



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

I Timothy 4:15

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THE BOOK OF CONCORD AND VERBAL INSPIRATION

This first in a series of longer articles on the *Christian Book of Concord*, the four-hundredth anniversary of which we will celebrate next year, is to treat the subject of verbal inspiration. At first look it might seem that material for this topic is rather meager. For the inspiration of Holy Scripture is nowhere treated in the *Book of Concord* under a separate doctrinal head; the term "verbal inspiration" is not found in any of the prefaces or confessions contained therein; and the principal proof passages for inspiration, such as 2 Timothy 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:21, are seldom used, and then only in contexts which are treating some other doctrine.

Does this mean, then, that those scholars are correct who affirm so confidently that the confessors of 1580 did not hold to the verbal inspiration of Holy Scripture, but that this "theory," as they refer to it, was developed first during the following century by the Lutheran dogmaticians in the universities of Germany? Hardly, for anyone who reads the *Book of Concord* without presupposition or prejudice must sense at once that these confessors held a very high view of the Bible, accepting implicitly all of the teachings contained in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, and recognizing without hesitation the divine authority of the very words contained in these Scriptures. An analogy may be in place here. The large majority of the sermons preached in the pulpits of our church body, or of the lectures delivered in the classrooms of our college, contain no direct reference to the doctrine of verbal inspiration. But the speakers invariably treat the Bible in such a way that their hearers easily infer that they accept the words of Scripture as the very Word of God!

WHY NO ARTICLE ON
THE INSPIRATION
OF SCRIPTURE?

The question must nevertheless be asked: Why does the *Book of Concord* nowhere contain an article on the inspiration of Holy Scripture? The answer is, in fact, not difficult. An

important function of a confession is to uphold the truth of Scripture over against errors which have been promulgated. This was, for example, one of the purposes of the Augsburg Confession of 1530, to which symbol the confessors of 1580 pledged themselves again "just as in former times concerning certain great controversies that had arisen in the Church of God, symbols and confessions were proposed, to which the pure teachers and hearers at that time pledged themselves with heart and mouth."¹ It is, now, a historical fact that the inspiration of Holy Scripture was not in controversy during the 16th century among the Lutherans and their major theological opponents. In an article written in *Lehre und Wehre*, C. F. W. Walther cites evidence that the inspiration of Scripture was accepted at that time by the Roman church as a firmly established doctrine:

Therefore, also Melancthon in his preface to the Augsburg Confession could, without fear of contradiction, designate that doctrine as the only correct one which is drawn "from the foundation of the divine Holy Scripture" [German text of Augsburg Confession], when he there writes: "Wherefore, in deepest obedience to Your Imperial Majesty, we offer and present the confession of our pastors, preachers, and teachers, and also of our own faith, as to what and how they from the foundation of the divine Holy Scripture (from the Holy Scriptures and the pure Word of God [Latin text]) preach, teach, uphold, and give instruction in our lands, etc." In the battle against those who in fact denied the divine inspiration of Holy Scripture, the most extreme papal zealots stood therefore on Luther's side. To adduce only a single example of this, Dr. Johann Eck wrote the following in a letter directed to Erasmus in the year 1518, after the latter had attributed a lapse of memory to the evangelist in Matthew 27: "By these words you seem to indicate that the evangelists wrote in the way that human beings are accustomed to do, that they wrote these things in reliance on their memory and neglected to refer to the books, and that they thus for this reason

committed blunders. Listen, my dear Erasmus, do you really think that a Christian will accept it patiently that the evangelists made mistakes in the Gospels? If the authority of Holy Scripture becomes shaky, what other part will then be above suspicion of error, as Augustine concludes with so fine an argument? You say furthermore that they relied on their memory, as if they had to write from that which they had previously read and retained in their memory--the very ones who had been told to take no thought what they should speak before kings and princes, but that they would be led by the Holy Ghost into all truth! And such testimonies, you say, they did not borrow from books--as if they compiled their written works from different books and authors, as we are accustomed to do and is now the style of making books. Far be it to suspect this concerning the disciples of the Holy Ghost and of our Savior Jesus, concerning these pillars of our faith, who were not instructed in human wisdom! He took them up as uneducated and ignorant in matters of learning, but then made them into the greatest of scholars."²

It would be hard to improve upon these words of the Catholic Eck as he defends the divine authority and inerrancy of Holy Scripture in the face of the aspersions cast against it by the humanist and rationalist, Erasmus. Seventy years later the Jesuit Bellarmine, an arch-foe of Lutheranism, could still refer to Holy Scripture as "the written Word of God."³ Let us recognize, then, that during the period when the Lutheran confessions were being written, the verbal inspiration of Scripture was not among the controverted articles of faith. (This is not to say, however, that the Lutherans and the Catholics were agreed in all parts of the doctrine of Scripture. From the very beginning of the Reformation, the Catholics bitterly opposed the *sola Scriptura*, namely, that the Holy Scriptures are the only source and norm of Christian doctrine. Concerning this dispute the Lutheran confessions have much to say, as will be indicated below.)

