagerberg, pp. 186, 195).

To understand Luther's position better, it is necessary to go back to the Smalcald Articles, where he uses Augustine's

maxim with regard to baptism and which would apply to the Lord's Supper also: "Baptism is nothing else than the Word of God in water, commanded by the institution of Christ; or as Paul says, 'the washing of water with the Word,' or again, as Augustine puts it, 'the Word is added to the element and it becomes a sacrament' " (SA, III, V, 1, 2). Luther then, all too briefly for us today to understand clearly, rejects two false positions that have been transmitted from the theology of the Middle Ages. One is that of Thomas Aquinas and the Dominicans "who forget the Word (God's institution) and say that God has joined to the water a spiritual power which, through the water, washes away sin." Nor does Luther agree with Duns "Scotus and the Franciscans who teach the baptism washes away sins through the assistance of the divine will, as if the washing takes place only through God's will and *not at all through the Word and the water*" (SA, III, V, 3-4; my emphasis). Hardt gives background for these two observations, showing that Luther understood correctly what these two positions were and that Luther rejected them as not adequate, because what was essential to Luther was that the words of consecration are "God's Spirit-filled creative Word" (Hardt, 1971, pp. 157-161). In casting further light on Luther's words in the Smalcald Articles, Hardt refers to Luther's sermon on the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ against the Enthusiasts (1526), adducing among several quotations the following: "As one cannot deny that she (the Holy Virgin) becomes pregnant through the Word and no one knows how it happens, so it is here too. As soon as Christ says, 'This is my body,' His body is there, through the Word and in the power of the Holy Ghost. If the Word is not there, it is simple bread, but as soon as the words come to it, they carry with them what they speak about" (cf. also Hardt, 1973, p. 3).²

While the Augsburg Confession and the Apology do not use the word "element," the Augsburg Confession certainly indicates the presence of the body and blood in the elements before the final act of the *sumptio*: "It is taught among us that the true body and blood of Christ are *really present in the Supper* of our Lord under the form of the bread and wine, and are there distributed" (AC, X, 1; my emphasis). The Apology repeats virtually the same words (Ap., X, 1 and 4). Krauth is undoubtedly correct when he answered the objection of Kahnis, who stated that "according to the Lutheran doctrine, there is but bread and wine, not the body and blood of Christ before the eating and drinking," by insisting that "the very opposite is the doctrine of the Lutheran Church." Krauth answers Kahnis by quoting the Augsburg Confession, Article X: "The body and blood of Christ are present *in the Supper*, and there com-

municated and received" (Krauth's emphasis). Krauth further declares: "From the *beginning* of the Supper, *strictly defined* (that is, from the time when Christ's consecrating words are uttered in His name by His authority), to *its end* (that is, until the last communicant has received the elements), or in other words, from the first time to the last '*in the supper*' in which, by Christ's authority, it is declared 'This is Christ's body, This is Christ's blood', that of which this affirmation is made *is* His body and *is* His blood" (Krauth, pp. 822-824; Krauth's emphases).

There is a further discussion of how the Real Presence is effected in the Lord's Supper in the Formula of Concord (SD, VII, 73-90), where it is asserted that the words of consecration effect the Real Presence of the body and blood of Christ. There evidently had been some controversy about this even before Luther's death (cf. the Wolferinus incident and Luther's letters to him), but a rather strenuous controversy had broken out in Lübeck and Rostock, the so-called "Saliger Controversy," and which is settled in this part of the Formula of Concord. It was apparently a complicated and heated controversy, with severe personality conflicts involved. Unfortunately, at least until recently, historians have not treated Saliger as impartially as he deserves to be treated. This may be partially due to the fact that some of the documents in the case were not available from the archives until recently. And it is especially unfortunate for conservative Lutherans in our country that two authorities which are used among us as resource people, need to be supplemented because they have not presented the whole picture, Bente (Historical Intro., p. 179) and Pieper (III, p. 372). Bente calls him "an extremist" who "taught that in virtue of the consecration before the use (*ante usum*) bread and wine are the body and blood of Christ," and Pieper says virtually the same, that "Johann Saliger, pastor at Lübeck and Rostock, had tenaciously defended the opinion that the *unio sacramentalis* occurred already *ante usum*; hence before the distribution and reception." Saliger did teach that the Real Presence began with the consecration, which he held to be part of the *usus*. Some later Lutherans have held that the *usus* is confined only to the *sumptio*, and if one held that position so believed, it would be right to say that Saliger taught that the Real Presence occurred before the *usus* or *sumptio*. But one must examine quite carefully the Formula of Concord to see what is meant by *actio* and *usus*, and what is the significance of the consecration, because the controversy was settled in the Formula of Concord. Dr. Jobst Schöne, a theologian of the Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church in Germany, has recently written an enlightening monograph on this controversy, *Um Christi*

Sakramentale Gegenwart—Der Saligerische Abendmahlstreit, 1568/1569 (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1966). Others have also begun to set the record straight on behalf of Saliger in their writings: Sasse (p. 175), Hardt (1971, pp. 258-268). It is the consensus of these men that Saliger was not guilty of false doctrine, but rather that as a Gnesio-Lutheran he was upholding Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper, and what is confessed in Article VII of the Formula of Concord is nothing else but what Saliger was contending for.

The Formula explicitly states that on the controverted questions "concerning the consecration and the common rule apart from the instituted use" the Confessors reached unanimous agreement among themselves (SD, VII, 73). The first point they establish is that no man's word or work, whether it is the speaking of the minister or the eating or drinking, or the faith of the communicants "can effect the true presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper" (74).³ This statement clearly rejects the thought that man is in any way a contributing factor to the Lord's Supper. As with the other doctrines, synergism with regard to the consecration is forthrightly rejected. Rather, as the second part of this paragraph asserts, the true presence of the body and blood of Christ is to be "ascribed only to the almighty power of God and the Word, the institution and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ" (74b; cf. Ep. VII, 8, 35). But on the other hand, the Formula confesses that the first institution of Christ confers its power to the consecratory words of the church:⁴ "they (i.e., the words which Christ spoke at the first institution) still retain their validity and efficacious power in all places where the Supper is observed according to Christ's institution and where His words are used, and where the body and blood of Christ are truly present, distributed, and received by the virtue and potency of the same words which Christ spoke in the first Supper" (75). Here is thus ruled out the false understanding that the words of institution are without effect. As a matter of fact, the final sentence in this paragraph makes it crystal clear what the position of the authors of the Formula was: "For wherever we observe His institution and speak His words over the bread and cup and distribute the blessed bread and cup, Christ Himself is still active through the spoken words by the virtue of the first institution, which He wants to be repeated." Ruled out as inadmissible is the false conception that the words of institution are not efficacious today when they are used as Christ instituted their use. Quotations from Chrysostom and Luther are then adduced as evidence for this being the doctrine of the church (76-78). It should be evident that nothing new is being said here which Luther and the

Confessions had not previously said. Luther never thought that whatever he said or did had any effect simply because he was Martin Luther or a called servant of the Word. He laid it all to the power of God's command and promise, as, for example, he says in the Leipzig Reformation Sermon (1539): "The Blessed Sacrament is not administered by men, but rather by God's command; we only lend our hand to it" (LW, 51, pp. 303-312). Our speaking and doing do not create anything in the Sacrament, but the words of institution, which are spoken through men, are words of power because Christ Himself speaks through His servants: "Ministers act in Christ's stead and do not represent their own persons, according to the Word (Luke 10:16), 'He who hears you hears me' " (Ap. VII, 47; cf. Ap. VII, 28; XII, 40; XXVIII, 18).

In the following paragraphs of the Solid Declaration (79-82), several points are made which help us understand the full meaning of the Lord's Supper. The words of institution are also a most important proclamation of the Gospel. They therefore are not a mere formula to be spoken *sotto voce* so that only a few could understand them (as was done by the priests in the Roman Catholic church). Rather, they are to be read or chanted loudly before the whole congregation. And, again, it is emphasized that they "are under no circumstances to be omitted." The necessity for this is grounded on a three-fold basis: 1) thereby we render obedience to the command of Christ, "This do"; 2) thereby the faith of the hearers in the essence and benefits of the Sacrament is awakened, strengthened, and confirmed through His Word; 3) thereby the elements of bread and wine are hallowed or blessed in this holy use, so that therewith the body and blood of Christ are distributed to us to eat and to drink, as Paul says, "The cup of blessing which we bless," which happens precisely through the repetition and recitation of the words of the institution.

To further clarify the doctrine of the Consecration and to avoid error, the Solid Declaration insists that the complete action of the Lord's Supper as Christ ordained it must be carried out (83-87). Christ's command comprehends the whole action: the blessing of the elements, the distribution, the reception, and the proclamation of the death of the Lord. All this is included in Christ's command, "Do this." Next (85), the Solid Declaration explains an axiom ("useful rule and norm") which the Lutherans have been using and which has been derived from the words of institution: "Nothing has the character of a sacrament apart from the use instituted by Christ, or apart from the divinely instituted action" (*Nihil habet rationem sacramenti extra usum a Christo institutum*). There are two words here that need careful definition from the

Formula itself, *actio* and *usus*, since some seventeenth century dogmaticians, followed by some twentieth century theologians (see Sasse, p. 173), have restricted the *usus* only to the moment when the elements are received (*sumptio*). The *usus* and the *actio* are identified as synonyms and the definition repeated: "The entire external and visible action of the Supper as ordained by Christ: the consecration or words of institution, the distribution and reception, or the oral eating of the blessed bread and wine, the body and blood of Christ" (86). The rule is then applied against those who believe that the "use" or "action" primarily means faith, and it is also applied against the practice of the Roman church. The Confessors declare that apart from the entire external and visible action of the Supper, "it is not to be deemed a sacrament, as when in the papistic Mass the bread is not distributed but is offered up, or locked up, or carried about, or exposed for adoration" (87). The Solid Declaration concludes this section by declaring that it is a misuse of this rule to deny the Real Presence and oral eating of the body of Christ by the worthy and the unworthy alike (88). And it reiterates again that it is not our faith, but the word and institution of Christ which remains efficacious in Christendom and makes the Lord's Supper a sacrament (89, 90). The LC-MS theologian, F. E. Mayer, summed up this part of the Formula quite succinctly and accurately: "Lutheranism holds that every Word of God is a creative Word. Christ's words of institution, 'This is my body', is a mighty fiat. When—so Lutherans maintain—the officiant today speaks the words of consecration, his words are effective by virtue of Christ's command and institution" (Mayer, p. 164).

But it is interesting to know what the authors of the Formula said otherwise on this doctrine. My limited resources and limited time do not give me an access to much of their writings. I have nothing of Andreae. Sasse asserts that Selnecker said that with regard to the phrase, "in the bread", etc., "they intend to say not more than this, that Christ is veracious, and that when giving us the bread in His Supper, He gives us simultaneously His body to eat, as He himself says" (Sasse, CTM, 1959, p. 37).

Chemnitz, the chief author of the Formula and especially of Article VII, is much more accessible to the average Lutheran today. In his *The Two Natures of Christ* (1578), with regard to the Real Presence, Chemnitz testifies that Christ "wills to be present with His body and blood in the observance of His Supper as it is celebrated in the gathering of the church here on earth in accord with His institution. For not even the adversaries dare or can deny that if the words of Christ's testament, wherein He asserts and affirms regarding the bread

which is *present, shown, and eaten* in the Lord's Supper, 'This is my body', are allowed to stand, apart from all figurative language in their simple, proper, native, and genuine sense, they demonstrate the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Supper. . . . But Christ mentions His body and blood, not because His body is separate from His blood or because both are separated from His soul and outside the personal union with the deity, apart and separate, as if He wished us to believe He is present in the Supper only in the abstract" (Chemnitz, 1578, p. 432; my emphasis). Chemnitz, in discussing the hypostatic union of the two natures of Christ as something permanent, inseparable, and intimate, has some comment on the nature of the "sacramental union" and "the use" of the sacraments: "By the external ministry of the Word and Sacraments God is truly present in the church, working with us and effectually acting in us through these means. He is present even in the external signs in the use of the sacraments, dispensing and communicating through these visible signs His invisible grace, according to His Word. But the signs themselves, by themselves, add nothing towards this grace. God is not present with them inseparably, but because of the covenant and according to the Word they are not sacraments apart from their use. When these sacraments have been completed, they either pass away, as Augustine says, or are separated from the sacramental union" (Chemnitz, 1578, p. 109).

In his *Examen* (1573) Chemnitz says much which sheds light on Article VII. Confining what he says to SD, VII, 73-90, where the words of consecration are discussed, Chemnitz notes that "some rejected the papistical consecration in such a way that they imagined that the Lord's Supper could also be celebrated without the words of institution." The comment of Chemnitz on this is clear and forthright: "This is manifestly false. For it is most certain that there is no sacrament without the Word, as Paul calls baptism 'the washing of water with the Word' (Eph. 5:26). The saying of Augustine has it correctly: 'Let the Word come to the element, and it becomes a sacrament.' Likewise: 'Take the Word out of baptism and what will the water be but water?' In no way therefore can there be a Eucharist without the use of the Word. For if the Word is taken out of the Eucharist, the bread will be nothing but bread. For this reason Augustine says (*Contra Faustum*, lib. 20, cap. 13): 'Our bread and cup becomes sacramental by a certain consecration; it does not grow that way.' Therefore, what is not consecrated, though it be bread and cup, is food for refreshment, not a religious sacrament. This ground is very firm, being derived from the definition of the sacrament. This addition of the Word to the element in the sacraments is called

sanctification by the ancients. The common people call it consecration. Paul, following the description of Mark, calls it blessing when he says: "The cup of blessing which we bless" (1 Cor. 10:16)" (Chemnitz, 1573, p. 300). Chemnitz then fortifies what he has said as being Scriptural by clear quotations from Ambrose, Justin, Irenaeus, and Chrysostom to show that this has always been the doctrine of the "ancient church."

There are some practical matters that arise with regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper as presented in the Book of Concord. It is difficult to discuss them since so much heat has been generated around them and not too much light is shed on them from the Scriptures or the Confessions. Concerning the mode of the Real Presence, we agree with Chemnitz: "We on our part simply believe this presence, because it has the testimony of the Word of God. But we judge that one ought not to dispute about the mode of the presence, because it has not been revealed by the Word of God. Therefore we do not define an established mode of this presence, but humbly entrust it to the wisdom and omnipotence of God. Therefore we do not establish a physical, or geometrical, or crass and carnal manner of presence. We do not dispute about inclusion in a certain place nor about descent or ascension of the body of Christ. Briefly, we do not hold that the body of Christ is present in the Supper in any manner that is natural to this world" (Chemnitz, 1573, p. 300).

With regard to the time or "the moment" when the Real Presence begins and the moment when it ceases (see Sasse, p. 173), Luther believed that it began with the words of consecration and ended when the communion service was over. This is what the Solid Declaration is saying (73-90), and it was certainly the understanding of the Augsburg Confession, as Krauth shows (see above). Luther was not ready to stipulate under which syllable the sacramental union takes place. It would appear to me that F. E. Mayer does not quite represent the Lutheran Confessions when he says that: "The Lutheran Confessions refrain from entering on the precise moment when the sacramental union begins and ends," but he is correct when he says that the Lutheran Confessions "state that there is no sacramental union outside the entire sacramental action or use which comprises the Consecration, the Distribution, and the Reception of the elements (SD, VII, 79-87)" (Mayer, p. 162). It seems to me that a fairly definite time is here set forth and that the Confessions do not limit the sacramental union to the instant of distribution and reception. While this latter theory may possibly eliminate some practical problems regarding the spilling of the elements, what to do with what is left over after all have been communicated, etc., it seems to me that it raises

some hard questions about the creative power of God's words of institution and the promise.

The Lord's Supper was instituted for us Christians to eat and to drink. If the action is not completed because of some accident (which would be the only reason for a Lutheran why it is not completed), we can not answer the questions that might thereby arise (Sasse, p. 175). The Formula warns us against speculation when it says: "We also reject and condemn all presumptuous, scoffing, and blasphemous questions and expressions which are advanced in a coarse, fleshly, Capernaïtic way about the supernatural and heavenly mysteries of this Supper" (SD, VII, 127). Chemnitz has said, in a general way, of the elements: "God is not present with them inseparably, but because of the covenant and according to the Word, they are not sacraments apart from their use. When these sacraments have been completed, they either pass away, as Augustine says, or are separated from the sacramental union" (Chemnitz, 1578, p. 109). But if one accepts what the Confessions say regarding the Real Presence, one will indeed treat the elements with the greatest respect, as Luther did, just as Sasse has again recently shown (*Christian News*, Oct. 28, 1974, p. 10).

