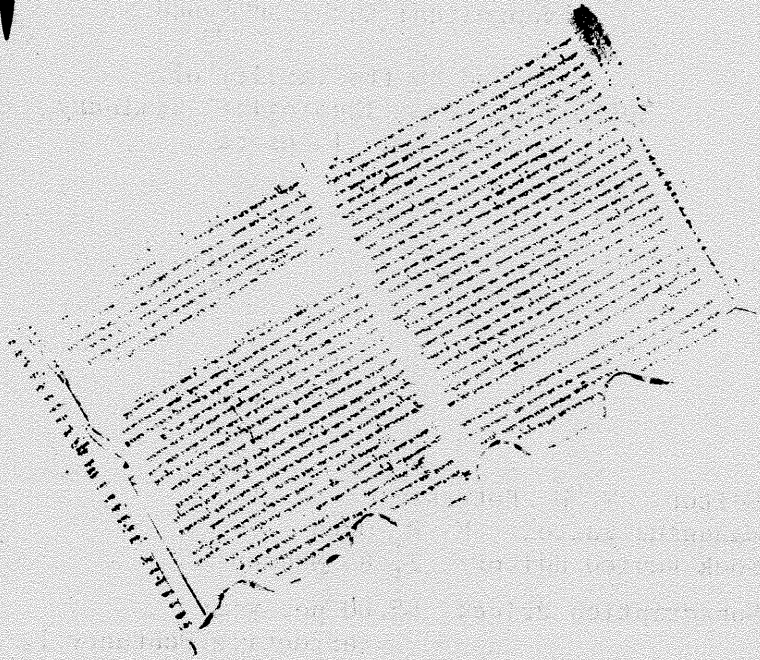




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FOREWORD

One of the duties of the undersigned, as president of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, is to serve as editor of the Lutheran Synod Quarterly. It is with a sense of trepidation that he assumes this position for he is aware of the responsibility that goes with it. Here again he derives courage for the task from the words of Holy Writ: "But our sufficiency is of God."

A special word of appreciation is in order to the rest of the staff of the Quarterly who carried on during the illness of former President Theodore A. Aaberg. Our readers are undoubtedly aware that President Aaberg was called to his eternal rest on January 8, 1980. The undersigned accepted the Call to serve as president of the seminary and assumed his duties on August 1, 1980.

The editor assumes responsibility for the articles that will be published in the Quarterly. He will keep his ear open to essays and exegetical papers that are delivered at pastoral conferences and circuit meetings. He would also appreciate receiving sermons delivered on special occasions. In the next issue, for example, there will be the sermon delivered by Pastor Adolph Harstad at the installation service of the president of the seminary and the Rev. Mark Harstad as professor of Old Testament.

In this issue we are pleased to present more history of the Norwegian Synod, history that preceded the merger of 1917. Pastor Harstad has translated this from the Norwegian and it is of special interest to us of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod

since our roots go back to the old Norwegian Synod. There is also a timely exegesis by Pastor Paul Haugen on James 5:13-17 regarding the anointing of the sick with oil. Also of interest is the article on the Committee of Ten and Ten by Pastor A. T. Kretzman. This committee was appointed to deal with the A Statement, a set of theses which were published in the mid-1940's in the LCMS which questioned the old conservative position on church fellowship and particularly the application of Romans 16:17-18 to Lutherans who erred in doctrine.

May the Lord graciously direct and bless the publication of this journal to His Glory and to the edification of its readers.

W.W.Petersen

SHOW YOUR FAITH BY PERSEVERING IN PRAYER

"Are any among you sick? Let him call the elders of the church and let them pray over him anointing in oil in the name of the Lord and the prayer of faith shall save the sick and the Lord will raise him." (James 5:14-15a)

This seems to be the problem part of this passage chosen for our exegesis. Yet, part of the hermeneutical process is to consider the immediate context as well as the broad context of the problem text.

The broad context of the Scriptures as a whole seem at first to add to the problem. Passages that at least superficially seem to parallel this passage are ones like Matt. 21:22 - "Whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive." and I Pet. 2:24 - "Ye shall be healed." (referring to Is. 53:5) On the basis of these and other passages we hear it claimed that God wants healing for the Christian -- that all we need do is believe and we shall be healed.

Yet the analogy of faith, our broad context, immediately calls this into serious question. For the analogy of faith teaches us that the term faith does not mean believing in what we ask for, but believing in what God has promised. Faith must be accompanied by God's promise. Our desire is not enough in and of itself. God's promise must accompany the desire.

Let's take one obvious example. Our desire for forgiveness and any accompanying faith is not enough to be forgiven. God's promise must be present for our faith to gain us forgiveness. Without the promise faith is nothing and without faith the promise benefits us nothing. Faith and promise go hand in hand.

But isn't healing what God has promised? Doesn't Isaiah 53:5 tell us that the Suffering Servant would gain healing for us? II Pet. 2:24 certainly seems to apply it that way.

We're a little shy of accepting that thesis -- that Christ through His atonement gained health and healing for us. We see how that concept is misused by faith healers. And so we don't want to acknowledge too loudly that we believe that Christ's atonement bought us the right to health.

Yet we shouldn't throw out the baby with the bath water. Just because someone misuses a concept does not mean we should avoid that concept. A look at this passage in James will bring us face to face with these questions. The immediate context seems to question the emphasis that this passage is an outline for how to be healed. It is rather an exhortation to persevere in prayer in the midst of good and evil. But doesn't this passage at least indirectly offer an outline for healing? Let us look at these verses and see.

The narrow context, i.e., the book of James, seems to indicate that the main thrust of this passage (5:13-18) is not healing but prayer. The main theme of James seems to be "Show Your Faith By Perseverance (Patience)." See James 1:3 - "Faith worketh patience (perseverance)." Also compare James 1:12 - "Blessed is the man that endureth (persevereth under) temptation" and 5:11 -

"We count them happy which endure (persevere)." So I have chosen the theme for James 5:13-18 to be "Show Your Faith By Persevering in Prayer."

Verse 13 - "Are any among you experiencing evil? Let him pray. Are any feeling good? Let him sing."

"Kakopatheï" is the present indicative form of "kakopathew," a compound of "kakos" and "pathew." "Pathew (pathos, paskw)" seems to carry the weight of experiencing something. It is quite passive in the sense of being affected instead of affecting something. And so it came to mean to suffer. And even the English word "suffer" has a passive connotation. That is evident from some of the uses of that word in the KJV---"Suffer the little children to come unto me." (Mk. 10:14).

"Kakos" is just pure baseness in the sense of being animal-like or to be of inferior nature. A person becomes "kakos" if he begins to act like an animal, guided ONLY by his own desires, morally unresponsive to those around him. Life becomes "kakos" when its quality is inferior to what is the "good life." That can happen by illness, deprivation or the actions of "kakos" men.

James asks "Are any in your midst experiencing 'kakos'?" And he gives his advice -- "Let him pray." "Proseuxomai" is a very religious term. It carries with it the weight of "euxa," a vow and so came to mean religious prayer. If you are experiencing "kakos" in any sense, pray, talk to God about it. "Proseuxomai" need not be a request. It is simply prayer in the broadest sense of addressing a deity or for James, the Deity.

If any of you are good spirited, let him sing. "Euthumew" is again a compound of "eu," good, well, fine, proper and "thumos," spirit, emotion, that

which wells up. "Thumos" coming from "thuw" (move quickly, roar, rage) has a suddenness, a violence about it. It is a force that moves man, beast, air, water, or even ground. We might say Mt. St. Helens is showing its "thumos." It seems to carry much the same weight our word emotion carries. For emotion comes from the same stem as motivation. An emotion is that which motivates, moves one to action.

Are you feeling good -- in good spirits? Then sing. We all recognize "psallw," from which we get our word psalm. "Psallw" comes from "Psaw," to touch. That's what the Hebrews did for music. They touched -- stroked -- their stringed instruments. So if you're feeling good, sing, make music.

All the verbs in this verse are present tense. The questions summarize a situation. Are you experiencing evil? Are you feeling good? The answers are in the imperative: "Let him sing;" "Let him pray." The present imperatives encourage us to make these actions into habits. These actions should be habitual. When we're experiencing evil we should automatically speak to God about it. When we're feeling good we should habitually, continually sing His praises.

Verse 14 - "Are any of you sick? Let him call the elders of the church and let them pray over him anointing (him) with oil in the name of the Lord."

The tenses of verse 14 change to aorist. The first verb "asthenei" is present, but the next three are aorist.

The aorists seem to indicate that James is addressing a specific type or example of verse 13. "Whenever you suffer any evil, pray. When you are sick, call the elders to pray with and for you. This is

strengthened by "asthenew," which is a species or kind of "kakopathew."

This at first may sound strange to us. Call the elders to pray over you. Yet we often practice something very similar to this. We offer special prayer in our services for someone who is sick. This really isn't so different when we remember that the pastors are often called "presbuteroi" in the New Testament.

But, we don't anoint with oil, do we? In a sense that may be true -- that is in the strictly literal sense. The elders of today don't go to the bedside of the sick for reading and prayer.