To put it simply, then, we would not expect the *Book of Concord* to contain articles on verbal inspiration, inasmuch as this doctrine was not a major issue of controversy prior to 1580. Dr. Robert Preus points out: "Before the rise of the Jesuit controversialists in the late sixteenth century Lutheran theologians had never considered the inspiration of Scripture as a separate locus," and then adds that in the confessions the inspiration of Scripture is simply "taken for granted."⁴

WHAT IS MEANT BY VERBAL INSPIRATION? Before we begin considering the many evidences in the *Book of Concord* which attest to the full inspiration of Scripture, it would be proper to state what meaning we have come to associate with the term "verbal inspiration." Graebner defines inspiration as follows in his *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology*:

The Bible was written by divine inspiration, inasmuch as the inspired penmen performed their work as the personal organs of God, especially of the Holy Spirit; who not only prompted and actuated them toward writing what they wrote, but also suggested to them both the thoughts and the words they uttered as they wrote.⁵

The addition of the adjective "verbal" emphasizes the Scriptural truth that the process of inspiration extended, not merely to the thoughts contained in the Bible, but to the very words in which these thoughts are expressed. Because inspiration is verbal, the Old and New Testaments are word-for-word the Word of God, and they are therefore inerrant in all matters which they treat.

In the following paragraphs it will be seen how the *Book of Concord* affirms, either directly or indirectly, the various truths about the Bible which we have come to associate with verbal inspiration.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN INSPIRATION The rock opera "Jesus Christ Superstar" pictures the disciples sitting in the upper room on

Maundy Thursday evening, their senses dulled by wine,
and confidently affirming:

Always hoped that I'd be an apostle
Knew that I would make it if I tried
Then when we retire we can write the gospels
So they'll still talk about us when we've died.

More refined, but likewise blasphemous, is the liberal contention that the Gospels are the products of human selection and editing, carried on after a period of evolutionary development of doctrine in the theological consciousness of the early Christian community.

The natural reason of man would thus regard the books of the Bible as human productions, conceived and executed according to the will and motives of mere men, and marked to a greater or lesser extent by the failings and foibles common to mankind. The confessors of 1580 held no such low opinion about the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. For them the various books had God the Holy Spirit for their true author, the human writers serving only as His instruments. They subscribed without reservation to the statement in the Nicene Creed that "the Holy Ghost ... spake by [namely, through] the Prophets." (p. 31) The Augsburg Confession says with regard to the Scriptural prohibition of man-made traditions: "Did the Holy Ghost in vain forewarn of these things?" (p. 91) In the Apology of the Augsburg Confession Melanchthon refers early in the preface to "the manifest Scripture of the Holy Ghost." (p. 101) In the article "Of Justification" he marvels that the adversaries are in no way moved by the many passages of Scripture which ascribe justification to faith and not to works, and then asks: "Do they think that these words fell inconsiderately from the Holy Ghost?" (p. 153) This quotation states clearly that the Holy Spirit is the author of these Scripture passages, that He spoke the words contained in them, and that He spoke these words with conscious intent! Under "Of Monastic Vows" Melanchthon ascribes to the Holy Ghost the command of 1 Corinthians 7:2: "To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife." (p. 437). Compare now this strong statement from the

pen of Luther in the Smalcald Articles: "Without the outward Word, however, they [the writers of Scripture] were not holy, much less would the Holy Ghost have moved them to speak when they still were unholy; for they were holy, says he, since the Holy Ghost spake through them." (p. 497) In the Formula of Concord we find the statement that "the Holy Ghost through the mouth of the holy apostle so earnestly charged His Church to preserve" the article concerning Christian liberty. (p. 1057)

Beyond such quotations which affirm directly that it is the Holy Spirit who spoke through the holy writers in the Bible, we have also references to the Scriptures as "divine" (p. 857; also the German text on pp. 20, 90, 952, etc.) and as "revelation." (p. 1111) Furthermore, because the Scriptures have come to man from God, any denial of them, according to the confessions, involves a profanation of the holy name of the divine Majesty! (pp. 381, 435, 595)

Further evidence, although indirect, for the fact that the Lutheran confessors regarded the Scriptures as originating in God is found in the following quotation, in which the Scriptures are set in contradistinction to the writings of men: "... the Word of God alone should be and remain the only standard and rule of doctrine, to which the writings of no man should be regarded as equal, but to which everything should be subjected" (p. 855).

