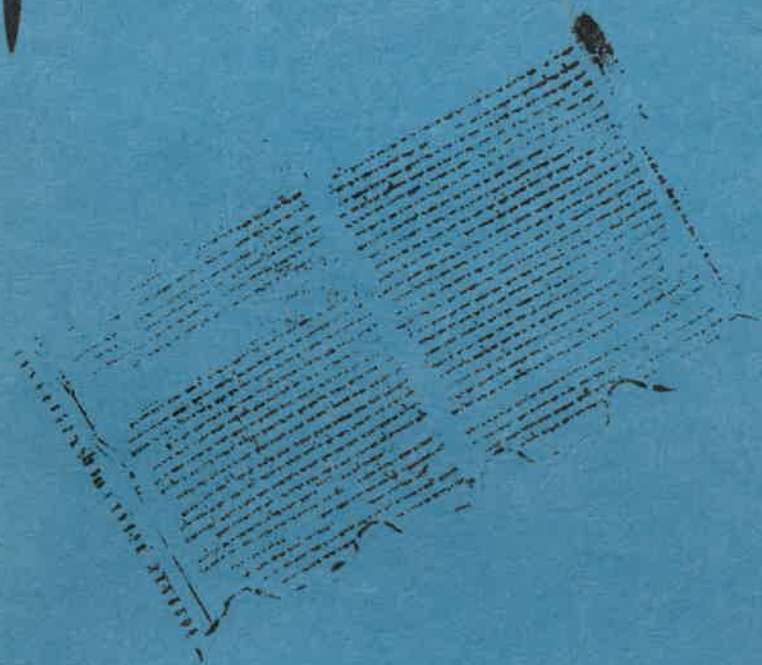


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## FOREWORD

The last issue of the Quarterly carried the announcement of Professor Milton Otto's death. A memorial service was held in the Bethany College Chapel on September 9th and we are including the sermon in this issue.

We also mentioned that on the last day of his life Professor Otto was proof reading a dissertation entitled A Lutheran Understanding of the Will and Providence of God by Dr. Ernest Bartels of Wahpeton, N.D. We are pleased to present the first three chapters in this issue. The rest will appear in subsequent issues.

Also included in this issue is an article by Dr. Neelak Tjernagel on The Augsburg Confession and the English Reformation which was delivered in the chapel on Thursday evening, November 4th, to a group of students, professors, pastors, and lay people. We were pleased to have Dr. Tjernagel at the seminary the first week in November when he lectured on the English Reformation. We are happy to share this article with you.

The next issue of the Quarterly will contain the lectures which were delivered at the annual Reformation Lectures on October 28-29 by Dr. Raymond Surburg of Concordia Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. They are entitled Luther and the Christology of the Old Testament.

We also take this opportunity to wish our readers a blessed Christmas and a truly happy New Year in the Name of the Christ Child in whom alone we have lasting peace and joy.

WWP

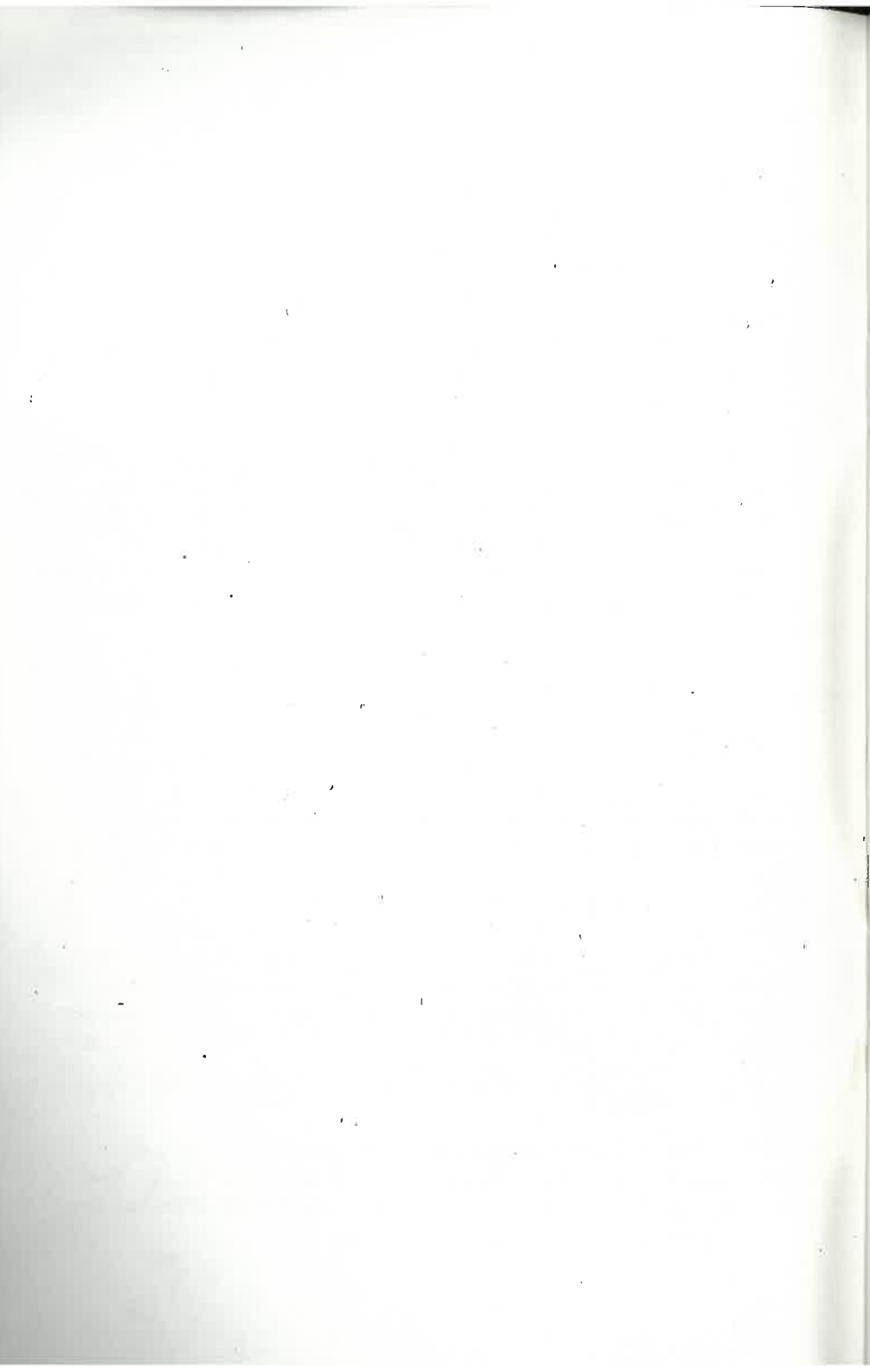


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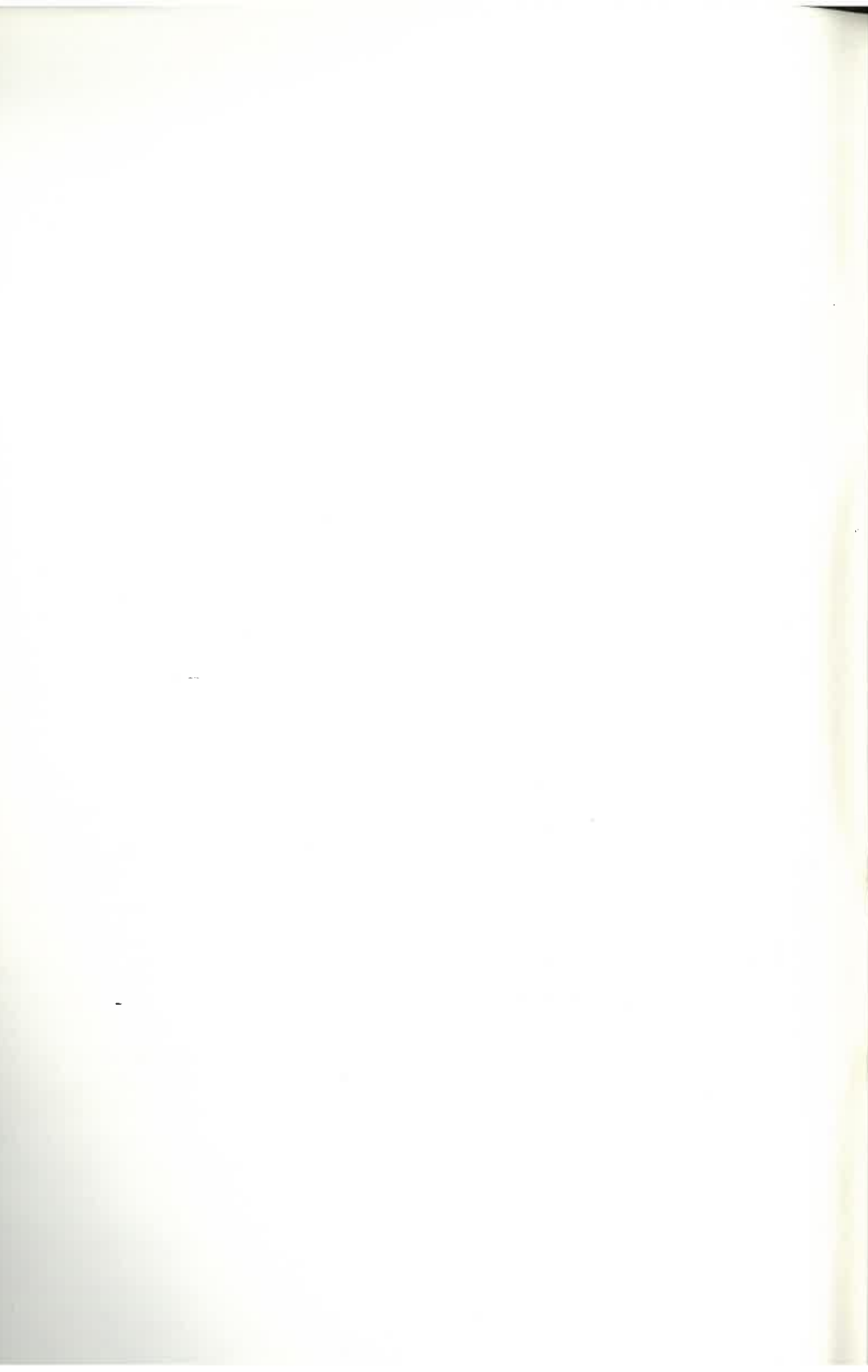
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Memorial Service for Professor Milton H. Otto

Bethany Chapel, September 9, 1982  
by W. W. Petersen, President of Bethany Lutheran  
Theological Seminary

FELLOW REDEEMED IN CHRIST:

Our chapel service today is in loving memory of Professor Milton H. Otto, who was closely associated with Bethany for twenty-five years. His call was to the seminary where he taught several courses and served as dean for many years. He also taught at the college and served as a frequent chapel speaker.

As a teacher at the seminary he exerted a wholesome influence on the students. He taught them how to preach sermons and they appreciated his pastoral approach to theology. He was always a Christian gentleman and was highly respected by his colleagues. He manned his post well and devoted himself to what he had been called to do. Two words that sum up his work are: faithful and loyal.

He suffered with emphysema the last years of his life and he bore this affliction with Christian fortitude. Though it curtailed his activities somewhat, he worked right up to the end. He had an iron will and refused to give up. He was up and around the last day of his life and was busy proof-reading material for our theological Quarterly. Shortly after midnight on August 20th he had an attack and as he was taken from his home to the ambulance he said to his wife, "I AM READY TO DIE." These were the last words he spoke and he died a peaceful death shortly after his arrival at the hospital.

Those last words "I AM READY TO DIE" echo the words of our text where St. Paul says, "For I am now ready

to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." Then he explains why he was ready: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." That faith which he kept was the faith which he had received as a gift of God, the faith which accepted the righteousness of Christ, that faith of which he wrote to Timothy: "I know whom I believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (II Tim. 1:12) The gracious God who had brought him to faith also preserved him in the faith.

Paul speaks of "the good fight" which he fought. No one knew better than he that keeping the faith was a fight. He daily contended with the enemies of his faith, the devil, the world, and the flesh. But the God of all grace gave him the necessary strength to overcome and win the victory.

Now as he approached his impending death he could say: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of life which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me." He uses athletic language, referring to the Grecian games, to describe the life of faith. First the course (the race), the fight (endurance) and finally the crown (wreath of victory). But here he refers to the crown of righteousness which the righteous judge would give him. But how can a righteous judge give eternal life to a sinner? The blessed answer is that he is also a gracious God who in his love found a way whereby his justice was satisfied so that he can give eternal life. In his love he sent his Son "who was delivered for our offenses and raised again for our justification." (Rom. 4:25) By virtue of His redemption work God can and does pronounce the sinner righteous and standing in that righteousness the sinner can say "there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge shall give me."



By the grace of God Professor Otto shared that same faith. He received this faith in his baptism and he faithfully nourished and strengthened that faith through the Word and Sacrament. Therefore he could say, "I AM READY TO DIE."

It may seem strange, yet it is true, that only when we are ready to die are we ready to live. You students are here to prepare for your life's work. Your life is ahead of you with its dreams and expectations and goals. That is natural and normal, but as you prepare for life you must reckon with the fact of death. The Bible reminds us that "in the midst of life we are in death." We know that death is no respecter of persons, age, or time; he strikes when and where he pleases and we are powerless against it.

There is an old Latin proverb which says: *Disce ut semper victurus; vive ut cras moriturus* which translated means "Study as though you are going to live forever" for you are; "live as though you may die tomorrow" for you may. There is much more to life than the few years in this world which the Bible describes "as vapour that appeareth for a little while and then vanisheth away." According to the creator of life, life is eternal and death is the entrance into eternity. That is why it is so important to be ready at all times.

