



"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

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Journal  
of  
Theology

**Church of the Lutheran Confession**

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VOLUME 9

MAY 1969

NUMBER 2

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## —ESSAYS AND ARTICLES—

### THE BIBLE IN TRANSITION\*

We begin by quoting what is often considered a mistranslation of the King James Version: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious."<sup>1</sup> This translation is not so far afield as is commonly supposed. We are interested at the moment in the word "superstitious." We are against superstition. Under the Second Commandment we teach that it is a form of religion. Since we are so strongly set against superstition, it may come as a shock to suggest that perhaps we have helped create one.

As we go about our preaching and say in ringing tones: "Thus saith the Lord," the Bible on that pulpit is most likely to be the King James Version. And when we quote what we would have men regard as the literal Word of God, again most likely it is in terms of the word text of the King James translation.

It should not escape us what this might be doing to the minds of our people. Without too much thought, without too great a knowledge of the entire matter of translation and versions, without always fully understanding the English they are hearing, they could quite superstitiously attach the truth of God inseparably to the form in which that truth is before them, and abide nothing else. The form can become a fetish, and the use of anything else a sacrilege; and the pastor who uses another translation may become sus-

\* This essay by one of our contributing editors, appearing here with his permission and in somewhat revised form, was read to the pastoral conference of the CLC at Austin, Minn. in April 1969. Because it deals with a subject of immediate, vital interest and concern among us, we reproduce it in the Journal for closer study and consideration.

pect of liberalism, or at least of leaning in that direction. History shows that pastors have been degraded, stigmatized, and even forced out of their parish because of this.

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### I. Definition of the Word of God.

Before we go any further it might be well that we determine for ourselves just what is the Word of God. No doubt we feel that we readily know the answer to that question, and quickly reply with something that agrees in essence with the answer to question 13 in our commonly used catechism, "The Bible is the Word of God."<sup>2</sup> This simple answer we all accept. But in its simplicity it might be too simple. The questions immediately arise, "What Bible?" and, "In what sense do we limit the Word of God to the Bible?"

In defining the Word of God we basically mean the inspired writing of the Hebrew and Greek in the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments, which is the permanent inscripturated revelation of God existing among men. But we go on from this. To our people we speak of the Word of God in terms of translations. In catechetical instruction we find ourselves insisting on careful memorization of a translation because we want our children to know "exactly what the Word of God says." To be more precise we should perhaps speak in terms of "this form of the Word of God," lest we foster the fetish complex. Yet speaking of a translation as "Word of God" is not only acceptable but a necessary designation of the Word of God and in keeping with what we see in Scripture itself.

But dare we limit the designation "Word of God" to such translations as are currently in general favor and usage among us, the King James or Luther's German Bible? Here we enter into the entire broad field of translating, with all of its research, study and debate; but we cannot, once having allowed the term "Word of God" to be applied to translations, limit it to those to which we have historical or sentimental attachment. It is accepted and

agreed among us that translations can properly be called the Word of God, with the understanding that among them there well may be a varying degree of accuracy, clearness, and readability. There are good or bad translations.

Our definition of what is the Word of God, however, does not stop even with translations which are closely bound to the original languages. We speak of the words of men, apart from the original Scripture and its various translations, as the Word of God. Here we think not only of that form of the divine message which is written in sermons, essays, books, but of that which is spoken, prepared or unprepared, even in casual conversation, expressed in words and in a word order of man's own choosing. In this, the Word of God becomes something quite apart from a set, written text, and is seen rather as the eternal truth of God capable of being expressed in various ways. The content, the essence, is the deciding factor, not the particular words used. Are we out of line here? Are we ascribing too much to the ability of man, in particular regenerate man, that he can out of his enlightened mind set forth his own wording of the will of God? I think not! Such liberty is implied in the unqualified injunction to preach the Gospel. Thus we rightly call our preaching and teaching a presentation of the Word of God.

Out of this we get the picture that God has left us a permanent record of His holy will in an inspired Word, which is not the only way His truth can be expressed, but remains the source from which all truth comes, and by which it is judged. It is His will that this record remain among men until the end of time, and He Himself uses it as a continuing means of revelation. As time goes on and nations with their various languages come and go, the Word of truth has to be spoken in terms that men can understand, which betokens change and calls for translation. And yet, there dare never be a departure in content from the permanent norm, and by the very nature of things in this present evil world it must be used constantly for comparison and study, checking and rechecking, so that whatever might be said in translation or in words of our own choosing can have the divine imprimatur, "thus saith the Lord."

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## II. The history of some representative translations.

One of the expressed desires as to what should be found in this paper was a certain amount of history concerning the transition of the Bible through translation; not so much in terms of why a translation was made and who did it, but how it was received by those concerned. It is a highly interesting approach; but, although a book or two has been read, not much source material has been found on that particular point of view. Yet from the historical records on hand, certain conclusions can be drawn.

The Septuagint. Although the story of Aristeas, the Alexandrian Jew, that the Septuagint came into existence under the Egyptian ruler Ptolemaeus Philadelphus (285-247 B. C.), when 72 Jews from Jerusalem supposedly translated the Pentateuch in 72 days on the island of Pharos, is no longer accepted, it is agreed that at this time a translation was made by Alexandrian Jews from a manuscript brought from Jerusalem. However, the quality of the translation varied greatly, the later books in general considered inferior to the work done on the Pentateuch.

This translation was made to fill a definite need. The Jews of Alexandria, and really of all the Diaspora, under Greek influence were losing command of the Hebrew and needed their sacred book put into the language they were using and could understand. Thus we may safely judge that the Septuagint had ready acceptance among the Jews. We are told that it had great influence among them and was quite generally used in their midst. Some even regarded it as inspired. Of particular interest--and this really tells us something about translations--is that the apostolic writers of the New Testament in quoting the Old Testament "usually quoted from this current Greek version."<sup>3</sup>

Later in New Testament times, however, "when Christians in debate quoted the Septuagint against their Jewish adversaries, the latter awoke to the fact that their own regard for it was excessive, and therefore abandoned it and returned to the study and use of the original Hebrew

text."<sup>4</sup> We are told that one Rabbi Eliezer said: "He who teaches his son Greek is like one who eats pork."<sup>5</sup> In this connection it is also said that "this Septuagint version was regarded as sacred (inspired) Scripture by the Christians, who used it in their controversies with the Jews as equal in authority with the Hebrew original."<sup>6</sup> But out of this came another development. "The discovery was quickly made that the Septuagint was not always accurate; and this fact was particularly unpleasant when Jews quoted from the Hebrew against the Christian disputants who, through ignorance, were obliged to rely upon the Septuagint."<sup>7</sup> Because of this, Origen prepared his great Hexapla, which contained a corrected text, and thus helped the Christian apologist.

By way of summary we might quote: "Great is the historical significance of the Septuagint. It was the first attempt at translation upon so large a scale. This explains and excuses its errors. Greek and Hebrew are very dissimilar; and as the translators knew more about the former than the latter, they failed to present the deeper and truer sense of Scriptures, and therefore misled the Christian Church, which used their labors. But the Septuagint is of the highest importance for the criticism and history of the Hebrew text."<sup>8</sup> For our particular interest we take note of the tendency already at this early date to regard the translation being used at a particular time as inspired.

