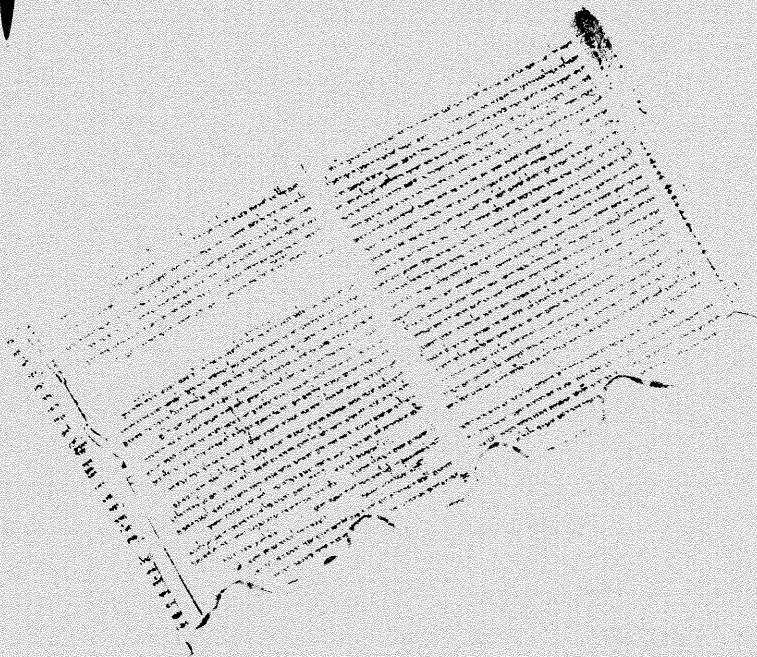


June 1980

Volume XX, No. 2

ISSN 0360-9685



The
Lutheran
Synod
Quarterly

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY

Theological Journal of the
Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Edited by the Faculty of
Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary
Mankato, Minnesota

Editor: Acting President Glenn E. Reichwald
Managing Editor: M. H. Otto
Book Review Editor: J. B. Madson

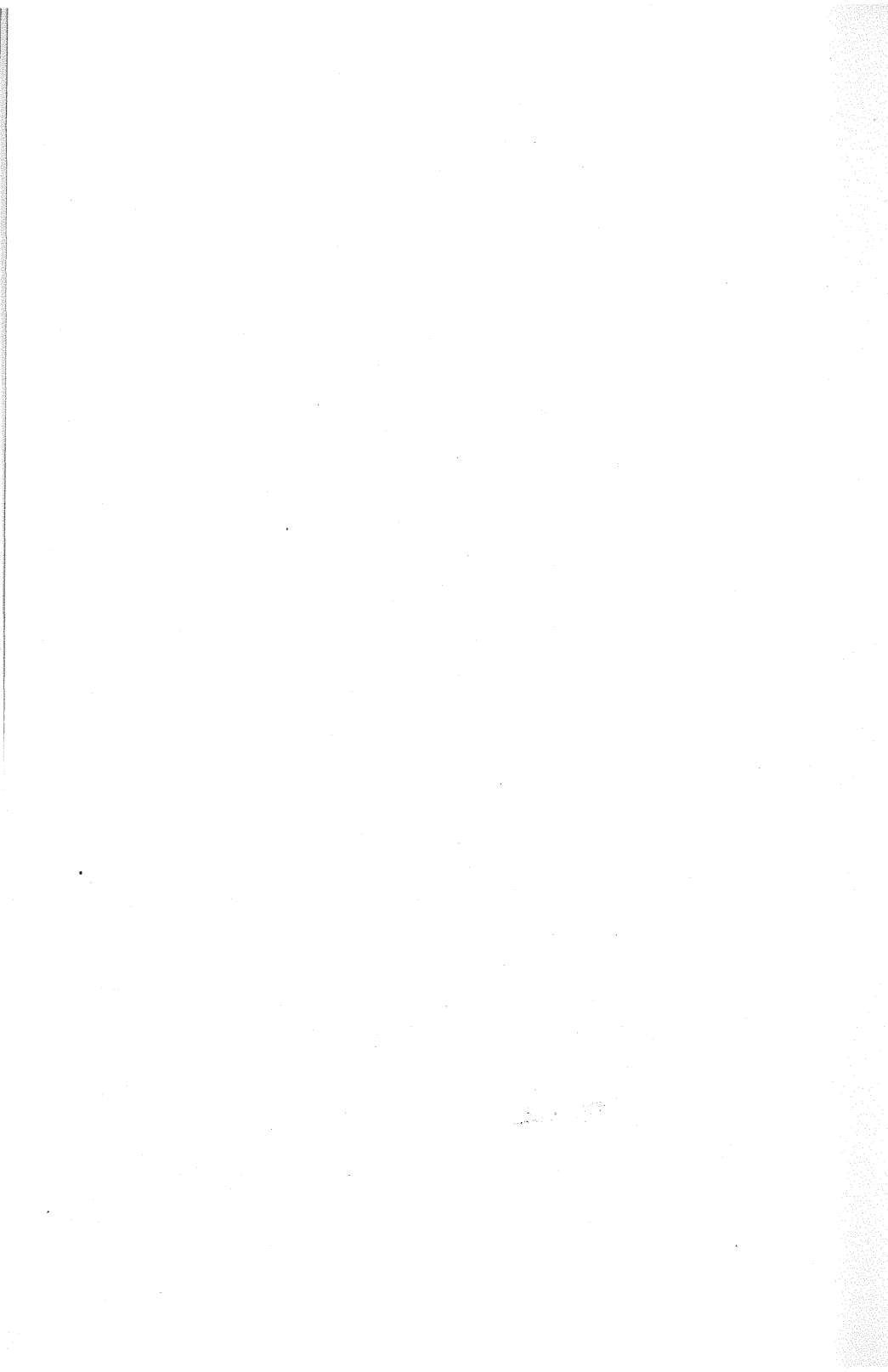
Subscription Price: \$4.00 per year

Address all subscriptions and all correspondence to:

LUTHERAN SYNOD QUARTERLY
Bethany Lutheran Seminary
447 North Division Street
Mankato, Minnesota 56001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
LUTHER'S CATECHISMS AND THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION	
N. S. Tjernagel	1
SOCIOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM AND THE QUESTION OF ORDNATION OF WOMEN: A CRITICAL REVIEW	
Gary Faleide	31
OUT OF HER PAST -- THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD -- INSTALLMENT II (Cont'd from Vol. XIX, #4)	
Adolph M. Harstad	37
TROUBLE ON INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY IN AUSTRALIA	
Glenn E. Reichwald	51
CORRECTIONS IN PREVIOUS INSTALLMENT	65
BOOK REVIEW	66



LUTHER'S CATECHISMS AND THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION

1. The Sources of the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession.

As Lutherans we accept, as a foregone conclusion, the belief that both of these confessional statements have their origin in Holy Scripture itself. Nothing in either of them is in any way, in spirit or in letter, incompatible with the words and precepts of God's revelation. We may go beyond that and also say that the Augsburg Confession, as well as the Catechisms themselves, are thoroughly and uniquely embedded in the theology of Martin Luther. Other Lutheran theologians provided editorial assistance in the compilation of the Augsburg Confession, nothing more.

We believe also that a proximity of the time of publication of the two confessions (the Catechisms in April and May, 1529, and the Augsburg Confession in June 1530) give added reason for considering the two documents under a single heading. Please note the following chronology of these two vital years in the annals of the Lutheran Reformation.

- Jan. 1529: Luther engaged in the writing of both Catechisms and the publication of the Small Catechism in chart form.
- Apr. 1529: First publication of the Large Catechism (April 19) and the meeting of the important Diet of Spires and the resultant first use of the term "Protestant."

- Oct. 1529: Presentation of Marburg Articles for discussion at the Colloquy of Marburg. Luther, Melanchthon, Jonas, Osiander, Brenz and Agricola on one side, Zwingli, Bucer, Oecolampadius and Hedio on the other. Articles revised for presentation at Schwabach later in the month.
- Jan. 1530: Diet of Augsburg called by Emperor Charles at Bologna where his coronation by the pope took place three days later.
- Mar. 1530: The Emperor's proclamation reached the Elector of Saxony at Torgau on the 11th. On the 14th the Elector commissions Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen and Jonas to draw up a document (the Torgau Articles) for presentation at the Diet of Augsburg.
- May 1530: Draft of the Torgau Articles submitted to Luther by the Elector. Continuous process of revision, especially by Melanchthon, until its final presentation to the Emperor.
- Jun. 1530: Augsburg Confession (drawn from the Marburg, Schwabach, and Torgau Articles) read to the Emperor on June 25.

This abbreviated chronology shows that the two Catechisms were barely published before the doctrinal concerns of the Lutherans were further ventilated at the Diet of Spires, the Marburg Colloquy, and the Diet of Augsburg where a new confession was formally submitted.

a) The Sources of the Catechisms

The first Medieval reference to the use of the Apostles' Creed in devotional and instructional literature is found in the 4th century. Derived from Apostolic doctrine, the Creed developed gradually to its present form. In a sermon preached in 1535 Luther rejected the legends that had grown up around the Creed and said: "Neither we or the early fathers invented this confession of faith, but just as a bee collects honey from all kinds of beautiful flowers, so is the Apostles' Creed a finely constructed summary of the whole of Scripture, the writings of the prophets and apostles, for the benefit of children and simple Christians."

We find the use of the Lord's Prayer almost equally early in the devotional literature of the church. Its derivation from the lips of Christ himself made it an obvious element in the life of the church. Not until the 13th and 14th centuries were the Ten Commandments regularly included with the Creed and Lord's Prayer in widely used instructional manuals.

The Bohemian Brethren appear to have been the first to have included the Sacraments in their Catechisms. Luther had possession of one of these Bohemian books which had circulated for 60 years before the publication of his first catechism. Luther followed suit and made confessional statements about both Baptism and the Lord's Supper an integral part of his own catechism, though as late as 1525 he was still speaking of the "three parts" of the catechism. A booklet for laymen and children written by Bugenhagen appears to have been the first Lutheran Catechism formally to include the Sacraments.

A number of appendices were added to the five chief parts of the Catechism, some before and some after Luther's death. It is not known when Luther composed the Table of Duties. Not catechetical in nature, the table seems to have been included for the purpose of giving practical instruction in Christian living. The sections under the heading, "What Hearers Owe to Their Pastors" and "What Subjects Owe to Their Government" were probably not written by Luther. They appeared in the Latin but not in the German version of the Book of Concord. The Table of Duties had some Medieval precedents. Luther's version was characteristically Lutheran.

The appendix on Confession did not appear in the first edition of the Small Catechism. The section on the Office of the Keys was not formulated by Luther. It was included in some editions of the Catechism but does not appear in the Book of Concord of 1580. Questions for those who wish to go to Communion may have been written by Luther, but they were not inserted in the Catechism until after his death. The conclusion of the Ten Commandments and the doxology of the Lord's Prayer were also added after the Reformer's death.