Yet what we do today isn't really so different. Our sick are anointed with oil to prevent sores, to encourage healing and to keep out infection. They are also anointed with medicine to encourage healing.

But is that what James means? Well, we can't be real definite. One thing is for sure -- we cannot say that medicine must be ruled out in this text. "Aleiphw" is used for very physical reasons like comfort (Jn. 12:3), grooming (Mt. 6:17), burial (Mk. 16:1) and possibly even medicine (Mk. 6:13), "riw," the term usually used for religious anointing, is not used here.

"Aleiphw" is also used in a religious sense, especially in the LXX (Gen. 3:13, Num. 3:3, Est. 2:12; but also compare Heb. 1:9). "Elaios" could be used for either a religious consecration or purely physical comfort and aid.

So, it seems, we can rule out neither the medicinal thesis nor the religious, miraculous thesis just from the words themselves. And, I don't think

the real crux of the problem comes here. No one would complain about being anointed with oil any more than they would complain about being anointed with lotion. If a nurse or doctor told the patient that they were going to rub oil on him to make him more comfortable, very few would complain. The hesitation begins when on the basis of the next verse, some "anointers" would claim to heal with this oil and prayer. Then some begin to wonder what is going on. Doubts arise. Has God promised this? Dare we hope for healing by prayer and oil? How can these miracle healers be so sure? So lets look at verse 15.

Verse 15 - "And the prayer of faith shall save the one being sick and the Lord shall raise him up and even if he has committed sin, it shall be forgiven him."

The jump from praying and anointing with oil in this verse is where many hesitate and stumble. It would seem James is laying the outline for a healing service. Do this in faith and you shall be healed.

There's one problem that arises immediately. There is no time span laid out in the verse. It does say that the Lord shall save the sick one, but it does not say when.

But, some would say, it means he shall be saved (healed) at the time of the anointing. Yet we must be very careful about finding a meaning in the Scriptures if it isn't indicated there explicitly or grammatically. If a miraculous healing through faith must happen here and now, then we have a problem of showing that from the text. For the text does not indicate that that should be so.

NOR does it indicate that it will not happen here and now. It leaves the time element completely

open. James is not setting up a religious form by which we can work miraculous healings, i.e., call the elders, anoint with oil, pray, all done in faith and you're healed; you don't have to wait until heaven to overcome this illness. James uses the future tense with no accusative or dative of time to limit the time element. From the words themselves, this time could extend to eternity OR it could happen right now.

Well, what is the point James is making? The same point Peter makes when he quotes Is. 53:5 - "By His stripes ye are healed." (II Pet. 2:24) Healing is a fruit of your redemption. It IS true - God doesn't want us to be sick and He is bringing the day when we shall be healed (saved). The remission of some sickness in this life -- the fact that all sickness is not always fatal -- is also a blessing of that redemption.

The prayer of faith shall save the sick. God has promised us healing through Christ. And when we believe in that promise we have that healing. We may not enjoy it in its totality now, but it is ours. The prayer of faith shall save us because it is faith in the promise of God given in Christ.

That's why any and all sin shall be forgiven the sick. No forgiveness is given outside of Christ. But if he prays in faith, trusting in Christ, he shall be forgiven and saved or healed.

That's why we should confess our sin to one another and pray for one another, so that we may be healed. For the prayer of faith brings healing and forgiveness. Verse 16 - "Be confessing, then, the sins to each other and pray over each other in order that you might be healed. Prayer of a righteous one mightly works great things being energized."

Confessing your sins to one another does not have to mean listing your sins. Confession is simply to agree with someone. "Eksomologew" means to speak the same out. So James is encouraging us to admit that what God says about us is true. And make that admission to each other. Also admit what other men say about you if it is true. Do not be shy of admitting to others your shortcomings. Confess them to one another and pray for each other in order that you may be healed. For the prayer of faith shall save you.

The prayer of a righteous man "availeth" much. A righteous man is none other than a man of faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. The prayer of the righteous elders shall save because if they are righteous they shall pray in faith -- that is trusting the promises of God as offered and fulfilled for us in Christ.

Again, the first two verbs in verse 16 are present, emphasizing repetitious confessing and praying. Habitually confess your sins to one another and habitually pray for each other.

The result will be that you shall be healed. That should be your goal also. Pray for each other so that you may be healed.

Verse 17 and 18 - "Elias was being a man of like passions to us and he prayed a prayer for it to not rain and it did not rain upon the earth three years and six months. And again he prayed and the heaven gave water and the earth sprouted her fruit."

Elijah is used as an example for us. He was a man like us -- with similar passions. Yet we see what his prayer accomplished.

He is used as an example of a righteous man, even though he had passions similar to ours. To be a righteous man does not mean having a certain set of passions. It means having Christ's righteousness through faith. Elijah was a righteous man even though he was like us. And so we can be righteous people even though we have passions like he had.

See what his prayer accomplished. He prayed and it rained not. He prayed and it rained again.

At first sight, it would seem that Elijah's example contradicts the thesis that a prayer of faith must be built on a promise of God. For when Elijah prayed for it not to rain, we are not told that God had told Elijah to do this. Yet if we read of his second prayer, the prayer for rain, we are told in I Kings that God told him specifically to pray for rain and God would send it.

We must remember that the prophets didn't do things on their own in the Old Testament. In fact, when they did try to do something on their own, if it happened to not conform to God's plan, God told them so. Nathan told David to go ahead and build the temple. God corrected Nathan. Samuel thought Jesse's oldest son was the king God had chosen. God corrected Samuel. And so Elias prayed and it was a prayer of faith, for it rested on God's word of promise. And because of that promise, it accomplished great things.

Now that does not mean we should pray only about what is promised in the Scriptures. But what it does mean is that when we do pray for something not specifically promised in the Scriptures, we are to pray "if it be Thy will." That is a prayer of faith. If we pray "Lord, heal me today," we must

add "If it be Thy will." But if we pray "Lord, heal me" and understand the healing may not come until Judgment Day, we need not add "if it be Thy will." For perfect health is one of God's promises to us through Christ. And a prayer of faith is to pray believing in those promises.

-- Paul Haugen

--Delivered at the Circuits 5 and 7 joint Pastoral Conference, May 20 and 21, 1980.

* * * * *

At the risk of sounding more mystical than I have any right to claim, I believe that in preaching, the preacher, congregation, and Scripture come together in a sacramental unity that enables the Spirit of God to move, affecting them in a variety of ways that cannot be predicted, commanded, controlled or judged from the standpoint of results. To be overly concerned with the results of one's preaching is to understand preaching too much as a form of manipulation, with direct cause and effect relationship in the lives of individuals. I prefer to view preaching as a knock on the door, an invitation to a pilgrimage, a question asked, a beckoning. The direction is clear enough: abundant life, Jesus called it, and the Apostle Paul saw it as Christ being formed in us. Any meaningful talk about results in preaching belongs there and has to do with God's grace being real in people's lives -- and God's forgiveness, and God's peace and God's freedom.

-- Robert M. Shelton, "Freed to Preach," article in Austin Seminary Bulletin, Nov. 1975, p. 32f.

OUT OF HER PAST -- THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD

(Installment III)

HISTORY OF THE FORMER NORWEGIAN SYNOD, 1904 - 1911

(with Special Attention to the Progress
of the Union Movement during this Period)

1904

The Presidential Address of Rev. A. K. Sagen
to the Convention of the Eastern District.

The Eastern District of the Norwegian Synod met for its 18th regular convention in St. Paul's Church, Chicago, Illinois, Rev. G. A. Gullixson, pastor, from May 26 to June 1, 1904. It is significant that both Rev. G. A. Gullixson and St. Paul's Church later became members of the re-organized Synod, in 1918, now called the Evangelical Lutheran Synod. Rev. A. K. Sagen of La Crosse, Wisconsin, had taken over the office of president of the Eastern District the year previous, having been the vice-president of this District from 1888 to 1903. He was a graduate of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, in the class of 1879. He was now of the age of 53 years and held the office of district president until his death in 1907. We consider his words to the Convention so excellent that we have made a translation of them for the benefit of the present and future generations of the Lutheran Church, and of our Evangelical Lutheran Synod in particular. If Pastor Sagen's words had been heeded and followed in the fateful years from 1912 to 1917 and thereafter, how different the history of Lutheranism among Norwegians in the U.S.A. might have been.

Rev. A. K. Sagen:

With this convention we begin a new period in our church's history. Last year we celebrated the 50th anniversary. We remembered with gratitude and praise what God had worked in and through us during the 50 years that were past. But we were also aware of our many and great mistakes whereby we so often had hindered God in the blessed work which He gave us to do. We also felt the responsibility for the future and we reminded ourselves of the dangers that threaten the church. And we implored God for deeper acknowledgment of His grace toward us and for greater faithfulness in our service so that we and our descendants might be kept in the faith and in holiness of life unto our blessed end.