On more important point ought to be raised here, but which really goes beyond the limits of this paper; nevertheless, it will eventually need careful investigation by someone among us. Apparently something strange happened to the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper, especially with regard to the consecration, on its way to being formulated by the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians. It is no secret that the view of consecration set forth in the second part of this paper would not coincide with the general view in our circles. There might be more or less agreement, and there might be more or less disagreement. There may be cases among us where the elements have not been consecrated in the Lord's Supper, or where at least additional elements were brought in and not reconsecrated. And what probably would be said in defense of this practise is that the consecration of the elements is not an integral part of the *sacramental action*. It would not be difficult to find the reason for this type of thinking. Perhaps most of us were introduced to the practical application of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper in the congregational services via Fritz's *Pastoral Theology*. Here we received the instructions: "The minister therefore should repeat the words of institution at the time when the sacrament is to be administered in order thereby to consecrate the elements, that is, to set them apart and bless them for their holy use in the sacraments even as Christ has commanded, and at the same time thereby to invite the communicants to receive not only bread and wine but also,

orally, Christ's body and blood. (1 Cor. 10:16)" (Fritz, p. 143). This is saying considerably less than paragraph 75 of the Formula said, that Christ is still active through the spoken words by the virtue of the first institution which He wants to be repeated. But this was not something new with Fritz; rather, one will find this point of view in Walther's *Pastorale* and in Pieper's *Dogmatics*. Sasse has pointed out that the theory that Christ's body and blood are present only at the "moment" when they are being received has come into Walther and Pieper via some of the later Lutheran dogmaticians, notably father and son, Egidius and Nicholas Hunnius (Sasse, p. 173).

Tom Hardt's paper prepared for and read to the four ELS representatives (Orvick, Kuster, Madson, Teigen), "On the Babylonian Captivities of the Sacrament of the Altar," is a calm plea that, just as the American Confessional Lutherans of a century ago felt free to take a cool, objective look at some of the seventeenth century Lutheran dogmaticians' views on the doctrine of the Election of Grace (*Intuitu Fidei*) and were not afraid to say that they found them wanting, so Confessional Lutheranism today should not be afraid to examine the formulations of the seventeenth century dogmaticians in the light of the Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions (Hardt, 1973, p. 2). One at this time need not agree with everything Hardt has said in his paper, but I would suggest that one should be extremely cautious that he does not immediately reject out of hand what he has to say and slough it all off by crying "Romanizing views."

There is, of course, another reason why we must devote our studies to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper at this time, and that is the pressing fact that the Reformed and Lutherans, both in Europe and in this country, have today moved very close together on their views of the Lord's Supper.⁵ The words of institution as having consecratory power do not figure in these agreements. Why? Sasse (pp. 164-170) has set forth the fact that there existed a profound difference between Luther and Zwingli on the power of Christ's words of institution. Luther accepted Augustine's statement that the Word causes the element to become a sacrament, while Zwingli could not do that. The Lutheran doctrine of the sacraments comes out of Ephesians 5:26, "the washing of water by the word."

We also need to be driven back to this Lutheran doctrine that the Word of God is a creative Word and the only channel of the Holy Spirit, in view of the tremendous tidal wave of Reformed Enthusiasm that is sweeping over us in the Evangelistic youth movements and the Charismatic movement which downgrade the power of the Word, no matter whether it is read, preached, or administered as the Visible Word of our gracious God. Has

there been a tendency for us to overlook this in Baptism, Absolution (especially individual and private), and in the Lord's Supper, so that our people are not aware of this precious truth but rather look upon the Scripture as only a means of defining correct doctrine?⁷

FOOTNOTES

1. This and other translations from the *Examen* I owe to the courtesy of Prof. Fred Kramer, Concordia Theological Seminary, who kindly sent me xeroxed copies of his manuscript before it had received its final checking for publication.
2. The sermon is found in WA 19, pp. 482-523; the English translation is in LW 36, pp. 335-361; the quotation occurs on p. 341.
3. In this section I must confess my indebtedness to Schöne (pp. 60-63); but I do not want to hold him responsible for what I have said, since I had access to his book for only a short time and my abysmal knowledge of German could well have completely misunderstood the points he was making; my hurried jottings on this section are quite incomplete.
4. Prof. Roland Hoenecke in a nineteen-page essay on Article VII of the Formula rightly brings out the point that it is the Word alone which accounts for the Real Presence, but, strangely enough, he passes over the material in 75 and the following paragraphs, which clearly states that the words of consecration are efficacious today when spoken by Christ's representative at the celebration of the Lord's Supper. (See "Formula of Concord—Article VII on the Lord's Supper," *Wisconsin Lutheran Quarterly*, July 1973, pp. 174-193).
5. See the essays and the "Report to the Sponsoring Confessional Organizations" of Marburg Revisited, the Arnoldshain Theses, and the Leuenberg Theses. As a possible key to these agreements one might, for example, consult Vilmos Vajta's book, *Luther on Worship—An Interpretation*, pp. 90-107 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1958). This modern, ecumenical Lutheran, who is director of the Department of Theology of the LWF, waters down Luther's and the Book of Concord's doctrine to the point where Christ's presence in the elements depends in general on His omnipresence, so that "Christ is in the elements long before they are placed on the altar" (p. 95).
6. It might be profitable also to examine in detail Luther's doctrine of the Lord's Supper (his whole doctrine of the creative power of the Word, for that matter) in the light of what Robert Preus calls "Luther's Realist Principle" (the 1973 Bethany Reformation Lectures; see the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*, XIV, 1, Fall, 1973, pp. 31-33). Luther would have repudiated later Idealism, and any "theology of non-event is unthinkable to Luther and our Confessions," etc.

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The Statement on Communion Practices: A Critical Appraisal

Lowell C. Green

Communion practices and the problem of Communion fellowship have been serious concerns of late among Lutheran thinkers throughout the world. At opposite extremes have stood thinkers such as Elert and Sasse¹ with their primary concern for scriptural and confessional integrity, and the proponents of widened fellowship² at the other. The Statement on Communion Practices, first made available to members of the American Lutheran Church who had requested it in May 1976 and offered for adoption at the July 1976 general convention of the Lutheran Church in America and the October 1976 convention of the ALC, encountered strong opposition. Obviously, the Statement had been hastily assembled and was pushed ahead so rapidly that adequate discussion was precluded, it being impossible for evaluations to be written and ready for the deadline of scholarly journals. Had the Statement been accepted by either convention without adequate investigation, or in spite of better knowledge, or even out of indifference to the issues involved, it would have been a serious discredit to the church. The Statement was presented before both LCA and ALC conventions, where it evoked strong criticism, but received a certain tentative approval before being returned to the relevant committee for revisions. The issues have not been widely enough discussed. They also involve the Missouri Synod which is in fellowship with the ALC. The following article provides generous quotations from the Statement since it has not been widely circulated. Originally appearing before the small readership of the *Concordia Review* (July 1976), it is now offered to the wider circulation of the *Concordia Theological Quarterly*.

ITS UNDERLYING DOCTRINAL PROPOSITIONS

We quote from the Preface:

The committee desired to outline a theological position and recommend practices which are consistent with and faithful to the biblical testimony and the witness of the Lutheran Confessions and which are also

enriched by the ecumenical insights now shared through open and appreciative contact with other members of the Body of Christ.

It is laudable that the Committee stated its purpose thus; both the LCA and the ALC, as confessional Lutheran bodies, are morally and legally bound to this basis. Scripture is the primary norm; but since most denominations claim its support, Lutherans regard their Confessions as a needful definition of their understanding of Biblical teachings. Likewise, such a statement must show what has been learned from the ecumenical encounters of recent years. Lutheranism has been ecumenically concerned from its beginnings.

What is meant by the word "ecumenical"? Derived from *oikoumene*, Greek for "the inhabited world," it refers to the Christian Church as a whole. The ecumenical church is seen in both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. Vertically, we become mindful of our fellowship with the Church through the ages. In terms of persons, this includes Christ and the apostles, the martyrs, confessors, and teachers; one thinks of Paul, Augustine, Luther, Gerhardt, and others. In terms of the faith professed, this includes Scripture, the creeds, liturgies, devotional materials, theological expressions, great works of art, and the Confessions. Horizontally, we treasure the Church as the Body of Christ in our own day: first, our brethren in world Lutheranism and, secondly, our brethren in other Christian denominations. A sort of "confessional" school among Lutherans insists that our best contribution is given to other denominations when we study our own heritage and share its riches with others while remaining strictly loyal to Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions. They stress honest dialogue. Truth is more important than administrative union or unionistic fellowship. Over against this group (Elert, Sasse, Kinder, Flesner, *et al.*) stand those who hold to a sort of "melting-pot" position. They feel that the horizontal aspect needs more emphasis. They consider it regrettable that doctrinal differences have hindered church-fellowship. Since doctrinal unity is difficult, we should establish fellowship first, and let theological agreement come later. It is obvious that although the former view was espoused at the time that the LCA and the ALC became involved in the ecumenical movement, present trends are toward unionism. The Statement which is before us tries to expand the horizontal experience of ecumenicity in its unsuccessful attempt at the same time to remain true to historic Lutheranism.

The Statement grapples with the question of the central doctrine behind the Lutheran understanding of Holy Communion. We might have expected its authors to have selected

the right distinction of Law and Gospel, Christology, or the Means of Grace. To our surprise they have bypassed these Lutheran insights to undergird their position with the Covenant-Theology of another tradition:

The theme of the covenant is central to the biblical understanding of the people of God. It describes the relationship of election between God and his chosen people. God's interventions in human history have had the object of forming, out of common and fallen humanity, a covenant community, a people who are his own. In the fullness of time the covenant was renewed through Jesus the Christ and through his Holy Spirit given to the church. The new covenant (Jer. 31:31ff) established in the ministry of our Lord and ratified by his self-offering (Matt. 26:28; Mark 14:24), is now ours—announced in the proclamation of God's Word, experienced in the sacraments and in the church, and witnessed to in the Christian life.

This is the characteristic theology of the Reformed tradition, reaching back past Coccejus over Ursinus and Bullinger to Calvin and Zwingli.³ Space will not permit us to debate this concept here, or to show how it conflicts with the Lutheran understanding of Law and Gospel and with Lutheran theology as a whole.⁴ Nevertheless, the Statement has attempted to base a discussion of Lutheran Communion practices upon such a doctrinal construction. The next step was to derive an appropriate doctrine of the Church out of the Covenant-theology: the Church as "covenant community," as the elect. Such an ecclesiology scarcely harmonizes with the Lutheran insight that the Church is the Body of Christ into which the believer was incorporated through Baptism. Furthermore, since a covenant requires two parties for actuation, Covenant-theology is the traditional support for the Calvinist insistence that receiving Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar is dependent upon the faith of the individual; but this all stands in unresolvable tension with the Lutheran view of the objective presence of Christ which leads to the insistence that also unbelievers receive the body and blood of Christ in the sacrament, to their condemnation (*communicatio indignorum*).

ITS UNDERSTANDING OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

Confessional Lutheran theology of the Lord's Supper has stressed three points: the body and blood of Christ are united with the elements of bread and wine (*unio sacramentalis*), the body and blood of Christ are therefore actually eaten by every communicant (*communio oratis*), and, consequently, those who are unworthy and unprepared also receive the true body and

blood of Christ, but unto judgment (*communicatio indignorum seu impiorum*). None of these points is developed in the Statement. Nowhere does it say that the body and blood are given; it only speaks of the "presence" of Christ. In the section on Intercommunion it asks "That the Real Presence of Christ in the sacramental elements be publicly affirmed" (p. 5). What is meant by that vague expression "Real Presence"? Certainly Calvin could have agreed to the use of that term under his concept of a spiritual presence of Christ, but he rejected the doctrine that the body and blood are given in, with, and under the bread and wine. The closest thing to an explanation of what is given in the sacrament are these words of the Statement:

The Lutheran Confessions uphold the reality of Christ's presence in the sacramental bread and wine in order to affirm by these means his saving work for us. The Sacrament is essentially a gift from God to his people through which the crucified and risen Christ is present and active to forgive, to save, to unite, to give life, to comfort and to strengthen us for the work to which he calls us in the world.

It is hard to believe that the committee expected four million Lutherans to accept this as a statement of their beliefs; one could change the second word to "Protestant" without otherwise altering the sentence in any way! The notion that the sacrament is a sign or affirmation of a salvation otherwise attained is characteristic of the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth century, but is explicitly rejected as inadequate in the Formula of Concord (Ep. VII, 6-9; SD VII, 115-118).

This leads us to another question: What position does the Statement take regarding the doctrines rejected by the Confessions? After asserting that the body and blood of Christ are handed out, the Augsburg Confession concludes: "The contrary doctrine is therefore rejected" (X). In the formula, not only are the views of the Reformed bluntly rejected (BS, pp. 1011-1016; BC, pp. 589-591), but also the confessors repeat the words of Luther which deny that the Reformed have a genuine Holy Communion (SD VII, 22, 32) and conclude: "... Those who will not believe that the bread of the Lord in the Supper is his true, natural body, which the godless or Judas receives orally as well as St. Peter and all the saints—whoever, I say, will not believe this should let me alone and not hope to have fellowship with me. This cannot be changed" (33). Were the writers of the Statement aware of this clear-cut position when they advanced the claim that their stand was "consistent with and faithful to ... the witness of the Lutheran Confessions" (p. 1)? Now that this has been pointed out, will it not be necessary either for them to reject Communion fellowship with those churches

repudiated above, or else to come out clearly and say that they are rejecting the teachings of the Lutheran Confessions?

Like several liturgical productions of recent years, the Statement tends to confuse the direction from which the essential action in the Lord's Supper proceeds. Is it something that God does for us or that we do for him? The Statement seems to regard not the divine gift but some human attitude as constitutive in the following words:

Because of the saving love of God in Christ which is conveyed in this Sacrament the language and spirit of the whole service of Holy Communion is one of thanksgiving (eucharistia). This thanksgiving is a remembrance of the mighty acts of God in Christ and an anticipation of the fulfillment of all things in the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit causes this remembrance and anticipation to become personal in the memory and hope of the covenant community and gives a foretaste of the feast to come.

The last sentence is grammatically and logically faulty: how can the memory and hope of "the covenant community," a group, be "personal"?

The above quotations from the Statement apparently want to describe the benefits of Communion: ". . . to forgive, to save, to unite [with whom—God or man?], go give life, to comfort, and to strengthen us for work . . ." It "brings into focus the common life of the covenant community, and propels . . . to engage in mission . . ." The first group of benefits is, on the whole, in accord with Scripture; the latter remarks about the "common life" and "mission" do not go back to Christ, but were invented by the committee. It may be desirable at times to prod members into more energetic support of the institutional church, but the attempt is out of place in this context. Before we leave this section of the Statement, one further correction is in order; the words, "This do for my remembrance," should not be ascribed to "FC, SD, VII, 83-84," but to 1 Corinthians 11:24.

PARTICIPATION IN HOLY COMMUNION

We now proceed to Part II of the Statement, Recommendations for Practice. Contrary to common opinion, the Iowa Synod rejected the Galesburg Rule as unionistic, thereby virtually ending merger discussions with the conservative General Council. In the preparations for the 1960 merger, the antecedents of the ALC approved the Minneapolis Theses with their commitment to close-communication, i.e., that only individuals who have been properly instructed are admitted to the sacrament. The 1968 ALC Statement was an unwarranted

departure from such confessional practices; the Statement of 1976 goes much further. It condones intercommunion with those whom our Confessions have repudiated, and urges Lutherans to go out of their way to admit participants from those who reject our position. It claims to be true to the Confessions, and yet urges communion with those who are therein said to have falsified the Scriptures in their teaching.

Note for example this paragraph of the Statement on Communion Practices on who may participate in Lutheran celebrations of the Sacrament:

Holy Communion is the covenant meal of the new people of God who are called to be the body of Christ in the world. Only those incorporated into this body, the church, by Holy Baptism may participate in the Sacrament of the Altar. Whenever the Sacrament is celebrated it should be open to all communing Christians present.

If the Covenant-theology were a suitable framework for a Lutheran doctrine of the Sacrament, if the Church were properly described as the "covenant-community," and the Lord's Supper well characterized as a "covenant-meal," it would seem inescapable that all persons who have at least voluntarily assumed their part of the covenant together with God should be eligible to attend Lutheran Communion. This is what the above paragraph evidently wants to say. However, each of those premises is wrong, and therefore the conclusion is also wrong. Furthermore, the paragraph is grammatically and logically unclear. The Covenant-idea had been injected into later Calvinistic thought in order to soften the effects of predestination and to increase the responsibility of the elect individual. The Covenant was seen as between two persons, God and the elect. The first clause of the above paragraph is consistent with this thought, as is also the last sentence; but the rest stands in tension. It is not that those who have made the covenant with God are now called to be the body of Christ, but rather, those who were not the people of God have been made His people, His body, by the means of Baptism. Unlike Reformed thought, Lutheran theology holds that only those who have been baptized have been regenerated. This is stated clearly in the second sentence, which is correct so far as it goes. The last sentence is a truism; obviously, those Christians who commune are communing Christians. But the Statement doubtless means to say that all Christians allowed to commune in other churches, orthodox or heterodox, should be regarded as eligible for Communion at Lutheran altars.