The Vulgate. One other ancient translation worthy of particular attention because of the position it held in the early New Testament church is the Latin Vulgate. It was not the first Latin translation. A version known as the Old Latin (Itala) existed already in the middle of the second century, but its origin is obscure. Evidently there were many revisions of the original translation, so much so that we read: "The great want of uniformity in the copies current in the latter part of the fourth century led to the revision undertaken by Jerome, which now bears the name of the Latin Vulgate."<sup>9</sup> This was authorized by Pope Damasus in 383.

Jerome was the most learned scholar of his day. We are told that he "proceeded cautiously, making as few changes as possible, so as not to arouse the opposition of those who, as he says, 'thought that ignorance was holiness.'"<sup>10</sup> That Jerome should make such a comment indicates that the problems of translators never change. Historians record that "Jerome's revision and new translation (finished 405) encountered much opposition, which greatly irritated his temper and betrayed him into contemptuous abuse of his opponents, whom he styled 'bipedes asellos.' But by inherent virtues, rather than by external authority, it passed into such current use that in the eighth century it was the Vulgate, the common version, in the Western churches."<sup>11</sup>

Although the Vulgate became the generally accepted version for perhaps the longest time of any, its acceptance by the rank and file of Christians was not a critical matter. It wasn't only that copies were rare and not available for common use, or that illiteracy was widespread and precluded its use, but that the church itself no longer rested its teaching on biblical authority and thus did not call upon it for witness and proof, and even discouraged and forbade its use by the laity. Although directed toward another translation this comment is fitting: "In trying to think ourselves into the position of Tyndale's opponents it is necessary first to realize that in the foreground of religious thought at the time was not the 'open Bible,' but the 'teaching church,' which held the Bible in trust for the edifying of her people. The Church was the sacred thing, the Divine Society founded by her Lord, coming down through the ages, one body, the centre of unity, the dispenser of the Holy Sacraments, the teacher of the people in their holy faith. She was ever to keep before them the Atonement of Christ in the great service of the Mass. She was to give the appointed Scripture portions in the Psalms and Sunday Gospels. Thus had she nourished religious life in the past ages when men never thought of an open Bible and were too ignorant to use one even if they had it. That Church with all her faults was still the central fact and any disturbing of

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her foundations would be fatal to religion.<sup>112</sup> This becomes more apparent especially in the history of English translations where church authorities fiercely fought the transmission of the Bible into the language of the people.

Luther's German Bible. For our purposes we could perhaps immediately proceed to a consideration of the development of the English translations; but we would like to make a digression, because of our background, and give some attention to the German translation of Luther. When we consider this, and also the English translations, we must realize that we are in Reformation times. The atmosphere is different. People are ripe for receiving the Holy Scriptures in their own tongue. Thus translations were eagerly sought, and were read and studied. With the Reformation began a new point of view. No longer was there an absolute rule of a hierarchical church, which served as a repository for Scripture and handed out doctrine according to its discretion, but a universal priesthood concept came into being with emphasis on the right and desirability of every believer having direct access to the revelation of God. Hence there arose a leadership most eager that all, from the greatest to the least, would have the Word of God in biblical record, in an understood language, in their hands for study and learning.

When we think of this we also take into account how God "worked things together" with men and nations that His saving message would again be openly known among men. Luther was the instrument for the doctrinal reformation, but the situation among nations, Germany over against Italy, the rivalry among all European powers, and the threat of the Turk, coupled with the revival of learning and the invention of the printing press, all coming together at about the same time, played a major role. In all this, the rise of the Turk and the capture of Constantinople forced Christian scholars from the Bible lands into Europe. They brought with them their manuscripts and knowledge of the biblical languages. This introduced a new phase into the whole matter of translating. It was at about this time that scholars again began to translate with reference to manu-



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scripts of the original languages and not only from previous versions. There is evidence that at this time even many of the clergy were so ignorant that the Latin Vulgate was to them the inspired Word; and many condemned as "heresy" the mention of a Hebrew and Greek original.<sup>13</sup>

We are well acquainted with the history of Luther's translation and how it was received. What is most singular about it is how it has endured as a translation. It wasn't the first German version, but from what we have been able to discover, to date, it might still be called the last, for nothing has appeared to take its place. Indeed, other German translations exist, some quite modern, and are used for study; but none have come even close to supplanting Luther's. No doubt this is because of Luther's special gifts and fitness to translate into his native tongue. "What he may have lacked in philology was compensated for by his eminent exegetical feeling or instinct, and by the fact that he had lived himself completely into the spirit of the Bible. His devout and pious soul was in true affinity with the Spirit that gave the living Word of God."<sup>14</sup> In this connection C. P. Krauth says, "And these gifts and graces as translator found their channel in his matchless German. In this he stood supreme. The most German of Germans, towering above the great, yet absolutely one of the people, he possessed such a mastery of the tongue, such a comprehension of its power, such an ability to make it plastic for every end of language, as belonged to no other man of his time, - and no other man since. His German style is the model of the scholar, the idol of the people. The facility in his choicé of words, the exquisite naturalness and clearness in the construction of his sentences, the dignity, the force and vivacity of his expression, his affluence of phrase, his power of compression, the rythmic melody of his flow of style have excited admiration to which witness has been borne from the beginning by friend and foe."<sup>15</sup>

In spite of this lavish praise it would not be quite correct to say that Luther's translation is without revision. He himself continued to revise his work until 1545. Since then, we are told, "after his death the various societies and editors that brought out the Luther version introduced chan-

ges consisting chiefly in adapting the language of the translation to that then current. This state of affairs produced a variety of Luther texts, which lack of agreement was keenly felt by the German Church.<sup>16</sup> In 1857 an effort to bring about a stable text was started by a General Conference of German churches, and the Canstein Bible Society was to undertake the work of revision. In 1883 they published the "Probe-Bibel," the text of which was quite generally adopted by other German Bible societies. It is said: "Owing to the wonderful hold which the Luther version has on the German mind, the work of the revision was exceedingly conservative."<sup>17</sup> And yet the comment is added: "The German Church did not take kindly to the revision."<sup>18</sup> Another revision of Luther's version "known as the 'Revidierte Bibel' appeared in 1892, but has not met with general favor."<sup>19</sup> No matter what was done however, all revisions were still considered Luther's translation; and thus it is to this day.