And when are we ready? Only when we can say "I have kept the faith." Our faith is the most precious possession we have and there is nothing more important in life than to nourish that faith on the same Word which gave us that faith. Then death will be the entrance into eternal life where we shall enjoy the unending bliss of glory with God in heaven.

A man named George Morris wrote a poem about his mother's Bible and among other things he said of it:

"The mines of earth no treasures give  
That could this volume buy:  
In teaching me the way to live,  
It taught me how to die."

When Christ is the object and goal of our faith, then we can truthfully say, "I AM READY TO DIE," and in confidence we can say and sing as we walk life's pilgrimage

"I walk with Jesus all the way,  
His guidance never fails me,  
Within His wounds I find a stay,  
When Satan's power assails me;  
And by His footsteps led,  
My path I safely tread,  
In spite of ills that threaten may,  
I walk with Jesus all the way.

My walk is heavenward all the way,  
Await, my soul, the morrow,  
When thou shalt find release for aye  
From all Thy sin and sorrow;  
All worldly pomp begone,  
To heaven I now press on;  
For all the world I would not stay,  
My walk is heavenward all the way."

## Vita

Milton Henry Otto was born on December 6, 1914, at Cherokee County, Iowa. He attended Concordia College, Seward, Nebraska; Concordia College, St. Paul, Minnesota; and graduated from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri, in 1940. He served a year of vicarage at Princeton, Minnesota, and taught parochial school in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. After his ordination, he served parishes of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod at Cottonwood, Minnesota and Lawler, Iowa.

Pastor Otto served as president of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod from 1954-1957. In 1957 he was called to Bethany Lutheran College and Seminary and taught chiefly in the Seminary. Until 1976 he was Dean of the Seminary. Upon his retirement from that office, the Board of Regents bestowed on him the title Dean Emeritus. During Prof. Otto's years at the seminary, over half of the pastors presently serving in the Evangelical Lutheran Synod graduated from the seminary.

Dean Otto is survived by his wife Marjorie (Lund), Margaret (Mrs. Ernest) Lillo, Elizabeth (Mrs. Ross) Hermanson, Ruth (Mrs. Dwight) Hildebrandt, Lois, and Paul.

Blessed be his memory.

## A LUTHERAN UNDERSTANDING OF THE WILL AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN HUMAN LIFE

### Statement of Purpose

Many people in the Lutheran Church have definite problems with the concept "will of God." They also have serious questions regarding the providence of God. To my knowledge nothing comprehensive and broadly inclusive has been written in the Lutheran Church on these subjects and their close interrelation. It is discussed piecemeal in doctrinal and exegetical writing, but there is no popular broad treatment available to lay persons and the average pastor in the Lutheran Church.

Laymen frequently ask (in private conversation and in Bible study groups, etc.) such questions as: "What does our church teach about the will of God? Is everything that happens God's will? What about natural catastrophies? Is it the will of God when a committed Christian suffers for a long time with something like cancer? How can I know what God wants me to do about something for which there are no clear answers in the Bible; for example, smoking, moving to another city, etc.? Why are some people saved and not others?"

Sometimes people read books and articles on these subjects from other sources and ask: "Does this agree with what Lutherans teach?" This is especially true of reading materials on suffering, calamities, etc.

I have prepared a written product that I believe will be spiritually and intellectually useful to

rank and file people in my church body. By treating the problem areas in their broader context and setting, rather than in isolation, I have been able to supply solid foundational information which people need. My hope is that thereby they will be aided in working through their spiritual problems in these areas.

Since it is God's will and God's providence which I have treated, the major source for what I have written has been God's Word, the Bible. I have used it continually and quoted it frequently throughout this work. I have drawn freely on the studies of Lutherans. I also included in my research the writings of persons from other Christian denominations, whenever I felt these useful to the development of my subject.

## Chapter I

### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING

### THE WILL OF GOD

Jim and Jack were visiting over a cup of coffee. Jack was doing the talking. He was very troubled. Through no fault of his own, and counter to his own desire, he had been forced to change jobs and relocate. As he poured out his heart to Jim, he described himself as a victim of circumstances. Jim listened patiently for a time, and then said, "But it must have been God's will. Otherwise it wouldn't have happened. You know, Jack, nothing ever happens in our lives unless it is the will of God." Jack's immediate reply was, "I don't believe in blaming everything on God! I can't believe it was God's will this happened to me. I think it was people's will. I've simply been manipulated by people.

God didn't have anything to do with it." They talked for a good while longer but, even though both were committed Christians, they could not come to agreement regarding what is and what is not the will of God in such matters.

Like Jim and Jack, many Christian people have questions about God's will. They have difficulty with the idea of the will of God, not only in what they see happening out in the wide, wide world, but especially in the things that come into their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Oftimes when they must make a decision in a situation or circumstance and wish to do God's will in the matter, they do not know how to determine it. Sometimes even the strongest of Christians are utterly baffled when it comes to discovering or knowing or understanding the will of God.

A Christian mother, together with her husband, brought up her six children "in the discipline and instruction of the Lord (Eph. 6:4b)." After her family was raised, she devoted her time to doing good for others in Jesus' name. She never missed the worship services of her congregation. Every day she read her Bible and communed with God in prayer. In the midst of her life of dedication and commitment to God, she was stricken with a slow painful form of inoperable cancer. For many torturous months she bore almost unbearable pain. Her suffering was so terrible that she pleaded with God to take her, but He seemed not to hear her prayers. A family member asked "Is this how God rewards His faithful?" Was it God's will that she be thus stricken? Did He will that after a life of service to Him, her death would come only after months of unscrutable agony?

A faithful pastor had served a particular congregation for most of the years of his ministry. To the

glory of God, he had literally given his life to bring the church he pastored from a struggling mission to a congregation of almost two thousand souls. While still fully active and in the best of health, he informed the congregation that in two years he planned, God willing, to retire from the pastorate of their church. His retirement would coincide with the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of his ordination into the holy ministry. After his announcement, and without explanation, the board of elders met in secret and then told him they had decided not to wait two years for his retirement, but asked for his immediate resignation. They also handed him a signed paper asking that he and his wife vacate the parsonage in thirty days. Where was the will of God in this? How was this experienced man of God to interpret this action by his elder board? All his life he had been careful to say of the future "God willing." Did these men act because it was God's will they ask him to resign?

Two young men were hill climbing over rugged western terrain in a four wheel vehicle. They were climbing about ten miles an hour on a trail that was regularly used by people who engaged in that sport. They came to the crest of the hill. Without warning there was no more road, but a sheer drop off. Unbeknown to them, gravel excavators had cut away the other side of the hill, without bothering to erect a warning or a barrier. Their vehicle fell sixty feet and capsized. One young man walked away from the vehicle unharmed. The other received a broken neck and was rendered a totally helpless quadraplegic. Was this God's will? Why was one harmed, and the other, in the happening of a moment, made paralyzed for the remainder of his earthly life? Could this be God's will? If it was the will of God, why would God do something like this?

The questions people have about the will of God as an individual are varied as the perplexing-experiences they have in life. Are there any satisfying answers? Is it possible to know and understand the will of God?

Before any answers can be supplied regarding the will of God, it is necessary to know what we mean by the phrase "will of God." What does this concept include?

Attempting to determine God's will can be confusing even when the Christian consults the Scriptures. This is because the will of God is spoken of in a variety of ways in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> A number of different words in the original Scripture languages are all simply translated as "will" in most English Bibles.<sup>2</sup> To add to the problem, words that vary in exact meaning are sometimes used interchangeably in the sacred writings. The ancient languages of the Bible are not always as technically precise as scientifically oriented moderns might desire.<sup>3</sup> However, a consideration of the words used for "will" in the original Bible language will aid in understanding the will of God as presented in the Scriptures.

There are primarily four groups of Greek words which denote the idea of "will" in the New Testament.

Two of these words have to do with the influence of "purpose" on "will." These words are the noun prothesis and the related verb protithēmi. When these are applied to God they refer to His purpose.<sup>4</sup> The Scriptures teach that God has an overall purpose or plan which He is carrying out in the world.<sup>5</sup>

The Apostle Paul referred to this purpose when he wrote that God "saved us and called us with a holy calling, not in virtue of our works but in virtue of his own purpose (prothesis), and the grace which he



gave us in Christ Jesus ages ago."<sup>6</sup> God's purpose determines what He wills. He wills what will accomplish His purpose.<sup>7</sup> This same word, prothesis, was used by Paul in Rom. 9: 11 when he wrote of the birth of the twins, Jacob and Esau. Paul wrote that "in order that God's purpose (prothesis) of election might continue . . . . 'The elder will serve the younger'."<sup>8</sup> The word prothesis characterizes God's activity among people as free and grounded in His will alone.<sup>9</sup> In a key Scripture verse regarding the will of God in the life experiences of Christian people, Paul wrote, "We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose (prothesis)."<sup>10</sup> Two other important verses in which prothesis refers to God's purpose are Eph. 1: 11 and Eph. 3: 11.

Protithēmi is the verb form of the purpose word prothesis. It lays stress on the planning process, on laying out the design of events before they occur.<sup>11</sup> It has to do with intentions and determinations, in the case of God'divine intentions and determinations. When used of God, protithēmi emphasizes the personal interest God has in planning what He then accomplishes by His will.<sup>12</sup>

There are other New Testament words which basically express desire. They are of two kinds. The nouns boulē and boulēma, and the verb boulomai have to do with desire which originates in the mind.<sup>13</sup> Desire from the heart is expressed by the noun thelēma and the related verb thēlo.<sup>14</sup> Originally these sets of words were used to make clear distinction between desire coming from the mind and desire from the heart. However, by the time the New Testament was written in popular koine Greek, they were being used in overlapping ways, and a clear distinction in meaning is not always possible between them.<sup>15</sup>

The holy writers used both word combinations in the New Testament to denote the will of God. When Luke told how Jesus prayed to His Father regarding His impending passion and death by crucifixion, he used both boulomai and thelēma. In reference to the will and plan of His Father being carried out, Jesus said "Father, if thou art willing (boulomai), remove this cup from me . . . ." Then to express His own emotional desire, He said ". . . nevertheless not my will (thelēma), but thine be done."<sup>16</sup>

The verb boulomai deals with the active process of thinking things over and then having a definite wish originating in the mind. D. Muller wrote that "boulomai was originally . . . the willing which arises out of conscious consideration free from emotion."<sup>17</sup> Such deliberate willing on the part of God is indicated in Hebrews 6: 17 "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath." To express this strong purposeful desire or resolve on the part of God, the author employed a form of the word boulomai.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, James used boulomai when he wrote of God "Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures" (Jas. 1: 18).<sup>19</sup> Some other verses in which boulomai was chosen to denote the will of God, or of Jesus, or of the Holy Spirit are Matthew 11: 26; Luke 10: 22; 1 Corinthians 12: 11; and Peter 3: 9.

The noun boulē occurs in Hebrews 6: 17, along with the verb boulomai. The verb expressed the will or desire of God. The noun is used of the purpose or plan of God, which is said to be unchangeable. "So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose (boulē), he interposed with an oath."<sup>20</sup>

On the basis of this Word of God "we, as Christians, must assume that God's plan (boulē) for our lives is fixed and unchangeable and will inevitably be done."<sup>21</sup> The words "a counsel or an edict" can be used to describe the force of boulē.<sup>22</sup>

When Paul wrote regarding the will of God in Romans 9: 19, he used a form of the related verb boulēma. "For who can resist his will?"<sup>23</sup> The answer implied is that His will (boulēma) is irresistible. W. E. Vine said that "boulēma indicates 'a deliberate design, that which is purposed'."<sup>24</sup> It has to do with "a purpose or will, a deliberate intention."<sup>25</sup>

The noun thelēma occurs in the New Testament in both an objective and a subjective sense. Objectively, it signifies that which is willed.<sup>26</sup> Jesus said in Matthew 18: 14 "It is not the will (thelēma) of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."<sup>27</sup> This same word is used in Mark 3: 35 where Jesus declares "Whoever does the will (thelēma) of God is my brother, and sister, and mother."<sup>28</sup>

In the subjective sense this word denotes "the will as the emotion of being desirous, rather than as the thing willed."<sup>29</sup> Thelēma may be described as "God's heart's desires."<sup>30</sup> In Romans 1: 10 Paul uses this word regarding his prayer life. He says that in his prayers he asks "that somehow by God's will (thelēma) I may now at last succeed in coming to you."<sup>31</sup> In several places he claims that his call to the apostleship was "by the will of God" (1 Cor. 1: 1) (11 Cor. 1: 1) (Col. 1: 1) (11 Tim. 1: 1).<sup>32</sup>

This word is used in regard to people doing God's will -- what God would like or desire, what would please Him. Paul tells the Corinthians that the

Macedonian Christians "gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will (thelēma) of God" (11 Cor. 8: 5).<sup>33</sup> The word thelēma is used for "the will of God" in 1 Thessalonian 4: 3 where God indicates He wants our sex life to be sanctified in the sense of being limited to marital partners and not being defiled by fornication or adultery.<sup>34</sup> The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says to his readers "For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will (thelēma) of God, and receive what is promised" (Heb. 10: 36).<sup>35</sup> St. John writes concerning our prayers" . . . if we ask anything according to the will (thelēma) he hears us" (1 John 5: 14).<sup>36</sup>

God's desire for the salvation of people is described by the related verb thelō. When Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2: 4 that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth," the word used for "desires" is a form of thelō.<sup>37</sup> F. Pieper says "The grace and favor of God in Christ toward all men is described by Scripture also as the will of God. 'God will (thelei) have all men to be saved'."<sup>38</sup> While the salvation of all in Jesus Christ is God's earnest desire or will, Vine, in his comments on this word, adds the thought "not all are willing to accept this condition."<sup>39</sup> Muller makes the observation that "In the Pauline writings thelō and thelēma are frequently used to describe the will of God, and especially to describe the real source of the whole event of salvation in Christ."<sup>40</sup>