Such an interpretation of this unclear sentence seems justified by the section on Intercommunion, page 5:

The practice of intercommunion among Lutherans at home and abroad is encouraged.

Participation as a visitor in non-Lutheran congregations, proper because of the universal nature of the church, places one in the role of guest. As a visitor one should respect the prevailing practice of hospitality. On such occasions and at ecumenical gatherings, in parish and nonparish settings, both pastoral and lay participation as communicants is a matter of personal judgment.

Such judgment should be informed by the following considerations:

- a. That the participants be baptized Christians;
- b. That the Real Presence of Christ in the sacramental elements be publicly affirmed;
- c. That the Sacrament be celebrated as a Means of Grace;
- d. That the Words of Institution be proclaimed; and
- e. That the elements associated with our Lord's institution be used.

For Lutheran clergy to be involved as presiding or assisting ministers in the celebration of Holy Communion in other churches, a reciprocal relationship between the clergy involved should prevail.

With the best construction put on it, it is impossible to say that the above quotation is "consistent with and faithful to the biblical testimony and the witness of the Lutheran Confessions" (Preface).

In addition to the arguments against intercommunion already advanced, let us examine Article VII of the Augsburg Confession: "And unto true unity of the Church it is sufficient to agree concerning the doctrine of the Gospel and concerning the administration of the sacraments." These words have often been appealed to loosely as endorsing doctrinal minimalism; Lutherans can have fellowship with the Reformed so long as they can agree that Christ is Lord and is somehow present at the Supper. This is a grievous distortion, however, when we consider this statement in its context: (1) It was addressed to Roman Catholics alone—Emperor Charles V, his retinue, and representatives of the papal church. The Reformed were explicitly excluded at Augsburg, following Luther's rejection of Zwingli's Neo-Platonic interpretation of the Lord's Supper at Marburg. (2) The "conservative reformation" concept of retaining ceremonies not forbidden by Scripture was addressed to the Roman, not the Zwinglian, party; matters such as the use of Latin, the elevation, candles, and vestments should not

separate us if we can agree on the essentials. (3) However, there can be no compromise on the preaching of the Gospel and on the Sacraments. Now, in spite of the earnest discussions between Lutheran and Reformed, one still gets the impression that the agreement which some have proclaimed is not genuine. It is natural enough when a person is placed on a committee which is supposed to reach a consensus that, in accord with the American obsession for success, he makes concessions until an "agreement" has been reached. However, a book such as *Marburg Revisited*² manifests both a lack of skill in questions of systematic theology and a naive misunderstanding of the historical problems (manifested in the title!) which betray the unfinished task. No doubt one of the reasons for the weakness of the Statement which we are appraising is the inadequacy of its forerunners.

Perhaps one of the reasons why a concerted effort has been underway to minimize confirmation has been the unauthorized practice of open communion. A Lutheran pastor in the eastern states once lamented to me that he admitted Methodists to the Lord's table, but his own unconfirmed youth could not attend. Abolishing catechetical instruction and confirmation as the requirement for eligibility, although it met much resistance from stubborn "conservatives," seemed the easier route toward intercommunion. But the problem is still not solved, at least in the Statement. In an age when we have given our children everything—material objects, early sex, an equal voice in adult decision-making within society, and early communion without requiring confirmation instruction, the youngsters are still not equal to the outsiders. Note these two paragraphs from the section of the Statement on "Admission," page 3:

Admission to the Sacrament is by invitation of the Lord, presented through the church to those who are baptized. It is the practice of the church to admit to Holy Communion those who, in its judgment, are ready to participate. Such participation need not be tied to intellectual attainment. The decision regarding readiness should be informed by the following guidelines, which are consistent with our confessions:

- a. That there be a simple trust that the Risen Lord is here giving himself to his people;
- b. That there be a basic understanding and appreciation of the nature and benefits of the Sacrament;
- c. That there be an acceptance of one's place as a communicant in the fellowship of believers, and;
- d. That there be self-examination in a manner appropriate to the level of maturity and recognition of the need of forgiveness.

There may be special concern for the admission of children. The findings of the Joint Commission on Theology and Practice of Confirmation indicate that readiness to participate normally occurs at age ten or the level of fifth grade, but it may occur earlier or later. The responsibility for deciding when to admit a child is shared by the pastor, the child, the family or sponsoring persons, and the congregation.

After asserting that admission is "by invitation of the Lord", the next sentence interposes the "judgment" of the institutional church to determine "readiness" of children. The "invitation of the Lord" is further limited by four "guidelines," determined by the committee, of course, in supposed line with the Confessions. The third guideline appears to be the demand of submission to the institutional church; if so, this legalism is unwarranted. Missing is a simple statement that admission is contingent upon a knowledge of the Small Catechism and acceptance of its teaching that the body and blood of Christ are received by all communicants under the bread and wine. Since many congregations have chosen not to follow the findings of the Joint Commission on Theology and Practice of Confirmation, citing them is irrelevant to some. At the end, our Lord's invitation is again modified to include the decision of the pastor, the child, the family (sponsors), and the congregation as to whether the child qualifies. That "participation need not be tied to intellectual attainment" has always been recognized by good pastors, even when suitable standards such as knowledge of the Small Catechism, the main events of Biblical history, some selected hymn-stanzas, and a treasury of memorized Bible verses were expected of children who were able to learn them.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

The Statement urges Holy Communion be given weekly and some weekdays on the basis of this remark in Apology XXIV, 1: "In our churches mass [a liturgical form] is celebrated every Sunday and on other festivals when the Sacrament is offered to those who wish for it . . ." The quotation should not be broken here, but the rest given: " . . . *after* they have been examined and absolved" (emphasis ours). Weekly Communion of the laity was virtually unknown before the Reformation, and subsequently uncommon outside of Wittenberg.⁵ Whether the Sacrament was received weekly, monthly, or less frequently in the young Lutheran Church, the pastor was required to meet with his parishioners personally for instruction and private confession. If weekly Communion is to be reintroduced today in a manner consistent with our Confessions, then pastors must be willing to devote more attention to the quality as well as the quantity of communions. If non-Lutherans are to be admitted,

they too must be fully instructed and "explored" in the Catechism, and heard in private confession, if we are serious about repristination of Wittenberg. The remark, "Corporate confession . . . is not required as a part of every service of Holy Communion," appears to contradict Augsburg Confession XXV, 1, but could be justified in a parish situation where a thorough pastoral ministry is practiced. In the context of unionistic communion, however the assertion is questionable. Like many other contemporary pronouncements, moreover, the Statement fails to note the difference between reciting the Words of Institution (proclamation) and containing them within a Eucharistic Prayer (adoration).

Several suggestions regarding the sacramental elements likewise require our attention:

Only enough bread and wine should be brought to the altar to serve the congregation. Should the supply need to be replenished, it is not necessary to repeat the Words of Institution.

In case any bread or wine remain after all have communed, it may either be consumed or be kept for future use. The handling of the bread and wine which remain should reflect the sacred use for which they had been set apart.

These suggestions represent not merely a departure from the custom of many of our congregations, but also an apparent ignorance of Lutheran church history as well as of recent theological studies.⁶ An ample supply of bread and wine should be provided to avoid a shortage during the distribution. Should the supply run out, Lutheran churches which emphasize the presence of the true body and blood of Christ under the bread and wine usually require the consecration of fresh supplies. For both practical and theological reasons, bread and wine which have in the sacrament been the body and blood of Christ should be consumed after the service. Luther once demanded and brought about the dismissal of a pastor for treating consecrated wafers like ordinary bread, denouncing the careless man as a Zwinglian. We would do well to seek high standards of reverence today as well.

The following lines of the Statement are similarly a departure from Lutheran tradition:

While the precise manner in which the elements are presented is not the central issue, the common loaf and the common cup are preferable because they evoke the image of the unity of the many who participate in the broken loaf and the shared cup (1 Cor. 10:16-17). . .

The breaking of a common loaf should be discouraged for the

following reasons: (1) Despite the inadequate liturgical rubrics in our servicebooks, it is not mere bread and wine, but the true body and blood of the Lord, which is being handed out and received.⁷ Breaking of the bread easily leads to crumbs being dropped and walked over, which is sacrilegious. (2) In upholding their view that only a "spiritual presence of Christ" is afforded in the sacrament, other denominations have placed their emphasis upon the elements and insisted that the observance is not valid unless the "bread" is broken, which, they have claimed, proves that the body of Christ is not present. Accordingly breaking the bread is out of place in our churches. (3) Broken bread does not suggest unity but division. Not the external element, but the verily present Christ, established unity. (4) In a time when ecumenism, valid in itself, has often obscured true doctrinal differences, we should avoid superficial similarities to practices of the sacramentarians lest they confuse the simple.

There are, then, a number of praiseworthy suggestions in the Statement, such as some recommendations of good liturgical practices like the use of the common cup. Unfortunately, the Statement as a whole must be rejected because it fails to meet its objective of being fully consistent with the Holy Scriptures, the Lutheran Confessions, and the better ecumenical insights.

FOOTNOTES

1. Werner Elert, *Eucharist and Church Fellowship in the First Four Centuries* (St. Louis, 1966). Hermann Sasse, *This Is My Body* (Minneapolis, 1959).
2. *Marburg Revisited*, ed. Paul C. Empie and James I. McCord (Minneapolis, 1966). Eugene M. Skibbe, *Protestant Agreement on the Lord's Supper* (Minneapolis, 1968). Other sources and literature are given in both.
3. See articles in RGG, I, pp. 1518 ff. Paul Althaus, *Die Prinzipien der deutschen reformierten Dogmatik im Zeitalter der aristotelischen Scholastik* (Leipzig, 1914 [reprint Darmstadt, 1967]). Hans Emil Weber, *Reformation, Orthodoxie und Rationalismus*, 3 vols. (Gütersloh, 1937 ff.).
4. The fundamental irreconcilability of this Covenant-theology with Lutheran thought is clearly shown in the materials cited in n. 3; see especially Weber, I/2, pp. 49-55, 74-75.
5. See Lowell C. Green, "How Frequently Was Communion Available in the 16th Century?" *Concordia Review*, I, No. 2 (July 1975), pp. 2-3.
6. Luther regarded anyone who treated the consecrated elements like mere bread and wine by returning them to the storage receptacles as Zwinglians, and called for the removal of a pastor for such loose practices. See his letter of July 4, 1543, to Simon Wolferinus in Eisleben. WA, Br. 10, pp. 336-342; cf. pp. 347-349. See the discussion of this in Edward Frederick Peters, *The Origin and Meaning of the Axiom: "Nothing has the character of a Sacrament outside of the use," In Sixteenth-Century and Seventeenth-Century Lutheran Theology*. Doctoral diss. (St. Louis: Concordia Seminary, 1968), especially pp. 188-196. To many theologians and churchmen of today, Luther's deep reverence for the Sacrament may seem

almost ludicrous; but this simply shows how little contemporary "Lutherans" really understand the Sacramentology of the Bible, of Luther, and of the Confessions, and how deep the inroads of Reformed theology and practice have really become.

7. The Confessions consistently refer to the elements distributed in the Lord's Supper not as bread and wine but as body and blood. See AC VII; SA III, vi (BS 450f. = BC 311); SD VII, 9, 16, 81.

Theological Observer

THE YEAR OF CONCORDIA

The year 1977 will mark the fourth centenary of the finalization of the Formula of Concord, the last of the historic Lutheran Confessions and perhaps the most critical from a post-Reformation viewpoint. The other historic Lutheran Confessions were written either by Luther or were known and approved by him. After his death, the Lutheran Church had to face the question of whether it could survive without its founder, or rather its reformer. Was devotion to Lutheranism devotion to a man or that man's principles? Luther as an individual will certainly always attract admiration, especially for his courage. The late Hermann Sasse in his *Here We Stand*, however, identified certain strands of a cultic devotion to Luther which, in a sense, can border on the idolatrous. The production of the Formula of Concord in 1577 did prove that a church could be Lutheran even without a living Luther. It demonstrated that Lutheranism was not merely a reaction to Roman Catholicism on the one side and Calvinism on the other, but that Lutheranism could solve its own problems on the basis of the Holy Scriptures, the previous confessions of the church, and the writings of Martin Luther. The triumphs of the church are always short-lived. For almost thirty years after 1517 Luther guided the church to an appreciation of justification by grace through faith and of the Scriptures as the Word of God. Then for thirty years after his death the church which had been illumined by the Gospel fell into the darkness of confusion. Many doctrines and customs from which Luther freed the church were reintroduced. Then 1577 dawned and the Lutheran Church revived.

Concordia Publishing House is taking the lead among Lutheran publishers in commemorating the fourth centenary of the Formula in this year and of the Book of Concord in 1980. In the last century confessional anniversaries have unleashed an unhealthy ecumenical enthusiasm which has caused churches to unite by denying their own confessional principles. If the years 1977 and 1980 provide an opportunity for pastor and people alike to renew and rekindle their interest in what is uniquely Lutheran, perhaps past dangers can be successfully avoided. Whatever confessional successes will be gained by these years of celebration will always stand in danger of being lost. Already in the 1580's there were notable losses for confessional Lutheranism. Within a century Pietism would blunt the sword, and the Enlightenment and Rationalism would all but annihilate the flame. But in the 1800's it sprang up again in Europe, and even more brilliantly, in America. The Formula of Concord shows that the vigor and commitment of Lutheranism can be rekindled.

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is coming out of a confessional struggle for the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Symbols. Even before it is over, some are seeing a parallel between the struggle that resulted in the Formula of Concord in 1577 and the struggle which could end in confessional peace for the Missouri Synod in 1977. There have been calls for a conference to restate the confessional truths. It is hard to deny the striking similarities between events four hundred years ago and those which have more recently been accomplished among us. In both cases the participants were Lutheran, and there were real problems that had to be resolved if the church was going to remain Lutheran. I do not think that the Missouri Synod is overemphasizing its importance. In the Missouri Synod alone there are over 6,000 pastors as compared to the 8,000 pastors who signed the Book of Concord. Numbers, however, are not the most important consideration anyway. Circumstances have pushed the Missouri Synod into a prominent position that is quite amazing in the eyes of the public relations directors. The Missouri Synod has an opportunity to revitalize itself and its world with the confessional incentive—and there are no better years to do so than those between 1977 and 1980.

THE AELC CONSTITUTION

The December 3-4, 1976, convention of the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches adopted a preamble to its constitution which calls for some comment. The AELC is aware that some might find the new group schismatic, and so the preamble sets down the reasons for the group's existence. This preamble is, in effect, a new confession which supercedes all the sixteenth-century Lutheran Confessions because it provides an official interpretation for them. Those organizing the AELC have strenuously objected to the Missouri Synod's alleged practice of adopting new confessions. The inconsistency is obvious.

In its new confession, the AELC has adopted a view of the church common among Episcopalians whereby denominations are considered members of Christ's body. Yet Paul speaks of the body of Christ as consisting in individual believers and not denominations. The AELC's view of the body of Christ is intended, of course, to permit fellowship and especially intercommunion on all levels. The ecumenical expression of the new group will undoubtedly be boundless.

The section on the Scriptures permits newer methods of Biblical interpretation within the traditional framework. The document says that "the Scriptures are God's written Word, recorded by people of faith and inspired by the Holy Spirit, to give us the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus." The phrase, "recorded by people of faith," however, has no place whatsoever in a statement on the Scriptures' origin. Those who wrote the Scriptures believed what they wrote, but their faith did not contribute to their being God's word. Equally objectionable is the way in which the inspiration of the Scriptures is limited to their giving us wisdom. Essential to the AELC view is the idea that the Holy Scriptures are primarily a product of the believing community or church. Consider this statement: "The Old Testament is our heritage from God's people Israel, and the New Testament was written and collected in the early Christian community." Anyone aware of the history of the Hebrew people knows that the Old Testament comes from God's appointed prophets and that the Israelites continuously rejected their message. Jesus also made this fact clear in His preaching. The New Testament is the authoritative word of the apostles. Its authority in the church and inspiration does not derive from its being collected "in the early Christian community." It is not difficult to recognize here the view popularized by Bultmann that the individual books of the New Testament were assembled from bits and pieces by early Christian communities. The AELC preamble fails to deal with the inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture. The statement, "the Holy Scriptures will impart to us the infallible Word of God," is a limp attempt to satisfy those who might have concerns here. Indeed, the words "the infallible Word of God" may simply refer to Jesus or the Gospel, since the document is most careless with the phrase.