English Translations. The translation picture in the English world is quite different in its early years. No one translation took over as did Luther's. Not until the time of Wycliffe in 1375 did the entire Bible appear in English. Before that, sections were translated by such men as Caedmon, Eadhelm, Egbert, the venerable Bede, and Alfred the Great. It should be understood that the English language did not stabilize to any degree until after the Norman invasion. Gradually the Old Saxon and the Norman French grew unintelligible to the people, "and with the fusion of the two races a language grew up which was the language of England."<sup>20</sup> "It was toward the end of the 14th century that English began to be the language of literature. 'Sir John Mandeville's Travels,' one of the earliest English books, appeared in 1356, and Chaucer wrote toward the close of the century; therefore Wycliffe's Bible in 1383 was about as early as a version could be which was to retain its place among the English people."<sup>21</sup> As to its acceptance, it was welcomed by the people, but banned and proscribed by the church. "Possessors of it were hunted down like wild beasts," and "burned with copies of it around their necks."<sup>22</sup>

The next great English translation was Tyndale's (1525), some hundred years later; but in the meantime printing came into existence and changed the picture. Like Wycliffe, Tyndale faced opposition in his earnest effort to get an English Scripture into the hands of the people and was forced to flee to the continent to have his translation published, first going to Cologne, finally to Worms. An interesting sidelight on the printing of Tyndale's Bible showed up at a trial before Sir Thomas More. The Bishop of London, in order to prevent Tyndale's version from spreading through the land, sought to buy up copies at the source and burn them. When a question was asked the prisoner who was supporting Tyndale the answer came, "My Lord, I will tell thee truly, it is the Bishop of London that hath holpen us, for he hath bestowed upon us a great deal of money for New Testaments to burn them, and that hath been our chief succor and comfort."<sup>23</sup>

Tyndale's translation was the first in English to use sources other than the Vulgate. He had access to some Greek manuscripts, although they were not of much authority when compared with those now available. Of Tyndale's work this has been said, "Not only did he go back to the original languages seeking the truth, but he embodied that truth when found in so noble a translation that it has been but little improved on even to the present day. Every succeeding version is in reality little more than a revision of Tyndale's; even our present Authorized Version owes to him chiefly the ease and beauty for which it is so admired."<sup>24</sup>

But shortly after Tyndale's death (strangled and burned at the stake Oct. 6, 1536) the climate changed in England. With the proliferation that printing allowed it was impossible to stop the tide of translations which were so much in demand by the people. In quick succession additional translations appeared: Coverdale's, 1535, Matthew's, 1537, Taverner's, 1537, and then one under the Church's sponsorship, the Great Bible, 1539; sometime later came the Geneva Bible, 1557, which was the most popular of all that had so far appeared in England, to be followed in 1568 with the Bishop's Bible, which was the hierarchy's effort to counteract the popularity of the Geneva Bible. (At about

this time also appeared the Roman Catholic version, Douai, Flanders, 1582) If we are of a mind to complain today of being plagued with a rash of new translations which only confuse the people, we find that it is nothing new. Within 50 years seven complete translations appeared in England. However, we find no comment that this caused perplexity among the people of England. Perhaps in spite of the general lack of education they still understood something about translating. We are led to think that where people are confused about translations they are also lacking in knowledge and comprehension of the fact and need of translating.

Finally we come to a consideration of the King James or Authorized Version. Since its history is fairly well known we will omit going into it. We are well acquainted with its place in history. One comment worthy of note partly explains how it gained the position it did. Previous English translations all had notes, many of them highly polemical over against the ruling authorities both in church and state, and were reflections of private political and religious opinion. Obviously such notes annoyed and angered bishops and kings. In setting up procedures for writing the King James we read, "and last, but by no means least, that there should be no marginal notes, except for the explanation of the Hebrew and Greek words. This simple rule did probably more than anything else to make our Authorized Version the Bible of all classes of England, binding us together as a Christian nation by a tie which the strife of parties and the war of politics has since been insufficient to sever. Had the opposite course been adopted, we should now have probably the Bibles of different religious bodies competing in unseemly rivalry, each reflecting the theological bias of the party from which it came."<sup>25</sup> Another writer says much the same thing, "For nearly fifty years the Authorized Version contended with the Geneva version before it began to draw ahead. It is on record that the Pilgrim Fathers refused to have the Authorized Version on the Mayflower at all. Had the Geneva version dispensed with its heavily biased notes, it might well have been the accepted English version up to the present time."<sup>26</sup>

A few quotes illustrate how history has adjudged the King James. "For more than two centuries English Protestant writers have spoken of it in terms of almost unanimous praise - its 'grace and dignity,' its 'flowing words,' its 'masterly English style.'"<sup>27</sup> C.P. Krauth in his rather extravagant style says, "It is now and, unchanged in essence, will be perhaps to the end of time, the mightiest bond, - intellectual, social, and religious, - of that vast body of nations which girdles the earth, and spreads far towards the poles, the nations to whom the English is the language of their hearts, and the English Bible the matchless standard of that language. So long as Christianity remains to them the light out of God, the English Bible will be cherished by millions as the dearest conservator of pure faith, the greatest power of holy life in the world."<sup>28</sup> T.D. Woolsey has it thus: "no book can be written more fitted in style and expression to do its work, more truly English, more harmonious, more simply majestic."<sup>29</sup> A certain Father Faber, Anglican turned Roman Catholic, gives this tribute, "Who will say that the uncommon beauty and marvelous English of the Protestant Bible is not one of the greatest strongholds of heresy in this country? It lives on the ear like music that can never be forgotten, like the sound of church bells, which the convert scarcely knows how he can forego. Its felicities seem often to be almost things rather than words. It is part of the national mind, and the anchor of the national seriousness. Nay, it is worshipped with positive idolatry, in extenuation of whose fanaticism its intrinsic beauty pleads availingly with the scholar. The memory of the dead passes into it. The potent traditions of childhood are stereotyped in its verses. It is the representative of man's best moments; all that there has been about him of soft, and gentle, and pure, and penitent, and good speaks to him forever out of his English Bible. It is his sacred thing, which doubt never dimmed and controversy never soiled; and in the length and breadth of the land there is not a Protestant with one spark of religiousness about him whose spiritual biography is not in his Saxon Bible."<sup>30</sup> These are words of high praise and yet

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they carry with them that which is to be feared - the building up of the fetish complex that this writing, and none other, is the Word of God.

### III. The contemporary scene.

We have no particular quarrel with the high position accorded the King James. It merited its acclaim and served its day well, perhaps too well. 341 years of being unchallenged has given it a position not unlike that of the Vulgate in Reformation times, when in ignorance men thought the current, popular version like unto God speaking personally on Sinai. and that to tamper with it was to desecrate the very Name of God.

Here we might well consider the preface which appeared in Tyndale's Bible which set forth his reasons and motivation for making his translation. Tyndale was not a vain man. He did not translate as an end in itself, as a personal achievement. He continually made the offer to the church authorities who so vehemently opposed him that he would gladly withdraw from his activity of translating if only they would go about putting the Bible into the language of the people. The preface says: "...that if they perceive in any place that the version has not attained unto the very sense of the tongue or the very meaning of Scripture, or have not given the right English word, that they should put to their hands and amend it, remembering that so is their duty to do."<sup>31</sup> Those last words deserve more than passing attention. In them we see the Gospel preacher speaking, the one who loves salvation for sinners, who wants men to know God's revelation of redemption in Christ. Thus one modern, but conservative scholar says, "Evangelical Christians, who believe in an infallible Scripture verbally inspired, should be among the most urgent in insisting on a new translation based upon the most accurate Greek and Hebrew text possible."<sup>32</sup> And again, "It is exactly the devout orthodox believer in the full inspiration and authority of the Scriptures who ought to be the most insistent upon accuracy and who must prefer accuracy to beauty or tradi-

tion, or familiar phrases, or style."<sup>33</sup> And yet it is among the orthodox that the biggest problem in dealing with translations often arises. Having been firmly established in an eternal, unchangeable truth, they might be inclined to forget or overlook what may and even should be changed. Too often reaction to a new or different translation follows the pattern of the distinguished theologian who said that he would "sooner be torn to pieces by wild horses than have a share in that revision." But he was talking about the King James.<sup>34</sup>