Looked at as a whole, Luther's Small Catechism may be seen as a comprehensive distillation of biblical theology in its entire essence. It is nothing more, nothing less. It is, as Luther liked to call it, "The layman's Bible."

Detailed historical studies have taken account of the stages of gestation of this great little book, the Small Catechism. We need only note Luther's "Little Prayer Book" (Betbuchlein) of 1522, a text which is remarkably dissimilar to the finished product of 1529. The 1522 booklet was very like the Medieval manuals of instruction,

both in content and form. The difference is a difference in pedagogical principle. Within those seven years Luther had devised a methodology for teaching. A textbook of unparalleled quality had come into being.

b) The Sources of the Augsburg Confession

Our review of the sources of the Augsburg Confession must begin with a glance at the political setting in which the Catechism and the Augsburg Confession were developed. Luther's citizenship in Electoral Saxony was very important for the future of Lutheranism because three Saxon Electors were to support Martin Luther as a teacher and reformer.

The first of the Saxon princes to rule during Luther's residence at Wittenberg was the attractive figure, Frederick the Wise. It was to be his role to protect the young reformer during the initial assault against him set off by the publication of the 95 Theses in 1517. Until his death in 1525 Frederick the Wise maintained a religious neutrality and continued to protect Luther in his role as professor at the University of Wittenberg. Frederick did this without ever formally espousing the Lutheran faith.

The successor to Frederick the Wise was his brother, John the Steadfast, who sincerely, vigorously and openly espoused the Lutheran cause. He made no secret of his full support for Luther's theology. It was to be his role to give the Lutheran movement a strong political base in his own principality, and also to draw together princes of other Lutheran cities and principalities into an effective alliance supportive of the principles of the Reformation.

John the Steadfast, whose reign was to span only seven years, has received much less than his due share of credit for the dramatic success of the Reformation in its initial stages. When he succeeded his brother on May 5, 1525, the Peasants' Revolt had reached crisis proportions in Germany and John's first task was to end the civil strife brought on by Thomas Munzer and the Anabaptist anarchy. Early in 1526 John joined with Philip of Hesse in forming the League of Gotha for the protection of the Lutheran faith. In the months of June to August, 1526, John stood resolutely against the Emperor Charles at the Imperial Diet of Spires to resist the anti-Lutheran provisions of the Diet of Worms of 1521. John secured from the Diet an act known as the Recess which anticipated the Peace of Augsburg of 1555 in providing that each territorial ruler in the Holy Roman Empire should be free to act in matters of religion in accordance with his conscience.

In political affairs, as well as in the continuing wars with France and with the Turks Elector John remained loyal and fully supportive of the rule of Charles V. When a second Diet of Spires was convened in 1529 Catholic Princes secured the support of the Emperor to attempt to revoke the Recess of 1526. John and other Lutheran rulers entered a vigorous protest which became the occasion for the use of the epithet "Protestant," applicable to all who had denounced the Roman church. After the Diet of Spires in 1529 further events were to move Lutherans toward new refinements in the formulation of their faith.

At the instigation of Philip of Hesse and with Elector John's sanction Luther and Melanchthon and others went to Marburg in early October 1529 to discuss theology with Zwingli and his adherents.

The Lutherans carried with them a document which included 15 articles known as the Marburg Articles. In the discussion that ensued agreement was reached on the first fourteen points, but not on the 15th dealing with the Lord's Supper. Later in the same month Lutheran theologians presented a revised version of the Marburg Articles to a synod at Smalcald. A new document was developed with the addition of two articles. It was called the Schwabach Articles. These articles were accepted by the Lutheran theologians on October 16, 1529, as the basis for admission into the league of Lutheran principalities. Luther claimed principal authorship of the Schwabach Articles, though he conceded that "they were not composed by me alone."

In January, 1530, Emperor Charles went to Bologna for his coronation by Pope Clement VII. On January 21, three days before that ceremony, the emperor issued a manifesto calling for the convocation of a Diet to convene at Augsburg on 8 April 1529. The main problem to be dealt with was the danger of a Turkish invasion of Christian Europe. He also said that he wished to take up the matter of the religious disunity that was troubling Europe. The words of his manifesto reflect an obvious sincerity and an honest desire to restore religious peace. He said:

"The diet is to consider furthermore what might and ought to be done and resolved upon regarding the division and separation in the holy faith and Christian religion; and that this may proceed the better and more salubriously to allay divisions, to cease hostility, to surrender past errors to our Savior, and to display diligence in hearing, understanding, and considering with love and kindness the opinion and views of everybody, in order to reduce them to one single

Christian truth and agreement, to put aside whatever has not been properly explained or done by either party, so that we all may adopt and hold one single and true religion; and may all live in one communion, church, and unity, even as we all live and do battle under one Christ."

The Elector, John the Steadfast, received the summons in the good faith in which it had been issued. John received the manifesto at Torgau on March 11. The Saxon Chancellor, Heins Brueck, read the document and within three days of its receipt advised the Elector that the position of the Lutherans be "properly drawn up in writing with a thorough confirmation thereof from the divine Scriptures." The Elector agreed and commissioned Luther, Jonas, Bugenhagen and Melancthon for the task, with the request that they treat particularly "those articles on account of which such division, both in faith and in other outward church customs and ceremonies continues."

By March 27 the theologians had finished their task. They submitted a revised version of the Schwabach Articles, previously agreed upon by the princes and theologians at Smalcald, and added a new section, henceforth known as the Torgau Articles because they were presented to the Elector at Torgau. This latter document discussed abuses which had arisen in the Medieval church.

From April 4th to 15th the elector and the theologians were enroute from Torgau to Coburg. After resting there for a week the company proceeded on to Augsburg. Luther, under the imperial ban, remained at Coburg where he carried on an extensive correspondence with the men at Augsburg.

The source material out of which the Augsburg Confession was to be formed were the Marburg Articles, the Schwabach Articles, and the Torgau Articles. Luther's hand had been foremost in their compilation. All three were an epitome of Luther's theology. Nothing original or distinctive in them had been produced by anyone else.

Due to Luther's temporary exile at Coburg it fell to Melanchthon to edit the three sets of articles at hand and to adapt them to the needs of the Lutherans at the Diet of Augsburg, circumstances at the diet determining the final form of the Augsburg Confession. The Schwabach Articles became the first seventeen, the Torgau Articles the last nine of the Augsburg Confession. Melanchthon gave the finished product its form and its irenic nature. It must be added that he was profoundly influenced by the shadow of Marburg which hung over the proceedings at Augsburg. Zwingli and the Lutherans had parted company in the spirit of a hardening of hostility and a sense of irreconcilable difference in the doctrine of the real presence. As they bid their farewells at the close of the colloquy Luther is said to have made the comment: "You have a different spirit than ours." For these reasons Melanchthon was at great pains to demonstrate to the Diet of Augsburg that the Lutherans had dissociated themselves from the Zwinglians and were desirous of a reconciliation with the Roman Catholic Church.

All of this notwithstanding, the thoughts, and in large measure, the words of the Augsburg Confession were Martin Luther's. To them Melanchthon had simply applied his skills as an editor. The finished product, the Augsburg Confession, represented a happy combination of the genius of two men. One commentator has summed this up in the

following manner. "With the son of a miner who was destined to bring good ore out of the deep shaft, there was associated the son of an armorer, who was well qualified to follow his leader and forge shields, helmets, armor and swords for this great work."

With all this, the fact remains that the Augsburg Confession had its source in Luther's theology. Luther had a full right to say: "The Catechism, the Exposition of the Ten Commandments and the Augsburg Confession are mine."

II. The Substance of the Catechism and the Augsburg Confession.

We honor Luther's creative genius displayed in his brilliant synthesis of Apostolic theology. For the first time since the era of the apostles a theologian turned his preeminent skills as a biblical scholar toward the achievement of a new handle on the teachings of Scripture. Luther's studies led him to see that the church of his time had confused, and eventually lost important parts and emphases in the message given to man in the divine revelation. His studies further enabled him to see the heart and kernel of Scripture within the whole of God's Word.

Out of a lifetime career of biblical scholarship this master of the whole Scripture was enabled to verbalize a distillation of the entire Scripture in brief and succinct formulations. This skilled summarization appears most clearly in his Catechisms and in the brief declarations of the Augsburg Confession. We would like to direct your attention, in this hour, to the substance of these confessions under the following readings:

- a) Their theological orientation.
 - b) Their orientation toward the means of Grace.
 - c) Their Law-Gospel orientation.
 - d) Their orientation toward a perspective of man in this world.
 - e) Their practical orientation toward a preaching and teaching of God's Word.
- a) The Christological Orientation of Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession.

Very few Protestants would hesitate to say that Luther's most important single reaffirmation of apostolic theology was the doctrine of justification. Luther considered the doctrine of justification the root of all theology. Justification by faith alone was the trunk of the tree of all theology. Other theological constructs were the branches and the twigs that derived their significance from the trunk to which they were attached.

Luther's explanation of the 2nd Article has been called the most comprehensive sentence in all of literature. Some, however, find no doctrine of justification by faith alone in that definition. That may be, but if one adds to it the explanation of the 3rd Article there can be no doubt that Luther's Catechisms do indeed teach the doctrine of justification.

The Augsburg Confession actually refers the reader to the Apostles' Creed in developing its own statement of justification. After a brief comment on the dual nature of Christ AC III adds that "The same Christ suffered and died to reconcile the Father to us; and that he was raised again to reign, and to justify and sanctify

believers according to the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed."

In view of conflict with the Roman Catholic Church, AC IV which defines justification is more technical and explicit in its terminology. It reads as follows: "Also they teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor, and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who, by his death, has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in his sight. Rom. 3, 4.

AC XVII corroborates statements in Luther's explanation of both the 2nd and 3rd Articles. Seen in their broadest sense we may well regard all of the Lutheran Confessions as elaborations and explications of the 2nd Article. This is as it should be, because the eternal mystery of God's love to man is revealed and explicated in the doctrine of justification.

In the definition of justification in AC IV quoted above we may note some phraseology that does not occur in the Catechism. Though they really add no substantive new matter, the words "satisfaction" and "imputation" had become necessary in the atmosphere of Rome's rejection of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Further elaborations of the doctrine of justification were to be made in Melancthon's Apology of the Augsburg Confession and in the Smalcald Articles and the Formula of Concord. We may say that by 1530, when the Catechisms and the AC were both at hand, the Lutherans had clearly recognized the Christological emphasis of Scripture and had included it in its basic instructional materials.

b) An Orientation Toward the Means of Grace.

Luther's profound recognition of justification as the core of Christian theology has been noted. His insights were equally discriminating in his understanding of relationships of elements in the biblical theological system. In this context special recognition is due the Reformer for his grasp of the concept of the Means of Grace, the external means through which God conveys his grace to us and establishes in us the gifts of the atonement.

Throughout Luther's catechetical literature and in all of the Augsburg Confession one finds implicit and undisputed fact of the verity and the authority of God's Word. It was not regarded as necessary to formalize this belief under specific headings either in the Catechisms or the Augsburg Confession. But both confessions speak of the verity and the authority of the Word as a matter beyond dispute.