We are now gathered here to build that future which we last year thought about and prayed God to bless for us. The realization of this duty ought to turn our mind to earnestness and anxious concern: To earnestness, because the work is God's and has decisive meaning for the eternal weal or woe of many souls; to anxious concern as regards how we further the work, not the worry that has its foundation in despondency and doubt, but that which makes us aware of those things that would hold us back in the work and lead us astray, and that awakens us to a realization of the responsibility for our service and of the requirements that the work sets before us.

Three Chief Dangers:

There are three chief dangers that threaten our Church: Externalism, Satiety, and Worldliness. These are fruits which stand there in abundance on the tree of our time, and many let themselves be tempted by them.

It behooves us now to meet these dangers with fortitude of faith and earnestness in the truth, and build our church on the old immovable foundation which stands forever, and this by upholding and accepting the true, sound, and certain teaching of God's Word for which our fathers have so manfully striven and have suffered.

1. Externalism

For want of a better word, I have called the first danger that of Externalism. It is the outcropping of the frame of mind that lets itself be determined and ruled by that which has outward show, is attractive to the eyes, and that the mob gapes at. This kind of spirit has not only become firmly established in society round about us, but also in many churches, and it tries powerfully to gain entry likewise into our church.

Externalism in the domain of the church shows itself not only in wanting to arrange the management of the church according to the manner of the world and ape the multitude that sets the fashion--as they think--for furthering the cause of the church, but also in this that it lets the revealed truths of salvation, such as God has laid them down for us in His Word, step into the background as less important and as something that can be compromised in order to attain that which counts before the world, win numbers and get great power and prestige. Externalism in the church sets its sights upon being acknowledged as something here in the world and easily winning the approval of the crowd. The real underlying thought in it is not so much to win souls for Christ -- because then one would keep to His

Word. But it looks out for itself and its own views. It does not ask so much about what God wants as it does about what men want and desire for themselves.

The message must therefore adapt itself to the demands of the time. And in their way of speaking this means that the truth of the Word shall not be preached so that it rebukes the faults of the times and is laid upon the conscience of today's people; but the teaching about God's essence and His deeds for man's salvation shall be modified so that it, as little as possible, shall come to awaken the ill-will of unbelief, so it at least may be tolerated by it and maybe win its approval. Unbelief must not be offended by the foolishness of the cross.

The norm and the rule for the preaching must therefore not be God's Word, but the degree of cognition that the hearers have attained to and that quantum of truth which they are willing to go along with. Not God, but the people are to be asked what shall be preached.

The old Word about sin and grace is distasteful to the present so-called men of science and progress, and so one must not offend them with the old Gospel, but give them what they want and will accept.

This is church externalism. It parades in the garb of Christianity, wants to be very pious, uses Christian phraseology and gives itself the testimonial of possessing the greater elucidation, the broader view and the more considerate and forbearing love. It is conspicuously friendly to union, but always upon the foundation that it is accepted and is given scope.

It feels at home with everybody except with those who do not meet it with acceptance.

Let us therefore see well to it under all the talk about church union that now goes on among us, that it is not the frame of mind which externalism fosters that really lies at the bottom of the whole thing. The foremost matter for us is that we have God and His Word, whether there are many or few who want to be with us.

Division among Our People

It certainly is sad to see the abomination of division among our people, and those who bear the blame for it have a grave reckoning to make. A heavy judgment lies upon those who have led our people away from the truth into error. But judgment lies also over those who have wanted to fight for the truth, but have let the flesh have sway in the battle and thereby have been the cause that the error has established itself with those who indeed went astray, but were not cognizant of it -- they stood there where they believed they had to stand. Not all go astray out of wickedness. Many do it out of ignorance and lack of deeper comprehension. Many have been led astray. Such must therefore be restored "in the spirit of meekness." An unwise and carnal manner of fighting often closes the way to the acknowledgment of the truth among those who otherwise might be won for the truth. We must see to it that we are not the cause of it that someone hardens himself in error. We do not drive out devils by Beelzebul; we do not overcome the Old Adam by the Old Adam.

We wish to God that we all could stand together and be edified together. We therefore want union with our church opponents and first and foremost

with those who once stood with us in the fellowship of the faith but separated themselves from us. But we do not wish the kind of union which externalism wants. We do not want union at the expense of truth and conscience in order to be a bigger power with greater prestige and influence. We do not want union in order to get praise as being men of a broader view, of the liberal manner of thinking and as originators and champions of progress. But we want that kind of union which is carried along by the truth and consists in "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace": Unity in faith, unity in confession of truth and unity in the battle against error. Without such a unity the bond of peace cannot bind us together. Our program is first unity and agreement, then union. To me it seems that all this talk about union sounds very strange especially in the mouths of those who broke the bond of brotherhood, declaring us to be false teachers and hypocrites who preached one thing, but meant something else in our hearts. If they have come so far now that they see that they, acting in irritation and overhastiness, have done that which they should not, then they ought to acknowledge it and ask God and men for forgiveness; because it shall not be forgotten that we did not forsake them, but they forsook us, presumably on account of false doctrine.

The Controversy on Election and Conversion

In the last great battle about Election and Conversion and the things that are connected therewith we have -- this we can say before God -- humbly wanted to bow before that which is written and have neither dared nor wanted to depart a hairbreadth therefrom because God has

not given us permission to have other thoughts and ideas about these things than He Himself has, and because it is not our view, but God's saving counsel, revealed in His Word, which alone can save and actually does save us.

If those who have opposed us in this strife can now show us from the passages on which we build our doctrine of man's Election and Regeneration that we have been mistaken in the understanding and interpretation of them, and can further show us clear words of God that a person's eternal Election and his Regeneration here in time has its explanation in man's "attitude" or "choice" or that God, when He elects and regenerates a person, has been "determined by" or has "taken account of" or "has accommodated Himself to" man's attitude, then we shall - and that is our Christian duty - bow ourselves to that; because we neither desire nor dare to hold fast to any doctrine which we find to be in contradiction to God's Word.

But if our opponents cannot show us this, so that we with good conscience can stand on their ground, or if we cannot convince them of their great error which we sincerely think they are steeped in, then there should be no talk about union between us, because a union without unity of spirit on the foundation of the faith would not please God and would not bring the church any blessing. Instead of making our church strong, it would make it weak. Indeed, it is not this that the church has large numbers and is honored and wondered at that makes it strong, but this and this alone that it is faithful to God and the truth. The church was not large in number and was not honored at the time of the Apostles, but it overcame the world. The true

confessional church was not large nor marvelled at in Luther's day, but it shook the throne of antichrist and loosened the chains of slavery. When the church makes allowance for departure from the truth, it may become large and obtain honor and admiration from the world, but it does not do miracles like those.

Whence the Real Strength of the Church

Neither was it during the time when the unity of faith in our church body was broken, and those who have left us were still in our ranks, that we were strong and energetic. At that time our church was shaken in its very foundations and its power was paralyzed. But when the unity of faith was restored -- even though we had become a much smaller flock -- then it was that we became strong and began to unfold a power which in these last 15 years has left lasting marks after it. Let us, therefore, watch so that we do not depart a hairbreadth from the truth out of considerations which externalism may tempt us to follow.

2. Satiety

The second danger that threatens us is satiety. For a half hundred years now we have been partakers of the grace of being satisfied and nourished by the unadulterated milk of truth. Many now think that they are surfeited and have a distaste for the sound words. This shows itself in infrequent church-attendance, neglect of the Lord's Supper, carelessness with regard to the Christian upbringing of the children and little interest for churchly activities as a whole. This danger seems to be most in evidence where the Word has been preached publicly for a

longer time. This is something that causes us to become anxious and afraid, because we know that when God's Word has left a place it does not return in several generations. Strong delusions, on the contrary, get hold of the field, and lies pass for truth.

3. Worldliness

That which really lies at the bottom both of empty externalism and sleep-inducing satiety is especially the increasing worldliness that rules the minds of many. "Demas hath forsaken me," says the Apostle Paul, "having loved this present world." Where worldliness has gotten an entrance to the heart the care for spiritual and eternal benefits disappears and the fellowship with God and His children ceases.

This is the third chief danger that threatens our church. Worldliness obtains power over the heart little by little until it finally takes over completely, and the final result is eternal poverty and perdition. May we never forget the "rich man" and the "rich farmer."

We must rouse ourselves now to meet these threatening dangers that come so close to us as we begin the second half-century of our synod's existence. There is now only a little handful left of those men who founded our synod and built it faithfully, and before long the Lord will take them home to Himself. Now it devolves upon us who have enjoyed the blessing of their work that we keep watch over the inheritance with the same devotion of faith and with the same self-sacrificing and self-denying love that they showed toward the

warding-off of error. We want our people to see the glory and the value of our inheritance for time and eternity.

* * * * *

1905
The Hague Synod Calls for Committees
to Discuss Union

At its 28th General Convention in Minneapolis in June, 1905, the Synod received the following letter from the Hauge Synod:

Red Wing, Minnesota, June 22, 1905
The Hauge Synod greets the Norwegian Synod: Grace and peace! At the Hauge Synod's 60th annual convention, just held in Red Wing, Minnesota, it was resolved that the Hauge Synod will take up the matter of union with the Norwegian Lutheran church bodies that are willing to deliberate with us concerning union. In keeping with this resolution, the Hauge Synod has appointed a committee of five, and it is our hope that the Norwegian Synod will appoint a similar committee.