The question of the need of a modern revision or a new translation of the English Bible is not new. It goes back at least one hundred years to the days preceding the making of the Revised Version. What applied then applies now, in an increased measure. The King James is not as accurate as translations now can be, and its language is sometimes obscure and misleading. Two things are involved. One has to do with the original languages - there are more and better manuscripts now available, textual criticism has improved, and more is known of the sacred languages, especially the Greek Koine; the other is simply this, that the English language is living and growing, and words and idioms have changed their meaning. It is not our purpose in this writing to document the foregoing. However, one might argue that all this is not too important. It could be pointed out that although there are 5000 differences between the Greek text basis of the King James and that of the Revised Standard Version, as one scholar says, "no variants turned up that requires a revision of Christian doctrine."<sup>35</sup> There is superficiality in this. Does any one among us question that where God's truth is concerned accuracy is paramount? And surely, what is written as translation should be in language commonly understood. The translators of the King James had this very much in mind when they wrote in their preface, "How shall men meditate in that which they cannot understand."<sup>36</sup> This is the strongest argument for replacement of their work. One present-day writer speaks of the King James on this point in rather strong terms, "It permanently keeps all who hear

Scriptures read avoidably misinformed as to what Scriptures really say."<sup>37</sup>

If an enlightened laity, acting with some independence in regard to Scripture, is to be desired, to recommend standing pat on the King James is a disservice to them. But having set this scene that something new is needed in English, the question immediately arises, what should be done about it. To pin-point the problem, we see no difficulty in the private use of translations. It is in the formal use of Scripture, in public worship and in instruction classes, memory work in particular, that the question arises. And although there are endless translations about us today, most of them are only of the New Testament. We are limited in formal use to possibly five translations of the entire Bible, the Authorized Version, the Revised Version, the American Revised Version, the Revised Standard Version, and in the near future the New English Bible. Of these, thinking in terms of what is contemporary, perhaps only the Revised Standard Version need be considered.

In answer to the question of what should be done, by the very nature of the situation one cannot avoid being subjective and can speak only of personal opinion. Here we admit we have no ready answer. To me the RSV is not the solution. I have no special liking for it. Perhaps the fault lies in the objectives sought in this revision, to retain as much as possible the style and beauty of the King James English and yet bring the wording up-to-date. To me it seems that they did too much of one and not enough of the other, and missed on both objectives. In spite of the fact that I must yield to the need for accuracy and clearness, I am a stylist and love the language of the King James. A good share of it is poetry. It has literary art. In this lies its charm and its strength. The RSV doesn't have it. It is flat, listless, it lacks "zing." If the beauty of the King James is to be retained we have to keep the Old English style, the endings and pronouns and word order. If a revision of that nature could be made, brought up-to-date, however, in accuracy and clearness, I might find it quite acceptable. The other possibility, and perhaps preferable,



would be a complete new translation in contemporary English. Lest we misunderstand, this was not the intention of the RSV translators. But we find that something of this nature is already in the mill. Evangelical scholars of our day have launched their own effort to publish a "Common Bible." "Some one hundred Bible scholars, working under the sponsorship of the 158 year-old New York Bible Society, have begun a new translation of the Scriptures. The group, working under the direction of the Committee on Bible translation, has as its aim the provision of the Scriptures in modern English. Every effort will be made to employ language which will communicate to the man on the street but which at the same time will be well chosen from the literary point of view. Translators will stress faithfulness to the text and unity of the parts of Scripture. They will strive to avoid theological and ecclesiastical bias, and through cooperative effort produce a translation which will be widely accepted by the Christian public and used as a standard version in churches throughout America and many English-speaking churches abroad."<sup>38</sup> Work has already begun. The Gospel of John is expected to be ready for publication by the fall of 1969. Since the men involved in this project are of conservative, evangelical, and for the most part Calvinistic, background, much the same as those who translated the King James, it could be that this translation would find better acceptance among conservative Christians than the RSV, the writers of which were suspect of liberalism.

Although it might be said that there is some urgency in the need for a new translation, I find for myself that, having once broken the thralldom of being bound to one set translation, the pressure is off. From this approach, during these days of transition the emphasis would be not so much on one translation or another, but on the entire concept of translating, the inescapable need of it, and all that is related to it, the setting of the canon, manuscript study and textual criticism, variant readings and interpolations, and all the problems involved. One might say that bringing all this to the attention of our people will only confuse them

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and undermine their confidence that we possess a sure Word of God. Facts are facts, and these exist. And we have little time for the proposition that some things pertaining to Scripture should be "reserved for the forum of the learned." In contrast to confusing, the other possibility is the development of better understanding of Scripture, with the ability to deal with and handle translations with profit. To us this is the more mature.

In contemplating the future of this matter, the words of J. Smyth seem very fitting. He speaks as one who over fifty years ago regretted that the Revised Version did not have better acceptance among the people. "It ought to have been a great success. It had more in its favor than any previous version... The old version holds the ground not only by the familiarity of its language but by its wonderful charm. It is universally accepted as a literary masterpiece, as the noblest and most beautiful book in the world. The new version is more accurate, more scholarly, more valuable. But it avails not. It lacks the literary charm... On the whole we may assume that far into the twentieth century the Authorized Version will still remain the popular Bible. The version that is to supersede it will come some day, but when it does it will have more than accurate scholarship. It will have in some degree at least the literary charm and beauty which for 300 years has brought the whole English world under the spell of the old Bible."<sup>39</sup>

Lest we lose sight of our overall objective, we must say that accurate translation for the sake of accurate translation is to us not an end in itself. It would be to a linguist but not to an evangelist. Our primary interest and concern must always remain this, that sinners find salvation in Jesus Christ. For that purpose we ever seek to overcome the barrier of the "unknown tongue," that as the Gospel sounds go forth the "unlearned" may say "Amen."

G. Sydow

## NOTES:

1. Acts 17, 22
2. Luther's Small Catechism (NWPB, 1946) p. 30
3. Companion to the Greek Testament, P. Schaff, pp. 17 and 23
4. Popular and Critical Encyclopedia, Vol. III, p. 2552
5. Companion etc., p. 10
6. New Standard Bible Dictionary, p. 934
7. Schaff - Herzog Encyclopedia, Vol. I, p. 280
8. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 280
9. Companion etc., p. 145
10. Ibid. p. 148
11. Ibid. p. 149
12. How We Got Our Bible, Smyth, p. 91
13. Ibid. p. 101, note
14. Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 51
15. Ibid. p. 52
16. Ibid. p. 50
17. Ibid. p. 51
18. Ibid. p. 51
19. Concordia Cyclopedia, p. 82
20. How We Got Our Bible, p. 58
21. Ibid. p. 58, note
22. Ibid. p. 77
23. Ibid. p. 99
24. Ibid. p. 107
25. Ibid. p. 130
26. Modern Versions, H. Dennet, p. 28
27. How, etc., p. 131
28. Lutheran Cyclopedia, p. 53
29. Ibid. p. 53
30. How etc., p. 131
31. How etc., p. 135
32. Examination and Evaluation of the RSV, p. 4
33. Ibid. p. 11
34. Ibid. p. 4
35. Ibid. p. 11

36. Modern etc., p. 27
37. Ibid. p. 31
38. Christian Heritage, Sept. 1968, p. 9ff
39. How etc., p. 152ff

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#### QUOTE

The Christian faith rests solidly on God's own revelation of Himself and of His will with respect to man. Divine revelation is an act of God, not subject as such to the correction of the philosopher. Divine revelation has, however, a human correlative, namely theology. Theology, as the word is here used, is the church's speaking and teaching about God and His will. It is not itself revelation, which is always God's activity, but the church's speaking and teaching based upon divine revelation and therefore subject to correction, where it may need correction, on the basis of divine revelation.