Many groups in the history of Lutheranism in America have demanded less than total commitment to the Lutheran pattern of doctrine at the time of their organization. It would, however, be difficult to find a group that stated it as blatantly at its foundation as this new organization.

dps

"THE DEBUT OF THE BIBLE AS A PAGAN CLASSIC"

This startling title is used to designate the lead article on the June 1976 issue of the *Bulletin of the Council on the Study of Religion* (VII, 3). The writer, John A. Miles, Jr., envisages the place of the Bible in a culture that has entered the post-Christian era. A comparison is made between the Bible in the post-Christian era and the Homeric literature, which also once served as

sacred literature but which is now studied for its literary value. As Miles puts it, "But let us for the sake argument imagine a time when both the church and the synagogue have conclusively failed, leaving the secular university as the only institution conceivably still interested in the Bible." Miles suggests that under such circumstances the Bible be studied by the principles of Gilbert Highet in his *The Art of Teaching* (New York: Random House, 1950, pp. 73-75). These, in summary, are the principles: (1) Attention would be paid to the beauty of the language. This would necessitate studying the original text in Hebrew and Greek. The emphasis would be on *belles lettres*, the beauty of expression, instead of *bonnes lettres*, the saving aspects of the book which are stressed in the common phrase, "the good book." (2) Little attention would be paid to the reconstruction of the specific historical events; and on that account the theories of Wellhausen, Albright, Moore, Wolfson, Jonas, and others would be mentioned only in passing. (3) The influence of the Bible on civilization and religion, e.g., Luther, Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*, Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, etc. would be discussed. (4) Attention would be paid to the apparent meaning of the stories in the Bible. Who were Jesus and Moses? Miles points out that in many Bible courses now the instructor assumes that the student is already familiar with the Bible, which is rarely the case anymore. (5) Little attention would be paid to the situation from which the various texts came. Such matters as the four-source hypothesis of the Pentateuch, the distinction of Triton from Deutero-Isaiah, and the synoptic problem would receive little consideration. (6) Also to be studied would be those whose views of the Bible were negative, e.g., Celsus, Nietzsche, Voltaire. (7) No ethical commitment would be elicited from the student. (8) A study of other religious literature would be made for purposes of comparison.

To Bible-believing Christians the thought that the Bible should be treated as a pagan classic is, of course, immediately repulsive. One must ask Miles whether or not a piece of literature can ever be completely sundered from the purpose for which it was originally written. The Bible is certainly deliberately religious literature and to ignore this is to fail to understand it. Still there is something excitingly refreshing about some of Miles' suggestions for studying the Bible. The liberal exegetical scholar spends a disproportionate amount of time dismembering the sacred text, and the conservative feels honor-bound to reassemble the text. Even the liberal must get a little tired of stacking the theory books on his shelves, and certainly the conservatives are looking for release from the bondage. Of course, somebody caught following principles 2, 4, and 5 above would likely be labelled a Biblicist. But we could easily counter that charge by proclaiming ourselves scholars of pagan classical literature in a post-Christian secular age. Now that sounds respectable.

dps

WHY NOT EFFECTIVE PARENTAL CHOICE OF SCHOOLS?

"End of the Line for VOUCHERS," triumphantly proclaims the June 1976 issue of *Church & State*, official organ of Americans United for Separation of Church and State. People as diverse as economists Milton Friedman (conservative) and Christopher Jencks (liberal) have welcomed the voucher plan. It is obviously designed to maximize genuine educational freedom and pluralism. Under this plan parents of all school-children would, in *Church & State's* own words, receive tax-funded vouchers "equivalent in value to the average amount normally spent per student per year in public schools," which would then "be used by parents to pay tuition to the public, parochial, or private school of their choice."

It is difficult to imagine a scheme more ideally suited to the interests of real justice in a modern, pluralist society. One of the very cornerstones of our civilization is the principle recognised in Article 26 of the *Universal Declaration*

of *Human Rights*: "Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children." It is all very well to say that people are free to send their children to religious or other private schools if they wish. If the cost of such private education is prohibitive, the average person has no chance to exercise this "right." It becomes, in effect, a privilege of a well-to-do elite. Other citizens simply have to put up with the secular, amoral, evolutionist/humanistic indoctrination which increasingly shapes government-dispensed "education" in the Western world. Moreover, Christian parents, who may abhor the secularist educational monopoly, are compelled to support it with their tax-money—and are considered insolent meddlers if they dare to object to the more blatant anti-Christian propaganda in textbooks!

Clearly, the voucher scheme is a most effective remedy. It is perfectly fair that parents/taxpayers should have access on equal terms to public funds for the schools of their own choice. One may on various grounds deplore *any* Federal involvement in education. But that is now an academic question. Given the fact that Federal funds are being appropriated, no school can in the long term remain viable unless it has access either to public funds or to private wealth. And the church has no business running "snob schools" for a select few. Yet *Church & State* denounces the eminently sensible voucher proposal in the most hysterical terms. For example, the scheme is held to "reduce pluralism and variety in education by providing public subsidies for religious and ideological homogenization within voucher schools. . .!"

One would have thought that it is precisely pluralism and variety that would benefit from the plan. The trouble is that the people who talk most about pluralism really mean by it not a genuine plurality of views, but one single secularist perspective, filled with a homogenized mishmash of relativized views, and imposed on the public through one standard system of government schools. This kind of bogus "pluralism" has, of course, every reason to fear vouchers, for they would effectively take the power of choice away from the educational bureaucrats and restore it to those to whom it rightfully belongs, the parents. If "pluralism" is the name of the game, then let us play it with an honest deck. Even the Supreme Court (*Torcaso v. Watkins*, 1961) has defined "secular humanism" as a religion entitled to protection under the First Amendment. Neither traditional phobias and jealousies nor genuine confessional differences among Christians ought to blind us to the fact that in the name of the First Amendment the nominal Christian majority in this country are being educationally disfranchised by a secular humanist minority.

Oddly enough, *Church & State* also attacks vouchers for the opposite reason: they "provide public subsidy for dividing children and teachers by religion, race, ideology, class and in other ways, *thereby weakening interfaith and community harmony*. . ." (my emphases). So we really lack the stomach for pluralism after all! Is American nationhood so fragile and precarious that it needs education for cultural conformity to keep it from shattering? One is reminded of Hitler's suffocating slogan: "One People, One Reich, One Fuehrer"! Surely our Bicentennial celebrates something more substantial!

Not surprisingly, the voucher idea has attracted favourable attention overseas. The 1974 "Statement of Principles" of the National Council of Independent Schools (Australia) strongly argues the need for access to public funds if parental choice of education is to be meaningful. The document explicitly refers to "some form of voucher or warrant" as one acceptable "mechanism for recurrent grants." And the Australian publication *News Weekly* (March 10, 1976) expresses great interest in the voucher experiment in the Alum Rock, California, school district. The paper reports:

58% of the teachers thought that, in general, the voucher demonstration would increase the quality of education received by the children of Alum Rock, while 8% thought quality would decrease. . . .

On the issue of quality of parents' choices, 93% of the teachers rated these choices as good or fair. In addition, 62% of the voucher teachers thought actual classroom innovation had increased, while only 9% were of the opposite opinion.

Is it not high time to end the monopolization of the First Amendment by the secular humanists?

Additional material is available from Citizens for Educational Freedom, 844 Washington Building, Washington D.C. 20005.

K. Marquart

EBLA

Few newspapers beyond the *Times* of London contain regular archaeological columns, but most took note during the past few months of what may prove to be the most important archaeological discovery of the century for Old Testament studies, the unearthing of the ancient archives of Ebla by the Italian Archaeological Mission of the University of Rome. The American publicization of the event accompanied the visit of the two men best able to discuss the finds—Professor Paolo Matthiae, the director of the excavation, and Professor Giovanni Pettinato, the epigrapher. Their presentation received the wrapt attention of the members of the Society of Biblical Literature at its annual meeting in St. Louis, 28-31 October 1976.

The Italians began the excavation of Tell Mardikh, a mound of some 230 acres near Aleppo in northwest Syria, in 1964. They uncovered much of interest in the following decade, definitely identifying the tell as the site of the imperial city of Ebla, considered such an important conquest by the great Sargon, king of Akkad, and his grandson Naram-Sin, whose torch brought its history to a close. In other words, according to this observer's chronology, Ebla met its end soon before the birth of Abraham (c. 2166 B.C.). Then in 1974 excitement mounted at Tell Mardikh as the Italian spades turned up some forty clay tablets, some of them bearing witness to a previously unknown West Semitic language. The following season, however, the expedition opened the royal archives of Ebla and took out over 15,000 tablets. The number must now be raised, according to Professor Pettinato, to 20,000; and those so far studied date back to the middle of the third millennium B.C.

The largest class of documents embraces the economic and administrative texts, including oversized tablets dealing with international trade. For the Eblaite empire was, above all, a commercial one. The historical and judicial texts show that Ebla's sphere of influence, including all of Syria and Palestine, reached to the Mesopotamian highlands in the east, Cyprus on the west, and Sinai on the south. These documents now provide the earliest mention of such Palestinian cities as Salim (=Salem), Hazor, Megiddo, Lachish, and Joppa. Now, metropolitan Ebla supposedly had a population of 260,000; but, according to the (tentative) Pettinato reconstruction, the citizens were so intent on commerce that they relied completely upon mercenaries for the military support, when necessary, of their economic hegemony. Such an internal weakness would, of course, explain how the Akkadians were able temporarily to subjugate and finally to obliterate the imperial city. Thus, the Eblaite empire formed an important part of the world into which Abraham was born, and the Eblaite literature will obviously tell us a great deal about the environment of Abraham and the patriarchs who succeeded him.

Contrary to the impression given by most popular reports, the majority—indeed, about eighty per cent—of the tablets are written in Sumerian, the classical language of the ancient Fertile Crescent. The remaining twenty per cent of the documents, however, represent the "new" language which Professor

Pettinato calls Eblaite or Palaeo-Canaanite. It is written, to be sure, in cuneiform, the wedge-shaped characters employed by the Sumerians, but it forms a part of the Northwest Semitic linguistic group to which Aramaic, Hebrew, Ugaritic, and Phoenician also belong. The royal archives of Ebla have produced, in addition, some bilingual texts, including the earliest known vocabularies, listing a goodly number of Sumerian words and their Eblaite counterparts.

Professor Pettinato stresses the close affinities of Eblaite with Phoenician and Hebrew, in particular. Thus, the tablets employ many personal names already familiar to us from Scripture, such as Ish-ra-il (Israel), Ish-ma-il (Ishmael), and Mi-ka-il (Michael). Indeed, the fortunes of Ebla reached their zenith under the scepter of a King Ebrum, to whom even Akkad paid tribute. This datum must topple the critical theory that the Eber of Genesis 11:16 is a mere aetiological fabrication—that the ancient Israelites invented the name (and the man) to explain why they sometimes called themselves Hebrews. “Eber” was, in fact, a real personal name in use at the point in history when, according to Scripture, the name was used by Abraham’s progenitor. The Eblaite religious texts, meanwhile, taking us back another millennium beyond the Ras Shamra literature, show that the use of the word “Canaan” as a proper noun is (in accord with Scripture) much older than most critics have been willing to admit. Also, it seems from the Eblaite tablets that the older form of the name *kemosh* (the god Chemosh) was *kamish*. Professor Pettinato contends that the occurrence of this form (with *yodh* as the vowel-letter rather than *waw*) in Jeremiah 48 indicates the remarkable reliability of the Massoretic text.

In this reviewer’s opinion, finally, the vastness of the royal archives of Ebla underlines once again the conclusion which follows from so much other archaeological evidence: the people of the ancient Near East relied, not upon oral tradition, but upon written documentation to preserve to posterity any matters of importance (and innumerable matters of lesser importance as well). The role of oral tradition in the development of the Old Testament derives not from the history of the second millennium B.C., but from the mythology of the late second millennium A.D. In the light of Ebla, Karnak, Ugarit, etc., it would have been distinctly odd if Moses had not recorded the events and arrangements which constituted the foundation of the Hebrew nation—and, indeed, just as odd if Abraham long before him had not reduced to writing the words and circumstances by which God delivered to him and his heirs the Messianic promise and the ownership of Canaan.

Judicius

THE MANKATO AFFAIR

For several years now Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary have hosted a Reformation lecture series. Such interest in the Reformation, and its impact for today, is worth noting. It was so also this last time, as was demonstrated by the lecture of Prof. E. C. Friedrich, chairman of the Department of Historical Theology at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, Mequon, Wisconsin. “The Quest for True Lutheran Identity” was the title of his essay presented during the two-day period, October 28 to 29, 1976. Traced were the ingredients of genuine Lutheran identity, along with a review in sprightly etched fashion, of the history of Lutheran efforts, during a span of two hundred years, at welding together the sundry, scattered strands of Lutherans in America, particularly at achieving a God-pleasing fellowship based on unity of doctrine and practice, not compromise. With Prof. Glenn E. Reichwald of Bethany, the undersigned was one of the reactors or respondents. The essays will be published in the *Lutheran Synod Quarterly*.

This pattern, involving participants from erstwhile Synodical Conference partners, has been the format of the lectures sponsored by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod's "college and seminary on the hill" for almost a decade now. This is a big venture in a way for a small institution. But its significance and impact should not be underestimated. For the present it is really the only major effort at keeping the lines of communication open between synods which in the past shared so much and which still, under God, should explore every possible avenue for restoring fellowship on a Scripturally sound and Confessional basis. Kudos to the brethren of the ELS for continuing a good work! For continuing the quest of true Lutheran identity and unity!

Included in this year's observance was the installation of Rev. Theo. A. Aaberg as president of Bethany Lutheran Seminary. He will be the first president to devote full time to the seminary, a task heretofore simultaneously borne by the administrative head of the college.

President Aaberg brings notable credentials to the office. For many years a parish pastor, he at the same time was an alert observer of and participant in the traumatic proceedings that led to the ELS's fellowship break with Missouri. Foremost, he is also the author of a really first-rate historical chronography of the events connected with the tragic breakup of the Synodical Conference. His book, *A City Set on a Hill* (available from Bethany at \$5.95), was written in 1968 to mark the occasion of the ELS's 50th anniversary. It tells the story of the heroic efforts of the "Small Norwegian Synod" to retain its Confessional integrity at a time (1912-1918) when the unionistic, compromising "Settlement," or "Opgjor," pressed for acceptance within the old Norwegian Lutheran Church. At that time the "Small Norwegian Synod," the present ELS, struggled against great odds, just in order to survive, a spiritual wrestling in which it was greatly aided by a concerned big brother, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This debt to Missouri has never been forgotten.

Aaberg's book is more than a dry historical review of the facts pertaining to the ELS's ordeal, much more than a parochial pot-boiler hurriedly put together; it is valuable careful delineation of the crucial years, especially between 1938 to 1960, the years of stress and strain within the Synodical Conference, when the so-called ecumenical *Putsch* affected all of American Lutheranism in general. Especially valuable - since the period is nowhere assessed with such careful attention to detail, to my knowledge - are Aaberg's chapters on "Alert Watchmen" and "A Strained Alliance," where he traces the goings-on especially in Missouri, from the 1938 St. Louis convention (which found the ALC's "Declaration" in agreement with the "Brief Statement") through the troubled 40's and 50's, a period during which Missouri was often like an ecclesiastical yoyo in its doctrinal maneuverings. These chapters supply material which no serious student of Lutheran unity can afford to overlook, especially as the church moves farther away from that time. The present can hardly be understood and met with meaningful action, if the past is not known. Aaberg's work, therefore, deserves a much wider audience. The possibility is present, after all, that it can be a catalyst for wider concern and greater efforts at removing the roadblocks to true Lutheran unity and fellowship.

The annual "Mankato Affair" itself deserves wider attention. Perhaps it would be expecting too much to hope that it should spearhead the reunion of the separated churches. But God has a way of choosing the small and the unlikely to accomplish His great and wondrous purposes. That lesson is inscribed deeply in human history, from the moment when the promise was first spoken in Eden, Gen. 3:15. It would be a truly God-pleasing fruit to have the "Small Norwegian Synod," the Wisconsin Synod, and Missouri united again by bonds of genuine doctrinal unity and by the kind of uniformity in ecclesiastical practice which, while flexible enough to allow for variations, is nonetheless true to Scriptural and Confessional principles. This would be an occasion for rejoicing also among the

sister churches overseas. Above all, it would be a God-pleasing goal. Missouri ought now come out of the corner and off the ropes where the "moderate" practitioners have forced her and strive resolutely for such God-pleasing fellowship. Towards that end Missouri's resolve at Dallas (summer 1977) ought to be to put substance into its chosen motto, "That We May Grow," by first of all contritely repenting for past offenses against God-given unity of faith and doctrine, and secondly, by repudiating present illicit fellowship alliances where no unity actually exists.