While the confessors of 1580 did indeed regard the Holy Spirit as the true author of Scripture, they did not conceive of the human writers as mere robots or automata. Inasmuch as the Holy Spirit in the process of inspiration took into His service the persons, the wills, the abilities, the concerns, etc., of the individual writers, the confessors can and do refer to these writers as contending (p. 275), speaking (p. 299), teaching (p. 301), meaning (p. 373), praising (p. 375), commanding (p. 375), wishing (p. 375), denying (p. 423), testifying (p. 423), describing (p. 429), calling (p. 493), complaining (p. 493), removing (p. 507), admonishing (p. 801), declaring (p. 825),

urging (p. 917), employing (p. 921), indicating (p. 925), putting questions (p. 927), answering (p. 927), emphasizing (p. 933), excluding (p. 945), ascribing (p. 949), exhorting (p. 969), explaining (p. 991), deterring (p. 993), warning (p. 993), placing (p. 1001), treating (p. 1069), building (p. 1079), concluding (p. 1079), distinguishing (p. 1089)--and other predicates in addition.

This, then, is the miracle of inspiration as witnessed to in the *Book of Concord*, that the prophets and apostles could be so active and personally involved in what they were writing, and yet that whatever they put down was the meaning and word of the Holy Spirit!

THE THOUGHTS That the Lutheran confessors re-
AND THE WORDS garded the thought content of the
 Bible to be given by God is so ob-
vious that it is really in no need of demonstration. They acknowledged that Scripture contains "the will and meaning of the Holy Ghost" (p. 1093), and they therefore established all doctrines and refuted all errors through a simple appeal to the pertinent passages of the Bible. Note, for example, how on pp. 179-201 several verses from Scripture are cited and discussed at length over against the adversaries in the matter of love and works--clear evidence that what these passages say was regarded as authoritative.

Whatever the Bible says, also in matters which do not pertain directly to Christian faith and life, is accepted as divine and therefore reliable. The existence and evil nature of the devil is confessed, because the Bible testifies thereto (p. 53 and many other places). The historical reality of creation (pp. 61, 365ff., 859ff., 959), of Adam and Eve as our first parents (pp. 301, 369, 861ff., 1093), and of the fall into sin through the serpent (pp. 369, 859ff., 881, 959) is accepted, because these matters are reported in Scripture. Events from Old Testament history are cited as factual (pp. 177f., 353, 381, 987); and the reports of the prophets, "which were full of faith and spirit," are set far above those of Aristotle and the other heathen (p. 195). Scriptural teachings

regarding marriage (pp. 63, 79, 365-373, 639, 643) and other civil ordinances (p. 435) are accepted as authoritative. Nowhere is the Bible or any passage thereof brought into question or spoken of disparagingly, as happens so frequently in modern religious literature.

The confidence of the confessors is not restricted, however, to the subject matter of the Bible. The very words of Scripture are regarded as trustworthy. Repeatedly an argument is based on a single word or expression used by the holy writer. Compare how the Formula of Concord emphasizes so strongly the so-called "exclusive particles" in the doctrine of justification by faith, such as "without Law," "without works," "by grace" (pp. 917f., 931f., 945). Note how the term "necessary" is accepted in connection with a Christian's good works, in spite of its misuse by some, inasmuch as it is a Scriptural expression (p. 943). Observe how every effort is made to arrive at the correct meaning of an individual word, such as the verb "justify" (p. 793, 921). And when the Spirit-intended sense of an expression or phrase has been ascertained, the confessors insist on holding to that meaning, even when it may conflict with natural human reason such as in the doctrines of the Lord's Supper and the person of Christ (pp. 811ff., 987ff., 1025ff.). It is interesting to see also how the confessors make a careful distinction between the words of Holy Scripture and theological terms not found in the Bible. Even though the latter may be rightly employed in religious disputations, they are not to be treated in the same way as Biblical expressions (p. 785).

Observations such as the above indicate clearly that a belief in verbal, word-for-word inspiration was part of the religious convictions of the men who composed our Lutheran confessions.

INERRANCY Since it is true that the Holy Spirit gave to the prophets and apostles the thoughts which they were to express and the very words in which they were to express these thoughts, it follows as a necessary consequence that Holy Scripture is

inerrant. For then it is free from all human fallibility and error.

That the Lutheran confessors who compiled and subscribed the *Book of Concord* regarded the Bible as inerrant appears manifest. For we have seen their unquestioning acceptance of the message and the words of Scripture, also in those matters not directly related to the salvation of sinners. Beyond this we find that the *Book of Concord* describes the Bible in ways which clearly imply inerrancy. In the Large Catechism Luther urges his reader to "believe the Scriptures," and adds significantly: "they will not lie to you" (p. 771). In the preface to the Thorough Declaration of the Formula of Concord the confessors accept as their governing norm "First ... the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel" (p. 851). Later in the preface they indicate their rejection of all ancient heresies and errors "upon the true, firm ground of the holy divine Scriptures" (p. 857). At the conclusion of the Catalog of Testimonies we find an acceptance of "the Scriptures of the holy prophets and apostles, as unquestionable witnesses of divine truth" (p. 1149).