- Fred Kramer in Concordia Theological Monthly, Vol. XL, No. 4, p. 195.

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## == PREACHING THE WORD ==

### FOR LIGHT HEARTS AND FEET.\*

Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

Hebrews 12:1-3.

Fellow redeemed in Christ:

The apostle has just placed us into the midst of a large gathering of Old Testament believers, heroes of faith all of them, from Abel to the prophets. He has surrounded us with these faithful witnesses in order to encourage us in our faith. But at first one feels almost disheartened, for our faith by contrast appears so frail, so lacking in fruits. As we go about our daily tasks, our hearts are often heavy with the sense of sin and the feeling of inadequacy. As we pursue the callings which the Lord has entrusted to us, our feet frequently lag behind and fail to reach the important

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\* This sermon was addressed to the pastoral conference of the CLC on April 9, 1969.

goals lying before us.

But the apostle is bold to invite you and me to place our names alongside the names of these heroes of faith. Take your stand next to Abraham, who stepped so trustingly into an unknown future, guided only by the Lord's promise. Or next to Moses, who chose a life of suffering with the people of God, rather than an easy existence in the midst of the treasures of Egypt. Or next to the prophets, who for their faithful testimony to the Truth suffered cruel death at the hands of violent men. For these men and women were not heroes of faith because of anything they were in themselves or anything they did. They were by nature the same frail, corrupt children of Adam as we are. Heroes of faith they became through God's work in them. The Holy Spirit kept directing their eyes toward the Savior of promise, and in Him they received hearts confident in the hope of eternal salvation and feet ready to run the way of God's commandments.

The Holy Spirit is no less able to do the same for us today. May He therefore teach us well the uplifting lesson of our text:

FOR LIGHT HEARTS AND LIGHT FEET KEEP TURNING  
YOUR EYES TOWARD JESUS

I. Gain confidence from Jesus' complete concern for your salvation.

"The Author and Finisher of our faith," our text calls Him--the One who begins faith in the hearts of men and who brings it to its final perfection. Faith, of course, needs an object, something in which it can trust, and the object of saving faith is Jesus Himself. In Him we have the complete answer to what ought to be man's chief concern--sin and its terrible consequences. No longer can our sin rise up and condemn us; for, as we have learned so well during the Lenten season now past, "by His own blood Christ entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Heb. 9:12. No longer need death terrify us: "Forasmuch then as the children are par-

takers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Heb. 2:14-15. No longer need we hesitate to come into the presence of the holy God Himself, for we have been covered with the righteousness of Jesus' perfect obedience: "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; and being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him." Heb. 5:8-9. The hymnwriter sums it up well:

Jesus, in Thy cross are centered  
 All the marvels of Thy grace;  
 Thou, my Savior, once hast entered  
 Through Thy blood the holy place:  
 Thy sacrifice holy there wrought my redemption,  
 From Satan's dominion I now have exemption;  
 The way is now free to the Father's high throne,  
 Where I may approach Him, in Thy name alone.

The beginning of faith in men's hearts is the work of Jesus. Many there are, false Lutherans included, who say that man co-operates at least a little in coming to faith. Well, as one true Lutheran confessor put it, if man's kicking against the pricks, his obstinate striving against God is co-operation, then man co-operates with God. No, our coming to faith is God's work entirely; for, as Paul reminds Timothy, God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Tim. 1:9.

Lord, 'tis not that I did choose Thee;  
 That, I know, could never be;  
 For this heart would still refuse Thee  
 Had Thy grace not chosen me.  
 Thou hast from the sin that stained me  
 Washed and cleansed and set me free  
 And unto this end ordained me,  
 That I ever live to Thee.

The final perfection of faith is likewise Jesus' work. As the Son of Man who endured all temptations in His own body, He well understands the vicious attacks that are continually being made upon our faith. And as the Son of God who upholds all things by the word of His power, He is well able to nourish and protect that faith until our heavenly homecoming when faith shall become sight. For as Scripture assures us: "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." Heb. 4:15-16.

Be thankful that Jesus bears the complete concern for your salvation. Since our becoming and remaining heirs of eternal life depends only upon Him, and in no way upon our own weak selves, it is so completely sure and certain. That we may have this confidence in even fuller measure, Jesus is coming to us tonight and giving us that very body and blood which 2000 years ago He offered to His Father as a holy and complete sacrifice for our eternal redemption. Believe Scripture, then, when it assures you that Jesus "is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25.

Let this then be your daily exercise, to turn your eyes toward Jesus, the Author and Finisher of your faith. In Him you will keep finding the light-hearted confidence to confess:

If God Himself be for me,  
 I may a host defy;  
 For when I pray, before me  
 My foes, confounded, fly.  
 If Christ, my Head and Master,  
 Befriend me from above,  
 What foe or what disaster  
 Can drive me from His love?



My heart for joy is springing  
 And can no more be sad,  
 'Tis full of mirth and singing,  
 Sees naught but sunshine glad.  
 The Sun that cheers my spirit  
 Is Jesus Christ, my King;  
 The heaven I shall inherit  
 Makes me rejoice and sing.

- II. For light hearts and light feet, keep turning your eyes toward Jesus. Be encouraged, secondly, by the example of His patient endurance.

The prophet Isaiah calls Him "a man of sorrows"-- a most fitting title! And the cause of much of His grief during His sojourn on earth was "the contradiction of sinners" of which our text speaks. It would not have been so hard to bear if this opposition had come only from the heathen Gentile world, from Israel's Roman overlords. But leading this opposition were His own countrymen, fellow descendants of Abraham, to whom had been entrusted the promises of His coming. What sadness lies in those words of John's Gospel: "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not." Jn. 1:11.

But the depth of Jesus' sorrow came with the cross. For there He was called upon to accept the disgrace of death by crucifixion, to bear the most stinging and cruel revilings and slanders from the lips of those passing by beneath the cross, and above all to endure the agony of hell itself: "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" Matt. 27:46.

All this opposition, shame, and suffering, our text tells us, Jesus "endured"--He did not turn away from it, but patiently bore it. And where did He find the courage and strength needed for such endurance? We are given the answer: "... who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." In the midst of His deepest humiliation on the cross He was face to face with

the joy of the victory and success which lay before Him. He must have then recalled Isaiah's promise concerning His exaltation and the fruits of His victory:

Behold, My Servant shall succeed:

He shall arise, lift up Himself, and then be very high.