E. F. Klug

LUTHERANS AND ANGLICANS TALK IN AUSTRALIA

The *Lutheran Theological Journal* (August 1976), the publication of the Luther Seminary faculty of the Lutheran Church of Australia, contains a statement of agreements and disagreements between Lutherans and Episcopalians on the matters of the Lord's Supper and the Ministry. Though it does not really plough any new ground, it differs from most contemporary dialog documents in stating points of disagreement. Zwinglian and other mere symbolical interpretations of the Eucharist are rejected. The hurdle of *manducatio indignorum*, however, the doctrine that unbelievers participate in Christ's body and blood in the sacrament, could not be jumped by the Anglicans. The Anglicans insist that union with Christ is a consequent upon faith, and thus cannot imagine non-Christians eating His Body, although they do see such unbelieving participation as leading to the individual's condemnation. In the Wittenberg Concord of 1536, Bucer agreed with Luther in accepting the *manducatio impiorum*. While Lutherans interpreted the *impii* as unbelievers, the Reformed saw the word as referring to those who were less sanctified. The Anglican rejection of the *manducatio indignorum* can be traced back to their understanding of the sacrament as an act requiring faith for completion. Perhaps the concept of union with Christ also needs examination. Is there not a real confrontation of an individual with Christ which is intrinsically different from the union in faith? The eschatological confrontation with Christ does not presuppose faith. Perhaps if the Anglicans would judge this sacrament from its eschatological perspective, the obstacles to their acceptance of the *manducatio indignorum* could be removed. The document drawn up by the Australians is admirable on many points and does indicate that substantive theological discussion is still possible in some circles. Nevertheless, there is an innate frustration in dealing with any group like the Anglicans whose world-wide structure provides great latitude. The Australian discussions on the ministry simply do not take into account recent decisions of sister churches (American Lutheran Church and Protestant Episcopal Church) to ordain women. I hold that such decisions to ordain women destroys a certain apostolic quality of that ministry. Both Lutherans and Anglicans have stressed this aspect of the ministry, but the Anglicans seem to have a little more to lose on this point. In the past differences dividing Lutherans in other countries have proven to be surmountable in Australia. The isolation of the continent has permitted the development of biological and ecclesiastical forms not found elsewhere. The same principle could be at work in the discussions between the Lutherans and Anglicans. Isolation has its benefits.

dps

Homiletical Studies

SIXTH SUNDAY IN LENT (PALM SUNDAY): LUKE 23:39-43

The first two synoptists tell us that both thieves reviled Jesus. Luke uses an even stronger term which denotes intemperate and insulting language (v.39). But watching Jesus as He hung patiently on His cross, one of these misguided men changed his opinion (v.40). He rebuked his compatriot in crime (v.41), admitting that his own sentence was just while Jesus' punishment was not deserved. According to v.42 the penitent looked forward to Jesus coming again in kingly power and glory. Thus he alone had read aright the superscription on Christ's cross, "This is the King of the Jews." The thief asked only that Jesus would not forget him at His coming. Jesus assured him (v.43) that He would remember him on this day, for before night fell he would be in paradise where the souls of the righteous find a home after death has separated soul and body.

The central thought of the text is that a saved person is one who relies on divine mercy. The problem in the hearers' lives is that they do not always grasp the magnitude of divine mercy. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would live with a keener awareness of Christ's mercy to them.

Introductory thought: Two radically different reactions to the culminating episode of Christ's passion. At first both men had reviled Christ, but then one man changed completely. No limit to the good a man can come to when God changes him. Change is evident especially from his words,

JESUS, REMEMBER ME

These words indicate:

- I. Sorrow for sin.
- II. Reliance on mercy.

I.

- A. The robber saw himself as guilty (v.41a).
 1. Now getting what he deserved.
 2. Blamed no one but himself.
 3. His observation of Jesus on the cross induced remorse over his sin.
- B. We need to see ourselves as guilty before God.
 1. Cannot point self-righteously to the robber—so much evil comes from our heart (Mt 15:19).
 2. Our words and actions reveal other forms of sin—selfishness, indifference, hypocrisy.
- C. Are we sorry for our sins?
 1. Not just sorry we got caught but a godly sorrow (2 Cor 7:9-10).
 2. See that our sins were the cause of Christ's death (Is 43:24).

Jesus, remember me! Let these words express heartfelt sorrow for our sins.

Robber's prayer not only humble but hopeful.

II.

- A. The robber had amazing faith.
 1. Asked only to be remembered, leaving it to Jesus how mercy would be shown (v.42).
 2. Regarded Jesus as an innocent sufferer (v.41b) who was thus in a position to show him mercy on account of his sins.
 3. Knew Jesus to be a king who could do anything He wanted to do.
- B. Faith looks beyond what the eyes see.
 1. You may see only the sin in your life and feel only estrangement from God.
 2. Faith sees forgiveness in Christ's blood and life in Christ's death.
- C. Christ's mercy does not fail.
 1. That day the robber would be in paradise (v.43).

- a. In the first paradise the first Adam sinned and doomed all mankind.
 - b. The second Adam, Christ, repaired the damage and brought one of the most miserable of Adam's children to heaven.
 - c. What a day for this dying man! What a contrast between its opening and its close!
2. We now have the assurance of heaven and of being there when we die. Jesus, remember me! Let these words express reliance on His mercy.

GA

MAUNDY THURSDAY: LUKE 22:7-20

The passover lamb had to be slain by the head of the family (Ex 12:6) (v.7). Jesus has Peter and John take the initiative (v.8). "Passover" in this context is used of the meal, the feast day, or the whole period of celebration (Jn 18:28). Reclining was the custom when eating (v.14). Jesus here seems to have in mind the heavenly banquet (v.16). The cup referred to is one of several passed during the passover meal itself (v.17). Which one it is, is uncertain, but it is evidently just before the formal introduction of the Lord's Supper. Again a reference to the heavenly feast at the consummation of the kingdom (v. 18).

Some manuscripts omit the last part of v.19 beginning with the words, "which is given for you," and also all of v.20. According to the *Greek New Testament*, edited by Aland et. al. (Stuttgart, 1966), there is only some degree of doubt as to the genuineness of vv. 19b and 20. Yet the RSV and the NEB omit these verses. However, TEV and the New American Standard include them. The textual evidence appears to support their genuineness. If v.20 is omitted, Luke would have no reference to the sacramental cup unless the cup in v.17 is regarded as the cup of the Lord's Supper. In that case Luke would have the order reversed, the cup before the bread.

The central thought of the text is that Jesus instituted a New Testament meal which supersedes the Old Testament passover. The problem of the hearers is that they may restrict their participation of the Lord's Supper to a few special occasions in their life or once or twice a year. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would come often to the Lord's Supper.

Introductory thought: Gathering tonight for a meal that has remained the same for almost 2000 years. A very simple meal and yet the most important one this side of the heavenly banquet. It is not, like the Old Testament passover intended to be celebrated only once a year but throughout the year. It is

A MEAL FOR ALL SEASONS

- I. This meal displaces the passover.
 - A. The passover was an important meal for God's people in the Old Testament.
 1. It was a passover to the Lord in which the Jews celebrated annually God's deliverance of their forefathers from the bondage of Egypt.
 2. The passover meal required preparation (vv.7-20).
 3. Jesus was especially desirous of eating this passover with His disciples (v.15a).
 - a. It would be His last meal with them (v.15b).
 - b. He would not eat it again until in the form of a heavenly banquet (vv.16b,18b).
 - B. The passover is superseded by another meal (vv.19-20).
 1. No need to celebrate the passover meal any longer because the deliverance the passover pointed to has been accomplished.

2. The Lord's Supper commemorates the deliverance not only of God's chosen people but of all people.
3. The Lord's Supper is the uniquely Christian meal for all seasons.

II. It offers Jesus Christ.

A. Jesus Christ is central in this meal.

1. Christ was prefigured in the passover lamb.
2. The real Christ is given to all who eat and drink the bread and the wine (vv.19b,20b).

B. Christ's body given for us and His blood shed for us on the cross assure us of forgiveness.

1. The passover was essentially a remembrance, but the Lord's Supper is both a remembrance of Christ's death and a seal of His forgiveness.
2. We can be sure of forgiveness even when we feel unforgiven.

C. Christ's body and blood received in bread and wine also strengthen our faith.

1. To resist temptation.
2. To live as Christians.

Conclusion: Since we need all the assurances of forgiveness we can get and all the strengthening of faith that is possible, the Lord's Supper is indeed a meal for all seasons.

GA

GOOD FRIDAY: JOHN 19:30

The other evangelists record yet another word of divine submission, "Father into Thy hands I commit my spirit." John ends his account of the death of Christ with the climactic words spoken by Jesus, "It is finished." The inscrutable fact of Christ's death is thus presented in its awful grandeur. The debt of sin was paid. The types of the Messiah in the Old Testament were fulfilled. The great work undertaken by Christ to realize the expectations of the prophets was done. The reality arrived of which the temple, the sabbath, the priesthood, and the offerings were all shadows. Death became not Christ's shame but His glory, for God reconciled the world to Himself by the death of His Son.

The central thought of the text is the triumphant completion of Christ's work. The problem of the hearers is that they do not always think and act as if Christ had completed His work of saving men. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would be confident that salvation is an accomplished fact.

Introductory thought: A dying person is often aware that many of his tasks have been left undone. Not so Jesus. He could say just before He died:

IT IS FINISHED

I. He finished fulfilling prophecy.

A. Old Testament prophecies concerning His passion.

1. His betrayal (Zch 13:7).
2. His suffering (Is 53:1-3).
3. His death (Ps 22:7,18).

B. Thereby showed Himself to be the promised Messiah.

1. Who revealed God to men.
 - a. Many want to know God.
 - b. Keep looking for new revelations (mysticism, esoteric religions).
2. No new revelations of God are needed, for Jesus is the final word from God (He 1:1-2).

II. He finished keeping the Law.

A. Observed it perfectly.

1. His enemies (Jn 8:46), Judas (Mt 27:4), Pilate (Jn 18:38), Satan (Lk 4:34) could find no wrong in Him. And God the Father said so (Mt 17:5).
2. Through faith in Him His perfection is ours; God does not hold against us our infractions of His Law.

B. Bore its curse.

1. Breakers of laws face the consequences.
2. Jesus took our punishment for breaking God's Law; we are freed from the curse.

III. He finished everything necessary for our salvation.

A. His death was a victory.

1. Jesus died when He chose to die, only when He knew that all had been accomplished (Jn 10:18).
2. His words, "It is finished," are like the exhausted but triumphant shout of members of a mountain rescue team who after arduous effort succeed in rescuing an injured climber.

B. It is a travesty of Christ's death if anyone thinks that by his sighs and tears, struggles and prayers, words and deeds, he must still do something to save himself.

Conclusion: When your unloveliness oppresses you and you go about dejectedly, let the words, "It is finished," give you confidence. When death comes and you realize there is still much to be done, let the words, "It is finished," calm and cheer you. Because Jesus has finished His task, Easter was possible, the resurrection is ahead of you, eternal life is yours.

GA

EASTER: LUKE 24:1-11

The angels recall to the women Jesus' promise of His resurrection (vv.6-7). The incredulity of Jesus' friends is remarkable when contrasted with the dread of the Jewish leaders that something of great moment would happen three days after Christ's death (Mt 28:11-15). The disciples were evidently amazed at His rising from the dead. The Jewish leaders would apparently have been surprised if something startling had not happened. Unique to Luke's account of the resurrection is the disciples' reaction to the women's story as idle talk.

The central thought of the text is that Christ really rose as He said He would. The problem of the hearers is that they do not take Christ's resurrection seriously enough to relate it to their total existence. The goal of the sermon is that they would relate the resurrection to every part of their lives.

Introductory thought: We sometimes engage in idle talk in the form of tall stories. The women seemed serious enough, but the disciples could not swallow their story. "Seemed to them an idle tale" (v.11). But that was not a day for tall stories, as the disciples soon learned. What happened on Easter is real.

THE RESURRECTION IS NO IDLE TALE

Therefore:

I. We Can Believe Christ's Words

II. We Can Share Christ's Life

I.

A. The women connected Christ's words with what had happened (v.8).

1. Jesus had foretold His resurrection (vv.6-7; Mt 17:9, 23; 26:32; Jn 2:19).
2. The resurrection corroborated Christ's words, and His words illumined His actions.

B. Christ's words are utterly reliable.

1. We have a tendency to distrust words, to say that words are cheap and that one doesn't know whom to believe. We are surfeited with words in the media.
2. We do well to remember Christ's words, for we can believe all that He said about who He is and what He did and will do.
3. Christ speaks to us in the words of Scripture which we can accept as true and reliable, because the resurrection is no idle tale. Jesus did what He said He would.

II.

A. He shares His life with us.

1. The purpose of His crucifixion and resurrection (v.7) was to give us life by delivering us from the consequences of our sins - alienation from God and eternal death.
2. His resurrection is proof that we have been declared righteous before God (Ro 4:25) and that death is not the end (2 Cor 4:14).

B. We can share His life with others.

1. The women told the disciples that Jesus was alive (v.9).
 - a. Their faith had grown.
 - b. Their lives had taken on new meaning.
2. Let us remind wife, husband, children, friends that Christ is risen. Our lives have a divine dimension. Christ makes our lives new, hopeful; there is no need to despair.

Conclusion: The resurrection is no idle tale; it is real. We can believe what Christ says and share in Christ's life.

GA

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER: JOHN 20:19-31

Verse 19: The scene is Easter Sunday evening. The fearful disciples were aware of the preceding events: the report of the women, the appearance to Mary, the account of Peter and John, and the report of the Emmaus disciples. Luke implies that more than the eleven had gathered. "Jesus stood in the midst" in His glorified body, subject to the laws neither of time nor space. "Peace be unto you": This is the peace He won and He alone can give, Jn 14:27. V.20: "He showed them His hands and His side": He is the living One who was dead but is now alive. "Glad": extreme dejection and fear are converted into the joyful conviction of the truth. The disciples heard, saw, and handled the Word of Life, 1 Jn 1:1. V.21: The first "peace" gave a new revelation; the second "peace" was a summons to service. "As my Father hath sent me, etc.": This is Christ's divine commission to His Church. V.22: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost": The Holy Spirit is Christ's parting gift to His Church. V.23: "Whosoever sins ye remit, etc.": This is the office of the keys, the peculiar church power to forgive the sins of penitent sinners and to retain the sins of the impenitent. Cf. Mt 18:15-19; Ac 2:37-39. V.24: Thomas is an example of an anxious skeptic. "Thomas was not with them": That was his first mistake. V.25: Thomas' second mistake was that he discounted the testimony of witnesses. V.27: Note the patience of Jesus. V.28: Thomas is now convinced and boldly declares Christ's divinity. V.29: Believing is seeing; that is faith. V.31: The miracles are a part of Christ's proclamation of Himself as the Son of God; they are Christ's sign language intended to bring men to faith. The goal of the sermon is to encourage the hearer to live by faith and to bring forth faith's fruits in a life of service.

Introduction: We worship no dead Mohammed, but a living Lord who is with us always.

Jesus Is In The Midst Of His Church

I. To commission His Church.

- A. He gives the command. V.21; Ac 1:8; Mt 28:18-20.
- B. He gives the message. Vv.21,23,25.
 - 1. A message of peace, the peace He won. Lk 2:14; Col 2:14.
 - 2. A message of pardon. V.23; 2 Cor 5:19.
- C. He gives the power. V.22.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit's power at Pentecost.
 - 2. The Holy Spirit is Christ's abiding gift to the Church. Jn 16:7-15; Ac 1:8.

What a challenge we have! What a power! But, alas, we are sometimes faithless when we ought to believe. But Jesus deals with our doubts.

II. To strengthen the faith of the doubters.

- A. Thomas lived by the philosophy: "Seeing is believing." V.25.
 - 1. Thomas was not with them.
 - 2. He discounted the testimony of witnesses.
 - 3. In times of adversity we are tempted to behave just like Thomas.
- B. Jesus encourages the philosophy: "Believing is seeing." Heb 11:1.
 - 1. We have a sure Word to guide us.
 - a. The Word is given by inspiration. 2 Tim 3:15; 2 Pet 1:21.
 - b. The Word points to Christ and His promises. Jn 5:39; Mt 28:20.
 - 2. Faith clings to the Word.
 - a. Against circumstances. Lk 5:5.
 - b. Against feeling. Ps 42:5.
 - c. Faith is rewarded by sight; cf. Abraham; the children of Israel at the Red Sea and at Jericho; Gideon against the Midianites.

Let's walk in the confidence of faith, bringing forth the fruit of Christian witness, because Jesus is alive and with us.

HJE

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF EASTER: JOHN 21:1-14

The disciples left Jerusalem for Galilee to await Christ's appearance. Mt 28:10,16. Galilee was the place where Jesus gathered all of his disciples except Judas, fed the five thousand, and walked on the water. V.2: The other two disciples may well have been Philip and Andrew. V.3: Waiting for Christ's appearance, the disciples would not be idle. "They caught nothing": without God's blessings our best efforts are futile. V.4: Christ comes when people have reason to be most despondent. V.5: "Meat": literally, anything eaten at a meal with bread. V.6: When the ingenuity and industry of the disciples failed, Christ came to relieve that. So great was the catch that they could not get it into the boat. V.7: John is the first to recognize Jesus. V.8: Two hundred cubits is about 100 yards. V.9: God will provide our daily bread. Ours is but to work faithfully at our calling without giving up to sloth or anxiety. The provision of bread and fish is the second miracle in this narrative. The goal of the sermon is to encourage people to live with a consciousness of the Lord's presence, power, and grace.