Some will, of course, object and say that words such as "divine truth" have reference only to the Gospel portions of Holy Scripture, and that the Lutheran confessors allowed for the possibility of error in matters pertaining to history, science, and such like. Such a contention, however, cannot stand in view of the following broad principle, enunciated by Luther and subscribed to by the Formula of Concord: "The Word of God [here the Latin text significantly uses the term "the sacred writings" as a synonym for "the Word of God"] alone should be and remain the only standard and rule of doctrine, to which the writings of no man should be regarded as equal, but to which everything should be subjected" (p. 855). Consider what this sentence says: The writings of no man should be regarded as equal to Holy Scripture; all things should be subjected to Holy Scripture. Surely J. W. Montgomery is correct when he says concerning this

quotation from the Formula: "Clearly, the Bible is held to stand in judgment over all other books--in all fields--and no man is permitted to judge Scripture in any particular."⁶ Could the Bible occupy this supreme position of judgment if it were not fully and absolutely inerrant? The answer should be obvious!

THE BIBLE AS SOURCE
AND NORM OF DOCTRINE

That the Bible is the only
source and norm of all
Christian doctrine is clearly

affirmed by the *Book of Concord* in the following statements:

We believe, teach, and confess that the sole rule and standard according to which all dogmas together with [all] teachers should be estimated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament alone. (p. 777)

In this way the distinction between the Holy Scriptures of the Old and of the New Testament and all other writings is preserved, and the Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard, according to which, as the only test-stone, all dogmas shall and must be discerned and judged, as to whether they are good or evil, right or wrong. (p. 779)

First [, then, we receive and embrace with our whole heart] the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the pure, clear fountain of Israel, which is the only true standard by which all teachers and doctrines are to be judged. (p. 851)

This principle is applied regularly and uniformly in the confessions contained in the *Book of Concord*. The Roman Catholic system of penance and purgatory is rejected because these things are nowhere spoken of in the Holy Scriptures (p. 295). The invocation of the saints is labeled as an uncertain and harmful matter inasmuch as no testimony for it can be found in Scripture (pp. 345-349, 469). The abandonment of property

is censured since it has no command or advice in the Scriptures (p. 435). The Apology insists that examples drawn from the Bible "ought to be interpreted according to the rule, i.e., according to certain and clear passages of Scripture, not contrary to the rule, that is, contrary to the Scriptures" (p. 441). Luther gives this sound advice in connection with his exhortation to use the Sacrament regularly: "Therefore, try this and practise it well, and do but examine yourself, or look about you a little, and only keep to the Scriptures" (p. 773). An excellent example of the application of this principle of *sola Scriptura* is found in the Formula's article on the person of Christ. Compare especially pp. 1035-49.

We should note, now, that the *Book of Concord's* affirmation that Scripture is to be the only source and norm of doctrine in the Church testifies to the fact that the confessors accepted verbal inspiration as a basic presupposition of their theology. For the *sola Scriptura* principle can stand only if the Bible is the authoritative, inerrant Word of God in all of its statements and words. To charge Scripture with human fallibility and inaccuracy at any point means that one has there set someone or something else above Scripture as its judge or corrector--and the *sola Scriptura* is immediately overthrown. Leonhard Hutter, who was personally acquainted with the framers of the Formula of Concord, affirmed that the *sola Scriptura* principle cannot be upheld unless the inspiration of Scripture is predicated.⁷ The fact, once again, that the confessors of 1580 so strongly upheld Scripture alone as the source and norm of doctrine witnesses most eloquently to their belief in verbal inspiration!

A word should, however, be added concerning the frequent citation of the church fathers and of Luther in the *Book of Concord*. Such quotations often occur alongside passages from the Bible, so that the reader might easily infer that the Fathers and Luther were authorities on a level equal to that of Scripture. The confessors strongly deny that this is the case, and they moreover state explicitly why they have chosen to cite theologians from the past:

Other writings, however, of ancient or modern teachers, whatever name they bear, must not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scriptures, but all of them together be subjected to them, and should not be received otherwise or further than as witnesses, [which are to show] in what manner after the time of the apostles, and at what places, this [pure] doctrine of the prophets and apostles was preserved. (p. 777)

Similar explanations can be found in the *Triglotta* on pp. 779, 1149, and elsewhere.

It is interesting to note also that the Fathers are frequently cited with an introductory formula that indicates that their statements were themselves subject to the judgment of Scripture. For example: "And St. Bernard truly says ... (p. 213); "And here Ambrose says well ... (p. 215); "And Vulgarius, who seems to us to be not a silly writer, says ..." (p. 247); " ... as it has been well said by Augustine ..." (p. 309); " ... recently it has been well treated of by William of Paris ..." (p. 337); "For what Luther has correctly said remains true nevertheless ..." (p. 931). That the confessors regarded the Fathers as fallible and standing below the authority of the Bible is clear from this passage in the Apology:

And even though they have the testimonies especially of Gregory or the moderns, we oppose to them the most clear and certain Scriptures. And there is a great diversity among the Fathers. They were men, and could err and be deceived. (p. 417)

What the Fathers said was to be accepted only if it was drawn "from Scripture" (p. 1033).