... it pleased Jehovah so to bruise Him, lay Him low:

For, once His soul had brought its sacrifice for guilt,

Then shall He see a seed, His days He will prolong,

And so the purpose of the Lord shall triumph by His hand.

Isaiah 52:13, 53:10.

On that very cross we hear Jesus expressing the confidence of success as He prays to His Father: "Save me from the lion's mouth: for Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare Thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee." Ps. 22: 21-22.

The patient endurance of Jesus the apostle now sets up as an example for us as we run that race which the Lord has set before us. This race is not going to be without its cross-bearing. How else are we to understand our Savior's words: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: ... And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." Matt. 10:16, 22. The words of the Apostle Paul are going to be true of every follower of Christ until the end of time: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." 2 Tim. 3:12. To be sure:

Crosses are hewn from different trees,

But all must have their calvaries. (Knowles)

But how quickly we grow weary and faint-hearted when the race becomes difficult with opposition and suffering. How often haven't we drawn back from following Christ faithfully in all things for fear of the unpleasantness and ridicule that might result? How frequently haven't we dragged our feet in going out into our communities to wit-

ness to others of our Savior, because the fruits of such witness seem so scanty in these last, evil days of the world. Haven't our prayers often lacked the fervency that should mark children of the heavenly Father? Have we at times even secretly looked for the day when a mission area or a struggling young school might close, or wished that we might be working in different and greener fields than those into which the Lord has placed us, because the going has become so rough?

Keep turning your eyes, then, toward Jesus, and be encouraged by the example of His patient endurance. For Him the cross was followed by the crown, and so it must be for us who are conformed to His image. Success shall be ours, so surely as Jesus Himself promises: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." John 14:12. Glory shall be ours, so surely as Scripture can already say to us: "Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Heb. 12:22. And see how our Savior tonight is our host, giving us His own body and blood in the sacrament. So surely will He in eternity feed us and lead us into living fountains of waters.

In this assurance lies the strength to follow the exhortation of our text: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us." Put away from yourselves, once and for all, the heavy weight of fear and worry that is causing your feet to lag as you carry forward your callings. Put away from yourselves the sin that so easily turns your attention away from the work you are pursuing. "Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet." Heb. 12:13. In short, exert yourselves to the utmost in striving toward the goal of your high calling in Christ Jesus!

For light feet, then, day by day keep turning your eyes toward Jesus, "who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." The victor's crown awaits you also:

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O faithful child of heaven,  
How blessed shalt thou be!  
With songs of glad thanksgiving  
A crown awaiteth thee.  
Into thy hand thy Maker  
Will give the victor's palm,  
And thou to thy Deliverer  
Shalt sing a joyous psalm.

Give, Lord, this consummation  
To all our heart's distress;  
Our hands, our feet, e'er strengthen,  
In death our spirits bless.  
Thy truth and Thy protection  
Grant evermore, we pray,  
And in celestial glory  
Shall end our destined way.

C. Kuehne



The JOURNAL OF THEOLOGY is published at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, by authorization of the Church Of The Lutheran Confession.

Subscriptions: \$3.00 per year, \$5.50 for 2 years, payable in advance.

Issues are dated: March, May, July, October, December.

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Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54701.

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## A CHAPEL ADDRESS

Luke 2:46-47: "And it came to pass that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

Somehow this famous scene seems like a miniature image of a functioning school, because it incorporates the two-fold activity of listening and inquiring which is, in fact, characteristic of a true growing process in human life. Our Savior, just entering His 'teens, is spending three days in an unusual school. He is in the Temple of His people, at the feet of Israel's teachers; He is being confronted with the faith, the traditions, the history of the world and of the nation to which, according to the flesh, He belonged. He is hearing - and asking. He is also answering.

One pauses to reflect upon what is happening to this basic principle of educational growth in our day, in our land. Many of our young people are attempting to turn the normal process upside down. They invade school campuses shouting questions and making pronouncements before they have truly listened. In fact, many refuse to listen at all to the voice of human experience, even as they are deaf to the voice of God.

Education begins with the wisdom of the past, not of the present. This does not require a blind following of tradition; but it does mean that we begin the learning process by drawing upon the fund of inherited treasures of knowledge. Rejecting this process in favor of instant wisdom, people of this generation chatter about the "new psychology" or the "new morality" who have never bothered to give a respectful hearing to the old. Being in a materialistic hurry and in love with the sound of their own voices, they close their ears to the answers of the past and flightily accept the slogans that happen to be in fashion.

But what do we hear if we do listen? Our Lord in

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the Temple heard much that was foolish and wrong; for He had teachers that did not understand the Scriptures. Jesus asked searching questions, and no doubt exposed the ignorance of Pharisees and Sadducees. But He could ask questions because He had a solid basis for them. He heard the Scriptures read and discussed. He built on the treasures of ancient wisdom. In them was the Truth.

That is the way we come to learn. We know what has been said by them of old time, so we do not speak in a vacuum of "today." We listen above all to the Scriptures and thus invite the Holy Spirit to guide us into all truth. In this light we review the thoughts and attainments, good or bad, of human experience. We listen to Plato before we listen to Freud, and we listen to Augustine and Luther before we get to reading Dr. Spock or Ann Landers. And then we begin to make value judgments, and come to certain firm conclusions. We learn to respect the finding of Solomon that "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord" (Prov. 21:30), and the assurance of the Psalmist that the man is a fool who puts his trust in princes (Ps. 118:9), and the judgment that he is a fool who despiseth his father's instruction (Prov. 15:5). We have solid substance for our convictions when we have studied the record and heeded the warning: "Remove not the old landmark" (Prov. 23:10).

More and more, then, we appreciate also the central place in all wisdom held by the supreme truth that in Christ we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

E. Schaller

# ==== PANORAMA =====

## A DOCTRINAL STATEMENT

The following resolution, adopted by the Church of the Lutheran Confession during its eighth convention, August 8-13, 1968, is recorded on page 43 of the convention proceedings:

### Doctrinal Statement

WHEREAS we presently have no brief statement expressing the doctrinal position of the CLC on the basic doctrines of the Bible, and

WHEREAS such a statement would be extremely valuable, especially in the mission fields,

BE IT RESOLVED that the convention direct the Board of Doctrine to have drawn up such a statement and submit it to the Book House for printing and distribution.

Pursuant to this directive the Board of Doctrine has addressed itself to the preparation of such a document, and is submitting the fruit of its labors in the following pages of the Journal.

The purpose of this printing in advance of final publication can be simply stated. The resolution of the convention describes the nature and purpose of the desired confession in broad terms. It is very probable that the delegates at the convention entertained widely varying impressions and expectations of the structure and form which this confession should or would have. And since it is most desirable that, at the very least, the anticipation of a majority of our membership be met, the Board of Doctrine herewith offers its work as a tentative draft and invites constructive comment.

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In evaluating the work it should be understood at the outset that no one form of confessional expression will meet all the practical needs of the Church equally well. In certain circumstances and phases of our efforts in seeking and winning souls a statement of the position of our church in very brief, capsule-like affirmations, such as are found on the back page of the service folders of some of our churches, is most suitable. Prepared by each pastor for his own needs, these will vary in their emphases in response to the particular nature of the work in each parish. The Board of Doctrine does not feel that its assignment was intended to supplant such individual efforts. At the same time it is assumed that, since the CLC in its constitution declares its acceptance of a confession known as the "Brief Statement of 1932," the convention did not intend to call for another document of the same theological character.