Thelō is also used with reference to God's plan for our lives. Part of God's plan for us has to do with our efforts to find out what He wants (thelō) us to do, what city He wants us to live in, what work He wants us to do, and what house He wants us to live in. Both our successes and failures are included in His plan.<sup>41</sup>

Another pair of New Testament words identified

with God's will are the noun eudokia and the verb eudokeō.<sup>42</sup> Literally eudokia means good pleasure. It implies a gracious purpose, a good object being in view. It carries with it the idea of a resolve, showing the willingness with which the resolve was made.<sup>43</sup> The best known place in which eudokia occurs is in the message of the angels who sang to the shepherds on the night when Jesus was born. "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is well pleased (eudokia)" (Luke 2: 14).<sup>44</sup> Jesus said to His followers "Fear not little flock for it is your Father's good pleasure (eudokeō) to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12: 32).<sup>45</sup> The noun eudokia is employed to describe the transcendent purpose of God in Matthew 11: 26 where Jesus says "Yea, Father, for such was thy gracious will (eudokia)."<sup>46</sup> When Paul told the Corinthians that "it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe" he used a form of the verb eudokeō (1 Cor. 1: 21).<sup>47</sup>

In Ephesians 1: 9 three distinct words associated with the will of God are used in the same verse "For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will (thelēma), according to his purpose (eudokia) which he set forth (protithēmi) in Christ."<sup>48</sup>

There are also words used to denote the will of God in the Hebrew Old Testament. The Hebrew language is functional and practical. It has no words for abstractions. Consequently the actions ascribed to God are of prime importance in the study of the will of God in Old Testament sources.<sup>49</sup> There are primarily five Hebrew words related to the concept of the will in the Old Testament. They are hāpēs, ābāh, ēsāh, māēn, and rāṣōn.<sup>50</sup> Of these, hāpēs, ēsāh, and rāṣōn are frequently used in relation to God's will.

The word hāpēs is loosely translated in the Septuagint with either thelō or boulomai.<sup>51</sup> It means to incline, to delight in, to be favorably disposed toward anyone or anything. It carries the idea "to will, to desire, to be pleased."<sup>52</sup> In Psalm 18: 19, David says of God ". . . he delivered me, because he delighted (hāpēs) in me."<sup>53</sup> God speaks in Ezekial 18: 23 and asks "Have I any pleasure (hāpēs) in the death of the wicked?" In Isaiah 1: 11 it conveys the sense of liking or wanting. God says in this verse "I do not delight (hāpēs) in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or of he-goats."<sup>54</sup> It is simply rendered "will" in Isaiah 53: 10, where the prophet writes ". . . it was the will of the Lord to bruise him."<sup>55</sup> H. C. Leupold says "This suffering was not accidental. It was part of a great divine plan . . . the Servant's anguish was in every way the fulfillment of a great divine plan."<sup>56</sup> In another place Isaiah speaks for God "You did what was evil in my eyes, and chose what I did not delight (hāpēs) in (Isaiah 65: 12c)."<sup>57</sup> The same sense is conveyed in Isaiah 66: 4.

An Old Testament word which denotes weighty consideration before effecting of the will is the Hebrew ēṣāh.<sup>58</sup> It has to do with deliberating, purposing, planning, and deciding.<sup>59</sup> The Septuagint translates ēṣāh into the Greek boulē.<sup>60</sup> An example of the use of ēṣāh with reference to God is in Isaiah 14: 24 "The Lord of hosts has sworn: 'As I have planned so shall it be, and as I have purposed so shall it stand'."<sup>61</sup> Commenting on this verse Leupold says "God works with definite purpose and with adequate planning."<sup>62</sup> This word is frequently translated "counsel."<sup>63</sup> "The counsel (ēṣāh) of the Lord stands forever" (Ps. 33: 11).<sup>64</sup> "Thou dost guide us with thy counsel (ēṣāh)" (Ps. 73: 24).<sup>65</sup> In discussing this word Muller says "God's purposes are trustworthy and true; Israel can therefore rely on them (Is. 25: 1). His purpose includes Israel's salvation (Is. 14: 26)."<sup>66</sup>

When used of God, the Hebrew word rāṣōn denotes His will. It describes the good pleasure, grace, and will of God.<sup>67</sup> It occurs in a prayer formula "May it be pleasing in thy sight." This can also be rendered "May it be thy will."<sup>68</sup> The Hebrew expression corresponds with one used by Jesus in Matthew 11: 26, in which the Greek word eudokia occurs. The Revised Standard Version translates the phrase by Jesus "for such was the gracious will of God." In a footnote on alternate reading "so it was well pleasing before thee" is given.<sup>69</sup>

While a number of different words regarding God's will are used in the original Bible languages, and His will is spoken of from a variety of perspectives, God has only one will.<sup>70</sup> As far as God's essence is concerned He is absolutely One.<sup>71</sup> David Hollaz wrote "The will of God is just as indivisible as it is impossible for the essence of God itself to be divided into parts."<sup>72</sup> In his classroom notes J. Meyer says "Will is not the basic essence of God. Nor is will a mere faculty added to the divine essence. It is the divine essence conceived from this particular angle."<sup>73</sup>

Although in an exact and strict sense there can be no division or classification of God's will, God in His inspired word caused the authors to write in such a way that certain divisions and classifications can be distinguished by us. In this approach in the Bible, God condescended to our limited finite human comprehension and understanding.<sup>74</sup>

On the basis of Scripture the Missouri Synod catechism gives a three-fold division of the will of God. The question is asked "What does the good and gracious will of God include?" The first part of the answer is "Everything that God wants to do for us according to His promise." The supporting Scripture cited for this answer is "God will have

all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2: 4 KJV). In the second part of the answer, the catechism says "Everything that God wants us to do and to avoid according to His will." The Bible support provided is "This is the will of God, even your sanctification" (1 Thess. 4: 3 KJV). The final division in the answer states "Everything that God wants us to suffer patiently according to His good pleasure." Two Bible verses are quoted. "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God (Acts 14: 22 KJV)." "Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (Matt. 16: 24 KJV)." A "note" after the third part of the answer says "See Hebrews 12: 6. 11." The supportive verses from Hebrews (KJV) are "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth . . . . Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."<sup>75</sup>

Above the catechism level Lutheran teachers make various distinctions about the will of God. These classifications will be discussed fully in subsequent chapters of this study. Following are introductory remarks concerning divisions in considering the will of God as delineated by Lutheran authors.

They distinguish the antecedent will and the consequent will of God.<sup>76</sup> These are sometimes called the first will and the second will of God.<sup>77</sup> Edward W. A. Koehler says "The antecedent will of God is that He will have all men to be saved (Ezek. 33: 11); the consequent will of God is that He will surely damn those who reject His saving grace (Mark 16: 16)."<sup>78</sup> A very important Scripture in the consideration of the antecedent and consequent will of God is John 3: 17 and 18 "For God sent the Son into the



world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him. He who believes in him is not condemned; he who does not believe is condemned already because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God." On the basis of these verses, Pieper says that we must "first think of God as desiring to condemn no one, but to save all men, without exception, by faith in Christ; only after that, in the second place, may we think of God as willing to condemn those who do not believe in Christ."<sup>79</sup> Paul Gerhard wrote, "God decrees to damn unbelievers; but He does not will that any perish."<sup>80</sup>

Lutheran writers distinguish between the resistible and irresistible will of God. They contend that God in His majesty cannot be resisted.<sup>81</sup> However, Christ's will to bring men to faith through the preaching of the Gospel can be resisted. In this regard they quote Matthew 23: 37 where Jesus says ". . . . you would not."<sup>82</sup> Koehler states the difference clearly and briefly "Men can resist the will of God when He calls through the Gospel to come to Him and be saved (Matt. 23: 37); but when on the Last Day He calls the dead from their graves, His will is irresistible (John 5: 28, 29; II Cor. 5: 19)."<sup>84</sup>

God's will is sometimes done through means and sometimes without means. This is described as "willing immediately and mediately."<sup>85</sup> Pieper gives New Testament examples of both ways of willing. He says that at the wedding in Cana of Galilee, "Christ made wine without the usual means of making wine (John 2: 1 - 11)." He mentions that in exceptional cases God works immediately. God even does this in the kingdom of grace. He cites the example that John the Baptist was endowed with the Holy Ghost in His mother's womb (Luke 1: 15, 41). God's usual order is that He works

faith, preservation of faith, and sanctification through the means of grace.<sup>86</sup> Meyer writes that "in the physical realm God usually does His will through the laws of nature."<sup>87</sup> Pieper says "Whatever God wills He accomplishes in one of two ways: either by His appointed means or without them. In either case . . . the one and selfsame power is operative."<sup>88</sup>

The writers of the doctrine books also teach that God's will is unconditioned by human effort as well as conditioned by human efforts.<sup>89</sup> In the realm of grace, God's will is not contingent upon man's good works. This is because people are saved by grace without the deeds of the Law (Rom. 2: 28), and by grace alone (Eph. 2: 8 - 10; Rom. 11: 6). Pieper writes that in the realm of the Law ". . . God's will is conditioned by man's work."<sup>90</sup> He cites Luke 10: 28 "Do this and you will live" and Galatians 3: 12 ". . . but the law does not rest on faith, for 'He who does them shall live by them'."<sup>91</sup>

A final distinction made by Lutherans is that God's will is both revealed and hidden.<sup>92</sup> Koehler writes "We distinguish between the revealed will of God, and we have it in the Bible, and the hidden or secret will of God (Deut. 29: 29). There are many things in the mind of God that He has not made known to us (Rom. 11: 33.34)."<sup>93</sup> The Bible clearly teaches that some parts of God's will are clearly revealed. In I Corinthians 2: 9b. 10 Paul wrote ". . . what God has prepared for those who love him, God has revealed to us through the Spirit." By way of contrast he asks in Romans 11: 34 "who has known the mind of the Lord?"

God, indeed, has a will. It can be viewed from a variety of perspectives.<sup>94</sup> His many faceted will is good and gracious, even when we do not understand.<sup>95</sup> The will of God is important for those

who would be His people. An endeavor to be in "the will of God" gives purpose and direction to the lives of those who are committed to Him.<sup>96</sup>

## Chapter 2

### PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD

Many questions and misgivings which people have regarding the will of God are interwoven with problems and questions concerning the providence of God. People ask and wonder, "Is God really in charge in the world? Does He truly rule over all things?" Their experiences would suggest that this is not the case. They are sincere in their doubts.

Other closely related questions are also being raised. While this is not a peculiarly modern phenomenon, for people have always had such questions, these come with increased rapidity and seriousness in our day. The Reformed theologian G. C. Berkouwer asks such questions as "Can life . . . . still make sense? Dare one call this life meaningful? Can all . . . . that fills men's hearts fall within the circle of a Divine Providence? Can men with honesty and clear conscience still believe it?"<sup>1</sup> Questions posed by Lutheran scholar Robert Preus include: "Why is there evil, if God's providence extends to all things? Why does a good . . . . God allow sin at all? Since evil exists, does God concur with it?"<sup>2</sup> The list of questions continues. He further asks "What becomes of man's freedom in light of divine providence? Can man resist God, if divine providence is always totally in control? Is divine punishment justified if God upholds and supports all things? And what about the problem of God hardening some men?"<sup>3</sup>

Four centuries ago Martin Chemnitz observed that "Christians in times of trouble or temptation sometimes doubt God's providence."<sup>4</sup> Berkouwer says "The lot of man in sickness, suffering, and death has always raised questions about God's Providence."<sup>5</sup>

People have always struggled with the problem of divine providence, questioning whether God was really in charge and control. However, Christian teachers have quite uniformly attested, until recent times, the truth of the doctrine of a provident God. The providence of God was an article of faith.<sup>6</sup>

There has been a crisis in the providence doctrine in our day. Richard Baepler says "For theologians of a century ago . . . the synthesis of liberal theology and various ideas of purposeful progress and evaluation kept the notion of providence . . . alive. But as these embodying ideas collapsed under the impact of war and the profound eruptions of human evil, the notion of providence disappeared."<sup>7</sup> Rightly Preus concludes, "The doctrine of divine providence is a difficult doctrine to hold."<sup>8</sup> In an essay in "The Abiding Word" Richard R. Caemmerer reached the same conclusion.<sup>9</sup>

The attitude of modern man is such that he will reject the idea of a God who works both good and evil, who does not act under "the rules of the game" as we understand them.<sup>10</sup> Berkouwer begins his volume on "The Providence of God" with this sentence, "One cannot give thought to the church's confession of faith in Providence without at once being impressed by the distance between this confession and modern thought."<sup>11</sup>

In this setting the Christian church must ask if it still has the courage to proclaim the providence

of God. Or is the church itself, fed by the news of daily events, possessed of secret doubts? Can the church still speak of God's rule over all things, of His holy presence in this world?<sup>12</sup> The church not only can but, the church must! The notion of providence needs to be reinvigorated. The confidence of Christians in this article of faith has to be rebuilt.<sup>13</sup>

Cognizant of the very real difficulties expressed in today's world concerning divine providence, we will examine the Biblical teaching of the providence of God.