Where Luther and the Augsburg Confession parted company with medieval theology was in elevating the Sacraments to their high role in the dispensation of God's grace. The introduction to the Augsburg Confession, written by Chancellor Brueck, had said: "We offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teaching and of our faith, setting forth how, and in what manner, on the basis of Holy Scripture, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories." That the Word was regarded as primary in the conveyance of God's grace to man was really not in dispute. The Medieval Church, whatever its shortcomings, can not be faulted for negligence in the administration

of the Sacraments. However, not until the Reformation period were Baptism and the Lord's Supper included in religious instructional material. As we have seen, the Bohemian Brethren were the first to sense that need. Luther's placement of the Sacraments in the Catechism was an important step in a recognition of the fact that these were indeed means of grace. Luther's Catechism, however, corrected erroneous views with respect to the real presence as well as the Roman Catholic concept of transubstantiation.

The statement of AC IX on Baptism is explicit: "Of Baptism they teach that it is necessary for salvation, and through Baptism is offered the grace of God; and that children are to be baptized, who being offered to God through Baptism are received into God's grace." Note here the positive reference to Baptism as a means of grace. Luther's exposition of Baptism in the Small Catechism is more detailed, but it clearly anticipates the wording of AC IX in referring to the offer of salvation through Baptism and to its being a gracious water of life.

The initial definition of the Lord's Supper in AC X is very brief. This is explainable in some of the motivations behind the writing of the Augsburg Confession. As we have seen before, Melancthon was attempting to win a reconciliation with the Roman Catholics. He had dissociated himself from the Zwinglians. Note therefore the wording of AC X on the Lord's Supper: "Of the Supper of the Lord they teach that the body and blood of the Lord are truly present and are distributed to those who eat the supper of the Lord; and they reject those who teach otherwise." The doctrine of the Zwinglians was thus repudiated. No mention is made of the Lutherans' rejection of

the doctrine of transubstantiation. It was this kind of failure to refer to Roman Catholic heresy that disquieted Luther and made him say: "Ich kann nicht so leise treten."

In his preface to the Small Catechism, Luther discussed frequency of participation at the Lord's Table. AC XXII (Of Both Kinds in the Sacrament) is explicit in demanding that Scripture be followed by offering both of the consecrated elements to communicants at the Lord's Supper. AC XXII (Of the Mass) condemned abuses in the Mass, but denied Roman claims that the Lutherans were neglecting the Sacrament of the Altar. All three of the Articles of the Augsburg Confession, (X, XXII, and XXIV) touched on matters that Luther had treated previously in both of his Catechisms.

c) An Orientation toward the Law-Gospel Nexus.

One of the most far-reaching and significant elements in the structuring of the Small Catechism was Luther's theological grasp of the proper ordering of the chief parts. The ancient and medieval church had commonly included the Creed and the Lord's Prayer in their instructional manuals. The Waldensians, a 13th century heretical sect, appears to have been the first group to insist on including the Decalog in their pensus of religious studies. Thereafter it was generally included in all manuals of instruction, following after the Creed and Lord's Prayer.

In his "Brief Explanation of the Ten Commandments, the Creed and the Lord's Prayer" published in 1520, Luther showed his understanding of a biblical law-gospel orientation by saying that the law ought to be taught first so that "the Commandments teach a man to know his illness . . . and

thus knows himself a sinner and violent man." The teaching of the Gospel then follows, and "the Creed shows him and teaches him where he may find the remedy, the grace which helps him become a good man, and helps him to keep the commandments; it shows him God and the mercy he has revealed and offered in Christ. In the third place the Lord's Prayer teaches him how to ask for this grace, get it, and take it to himself, to wit, by habitual, humble, comforting prayer. Then grace is given, and by fulfillment of God's command he is saved.

These words truly represent a basic and fundamental insight into biblical theology. The proper distinction between law and gospel has been a major concern of Lutheran theology ever since. The subject is treated comprehensively in the Apology, the Smalcald Articles, and the Formula of Concord.

d) An Orientation Toward a Perspective of Man in the World.

There is scarcely any subject that the Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession deals with more comprehensively than that of the proper role and conduct of man in the world. Consider first Luther's explanations of the Commandments. He was not content merely to elaborate on the prohibitions in the Commandments. He brought each of them to life in positive admonitions. -"We should fear and love God that we may ... help and befriend ... be of service to him," and similar expressions. Each Commandment was seen in its positive side. Each was seen in the light of a service of love to God and man. The same is true of the explanations of the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer.

AC XVI urges us toward submission to civil authority in greater detail, yet in simple conformity

to the explanations of the 4th Commandment and the 4th Petition of the Small Catechism. The comparable sections of the Large Catechism elaborate these things further.

Luther's wide ranging social concerns are expressed fully in both Catechisms. The concept of sanctification described in the Third Article is spelled out in meaningful detail in numerous references to appropriate expressions of love to God and man.

This major theme in Luther's work also finds expression in Melanchthon's lengthy exposition of justification in the Apology of the Augsburg Confession. In that detailed study we find more time, more words, on the subject of the fruits of faith, or good works, than on justification itself. Indeed, Jesus himself, as quoted in the synoptic Gospels talks more about a godly life than he does about God's plan of salvation. Luther may thus be seen as reflecting the spirit of God's Word in his extensive concern about the life of man on planet Earth.

Luther's immensely important breaking of ground in a new emphasis on the positive side of the Commandments also gave a new dignity to human vocation by frequent references like his comment that a serving maid who does her work well is thereby serving God as truly as if she were a prince or potentate, a bishop or a priest. The Table of Duties in the Small Catechism is an important reference to the nature of Christian service in numerous specific vocations.

AC VI (of New Obedience), while emphasizing the fact that no one is justified for the sake of his own merit of good works, asserts that "faith is bound to bring forth good works, and that it is

necessary to do good works commanded by God, because of God's will." AC XX (of Good Works), notes that "Our teachers are falsely accused of forbidding good works. For their published writings on the Ten Commandments, and others of like import, bear witness that they have taught to good purpose concerning all estates and duties of life, as to what works, in every calling, be pleasing to God."

e) A Theological Orientation Toward Preaching and Teaching.

As Lutherans we are well schooled in the theology of the Lutheran Reformation. We are appreciative of Luther's creative synthesis of Apostolic theology and his clear and cogent exposition of the central doctrines of Holy Scripture. We may be less than fully cognizant of the revolution, both in educational practice and theological understanding that took place when Luther asked the question, "What Does This Mean?" The question recurs in the Catechism 23 times, and the same question, adapted to instruction in the Sacraments, occurs 16 times. Before the Reformation the church had been content with the ideal that Christians, trained only in rote memorization, should know the Creed and the Lord's Prayer from memory. Questions were rarely asked as to what these verbal formulations meant.

The character of Medieval religious instruction had been developed in its broad outlines by Gregory the Great (590-604). A great churchman, and a superb administrator of the papal patrimony he nevertheless gave up on any hope of a real indoctrination of the primitive and illiterate people of his time. Instead he advocated a simple veneration of true relics and recommended a religious life based on a pious imitation of the lives of the saints and the martyrs. What evolved from this

was that the real Bible of Gregory's people came to be the legends and biographies of the saints. Bible history was largely ignored and the people were nurtured by a hagiographic and devotional literature that was devoid of instruction in doctrinal fundamentals. The mystery of the Mass and the lives of the saints became the theology of the church.

Religious instruction, despite the work of the scholastic theologians, took no real step forward until the emergence of heretical movements, the Waldensians, the Wyclifites, and the Hussites of the later middle ages. These sects turned to Scripture for instruction and developed instructional materials based on the Bible. Their confirmants received instruction that made Holy Communion a meaningful experience for them.

It remained for Martin Luther to recast these materials on the basis of his comprehensive understanding of biblical theology. The Catechism, a recognized milestone in the history of education, and a precious jewel in Christian education was the result. Here was a unique literary creation. In it rested the entire scope of Reformation theology in brilliant microcosm. Here was an organization of biblical themes, a distillation of the will and grace of God as it was reflected in Holy Scripture. In one great sweep the Catechism removed the fantasies of Medieval hagiography. The facts and precepts of the Bible replaced the fables of Medieval superstition.

When Luther asked the question, "What Does This Mean?" of each of the Ten Commandments he was not establishing a mere canon of worldly righteousness by which a 16th century pharisee might measure his life. On the contrary, Luther explained the Decalog in terms of the fruits of faith which

illuminate and enrich the lives of justified sinners. He thus gave the law a long-lost dimension. He reminded a Christian catechuminate that love is the fulfilling of the law and gave renewed scope and meaning to the joy of Christian life.

III. The Contemporary Relevance of Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession.

I believe it is appropriate, in the setting of this pastoral conference,* to direct my remarks on the contemporary relevance of the first two of the Lutheran Confessions to a Lutheran pastorate. You represent a group of men whose calling and vocation has committed you to the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. AC V states that in order that men may come to faith God instituted "The ministry of teaching the Gospel and administering the Sacraments. For through the Word and Sacraments, as instruments, the Holy Ghost is given, who works faith, where and when it pleases God, in them that hear the Gospel; to wit, that God not for our own merits, but for Christ's sake justifies those who believe that they are received into grace for Christ's sake. They condemn the Anabaptists and others who think that the Holy Ghost comes to men without the external Word, through their own preparations and works."

It seems to me that any serious query about the contemporary relevance of Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession ought to ask two questions, namely: "Are these 16th century documents valid? Do they fairly and adequately conform to Holy Scripture?" and the second question, "Are these 16th century documents useful instruments in the ministry of the Gospel in the 20th century?"

*at which this paper was first presented

We may conclude with some reflections on the role of these symbols in the preservation of historic Lutheranism.

a) The Validity of Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession.

We may first look back to written statements of those who produced the Lutheran Confessions. Did they consider their writings to be Scriptural? The preface to the Augsburg Confession was written by Chancellor Brueck. Responding to Emperor Charles' original summons to the Diet of Augsburg the chancellor said: "In dutiful obedience to your imperial majesty we offer and present a confession of our pastors' and preachers' teaching and of our own faith, setting forth how and in what manner, on the basis of Holy Scriptures, these things are preached, taught, communicated, and embraced in our lands, principalities, dominions, cities, and territories."

Luther's profession that his Catechism proceeded from God's Word is implicit in his claim that the Small Catechism is a "brief and simple catechism or statement of Christian teaching." The Reformer implored pastors and teachers to "take the duties of your office seriously, that you have pity on the people who are entrusted to your care, and that you help me to teach the catechism to the people, especially those who are young." Luther equated the Catechism with the Word itself and acknowledged the blessings that flow from God's Word in the Catechism. He said that anyone who refuses to hear the precepts of the Catechism is not a Christian. His reference to the Small Catechism as the "little Bible" is well known and has often been repeated.

When Chancellor Brueck read the Augsburg Confession at the Diet of Augsburg, he said: "By the

help of God and our Lord Jesus Christ this confession shall remain invincible against the gates of hell to eternity."