Before proceeding to the next topic, a further observation on the above quotation from the Apology should be made. It states that wherever a human element enters into a writing, there error can be expected. Scripture, it affirms, is free from any such

error. The implication is evident: There is no human element in Scripture! In this way the quotation testifies indirectly to the non-human, divine origin of the Bible.

PLENARY The *Book of Concord* clearly accepts all
INSPIRATION the books of the Old and New Testaments
 as equally authoritative in all their
parts, even though it does not enter into a discussion
of the canon as such. Repeatedly we find expressions
like "the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the
Old and of the New Testament" when reference is made to
the authority principle in the Church. Compare pp.
321, 351, 777, 851, 951, and 1097 in the *Triglotta*.
The entire Holy Scriptures are regarded as important
and useful to the Christian. The merit of the Cate-
chism, for example, is found in the fact that it is a
summary of the entire Holy Scriptures (pp. 567, 573,
577f.), and that it can help lead the young into these
Scriptures (p. 579).

At no time is one holy writer made to oppose
another, as if one were more spiritual than the other.
Rather than this, the confessors assume a perfect har-
mony between passages taken from different parts of the
Bible. As an illustration, note how carefully they
demonstrate the agreement that exists between Paul and
James in regard to the doctrine of justification (pp.
189ff., 931).

THE BIBLE We come now to a critical question:
AS THE WORD Does the *Book of Concord* regard the
OF GOD Bible as the written Word of God? In
 view of what has been said up to this
point, an affirmative answer would seem to be self-
evident. Yet there are some scholars, particularly
liberals among the Lutherans, who deny that the
Lutheran confessions equate the Bible with the Word of
God. The confessions, they assert, use the term "Word
of God" only of Christ and the Gospel message of the
prophetic and apostolic Scriptures, or at most of
Christ and the Gospel together with that proclamation
of Law which serves to prepare man for hearing the
Gospel.

We will not deny that the Lutheran confessions do at times employ the term "Word" with reference to Christ and the evangelical content of Holy Scripture. Compare the following: "the Word, that is, the Son of God" (p. 45); "justification occurs through the Word" (p. 139); "faith is conceived from the Word" (p. 141); "the Word and promise of God concerning Christ" (p. 273); the use of "God's Word" in part IV of the Small Catechism (p. 551); "the forgiveness of sin through the Word and signs" (p. 693); "the grace offered through the Holy Ghost in the Word and holy [divinely instituted] Sacraments" (p. 785); "the Son, the Word of the Father" (p. 1043); "the Holy Ghost works true faith through the hearing of the Word" (p. 1085).

It is true also that the term "Word" is used at times of the legal and condemnatory sections of the Bible: "sins are censured by the Word of God" (p. 259); "they present only the Word, which convicts of sin" (p. 261); "It behooves us to do no more than to instruct and reprove with God's Word" (p. 651); and other similar passages on pp. 673, 807, 867, and 903.

But while admitting these things, we can in no way accept the liberal contention that the Lutheran confessions restrict the term "Word" to the Christ-Gospel or Law-Christ-Gospel content of the Bible. An attentive reading of the *Book of Concord* should convince one that the confessors unqualifiedly accepted the entire Bible as the objective written Word of God, and moreover frequently referred to it as such. There are several lines of evidence which make this manifest.

Note, first of all, how the German and Latin texts repeatedly interchange the terms "Scripture" and "God's Word" in the same sentences of the confessions. In the Preface to the *Book of Concord*, p. 6: "*und darauf aus göttlicher, prophetischer, apostolischer Schrift ein kurz Bekenntnis zusammengefasst*"; "*Et eam sane ob causam brevis et succincta confessio ex verbo Dei et sacrosanctis prophetarum et apostolorum scriptis collecta est.*" (Obviously "verbo Dei" and "sacrosanctis prophetarum et apostolorum scriptis" are used synonymously here.) In the same Preface, p. 12: "*wider*

allerlei gefährlichen Miszverstand mit Gottes Wort verwahrt werden könnte"; "contra corruptelas ac depravationes sacrarum literarum testimoniis muniri et confirmari posset." Again on p. 20: "so in der heiligen göttlichen Schrift gegründet"; "quam quae verbo Dei fundata." In the Smalcald Articles, p. 466: "ohne Schrift"; "destituta Verbo." In the Formula of Concord, p. 856: "aus wahren, beständigem Grunde der heiligen göttlichen Schrift verworfen und verdammt sind"; "ex solidis Verbi Dei fundamentis reiecti sunt. et damnati." And on p. 892: "Diese Lehre ist in Gottes Wort gegründet"; "Haec doctrina in sacris litteris solidissima fundamenta habet."