By the providence of God we mean His activity whereby He uninterruptedly upholds, governs, and directs the world which He created.<sup>14</sup> His providence has its source in His wisdom and power. Caemmerer writes, "The wisdom and power of God combine to produce what we call the providence of God; that means not merely His knowledge of all things, but His direction and concern for man in them."<sup>15</sup> In His providence God actually intimately and personally enters the affairs of nature and men.<sup>16</sup> Divine providence is not a force that has been set in motion and then operates according to predetermined laws, but is a personal activity of God.<sup>17</sup>

The word providence does not occur in canonical Scripture in this sense. The word *pronia* (providence) is used in Acts 24: 2 and Romans 13: 14, but not in reference to God's provident manner and activity. The only place in Biblical literature in which the word is used regarding God's providence is in an apocryphal book. The Wisdom of Solomon 14: 3 - 5 reads

But it is thy providence, O Father, that steers its course, because thou has given

it a path in the sea, and a safe way through the waves, showing that thou canst save from every danger, so that if a man lacks skill, he may put to sea. It is thy will that the works of thy wisdom shall not be without effect; therefore men trust their lives even to the smallest piece of wood, and passing through the billows on a raft they come safely to land.<sup>18</sup>

However, in the Bible several other words are used synonymously with the concept of the providence of God.<sup>19</sup> The word which ordinarily means seeing is sometimes employed and translated in this way. An example is Genesis 22: 8, "Abraham said, 'God will provide himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son'." Also I Samuel 16: 1, "The Lord said to Samuel . . . Fill your horn with oil, and go; I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons." Likewise Ezekiel 20: 6, "On that day I swore to them that I would bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land which I had searched out for them."<sup>20</sup> The word for ordination occurs as a synonym for the provident concept in Psalm 119: 91, "By thy appointment they stand this day; for all things are thy servants." The King James Version has, "According to thy ordinances . . . ." The word for preservation is also used in Psalm 36: 7, "How previous is thy steadfast love, O God! The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings."<sup>21</sup>

In a Missouri Synod conference essay, E. W. Hinrichs writes that the basic truth of providence is

that God's omnipotence, goodness and mercy perpetually sustain, control, and govern all creatures and all forces of nature,

collectively and individually for His glory and for the welfare and special benefit of His people, collectively and individually.<sup>22</sup>

Scripture views providence as the work of the Triune God. However, it especially ascribes the preserving and governing of the world to the Son. In Hebrews 1: 13 we read, "He reflects the glory of the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by the word of his power."

Lutheran authors connect the providence of God with His creation activity. Gustaf Aulén says, "God's activity as 'providence' . . . is not some new activity over and above creation, but precisely His creative activity seen from the standpoint of its continuity."<sup>23</sup> God's providence is His continuous creation activity. There is, of course, a different connotation in providence from that in creation. Providence has to do with the maintenance of what already exists.<sup>24</sup> Aulén echoes Saint Augustine who wrote, "God is not a workman who, when He has completed His work leaves it to itself and goes His way; but having created the world, he sustains it and cares for it."<sup>25</sup> Hinrichs puts it this way, "The creator is not a 'factory god,' who completed His product and then turned it over to another or entrusted it to some impersonal, blind mechanical force. He is not an absentee landlord, or a mere spectator of the universe He brought forth."<sup>26</sup>

The providence of God especially manifests itself in three ways. God preserves what has been created in the world. He cooperates with all that occurs. Everything in the world is governed, led, and directed by Him.<sup>27</sup>

Martin Luther wrote in the Small Catechism, "I believe that God has made me and all creatures . . .

and still preserves them."<sup>28</sup> According to seventeenth century Lutheran David Hollaz, "Preservation is the action of Divine Providence whereby God sustains all things created by Him, so that they continue in being with the properties implanted in their nature and powers received in creation."<sup>29</sup> Only the sustaining, upholding power of God insures the continued existence of the world. It would fall back into nothing if God were to withdraw His presence."<sup>30</sup> The clear Bible teaching is, "By Him all things consist" (Col. 1: 17). Meyer says that God "keeps and maintains His creatures in their original kind, properties, and virtues."<sup>31</sup> In addition to preserving species, or kind, God also preserves individuals.<sup>32</sup> This includes not only people, but other living creatures. Psalm 36: 6 (KJV) says, "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." Scripture maintains that created things do not subsist of themselves, from their own strength. They are utterly dependent on God. A key passage on this point is Acts 17: 38, "In Him we live and move and have our being." Two other important verses in this regard are Colossians 1: 17 and Hebrews 1: 3.

A Lutheran church father, Stephan Gerlach, used the word sustenance in this connection and beautifully said

Sustenance means that God preserves the beautiful order within His creation, for example, the orbits of the heavenly bodies, the seasons and fertility of the earth, the essential properties of things and in general His laws of nature. Sustenance means that God cares for us, as He does for all things, and this involves individual and personal care and concern."<sup>33</sup>

God ordinarily carries out His preservation according to natural laws and natural causes.<sup>34</sup>

God not only preserves His creation, but He also cooperates with all that occurs, with everything



that happens.<sup>35</sup> Again Acts 17: 28, "In Him we live and move and have our being" is pertinent. This cooperation by God the Lutheran dogmaticians have termed concurrency. Hollaz probably supplied the best definition of divine concurrency to be found in Lutheran literature. He wrote

Concurrency, or the cooperation of God, is the act of Divine Providence whereby God, by a general and immediate influence, proportional to the need and capacity of every creature, graciously takes part with second causes in their actions and effects.<sup>36</sup>

God, indeed, cooperates with everything that occurs. However, the manner of His cooperation varies depending on the nature of the cooperating causes, and the necessities of the case. It is obvious that God cooperates in one way when the action proceeds from inanimate nature, and in another way when the one with which He cooperates is one who has freedom.<sup>37</sup> Meyer writes, "God directly influences and assists every creature in its function and activities according to its peculiar nature."<sup>38</sup> God cooperates with people when they will, plan, risk, and do things. His providential concurrency includes the use of other causes and means as He actively preserves, upholds, and governs creation. Hinrichs says, "God and the means work, but the means are subordinate to providence and function only as long as God works in them."<sup>39</sup>

Hollaz elaborates on the distinction between what he calls necessary agents and what he terms free agents. About necessary agents he says, "God concurs uniformly, e.g., with fire in order for it to burn, with the sun in order to shine."<sup>40</sup> He says that "with free agents God concurs variously

leaving them to their free decision and the free power to choose this or that; for the order that God has once established He does not easily change." He refers to Psalm 119: 90, "By thy appointment they stand this day, for all things are thy servants."<sup>41</sup>

In divine concurrence the actions of God and the actions of the causes, are means, are simultaneous.<sup>42</sup> Regarding the simultaneous nature of God's concurrence in human action, Psalm 127: 1a is appropriate, "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." In reference to a variety of means, Hinrichs says, "thus food nourishes, drink refreshes, medicine heals, government protects, etc."<sup>43</sup> Johann Quenstedt wrote that the result of concurrent action is produced "not by God alone, nor by the creature alone, nor partly by God, and partly by the creature, but at the same time by God and the creature, as one and the same total efficiency."<sup>44</sup> He likens it to an act of writing depending upon both the hand and the pen, and as part of the writing does not depend upon the hand and the other upon the pen, but each part entirely upon the hand and entirely upon the pen.<sup>45</sup> Our actions are so totally dependent on God's cooperation that without His concurrence we cannot even raise a finger or produce the least movement. Paul F. Bente says, "The means or secondary causes are not coordinate with God. They depend on the operation of God to such an extent that the moment God ceases to operate through them they lose all efficacy."<sup>46</sup>

While God actively employs second causes, or means, He is not bound by them. Martin Chemnitz wrote, "Whatever God does through secondary causes, He is able to do alone without them."<sup>47</sup> He can freely act and accomplish what he pleases without concurrence.

God's concurring providence is exercised differently with reference to that which is evil, and that which is good. The concept of divine cooperation in evil has always posed difficulties for Christians. Heinrich Schmid said, "The most difficult problem in the science of Theology is that of exhibiting the method of the divine concurrence in the evil actions of men, without at the same time in any wise throwing the blame upon . . . God,"<sup>48</sup> Bengt Hagglund of Sweden agrees with this opinion.<sup>49</sup>

Lutheran Dogmaticians have expressed the difference in manner of concurrence with good and evil in several ways. Bente has said regarding God's concurring influence in good acts, "In good acts God makes both to will and to do, supplies both the energy and the direction and purpose of the act."<sup>50</sup> Koehler says that God "supplies the motive for and gives direction to the good works of His Christians."<sup>51</sup> Psalm 115: 1 is cited as supportive of this. "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to thy name give glory, for the sake of thy steadfast love and thy faithfulness!" Regarding the concurrence of God in actions that are morally good, Hollaz speaks of both physical and moral concurrence. "Physically (God) affords a general concurrence with moral actions by sustaining strength of mind and body, adapted to act. Morally, he concurs, by commanding and promising."<sup>52</sup> Concurrence with the morally good works of people is not limited to works done by Christians. Hinrichs writes, "It is God who works the civil righteousness in the unregenerate in society through government and law, and He rewards it with temporal and mundane blessings."<sup>53</sup> Romans 13: 3 - 4 is adduced as supporting Scripture.

Concerning God's cooperation in evil, Bente says, "What God supplies when men commit sin is only the capability of action . . . . God does not work along

in the direction the act takes,"<sup>54</sup> Thus God supplies the capacity for men to see, to lift their hands, to shoot a gun. He does not work along, for instance, in determining that they think blasphemy, look at indecent pictures, or aim a revolver at an enemy. Lutheran authors are agreed that God concurs in sinful acts only in so far as they are acts, but not in so far as they are sinful.<sup>55</sup>

Theodore Nickel acknowledges that this distinction does not altogether satisfy human reason. It does, however, restrict our thoughts on this matter to what the Bible says. "All further speculations on this point lead only to a denial of Scripture."<sup>56</sup>

Quenstedt gives an interesting shade of thought, "God concurs in producing the effect, not the defect; God concurs as to the materials, not as to the form."<sup>57</sup> Professor Meyer mentions this distinction in his classroom notes and cites Psalm 50: 16 - 22 and I John 3: 4 - 8 as supporting Scriptures.<sup>58</sup> This line of thought is intended to teach that God has furnished the power through which the action could have been a good one. However, if on the part of man this has not been employed for such purpose, the blame does not fall on God.

Another distinction is delineated by Hollaz, "God concurs with the remote, not the proximate material of actions morally evil. The former is an indeterminate act: the latter is an act determinate and applied to a prohibited thing."<sup>59</sup> He mentions the example of Eve. He says that when she extended her hand to the forbidden fruit, two actions were present; the first being the extension of the hand, and the second, the extension applied to the forbidden fruit.

God also exercises His providence by governing, or ruling over all things.<sup>60</sup> Gerlach says that as Lord He "controls and sets bounds for all things

of past, present, and future."<sup>61</sup> He is totally in charge. In Matthew 6: 13 we read, "For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever." God regulates all things according to His power, and wisdom, and goodness.<sup>62</sup> Three hundred years ago Abraham Calov wrote the classic Lutheran statement

Government is the act of Divine Providence by which God most excellently orders, regulates, and directs the affairs and actions of creatures according to His own wisdom, justice and goodness, for the glory of His name and the welfare of men.<sup>63</sup>

The government of God pertains to the whole world.<sup>64</sup> He is the absolute ruler.<sup>65</sup> David said to God in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, "Thou rulest over all. In thy hand are power and might; and in thy hand it is to make great and to give strength to all" (I Chr. 29: 12). In Psalm 47: 2 God is called "a great king over all the earth." He is addressed as "the Most High over all the earth" in Psalm 83: 18. Other significant Scripture passages are Psalm 135: 6; Psalm 139: 7 - 10; Daniel 4: 24 - 35; and Acts 17: 24.

Bente writes that "The providence of God regulates and controls all creatures. None is so great as to be independent of Him; none so small as to escape His attention."<sup>66</sup> He is concerned with the most insignificant things and with the minutest details.<sup>67</sup> Perhaps the best known Bible verses concerning this are the words of Jesus, "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the very hairs of your head are numbered" (Matt. 10: 29. 30). God's concern and governance is also indicated in Job 39: 5. 6.; Psalm 50: 10. 11; 139: 2-4; 147: 4. 9; and Isaiah 40: 12.

The Bible teaches that God directs the destinies of nations.<sup>68</sup> In Deuteronomy 28: 49 Israel is told that "The Lord will bring the counsel of the nations to naught; he frustrates the plans of the peoples." In his tenth chapter Isaiah leaves no doubt about the governance of God in the affairs of the nations (Is. 10: 5.6. 13 - 16). When he preached on Mars Hill, Paul said of God, "He made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitations" (Acts 17: 26). Saint Augustine wrote, "Human kingdoms are established by divine providence."<sup>69</sup>

The God who governs nations is also the good and wise ruler in the lives of individuals.<sup>70</sup> In Proverbs 16: 9 we are told that "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his path." Other Scriptures which indicate God's rule and government in individual lives are I Samuel 2: 6.7; Job 13: 27; 14: 1 - 3; Psalm 33: 13 - 16; 139: 15.16; and Proverbs 20: 24. Chemnitz said, "It is characteristic of God's providence to have individual concern with His creatures and with the individual needs of all."<sup>71</sup>

God uses various methods in governing and directing the world. The dogmaticians list four methods: permission, hindrance, direction, and determination.<sup>72</sup>

Meyer says, "God does not always prevent . . . evil decisions and actions."<sup>73</sup> This is called His permissive providence. Hinrichs makes the observation that "It is Scriptural to say, 'God permits evil'. "<sup>74</sup> God could, in every case, check or restrain sinners by placing insurmountable obstacles in their way.<sup>75</sup> When He allows evil He does it for His own just reasons. Quenstedt wrote, "The most

holy divinity has the very best reasons for permitting sin."<sup>76</sup> God says of Israel, "My people did not listen to my voice . . . . so I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels" (Ps. 81: 11.12). The Apostle Paul said in a sermon, "In the past generations he allowed all the nations to walk in their own ways (Acts 14: 16). In Romans 12: 8 he wrote, "God gave them up to a base mind and to improper conduct."