Is it out of order for us now to ask whether, in fact, the Augsburg Confession has remained invincible through the 450 years that have elapsed since its adoption as the first symbol agreed to by the first generation of Lutherans? We can say that it remained invincible up to the time of the publication of the Book of Concord in 1580. The men who wrote, and the churchmen who adopted the Formula of Concord in 1577, said of the Catechism and the Augsburg Confession that "we declare our unanimous adherence to Dr. Luther's Small and Large Catechisms as he prepared them in his published works, since they have been unanimously sanctioned and accepted and are used publicly in the churches, school, and the homes of those churches which adhere to the Augsburg Confession and since they formulate Christian doctrine on the basis of God's Word for laymen in a most correct and simple, yet sufficiently explicit form."

In the 400 years that have elapsed since the publication of the Book of Concord no new symbols have formally been added to the Lutheran Confessions. During that time, however, there has been no dearth of Lutheran scholarship. Exegetical and doctrinal studies have appeared in great profusion. None of them have successfully challenged the validity of either the Catechisms or the Augsburg Confession. They have stood as towering monuments to the faith and confession of Lutherans for these 450 years. The Small Catechism has been used as a book of instruction for children and adults for fifteen generations. The Augsburg Confession has continued its testimony to the unity of the Lutheran faith. Generations after generation has found the biblical interpretation

of the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession to be in perfect agreement with Holy Scripture. For these many years the confessions have stimulated and preserved the unity of the church, not as contracts arbitrarily made and binding in a legal sense, but as symbols of the existing faith of Christians who have bound themselves to the verities of Holy Scripture. Faithful pastors and teachers in the church continue to teach the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession, not from compulsion, but because they recognize them as effective instruments of learning that are well suited to the task of instruction in the saving truths of Holy Scripture.

b) The Continuing Usefulness of Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession in our Public Ministry.

As we, pastors, carry on our public ministry we do well to recall Martin Luther's humility, expressed in the preface to the Large Catechism. "As for myself, let me say that I too am a doctor and a preacher, --yes, and as learned and experienced as any of those who act so high and mighty. Yet I do as a child who is being taught the Catechism. Every morning, and whenever else I have time, I read the recite word for word the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Psalms, etc. I must still read the Catechism daily, yet I cannot master it as I wish, but must remain a child and pupil of the Catechism, and I do it gladly."

Referring to careless religious leaders and teachers as "presumptuous saints," Luther added: "I implore them not to imagine that they have learned these parts of the Catechism perfectly, or at least sufficiently, even though they think they

know them ever so well. Even if their knowledge of the Catechism were perfect (even though that is impossible in this life) yet it is highly profitable and fruitful daily to read it and make it the subject of meditation and conversation. In such reading, conversation and meditation the Holy Spirit is present and bestows ever new and greater light and fervor, so that day to day we relish and appreciate the Catechism more greatly. This is according to Christ's promise."

Heed these words well. The Small Catechism and the Augsburg Confession are valid summaries of Christian doctrine. They represent the basic minimum of Christian knowledge that a pastor needs to have at the tip of his tongue every day of his ministry. They represent the minimum of religious knowledge that must be imparted and conveyed to the people in our parishes. To neglect the propagation of this minimal knowledge is to risk the loss of the larger whole of biblical truth. (The mathematician who neglects the elementary truths of the multiplication tables places his calculus and trigonometry in jeopardy).

No one of us is likely to be wise enough to arrive at a better embodiment of biblical truth than that which we have in Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession. Our entire ministry may falter and be drawn into heterodoxy if we assume the posture of the "presumptuous saints" who consider the primary symbols of the Lutheran Symbols to be mere childish prattle, unworthy of the intellectual consideration of mature pastors and scholars."

Nor should we forget that the form of instruction embodied in the Small Catechism has survived 450 years of testing. It has withstood all challenges and has remained the constant reference of

confirmation classes through 15 generations of Lutheran life. It has provided our youth with an understanding of the basic categories of Christian knowledge. It has been, and it remains, the substance of a Lutheran understanding of law and Gospel, of faith and good works. It has focussed attention on Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Savior, has led us to believe and accept God's plan of salvation.

The Augsburg Confession has been scarcely less important. In its direct and simple statements it succeeded in drawing together and informing the first generation of Lutherans. Lutherans were first known by the descriptive term, "they of the Augsburg Confession." Their confession identified them in relation to other non-Catholic religious groups. The Augsburg Confession gave them the pride and confidence of their identity as Lutherans. They accepted the Augsburg Confession as the symbol and mark of their faith and conformed their new religious life and worship to it.

Not least in its value to that first generation of Lutherans was Luther's Large Catechism. The Small Catechism provided the matter and the methodology for training the unlearned in the rudiments of Christianity. The Large Catechism provided the model for Lutheran sermonizing. It established the principles of teaching applicable to the pulpit and Christian worship.

We refer constantly to Luther's doctrinal essays for instruction in the elements of Christian doctrine. We ought to make much greater use of Luther's example as the master preacher. Frequent reading of the Large Catechism and of Luther's other published sermons would help us all toward greater effectiveness as teachers in the pulpit.

Luther's sermons were no oratorical flourishes designed to celebrate his power and eloquence. They were always, and only, an exposition of Holy Scripture adapted to the understanding and the needs of his congregation. His choice of words, his use of illustration, his good humor, his self-deprecation, all contributed to the ultimate purpose of bringing Christ to the people. We would all be more effective preachers if we read Luther's sermons frequently and followed the example of their enthusiasm, intensity, and practical understanding of the needs of the people who sit in the pews before us.

c) The Role of the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession in Preserving Historic Lutheranism.

There is no way in which we can better estimate the magnetism and the personal power of Luther's commanding presence than to reflect on what happened in Lutheran Germany after the Reformer died. One generation, the period of Luther's active career, had not sufficed to mature Christian faith and biblical knowledge in the minds of all who called themselves Lutherans.

After his death Lutheran Europe degenerated into a theological anarchy. Territorial politics were involved, of course, but the primary problem was the acrimonious debate of Lutherans who had not fully understood Luther, of theologians engaged in religious warfare in which personal invective and obscene caricatures of theology replaced a careful and peace-loving dissemination of the Gospel.

Under God's grace that 30-year period of rancor and hate came to an end. Martin Chemnitz, Jacob Andreae and others restored peace through the instrumentality of the Formula of Concord of 1577.

What is important for our purpose is not so much the fact of a new confessional document which helped to resolve some of the doctrinal issues of the past thirty years.

What was outstandingly important is the fact that the confessors of 1577 and the compilers of the Book of Concord of 1580 returned to the original foundations of Lutheran orthodoxy. These included not only the three ecumenical Creeds, but also Luther's Catechisms of 1529 and the Augsburg Confession of 1530 as well as the longer and more detailed Apology, the Smalcald Articles and the Power and Primacy of the Pope.

In the massive return to orthodoxy in 1580 Luther's Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession played a conspicuous role. The first generation of Lutherans was familiar with the Catechism. Many had memorized it. As orthodoxy began to return, the people rallied about the banner of the simple and straight forward affirmations of the Augsburg Confession. The battle of the theologians was over and the people could readily come back to their former understandings of biblical theology.

The Book of Concord of 1580 represented a comprehensive statement of faith that was both simple and sophisticated in expression. It remains, to this day, an authoritative expression of the Lutheran faith.

Other denominations undertook similar ventures. The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent of 1564 was the Roman response to 16th century Lutheran theology. These Canons are still authoritative for Roman Catholics. But remember that their continuing authority rests on the pope's supervision of doctrine. The English Thirty Nine Articles, drawn originally from the Augsburg Confession, are the

confession of faith of the Anglican church. The articles have undergone numerous revisions under Calvinistic influence and are deliberately ambiguous. Their authority rests in the English crown.

The Lutheran Confessions are unique in that they rest on no other authority than that of Holy Scripture itself. They were initially submitted to the church in a political context. In modern times subscription to them has been wholly voluntary.

Not all Lutheran denominations have subscribed to the Formula of Concord. Some have considered the Formula a purely German statement. No Lutheran body has failed to accept the confessional status of the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession. Since the Reformation the Lutheran Church has prospered as a confessional church, devoted to the confessional principle, namely, that these documents are authoritative because they conform to the teachings of Scripture.

We do well to look to the past in our reflections on the future. No Protestant denomination has so steadfastly held to apostolic doctrine as the Lutheran Church. That can only be attributed to the fact that through the years the confessions have provided Lutherans with a steady and reliable guidance. A consistent adherence to the confessions, and especially the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession, which speak so simply and clearly. These historic documents have been our anchor and foundation. On them rests the hope for Lutheran orthodoxy in the years to come.

I am sure that no one in this assembly would ever consider cutting loose from the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession. The danger to us in future years will be that we merely give lip service to

these hallowed elements in our Christian heritage.

But know this: The confessions will live in our midst only so long as we use them. It will not suffice for us to keep them as reference works when doctrinal disputes arise or when we must write a conference paper. Only so long as we draw the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession into our daily ministry, into our teaching, preaching, and pastoral counselling will they remain alive and flourishing among us.

I ask you, in closing, to indulge me as I call to your attention the heroic response of one great Christian who was asked to abandon his personal commitment to the teachings of the Catechisms and the Augsburg Confession. I refer to the Saxon Elector John Frederick who had been defeated in the Smalcald War and while languishing in prison was requested by Emperor Charles V to approve the Interim, a shabby document which renounced Lutheran doctrine and the Augsburg Confession. John's response to the Emperor follows:

"I cannot refrain from informing your majesty that since the days of my youth I have been instructed and taught by the servants of God's Word, and by diligently searching the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures I have also learned to know, and unswervingly to adhere in my conscience to this, that the articles composing the Augsburg Confession, and whatever is connected therewith, are the correct, true, Christian, pure doctrine, confirmed by, and founded in, the writings of the holy prophets and apostles, and of the teachers who followed in their footsteps, in such a manner that no substantial objection can be raised against it.

"Since now in my conscience I am firmly persuaded of this, I owe this gratefulness and obedience

to God, who has shown me such unspeakable grace, that, as I desire to obtain eternal salvation and escape eternal damnation, I do not fall away from the truth of his almighty will which his Word has revealed to me, and which I know to be the truth. For such is also the comforting and terrible word of God: 'Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I also confess before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.' If I should acknowledge and adopt the Interim as Christian and godly, I would have to condemn and deny against my own conscience, knowingly and maliciously, the Augsburg Confession, and whatever I have heretofore held and believed concerning the Gospel of Christ, and approve with my mouth what I regard in my heart and conscience as altogether contrary to the holy and divine Scriptures. This, O my God in heaven, would indeed be misusing and cruelly blaspheming thy Holy Name, for which I would have to pay all too dearly with my soul. For this is truly the sin against the Holy Ghost concerning which Christ says that it shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

-- N. S. Tjernagel

SOCIOLOGICAL REDUCTIONISM AND THE QUESTION OF THE
ORDINATION OF WOMEN: A CRITICAL REVIEW

At the 1970 Biennial Convention of the Lutheran Church in America, the delegates approved "with a resounding voice vote" a proposal to change the wording of Section II, Item 1 of the constitutional by-laws from "A minister of this church shall be a man..." to "A minister of this church shall be a person..."¹ This change in the by-laws allowed for the possibility of the ordination of women. That possibility has been realized and today 124 women have been ordained in the L.C.A. The Lutheran, the official magazine of the L.C.A., has recently published an article and an editorial concerning women in the ministry to help commemorate the tenth anniversary of this historic decision.