The purpose of the Board of Doctrine has been, as the convention directive suggests, to supply a definitive expression of our faith in the basic doctrines of Holy Scripture; to summarize these truths as briefly as possible without sacrificing essential content; to do so in language dignified yet readily understood by people of average intelligence; and to speak to the hearts in inspirational rather than in dogmatic fashion.

How well the authors have succeeded in these objectives will doubtless be measured in mixed judgments. It is taken for granted that a document of this nature will never conform completely to an ideal. Some of us will perhaps always have preferred the use of an alternative expression here and there, or the inclusion of this or that point of doctrine or practice. Ultimately we shall have to be content and thankful if the Statement responds adequately to the average, essential needs for which it is designed.

Comments may be addressed to the undersigned.

E. Schaller



STATEMENT OF FAITH AND PURPOSE  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF THE LUTHERAN CONFESSION.

I. Our Purpose

It is our single purpose to be a Christian church which strives to proclaim the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Bible, by which alone man can know the true God and the way to eternal life. This our purpose and commitment rests upon the following statements of the Bible:

- \* Matthew 28:18-20: And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.
- \* John 17:3: And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.
- \* Acts 4:12: Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

We disavow the claim of some that it lies within our province as a church body to be an advocate of human

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social, political or ethical opinions, or to engage in agitating secular causes. Our right of existence as a church is limited by our readiness to say with St. Paul that we are "determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified" (I Corinthians 2:2).

- \* I Peter 2:9: But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people: that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

## II. Our Source Of Truth.

In our teaching and preaching we rely wholly upon the Bible, the canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. We regard this Book of Books as the Word of God, verbally inspired and wholly inerrant as written by holy men of God. We consider our mission to be that of communicating the words and message of this Book to those who will hear them; and we know of no other divine source of true doctrine and instruction in the way of salvation and in God-pleasing living.

We therefore reject as sacrilegious and destructive every effort by which the intellect or science of man would modify or set aside a single inspired word. We deplore the wide-spread apostasy, now prevalent even in former "conservative" church bodies, which reduces the Bible to the status of a human document containing errors and myths.

- \* II Timothy 3:16-17: All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.

- \* John 10:35: . . . . the Scripture cannot be broken.
- \* Jeremiah 23:28: The prophet that hath a dream,  
let him tell a dream; and he that  
hath my word, let him speak my word faithfully.  
What is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.

### III. Man: His Creation And Fall.

Our purpose is fixed also by the knowledge and conviction that man is what the Bible says he is: Not a product of an evolutionary process which has brought him from brutish beginnings to more advanced stages of development, but a being distinct from the beasts. Created originally in the image of God, he is now utterly depraved by reason of sin into which Adam fell. He is spiritually blind, dead, an enemy of God and doomed to eternal damnation, being utterly incapable of redeeming himself by any means whatsoever. Nothing is revealed more clearly in Holy Scripture than this.

- \* Genesis 1:27a: So God created man in his own  
image . . . . .
- \* Read Genesis, Chapter 3.
- \* Genesis 8:21: . . . . . for the imagination of man's  
heart is evil from his youth.
- \* Psalms 14:2-3: The Lord looked down from heaven  
upon the children of men, to see if  
there were any that did understand, and seek God.  
They are all gone aside, they are altogether be-  
come filthy: there is none that doeth good, no,  
not one.
- \* Psalms 51:5: Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and

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in sin did my mother conceive me.

- \* Ephesians 2:3: . . . . we all . . . . were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.
- \* Romans 8:7: Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

Indeed, the true God Himself is unknown and hidden to this human race, and can be found by man only in and through the revelation graciously provided in the Bible. Without exception the gods of the nations are idols that cannot hear, see or save. In the darkness of their wicked hearts men, left to themselves, have "worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator." "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things" (Romans 1:23,25). This describes not only the gods of the pagans, but those professed in the manuals of Scouting, in the Lodges, and in many churches as well, some of which have abandoned the tenets of their historic faith.

#### IV. The Triune God, Self-revealed In His Word.

We confess and worship the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, revealed in His Word and in the Person of the Son incarnate. In this Triune God we find and declare the source and promise of salvation:

##### A.

In the Father who as Creator and Preserver loved the world perishing in its sins, and from eternity planned a salvation for mankind through and with His Son.

## B.

In the Son, true God and true Man, who by His Incarnation and life of perfect obedience, and in His suffering and death upon the cross in our place and stead, atoned for the sins of the world, removed all guilt, reconciled mankind to God, and was raised again from the dead for their justification. We believe that by virtue of His sacrifice and in His perfect obedience all men have been declared righteous by God; and this righteousness we proclaim and offer to men by the Gospel.

- \* II Corinthians 5:19-21: . . . . God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

## C.

And in the Holy Ghost, "the Lord and Giver of Life," whose gracious work it is to enlighten the dark, ignorant hearts of men by means of the revealed Gospel of salvation, creating saving faith and conferring the comfort of the forgiveness of sin. A Christian is the result of this creative act which Scripture calls Regeneration, a New Birth. By the faith thus wrought, the sinner receives and accepts the blessing of his justification, thus enjoying the salvation prepared for him in Christ.

In his own nature, by his own strength of mind or will, man can do nothing except resist and reject the life-giving Gospel. He cannot by his own power "decide for Christ." As believers are told by St. Paul in reviewing

their state before regeneration: "Ye were dead in trespasses and sins" (Ephesians 2:1), so we recognize in no man a previous "good disposition toward the Gospel," or an "inclination toward Christ," which is not wrought by the Holy Ghost through the Gospel.

- \* Ephesians 2:4-5: But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved).

In regenerated hearts the Holy Spirit dwells, sanctifying them day by day, moving them to live before God as His children according to His revealed Will, teaching them to crucify the fleshly urges of sin which still cling to them in this life.

- \* I Corinthians 3:16: Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?
- \* Ephesians 2:10: We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.

## V. The Holy Christian Church

We teach that the Holy Ghost gathers the Holy Christian Church, which in its ultimate fulness consists of all who by God's mercy, and according to His own purpose and grace, were from eternity ordained unto eternal life. This Church is invisible to human eyes. It cannot, therefore, be identified with any specific organization, or church body. For its unifying factor is "the one true faith;" but human eyes cannot discern faith, which is in the heart, and for us the very existence of the Church is thus an article of

faith.

Nevertheless the presence of the Church can be determined by its marks. For since the Holy Spirit gathers its members by the Gospel, we must and may assume that true believers are present wherever the Gospel is preached and the Sacraments truly administered.

- \* Isaiah 55:11: So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.
- \* Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.
- \* II Timothy 2:19: The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: the Lord knoweth them that are his.
- \* Read Ephesians 1:3-6.

## VI. Church Fellowship: Its Basis And Limitations.

We are confident that there are many who, though they do not now openly share with us the profession of the one true faith, being yet partly uninformed or weak in understanding, are nevertheless at heart members of the flock of the Good Shepherd, Jesus Christ (John 10:14-16).