Divine permission is not kind indulgence. God is offended when people commit sin. It is not a mitigation of the Law of God. God does not grant people license to sin. Such permission is not a weakness in God. Nor is it a defect of His knowledge, as though He were ignorant of it. It does not reflect lack of power in God. If He chose, He could check it. God said to evildoers in the Old Testament, "These things you have done and I have been silent. . . . Mark this. . . .ye who forget God, lest I rend, and there be none to deliver" (Ps. 50: 21.22). God's permissive providence does not suggest that He is indifferent to sin. He is not simply an unconcerned witness. In Psalm 5: 4.5 we read, "Thou are not a God who delights in wickedness. . . .thou hatest all evildoers." Speaking through the prophet in Zechariah 8: 17, God says, "do not devise evil in your hearts against one another, and love no false oath, for all these things I hate."<sup>77</sup>

This permission has been described by Hollaz as "a negative act, inasmuch as God does not place insuperable difficulties in the way of the sinner, but allows him to rush into iniquity."<sup>78</sup> To substantiate his point Hollaz gives Matthew 26: 23 as a reference. In this verse Jesus speaks of Judas and says, "He who has dipped his hand in the dish with me, will betray me."

A second method used in divine providence is hindrance. This is described by Quenstedt as "An act. . . .by which God limits the action of creatures according to His judgment, so that they do not produce the result, which otherwise they would effect, either by a natural or a free power to act."<sup>79</sup> The Bible presents numerous examples in which God prevents people from carrying out their designs. When the wicked in Sodom wanted to break down the doors of Lot's house, they were "struck with blindness. . . .so that they wearied themselves groping at the door" (Gen. 19: 11). The Scripture says that when Jeroboam reached out his hand to take the prophet of the Lord "his hand which he stretched out against him, dried up, so that he could not draw it back to himself" (I Kings 13: 4). Other Biblical examples are recorded in Genesis 20: 6; Exodus 14: 30; Numbers 22: 12; II Kings 6: 17. 18; 7: 6; and Isaiah 37: 36.

God also governs by controlling and directing human actions.<sup>80</sup> Schmid says that "He knows. . . . how to sway the freely performed actions of men . . . in such a way that they must be subservient to and in accordance with His own purposes."<sup>81</sup> Meyer writes that God directs in two ways. He "prosperes the good works of His children" and "frustrates the purposes of the wicked, although permitting the deed."<sup>82</sup> The words of Joseph to his brothers are appropriate here. "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today" (Gen. 50: 20). The following Scripture verses also show God's governance by direction: Exodus 3: 11.12; Leviticus 26: 3 - 13; Deuteronomy 20: 1; I Samuel 9: 20; 10: 7; Acts 4: 28; and Romans 8: 28.

The final method used by God is determination.<sup>83</sup> God, Himself, is the source from which all power and ability to act comes. He sometimes attains His own



ends by withholding the necessary power, or by limiting it. He thereby prevents that which is contrary to His wishes from happening, or being accomplished. He worked this way with Satan in the case of Job. God said, "Behold all that he has is in your power; only upon himself do not put forth your hand" (Job. 1: 12). Later God told Satan, "Behold he is in your power; only spare his life" (Job 2: 6). Job, himself, spoke to God about our human situation and said, "his days are determined, and the number of his months is with thee, and thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass" (Job 15: 5). Divine determination is also indicated in Psalm 7: 14 - 16; 66: 7; 124: 1 - 5; Isaiah 8: 10; John 2: 4; and Acts 17: 26.

God's providence is viewed differently from the divine perspective than it is from the human. Hinrichs says, "From the viewpoint of divine providence all things must happen just as they do happen, but from the viewpoint of man's responsibility they could happen otherwise."<sup>84</sup> Pieper writes "Scripture compels us to maintain both the necessity and the contingency. From the viewpoint of divine providence the necessity obtains, from the human viewpoint the contingency."<sup>85</sup>

Scripture clearly states, for instance, that the betrayal of Jesus by Judas and His crucifixion by the Jews and the Romans had to occur according to God's determinate counsel. On Pentecost Peter preached "this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2: 23). After Peter and John had been released by authorities, the assembled Christians included these lines in their prayers, "These were gathered against thy holy servant Jesus, whom thou didst anoint, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with

the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever thy hand and thy plan had predestined to take place" (Acts 4: 27.28).

On the other hand, the same incidents are presented in Scripture as contingent from the human point of view.<sup>86</sup> None of the participants in the passion and crucifixion of Jesus were forced to commit the crimes which they did against Him. Jesus warned, "The Son of Man goes as has been determined; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!" (Luke 22: 22). In his Pentecost sermon Peter held responsible those who arranged for the suffering and death of Jesus "this Jesus delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men" (Acts 2: 23). Leonard Hutter wrote that

the betrayal by Judas was a contingent event, for Judas could have abstained from that crime, and not betrayed his Master; so that when he actually betrayed Him, there was nevertheless, in him a cause, which by its own nature could have acted otherwise, i. e., it could have restrained him from that deed.<sup>87</sup>

They committed their crimes on their own responsibility. They did what they did against better knowledge.

How can necessity and contingency so exist side by side? Hutter says. "A contingency of human affairs and actions can exist most surely, without diminishing or impairing the Providence of God, for the reason that this contingency is not opposed to Divine Providence, but is subject to it."<sup>88</sup> The providence of God governs and determines contingent actions.

Martin Scharlemann uses an analogy in discussing

contingency. He says that the war plans for American troops designated to hit the French coast on D-day during World War II covered hundreds of volumes. Every conceivable contingency had been taken into account. A separate plan was drawn up for each eventuality. If the men got ashore, one set of plans would be implemented. If they were thrown back, another course of action would be followed. He then says that

In some such way we might conceive of our Creator as having a set of contingency plans for every one of the countless choices an individual may make. He has chosen to put many options before His creatures. If an individual decides one way, a certain set of effects will follow; if the choice runs to another direction, a different series of consequences will be started . . . Scripture requires that we assert God's sovereignty and man's accountability. Neither God nor man is trapped in an inexorable sequence.<sup>89</sup>

Professor Scharlemann bases his remarks on such Scriptures as Deuteronomy 11: 26 - 32; 30: 15 - 20; Joshua 24: 14 - 28; Jeremiah 21: 8 - 8; and Ecclesiastes 15: 17.

Bente writes that "we must according to Scripture recognize that things happen contingently; that events can be modified and depend on circumstances and upon decisions which we make."<sup>90</sup> Thus Jesus instructed His disciples that, when persecution would come, they should not try to view the outcome from the point of view of divine providence and permit the persecutors to take them as He did, but to flee to another city (Matt. 10: 23). When Paul's life was sought in Damascus he had himself let down the walls of the city in a basket (Acts 9: 25). Such things as fleeing and being let down in a basket made differences in the courses of events.

While we believe in divine providence, we must, under God, do all we can to protect and preserve our lives.

The question arises, "But what about God's foreknowledge?" Hutter said, "We do nothing that God has not foreseen, and yet this knowledge of God is not the cause of our actions."<sup>91</sup> This agrees with the Formula of Concord which states, "This foreknowledge extends alike over the godly and the wicked, but it is not the cause of evil, neither of sin."<sup>92</sup> Hutter also wrote "God knew matters in no other way than as they would occur from their own causes, and indeed freely."<sup>93</sup> He further says, "This foreknowledge depends upon the event, but the event does not depend upon the foreknowledge."<sup>94</sup> He also wrote, "It is absolutely denied that providence brings necessity to things foreseen. For thus no place would be left any longer for natural causes, nor any liberty of the human will."<sup>95</sup>

How can such statements be made? An answer is supplied by Hollaz, "The expresison to know beforehand only inaccurately describes God's knowledge of everything, since . . . he sees everything, the past, the present, and the future at once, as if it were in a mirror."<sup>96</sup> The knowledge of God is not mediated by a succession of time and thought, as ours is. In the Formula of Concord we read, "Before God all things, whether they be past or future, are manifest and present."<sup>97</sup> Quenstedt said, "To God there is nothing future, but all things are present . . . He foresees nothing, but sees all things . . . in a perpetual, abiding, and immutable now."<sup>98</sup> Pieper writes, "We think only in terms of the past, the present, the future, and therefore God condescends to our concept of time."<sup>99</sup> It was most briefly said by Luther, "We see things lengthwise, but God views them crosswise."<sup>100</sup>

What about fatalism? Bente asks, "Does the doctrine of divine providence make fatalism the only logical philosophy of life?"<sup>101</sup> One Lutheran author, Hollaz, discusses what he terms "a Christian fate." He distinguishes Christian fate from "stoical fate" and "astrological fate." He says, in part, "Christian fate . . . . is the necessary connection of cause and effect . . . . in so far as it has been infallibly foreknown by God, established by an absolute or conditionate decree, and governed by divine direction agreeably disposing it."<sup>102</sup> Saint Augustine felt that the word "fate" could not properly be used when speaking of divine providence. Writing about the Roman empire, he said, "Human kingdoms are established by divine providence. And if anyone attributes their existence to fate, because he calls the will or the power of God itself by the name of fate, let him keep his opinion, but correct his language."<sup>103</sup> Chemnitz made the clear statement, "We do not live by fate but by the living God who cares for us."<sup>104</sup> Developing a similar line of thought Aulen writes, "To be included in God's care ('faith in providence') means neither a fatalistic submission to the inevitable course of events nor . . . . attitude which attempts to make God a servant of man; but unconditional trust in that God who is sovereign."<sup>105</sup> He says that "faith in God's providence is something entirely different from a simple submission to the actual course of events."<sup>106</sup> Bengt Hagglund wrote, "Faith in divine providence implies a rejection of the fatalistic idea of an impersonal destiny ruling over us."<sup>107</sup> Koehler flatly states, "The idea of fatalism is contrary to the teachings of the Bible."<sup>108</sup>

Divine providence has definite goals. These goals include "the temporal and eternal welfare of man, particularly the salvation of the elect, the spreading of the Gospel, and the promotion of the glory of God."<sup>109</sup>

How important is divine providence? Preus says

Without divine providence we cannot depend on the orderly performance of nature. In fact there is no sense in nature at all, if God is not controlling all things, no purpose in nature or life, and therefore no possibility of indicating future events or of understanding or controlling nature. Furthermore, there can be no natural knowledge of God and no rationale for human behavior -- for social and political action and ecclesiastical organization."<sup>110</sup>

### CHAPTER 3

#### FREEDOM OF THE WILL AND THE SIN FACTOR

The best known statement about the will of God in Lutheran circles is Martin Luther's explanation of the third petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Most confirmed Lutherans have memorized these comments by Luther in their catechetical instruction. Luther's explanatory words are

What does this mean? The good and gracious will of God is done indeed without our prayer; but we pray in this petition that it may be done among us also. How is this done? When God breaks and hinders every evil counsel and will which would not let us hallow God's name nor let His kingdom come, such as the will of the devil, the world and our flesh; but strengthens and preserves us steadfast in His Word and faith unto our end. This is His gracious and good will.<sup>1</sup>

In commenting on Luther's remarks, Koehler says

The sovereign will of God, as it operates in the kingdom of power . . . . is always done . . . . But there are powers at work that could not let us hallow His name nor let His kingdom come to us, therefore we pray that His good and gracious will be done among us.<sup>2</sup>

His words like Luther's are based on the concept of the three-fold division of God's rulership; His Kingdoms of power, of grace, and of glory.

Luther identifies three powers or forces which are opposed to the good and gracious will of God. They are "the devil, the world, and our flesh." These identifications are Biblically based. The Bible teaches that the devil opposes the will of God. Some clear examples are the fall of man (Gen. 3: 17), the temptation of Christ (Matt. 4: 11) and the betrayal of Judas (John 13: 2). By the world Luther is referring to the wickedness in the world in the same sense in which the Apostle spoke of the "world" in I John 2: 15. 16, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world . . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The world includes the wicked people in the world, evil things that are present, and sinful pleasures and practices, evil examples and customs.<sup>3</sup> Our flesh is our own sinful nature. It is this of which St. Paul speaks when he says, "I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is in my flesh" (Rom. 7: 18a).

How does it happen that in God's universe there are wills in addition to His will? It has not always been so. Originally there was only one will

-- His will. The Presbyterian scholar Donald G. Barnhouse wrote, "In the beginning there had been one will, the will of God . . . . But now there are billions of wills."<sup>4</sup> There are more wills than God's will because God, as the Creator, willed to make creatures whom He endowed with wills of their own.

All of God's creation was perfect. The Bible says, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen. 1: 31). At the beginning the wills of all of God's creatures were in perfect harmony with His will. The wills God gave were totally free. Those made by Him were free to stay in a perfect relationship with Him.<sup>5</sup> They were to turn away from Him, and sin against Him. Johann Gerhard, a dogmatican of the period of Lutheran orthodoxy wrote, "Free will in man before the Fall was that faculty of the reason and will by virtue of which he was able either to sin or not to sin."<sup>6</sup> Barnhouse said, "It was man's will that made it possible for him to depart from the plan of God."<sup>7</sup>

If all was perfect and in harmony with God and His will, how did it happen that His creatures willed to turn against Him? In a perfect situation, where did the first "germ" of sin originate?

Among the perfect creatures made by God were spirits, or angels. One of these, known as Satan, or Lucifer, or the devil (and by various other names), rebelled against God and committed the first sin. His will was set in opposition to God's will. From that time forward there was no longer harmony of wills between God and all of His creatures, but the will of Satan was in conflict with the will of God. He led other angels to rebel against God. Consequently, the wills of many became opposed to the will of their Creator. Some key Scripture



verses on this subject are I John 3: 8; 2 Peter 2, 4, and Revelation 12: 7 - 9.