May this matter, then, be recommended to the Norwegian Synod in the name of the triune God.

On behalf of the Hauge Synod,
N. J. Løhre, secretary

The committee of the Synod that was designated to deal with this letter presented the following report which was adopted by the Synod:

The committee recommends that the Synod appoint a committee of five to deliberate concerning union with the committee that the Hauge Synod has elected for this purpose.

As members of this committee, the committee proposes: Prof. Dr. H. G. Stub; Prof. O. E. Brandt, St. Louis 1883; Prof. A. Mikkelsen, Concordia Seminary 1863; and Pastors H. Halvorsen, University of Christiania 1872; and O. P. Vangsnes.

Resolved that the secretary answer the letter from the Hauge Synod.

(Synodical Report, 1905, pp. 67 & 68)

At this same convention in 1905, a resolution was passed in the matter of eligibility of election to the office of president of the Synod. Previous to this, eligibility for election to this office was limited to pastors of congregations of the Synod. This was now changed so that also an ordained professor who was a member of a congregation in the Synod possesses the essential qualifications for election to the office of president. All the functions of the office can be delegated to him except that of casting the deciding vote at the convention.

The following voted against this resolution and asked that their names be recorded as protesting against it: Professor Joh. Ylvisaker, President T. A. Torgerson, and Rev. P. A. Widvey. At this convention, Prof. H. G. Stub was elected vice-president of the Synod.

1906

In 1906 Dr. Koren reported to the Synod that he had received a report from Dr. Stub and Prof. Brandt concerning the deliberations with the committees of the Hauge Synod and the United Norwegian Lutheran Church. They had discussed the doctrine of Absolution, and the old doctrinal position of the Synod had been adopted. It seemed that the Hauge Synod

had now taken a different stand. The deliberations of the committees were to be continued on October 16, 1906.

Dr. Koren also reported the following:

People have asked how the committee of the Synod could allow itself to be partaker in deliberations where Dr. F. A. Schmidt would be a partaker. People saw an inconsistency on the part of the Synod when it did this. But Dr. Koren did not think so. As formerly had been stated some years ago, said Dr. Koren, we thought that Dr. Schmidt might have changed his manner of carrying on controversy. But then a colloquy had been held with the men of the United Church and Dr. Schmidt was present among them. He issued a report of the deliberations although the member of the joint committee had agreed that none should be given until the matter under consideration was finished at the next meeting. Dr. Schmidt's report and its contents showed that he was carrying on controversy in the same manner as before. Then the Synod's Church Council declared that they considered his unfair action to be a hindrance even to coming to an understanding and that there ought not to be any more conferring with him. This was the occasion of an appeal directed to us that we should deliver proofs of his dishonesty. These proofs were presented by the Church Council and the Synod's theological professors in a carefully worded pamphlet entitled "Traits of Dr. Schmidt's Conduct" ("Træk af Dr. Schmidts Færd"). After a long time there came an answer from the committee of the United Church. We regarded this answer as really saying nothing except that what we counted as unfair and not permissible, the United Church's committee called permissible. Then there came the invitation from the Hauge Synod that the three church bodies should confer. The Synod wanted these deliberations since

the Hauge Synod had never taken part in the deliberations that were aimed at unity with other church bodies. Our Synod knew that it was likely that Dr. Schmidt would come to take part in the deliberations. So the question was: Should we on this account refuse to be along. We knew that we had been and were right when we refused to deliberate with him, but since we regarded it as our duty to confer with the Hauge Synod, we chose rather to listen to Dr. Schmidt than to be deprived of the opportunity to listen to the spokesmen of the Hauge Synod.

1907

This was a year in which the Districts of the Synod held their conventions. The Eastern District met in La Crosse, Wisconsin, May 30 to June 5, 1906. Pres. A. K. Sagen had died on February 9 that year, and the Vice-president, Pastor J. Nordby of Lee, Illinois, stepped into the office of District President. He was now 54 years of age and had graduated from Concordia Seminary in 1876.

President Nordby reported that from his death bed President Sagen had sent him this message: "Tell the pastors that they must be diligent." In his Report the previous year, Pres. Sagen had given the clergy the following testimonial of appreciation:

Maintaining the right view of the Word as the unfailling and sure foundation for the church's preservation and the salvation of souls is due, next after God, to our pastors' continued faithful work for the edification of the congregation on the basis of the Prophets and Apostles, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. This work that most of our pastors do under sacrifice and hard, untiring labor so as to build up their hearers unto true

Christianity in confession and life and to bring them to God deserves our undivided respect and admiration. With them it is not a question of favor or disfavor, of gain or loss, of appreciation or lack of it, but the truth of the Word is everything to them, and with wisdom and patience, under good report or evil, they seek to impress it upon the hearts of the people among whom they have been placed as watchmen. This testimony is true; and it ought to fill our hearts with thanks to God that it is true. The more that I as a watchman for our District have gotten an insight into the work of our pastors for the edification of our congregation in the truth and preservation from error the more it has become apparent to me what a pious, diligent and faithful clergy we have.

For us of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod it is interesting to note that the Report of the Eastern District mentions two pastors who later were along in the re-organization of the Synod in 1918, and it says of them that they had been ordained the year previous: Rev. John Moldstad was ordained in Chicago on July 15, 1906, by Pastor G. A. Gullixson, and Rev. Holden M. Olsen was ordained in Madison by Pastor R. O. Brandt on August 5, 1906.

Deliberation with Other Lutheran Church Bodies

In 1907 the districts in their conventions, one after the other, passed resolutions encouraging the continuance of the meetings of the committees of the Synod, the Hauge Synod, and the United Church. Also the Pacific District passed such a resolution. It reads as follows:

As to the deliberations with other church bodies, Pacific District wishes to express

its gratification at the fact that it has been possible to continue these deliberations, and we approve of the decision of the delegates to continue.

However, there developed quite a discussion about this at the Pacific District Convention, and it was carried on in the English language. There was one member of the District who voiced a word of warning. It was Rev. B. Harstad who referred to the Bible passage, Titus 3, 10: "An heretic person reject, having admonished him once or twice." He also quoted Acts 19 where it is stated that St. Paul parted his disciples from the opponents when they began to speak evil of that doctrine. The other side of this discussion kept referring to it that it was the Hauge Synod that had issued the invitation, even though the United Church was also there with its committee and Dr. Schmidt among them. Dr. Koren said: "Our opponents know that they cannot move us." (Page 167) He also said: "I am against Dr. Schmidt and will have nothing to do with him, and for that reason I am not a member of that committee. Now I have the hope that he in the future will not take part in the conferences. But the word that rules me in this connection is this: Be ready always to give answer to every man that asks of you a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." Then Pastor Harstad asked the question: "Do you believe that they ask us to confer with them because they want to listen and find out what our confession is?" And Dr. Koren answered: "I have no right to doubt that. If there were any danger that those people would believe we were unionistic, then I would shut my mouth, but I do not think there is any danger of that."

Rev. Harstad:

What is the reason that our Church Council passed a resolution not to meet provided Dr. Schmidt was present as a delegate, and yet they have met? Though the United Church knew the position that the Synod took, still they went to work and elected Dr. Schmidt. Do we not put you in a doubtful position by sanctioning this? And then, do you really meet these delegates with the understanding that they are meeting there as such in behalf of their church to discuss this doctrine because they desire your doctrine, or at least desire information from you on those topics? If you can prove that, then I yield. But you know, or at least I know, that from their official documents they declare and consider us as false prophets that should be rescued from perdition by these representatives and we are constantly treated as such, and therefore I applied these other passages because they meet us as opponents of these doctrines you discuss.

Reply of Prof. Brandt:

It appears that I have not been able to make it clear that the invitation that came to us was extended by Hauge's Synod. We had no invitation from the United Church. On this committee of the United Church was also Dr. Schmidt. We had the invitation from Hauge's Synod, and we accepted that invitation, and then the United Church was invited by Hauge's Synod, and we felt that we could not accept the invitation of Hauge's Synod without meeting also the committee of the United Church, but the fact that we accepted the invitation extended by Hauge's Synod puts a different light on our relation to Dr. Schmidt.

1908

President Koren's Synodical address at the 29th Convention of the Norwegian Synod in Our Savior's Church, Chicago, in June of 1908, was in the form of a treatise on THE INSPIRATION OF HOLY SCRIPTURE. He wanted this address to be considered as his testament to the Synod. The entire address has been translated into English and is printed in TRUTH UNCHANGED, UNCHANGING, pages 145 to 166.

Greetings and Response

Pastor A. C. Franck, a delegate of the German Missouri Synod, brought a hearty brotherly greeting from his church body and expressed the wish for God's rich grace and blessing upon the Synod. In a longer communication to the Synod (in Norwegian) he called to mind that this year it was 50 years since the Norwegian Synod, through its two delegates, Pastors Ottesen and Koren, came to the convention of the Missouri Synod at Ft. Wayne and entered into fellowship of faith with the German Synod. He spoke of the great blessings this fellowship had brought about for both church bodies. Dr. Stub, the acting chairman, thanked on behalf of Dr. Koren and the Synod and the Synod expressed its agreement by rising.