Introduction: Many people look at life simply as a dog-eat-dog existence. Life to them is simply a matter of the survival of the fittest. Christians count God in the equation of living. That makes all the difference in the world. Ro 8:31; Phil 4:13. In the midst of fruitless toil John cries out:

It Is The Lord

I. The Lord is with us.

- A. The disciples toiled fruitlessly.
 - 1. Waiting for Christ's appearance in Galilee, the disciples returned to their vocation as fishermen.
 - 2. A night of fishing proved fruitless.
 - 3. So often life is like that
 - a. When we do not seem to get ahead.
 - b. When reverses, like sickness or unemployment, cause us to go backwards.
 - c. We become anxious and ask: "Where is God?" Mk 4:38.
- B. Jesus appears.

- 1. He knows about the disciples and appears to them.
- 2. He, our loving Lord, knows about us too. Jn 10:14; Mt 28:20; Ps 27:5; Jer 23:24; Ps 139:7; 1 Pt 5:5.

If God knows, we should take comfort, for He also has power to help.

II. The Lord is with us with His power.

- A. Jesus performs a double miracle.
 - 1. He gives the disciples 153 large fish.
 - 2. He prepares a table before them. Ps 23:5.
 - 3. Jesus often proved his power: lepers were cleansed; the blind received sight; the lame walked; the dead were raised.
- B. Christ's power is available to us, too.
 - 1. He supplies our daily bread. Ps 145:15.
 - 2. He helps us in every need.
 - a. At times He removes our trial.
 - b. At other times, He gives us strength to bear our trials. Phil 4:15; 1 Cor 10:13.

What a power we have available. Hence we pray. Phil 4:6. As we pray, we trust. Mt 21:22.

III. The Lord is with us with His grace.

- A. It was love that brought Jesus to the seashore.
 - 1. To provide for the immediate needs of the disciples.
 - 2. To strengthen them for their future work as fishers of men.
- B. Jesus is with us with His grace, too.
 - 1. He showed His love for the world by His sin-atoning death. Jn 10:11.
 - 2. His resurrection guarantees His victory for us over sin, death, and hell. 1 Cor 15:55-57.
 - 3. This love attends us, too. Is 49:15.
 - a. To guide in life. Ps 73:23-24; Mt 6:31.
 - b. To bring us to our heavenly home. 2 Tim 4:8.

"It is the Lord." He is with us. Therefore, let us live in humble dependence; let us be grateful for the blessings he daily gives; let us trust His love to provide also for the future.

HJE

FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: JOHN 10:22-39

The feast of dedication was instituted by Judas Maccabaeus, 165 B.C. It was celebrated for eight days with lights in homes and in the temple. V. 24: "Make us to doubt": Hold us in suspense, literally, steal away our hearts. Christ was not

their kind of Messiah. They wanted to lay a trap for Jesus, for one who pretended to be a Messiah would be killed for blasphemy, cf. v. 31. Unbelief does not see the sun at noonday. Their problem was not one of evidence, but lack of faith. They had the Old Testament promises, Christ's preaching, and Christ's miracles; yet they would not believe. V. 27: Jesus is a stone of stumbling to some; to others He is precious. Sheep hear His voice and follow; He knows them and gives them eternal life. Their security is that no man is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand, cf. Rom. 8:35. "Hear my voice": This implies faith. "I know them": Christ distinguishes them from others, 2 Tim 2:19, and He has a particular regard for every individual, Ps 34:6. V.28: "Shall never perish": They shall by no means perish forever. "Out of my hand": All things are in God's hand, Deut 33:3. V. 29: "Greater than all": Greater than all the enemies, Ps 46. "My Father which gave them to me": He that secured the glory of the Redeemer will secure the glory of the redeemed. V.30: "One": One in essence, in power and glory.

Introduction: What do you think of Christ? This is a most important question because a man's eternal destiny hangs on his answer.

What Do You Think of Christ?

- I. Some do not believe.
 - A. They have the evidence.
 1. The words of Jesus.
 - a. Concerning His deity, Jn 1:1; 8:58.
 - b. Concerning His Messiahship, Jn 10:11; Mt 20:28.
 - 2 The works of Jesus, v.25, Mt 11:5; Jn 20:30.
 - B. They refuse the evidence.
 1. They fail to see themselves as sinners, Mt 19:20; Lk 18:11.
 2. They fail to see Christ as Savior, Ro 1:20-21.
 3. They bring judgment upon themselves, Mt 11:21; Lk 13:34; Jn 15:22.
 4. These people must be the object of our missionary concern, Jn 10:16.
- II. Some believe.
 - A The relationship of sheep to their shepherd.
 1. Christ's sheep hear His voice, Jn 8:31-32; Lk 11:28.
 2. Christ's sheep follow Him.
 - a. In faith, Ac 16:31.
 - b. In life, Lk 5:11.
 - B. The relationship of the shepherd to the sheep.
 1. The shepherd knows the sheep, Ps 139:1.
 2. The shepherd gives them eternal life, 2 Tim 4:8; Jn 14:1-6; Ro 8:35.

God, give us all the faith to say, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

HJE

FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: JOHN 13:31-35

Jesus announces His going away in terms which the disciples are slow to understand. He is to be "glorified," by which He means that He is to be revealed as the Savior and the divine Son of God by His suffering and death (v.31) and also by His resurrection and ascension (v.32), in all of which the Father is active. The disciples would not be able to walk the same path of suffering He would walk, nor could they immediately follow Him into heaven (v.33). Nevertheless, they would not only share in His glory but, while on earth, they themselves would glorify Him through their love for one another.

The commandment Jesus gives to love is new in the sense that Jesus has provided a new standard and motive - "even as I have loved you" (v.34). The love He was to show in His death for others was a self-sacrificing love. Such love shown by His followers would be the witness to the world of true discipleship (v.35).

The central thought of the text is that Jesus is glorified or honored by submitting to death, by God exalting Him, and by the love of Christians for one another. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would let the glory of Jesus which they see by faith be reflected in their lives. The problem is that Christians sometimes let other kinds of glory overshadow the glory which is theirs in Christ.

Introductory thought: "The paths of glory lead but to the grave." Acclamation of men is ephemeral. One enjoys it no more in death. Jesus walked on paths of glory much different from the world's, paths which give all other glory a new dimension.

Paths of Glory For Jesus Christ

- I. A path of humiliation.
 - A. He was about to suffer and die.
 1. Judas had left the room in order to carry out the betrayal (v.31a).
 2. Jesus was now seemingly helpless against the worst that sin, Satan, and death would do.
 - B. Yet Jesus was glorified in suffering and death (v.31b).
 1. Here the brightest manifestation of God's righteous love (Ro 3:21-22).
 2. Here the clearest demonstration of vicarious sin-bearing (2 Cor 5:21).
 3. Here the complete redemption of the human race (Col 1:14).
 4. None of us could go with Him on this path of humiliation (v.33). He went for us. A path of glory indeed.
- II. A path of exaltation (v.32).
 - A. He descended into hell (1Pe 3:19-20).
 1. To proclaim victory over Satan.
 2. To announce to the condemned irrevocable judgment because of their unbelief.
 - B. He rose from the dead (Mt 28:6; 1 Cor 6:14).
 1. Conquering death for us (Jn 11:25-26).
 2. Giving us new power (Php 3:10a).
 - C. He ascended into heaven (Eph 1:20-22).
 1. To be the head of the church.
 2. To be the ruler of all.

We share in His glory, for we have been delivered from eternal death and assured of new life here and hereafter (Eph 2:6). A path of glory indeed.

- III. A path of love.
 - A. We Christians are to love one another "as I have loved you" (v.34).
 1. It is a new commandment because of the principle of self-sacrifice (*agape*).
 2. It is a new commandment because of the motivation. His love enables us to love.
 - B. When we live in love, the glory of Jesus shines through us.
 1. Such love is the most evident demonstration to the world that we are Christ's disciples (v.35).
 2. It is a marvelous power for healing and service.

Conclusion: Because Jesus' paths of glory have intersected with ours, we need not glorify ourselves. It is glory enough to share in His and to reflect it.

SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: JOHN 14:23-29

Jesus is interrupted by the question (v.22) as to how He is to be manifested as the Messiah only to the disciples and not to the world. Jesus replies (v.23) that the manifestation of which He has been speaking is spiritual and is conditioned upon love for Christ and obedience to His word. A result of Jesus manifesting Himself will be the abiding in the believer of the Father and the Son. Jesus further assures the apostles that the Counselor, whom He now designates as the Holy Spirit, will teach them all things and bring to their remembrance all His words (v.26). In view of these promises, Jesus bequeaths to His disciples the legacy of peace (v.27). He reiterates (v.27) words of comfort spoken earlier (14:1). In spite of His promised spiritual coming, the disciples were to endure the anguish of losing His bodily presence. Jesus assures them that His going away was a necessary condition of His spiritual coming, that His very prediction of His bodily departure would later strengthen their faith (vv.28-29).

The central thought of the text is that Jesus nurtures our love for Him by His indwelling, teaching, and consolation. The problem is that the hearers are often insensitive to the ways in which Jesus keeps their love for Him alive. The goal of the sermon is that the hearers would grow in their love for Jesus Christ.

Introductory thought: Human love in marriage and in other family relationships often wanes and dies. The same can happen to our love for Christ. Jesus is concerned about keeping that love affair going (vv.23a,21,15). He has His own plan for increasing our love for Him.

Jesus Strengthens Our Love For Him

- I. By coming to live in us.
 - A. He and the Father make their home with us (v.23b).
 1. Actually live in us (Eph 3:17a; Re 3:20).
 2. The life of God permeates us and affects our being (Ga 2:20; Php 1:21).
 - B. Our close relationship with Jesus fosters love for Him.
 1. Our relationship with Jesus is similar to the marriage relationship (Re 21:2).
 - a. Love wanes when the marriage relationship is no longer close.
 - b. Commonality is needed in marriage.
 2. Jesus takes the initiative in maintaining a close relationship with us. In that closeness our love for Him grows.
- II. By teaching us.
 - A. Jesus teaches us by means of the Holy Spirit.
 1. Though Jesus is not present bodily, the Spirit is a wonderful Counselor (v.26).
 - a. The Spirit recalled to the apostles what Jesus said, so that the words of Him whom we love are kept before us in the apostolic writings.
 - b. The Spirit teaches us how to relate Jesus' words to our life
 2. The Spirit's teaching takes place always through the word of Jesus (v.23a). For us, that word is the Holy Scripture. We who love Jesus treasure His words.
 - B. A characteristic of a close relationship is the desire to learn.
 1. We want to learn something we did not know before, to gain insight and grow.
 2. Through Jesus' teaching we learn more about God and ourselves. We grow in love for Him who teaches us so well.

III. By comforting us.

A. Jesus comforts by giving us peace (v.27a).

1. Not as the world gives (v.27b).
 - a. His peace is not dependent on outward circumstances.
 - b. Troubles remain, but our hearts need not trouble themselves (v.27c).
2. Our comfort is based on Jesus going to the Father to reign over all things for our good (v.28b).
3. He will come again to take us to Himself (v.28a). What comfort!

B. In a maturing human relationship comfort is needed and given.

1. Husbands and wives, parents and children, members of the Christian church need to support one another.
2. Without that support love stagnates. Jesus' comfort is His way of revitalizing our love.

Conclusion: There is no need for our love for Jesus to stagnate. He has a plan to keep our love alive. Intimate closeness. Stimulating teaching. Encouraging comfort. Our love for Him is strengthened.

GA

ASCENSION DAY: LUKE 24:44-53

In point of time, although vv.44-49 may well have been spoken by Jesus on Easter Sunday, it is possible that the evangelist here condenses various reports into one, relating in one paragraph what happened on a number of occasions. In any event, we have recorded the commission to carry on Christ's work and not to begin a new one. As the Father sent Christ--in the past, for His mission was completed; so now Jesus sends His disciples--in the constant present, till His coming again.

Christ's mission was now complete. Jesus indicates that the unalterable agreement introduced by "it stands written" has now been fulfilled. The "must" of fulfillment of the whole Old Testament touching on the work of the Messiah was now completed. In the word translated "must be fulfilled" we have what one can call the key to the work of Christ. Why was it necessary, this suffering, dying and rising again? Arndt in answer insists:

- 1) "It had been prophesied and the divine Scriptures have to be fulfilled."
- 2) "The fact that the prophecies were in the Scriptures shows that God had decreed the passion and resurrection of Christ."
- 3) "It was necessary for the salvation of the human race that these things come to pass."

To these things the disciples had been eye-witnesses. The proclamation of this "in His Name" was to be their principal task and that of the church until Christ's return.

Thus the continuity not only of the work but also of the message was established. For even as the burden of the Messiah's proclamation was the summoning to repent and receive the Kingdom, so now "repentance and forgiveness of sins was to be proclaimed." To the changed heart that in faith laid hold on Christ and His atoning work there was the free offer of forgiveness of sins.

In this work the disciples had the promise of the Christ for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and also for His abiding presence and help. For even though His visible presence was removed by His ascension, invisibly Jesus continued with them.

Introduction: Paradoxically, rather than experiencing sorrow at their parting from Jesus Christ, the disciples found joy. This joy is pegged on three specifics that come out of the text: Joy in the fulfillment of God's promises prophesied in the Old Testament; joy in the call to purpose and meaningful service; joy in being blessed and finding its response in joyful worship in the temple.

Text and context: Relate the events, resurrection to ascension, as indicated in the text.

An Ascension Message of Joy

- I. Joy in the fulfillment of God's promises in the Old Testament.
 - A. Fulfilled are the Messianic prophesies of the Old Testament.
 1. "It stands written," the formula introducing God's unalterable agreement.
 2. The whole Old Testament bears witness to Christ.
 - B. "It was necessary."
 1. That the scriptures must be fulfilled.
 2. "It pleased God to bruise Him." God's decree concerning Christ's suffering, death and resurrection.
 3. For the salvation of the human race.
 - C. Jesus opens the minds of the disciples to understand. Here merely an intellectual comprehension.
- II. Joy in the call to purpose and meaningful service.
- A. You will be witnesses of these things.
 1. The "what" and "why" of the suffering, dying, and rising again of Christ.
 2. They were to carry on the work of Christ—this command is in the "constant present"—until Christ's coming again.
 3. Beginning in Jerusalem and going out into all the world.
 - B. Proclaiming repentance and forgiveness in His name.
 1. True repentance involves two things.
 - a. Sorrow and contrition.
 - b. Faith which trusts the promise of God's forgiveness.
 2. "In His Name."
 - C. The Holy Spirit would empower them.
- III. Joy in the blessing that found response in joyful worship.
- A. They receive the blessing of Christ, not the least of which was the promise of His abiding Presence (cf. Matt 28:20).
 - B. Their worship in the temple anticipates their joyful worship in heaven (cf. Jn 14:1-6).

The Ascension joy is also available to us in the same way and on the same terms. God has promised, called, and blessed us. We in that blessing respond in joyful service and worship, until in Christ's coming again, we are taken "so that where He is we may be also," in heaven where we shall serve and worship our God in the fulness of joy that knows no end.

NHM

THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: JOHN 17:22-26

The estranged are reconciled through the atoning work of the Savior. In that work we come to know the Father, not merely intellectually, but more importantly in the intimacy of trusting faith and thus experience His love. This, in part, is what it means to be one with Christ. This also, the text suggests, makes us heirs of Christ's glory. This is the glory to which Christ was raised in heaven after He had achieved His work on earth—indeed, that same condition that was His before His incarnation and even from eternity. Oneness with Christ incorporates the idea of "participation in" and "enjoyment of."

Introduction: It is amazing in the light of what was ahead that Jesus had no concern for Himself but only for His disciples, and this includes us. So close was the relationship between Jesus and the Father that Jesus speaks of it in terms of being "one." No one, because of this relationship, ever knew the Father as Jesus did, nor experienced the Father's love as He had, nor received the degree of glory that was His. All of this that Christ has He desires that we should have. This, then, is the burden of His prayer.

Text and Context: Relate setting, past, present, future.

In Christ We Become Heirs of His Glory

- I. In Christ.
 - A. We come to *know* God.
 1. The inability of natural man to truly know God.
 2. Christ reveals, makes the Father known to us. (Cf. Heb 1:1-2; Jn 1:18; Jn 17:3.)
 3. We come to know Christ most surely in the redemptive act wherein God revealed His divine purpose for us for eternity.
 - B. We experience the Father's love.
 1. A love that had its origin before the foundations of the world.
 2. A love that found greatest expression in the sending and offering up of His Son for our sins.
 - C. We become one with Christ.
 1. By faith through baptism we are united, grafted into Christ.
 2. The serenity and security this yields.
 3. The powerful dynamic this affords.
- II. We Become Heirs of His Glory.
 - A. The glory given Christ by the Father.
 - B. The glory in which we participate, for His prayer is ever, "that we may be where He is."
 - C. Our Easter joy made more full, for in the resurrection in which we participate we live now and eternally.