We know that sin originated when Satan willed to exercise his God-given option of freedom to turn away from God. What motivated him? How could this happen in a perfect environment? Koehler simply says, "How this could be, we do not know."<sup>8</sup> An interesting turn of thought is suggested by Barnhouse. He writes, "Iniquity came by what we might term spontaneous generation in the heart of this being."<sup>9</sup> In his dogmatics Aulen expresses concern regarding being "satisfied with an ultimate dualism" and seems uncomfortable with the entire idea of endeavoring to trace evil to its origin.<sup>10</sup> He says, "The purely speculative question about the origin of sin is foreign to faith."<sup>11</sup> Theodore Nickel writes that "Scripture . . . leaves the question unsolved: How did evil originate."<sup>12</sup>

The third chapter of Genesis tells us that our first parents exercised their free wills and sinned. How this happened is clearly set forth in the Biblical account. Eve was tempted and seduced by the devil, who acted through the serpent. She succumbed, and in turn tempted Adam. He also did what God had said they should not do. This was far more serious than merely eating forbidden fruit. Their whole attitude toward God and His will was involved and affected. Whose fault was it that this happened? Koehler writes, "Being perfect, Adam and Eve could have successfully resisted . . . but of their own free will they yielded to the temptation. . . and are, therefore, responsible for their transgression."<sup>13</sup> Schmid says, "Our first parents . . . having abused the freedom of the will, violated the divine prohibition concerning the not eating of the fruit of the tree."<sup>14</sup> Quenstedt calls their first sin "voluntary apostasy from God their Creator." He writes, "they transgressed of their own accord."<sup>15</sup>

Adam tried to blame God. He said to his Creator "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the fruit of the tree, and I ate" (Gen. 3: 12). Nickel says that Adam "thus laid the blame for his fall, first on his wife, but secondly and chiefly on God."<sup>16</sup>

Is God somehow, or at least in a sense, the cause of sin? Lutheran teachers are agreed that God is not. In the Augsburg Confession, Lutherans maintain "although God does create and preserve nature, yet the cause of sin is the will of the wicked, that is, of the devil and ungodly men."<sup>17</sup> This agrees with the words in I John 2: 16 "all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the pride of life is not of the Father." John T. Mueller wrote, "According to Scripture the external, or remote, yet principal, cause of sin is Satan, who sinned first and then seduced man into sin . . . while the internal and directly efficient cause of sin is man's corrupt will, which permits itself to be enticed into sin by Satan."<sup>18</sup> He cites the following Bible references: Genesis 3: 6, 7; John 8: 44; II Corinthians 11: 3; and Revelation 12: 9. Quenstedt notes that the intellect and will of the first man was the cause of sin "not from any defect therein, which could not exist in an unfallen state, but by way of accident, in consequence of his wonderings and departure from God, through seduction from without."<sup>19</sup>

"But," one might ask, "Why did God appear to assume a passive role when men fell? Why did He not prevent it?" The simple answer is given by William F. Arndt. He writes, "We can understand why God did not compel man to resist Satan's temptation. A righteousness resting on compulsion and not having the support of one's own approval and will is no righteousness at all."<sup>20</sup>

Eugene F. Klug reports that in some of his writings Martin Luther takes exception to the idea that human will was free before the fall. He says

Luther held that man, even in his pristine purity was not free, but the dutiful servant of his Creator, Who alone was free and Whom he served in a purity and holy obedience with joy, and willingly . . . . He had stated unequivocally in Heidelberg Thesis 15: 'Nor was free will able to remain as a realizable potentiality, not to speak of making any progress toward the good'.<sup>21</sup>

He says that Luther's commentary on Genesis is evidence that Luther held this position to the end of his life. He also quotes Luther "'Free-will' is obviously a term applicable only to the Divine Majesty . . . . So it befits theologians to refrain from using the term when they want to speak of human ability, and to leave it applied to God only."<sup>22</sup> In other writings Luther uses the term "free-will" with reference to human beings. For example, in his book "The Bondage of the Will" he makes the statement, "I know that 'Free-will' can by nature do something; it can eat, drink, beget, rule, etc."<sup>23</sup>

Some of the problem in discussing freedom of the will among Lutherans may be semantic in nature. Schmid writes that "the Dogmaticians distinguish a three-fold condition, 'the state before the Fall, the state of corruption, the state of reparation'." He then says, "In each of these conditions free-will is a different thing."<sup>24</sup> Chemnitz observed in his day that "There is a great diversity among ecclesiastical writers, some affirming, others denying the freedom of the will."<sup>25</sup>

The fall into sin which was occasioned by Adam and Eve freely exercising their wills in disobedience of God has brought with it tragic consequences

for the entire human race. All have been affected by it. Since then all of humanity has been depraved. Hollaz says

Our first parents are the proximate cause of the original blemish, from whose impure nature the original stain has flowed into our hearts. Everything follows the seeds of its own nature. No black crow ever produces a white dove, nor does a ferocious lion beget a gentle lamb; and no man polluted with inborn sin ever begets a holy child.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise the Augsburg Confession declares "since the fall of Adam, all men begotten in the natural way are born with sin, without the fear of God, without trust in God, and with concupiscence."<sup>27</sup> The writers of the Formula of Concord say that

original sin . . . . is . . . . a deep, wicked, horrible, fathomless, inscrutable, and unspeakable corruption of the entire nature and all its powers, especially of the highest, principal powers of the soul in the understanding, heart, and will, so that now, since the Fall, man inherits an inborn wicked disposition and inward impurity of heart, evil lust and propensity.<sup>28</sup>

In the Smalcald Articles, Martin Luther wrote, "This hereditary sin is so deep and horrible a corruption of nature that no reason can understand it, but it must be learned and believed from the revelation of Scriptures."<sup>29</sup> Luther based his statement on Psalm 51: 5; Romans 5: 12ff; Exodus 33: 3; and Genesis 3: 7ff. Other Scriptures frequently cited by Lutherans are John 3: 5.6; Romans 3: 23; and Ephesians 4: 22.

The depraved human condition has had a pronounced effect on the freedom of the will. Man still has a will, but as Hutter says, "man has not lost his will, but the soundness of it."<sup>30</sup> F. Albrecht wrote, "The natural will of fallen man is perverse, is against the will of God."<sup>31</sup> The will of natural man is not what it once was. It is now only partly free. It is also partially in bondage.

It is in spiritual matters that the will of natural man is in bondage. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says, "we do not ascribe to free will these spiritual matters; namely, truly to fear God, truly to believe God, truly to be confident and hold that God regards us, hears us, forgives us, etc."<sup>32</sup> Also, the Formula of Concord states

the Scriptures deny to the intellect, heart, and will of the natural man of aptness, skill, capacity, and ability to think, to understand, to be able to do, to begin, to will, to undertake, to act, to work, or to concur in working anything good and right in spiritual things as of himself.<sup>33</sup>

Other Lutherans agree with these statements from the Book of Concord. Chemnitz briefly says, "in spiritual acts there is no liberty, the will not being free."<sup>34</sup> Quenstedt writes

the power of the unrenewed man, both in intellect and will, whether from the beginning, or continuing, or completing . . . . entirely spiritual acts . . . . are not only bound, impeded or even weakened or broken, but altogether destroyed, lost, extinct, and a nullity.<sup>35</sup>

The Lutheran writers draw their doctrine that the will of natural man is bound in spiritual matters

from the Bible. Some of the Bible verses to which they refer also show the help which God supplies by His Holy Spirit. By nature we cannot of ourselves will what is for our spiritual good, but God the Holy Spirit can and does beneficially influence and empower us in this regard. An important verse is I Corinthians 2: 14, K.J.V. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." In II Corinthians 3: 5, K.J.V. Paul says, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." He says in Philippians 2: 13, K.J.V., "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Again in I Corinthians 12: 3, K.J.V., the Apostle declares, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost."

Rightly the conclusion is reached in the Formula of Concord

before man is enlightened, converted, regenerated, renewed, and drawn by the Holy Spirit, he can of himself and of his own natural powers, begin, work, or concur in working in spiritual things and in his own conversion or regeneration just as little as a stone or a block or clay.<sup>36</sup>

Schmid stated that natural man "cannot of his own accord even cherish a desire for salvation and a change of his present depraved condition."<sup>37</sup> Theodore Graebner said it briefly in one sentence, "Man has absolutely no free will whatsoever in spiritual matters."<sup>38</sup>

The natural human will is bound only in spiritual matters. In other areas of life man has freedom of

will.<sup>39</sup> This is vitally important, for as Schmid points out, freedom of the will still belongs to man since the Fall "for without this he would cease to be man."<sup>40</sup>

In the Augsburg Confession we read that "man's will has some liberty to choose civil righteousness, and to work things subject to reason."<sup>41</sup> Expanding on the thought of the Augsburg Confession, the Apology of the Augsburg Confession says

The human will has liberty in the choice of works and things which reason comprehends by itself. It can to a certain extent render civil righteousness or the righteousness of works; it can speak of God, offer to God a certain service by an outward work, obey magistrates, parents; in the choice of an outward work it can restrain the hands from murder, from adultery, from theft.<sup>42</sup>

The Apology gives a reason for this, "Since there is left in human nature reason and judgment concerning objects subjected to the senses, choice between these things, and the liberty and the power to render civil righteousness, are also left."<sup>43</sup>

There is unanimity of agreement of this subject among Lutheran writers. Luther himself wrote that natural man has a

Free-will . . . . in respect . . . . of those things which are below him: that is, he may be allowed to know, that he has, as to his goods and possessions the right of using, acting, and omitting, according to His free will.<sup>44</sup>

Luther's partner, Philip Melanchton, said

there remains in the nature of man a certain judgment and choice of things which are objects of reason or sense, there remains also a choice of external civil works, wherefore the human will is able by its own powers, without renovation, to perform in some way the external duties of the Law.<sup>45</sup>

Those expressing much the same thought include (among others) Chemnitz, Gerhard, Graebner, Hollaz, Mueller, Pieper, and Quenstedt.<sup>46</sup>

Hutter makes an interesting division of the actions of people. He works with three categories: "evil, viz., those forbidden by the moral law; mediate, or indifferent; and good." He divides the mediate into three parts: 1) as they pertain to the condition of our nature (standing, eating, sleeping, drinking, etc.), 2) as they pertain to our civil and domestic conduct (buying, selling, going to law, following a trade, etc.), 3) as they pertain to the external government and discipline of the church (teaching and hearing the Word of God, observing certain ceremonies, receiving the sacraments, etc.). Concerning good actions he makes a two-fold division: 1) those morally good (living honestly, giving everyone his due, etc.) and 2) spiritually good (having the proper regard for the worship of God, for true religion, and the eternal salvation of souls). He says that the unregenerate have liberty of the will in doing all except the very last mentioned -- spiritually good.<sup>47</sup>

The writers of the Lutheran confessions hold that even though, by nature, people can exercise their free wills to attain civil and external righteousness, "it is false to say that he who performs the works of the commandments without grace does not sin."<sup>48</sup> The reason stated in the Agassburg Confession is "human hearts without the Holy Ghost are



without the fear of God; without trust toward God, they do not believe that they are heard, forgiven, helped, and preserved by God. Therefore they are godless."<sup>49</sup> Two Scripture passages are cited. "Neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7: 18, K.J.V.). "Without faith it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11: 6, K.J.V.). Nickel explicitly says

Even when natural man chooses that which is outwardly good . . . . civic righteousness, feeding the hungry, caring for the destitute . . . . he is never able to will and do them out of a right and God-pleasing motive.<sup>50</sup>

Mueller writes that

the externally good deeds of natural man do not flow from the true love of God . . . . but at best from natural sympathy or compassion and similar causes, though generally such 'good works' have their source in vainglory and work-righteousness.<sup>51</sup>

He bases his statement on Ephesians 2: 12 and Matthew 23: 25 - 28.

Even though natural man enjoys freedom of the will, the Missouri Synod catechism says that according to the Scriptures man is by nature "spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God."<sup>52</sup> Three Scripture passages are adduced as proof. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Cor. 2: 14). "You were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1). "The carnal mind is enmity against God" (Rom. 8: 7). The will of natural man is slanted toward that which is evil. Natural man cannot be neutral as far as good and evil are concerned. Pieper says

It is psychologically impossible for man, endowed with intellect and will, to remain neutral even for a moment. If his mind and will are not attached to God, they are attached to some creature, and that is apostasy from God.<sup>53</sup>

A. D. Mattson writes, "If man is sinful by nature, the quality of his willing is sinful."<sup>54</sup> Nickel states that

the will of man is . . . . totally depraved. It is not only spiritually dead and hence unable to will anything that is pleasing to God, but it is also carnally alive in active opposition to the Law of God.<sup>55</sup>

Sin not only robbed man of the freedom of his will in spiritual matters, it also brought with it a curse upon the world and humankind.

There is a curse upon the world. The words of God to Adam were "cursed is the ground because of you . . . . thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to you" (Gen. 3: 17.18). Nickel says, "the one sin of Adam affected the world. It brought with it thorns and thistles, sickness and sorrow, poverty and crime, war and bloodshed. . . . all the horrible iniquities throughout all her generations."<sup>56</sup> With sound basis, Paul wrote to the Romans, "the whole creation has been groaning . . . . together until now" (Rom. 8: 22).