From the annual meeting of the United Church the Synod received the following telegraphic greeting:

The annual convention of the United Norwegian Lutheran Church of America sends greetings to the Synod of the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. We thank God for His blessings upon you in the past, and we pray Him to continue these blessings in the future.

J. C. Roseland, Secretary

The following answer was adopted and sent by the Synod:

The Norwegian Lutheran Synod, in convention assembled, has received your kind greetings, and thanks you heartily. We also ask God for His rich blessings upon you, for His honor, and for the welfare of His church. With best greetings in behalf of the Synod.

J. Nordby, Secretary

On the occasion of this action of the Synod the following statement was delivered to the Synod:

The undersigned feel obliged to express to the Synod the regret over it that the answer to the friendly greeting from the United Church was accepted without any opportunity being given for discussion either concerning its contents or the form, and that the answer, in the form it was sent, did not, besides the wish for God's blessing over the United Church, give expression to the hope that the last deliberations have awakened in us that the United Church will no longer fight against the truth that we confess or lay hindrances in the way of our church work.

Respectfully,

Laur. Larsen

O. M. Holden

V. Koren

G. A. Gullixson

K. Bjørgo

L. P. Jensen

L. C. Foss

T. Rosholdt

B. Harstad

The Hauge Synod also sent a friendly greeting from its annual meeting in Red Wing, but it arrived the day after the close of the convention. The secretary wrote Pres. Eastvold and expressed the Synod's hearty joy and thanks.

New District Created

At this convention it was resolved to divide the Minnesota District into two districts, thus creating what came to be called the Northwestern District in addition to the Minnesota District.

1909

Speaking before the convention of the Minnesota District at Glenwood, Minnesota, in June 1909, District President K. Bjørgo said:

Unionistic tendencies show themselves at many places, both in older and younger congregations, and that most of all in many of the older ones, and especially in cities.... More and more, one hears expressions that it is not so important what one believes and confesses if one only means it well, has the Bible, wants to worship God and wants to go to heaven. One must not be so entirely sure of one's own faith and not so unloving and unneighborly.... All controversy and testimony against false doctrine should be stopped, or at least be carried on so that no one feels offended or that it hits him, etc.... This unionism of our time and carelessness with regard to faith and confession I view as one of the greatest dangers that in the future threatens our Lutheran Church and also our Synod and our congregations and pastors. We are children of the times and we will therefore easily be influenced by the spirit of the times if we do not stand on guard by continual prayer and calling upon God....

Let us also be on guard against sinful desire for union. As real Christians we shall work and pray for a right and God-pleasing unity

of faith and confession.... That will be the case only if we stand fast and immovable in the Lord's truth, avoid and flee from all error, even the seeming small error, and in word and deed confess our faith and avoid church fellowship with those who we know depart from the truth in any point. In this way we shall also confess our Savior, and then He will also confess us before men.... Then the right God-pleasing oneness of spirit will arise, and from that will flow the right and lasting union that will not easily be broken again.

The deliberations of the committees of our Synod, the Hauge Synod and the United Church have continued also this year and shall be continued in the future. May God rule and bend their hearts who are to deliberate in these meetings so that they, with His help, can reach forward to the unity of spirit on the basis of truth without giving up anything of that faith which is entrusted to the saints and that is clearly revealed in God's Word.

The convention of the Pacific District was held in Seattle, Washington, July 1 to 7, 1909. The Report states the following:

Even though there is not any public report of the results of the last meeting of the committees of the Hauge Synod, United Church, and the Synod, the Pacific District heartily recommends continued deliberations.

This recommendation was accepted after Pastor Harstad, Pastor Grønsberg and Dr. Stub had spoken in the matter, and the debate was cut off. Rev. Blaekkan stated that he wanted to register a protest under his name that the debate was cut off

before those with whom it was a matter of conscience had gotten permission to express themselves. Pastor Harstad asked that it be added to the minutes that he voted against the recommendation of the committee and protested against the kind of action that was accorded this matter.

1910

The districts of the Synod had their conventions in 1910. But the Second Part of the Report of 1910 consists of matters that pertain to the entire Synod. In this section President Koren has a rather brief Report, and we quote only a few sentences from it.

It is well known to most of the members of the Synod that I have been ill during this synodical year. My sickness is 'angina pectoris'. It has hindered me from taking part in meetings, and at these the vice-president, Dr. Stub, has functioned for me. I have been able, however, to take care of some of my correspondence. It had been my desire to greet the Synod conventions with a synodical address. Its contents should have been an accounting of the meaning of the offices of the president concerning which, I understand, there is considerable unclearness.

Then there is a Report from the Union Committees of the Norwegian Synod, the Hauge's Synod and the United Church, pages 82 to 94. To this we now address ourselves.

Report of the Committees of the Norwegian Synod,
Hauge Synod and the United Church, Appointed to
Deliberate Concerning the Matter of Union

At the meeting of these committees on April 7, 1908, it was agreed that they should meet November 10 to 13, 1908. The matter of deliberation then

would be "Election." A sub-committee, consisting of Prof. Stub, Prof. J. N. Kildahl, and Rev. M. G. Hanson, was asked to present points concerning this matter to this meeting.

November 10 - 13, 1908

The sub-committee reported that it had not been able to agree on a common statement and therefore presented two sets of Points: One by Dr. Stub (ten Points), the other by Dr. Kildahl (seven Points). These are printed in the 1910 Synod Report, 2nd Part, page 82 f. Besides these, there are also four Points by Prof. Bøckman.

In his Point No. 10, Dr. Stub included the statement that the dogmaticians of the 17th Century use the Second Form of the doctrine of Election which limits Election to that act of God by which He has appointed all those to eternal life in whose case He has foreseen that they would remain steadfast in faith unto their end. And Dr. Stub added: "But there can be unity of faith when this is understood in the way it is set forth by John Gerhard." Then Dr. Stub quotes a paragraph from John Gerhard, Loc. de electione, paragraph 61. We here give a translation of Dr. Stub's Norwegian rendition of the Latin of Gerhard:

The merit of Christ is the cause of our Election; but since Christ's merit does not truly benefit anyone without faith, therefore we say that regard for faith is included in the decree of election. With loud voice we confess that we teach that God has not found anything good in man that he should be elected unto eternal life, that He has not taken reference either to good works, or to the use of free will, yes, what is more, not even to faith itself in this way that He thereby has

been moved or that He on account of it has elected some; but we say that it is solely and alone the merit of Christ whose worthiness God has taken into consideration, and that He out of pure grace has made the decree of election. Yet, since Christ's merit has no place in man except by faith, therefore we teach that election has taken place in view of Christ's merit which is to be accepted by faith. Consequently we say that all those, and only those, are elected by God in eternity unto salvation concerning whom He has foreseen that they, by the working of the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the Gospel, will come truly to believe in Christ the Savior and continue steadfast in faith until life's end.

Dr. Kildahl's Point No. 7 included a statement of the Second Form, but said nothing about understanding it in the way John Gerhard expresses it.

When they voted as to which list of Points should be made the basis of discussion, the vote was tied between Stub's and Kildahl's Points. The chairman decided the question in favor of Dr. Stub's Points, and these came under consideration. Not much progress was made, and it was resolved to continue the deliberations at the next meeting.

Meeting March 30 to April 2, 1909

For two days they discussed Dr. Stub's Point No. 3. In the afternoon of April 1, it was decided to go over to Point 4, and this was discussed the rest of the meeting. It was resolved to meet again November 2 - 5, 1909.

Meeting November 2 - 5, 1909

The committee of the United Church set forth the following: "Since it has been seen that we cannot come to agreement on the basis of these Theses, we make the motion that we make Question 548 of TRUTH UNTO GODLINESS ("Sandhed til Gudfrygtighed") the basis for the deliberations at the next meeting.

It was resolved that a sub-committee be formed, and if this committee comes to agreement, then a new meeting will be held.

Resolved that the full committee shall not meet if this sub-committee does not come to agreement.

Resolved that the sub-committee consist of three members.

Resolved that each church body's committee elect its representative.

Resolved that we meet March 29 to April 1, 1910.

Resolved that the Norwegian Synod's representative on the sub-committee call the meeting.

Meeting March 29, 1910

Dr. Stub announced that the sub-committee had not come to agreement concerning a common set of Points but presented three sets, one by Dr. Stub, one by Dr. Bøckman, and one by Pres. Eastvold.

Resolved that Dr. Stub's summoning of the committee for a meeting be sanctioned.*

*In Kirketidende, 1911, page 342, we have Dr. Stub's explanation why he called the meeting. It is this:

Dr. Stub called the committee together in order that they should come to agreement about a report to the annual conventions, NOT FOR DOCTRINAL DISCUSSION. The United Church committee said the words "for doctrinal discussion" are not found in the minutes and therefore they denied the

correctness of Dr. Stub's presentation. Dr. Stub then asked Pres. Eastvold of the Hauge Synod about this. Pres. Eastvold declared: "It was clearly understood at the November meeting that we should not continue with the doctrinal discussions if the sub-committee could not come in with a common presentation, but that we nevertheless should meet in order to agree about a report to the annual meeting."