NHM

PENTECOST: JOHN 15:26, 27; 16:4b-11

An integral part of the last discourses of Jesus is His treatment of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. John contains frequent references to the person and work of the Holy Spirit and the necessity of His coming to the disciples. We have long since been drawn to the awareness that the ability of people to embrace Christ and what He said and did, in faith and trust, is furnished by the Holy Spirit, for He above all things bears witness to Christ. In the words immediately before this pericope Jesus had explained that the hostility of the Jews to Him was sinful, for they ought to have recognized His divine mission in His works and words. They hated Him, not knowing Him, although they ought to have known him; but when the "Paraclete" came, He would bear true testimony to Jesus, being indeed the Spirit of Truth. Thus Jesus in the text calls the Holy Spirit the "Paraclete," the divine advocate, defending "The Righteous One" against false accusers, pleading the cause of Christ with the world. The Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father and bears true witness to the world concerning Christ. He is indeed the Spirit of Truth, bearing witness to the Truth, the Christ of God.

Because, as Jesus says, He was going to the Father (a reference to His death, resurrection, and ultimately His ascension), the persecution that found focus in Him would, with His leaving, be directed to His disciples, His witnesses. The Paraclete, whose office has already been described as one of witness, would also vindicate the apostles in the testimony which they were to deliver.

Exposed to persecution they would have a powerful advocate at their side. "He will be their Paraclete, no less than the Paraclete of Jesus, or rather He will be theirs because He is His."

It is interesting to note that emerging from the text is the conviction that the Paraclete will not only provide the defense of the apostles, but will also assume the part of the prosecutor of their enemies, convicting their accusers and the accusers of Jesus of being in the wrong.

Jesus renders not only an indictment but also a conviction on three counts (the word used for convict is straight out of the court room): (1) the Paraclete will expose the sin of failure to discern God in Christ and thus "to believe in Him." The world is to be convicted of that sin inherent in the rejection of Jesus. (2) The righteousness of which the world will be convinced to its shame is the righteousness of Christ, that absolute righteousness that could only be revealed in the risen Christ. "He goes to the Father" is the statement which authenticates His mission. For with the Passion, His revelation of the Father is completed, and henceforth the Paraclete will convince the world of that perfect righteousness which is revealed in Christ and made accessible to people. (3) The Paraclete will convince the world both of the justice of God and the inevitability of God's judgement. The world will be judged and the outcome of that judgement is already determined, because the prince of this world has been judged. In the redemptive act Jesus is victorious. Satan's hold is broken, death is destroyed, and the final expulsion of Satan from the domain over which he claims rule is assured. (Luther's words are appropriate: "He's judged, the deed is done; one little word can fell him.")

The message is plain. The Paraclete is both the advocate of the disciples and Jesus Christ, and the accuser or prosecutor of the world. As we witness to our Lord, the Spirit performs the same functions yet today for and through us.

The Holy Spirit—Advocate and Prosecutor

- I. The Paraclete Is an Advocate—a Divine Helper.
 - A. To the disciples.
 1. In persecution and need.
 - a. Jesus had warned them.
 - b. With His leaving, the hatred that focused on Christ would be turned on them.
 - c. They would need the advocacy of the Holy Spirit.
 2. In support of their witness to Jesus Christ.
 - a. They along with the Holy Spirit would bear witness to Jesus.
 - b. They were witnesses because they had been with Christ from the beginning.
 - c. The coming of the Holy Spirit was to complete Jesus' presence.
 - B. Of and for Jesus Christ, bearing witness to Jesus and His works.
 1. Defending the Righteous One, pleading the cause of Christ with the world.
 2. Pleading the cause of Christ before false accusers.
 3. Bearing true testimony to Jesus as a Spirit of Truth.
- II. The Paraclete Is Also the Prosecutor. He will not only provide defense, but He will also take the role of the accuser. He will accuse the accusers of Jesus and His disciples of being wrong. He will convict the world to its shame:
 - A. Of sin.
 1. The sin inherent in the rejection of Jesus.
 2. The failure to discern God in Christ and to believe in Him.
 3. The failure to recognize Jesus' divine mission through His words and works.

- B. Of Christ's righteousness.
 - 1. Righteousness absolute and authenticated by the passion and resurrection.
 - 2. A righteousness revealed in Christ and made accessible to man.
- C. Of judgement (its justice and inevitability).
 - 1. The outcome is already determined and assured.
 - 2. Satan will be expelled from the domain over which he claims rule.

NHM

HOLY TRINITY: JOHN 16:12-15

On the Festival of the Holy Trinity the pastor calls upon the hearers to worship the Triune God: the Father who created us, the Son who redeemed us, the Holy Spirit who made and keeps us as the children of God. Each work, though ascribed especially to one of the Persons in the Godhead, is at the same time spoken of as the work of the Trinity as such. For such a thought a single text of Scripture is difficult to find. Consequently the sermon usually becomes quite topical. But John 16 clearly speaks of the Trinity. Each of the Persons is mentioned. More than that, the text deals with one topic, the testimony of each of the Persons of the Trinity with regard to our salvation.

What do these verses actually teach? Here clearly the Son testifies concerning the Father that He has given the Son all that is His in such a way that it still belongs to the Father even as it belongs to the Son. Compare Psalm 2 where the Father says to the Son, "Ask of me and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." To look at it from another angle, by His action in giving all to the Son, the Father is certainly testifying of the Son that He is the Only-Begotten from eternity, one with the Father. Furthermore, the Son testifies of the Spirit that He has been given the whole message of salvation to proclaim to the world through the apostles. The Spirit, in carrying out this glorious work, has thereby testified of the Son that He is indeed the Savior.

To sum it up, in this short pericope each of the Persons of the Godhead is testifying of the others, and in doing so is actually giving this testimony to us to assure us of our salvation. The truth is thus drawn from these four verses that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are truly the God of our salvation.

GOD THE FATHER, SON, AND HOLY GHOST—THE GOD OF OUR SALVATION

- I. The Father gave to the Son all that He needed to be the Savior of the world. This is the testimony of Christ Himself (text) as it has always been the testimony of the Father (Gn 3:15; Ps. 2; etc.).
- II. The Son went the way appointed through suffering, death, and resurrection to be the Savior of the world. This is the testimony of the Holy Ghost through the apostles, as foretold by Christ (text).
- III. The Holy Ghost is the reliable witness to the eternal plan for our salvation. This is the testimony of the Son of God regarding Him (text).
- IV. What glorious unity is here proclaimed! What an assuring message for believers, that the Triune God is truly the God of our salvation.

MJS

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 7:1-10

In this season of the church year in which the Christian life is to be clearly set forth, the strengths and the weaknesses of our hearers in confessing Christ and trusting in Him are to be uppermost in our minds as we apply the Gospel to their several needs. This text certainly serves well also for such a purpose. We focus our attention especially on the centurion, whose faith causes even Jesus to marvel. He would have us consider the centurion as a man of great faith and thus as an example to every Christian. The centurion, a Gentile, shows great concern for a servant who was dear to him, which seems perfectly natural. Another point, quite significant in the text, seems also perfectly natural: the centurion sees himself as in full control in his relation to the soldiers under his authority. But note the other features of this text. The centurion, so fully in control in some areas of life, is perfectly willing to admit his complete helplessness in dealing with what appeared to be the fatal illness of his servant. There is no thought here of using his authority, of demanding the service of some physician or surgeon, expecting him to perform a "miracle." There is no thought at all of using his good deeds, as the elders of the city were trying to use them, to ingratiate himself with the Lord. There is no thought at all on his part of any worth that he would have with Christ; yet he appears to have perfect confidence in Christ's power to heal and in His willingness to heal. He had confidence in Christ's Word. Confidence in something which cannot be seen is faith. The centurion had faith in Christ. Christ Himself said that it was a great faith.

THE CENTURION OF CAPERNAUM, AN EXAMPLE OF FAITH

- I. As we are faced with varying conditions of life.
 - A. We may feel fully in control in some areas of life, as was the centurion.
 1. This is not wrong in itself.
 2. The Christian should have confidence that God will continue to supply him with energy and strength to do his daily work.
 - B. Yet how helpless we can become in the face of difficulties.
 1. They may come upon us so unexpectedly.
 2. We recognize them at once as beyond our control.
- II. As we seek a solution to our problems as children of God.
 - A. It is good for us to admit that of ourselves we are not worthy to come to God in our need.
 1. In this already, the centurion is an excellent example for us.
 2. Note that he was a good man but used none of his goodness to earn favor with God.
 - B. Yet in all confidence we come to God in our need.
 1. We are confident that Christ can help. He need only speak the Word.
 2. We find our full worth in Him.
 - a. He it is who has made us the children of God (that was His chief work on earth).
 - b. He knows each of us as surely as He knew the centurion.

MJS

THIRD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 7:11-17

See the sermon on this text by the writer in the 1977 *Concordia Pulpit* (pp. 171-174) for views of death which may seem quite strange to some, judging from what one hears about the death of Christians in many a funeral sermon. Some even go so far as to say that the death of the Christian is the wages of

sin, which completely ignores the fact that the wages of sin have all been paid by Christ.

If it seems strange that a text dealing with death would be chosen for the Third Sunday after Pentecost, let it be borne in mind that the Christian's attitude toward death is likely to color his attitude toward all of life. It is proper, then, in that portion of the church year in which the Christian life is being discussed, that the proper view of death be considered.

WHAT A LIFE IS OURS IN CHRIST OUR LORD!

- I. For those who die in Him death is not really dying.
 - A. The miracle proved Christ to be the Messiah.
 - B. As Messiah He died the only death that truly pays for sin.
 - C. He thus removed from us the sting of death.
 - D. To die a death that has no sting is not really dying at all. It is a falling asleep in Jesus.
- II. For those who live in Christ, life is more than just living.
 - A. True, even Christians may get some very morbid thoughts about life.
 - C. But why these morbid thoughts? Is Christ also dead? Are we who mourn the loss of loved ones ever left alone?
 - D. The living Lord has power over death and its consequences in the lives of those still living.
 - E. He also has power to make our earthly life a life of joyful service.

Note that dying was discussed before living, in line with the statement at the beginning of this study, that the Christian's attitude toward death so often colors his attitude toward life. If we can help our people to face death without fear, regardless of when it comes, they should be able with the help of Christ to live their lives in joyful service to Him who makes even death a blessing for His people.

MJS

THE FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: LUKE 7:36-50

This account is found only in Luke. A synopsis of the text is something like this: Works matter, after all. Simon had no works; hence, no faith. The woman showed that she had forgiveness, for she loved much. Her much loving was the fruit of her faith. V.36: Simon was not an outspoken enemy of Jesus. However, He was a real Pharisee, who knew neither the fact of his sinfulness nor the meaning of forgiveness. V.37: This woman remains unknown except for this narrative. She was a sinful woman, not necessarily a prostitute. She had heard Jesus preach and accepted Him in faith. She comes now to show her gratitude. V.38: "His feet": Jesus reclined on a couch as He ate. This woman recalls her many sins, and tears course down her cheeks. She wipes His feet with her hair. The greatest humiliation for a woman was to unloosen her hair in the presence of men. V.39: Simon is unable to understand what is going on in the heart of Christ or in the heart of the woman. Jesus teaches Simon how unsound is his reasoning by telling the parable of the two debtors. V.47: "For she loved much": This clause expressed the logical connection between the proof and that which is proved. The woman's much love expressed her trust in Christ's forgiveness.

Introduction: Luther once described faith as a living, active thing.

Faith is living and active

- I. It takes the forgiveness freely given by Christ.
 - A. Simon knows "this woman" but not himself.
 1. She is a sinner, and he knows it.
 2. He doesn't realize that he is, too, Lk 11:42
 - B. Jesus forgives her.
 1. Out of pure grace, Eph 2:8-9.

- a. He came for such as she, Lk 19:10; 1 Jn 3:5.
 - b. She takes the forgiveness in repentance and faith, Ro 4:5; 5:1.
 - 2. Simon forfeits forgiveness because he doesn't look to Christ as Savior.
 - a. Christ to him is only a great man.
 - b. He doesn't see Christ as his Savior, Ro 3:12; Mt 23:37.
 - II. True faith manifests itself in love.
 - A. Out of grateful appreciation this woman anoints Jesus' feet.
 - B. Simon manifests no such love.
 - C. The parable of the two debtors sets the record straight.
 - 1. Those who are forgiven little, love little.
 - 2. Those who are forgiven much, love much, I Pe 2:9; Mt 5:16; Mt 25:34-36.
- Let's joyfully accept in faith the forgiveness God so freely gives us in Christ and reflect our joy in works of Christian love.

HJE

THE FOUR HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FORMULA OF CONCORD: MAY 29, 1977 HEBREWS 13:7

May 29, 1977, marks the fourth centenary of the signing of the Formula of Concord. This event belongs to the great historical occasions of the Lutheran Church. The Formula of Concord reunited the divided Lutherans after a generation of controversy following Luther's death. To bring this event closer to our time it is profitable to make a partial comparison of the twentieth and sixteenth centuries:

- 1. The Lutheran Church now, as then, has a yearning for peace after decades of conflict. A serious meditation on the Formula should bring us all closer to the faith of the Bible and the Confessions.
- 2. There was a communications-explosion in the sixteenth century (the invention of printing) and another has occurred in the twentieth century (radio and television).
- 3. The Reformation period possessed a sense of eschatological anticipation which is evident again today as we approach the end of the second millennium.
- 4. There was an awareness of an expanding world in voyages of discovery and the studies of the heavens (Copernicus, Bruno, Brahe).
- 5. Social experimentation was very evident in the Peasants' Revolt and the various *Schwaermer* (fanatic) movements. It was an age of commercial and military progress as well.
- 6. The art of printing brought with it new translations of the Bible in most of the languages of Europe.
- 7. In the sixteenth century nationalism was on the rise throughout Europe. We pray that our age may produce something better.
- 8. Waves of speculative doctrine are hardly peculiar to any age, but they deserve to be mentioned in this comparison of centuries. Even ill-considered ecumenical efforts were not lacking in the sixteenth century.
- 9. The Reformation period, finally, saw the sort of lay leadership in the church which is only beginning to reveal itself again in our times.

A PATTERN FOR HARMONY AND RENEWAL

- I. "Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you."
 - A. The authors and signers of the Formula of Concord deserve remembrance.

- B. Their efforts to prepare a valid confession deserve special remembrance.
- II. "Think back on how they lived and died."
 - A. Both lay and clerical leaders confessed their sins and praised God for their salvation.
 - B. The task before them in preserving and transmitting the pure Gospel was very great.
 - C. The benefits to them and to their churches in a fruitful life and blessed death were also very great.
- III. "And imitate their faith."
 - A. The church of the Reformation stood the test (Counter-Reformation, Pietism, Rationalism), though also needing repeated renewal.
 - B. The content of their faith (*quae creditur*) was that of the Scripture and the Creeds.
 - C. The trust and confidence of their faith (*qua creditur*) was nourished by Word and Sacrament.

OFS

Book Reviews

I. Biblical Studies

THE FIRST BOOK OF THE BIBLE. GENESIS. Interpreted by B. Jacob. KTAV Publishing House, New York, 1974. 358 pages. Cloth. \$12.50.

Beno Jacob was considered by Jewish scholars to have been one of the foremost modern Jewish interpreters for the English-reading public. His great commentary on Genesis was published in 1934, but was destroyed by the Nazis before it could be accorded further attention. Dr. Ernst I. Jacob and Dr. Walter Jacob, respectively the son and grandson of the author, have reduced the original German commentary by the elimination of the technical philological material and the argumentation advanced against the Documentary Hypothesis and what used to be called "higher" textual criticism. The eliminated portions may be consulted in the German edition which was recently reprinted by KTAV. The publishers inform the reader that the core of the German commentary is to be found in lucid and clear English in this translated and adapted version.

Martin Buber, now deceased, spoke about this Jewish Genesis commentary as follows: "Beno Jacob's Commentary sets out on new paths. No other Commentary of our time is as thorough and so richly inspiring. It is an admirable work." Harry Orlinsky is high in his praise of Jacob's Commentary, when in the foreword he states: ". . . Jacob's commentary becomes indispensable for the fuller understanding of what the Bible has said and has continued to say from its inception to our own days. Such commentaries on Genesis as those of S. R. Driver (1904 often reprinted, and G. von Rad, 3rd edition, 1972) are of course of prime importance; but it is Jacob's commentary that gives their data and approach and the perspective that makes for a whole view" (p. VII).

While B. Jacob was opposed to the higher criticism of Genesis as found in the standard commentaries on Genesis, yet many of his interpretations are not much different. On many verses and chapters the views of Jacob are unique and novel, at least when compared with other Genesis commentaries. To understand this commentary it might be well to ponder the following statement of Orlinsky in the foreword:

Jacob could not accept the Documentary Theory as understood and applied by biblical scholarship in the first two-three decades of the twentieth century, i.e. in pre-archaeology days. To the vast majority of Christian scholars, the Hebrew Bible came to an end when the New Testament came into being, whereas to Jacob, as to any Jew who knew Jewish history, the Hebrew Bible did not come to an end; indeed, as a Jewish scholar looking back upon the panorama of biblical interpretation that covered nearly two thousand years of the Common Era, Jacob saw the Bible as a reality that had become increasingly vital and meaningful in the mishnaic and later rabbinic periods.