Sin brought the curse of death. God had said, "in the day you shall eat of it you shall die" (Gen. 2: 17). Mueller writes that these words were "literally fulfilled since spiritual death followed immediately upon the transgression, and our first parents were at once subject to temporal and eternal death."<sup>57</sup> In Romans, Paul says, "Death spread to all

men because all men sinned . . . . the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 5: 12; 6: 23). Erwin Kurth makes the observation, "Sin and death are merely different stages or phases of one and the same thing. Sin is death begun; death is sin finished, worked out to its logical conclusion."<sup>58</sup> Nickel traces the development of sin's results as

the continuous and general dissolution of our mortal bodies, the constant corruption and decay of strength and health, ending finally in . . . . physical death; and--unless we accept Christ--this physical death will finally end in the eternal separation of the creature from the Creator in the torments of the damned.<sup>59</sup>

Accepting Christ makes the difference in human life. In the next chapter God's salvation will and how we can enter into a saved relationship with Him will be discussed. Only through the relationship that is established by the operation of the Holy Spirit through Jesus Christ can people proceed to true and complete freedom of the will. Mattson says

The highest type of freedom is Christian freedom . . . . Christian liberty consists in the agreement of the human will with the divine. When the human will has been laid hold of by the divine and man comes to want to do the things which God wants him to do . . . . man is free and has attained to the highest type of freedom. He is free by being bound to God.<sup>60</sup>

(To be continued)

## REFERENCES

Reference footnotes in the paper are numbered in sequence as they appear in each chapter. Bibliographical items are numbered alphabetically. Thus the bibliographical reference for footnote number one is 13: 105. Bibliography item number 13 is the book "Our Sovereign God," edited by Boice. The number 105 is the book page number. When the footnote reference is to a multi-volume work, the item number and volume number are separated by a comma. Thus, for example, the reference 82, 1: 464 is to Pieper's Dogmatics, volume 1, page 464. English Biblical references are not included in the numbering system, but are run into the text as they occur.

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THE AUGSBURG CONFESSION AND THE  
ENGLISH REFORMATION\*

Not many Americans have a historical awareness of the main details of the English reformation. Yet most would be able to identify Henry VIII, the English king, who had six wives and treated most of them badly.

It seems grotesque to relate Henry's lurid career to a reformation of religion in England, but each of Henry's wives, and all three of his children, born of three different wives, were to play crucial roles in the development of Protestantism in England. A quick look at these six wives and three children, two daughters and one son, will give us the needed background for our review of the historical relationship between the Lutheran Augsburg Confession and the Anglican Thirty Nine Articles.

1. Catharine of Aragon was the daughter of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain and, like her parents, a determined Roman Catholic. Her marriage to Henry VIII was a dynastic arrangement in the making of a political alliance between England and Spain. She gave birth to one daughter, the future Queen Mary of England. A succession of five still-born sons convinced Henry that the marriage was under a curse because it had been entered into under an improper papal dispensation. When the pope refused to grant Henry an annulment of the marriage, England and its king took the steps that permanently severed

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\*Delivered at Bethany Lutheran College on November 4, 1982.

relationships between the Church of England and the papacy.

Catharine's daughter, Mary, became the queen when her brother Edward VI died in 1553. She married Philip of Spain, the son of Emperor Charles V and the grandson of Ferdinand and Isabella and undertook to restore Catholicism to England. Her determined persecution of Protestants sent six hundred exiles to the European strongholds of Calvinism. When Mary died in 1558 these exiles returned to England to give the Anglican Church the permanent legacy of a modicum of Calvinistic theology.

2. Anne Boleyn, Henry's second wife, contributed toward opening wide the doors that first admitted Protestantism into England. Cardinal Wolsey, Archbishop of York and Papal Legate, had served the Catholic orthodoxy of the first ten years of Henry's reign. When he was unable to secure the annulment of Henry's marriage to Catharine, Wolsey fell from power and was replaced by Protestants in the counsels of the king. Anne Boleyn's family had Protestant leanings and their influence brought Thomas Cranmer and Thomas Cromwell into roles of great influence in the second third of Henry's reign. These two men entered into fruitful conversations and negotiations with Lutherans in Germany that ultimately brought significant elements of the Lutheran faith into the Thirty Nine Articles. This final definition of the formal faith of the Church of England was to draw, as we will demonstrate, from the Lutheran Augsburg Confession of 1530.

Elizabeth, Anne Boleyn's daughter, succeeded her sister Mary on the English throne and reigned from 1558-1603. She consolidated English theology in stiff resistance to Puritan Calvinism, conceding only a compromised doctrine of the Lord's Supper broad enough, as she hoped, to entice both Calvinists



and Romanists into the Anglican communion. Elizabeth's religious settlement of 1559 established the Church of England in its present basis. Anglicans, since then, have referred to the Via Media, the middle road of the Anglican settlement. Actually her settlement was a compromise designed to draw a broad spectrum of religious thought into a single theology. When Lutherans were at work forging the terminology of the Formula of Concord of 1577, Elizabeth was sending emissaries to Germany armed with bribes to prevent the adoption of the Formula. Her interest lay in the creation of a unified European Protestantism that might become a force capable of resisting papal power.

3. Jane Seymour became Henry's third wife in 1537, the year after the deaths of his first two wives. Jane had been attached to Henry's court as lady-in-waiting to both of Henry's first two wives. She was queen only long enough to give birth to Henry's only son, Edward VI, and died twelve days later.

Edward VI was ten years old when his father died. England was ruled by a council of Regency until Edward died at age 16. During the last years of his life Henry had dallied both with Protestant and Catholic theology. No one knew quite where he stood. But, when his death approached, he called for his friend Thomas Cranmer and died on January 28, 1547, the Archbishop's hand in his grasp. The king left a will naming a council of regency to rule during Edward's minority. Every member of that council was a Protestant. All Catholics had deliberately been excluded. The result was that during the six years of Edward's minority Protestantism, under Cranmer's leadership, made steady progress. Cranmer wrote the Forty Two Articles, a precursor of the Thirty Nine Articles and worked on the Book of Common Prayer.

4. Anne of Cleves, Henry's fourth wife, was the sister of Sybilla, the wife of the Saxon elector, John Frederick. The marriage alliance was arranged by Thomas Cromwell, a Protestant, and Henry's chief minister, who sought to bring the German Lutherans and English Protestants into a single orbit. The marriage, just barely consummated, was annulled because political events in Europe had suddenly made the military agreements of the alliance a dangerous prospect. Henry set Anne of Cleves aside in order to justify the breaking of his military covenant of the alliance. He provided handsomely for Anne's needs, giving her a ranking only below that of his own children.

5. Catherine Howard, the king's fifth queen, was thirty years his junior. She was executed for adultrous dalliances after two years of marriage. The marriage was a feature of the Henrician reaction in which English Catholics sought to repudiate Protestantism and restore the Catholic faith in England. The execution of Catherine Howard marked the failure of a last-ditch effort to remove Protestantism from the English scene.

6. Catherine Parr, a Protestant, Henry's sixth and last queen proved to be more a faithful nursemaid than wife to the king. She attended lovingly to his needs, comforted him in his illnesses, and gave motherly attention to the interests and welfare of the king's three children. A Protestant, she supported the English reformers and deflected some of Henry's ill-advised ventures.

Let this suffice as a review of the historical setting of the English reformation and as a brief account of the relevance of the king's marriages to the religious changes in England during the sixteenth century.

We generally take the posting of Luther's 95 Theses at Wittenberg in 1517 as the beginning of the Reformation in Germany. We may similarly account the publication of Erasmus' edition of the New Testament in 1516 as the beginning of the reform movement in England. The book included the New Testament in Greek and Latin texts in parallel columns. English students bought the book for the sake of the elegant Latin of Erasmus and then were moved by the message of the gospel in the New Testament. Besides becoming an effective tool of scholarship, invaluable to Luther in his work as a translator, it became the inspiration for the conversion of many Cambridge students.

In the annals of the University of Cambridge for the year 1517, the only event considered worth recording that year was a curious incident. John Fisher, the Bishop of Rochester and the dean of the university, had posted a notice informing the student body of an indulgence available to them. A Norman student, Peter Valence, tacked a notice on the board ridiculing the indulgence. Luther was not alone in attacking indulgences. After 1517 a flood of Lutheran literature was making its way across the English Channel.

During the 1520's Luther and Henry VIII debated the Sacramental system of Roman Catholicism. Bugenhagen, a Wittenberg reformer, wrote a friendly letter to the English in defense of the gospel preached by the reformers. He assured the English that Lutheranism did not advocate anarchy and that it was loyal to properly constituted civil authority. William Tyndale, at work in Bible translation in the Netherlands, sent doctrinal discourses, one of justification, back to England.

During the 1520's the unique cauldron of the chemistry of reform in England was the University

of Cambridge. More than a hundred men can be named among the university students of that time who were to be involved in the English reformation. Their leader was Robert Barnes, a university scholar who had also attended the University of Louvain for three years and had returned to his Augustinian house to be named its prior and to receive the D.D. degree from Cambridge by incorporation.

Nearly twenty-five of those students were later to suffer martyrdom. The makers of the English Bible were there, Tyndale, Coverdale, and their associates as well as John Rogers involved in publication of later Bible translations. Robert Barnes and others of them placed their lives in jeopardy by selling Tyndale's Bibles, Thomas Cranmer was at the university in the 1520's with a dozen of the men who assisted him in compiling the Book of Common Prayer. So too were several of the men who assisted in producing the doctrinal formulations of the reign of Henry VIII as well as those who helped form religious policy in the reign of Edward VI. At least twenty of these Cambridge men were destined for episcopal appointments. Thomas Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury during the reigns of Henry and Edward. Matthew Parker held that office under Elizabeth. Forty of the Cambridge men of the 1520's proceeded to doctoral degrees and twenty were bachelors of divinity. Certain it is that these men changed the university curriculum at Cambridge and laid the enduring foundation for the reformation of the Church of England. That foundation was to have as its first component the Augsburg Confession of 1530. We trace, herewith, the sequence of doctrinal formulations from the Lutheran Augsburg Confession to the Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England.

1. The "Sentences" of Robert Barnes. This man, the intellectual and pastoral leader of the Cambridge men just referred to, was the first of the English reformers to recognize the importance of the Augsburg Confession. At the time of its adoption he was at Wittenberg, an exile from English persecution. The ink was barely dry on the first printed copies of the Augsburg Confession when Barnes wrote the small book commonly referred to as the "Sentences." Published in 1530 with a preface by Bugenhagen, it ran to about 150 pages. It might be described as a debater's manual with nineteen brief doctrinal statements fortified by biblical texts and references to the church fathers. It was something like the "Catalog of Testimonies" included in the Triglot Concordia. The Lutherans thought well enough of the book to publish a German translation by Bugenhagen in 1531. Our interest in the book lies in the fact that all but two of the nineteen titles in the book reproduced material in the Augsburg Confession. It thus became the first of the English doctrinal formulations based on the Augsburg Confession.

2. The "Supplication" of Robert Barnes. This is the abbreviated title of Barnes' second work. A first edition was published in Antwerp in 1531 and a second amended and expanded version was published in London in 1534. This issue was reprinted in 1555. The definite edition, including all the essays of the 1531 and 1534 books, were edited by John Foxe and published in 1572 in a single large volume, a compendium of the writings of Tyndale, Frith, and Barnes.

In view of the fall of Thomas Wolsey, Barnes' former persecutor, and changes in the religious atmosphere in England, Barnes considered the time propitious for an appeal to the king from the unjust charge of heresy lodged against him by

Wolsey, the Cambridge authorities, and the English Bishops. To this appeal to the king he added fifteen doctrinal essays. One of them had the title, "It is lawful for all manner of men to read Holy Scripture." All the rest of the essays were drawn from the subject matter introduced in the Augsburg Confession. The first essay was a comprehensive discussion of the doctrine of justification. Other subjects treated were the doctrine of the church, the keys, free will, ecclesiastical rites, communion in both kinds, the marriage of priests, the cult of saints, and the mass. Through this book Barnes gave his English compatriots their first and mature exposure to Lutheran theology.

Richard Taverner, one of the Bible translators, wrote commentaries on the standard gospels and epistles and, in 1536, translated the Augsburg Confession into English so it could be seen at first hand in England. Suspected of heresy, he was interrogated and quickly dismissed "because he was just a musician." Hugh Latimer and others, encouraged by Barnes' public declaration of the Lutheran faith, were preaching the gospel the length and breadth of England. Latimer declared that none brought the gospel to the people with greater zeal and more moving effect than Robert Barnes, who preached on every possible occasion.

3. The Wittenberg Articles of 1536. By 1536 Henry VIII was moving dramatically in the direction of reform. He had been very happy to receive an invitation from the Smalcaldic princes to join them in a defensive league established to protect the evangelical faith. Henry's dignity was somewhat ruffled by the demand that all members of the league agree on subscription to the Augsburg Confession of 1530. He felt that he should have a voice in any confessional statement agreed to in an alliance to which he was joined.

After all, the Lutheran princes were his inferiors in rank. He was a sovereign king, they were the subjects of the Emperor Charles V. For that reason a discussion of doctrine was arranged. Henry sent the English theologians Nicholas Heath, Edward Fox, and Robert Barnes to the conference in Wittenberg. The Smalcaldic League was represented by Martin Luther, Melanchthon, Bugenhagen, Jonas, Cruciger, and others. The Lutherans considered it a summit conference and spared no expense or effort to make it a success. After the work of the commission was concluded, Luther expressed himself as fearful that dangerous concessions had been made to the English who had refused to accept the Augsburg Confession on its original form. He added that if the English king should be unwilling to accept the Wittenberg Articles, there would appear to be no point in further discussion. Internal evidence and some reference to Melanchthon's Loci suggest that he was the author of the articles. The Augsburg Confession itself was the principal source of material for the final version of the articles.