A second line of evidence showing that the Lutheran confessions equate Scripture and the Word of God is the fact that the text frequently interchanges these terms in the same sentence or context. Space permits only a few examples. In the Preface to the *Book of Concord*, pp. 21 and 23: "derived from God's Word"; "derived from the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures." In the Augsburg Confession, p. 39: "doctrine from the Holy Scriptures and the pure Word of God." (The word "and" is clearly appositional, as is seen also from the German text which combines the terms "Holy Scripture" and "Word of God" into a single phrase: "aus Grund göttlicher Heiliger Schrift.") In the Apology, p. 345: "since neither a command, nor a promise, nor an example can be produced from the Scriptures concerning the invocation of saints"; "since invocation does not have a testimony from God's Word." On p. 435: "The division, control, and possession of property are civil ordinances, approved by God's Word in the commandment, Ex. 20, 15: Thou shalt not steal. The abandonment of property has no command or advice in the Scriptures." In the Smalcald Articles, p. 495: "... and accordingly judge Scripture or the spoken Word, and explain or stretch it at their pleasure." (Read the entire Article VIII on pp. 493-497 and note how the terms "Scripture," "writings," "spoken Word," and "outward Word" are used interchangeably.) In the Formula of Concord, p. 857: "according to God's Word of the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures." (A comparison of the German and Latin

texts indicates apposition here. A better translation would therefore be: "according to God's Word, the Prophetic and Apostolic Scriptures." The Tappert translation, "according to the prophetic and apostolic writings of God's Word,"⁸ is an improvement upon the *Triglotta*, inasmuch as it indicates without ambiguity the meaning so evident in the original languages, namely, that the Scriptures are God's Word.) On p. 1067: "Since all Scripture, given by inspiration of God, is to serve ...; also, since everything in God's Word has been prescribed to us ..." The ease with which the confessors move from the term "Holy Scripture" to the term "God's Word" shows that in their minds the two terms have one and the same reference--the Bible!

A third type of evidence involves the use of the term "the Word of God" after the preposition "in," in which passages the confessors are thinking of the Word of God as the volume of Holy Scripture. Several examples from the Formula of Concord follow: "the ceremonies or church rites which are neither commanded nor forbidden in God's Word" (p. 829); "those which God Himself has prescribed and commanded in His Word" (p. 939f.); "from the words of institution, in the holy, divine Word" (p. 985f.); "also, since everything in God's Word has been prescribed to us, not that we should thereby be driven to despair, but that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope, Rom. 15, 4" (p. 1067); "For our curiosity has always much more pleasure in concerning itself with these matters ... than with what God has revealed to us concerning this in His Word" (p. 1081).

Fourthly, in many passages of the *Book of Concord* the context requires us to take the term "Word of God" in the sense of "Holy Scripture." Luther is beyond any doubt urging the study of the entire Bible when he makes these statements in the Large Catechism concerning the Third Commandment (p. 605f.):

Secondly, and most especially, that on such day of rest (since we can get no other opportunity) freedom and time be taken to attend divine service, so that we come together to hear and treat

of God's Word, and then to praise God, to sing and pray ...

How, then, does such sanctification take place? Not in this manner, that [with folded hands] we sit behind the stove and do no rough [external] work, or deck ourselves with a wreath and put on our best clothes, but (as has been said) that we occupy ourselves with God's Word, and exercise ourselves therein.

And, indeed, we Christians ought always to keep such a holy day, and be occupied with nothing but holy things, *i.e.*, daily be engaged upon God's Word, and carry it in our hearts and upon our lips. But (as has been said) since we do not at all times have leisure, we must devote several hours a week for the sake of the young, or at least a day for the sake of the entire multitude, to being concerned about this alone, and especially urge the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, and thus direct our whole life and being according to God's Word. At whatever time, then, this is being observed and practised, there a true holy day is being kept; otherwise it shall not be called a Christians' holy day. For, indeed, non-Christian can also cease from work and be idle, just as the entire swarm of our ecclesiastics, who stand daily in the churches, singing, and ringing bells but keeping no holy day holy, because they neither preach nor practise God's Word, but teach and live contrary to it.

For the Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries, yea, the only one which we Christians know and have. For though we had the bones of all the saints or all holy and consecrated garments upon a heap, still that would help us nothing; for all that is a dead thing which can sanctify nobody. But God's Word is the treasure which sanctifies everything, and by which even all the saints themselves were sanctified. At whatever hour, then, God's Word is taught, preached, heard, read or meditated upon, there the person,

day, and work are sanctified thereby, not because of the external work, but because of the Word, which makes saints of us all. Therefore I constantly say that all our life and work must be ordered according to God's Word, if it is to be God-pleasing or holy. Where this is done, this commandment is in force and being fulfilled.