Since only two members of the committee of the Hauge Synod were present, namely, Pres. Eastvold and Pastor Mortvedt, these two men thought that it was not appropriate now to take up Pres. Eastvold's Points for consideration.

Prof. Kildahl voiced a protest that they could not get to vote on Pres. Eastvold's Theses.

It was moved and seconded that all the Minutes be publicized as a report to the annual conventions and that the report wait upon these.

Signed by: E. Kr. Johnsen,
O. E. Brandt, E. Eastvold

Prof. Kildahl recommended that we go over to doctrinal discussion with Eastvold's list of Theses as the basis of discussion.

At the afternoon session the following declaration was presented: The committee of the Norwegian Synod holds fast to the unanimous resolution of the entire committee in November (1909) that: If the so-called sub-committee cannot come with a common declaration of doctrine, there will not be any meeting of the entire committee for doctrinal deliberations. In the meantime the committee will report to the church body and await its declaration concerning how far it will ask for continued meetings after the deliberations that now have been held over a longer period of time about Election

and Certainty of Salvation. This was signed by H. G. Stub, Joh. Ylvisaker, O. E. Brandt, A. Mikkelsen, O. P. Vangsnes.

Reaction of the District Conventions
of the Norwegian Synod

At the meeting of the five districts of the Synod in 1910, all agreed to the following resolutions:

1. The Synod recommends that the committee for church unity continue its work as long as it can see any hope of unity on the basis of the truth being attained.
2. The Synod declares itself agreed with the doctrine of Election as presented by the members of our committee in the printed Theses.
3. The Synod also gives expression to the statement that the two Forms of the Doctrine of Election, as set forth in the Lutheran Church's confession and by John Gerhard, should not be divisive of church fellowship, and will very much deplore it if such should happen.
4. The Synod encourages unto prayer to the end that God will bless the work in behalf of church unity among us.

Final Meeting of the Three Committees, Dec. 13, 1910

The Synod's committee asked the committee of the United Church for proofs that the Synod's Theses contained un-Biblical and un-Lutheran doctrine, as Pres. Dahl had asserted before his church in 1910.

The Synod's reasons for this request were declared to be "unchristian," "the most wretched thing one had ever heard." And the Synod's Theses were characterized as hiding places for Calvinism. One speaker even thanked God that he had had the opportunity to brand our reasons as unchristian.

The Synod Convention in 1911

The 30th Regular Convention of the Norwegian Synod was held in Central Presbyterian Church, St. Paul, Minnesota, beginning on Friday, June 23, 1911. Pastor O. J. Kvale of Orfordville, Wisconsin, preached the opening sermon. The hymn-singing was led by a choir of 1100 voices, directed by Prof. John Dahle and accompanied by Luther College Band under the direction of Prof. Carlo Sperati. That same afternoon Zion Lutheran Church in North Minneapolis, Rev. Christian Anderson, pastor, was dedicated. The preacher was Dr. H. G. Stub.

President U. V. Koren had died on December 19, 1910, lacking only three days of being 84 years of age. He had been president of the Iowa District from 1876 till 1894, and president of the Synod from 1894 till his death in 1910.

Dr. H. G. Stub, as vice-president, now took over as president of the Synod. In his Report Dr. Stub gave a brief account of Dr. Koren's life and work, and also reported concerning his last illness, death, and burial. Dr. Koren's mortal remains were laid to rest in the church yard of Washington Prairie Lutheran Church, near Decorah, Iowa. Of him, Dr. Stub said: "May our Synod not forget what a gift God gave us in him who after 57 years of tireless work as one of our pioneer pastors and as a champion "in doctrine" and "in

the care for the congregation and the Synod" was granted to enter into the eternal rest."

In the Report we also read this statement: "As the Synod's representative I was present at the great Walther Festival in St. Louis, Commemorating the 100th anniversary of Walther's birth. Professors Ylvisaker and C. K. Preus and several other pastors of our Synod were also present."

Dr. Stub's Report concerning the Union Matter.

That which for a long time has taken hold of our minds is the work that has as its goal to bring about understanding and unity in doctrine between the Hauge Synod, the United Church, and the Synod. That it would be a great thing if the three bodies could come to an understanding and acknowledge each other as brethren in the faith, even if there were no outward union, is self-said. That the committee of the Synod has gone as far as one could expect of it is acknowledged by the other side. We read in Lutheraner for December 14, 1910: "The Norwegian Synod's representatives have, without doubt, gone halfway in order to extend the hand of brotherhood." In a longer series of articles in Kirketidende under the title "What Stands in the Way of Work toward Church Union among Us?" I have established the truth of this saying, and have also shown that the United Church's committee, by its conduct, has driven us out of the deliberations. This is so because not only did the United Church's president Dahl, in his statement to the annual meeting of the United Church last year, say that the theses that we had presented and considered -- to whose doctrinal content all our districts confessed agreement last summer -- "contain certain teachings about Election which

the United Church's committee could not with a good conscience accept as Biblical and Lutheran doctrine," but at the colloquy that was held after the annual meetings, the United Church's committee refused to deliver the proof for this that we asked for, and also refused to make the consideration of this the first object of deliberation before one went over to anything else. In addition to President Dahl's judgment now came also several of the committee members' judgment of them as Calvinistic or Calvinizing doctrine. Our request for proof for this accusation was declared to be "unchristian." They thanked God for the opportunity they had had to stamp our stand as unchristian. Our committee leaves it to impartial men to decide whether we were not driven out of the deliberations by the conduct of the United Church toward us.*

*In Kirketidende 1911, page 374, Dr. Stub quotes some competent theologians who express their judgment of the Synod's (Dr. Stub's) theses concerning Election as follows:

Dr. Weidner of Chicago University finds them to be.

"Scriptural and strictly Confessional."

Dr. Jacobs of Philadelphia, the most renowned theologian in the English Lutheran Church in America, says of them:

"They appear to me to be correctly and judiciously stated."

"If I were to publish the theses I would add a sentence directing the attention to the fact, that while 'ituitu fidei', as understood by Gerhard, is not to be repudiated, nevertheless on account of

the very serious errors that may hide beneath it--especially from Arminianism--it is not a satisfactory statement, and should be avoided."

The document which the United Church's committee has presented as proof for its judgment of us is a striking expression of the old fanaticism. The three chief points are essentially these:

1. All believers, whether they continue steadfast in the faith or not, are elect unto salvation.
2. The mystery in the doctrine of conversion and election we have mastered.
3. While we formerly accused the Norwegian Synod of making people secure and certain in that they taught an absolute certainty of salvation and election, we have now changed our front in this matter in that we declare that the Norwegian Synod, by its doctrine of Election, makes people uncertain with regard to salvation.

In his report to the United Church's annual meeting, Pres. Dahl has had the audacity to say in view of the treatment we have complained of: "It is difficult to see how the committee of the United Church could show more consideration over toward the committee of the Norwegian Synod." And it is peculiar that Pres. T. H. Dahl, after such a judgment, was unanimously reelected president of the United Church without a rival candidate.

But in spite of this, we have many testimonies to the effect that a great many both of the pastors and of the lay people in reality have

overruled Pres. Dahl's judgment. The testimony 17 pastors recently gave shows this. Pastors in the United Church have both written to me and told me that they could subscribe to our Theses.

And during the consideration of the Union matter at the convention of the United Church there were many strong testimonials that bespoke the need to come to an understanding with the Norwegian Synod, according to reliable witnesses. Also, a new committee was elected to confer with the synods that might be willing to confer with them, namely Pastors Tangjerd of Eau Claire, Wisconsin, Gerhard Rasmussen from Harmony, Minnesota, S. Gunderson from Mt. Horeb, Wisconsin, H. Engh from Black River Falls, and M. H. Hegge from Stoughton.

On behalf of myself I will say that it would never occur to me to feel slighted if the Synod would decide to continue the deliberations with a new committee. I know that none of my fellow committee members would view this side of the matter differently than I. Both out of concern for our own Synod and for the United Church I think that also our Synod should elect a new committee. Personally, I am assured of it that we, in our Synod, have so many competent powers, both older and younger, that I would not have the least scruple about letting them take up the deliberations. It shall not be said truthfully concerning the Norwegian Synod that it has not been willing to try everything in order to come to understanding, if possible.

Another matter is this: How we shall consider the situation as regards the Hauge Synod representatives. They have always shown themselves as "Gentlemen" toward us, and not only that.

They have never expressed themselves as being against our Theses. Pastor Eastvold declared expressly that his Theses should not be theses in opposition to ours. Indirectly, one could perhaps say that they had declared themselves against us by declaring that after the vote on Pastor Eastvold's Theses it was said that they did not consider themselves disagreed with the United Church. Under these circumstances it might seem best to negotiate separately with the two committees, and that so much the more as the old committee still stands for the Hauge Synod, but without any special mandate about negotiating the doctrine with us or with the United Church's committee. May the Lord give wisdom and grace to hit upon that which is right.