In her article "The LCA's White-Collar Women,"² Ms. Kathy Kastilahn interviews six women who are presently active in either the parish or the teaching ministry. Each was asked to reflect on her experiences as a pastor. Although each of their ministries was different, what they shared in common was, on the one hand, the joy of proclaiming the Gospel and administering the sacraments and, yet, on the other hand, the frustration of encountering resistance to their ministry as women.

The Reverend Edgar R. Trexler, editor of The Lutheran, writes in his editorial "In Praise of Women Pastors,"³ of the blessings women pastors have brought to the church in this their first decade. He goes on to lament that "prejudices" (my quotes) against women pastors are still present. He argues

that the fears of the church's "feminization" (his quotes) have not materialized. Although he acknowledges that the decision to ordain women may have been prompted by changes in society, he nevertheless declares that decision to have been theologically warranted. Lastly, he predicts that in the coming decade the first woman may be elected synod president.

The critical note which I wish to sound in this review does not concern the question of whether or not women should be ordained. That question has already been discussed.⁴ Rather, what I propose to do is as follows: First, I will set forth how opposition to the ordination of women is understood in the above-mentioned articles. Second, I will show that understanding to be reductionistic. Third, I will draw the consequences of such an understanding for the possibility of any genuine conversation between theological opponents on this issue.

1. How is opposition to the ordination of women understood? Even a cursory reading reveals that the opposition to women in the ministry is understood to be sociological.⁵ That is to say, the roots of resistance to women clergy are understood to lie in the values and attitudes ("prejudices" as Mr. Trexler says) of parishioners who have been acculturated ("culture conditioning" in Ms. Kastilahn's words) into a society which has historically discriminated against women. In particular, this discrimination has excluded women from leadership positions.

Since the church as a social institution is a part of that society, it too has excluded women from its leadership positions. However, as is now the case with society as a whole, women are now also assuming leadership positions in the church. Resistance to this indicates a failure to grasp the

profound changes in the social realities (including the church) in which we live.⁶

Given this understanding, it comes as no surprise that this resistance is to be met by a re-conditioning of the values and attitudes of the laity. An example suggested by one of the women pastors of how this might be done is for women pastors to pulpit supply as frequently as possible in order to accustom the laity to seeing a woman in the pulpit. In this way, a congregation would be better predisposed to call a woman pastor when vacant.

2. What is most disappointing in this understanding is that there is no recognition, not even a hint, that opposition to the ordination of women may be motivated by theological concerns rather than by sociological factors. The problem of that resistance is understood solely within a sociological context. It is for this reason that I judge the above understanding to be an example of reductionism.

By reductionism I mean a process whereby subject matter A is explained exclusively in terms of another subject matter B. The fatal flaw in such a reduction of A to B is that if A and B are different subject matters, then all of A cannot be explained in terms of B. Otherwise, A and B are not really different.

An example of reductionism is the Freudian psychology of religion. In Totem and Taboo,⁷ Freud argues that the genesis of belief in God (i.e., religion) is to be found in the distant past of the primordial family. Although the sons fear their father, they nevertheless rise up and murder him in order to have access to his wives.

To alleviate their guilt, the sons attempt to erase their crime by making the father once again present. They do this by projecting their memory of him into a figure (=God) whom they can again fear (=worship). Freud concludes that since God is a self-projection without an objective referent, He does not exist and religion is an "illusion."

But is Freud entitled to draw this conclusion? Even if we concede to Freud the truth of what he says (which we don't), what has he shown? At most, all that Freud has shown is the psychological reasons for our belief in God. He has not yet said anything about whether or not God exists. In other words, at best a Freudian analysis concerns the psychology of faith, but not the object of faith. Whether or not God exists must be determined on other than psychological grounds. To do otherwise commits one to a psychological reductionism.

As it was shown above, opposition to women clergy is understood exclusively in terms of the social forces at work in the church today.⁸ This is an example of sociological reductionism. A theological problem has been reduced to a sociological problem. Is such a reduction legitimate?

Even if we were to concede the truth of what was said, it does not follow that a theological basis to that opposition is precluded. At best, such a sociological analysis concerns only the sociology of that opposition, but not its theological correctness. Whether or not women are to be ordained remains a theological question which must be determined on other than sociological grounds. For Lutherans, that basis is Scripture.⁹ To do otherwise commits one to a sociological reductionism.

3. The consequences of such a sociological understanding for conversation between theological opponents on the question of the ordination of women is obvious. Meaningful theological dialogue is precluded because there is no recognition on the part of the proponents of the ordination of women of the possibility of theological opposition. Without the recognition of the theological character of that opposition there can be no basis for theological discussion.

Such a discussion is necessary in order to get at the heart of the problem. The heart of the problem is not the question of the ordination of women, although this is serious. It is but a symptom of a more basic, hermeneutical problem: How are we to understand and interpret Scripture? It is on this level that debate about the ordination of women should be engaged. But all this is precluded by sociological reductionism.

FOOTNOTES

1. Minutes of the Fifth Biennial Convention to the Lutheran Church in America (Philadelphia: Board of Publication, 1970) pages 433, 539, and 803.
2. The Lutheran, Volume 18, Number 10, pages 4-7.
3. Ibid., page 34.
4. See, for example, Peter Bunner's The Ministry and the Ministry of Women (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971).

5. Although not all of what follows in this section is explicitly stated in the articles, it is clearly presupposed by them.
6. Such a sociological reading is underscored when Mr. Trexler states that the decision to allow women to be ordained involved no change in the church's doctrinal statements, but only in her by-laws.
7. New York: Vintage Books, 1946.
8. It might be argued that those concerned are not really suggesting that all opposition to women clergy is sociological, but only that such opposition is also social. If that is the case, then their silence about such theological opposition is all the more inexcusable.
9. Therefore, it goes without saying that for a Lutheran any opposition to the ordination of women on other than a scriptural basis is theologically illegitimate.

-- Gary Faleide

OUT OF HER PAST -- THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

(The Fiftieth Anniversary Celebration)*

ESSAY II: THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE CONCERNING
THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER BEFORE GOD

by: Prof. Johannes Ylvisaker

Prof. Johannes Ylvisaker was 58 years of age in 1903. He had also studied theology under Dr. C.F.W. Walther, graduating from the seminary in 1877. He had been professor of theology at the Synod Seminary in 1879. He based his presentation of this doctrine on Romans 3, 24-28, as follows in brief outline:

In this text the Apostle speaks of:

1. Justification itself, in that he says that men who have sinned, v. 23, become justified.
2. What the source of Justification is: God's undeserved grace.
3. What the foundation of Justification is: The redemption in Christ Jesus.
4. What the medium of Justification on our part is: FAITH.
5. What the result of Justification is: Exclusion of all self-glorification, and, according to Rom. 5, 1.2, peace with God, open access to grace, and hope of glory with God.

*Con't from Vol. XIX, #4

Under Point 2, Prof. Ylvisaker asked Pastor T. A. Torgerson to speak concerning the threats to the pure doctrine of Justification that the Synod had experienced when synergists had arisen in its very midst and had spoken perverse things, even saying that salvation did not depend on God alone, but in a certain sense also on man, that man before regeneration under God's preparatory grace obtains spiritual powers which he can use to choose God and that he thereby causes God to have mercy on him. The synergists also sought to explain the reason why some are saved, others not, by maintaining that even before regeneration some showed a better attitude than others toward God's grace. Such false teachings stand in conflict not only with the doctrine of the sinner's conversion, but also with the doctrine of God's grace and violate it. Since we have been in danger of having the chief article of our Christian religion falsified, and God has preserved us in the truth, we certainly have reason to jubilate and thank and praise God from the bottom of our heart.

Pastor T. A. Torgerson was then 65 years of age and was a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in 1865. He was President of the Iowa District of the Synod from 1894 till his death in 1906.

CONVENTION BUSINESS

Colloquies Between the Presidents and Theological
Faculties of the Synod and of the
Norwegian Lutheran Church

At its Convention in 1902 the Synod had expressed the wish that the colloquies that had been begun between the Synod's and the United Church's presidents and theological professors should be continued.

However, the Synod then had requested the United Church to name a man in the place of Dr. F. A. Schmidt, since he, by his conduct both during the long doctrinal controversy as also now during and after the last colloquium, had shown himself a hindrance, not only for unity, but also for understanding between the church bodies. And the Synod had issued a pamphlet, under the authority of the Church Council, setting forth its grievances against Dr. Schmidt.

Now, in 1903, President Koren reported the following to the Convention:

With regard to the dealings with other Norwegian Lutheran bodies in this country I can inform the Synod that I received information from the secretary of the United Church in July, 1902, that the United Church holds fast to its resolution of last year (1901, p. 206), and therefore does not find itself inclined to take consideration of the memorial which was drawn up at the last Synod Convention in the interest of this cause. As far as I can see, the door to further dealings in official colloquies is thereby closed, and that so much the more as the idea of the United Church concerning the form of such colloquies according to the common understanding within the Synod would only be a repetition of the old fruitless Free Conferences with the endless speeches that went with them and without fruit for reciprocal understanding. The only form of deliberations that we can hope to get any results from appear hereafter to have to be in smaller areas. It would be desirable if our younger pastors would get the public documents that may be obtainable which cast light on what the real subject of the controversy has been.

Now during the Convention in 1903 the Synod received the following telegram from the secretary of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church:

Duluth, Minn., June 18, 1903.

Secretary, Lutheran Synod:

You are hereby respectfully requested at your earliest opportunity to place before the convention of your body, now assembled, this question:

Does the Synod recognize the pamphlet issued under the name of its Church Council against Dr. F. A. Schmidt as its own official expression?

Our action in the whole matter will depend on your immediate and official answer.

Jens C. Roseland
Secretary, Convention
United Norwegian Luth
Church in America

The Committee of the Synod that was delegated to formulate an answer to this telegram submitted the following which was unanimously accepted by rising vote and sent to the secretary:

Dr. F. A. Schmidt has asked the Church Council of the Synod to prove the accusations that have been made against him. The Church Council has complied with his request. If the Church Council has spoken evil bear witness of the evil. (John 18, 23).

Delegates of 1853 Present

The Program Committee had been diligent in finding out who were still living of those who had been delegates at the two Synod conventions in 1853,

and had found three. These were invited to be guests, and two of them came, namely Peder Halvorsen Wambheim of Forest City, Iowa, and Hans Madsen of Manitowoc County, Wisconsin. The third one, Ole Halvorsen of Adams County, Nebraska, could not come on account of illness. The assembly arose to greet and honor the two who were present.