The conclusion is inescapable, then, that the *Book of Concord* does regard, treat, and speak of the Holy Scriptures as the very Word of God.⁹ Ralph Bohlmann is not making an overstatement when he affirms that in the Lutheran confessions "most frequently the term 'God's Word' identifies 'Holy Scripture.'"¹⁰

STILL MORE TESTIMONIES Now that we have established the fact that the Lutheran confessions recognize the Bible as God's written Word, we could cite many more testimonies from the *Book of Concord* which affirm verbal inspiration and its corollary, inerrancy. Permit at least the following:

When some godly men, lovers of peace and harmony, besides also learned theologians, had noticed all these things, they judged that these slanders and the dissensions in religion which were constantly increasing more and more, could not be better met than if the controverted articles would be thoroughly and accurately set forth and explained from the Word of God ... and the truth divinely delivered be clearly and lucidly presented ... (p. 11)

... we emphatically testify that after the pure and immutable truth of God's Word we wish to embrace the first Augsburg Confession alone ... (p. 15)

We are also in great hope that, if they would be taught aright concerning all these things, the Spirit of the Lord aiding them, they would agree with us, and with our churches and schools, to the infallible truth of God's Word. (p. 19)

Therefore I would be very glad (I say it again) if men would open their eyes and ears, and take this to heart, lest some time we may again be led astray from the pure Word of God to the lying vanities of the devil. (p. 615)

... God's Word is not false, and does not deceive. (p. 811)

To this Christian [pious] Augsburg Confession, so thoroughly grounded in God's Word, we herewith pledge ourselves again [publicly and solemnly] from our inmost hearts; we abide by its simple, clear, and unadulterated meaning as the words convey it, and regard the said Confession as a pure Christian symbol, with which at the present time true Christians ought to be found next to [which pious hearts ought to receive next to the matchless authority of] God's Word ... (p. 847)

... we lay down God's Word, the eternal truth, as the foundation ... (p. 855)

And, indeed, this very opinion, just cited, is founded upon the only firm, immovable, and indubitable rock of truth, from the words of institution, in the holy, divine Word ... (p. 985f.)

The rule is: The Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel. (p. 467)

IN CONCLUSION It is true that the *Book of Concord* contains no separate article on the doctrine of verbal inspiration, nor does the term occur even once on its many pages. But this "silence," as we have seen, is an eloquent one, which proclaims loudly and unmistakably that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the very Word of God in all their statements and all their words, and are therefore totally inerrant and fully trustworthy. For what more could we wish or ask?

C. Kuehne

FOOTNOTES

1. *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), p. 847. Subsequent references to the *Triglotta* will be made simply by page numbers contained in parentheses.

2. *Lehre und Wehre*, vol. 32 (1886), p. 35f., footnote. Translation by C. K.

3. Cited in Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), vol. 1, p. 206, footnote.

4. Robert Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture* (Mankato, Minn.: Lutheran Synod Book Co., 1955), p. 26f. Ralph Bohlmann discusses this question at length in his *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 23-28. He says on p. 27: "We do know, however, that belief in the divine inspiration, infallibility, and authority of Holy Scripture was common property of Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Reformed, and other parties involved in the controversies dealt with in the Lutheran Confessions. Since church confessions normally deal primarily with controverted articles, there was no pressing need for an article on Holy Scripture."

5. A. L. Graebner, *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1910), p. 4.

6. John Warwick Montgomery, *Crisis in Lutheran Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1967), vol. 1, p. 43.

7. Preus, *op. cit.*, p. 26f.

8. *The Book of Concord*, translated and edited by Theodore G. Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1959), p. 507.

9. Following the drafting of this section, the writer perused the chapter "Rule and Norm of Doctrine in the Formula of Concord" by Dr. Harry Huth, contained in the volume *A Contemporary Look at the Formula of Concord*, edited by Robert Preus and Wilbert H. Rosin (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1978). Huth affirms on p. 98f.: "While the term 'Word of God' has several meanings in the Formula, one thing is perfectly clear. Whenever the Formula refers to the Word of God that is the rule and norm of doctrine it means the Holy

Scriptures, the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments in toto. *Scriptura in sola Scriptura is tota Scriptura*. . . The Formula maintains that the Scriptures are the rule and norm of doctrine because it regards the Scriptures as God's Word." Huth proceeds to document this with several arguments based on more than fifty references in the Formula. While his treatment is similar to that of the present article, a reading of his entire chapter is recommended for anyone who desires further documentation. Huth, for example, points out on p. 98f. "the fact that the terms 'Word of God' and 'Holy Scriptures' are used interchangeably in the contexts that discuss the rule and standard by which teachers and teachings are to be judged. The SD says: 'The Word of God alone should be and remain the only standard and rule of doctrine' (Comprehensive Summary [Rule and Norm], 9). The corresponding paragraph in the Ep says: 'Holy Scriptures alone remain the only judge, rule, and standard' (Summary Content, 7)."

10. Bohlmann, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

THE SPIRIT OF THE CONFESSIONS

Our confessions are imbued with an evangelical spirit. Who among us would dispute this? Yet, to assent to the statement may fall short of appreciating the truth. For deep and rich truths sometimes fade from our vision, unless viewed by way of contrast. An approach from the back door may open wider again eyes which have become accustomed to the scenery.