Greetings from the United Church

The following message was received from the United Church:

St. Paul, Minn., June 23, 1911

Highly Honored People:

It is witnessed hereby that Pastor A. Ofstedal has been elected by the annual convention of the United Church in St. Paul, Minnesota, June 15 - 22, to bring to the Norwegian Synod's annual convention our church's brotherly greeting.

On behalf of the annual convention,
Jens C. Roseland, Sec.

This Pastor A. Ofstedal was of the age of 55 years, had attended Luther College for four years, and had graduated from the Synod's seminary in 1881. He had followed the Anti-Missourians out of the Synod and into the United Church. His greeting is as follows:

Honored Assembly! My humble person stands here before you as a representative from the United Church to bring you as representatives of the Norwegian Synod our church's greeting.

As we all know, there has, sorry to say, not been the most desirable understanding between us. But we are nevertheless come from the same root, from the same church home, and have taken with us the same inheritance, which is dear to us all, and which we eagerly have wanted to keep as well as we have understood it. As an expression of the fellow-feeling that animates us and on account of the great blessings we have in common, therefore it is that I bring this greeting from my church to you.

It is our prayer to the Lord, whom both churches eagerly want to serve, that He by His grace will wipe out that which might divide us.

And so I want to thank you for the opportunity you gave me to bring this greeting. Hearty thanks!

To this communication the president, Dr. Stub, answered:

At the same time as the Norwegian Synod understands how to value the feelings that have animated the United Church that has sent Pastor Ofstedal as representative, we of the Norwegian Synod cannot really understand how the United Church can send a brotherly greeting to us in the real sense of the word. I say, that we in the Norwegian Synod understand how to value the feelings that have elicited this greeting. But I would be unfaithful to my position and unfaithful to the truth we have sought to

assert if I did not say that I cannot understand how those in the United Church can send such a brotherly greeting to such a church body whose doctrine they declare to be un-Biblical and un-Lutheran.

We hope, in the meantime, that this greeting is a testimony and expression of a deep need to come to an understanding with the Norwegian Synod. And this we also have proof of in that they have set up a new committee to deal with us. And we in the Norwegian Synod are also animated by the spirit that we readily want to come to an understanding with those who belong to other Luthern church bodies here in this land. And we pray God that He will open hearts so that there can be a better approach to understanding what is taught in the different bodies, so that after awhile it may succeed so that we can meet as brethren on the foundation of truth and confession. And we hope that Pastor Ofstedal will let that church body which he represents know that we in the Norwegian Synod have been willing to negotiate with them and are so right now. And we hope that a better situation as regards our relations may come.

Action Concerning "The Union Matter"

The following resolutions were passed:

1. Concerning the union matter the Norwegian Synod expresses it as its genuine wish that the day may dawn when the Norwegian Lutheran Church people here in this land stand united and strong on the foundation of God's Word and the Lutheran Church's Confessions.

2. It expresses its recognition of the work that our committee has carried out and it would rather see this committee continue the work; but in order to show all consideration that does not contradict God's Word we, nevertheless, elect a new committee for continued deliberation with the designated church body.

Election of Officers

Of the 442 votes that were cast for the office of President, Dr. H. G. Stub received 372. The next highest was Prof. C. K. Preus, president of Luther College, with 22. The secretary was instructed to cast the vote of the assembly for Dr. Stub, and he was declared elected.

On the first ballot for vice-president, 412 votes were cast. The three receiving the highest number of votes were: Prof. C. K. Preus, 110; Rev. O. P. Vangsnes, 78; Prof. O. E. Brandt, 56.

The second ballot was limited to these three, with the result that Prof. Preus receive 176 votes; Rev. O. P. Vangsnes, 118; Prof. Brandt, 67. There were some votes also for others.

On the final ballot for vice-president, Prof. Preus received 206 votes and was declared elected.

Representative to the 100th Anniversary of the University of Norway

It was reported that in September, 1911, the University of Norway would be celebrating its 100th anniversary. From this University came the organizers of the Norwegian Synod and our sainted presidents: A. C. Preus, H. A. Preus, and V. Koren,

besides some of our earlier clergy. Luther College and St. Olaf College were invited to let themselves be represented on the occasion. The representative of St. Olaf College was to be Prof. Kildahl. Prof. C. K. Preus, president of Luther College, was designated by the faculties of Luther College and Luther Seminary, and also by the Church Council, as our representative.

Luther College celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1911. Thus it was only 50 years younger than the University of Norway.

-- Adolph M. Harstad

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-- The Managing Editor

THE COMMITTEE OF TEN AND TEN*

(Professor Reichwald, Questions 17 and 18 in my opinion have been already covered under Question 15. For that reason I gave no answer to these two questions.)

Question 18 reads: "What were the implications of the arguments made, i.e., fellowship, tolerance in doctrine, etc.?" No statements were made by the signers by which any false teachings on their part were clearly indicated or implied outside of the fact that they maintained that neither Romans 16:17-18 nor any other prohibitive passage on church fellowship forbids fellowship with persistent errorists who may be considered Christians. They also held and maintained to the end that there were teachings of Scriptures, clearly revealed doctrines, which are not divisive of church fellowship. However, their false exegesis of Romans 16:17 and their failure to produce any Bible passages which teach the Scriptural doctrine found in this passage resulted in the nullification of this teaching on their part. It thus became a doctrinal difference bound to result in the kind of liberal position on church fellowship maintained and practiced by the new church body called the AELC, which all or most of its men helped to organize in recent years. The principles expressed in A Statement were thus being put into practice, as one of the prominent signers of A Statement who was on their Committee of Ten stated several years ago in Chicago at a mass meeting held prior to the organization of this new church body.

*Continued from Vol. XIX, 4.

Question 19 reads: "Was there any disagreement among the men on your side? If so, in what way?" No disagreement was expressed, to my knowledge, during the meetings of the President's Committee by any members of that committee and in the sessions of the Ten and Ten. There was just one jarring incident when a member of the President's Committee suggested at a joint session of the two committees that, since we had apparently reached an impasse, the signers might merely be asked to apologize for the unrest caused by the appearance of A Statement. This suggestion was immediately rejected by members of both committees.

Question 20 reads: "Was there any disagreement among the men on the other side, or did they represent a unified position?" No disagreement was noticeable, though some of the signers, especially such men as Dr. Theodore Graebner, Pastor Kuechle, and Dr. Oswald Hoffmann (in the course of the discussions) made a few concessions to the orthodox position held through the years by the Missouri Synod. It might also be mentioned that on September 25 one of the signers made the motion to adopt Declaration No. 2 of the President's Committee which, in disagreement with Thesis Five of A Statement, set forth the Scriptural meaning of Romans 16:17-18. This motion was still pending at the close of the last meeting on November 15. This was not just necessary parliamentary procedure to get this matter on the floor, since a motion to place the declaration before the committees had already been made previously.

The only point of agreement, and a truly important point, acknowledged by the joint committees, was in the principle of Sola Scriptura as set forth in the eighth thesis of the document known by that name, and mentioned previously. All points declared to be points in controversy by A Statement

and the thirteen declarations directed toward them by the President's Committee remained such, until the end of the joint sessions on November 15, 1946.

Question No. 22 reads: "As the committees continued their joint meetings, were the points of disagreement recognized? What were they?" Everyone on both sides remained conscious to the very end of the sessions that the differences pinpointed by A Statement, as contrasted with the declarations by the President's Committee, were not removed in the twenty-three days on which the two committees met. It was also realized that with regard to the efforts made to remove these differences a true impasse had been reached. What these points of difference, or disagreement, were is set forth in the declarations of the President's Committee. I just wish to add this point that it was very important to our committee that the meetings of the joint sessions of the two committees were so described. Our committee was a committee by itself, and the committee of the signers of A Statement was a committee by itself. And the two committees therefore met as joint committees from time to time. It is for this reason that some few small changes in the wording of the questions are being made by me.

Question No. 23 reads: "Do you feel that the two committees of the Ten and Ten in joint session were making any progress? Were there meaningful clarifications, or was there an obvious impasse?" The sessions of the two committees of the Ten and Ten served a most important and necessary purpose in pinpointing the differences which had come up, and in bringing to light which statements and principles of Scripture had been violated by the declarations espoused in A Statement. The signers of

this document offered no clarification which might have made A Statement more palatable to the truly orthodox. It was clearly a case in which an impasse had been reached, as members of the praesidium emphasized to the President's Committee shortly before the "Agreement" with the signers was put into operation by which this document was to be withdrawn but not retracted.

Question No. 24 reads: "How did these points of difference contrast with the historical theological position of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod?" Although the Declaration of the President's Committee did not use the orthodox declarations of the Missouri Synod on the points under discussion as proof, but went directly to Scripture, it did seek to defend synod against several unjust accusations on doctrinal matters made by the signers of A Statement. The President's Committee consistently took a position in these matters which coincided with the one that synod had always held.