Ordination

On Friday evening during the Convention, thirteen candidates were ordained to the Holy Ministry. Professor Johannes Ylvisaker delivered the ordination sermon and carried out the rite of ordination. Pastor H. Halvorsen read the candidates' life histories. Pastor M. Fr. Wiese delivered the confessional address and Pastor D. G. Ristad administered Holy Communion.

Professor Stub reported during the Convention that there was need for more theological students. He said that in 1902 28,000 emigrants came from Norway and that 40,000 were expected to come during 1903.

Sermon by Pastor O. P. Vangsnes on "Faithfulness to Christ."

Pastor O. P. Vangsnes was 48 years old in 1903. He had been trained at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, graduating in 1878. In 1903 he was pastor in Story City, Iowa, and was vice-president of the Iowa District. He was president of that District from 1906 till his death in 1916.

On Sunday afternoon Pastor Vangsnes preached on 2 Corinthians 11, 2.3 and spoke on "FAITHFULNESS TO CHRIST." He said that we must not only look back upon what has been accomplished, but also ahead - that we remain faithful to Christ. We must overcome

the dangers and not close our eyes to them. We must not become secure. There is no easier way to destruction than security. There is no more dangerous snare than that they cry "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. There is no more certain defeat than to be taken by surprise by the enemy. Vigilance, Watchfulness - these are required. We must know the enemy and stand on guard.

Oh, that our Synod might always be a Synod of praying congregations, praying Christians. And along with prayer we must earnestly contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints, Jude 3.

Two Founding Fathers Address the Convention

On Sunday afternoon two of the founding fathers also addressed the Synod. They were Pastor Jakob Aall Ottesen and Pastor Hans Andreas Stub.

Jakob Aall Ottesen was then 78 years old. He was one of the seven pastors who organized the Synod, and so he was asked to speak at the 50th Anniversary. He was a graduate of the University of Christiania and was a Candidate of Theology in 1849. He came to America in 1852 and was pastor first at Manitowoc, and then at Koshkonong, from 1860 to 1891.

Pastor Ottesen took as his text the words of the Emmaus disciples: "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And He went in to tarry with them." Luke 24, 29. He closed with the prayer:

Thou faithful Lord God, help us all so that we always seek Thee and find Thee when we cry:
Abide with us with Thy grace. Again be Thou

praised and lauded for all Thy mercy which is new to us every morning. Bless the dear Norwegian Synod. Keep its teachers and hearers in Thy truth. Keep us all therein until Thou comest to take us home.

Pastor Hans Andreas Stub, the father of Prof. H. G. Stub, was of the age of 81 in 1903. He had been a Candidate in Theology from the University of Christiania in 1846 and came to the United States in 1848. His first pastorate in America was at Muskego, Wisconsin, 1848-1855; then at Coon Prairie, 1855-1861. He also was one of the seven founding fathers. We quote some of his words, spoken at the Jubilee Convention:

Today I remember how it looked as regards our Norwegian people 55 years ago when I first put foot on American soil. How I spend the sweat of anxiety when I saw these multitudes of fellow countrymen as they were spread out over this great land! They seemed like chaff scattered before the wind. And what could I, a poor young man, do here? For two entire years I went about far and wide among these small flocks of fellow countrymen that were like sheep without a shepherd and without synodical bond. In the second year after I arrived the only other Norwegian pastor that was here before me returned to Norway; but God sent another in his place. And together with him and the Dane, C. L. Clausen, we got our first meeting with a few of our little congregations' representatives in the little stone church at Rock Prairie where we tried to get a gathering of our congregations. And here we agreed to meet at about the same time next year. This our second meeting, which consisted of six pastors (We had gotten three more than Norway) gathered in the

renowned log church at Muskego (the oldest Norwegian Church in our land). And also here we decided to gather the third year in one of the small log churches at Koshkonong. This meeting was held in February of 1853. There were now seven pastors. (Rev. Ottesen had come to Manitowoc in the summer of 1852.) At this meeting a constitution was accepted and the Norwegian Synod established. So the bond was knit between congregations widely separated. And the young daughter church sent the call to the fatherland: Send us help. The fields are ripe to harvest, but the laborers are few. A few younger theologians came. But the greatest help came from the old Missouri Synod which willingly opened its schools to our young men who wanted to be educated for the work.

And today we see the fruits: A large and flourishing church body! My two wishes are: 1. Do not forget the work of union, to bring understanding between the Norwegian Lutheran church bodies here - on the foundation of the truth. 2. Work for the Christian Day School. Feed the Lord's thousands of lambs.

Greetings to the Synod

The Synod received very many communications from various church bodies and individuals in honor of the 50th Anniversary. There were greetings from the Chief of the Norwegian Church-Department, Christiania, Norway, and from His Majesty King Oscar II, Christiania. Likewise, from the following: The Schreuder Mission with headquarters in Christiania and from the Missionaries in Africa; Pastor John Bading, President of the Lutheran Synodical Conference; the president of the German Wisconsin Synod, Pastor Philip von Rohr; the president of the German Minnesota Synod,

Rev. C. Gausewitz; from a representative of the Synodical Conference, Pastor Fr. Sievers; from Prof. A. W. Meyer, President of the English Missouri Synod, and others.

Of all of these communications, I would like to draw attention to two paragraphs of the message of Pastor Bading, President of the Synodical Conference, as follows:

At the time when in your midst there arose men to rend your Synod, they, I am sorry to say, succeeded to lead astray a number of your members to accept their false doctrine, and in consequence thereof your venerable Synod, to avoid greater evil results, found itself compelled to solve its organic connection with the Synodical Conference, in whose organization your Synod participated, those men nevertheless did not succeed to destroy your Synod, but on the contrary were only instrumental in peacefully strengthening your Synod on the foundation of God's Word and to become what it now is. And though your Synod is no longer an integral part of the Synodical Conference, it yet has always signified its unity in the faith with that body by sending delegates to its sessions.

In the name of the Synodical Conference, I now express our hearty desire and prayer to God, that your Synod may in the future by the grace of God be established in the true faith and may grow and be instrumental in the salvation of many immortal souls; and we cherish the hope that not in a remote future your Synod will again become an integral part of the Synodical Conference and that our common work may redound to the glory of God and the upbuilding of His Kingdom here on earth.

Pres. Koren and Prof. Larsen Honored

But in addition to the above-mentioned communications to the Synod, some of them given in person, others in writing, two representatives of the Missouri Synod were present and were introduced to the assembly by the Synod's President. They were Prof. Fr. Pieper, then President of the Missouri Synod, and Prof. A. Graebner. The latter spoke first. He brought greetings from the Missouri Synod first in the Norwegian language. Then he addressed words in English especially to the younger members of the Synod. And we here quote some of his words as follows:

Nor do we congratulate you the less cheerfully as we behold you face to face with the fact that inseparably bound up with your inheritance a tremendously grave responsibility devolves upon you, a responsibility to which all the best intentions you entertain today and the best endeavors you may put forward in days to come must remain utterly unequal. What if the time should come when your congregations had dwindled away, when your houses of worship gave shelter to adherents of false doctrine taught by false prophets, when rationalism and modern unbelief under the name and in the garb and trapping of science would strut about or sit enthroned in your colleges and seminaries, when the very memory of your fathers would rise up as an indictment against you and the records of these fifty years would stand as a condemnation of your faithlessness? God forbid that such a day should ever dawn! God grant that, if another period of fifty years be vouchsafed to the Norwegian Synod, you, or as many of you as shall then remain in the land of the living, may say to future generations: Here is the precious inheritance we have received from

our fathers. We have, in the strength of God, toiled as they have toiled, fought as they have fought, have been blessed from on high with fruits and victories as they were blessed; and now we charge you to receive and hold sacred what through our hands God entrusts to your keeping. Hold fast your inheritance. Toil on unwearied, though it be another fifty years; you shall have a whole eternity to rest in. Fight on undismayed, though it be to the end of your days; yours shall be a whole eternity wherein to wear the victor's crown upon your brow. And know that you will surely fail, unless, and will assuredly succeed, if your strength shall be where was your fathers' strength, not in yourselves, but in the Lord of hosts and in His holy Word.

Then Pres. Fr. Pieper brought greetings in the German language, and we here offer a translation of his closing words.

Your Synod has also from its beginning unto this day endured affliction (Anfechtung). You have been afflicted both from within and without. They have derided you on account of the truth of God's Word that you confessed. They have wanted to draw you away from the confession of the truth. But by God's grace you stand unto this day in the confession of the truth. By God's grace you confess unto this day the 'sola Scriptura' and the 'sola gratia,' in opposition to the many kinds of seductive error. For this unspeakable grace of God you thank God today, and we, your brethren in the faith, thank God along with you. God bless you, our dear brethren in the faith and in battle, also richly in the future for the sake of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Then Pres. Pieper switched to the Latin language and informed the assembly that the Faculty of the Theological Seminary of the Missouri Synod in St. Louis had decreed to create the President of the Norwegian Synod, Pastor V. Koren, and also Prof. Laur. Larsen, Doctors of Theology. This was formally done, and thereafter the entire assembly arose to congratulate Pres. Koren and Prof. Larsen on the occasion of this great honor bestowed upon them.

And here we turn to a word written to the Convention by Pastor Fr. Sievers who had been elected to be a representative of the Synodical Conference on this occasion. His words are given in the Norwegian language and we here repeat some of them in translation.

I congratulate the highly honored President Koren and Professor Larsen, who, after the most profound course in 'studio theologico' both 'theoretice et practice exacto,' were found capable as well as worthy to graduate to the highest distinction in the church militant, with the wish that these young 'Doctores Theologiae' might continue to be handsome and noble adornments for the orthodox church, shining stars in the land of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I send my letter to Decorah,

Now I sing just like Deborah:

"They who love the Lord shall shine like the sun shines forth in its strength."

The dear Norwegian Synod's brother in the faith in Christ Jesus.

Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 22, 1903.

Fr. Sievers.

The Synod bade the secretary to send its hearty thanks to Pastor Sievers.

The Close of the Convention

Two of the Synod's pastors were asked to address the Synod at its close. They were Pastor Bjug Harstad and Pastor George A. Gullixson, The first of these was at that time 54 years of age and had graduated from the Seminary in St. Louis in 1874. The other was 36 years of age and a graduate of the Norwegian Synod's seminary in 1893. The first spoke in Norwegian, the second in English.

After the singing of the hymn, "Wake, awake, for night is flying," Pastor Harstad preached, using Psalm 78, 3 ff as text. He said that there are especially three things that the Christians shall do: 1. Not hide the great works of God, but proclaim to the coming generations the Lord's praise and His strength and the miracles He has done. 2. He shall remember that it is the calling and purpose of the Christian to see to it that the coming generations shall be able to know the Lord their God and put their hope in Him in willing obedience. And 3. They shall furnish themselves in all things as living witnesses of God's grace in the Lord Jesus Christ to the glory of God.

Pastor Gullixson spoke of the responsibility that especially the young in the church body have to continue the work that the fathers have so well begun. The field is large and we must take hold of the work with zeal, and above all we shall pray that the Lord of the Harvest will send forth many workers into the great harvest. He closed by reading Solomon's prayer as recorded in 1 Kings 8, 57 ff.