Both conservative and critical scholars will find views expressed in this commentary with which they would agree. Conservatives will appreciate the criticisms of the erroneous assumptions and conclusions of the proponents of the Documentary Hypothesis. Against evolution Jacob asserts (p. 1):

It is the first achievement of the Bible to present a divine creation from nothing in contrast to evolution or formation from a material already in existence. Israel's religious genius expresses this idea with monumental brevity.

Relative to the meaning of "day" in chapter 1, he writes (p. 4):

Indeed all efforts to understand these "days" as world periods of indefinite length are vain; this has been claimed in order to achieve conformity with the millions of years assumed by modern science for the origin of the universe. The Bible means by the word "day" only a day like ours. This is established for all six days as the seventh day as a day of rest naturally means a period of 24 hours.

Concerning the employment of "God" and "Lord" as a criterion for finding different divergent documents in Genesis, he states: "One and the same author may not only use both names, but even alternate them with intention and art; under certain circumstances they may be combined as I believe to have shown for many passages" (p. 14). Regarding a supposedly second story of creation in Genesis 2:4b-25, Jacob wrote: "It has been claimed that the following chapter contains a second story of creation. This is not conclusive as it would be a story of creation in which nothing is created—neither the heavens nor the earth, neither the sea nor the fish, nor as assumed birds, animals or man. They are "formed" and a garden is planted at a certain spot on the earth which therefore must already have existed" (p. 15).

The description of Eden, on the other hand, and the river which flowed from it into four other rivers is said to be "a product of fantasy and nothing else; else it is designed, not without irony, to disenchant us about the 'paradise.' It does not contain fairy tale treasures as in Ezek. 28, 13f." (p. 18). The Genesis Flood account is supposedly borrowed from the Babylonians "from whom Israel borrowed other things as well." The Bible took the raw materials and thoroughly transformed them through their own characteristic spirit. According to Jacob "the Bible clearly and decisively emphasizes religious ideas; it makes matter and form subservient to them. This proves the originality and energy of Israel's mind" (p. 60).

Jacob often points out the superiority of the Genesis materials when compared with Near Eastern mythological ideas, but Genesis 1-11 are not considered to relate true historical events. Those who hold to the factuality and historicity of the Genesis narratives will find that, even though Jacob differs with the Documentary Theory, he ultimately ends up with interpreting the Genesis materials allegorically and as purely didactic narratives which reveal how the ancient Hebrews thought about the great problems of life, such as God, man's relationship to nature, death, and immortality.

Genesis 12-50 are referred to as "tales." Jacob states that "some have doubted that the patriarchs were historical. It is not our task to examine this question." How can a commentator write an exposition and take a neutral stance on whether or not the Hebrew patriarchs were true historical characters?

An analysis of the isagogics and hermeneutics employed by Jacob would reveal that they cannot be harmonized with the type of hermeneutics that was used by Roman Catholicism, Calvinism, Arminianism, and Lutheranism before the invasion of the historical-critical approach in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. Now and then this commentary will give an interesting insight but basically its interpretations disagree with such inspired Jewish writers as Jesus, Paul, Peter, John, and the author of the Letter to the Hebrews.

Raymond F. Surburg

II. Theological-Historical Studies

AGAINST THE WORLD FOR THE WORLD. Edited by Peter L. Berger and Richard John Neuhaus. Seabury Press, New York, 1976. 164 pages. Cloth. \$8.95.

In January 1975 an assortment of theologians convened in Hartford,

Connecticut, to issue "The Hartford Appeal for Theological Affirmation." It was widely recognized as a conservative turn in theology. At the time it appeared I had written what was intended as an editorial for THE SPRINGFIELDER to be entitled something like "Is Neuhaus Among the Prophets?" Whatever was written is lost beneath the debris of my desk. What was striking was that Pastor Neuhaus, a recognized "moderate" spokesman in the Missouri Synod, had organized a group of theologians to issue a conservative manifesto against liberal sins. Now the organizers of the 1975 Hartford meeting have rounded up some of its signers to appraise their own document. In addition to the editors, George A. Lindbeck, George Forell, Carl J. Peter, Richard Mouw, and Alexander Schemann have contributed essays. The general tone of most of the essays is virtually an apology for having given the appearance in the Hartford document of being conservative. Let this example from Lindbeck's essay prove the case: "There is, for instance, no particular Christology or doctrine of God in it [Hartford Appeal], although it implies that doctrines of God and of Christ are necessary. Similarly, it does not define what it means by resurrection or life in the world to come, but simply insists that their affirmation in some form or other is imperative" (p. 25). With such an understanding of the Hartford document, it is hard to see that there was any kind of retreat from liberalism into conservatism. Could we say that in January 1975 that some professional theologians got together to play theology for a week? Looking at the evidence a year later, it was a good thing that my original editorial of commendation got lost. Lindbeck also states that the Hartford Appeal could be signed by Thomists, Tillichians, Rahnerians, French theological structuralists, Lutherans, "and Barthians who oppose all these positions (not to mention Wittgensteinians, Whiteheadians, Pannenbergians, and Palamists) . . ." (p. 29).

The original motivation of the signers begins to emerge. It appears as if the signers thought that something had to be done to rescue the science or discipline of theology. If secularism was the answer, why have church, religion, or theologians? The Hartford Appeal was written to answer the call for rescue. The whole business is like a poker game where one player has won all the chips and gone home with the winnings. The Hartford signers are saying, "Let's keep playing, just for the sake of playing." If *Against the World For the World* was an attempt to revive the flash-in-the-pan enthusiasm of 1975, it failed. If we are to take the signers' word for it, it was just so many words.

dps

LUTHERAN CYCLOPEDIA. Erwin L. Lueker, editor. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1975. 845 pages. Cloth. \$24.95.

In 1927 Concordia Publishing House published the *Concordia Cyclopedia: A Handbook of Religions Information, with Special Reference to the History, Doctrine, Work and Usages of the Lutheran Church*. It was Theodore Graebner who first suggested this reference work and he served on the editorial board until 1923, but in that year was replaced by Paul E. Kretzmann, with Ludwig Fuerbringer and Theodore Engelder serving as editors from the very start. They were assisted by a number of notable scholars in Synod. This volume reflected the conservative stance of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod on all matters presented and discussed.

In 1954 its successor appeared utilizing materials that had appeared in its 1927 predecessor, but under the editorship of Dr. Erwin Lueker. Naturally this volume endeavored to present matters of Biblical interpretation, systematic theology, church history, life and worship in the church as they were understood and practiced in the two decades that had elapsed since 1927.

Renamed as *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, it was expanded to 1160 pages. William F. Arndt, Richard R. Caemmerer, Otto A. Dorn, and Frederick Mayer served as editorial advisers. A number of professors and scholarly pastors served as consultants.

In 1975 Concordia issued a Revised Edition of the 1954 *Lutheran Cyclopedia*, again with Dr. Erwin Lueker (now a Seminex professor) serving as editor. In the preface to the 1975 edition the reader is told that numerous corrections, suggestions and criticisms poured in as soon as the 1954 edition appeared and all these were entered into a master copy before the decision was made to issue a revised edition. The editor states:

The number of entries has been considerably increased, articles from the previous editions were carefully reworked, and the mechanics improved. Subjects on which information would be sought especially in a Lutheran cyclopedia are somewhat more complete than those on which information is available in many other reference works. Thus a length of an article is not necessarily a criterion of importance.

About 250 individuals, professors, district presidents, synodical executives, and others contributed to the revision. The views that now are dividing the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod are partially reflected in certain articles written by those sympathetic to the so-called "moderate movement" in the LCMS.

In contrast to the three volume *The Encyclopedia of the Lutheran Church* (Augsburg Publishing House, 1965), this cyclopedia reflects an emphasis on matters related to the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, but it does contain a wealth of material useful to Lutherans of other synods. There is also information of a general nature about Christianity in all lands and at all times and places. Like its predecessors, the 1975 revision covers the major subjects in the areas of Biblical interpretation, systematic theology, church history, and practical theology, which includes religious education, preaching, counselling, evangelism, and worship. The revised *Lutheran Cyclopedia* contains information on church bodies and their official teachings, hundreds of historic persons, and the religious status of other countries. Lutherans in the United States and Canada will find numerous discussions of topics of interest to American and Canadian Lutheranism. Short bibliographies at the end of many articles will be helpful for research students or those wishing to pursue a subject in greater depth. Few outstanding personalities in the history of Christianity are forgotten. People associated with American and European Lutheranism are given space; there is even a list of all synodical and district presidents of the LCA, ALC and LCMS.

As one compares the *Concordia Cyclopedia*, *The Lutheran Cyclopedia*, and the revised *Lutheran Cyclopedia* the observant reader will find theological shifts. For example, both the 1927 and 1954 cyclopedia identified "The Angel of the Lord" with the preincarnate Christ, while Wegner in his article lists this only as one option which he does not favor and omits the book which has an excellent chapter on this matter, namely, Hengstenberg, *Christology of the Old Testament*. The article on archaeology assumes that the thirteenth century date of the Exodus is the correct one, which does not meet the requirements of the Biblical chronology and other data given in the Bible, as the fifteenth century date does. The article on the canon, originally written by William Arndt, is quite different in the revision. In it Fred Danker subscribes to the critical approach to the Bible and describes the Pentateuch as first completed around 400 B.C. (The Documentary Hypothesis underlies this view). He also speaks about two Old Testament canons, a limited Palestinian canon and a wider Alexandrian canon, and propounds the theory that it was the Synod of Jamnia which finally decided what books belonged in the Old Testament canon. This view is completely contrary to the facts, as well as opposed to the position of historic Protestantism and historic Lutheranism and represents a

radical change from its two predecessors. The article on "the covenant" fails even to hint at the fact that the most important element of the Abrahamic covenant was the promise that through one of Abraham's descendants, namely Christ (according to Paul in Gal. 3) all the nations of the earth would be blessed. The whole presentation is from the critical viewpoint. An excellent article written for the *Concordia Theological Monthly* by Dr. W. Roehrs is omitted from the bibliography, but it disagrees, of course, with the author's presentation.

A number of articles in the 1954 edition were shortened and condensed; sometimes articles were rewritten in the interest of an ecumenical approach. In the 1975 revision the term "Messiah" is defined as follows: "(Heb. *mashiach*, 'anointed.') Wood used in various forms in reference to anointing with holy oil (e.g. Ex. 2:41; I Sam. 9:16; I Kings 19:16). The New Testament word is Christ (Gk. *christos* e.g., Mt. 16: 16; Jn. 1:41" (p. 531). In the 1954 edition Messiah is defined as follows: "One of the most significant names of the Savior on the basis of the prophetic sayings of the Old Testament, which pictured Him as the "Anointed of the Lord," one who should be endowed with the Holy Ghost without measure to be our Prophet, Priest, and King. The prototypes of the Messiah were the Old Testament patriarchs, prophets, priests, and kings, some of whom were designed as anointed, others being inducted into their office by means of anointing. Jesus repeatedly stated that He was the Messiah as foretold by the Prophets of old. John 4:26; 10:24, 25; Matt. 26:64. The corresponding Greek name is Christ" (p. 671). The revision reflects the critical bias against Messianic prophecy so characteristic of current Old Testament criticism. However, other articles, like the one on "prophecy" (p. 640) and "Christ as Prophet" (p. 641), emphasize the Biblical and traditional position of predictive Messianic prophecy. The article on prophecy correctly emphasizes the truth, that a prophet is a forth-teller as well as a fore-teller.

While the revised *Lutheran Cyclopedia* has an article on "Pentecostalism" which describes what traditionally was the position of this movement and defined the churches espousing this erroneous kind of theology, there is no articles on "Neo-Pentecostalism," which since 1961 has affected the main-line denominations of Christendom, including Roman Catholicism, Episcopalianism, Presbyterianism, Lutheranism, and other Protestant denominations. Neo-Pentecostalism has divided and continues to divide churches and is one of many problems plaguing Protestant and Lutheran churches.

Since the historical-critical method is the big dividing issue today in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, it would have been extremely helpful to have had a discussion in this reference volume of the difference between the historical-grammatical method and the historico-critical, but the definitions given are exceedingly brief and do not inform the reader wherein the difference between the two methods consists. The article on "Commentaries, Biblical" (pp. 187-188) definitely favors the critical approach to Scripture. The writings of Hengstenberg, outstanding conservative Lutheran theologian of the nineteenth century, are belittled by citing F. W. Farrar's judgment, namely, the exegetical methodology of Hengstenberg "was retrogressive." The ICC Commentary which contains many extremely liberal volumes is cited "as authoritative, though some volumes have been superseded by fresh investigation." Conservative commentaries, those of Leupold and Laetsch, are not mentioned among commentaries not in sets.

With 250 individuals contributing, some of whom are now associated with Seminex and men sympathetic to the so-called moderate theology, it is not surprising that the 1975 revision does not portray the same consistency toward the Bible and its writings as was the case with its predecessors of 1927 and 1954. Hold on to your 1954 version and the 1927 version if you own them or can purchase them. Living theologians and church leaders are not mentioned; only those who are dead rated inclusion in this reference work. The many cross-references make this a very useful volume. Despite the foregoing

criticism and others that might be made, the revised *Lutheran Cyclopedia* contains much valuable information and is a volume every pastor will want to have in his library for handy access to data normally scattered through many books. Considering current book prices, the price asked for this volume is not too high.

Raymond F. Surburg

JESUS IS VICTOR: KARL BARTH'S DOCTRINE OF SALVATION. By Donald G. Bloesch. Abingdon, Nashville. 176 pages. Paper. \$5.95.

Among the conservative-evangelical American scholars, Donald G. Bloesch of Dubuque Theological Seminary is certainly one of the foremost interpreters of Karl Barth's theology. The present volume is an imbibible distillation of Bloesch's many years as a student of Barth's through his writings and one year as a participant in one of his seminars. Barth is no longer the rage at American seminaries now that he was in the late fifties, but Bloesch sees a possible revival. Since in my opinion, many of the current Missouri Synod problems can be traced back to undiluted injections of Barthianism into the theological bloodstream, the issue of Barthianism is not really dead in our circles. This does not mean that the students picked up Barth and read him, but rather it means that many professors became enamoured with the Swiss theological giant and a correlation between their views and his. *Jesus Is Victor* presents in a capsule form the quintessence of Barth's thought from a not altogether unsympathetic stance. Thus, for example, Bloesch seems to assert that Karl Barth does not deny the resurrection as an event in time, but that his stress is that only faith can understand its meaning (p.53f). The author's treatment of this often debated point in Barth's position simply does not receive adequate discussion. Perhaps the matter should have been approached this way: Is it possible for Barth to discuss the resurrection apart from faith? Here an answer would have been more revealing.

Bloesch places himself with the Reformed, and thus his mindset is more geared for understanding Barth, who is a Calvinist by tradition and commitment. The real key to Barth's theology might very well be the dominance of grace as a supreme attribute in God. This is different from Lutheran theology, where grace is a result of Christ's crucifixion. Attached to Barth's view of grace is God's sovereignty, the Calvinistic heritage. Sovereign grace overcomes nothingness and brings creation into existence and it also effects the redemption. In spite of some equivocation on Bloesch's part, he seems to say that for Barth grace does overcome all unbelief. If grace is to be totally sovereign, universalism, the doctrine that all men will be saved, is the only natural conclusion. The Barthian ambiguity results from a hesitancy to confine the sovereign grace by defining it. Placing all of God's activities under grace as does Barth is as objectionable as when it was done by the older Reformed theologians, who spoke about creative grace.

Barth's theology is attractive even to many conservatives because of its near-total reliance on Biblical terminology. But beneath the Biblical mask lies a philosophy that is not Biblical. For Barth there is no personal Satan. The evil God overcomes is nothingness and it is this battle which is described in the Bible. But God's creative act was not a battle against nothingness and His redemptive act through the cross is not cut from the same cloth. Bloesch's title for Barth's salvation doctrine, *Jesus Is Victor*, is appropriate because in Him the cosmic battle, as viewed by Barth, is finally won.

The present volume fails to list the many other readable theological books written by Bloesch. We can only assume that the publisher does not want to sell the books of his competitors. Bloesch's dialog with Barth is respectful even where he takes issue with his teacher. The result of this type of approach

is a Barth which is supposed to be more acceptable to the conservative mind. But there is no need to make an already deceptively alluring Barth even more attractive.

In theology there is always the debate over whether to begin with a system of theology or with the Bible. Barth presents a system of theology and presents all kinds of statements which exist independent of Biblical exegesis. After a bout with Barth, a saner approach suggests that a piece by piece approach to the Bible will at least not be deceptive.

dps