The Wittenberg Articles reviewed and included the substance of all the articles in the Augsburg Confession except: V. The Office of the Ministry; XII. Repentance; XVII. Christ's Return to Judgment; XIX. The Cause of Sin; and XXVIII. The Power of Bishops. Many of the articles were longer than their counterparts in the Augsburg Confession. Article IV on justification drew heavily from the Apology.

Henry absolutely ignored the work of the joint commission and derided it by publishing his own doctrinal statement. It was approved by Convocation under the title: "Articles Devised By The King's Highest Majesty to Establish Christian Quietness and Unity Among us and to Avoid Contentious Opinions Among Us." It is remembered as the Ten Articles of 1536.

4. The Ten Articles. Despite lack of official recognition much of the content of the Wittenberg Articles turned up in the Ten Articles. The book was divided into two equal parts. The first dealt with doctrine, including statements on God and God's Word, Justification, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. One article treated penance as a sacrament, another took up the doctrine of purgatory. With the exception of the second article on original sin, the Ten Articles evidence a close parallel to the first of the seventeen Wittenberg Articles.

The Ten Articles, in their totality, included much of Lutheran theology. Only prayers to the saints, prayers for the dead, and a modified view of purgatory ran counter to the Wittenberg Articles. Melancthon said the articles were "composed in confusion," yet Cranmer and his party had achieved much in realizing a doctrinal formula that acknowledged the basic premises of Lutheran thought. The articles were to be authoritative and read in English churches for the next seven years. A compromise it was, but it was a gain for Cranmer, Cromwell, and the English party of reform. It was an acknowledged loss to Stephen Gardiner and the Catholic party in England.

5. The Bishops' Book of 1537. Early in 1537 Henry had been agitated by religious disturbances in northern England and by the ominous threat of a general council to be held in Mantua. It was in this atmosphere of concern that he commissioned his bishops to produce a devotional and doctrinal manual that would be more effective and useful than the Ten Articles of the previous year. The work was done and the book appeared under the title, "The Institution of the Christian Man." Its compilers were Thomas Cranmer and other Protestant bishops as well as some who held to



traditional Roman Catholic views. It was cast in the mold of the medieval devotional and catechetical works that had been rendered obsolete by similar works coming out of Wittenberg. The Bishops' Book included an exposition of the Apostles' Creed divided into twelve sections (53 pages), The Seven Sacraments, greatly downgraded (48 pages), The Lord's Prayer (27 pages), The Ten Commandments (47 pages), and six pages on the Ave Maria. The statements on justification and purgatory, much watered down, were taken verbatim from the Ten Articles. The Bishops' Book turned to Luther's catechisms. The articles on three of the sacraments, confirmation, marriage, and ordination, were conformable to Lutheran doctrine saving the fact that the Lutherans did not consider them sacraments.

Ultimately the book was too long to become a popular manual. Moreover it was admittedly a compromise between Lutheran and Roman Catholic theology. Neither side greeted the book with enthusiasm. Yet it does reflect a continuing penetration of Lutheran theology into England. There was nothing distinctively English in the book. Where it departed from Roman Catholic theology it was in Lutheran terms. No non-Lutheran continental theology is apparent in the book. Where the Ten Articles had drawn from the Augsburg Confession the Bishops' Book was indebted to Luther's Catechisms. More Lutheran than Catholic the Bishops' Book played no small part in England's transition towards Protestantism. Though the king had commissioned the book he failed to give it formal authorization and it rested only on the authority of the bishops who had compiled it.

6. The Thirteen Articles of 1538. The Emperor Charles' action in convening a general council to meet at Mantua had the effect of drawing Henry VIII and the Lutherans into closer association.

When the council was aborted by differences between pope and emperor, the Anglo-Lutheran diplomacy was resumed. The Lutherans sent a delegation to meet with English theologians in London in 1538. It included Francis Burckhardt, vice-chancellor of the elector of Saxony, Dr. George Boyneburg, a nobleman of Hesse, and Frederick Myconius, superintendent of the church at Gotha. The English, who had hoped that theologians of high rank, including Melanchthon, would be appointed, were severely disappointed. Henry shows his displeasure by limiting the conclave to a discussion of doctrine and forbade the discussion of abuses in the church. He indicated his determination to resolve those problems himself.

The council of theologians therefore merely covered familiar ground, the first seventeen articles of the Augsburg Confession. Their completed work, known as the Thirteen Articles of 1538, did not treat the subject matter of the Augsburg Confession's article V, The Office of the Ministry, article VI, The New Obedience, and article XI, Of Confession. Time and space do not permit a detailed comparison of the Thirteen Articles with the Wittenberg Articles and the Augsburg Confession. Suffice it to say that the Anglo-Lutheran doctrinal formulas proved to be way stations between the Augsburg Confessions and later doctrinal formulas. Thomas Cranmer, the principal author of the later English formulations does not appear to have had the Augsburg Confession before him as he wrote. He did have the Thirteen Articles which were immediately derived from the Augsburg Confession.

The Thirteen Articles have a special interest for us because of the king's personal intervention in its production. An original manuscript copy of the document shows changes made by Henry himself, changes that reflect some theological understanding

and grasp of the issues involved.

7. The King's Book of 1543. After 1538 political considerations made Henry VIII renounce the Lutheran diplomacy of the 1530's. In 1540 he sent his Lutheran chaplain, Robert Barnes, to the fire at Smithfield. Thomas Cromwell, the principal agent of the king's Lutheran policy was sent to the hanging tree at Tyburn. Ann of Cleves was put on a royal pension and retired to live a life of ease in any one of three palatial residences. Roman Catholic courtiers took precedence at court and in the king's council.

Henry soon missed Thomas Cromwell, his extraordinarily competent minister. Bereft both of friends and advisors, challenged by foreign foes, he continued to confer with continental Lutherans until his death. He consistently urged his subjects to read their Bibles. Stephen Gardiner, now at the head of the privy council, was sent to the Imperial Diet of Ratisbon in 1541. He came back empty handed. At this juncture the king once more turned his hand to the formulation of another doctrinal statement. Known as the Kings Book of 1543, it had the formal title, "The Necessary Doctrine and Eru- dition of a Christian Man." Like the Bishops' Book it was compiled by the bishops under the leadership of Thomas Cranmer. It was not much more than a revision of the Bishops' Book. Somewhat shorter, it added a section on faith and another on free will. It enlarged on the doctrine of justification and added a section on good works.

A compromise, the King's Book was neither Lutheran nor Roman Catholic, but it conceded enough to enable each to give it a reluctant acceptance. It had minimal effect in England because, after the death of the king, the Archbishop of Canterbury neglected to promote it or encourage its use.

8. The Forty Two Articles of 1553. In 1544 Henry VIII had urged the English people to use faithfully "certain godly prayers and suffrages in our native English tongue" which had been composed by Thomas Cranmer. The following year the king issued his injunctions on the use of the King's Primer, the title then given to Cranmer's prayer book. The king said the book was "to be frequented and used in and throughout all places of our said realms and dominions, as well of the elder people, as also of the youth for their common and ordinary prayers. . . to the commodity of our loving and obedient subjects and edifying the same in godly contemplation and virtuous exercise of prayer." Thus was begun that imperishable classic of devotion, prayer, and worship, the English Book of Common Prayer.

Henry died, his hand firmly clasped in that of his best friend, his beloved Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury. With Henry's passing the mantle of religious leadership in England passed to the archbishop. Though he continued to develop and perfect the Book of Common Prayer for the rest of his life, it was now necessary for him to provide an enlarged statement of faith. The relaxed Protestant atmosphere of the reign of Edward VI enabled him to secure sympathetic assistance in developing the tentative Forty Two Articles of 1553. These articles retained the legacy of the Augsburg Confessions and added new articles, most of which were conformable to the Lutheran faith. Cranmer's objective was to submit a more complete confession than those circulating in Henry's reign. Anabaptist error and Roman Catholic aberrations, and other contemporary problems were dealt with.

The death of Edward VI and the accession of a Roman Catholic Queen Mary quickly scotched

Cranmer's liturgical and doctrinal projects as Mary proceeded to reestablish Roman Catholicism as the church of the English people. The Forty Two Articles had not been approved by Parliament so it was not necessary to revoke them. They were a dead letter. In her indefatigable zeal Mary supported the persecution of Protestant heretics and eventually brought Cranmer, the Archbishop of Canterbury to the stake. Six hundred exiles fled Mary's persecution, finding hospitable exile in the European strongholds of a developing Calvinism. After five years of fruitless effort to turn England back to its original Roman Catholic moorings, Mary died and was succeeded by her sister Elizabeth.

9. The Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England. Apart from considerations of social, economic, and political policy the new Queen Elizabeth knew exactly what she wanted in terms of her role as head of the English church. She would be Defender of the Faith as her father had been. She would have none of the austerities of the Swiss and Genevan faiths or the religious oddities of the radical sects. She rejected absolutely the pretensions of papal power and related elements of Roman Catholic doctrine. There is great significance in her love for the ceremony and the liturgical formalities of the medieval church and her determination to retain the hierarchy of its episcopal system. She accepted the Protestant development of her father's reign and gave to Matthew Parker, her Archbishop of Canterbury, the task of bringing the Forty Two Articles of Thomas Cranmer up to date.

His task was similar to that of the Lutherans who brought their Augsburg Confession up to date by the adoption of the Smalcald Articles in 1537 and the Formula of Concord in 1577. Parker's work

achieved Elizabeth's objectives in formulating a revision that disavowed Swiss and Genevan austerity and legalism, the crudities of the radical sects, and Roman doctrines and usages that had been condemned by the Lutheran Reformation. Only two of the Thirty Nine Articles are clearly Calvinistic, the articles on the Lord's Supper, and they were included in a form that had been approved by Cranmer, Bucer, and other European theologians associated with the English Reformation.

In addition to the documentation we have referred to, Matthew Parker's revision of the Forty Two Articles was influenced by another Lutheran confessional statement. It was the Confession of Wurttemberg which Lutherans in that city presented to the Council of Trent in 1552 as a declaration of the Lutheran faith. Looked at as a whole, and with the two exceptions noted, the completed version represents a statement that is conformable to Lutheran theology.

Stung by the insult of her excommunication by the pope, Elizabeth had a passionate desire to bring English Catholics into the church through the broad terms of the articles of religion. She was equally eager to bring English Protestants under a single banner. She did not succeed. Catholics, Puritans, and other non-conformists were to plague England's future. But she did succeed in creating the established Church of England which continues, even now, to hold its privileged position in the English monarchy.

Elizabeth's promotion of Thomas Cranmer's Book of Common Prayer is even more important than her role in the final phase of the development of the Articles of Religion. The Book of Common Prayer was Cranmer's previous translation of German Lutheran originals. Thus Luther's determination

to make minimal changes in medieval worship forms was effectively carried in England in Cranmer's literary artistry reflected in the Book of Common Prayer.

Elizabeth's emphasis, as we have seen, was on the form of worship rather than on the substance of the proclamation of God's Word. The compromise of the Thirty Nine Articles bears its bitter fruit in the characteristic latitude in the briefs of the Anglican clergy.

### Conclusion

We conclude this essay with a few observations:

1. The Church of England and her historians have taken great pride in the assertion that the Anglicans took a via media, a middle road, in the conflicts of the Reformation. They refer to an Anglican policy of comprehension designed to incorporate and accommodate the largest possible number of the English people in their communion. None of the apologists for Anglicanism have ever said that the middle road was the right and Scriptural course to follow, only that it was the best road for their purposes.

The Elizabethan Settlement was admittedly a compromise. As such it has suffered the bane of most compromises. First, the danger that the parties to the compromise would be less than content with the results of their agreement and, second, that the first compromise would beget future compromises until eventually all theological integrity is lost.

2. It has been the misfortune of Anglicans that it has produced no independent or first-rank theologians. As a result there is

nothing distinctively English about the Anglican faith in the sense that Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists and the radical sects espoused distinctive and characteristic beliefs. The Anglican faith as developed and stated in the 16th century in the Thirty Nine Articles was drawn primarily from Lutheran sources, and lightly and superficially from Roman Catholic and Calvinistic sources. As we have seen, the fabric of the Anglican faith was a revision of the Augsburg Confession of 1530 with later dependence on the Wurttemberg Confession of 1552. The Roman Catholic concept of church structure was retained with a Calvinistic modification of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

3. This negative evaluation of the doctrinal substance of the Anglican faith notwithstanding, our own Lutheran debt to the Church of England is immense. To a greater extent in England than on the continent, the production and publication of a vernacular Bible was the heart and soul of the Reformation. Tyndale, Coverdale, and a dozen other Englishmen gave us the exalted linguistic perfection that culminated in the familiar King James version of the Bible. They made the gospel sing. They gave external beauty to the inner glory of God's precious Word. They gave to the English language a literary style that has ornamented and glorified the literature we share with the English people. Anglican clergymen generally deliver shallow and disappointing sermons. Their reading of Scripture is usually an outstandingly edifying experience.

4. Despite the dubious value of the compromised via media of the English Articles of Religion, we are the richly endowed heirs of the English Reformation in its development of the liturgical



forms of our worship. During the formative years of the English Reformation, Thomas Cranmer was evolving the precious style of the Anglican form of worship. Taking catechetical and liturgical materials employed in Germany, Cranmer enhanced and glorified them and made the Book of Common Prayer, like the English Bible, one of the literary gems of the English language.

When an English speaking Lutheran Church developed in America, it simply adopted the Anglican collects, prayers, and liturgical forms without significant revision. A comparison of the liturgy in use in our churches with the Book of Common Prayer makes this strikingly clear. We shall continue to share with Anglicans the two great achievements of the English Reformation, the English Bible and the Book of Common Prayer.

-- N. S. Tjernagel