Then Dr. Koren closed with a prayer, using for his prayer the same passage that Pastor Gullixson had just read.

Lord God, be with us as Thou hast been with our fathers. Forsake us not. Bow down our hearts to Thee, that we may walk in all Thy ways and keep Thy commandments and ways that you have commanded to our fathers, and let our petition for Thy grace come near unto Thee, Lord our God, so that all people may know that Thou art God and that there is none other. Amen.

Then Dr. Koren pronounced the Blessing upon the assembly, and all joined in singing:

On my heart imprint Thine image,
Blessed Jesus, King of grace,
That life's riches, cares, and pleasures,
Have no power Thee to efface;
This the superscription be:
Jesus, crucified for me,
Is my life, my hope's foundation,
and my glory and salvation.

Then Pastor T. A. Torgerson spoke up and said that there is one thing that has been forgotten. I just thought of it about half an hour ago while Pastor Harstad was speaking: It is now 50 years since Pastor and Mrs. Koren were married and 50 years since he was ordained in the congregation in which he still serves. At this the entire assembly arose in congratulation.

Pastor I. B. Torrison expressed thanks on behalf of the Decorah congregation and its arrangements committee to all the people for the pleasant gathering. And now the memorable jubilee Synod Convention was declared adjourned in Jesus' Name.

-- Adolph M. Harstad

TROUBLE ON INSPIRATION AND INERRANCY
IN AUSTRALIA

Dr. Henry Hamann, the "younger Hamann" and a member of the Lutheran Church of Australia, recently spent some time in the United States as a guest lecturer at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. He also took time while in the United States to deliver a series of lectures at Valparaiso University, Valparaiso, Indiana. His lecture topic there was "The Bible Between Fundamentalism and Philosophy." These lectures, abridged by Hamann himself, were published in the Cresset, the literary magazine of Valparaiso University, in the November, 1979; December, 1979; and January, 1980 issues.

After reading through Hamann's essays it was very difficult to see how he could have taught at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. The administration, the faculty, and the recent graduates of that school have reflected the theology of "Old Missouri." His whole approach is not just inconsistent with, but opposed to everything which Concordia and its president, Robert Preus, stand for and contend for.

Certainly the liberals must be laughing at Concordia, but one would expect that of them. And certainly Concordia must be embarrassed by the whole situation. But one must honestly ask if Dr. Hamann actually revealed or concealed his position on the Scriptures while teaching at Concordia. One must wonder out loud if he entered the classroom, taught, and left without the students, faculty, and administration knowing exactly where he stood. If this is true, then the whole situation speaks for itself.

But what is more sad is that the position adopted by the "younger Hamann" reflects a departure from the conservative theological stance of the "elder Hamann," who was one of the respected conservative theologians of the old Synodical Conference. This writer can remember his clear testimonies. In contrast, when one looks at the essays delivered at Valparaiso, one must say "Ichabod," for the glory has departed from Israel, I Samuel 4:21.

If this seems like a rather strong reaction to the lectures of Hamann, then one should read the lectures for himself. It should also be mentioned that Hamann condensed the lectures himself. What was then printed was Hamann first hand. If there are any unclarities because of condensation, the fault does not lie with the reader.

As was mentioned above, Hamann's essay had the very interesting title, "The Bible Between Fundamentalism and Philosophy." As one reads through Hamann's lectures, it would seem that he sees Fundamentalism as a greater danger than philosophy. He certainly spends much more time criticizing the former.

The lectures are divided into three sections. The first portion has the subheading, "The Bible and the Deviation of Fundamentalism." This portion of the lectures, together with material related to it from other sections, received the greatest treatment of the three areas and was, one would judge, his greatest concern. The title of this portion might have led readers to expect criticisms of Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, Billy Sunday, and any other number of persons. Instead the reader is surprised to hear, under this heading, criticisms of the late Dr. William Arndt for writing Does the Bible Contradict Itself? and Bible Difficulties, of the late

Dr. Theodore Engelder and his classic Scripture Cannot be Broken, and even of his (Hamann's) earlier theological training at Adelaide. This approach of Hamann's must immediately distinguish his approach to Scripture from the "Old Missouri" position and of his own Australian church body in its premerger days.

When Hamann thus criticizes the so-called Fundamentalists, he is also to a large degree finding fault with conservative Lutheranism. Hamann, of course, is using a favorite ploy of the liberals. He condemns a movement which conservative Lutherans cannot accept, but then equates conservative Lutheranism with it. Certainly no true Lutheran appreciates the legalism of the Fundamentalist movement, its shallow Arminianism, its neglect of the Sacraments, and the many other facets characteristic of the movement. But that is not what Hamann is criticizing the movement for. Rather he finds fault with a position accepted by conservative Lutherans. He complains that the Fundamentalists -- we would say, conservatives -- make "a doctrine of every statement or fact" of the Bible. One cannot help feeling that he is really rejecting the position of the Brief Statement and the biblical concept of propositional theology, John 10:35b. When he laments that these people have made the Bible into a book which has "become a law book with a whole host of definitive and authoritarian sentences and paragraphs," it would seem that he is faulting conservative Lutheranism for its propositional, proof-text approach to theology.

He certainly does not seem to hold to inerrancy. He asserts: "We don't have to become doubtful of a book because of some inconsequential error out on the periphery." He does point out just prior to this statement that a book loses its validity only when too many errors appear in it. But he leaves his readers with a problem. What is the magic percentage

point beyond which a book, including the Bible, can no longer be trusted? Is the mark of purity 75%, or 83.2%, or 99.44%? Another problem which he does not touch on is this: who is to sit in judgment of the Bible and determine where possible errors exist? Who is to determine what is to be believed? Is it Franz Pieper, or Rudolph Bultmann, or Henry Hamann? Furthermore, he deals with error only as a quantity, but what of errors of quality? These errors could disrupt the basic doctrines of Christianity and of Scripture.

Hamann faults conservatives who argue from the perfection of God to the perfection of Scripture as a creation of God. He sees this seemingly as a mere logical deduction. He asserts: "The argument is that, since the Scriptures are inspired by God and since God knows everything and cannot be possibly mistaken, therefore the Scriptures must be inerrant." However, though Hamann may disagree, one must say that God does have a remarkable felicity of being able to do just that very thing. In Genesis we read that God took the dust of the earth and made man from it. But perhaps this illustration should not be used, since Hamann prefers to leave Genesis 1-3 open to figurative interpretations. But one could also use the parallel of Christ, where the divine and the human are united in His person without any complicating problems, unless one wishes to opt for the modern kenoticism held by certain liberal Lutherans, who have completely emptied Christ of His divine qualities while He was here on earth. Thus Christ was left a mere shell.

Hamann faulted the Fundamentalists, or conservatives, for refusing to consider possible figurative interpretations of Genesis 1-3, Job, and Jonah, even though he recognized that Jesus did refer to Job as a person. He neglects to note that Christ spoke of the Jonah event as a "sign," which every New Testament

student recognizes as a term for special divine proof in a situation. A parable cannot be a "sign" in the sense in which Christ applied it to Jonah.

Hamann also reacted negatively to a reviewer of his book on form criticism. Hamann complained that the reviewer had faulted him for "confining myself to purely rational and historical argumentation in my discussion of the various forms of criticism met in NT scholars." The reviewer had faulted him for leaving out the "presuppositions of faith." Two comments can be made here. First of all, when Christ dealt with the theological liberals of His day, the Saducees, he did not hesitate to use the presuppositions of faith. He rather appealed directly to the Scriptures and the power of God, Matthew 22:29. The translation of the NIV is very much to the point: "You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God." One would presume that this would be a very good example to follow.

Secondly, Hamann, following the arguments of the historical-critical method, asserts concerning the Bible that "As an historical collection of writings, it has to be treated wholly from an historical point of view." Thus the readers would sit in judgment of the Bible. Incidentally, one might also call this a non-faith presupposition, for it presumes that God cannot cause a book to be written which is different from any other book ever written. Readers here are referred back to Jesus' comments in Matthew 22:29. Here also is an internal contradiction in Hamann's thinking. Here he denigrates the importance of faith, but later on in his presentation he elevates the faith of the Christian as that which decides what is to be believed. Nowhere is Scripture's witness concerning itself considered.

Hamann is also critical of the conservatives

for insisting that "There must be a direct and matching correspondence between OT prophecies and NT fulfillment." Later in his presentation he offers an example of what he means. He objects to the Old Testament word almah of Isaiah 7:14 being translated "virgin." He further objects to making the translation of almah as "virgin" a mark of orthodoxy. He objects because he feels that "The Two Testaments are not the same, and prophecy is not fulfillment. The fulfillment adds a precision which prophecy makes possible." He explains this by adding that "no one knew just how the OT prophecies would be fulfilled." Such statements cause the reader to wonder. Prophecy which cannot be understood as prophecy is not prophecy. Prophecy at least gives specific direction to one's thinking. Certainly aged Simeon in the temple knew exactly Whom he had been waiting for and why. One must also think of the Emmaus disciples who were faulted by Christ not merely for failing to apply the Old Testament prophecies to the events which had just taken place, but for having failed to prepare themselves through prophecy for the events which had happened. In the end, Hamann's approach to prophecy seems to be the rather weak typical type of prophecy at best rather than the rectilinear approach. One additional thought! It is also interesting that the words of Peter in Acts 10:43 are quoted in the Confessions, where, in the Apology, XII:66, the witness of the prophets are equated with "the consensus of the universal church." The Confessions evidently see the Old Testament and the New Testament as a unit.

Because the conservatives hold a position which Hamann cannot accept, Hamann evidently feels that there is something wrong with their thought processes. Hamann attacks their intellectual integrity. He states: "A certain anti-intellectualism shows up quite regularly." Certainly conservatives have not been as careful always as they might have been in

presenting their case, but Hamann does not present any of the illustrations of which this reader thought. Rather Hamann criticizes those who hold to a seven-day creation and similar Biblical teachings. One also wonders if he includes Dr. Arndt and Dr. Engelder here.

He finally accuses the conservatives -- he calls them Fundamentalists -- of putting the Holy Spirit ahead of Christ. He faults the conservatives for stressing the necessity of the Bible as the written Word of God, from which people then find out about Christ as their Savior. He says this upsets the divine order. The conservatives are faulted for telling people to believe the Bible so that they can then believe in Christ. Here again a quick response must be made. First of all, in faulting conservatives for making too much of the Scriptures at the expense of Christ, Hamann does a rather odd thing. He quotes rather extensively from the Scriptures to show the importance of Christ. What he really is showing is that the Christian cannot know any other Christ really than the Christ of the Scriptures. Furthermore, how did he become a Christian except by being baptized in accord with the Trinitarian Baptismal formula stated in Scripture?

At the end of his first presentation Hamann really leaves his hearers dangling in uncertainty. Lutherans are accustomed to hearing their clergy round off formal presentations by calling for action with the familiar "Let us now . . ." or with a call to commitment with the familiar "Let us now hold fast . . ." Hamann does neither. His conclusion leads to no conclusions except uncertainty. Hear his conclusion!