Question No. 25 reads: "What did your side of the committee do after the meetings ended?" After the "Agreement" was announced by Dr. Behnken, this committee requested a meeting at which they protested strongly to this procedure as a serious disservice done to synod and to the cause of orthodoxy. Assuming full responsibility for any harmful results for this joint agreement with the signers of A Statement, President Behnken very curtly and sharply dismissed his committee members. The members of the President's Committee called to his attention the fact that Romans 16:17 was like a divinely placed dike to hold back the forces of false doctrine or assist in that respect, and that now that we had reached an agreement not to retract but only to withdraw what he had previously declared to be false doctrine, that this would open the dikes for all manner of false teaching.

History has shown that this was the way in which the matter turned out. In fact, it was not too many years later that Dr. Behnken himself directed a series of questions to the St. Louis faculty with regard to the teachings which had by that time become much worse and spread more widely than during the time of A Statement. He received no satisfaction whatsoever from those to whom those questions were directed.

Question No. 26 reads: "What conclusions had your committee arrived at?" We were agreed with the praesidium of synod, as well as apparently also with the signers of A Statement, that a true impasse had been reached and that further discussions on this level would very possibly be fruitless.

Question No. 27 reads: "Did your committee have any official results?" If by "official" is meant whether the Missouri Synod in session declared agreement with the position expressed in the thirteen declarations of the President's Committee, the answer would have to be "No." However, if by "official" were meant the agreement of the praesidium as elected representatives of synod, the answer would have to be "Yes," since this official body (the praesidium of the Missouri Synod) never wavered in declaring its hearty agreement with the declarations of the President's Committee and the latter's rejection of A Statement as containing false doctrine. This remained true also after the "Agreement" had been reached between them and the signers.

Question No. 28 reads: "Why did President Behnken not continue the work of your committee?" The "Agreement" itself states reasons for its existence and issuance. It states in part:

"The longer discussions of this matter are drawn out, especially if the basis of the discussion is not understood by all participants in the same sense, the greater looms the danger of misunderstanding and the injection of personalities, temperaments, personal experience, and emotions where calm judgment should prevail." That these were not intended as implied criticisms of the sessions of the Committee of Ten and Ten that had already been held is borne out by the fact that Dr. Behnken stated to synod's clergy, "It should be said that a fine brotherly spirit characterized the meeting." "The meetings of the Ten and Ten have not been terminated because of any clash of personalities." This is from the meeting of the praesidium and the President's Committee on January 17, 1947.

Question No. 29 reads: "Had there been any results from the work of your committee even though its work was cut short?" Before the "Agreement" was reached, the President's Committee had asked for and received authorization to prepare and mail to all pastors of synod a summary of the meetings of the Ten and Ten, it being suggested by them that the signers of A Statement should be authorized to do the same. This report, with the discussion on Romans 16:17-18 carefully detailed and summarized, was prepared at Fort Wayne by Dr. S. Bente and the secretary of the President's Committee and later on adopted by the entire committee. However, while the details were being worked out with the praesidium, the issuance of the "Agreement" brought this proposed project to an end.

However, special efforts were made by a large group of conservatives, ordinarily meeting in Oak Park, Illinois, to disseminate the pertinent facts, including this summary of the discussion

and meetings as prepared by the committee of the President, as well as an informative brochure entitled "Do you Know?" and other printed and mimeographed material. As a result many of the well-informed readers began to express their orthodox position in these matters at conferences, district conventions, and in religious magazines and papers. Most importantly, many pastors were now able to fully inform their congregations about the doctrinal situation in synod.

Question 30 reads: "When the work of your committee was stopped, did your committee attempt anything further to publicize its efforts and findings?" After the President of synod had dismissed his committee on A Statement, and thus disbanded it, a Memorial to the General Convention of Synod in Chicago, meeting on July the 20-29, 1947, was prepared and signed by ten of the thirteen members and alternates of the President's Committee. It refers to the declaration by the presidency and the signers that sentences in A Statement which if understood in the sense which the words ordinarily convey contain potentially divisive errors, were not so intended by the signers. It mentioned five such statements. Thereupon the Memorial set forth five basic declarations on Church Fellowship, requesting synod to express agreement. If adopted by Synod these doctrinal pronouncements could have served as the basis for dealing with instances of false doctrine which might arise in the future. The answer given by synod to this Memorial by-passed these requests, bearing out what was well known to everyone; namely, that A Statement had been withdrawn as a basis for discussion, failing to understand that the synod was thus by-passing the very reason why this Memorial had been presented.

Individually, the members of the disbanded committee also participated in discussions at Pastoral Conferences of theses which came from the President's office on "The Church," "Romans 16:17-18," "The Fellowship Theses," and others. But even as the "Sola Scriptura" theses prepared by the Ten and Ten settled nothing because of the refusal to apply these principles to the basic passages on church fellowship, so also did these other guidelines fail to bring about doctrinal unity in synod. When at the Northern Illinois pastoral conference, at which the president of synod was present as a member, the theses sent out by him were declared by an essayist to contain false doctrine, there was no reply from the president who had issued the theses, even though he was specifically asked by the chairman whether he had anything to say in his own defense. Also, the guideline on Romans 16:17-18, prepared at the instigation of the president of synod then by the St. Louis Seminary faculty, was found unacceptable by the Springfield Seminary faculty, giving expression to the disunity at Missouri Theological seminaries at that time. In the discussion that ensued in all parts of synod, the former members of the President's Committee who had made such a careful study of all the issues, were often able to take the leading part. Thus a former initial co-author of the Sola Scriptura theses in carrying out an assignment of his district president prepared an essay in which these theses were applied to the basic passages on church fellowship and thus on the teachings of church fellowship itself. After several years the paper was finally "Adopted with Thanks" but with an explanation by the liberal-minded makers and supporters of that motion that they did not mean that the pastoral conference was thereby accepting the doctrinal content of the essay.

Question No. 31 reads: "While you may hesitate to pass judgment, do you see any relationship in the problems faced by President J.A.O. Preuss of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod today and those meetings in which you took part?" In comparing the two situations 30 years apart it is possible, speaking subjectively, to note both similarities and differences. If at the end of the Ten and Ten meetings, having reached an impasse, the guidelines in synod's handbook had been followed lovingly but firmly, there is a good possibility that this liberal movement would have been halted. This would possibly have made unnecessary the action which took place 30 years later. The loss to the synod membership in the first instance would possibly have been minimal since the liberal movement was not as widespread as later on. Also, while doctrines involved in 1946 were almost exclusively connected with Church Fellowship, many new and perhaps more far-reaching ones were involved 30 years later. At the same time, in agreement with the scriptural declaration that false doctrine, if not combated and removed, spreads very quickly, the number involved in the exodus in the seventies was comparatively much larger than might have been envisioned if matters had been handled properly according to scriptural requirements and the synod's constitution three decades earlier.

The last question, No. 32, reads: "Do you have any further comments you might want to make?" While serving on the President's Committee was at times very difficult because of pressing obligations to congregation and synod, and at times also discouraging, yet it was a real privilege for me to have served, and it brought blessings to me. Having just accepted a call to a congregation of about 800 communicants and being called upon to preach in both languages every Sunday and at the same time serve on this committee of the President, it was certainly not easy but it made me study

Scripture and the rules of Greek grammar more carefully. But above all it made me appreciate our remarkable Bible and its many truths, especially and above all the Gospel of God's love in Christ Jesus our Savior revealed to me in God's Word. My mind and heart echoes its heartfelt assent and agreement through a closing statement made by my cousin, Dr. O. P. Kretzmann, at the end of our sessions, that since leaving the seminary he had never learned as much as at these meetings and that it was like a postgraduate course in theology to him. Those were exactly my sentiments. My involvement in this doctrinal controversy has helped to impress upon me also the importance of heeding the reminder: "We Missourians consider a church body, as a body, orthodox only when the pure doctrine is proclaimed from all pulpits and professors' chairs and in all writings that become public within the communion and when, on the other hand, every erroneous teaching is stopped in the manner prescribed by God as soon as it makes its appearance. If it were shown us that even but one pastor were preaching false doctrine or that even but one periodical were in the service of false doctrine and we would not put a stop to this false doctrine, we would thereby have been ceased to be an orthodox synod and would have been a unionistic fellowship." Dr. F. Pieper in Lehre und Wehre, 36, 261f.

So also our Lutheran Confessions in the prefix to the Book of Concord, Triglotta, page 25, state: "We will also take pains, if either controversy concerning religion should arise, to remove and settle them betimes (without delay) for the purpose of avoiding offense, without long and dangerous digression." "Prove all things; hold that fast which it would." I Thess. 5:21.

-- A. T. Kretzmann to
Prof. G. E. Reichwald

CORRECTIONS

Vol. XX, No. 2:

- p. 37: 1st paragraph after title, 1.5,
read "since" instead of "in"
- p. 43: Paragraph 3, 1.3,
read "sweat" for "spend"

bottom line,
read "from" for "than"
- P. 45: Paragraph 3, 1.7,
read "dissolve" for "solve"

Vol. XIX, No. 4, p. 43:

Readers have very likely discovered another misprint on their own in the top paragraph relative to the quotation from Jeremiah.

1.3, read "negligently" for "diligently"

The staff regrets that these mistakes were not detected before press time.