We are also fully aware that in our own visible fellowship there may be such who, despite their outward profession, are not of Christ, but are hypocrites and unbelievers. Jesus said to His disciples: "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" (John 6:70). It will not be otherwise in our day.

Yet in our exercise of external, visible fellowship

of worship and joint church work we are guided by clear and sure directives of God's holy Word. We cannot recognize our brethren on earth by the faith of their hearts; for these are not open to our view. Instead, by the merciful and gracious dispensation of God we are permitted and directed to regard as brethren those, and those only, who in their confession and life bow to the rule of the divine Word.

- \* I John 1:7: If we walk in the light, as he (God) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.
- \* II Corinthians 6:14-18: . . . . what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? . . . . . Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate . . . .
- \* Ephesians 5:6-7: Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them.
- \* II John 10-11: If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine (the doctrine of Christ), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.
- \* Romans 16:17-18: Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.
- \* Romans 14:1: Him that is weak in the faith receive ye . . . . .



\* Read also Acts 19:1-7.

In our practice, therefore:

1. We deny the right of the Christian name to those who, by word of mouth or in their writings, expressly or by implication reject the blood-bought salvation of Jesus Christ and the means of Grace, or impenitently persist in ungodly living.
2. We publicly acknowledge and fellowship as Christians only those who do not by word or act reject any part of the pure doctrine of God's Word by their confession, who therefore accept what we teach and preach.
3. While we avoid all who preach, teach or advocate error, we gladly receive those who, though weak in understanding and as yet in part uninformed, profess faith in their Savior and gladly hear, learn and receive the Truth, continuing therein and renouncing all error.
4. We are indeed edified and heartened by every testimony, written or spoken, which truly confesses, teaches, preaches and glorifies the Gospel of Christ. But we reject and condemn the false ecumenism which would require us to make common cause in worship and church work with those who, while claiming the Christian name, or even the Lutheran name, publicly adhere to that which contradicts God's clear Word in whole or in part. We equally condemn separatism - that is, a schismatic withdrawal from others for a reason or purpose not in accord with God's revealed Will.
5. We do not deny, but joyfully acknowledge that the Lord knows His elect, even if some be unwitting captives in false-teaching churches where, by their membership, they are partaking of a confession of error and are subjected to grave spiritual danger. We pray that all who now truly believe may persevere in that faith to the end and thus obtain everlasting life.

## VII. The Ministry Of The Gospel.

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That men might attain to His salvation, the Lord Jesus Christ instituted the glorious ministry of the Gospel by which the Holy Ghost is pleased to call, gather, enlighten and keep the whole Christian Church on earth. To this ministry He has called everyone who truly believes in Christ, and for its purposes enables Christians to establish congregations as well as other groups, sometimes called synods, on the basis of a Scriptural confession. Only of such church organizations which purely teach His Word can it be said that they exist by God's Will and Order.

Within such groups, large or small, believers are privileged to set up the public proclamation and teaching of the saving Word by human instruments which God himself supplies. These instruments are those Christians chosen and prepared by Him to act in His behalf as well as in behalf of their brethren as administrators of the Grace of God.

Their function we call the Public Ministry. It is staffed by those whom Christ gives to His Church and who are properly called by the Church for the work. Pastors and teachers of the Word are thus divinely ordained, and their specific area of work is determined and defined by their respective Calls in which the assignment given to each by the calling assembly is spelled out. In this service there is no distinction of rank and power. But there is a diversity of gifts and responsibilities. Eligibility for a Call to the Public Ministry is determined by the directives of God's Word (I Timothy 3:1-13; I Timothy 2:11-12).

We further believe that, when such called ministers of Christ, in accordance with their respective Call, deal with us by Christ's command, He speaks through them, and in them we obey Him.

- \* Ephesians 4:8-16: ..... He ..... gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ .....

- \* Hebrews 13:17: Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

### VIII. The Sacraments of Baptism And Of The Altar.

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism which is administered among us as a part of the Gospel ministry we regard as a washing of regeneration, having power by means of the Word connected therewith to work faith and thus to confer all the blessings of Christ upon young or old. We regard infant baptism as clearly implied, both in the Savior's command to baptize all nations and in the promise of Peter that baptism has power to save all who are lost by reason of inherited and actual sin ("... baptism doth also now save us ...", I Peter 3:21). We note that those who reject infant baptism usually also reject the Scriptural doctrine concerning original sin.

While the mode of baptism is nowhere prescribed, we regard baptism as valid only when performed in accordance with Christ's institution.

The Sacrament of the Altar, or Holy Communion, is administered in our churches as it was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, and only to those for whom it was intended (insofar as we are able to determine), namely to penitent sinners who desire to confess and live according to God's Word.

We therefore practice what is known as close communion, with attendance at the Lord's Table restricted to such who have properly signified their intention to commune and are able to examine themselves. In observing these procedures we indicate our respect for the Holy Supper as a precious gift for our souls, worthy of frequent and sanctified use by all communicants. In this we are governed by the inspired counsel of the Apostle in I Corinthians 11:23-24.

## IX. The Final Judgment.

We know, believe and teach that the world as it now exists will not endure. The ills of man and his civilization are rooted in unbelief and sin, because of which things "cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Ephesians 5:6). There is no hope of cure save in a turning to the Lord Jesus Christ and His Way. The world as such has consistently rejected this course, and always will.

Therefore, while as individual Christians and citizens we must be actively concerned with serving as a salt and a light in the affairs of men, and while as a church we shall lift up holy hands in prayer for the good of all men, we have no illusions as to the final outcome of events and preach no false, millennialistic hopes. Rather, we direct men to the future city of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and bid them wait for, and look to, the glorious appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ in His second Coming to judge the quick and the dead.

- \* II Timothy 3:13: But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.
- \* Matthew 24:14: And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.
- \* II Peter 3:10: But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

## X. Conclusion.

These things, together with all other truths of Holy Scripture as set forth also in the Lutheran symbols of the Book of Concord of 1580 A. D., we believe and desire to confess by word and deed before the Triune God and all men. And we invite and welcome to a share in our rich blessings

**ALL** who are in distress of mind and heart because of their guilt and condemnation in the sight of Almighty God and seek the pardon and comfort which only the Gospel of Jesus Christ can confer;

**ALL** who are bewildered by the confusion of many voices offering the theories of human wisdom in the name of religion, and who desire to hear the Voice of the Good Shepherd whom God raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses;

**ALL** who, though members of Christian churches, have come to fear or to know that their churches have departed from the truth of Holy Scripture, who therefore long for the old paths and the good way (Jeremiah 6:16);

**ALL** who have strayed from the blessed pledge of their Baptism and desire to be restored to the Bishop of their souls.

**\* NOW UNTO HIM THAT IS ABLE TO KEEP YOU FROM FALLING, AND TO PRESENT YOU FAULTLESS BEFORE THE PRESENCE OF HIS GLORY WITH EXCEEDING JOY, TO THE ONLY WISE GOD OUR SAVIOR, BE GLORY AND MAJESTY, DOMINION AND POWER, BOTH NOW AND FOREVER. AMEN. (Jude 24-25).**

The Board of Doctrine, CLC.

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VOLUME 9

MAY 1969

NUMBER 2

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