A proper view of the Bible will endeavor to draw together the evident characteristics

of Biblical writings and teachings concerning the Bible as set forth by our Lord and his apostles. The struggle for this adequate teaching must still go on, for a complete solution of the problem is still to be found.

What Hamman is really saying is that he has rejected the old Synodical Conference position on Scripture's inspiration, infallibility, inerrancy, and clarity. He has definite assertions and propositions as to what the Scriptures are not, but do more!

In his second presentation entitled "The Bible and the Threat of Philosophy," he seems to see fewer dangers to Christianity from philosophy than from so-called Fundamentalism, or conservatism. He grants that "The philosophical attitude to Scripture has become crystalized in the so-called historical-critical method." But he then goes on to praise this method: "The historical-critical study of the Bible has led in many ways to a better understanding of the Bible and its message." After these words of praise for this method, Hamann then presents a brief history of the application of this method in the history of the church. He ends with the demythologizing of Bultmann, and he correctly states that Bultmann denied many of the fundamentals of the Christian faith. One must wonder how Hamann can praise a method which ended in Bultmann.

Hamann evidently felt that this question would arise in the minds of his readers, so he provided his answer. The fault did not lie in the method, but in the failure to hold to Christian presuppositions as he sees them. This, incidentally, was and is the argument of Seminex. What went wrong with Bultmann and similar men, according to Hamann? In their application of the method "reason displaces Scripture." But not only that. "The Bible and

human reason or philosophy are incompatible; they are irreconcilable opposites." But according to Hamann the assaults of philosophy do not trouble the believer. "They have experienced in their own hearts and souls and brains that the Christian gospel, the message of the Scriptures, come into continual conflict." But the Christian, Hamann asserts, stands firm, "For the Christian knows faith from the inside . . ." This seems to sound rather like Schleiermacher rather than the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit. Schleiermacher, of course, based Christian certainty on the internal, subjective faith and feelings of the Christian. Hamann, of course, has reduced the propositional content of the Bible to a minimum, an example of Gospel reductionism. One is to hold on to Christ as the minimum, especially since the Bible is not all that reliable, according to Hamann. Remember that he did not approve of the efforts of Dr. Arndt and Dr. Engelder.

The third portion of Hamann's lecture is entitled "The Bible and the Word of God." Such a title makes conservatives immediately suspicious, and for good reason. Hamann's key statement in his third lecture is as follows:

That the Bible is the Word of God, all of it, must be held together with the other assertion that it is, all of it, word of men. . . . Everything about the Bible shows its humanity That the Bible is the Word of God must be held without falling into the mistake of making the Bible and the Word of God identical. . . . As a matter of fact, Word of God is a far wider term than Bible. Bible is part of the Word of God.

Hamann then goes on to show that, for him, the Word of God has a much broader meaning: the preaching of the Gospel, the words of Christ, and many other forms

also today. But he quickly adds that the Scriptures are normative for preachers.

Sermons, exhortations, and essays produced by men and women of the church are Word of God only insofar as they are in keeping with the teaching of the Bible.

He seems to place the Bible on a normative level when he states: "All teachers and teachings in the church can be criticized and set right, as the Bible cannot be." Hamann also praises the stability which the Bible gives to faith; "The correction and stability offered by the Bible is always there." All this sounds very good. Yet one must remember that Hamann is a Gospel reductionist and does not feel at home with the concept of Scriptural inerrancy of Arndt and Engelder.

But one's hopes are further deflated by a number of other statements. He makes a rather odd statement of praise for Luther, which Luther would never have accepted: "Luther's view of man in his sin is probably more profoundly expressed than the Bible expresses it." What an odd statement in view of Psalm 51 and a host of other portions of Scripture!

More disturbing are his comments on the inspiration of the Scriptures. Hamann seems to have given up the old Synodical Conference doctrine. He states:

In all this, the Bible is the witness of the Spirit of Christ. As the Bible itself asserts in a number of places, we speak rightly of the inspiration of the Scriptures. Every true witness of Christ by whomsoever given is also the witness of his Spirit. And, of course, this inspiration extends over the whole of what is the Scripture. Of course,

inspiration is verbal, for that is how we think, in words, and of course how we speak. There is no other inspiration of verbal material possible.

At first glance this statement seems rather conservative. But it should be noted that Hamann has really broadened the definition of those who are inspired to "every true witness of Christ," which is far beyond the prophets, evangelists, and apostles. Inspiration, instead of being defined as the creative activity of the Holy Spirit through selected individuals which produced an inspired, infallible, and inerrant Scriptures, is defined merely as process by which individuals express themselves. It would seem that Hamann is asserting that any individual who is a Christian could produce materials of equal quality with the Scriptures. Emphasis thus falls on subjective experiences rather than the objective statements of Scripture.

That Hamann has given up the old Synodical Conference position on Scripture is obvious from his concluding remarks. He refuses to accept the position of the conservatives. He faults them for insisting that all of the details of Scripture are "important, all of them the revealed Word of God..." He is content rather to hold to a minimal Gospel of Christ. Holding to this principle, he asserts that "the Gospel of Jesus Christ becomes a determining principle of Scriptural interpretation." Hamann argues that when an exegete follows this principle, the Gospel then "keeps the expositor from adopting some explanation of a certain passage because of its plain inconsistency with the Gospel." This, of course, is the basic hermeneutical principle of Seminex. But what makes this Gospel true? It is a well-known fact that liberal theologians who have left the foundation of the Scriptures have come up with a variety of so-called Gospels. All that Hamann has to fall back on is his own subjective

certainty and a Bible which is not too true. One should remember that he did not like Arndt's books which dealt with Bible difficulties.

Hamann also recognized that conservatives are concerned when the possibility of error in the Bible is admitted. Hamann shrugs off this concern. "These aspects of the Bible do not bother me or my kind." To him truth seems to be some kind of a Platonic concept. Truth is out there somewhere. Christ speaks of knowing the truth. One can talk about it. But one really cannot say, "I have the truth."

This judgment of Hamann's approach to truth is supported by his own words: "Proof for the Word is not historically possible." Hamann may here be separating the truth of God's Word as he sees it from the historical setting in which it occurs. Liberal theologians have attempted to avoid the question of reliability of Scripture by making this distinction. But one of the primary thrusts of Scripture from Adam on is historicity. Paul, for example, makes use of historical arguments for the resurrection of Christ. Certainly Thomas was convinced by an historical event, the appearance of Christ to the Eleven. The catalog of witnesses in I Corinthians 15 is very familiar; Paul argues that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection should convince the Corinthians. Though the historical reliability of Scripture cannot be proven to the satisfaction of the person questioning it or rejecting it, the reliability of Scripture can be supported by history, archaeology, harmonization, proper translation, and a host of other supportive approaches.

Hamann would disagree. He asserts: "Take the resurrection. No historical proof for this is really possible . . ." Does Hamann intend to leave the resurrection in a limbo of doubt? What he is

trying to do is to seal it off hermetically from all criticism by encapsulating it in his own personal conviction of its truth. But the Scriptures do not handle Christ's resurrection this way. And it is amazing that someone who calls himself a Lutheran theologian should follow this route. The whole thrust of Scripture is toward the objective certainty of this fact. This rings through the apostolic preaching. This is the whole thrust of the Old Testament prophecies, the prophecies of Christ concerning Himself, and the historic narratives of the Gospels and epistles. The resurrection was a sign before all. The disciples in Galilee had no doubt of the reality of the event when they sat down and ate with Christ on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Though Easter was a unique event -- and this is probably the reason for Hamann's statement on historical proof -- yet the event of Easter was an historical event capable of being witnessed and witnessed to. Certainly Hamann would not wish people to be uncertain of the resurrection of Christ.

Hamann ultimately shows himself to be Barthian in his approach to the Scriptures when he states: "God gave his Word (and still gives it through the Scriptures) in human words." If Hamann is correctly understood, he is stating that God communicates through, not by means of, the Scriptures. The Bible is then a human vehicle which God may choose to use.

An additional number of items could have been mentioned, but these will more than suffice. These lectures certainly raise concerns over the fate of conservative Lutheranism in Australia. Hamann's views certainly were more at home at Valparaiso University and in accord with Seminec than with Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne. It is a theology which rejects the doctrine of Scripture championed by Arndt and Engelder. It stands in

complete opposition to the writings of Scripture currently circulated in the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, such as Dr. J. A. O. Preus' A Statement and It Is Written. It is rather unfortunate that Dr. Hamann did not take time while at Concordia to resolve some of the questions which he raised in his lectures by speaking with the conservative faculty there: Surburg, Maier, Klug, and others.

It would have been interesting to have Hamann openly profess his views on less friendly ground than Valparaiso, which, as far as this writer knows, does not have a conservative on its theological faculty. After all, there are two sides to the questions which Hamann raised.

The face of Concordia may be rather red -- if a seminary can blush -- for the guest teacher which it had on campus and to whom it gave an honorary doctorate. After all, it is embarrassing to find out later that your guest does not agree with you theologically. But embarrassment in such a situation is a good sign. But it is more important to remember that the Confessions do teach the inerrancy of the Scriptures. Good Lutherans accept the words of Luther's Large Catechism that the words of Scripture do not lie, L.C., "Lord's Supper," 76.

-- Glenn E. Reichwald

CORRECTIONS IN PREVIOUS INSTALLMENT

Vol. XIX, #4, top of page 35, supply missing section title:

REV. HERMAN AMBERG PREUS, PRESIDENT OF THE SYNOD
FOR THIRTY-TWO YEARS

Page 37, the last line should read:

office of the vice president

* * * * *

"I believe the old cliché 'an age of anxiety' is still to be taken seriously. Scratch the surface of one of those apparent self-righteous, confident, purposeful Pharisees in our churches and you find an anxious Pharisee. Scratch the surface of a narrow, prejudiced deacon or elder and you find a frightened deacon or elder. Scratch the surface of a rebellious teenager and chances are you find a scared kid."

Thus, he counselled, preaching today as a part of the worship of local congregations should be shaped by the overwhelming need on the part of the people for a word of comfort, hope, and assurance. The preacher's cue, he opined, should be taken from Second Isaiah with its predominant theme, "Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people."

-- Edmund A. Steimle, "Preaching Out of Season" Thesis, Quoted and commented on by Robert M. Shelton in Austin Seminary Bulletin, Nov. 1975, p. 31.

BOOK REVIEW

Rutz, Karl W. Martin Luther and the Confessions -- a Guide. Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1980. 10 p. 80¢

Obtainable from: Mr. Peter Kallenbach, Concordia College Bookstore, Hamline and Marshall, St. Paul, Minnesota 55104

"This little pamphlet is intended to help the interested student of the Lutheran Confessions to find in English translation (if available) the Luther citations in the Tappert edition of The Book of Concord ... If an English translation seems unavailable, reference is made to an edition of Luther containing the citation in question, which is likely to be more available than the Weimar edition." (Foreword)

The great majority of references are to the American Edition of Luther's Works. Because only a few people have access to the Weimar edition, this pamphlet should prove to be a very useful tool.

-- M. H. Otto