A back door route, if you will, to an overall appreciation of our confessions will be taken in this article. We shall introduce ourselves to two Reformed theologians. We shall not withhold the tribute which is certainly due them. But an examination of a pair of quotations from them will pinpoint key differences between Reformed and Lutheran theology, thus setting the stage for a third quotation. By God's grace, may we thereby be stirred to a fresh enjoyment of the

evangelical spirit of the confessions and to a renewed and ever more diligent pursuit of that spirit in our work.

1. John Owen was an Englishman who lived from 1616-1683. He was a Reformed theologian, defender of the Congregational way, biblical commentator, and devotional writer. Nearly four columns are devoted to him in the four-volume *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge*. It is there reported that he once attended a certain church in the hope of hearing the famous Edmund Calamy. A stranger, however, occupied the pulpit. He preached on the words, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?". The sermon "led to Owen's spiritual decision of character."¹

More than once he preached before Parliament, the most important occasion being the day after the execution of King Charles. Shortly thereafter he met Cromwell and accompanied him. At one point in his life he was offered the presidency of Harvard College, but he declined. During an eventful and busy life he found time to produce a great variety of doctrinal, polemical, and devotional works, some of which have been reprinted again and again. John Stoughton, who concedes that "many of his discussions are wearisome, and the diction is generally crabbed and uninviting," states that "it is very refreshing to read his *Meditations on the Glory of Christ*." The same writer concludes his article with this judgment: "His piety equalled his erudition."² Owen's productivity amidst his varied labors compels our admiration.

2. Abraham Kuyper lived from 1837-1920. A Dutch Calvinist theologian and political leader, he was "a major figure in recent Dutch history."³ His influence and leadership brought about a revival of a systematic orthodox Calvinism. The energy and dedication which this many-sided genius brought to bear upon his work are nothing short of phenomenal. He formed a Calvinist "Free University," led an exodus from the Reformed Church which eventually resulted in the formation of the Gereformeerde Kerk, and was at one time made prime minister.

In his student days he had turned to the prevalent modern theology. But a band of peasants in the little village of Beesd, where he had his first pastorate, had an impact upon the young man which turned his theology and his life around.

They had the truth; they told him he ought to preach the truth; and they showed him the truth. He was amazed. It was a substantial world- and life-view that they placed before him: God sovereign over his whole creation; God's glory the sole aim of that creation. The young minister here saw Calvinism, which hitherto he had known only as a theological fossil of bygone ages, or as a caricature, alive, rooted in the Word of God, nourishing and energizing spiritual life and finding varied expression in practical life. It was a big discovery! The learned doctor became the pupil of poor peasants; but his eyes were opened and his heart, thirsting for the truth, found rest in Calvinism.⁴

Van Lonkhuyzen's enthusiastic tribute to Kuyper is replete with expressions of amazement at the man's gifts and accomplishments. "Truly, the more I think of him, the more I marvel! Theologian, statesman, orator, university-founder, preacher, journalist, author, church-reformer, leader, organizer, traveler, all this and more, and pre-eminent in every capacity, and above all a humble and devout Christian!" After describing him vividly in his various roles as leader, professor, prime minister, and family member, he continues: "And again I marvel when I see what he accomplished!" "Still more do I marvel when I consider the rapidity with which he did his vast and many sided work." "In the union of encyclopedic knowledge and deeply loving heart -- indeed, a marvelous man!"⁵

Kuyper's Stone Lectures at Princeton University in 1898, subsequently published in 1931 as *Lectures on Calvinism*, comprise a learned and influential work of Calvinistic apologetics. The author's varied knowledge and breadth of view are evident throughout, as he "sets forth the life-system of Calvinism, and applies its

principles to religion, politics, science, and art."⁶

The two men whom we have just met, particularly the latter, rank as giants in the Reformed community. Nor is there any denying the thoroughness and profundity of their work. Time spent in meeting them is certainly not time lost. Still less is it to be regarded as beneath our dignity to take a cue from Reformed scholarship, wherever it is found. But, as we hope shall become clear, it is with a very particular purpose that the following quotations are selected from these writers and exhibited to the view of the reader.

1. We quote first from John Owen.

Be advised, therefore, not to be too confident of your state, lest you should yet lack that one thing, the want of which might prove your eternal ruin. ... But there is a fundamental act of faith whereby we close with Christ, whereby we receive Him, that is, in order of nature, prior to its actings in all other duties and occasions; it is laying the foundation; other things belong to the building. This is what you are called on to secure... The act, work, or duty of faith, in the receiving of Christ, is a peculiar, singular work wherein the soul yields special obedience to God; it is not to be reckoned to such common duties as those mentioned, but the soul must find out wherein it has in a singular manner closed with Christ upon the command of God. ... Have you been wearied with disappointments in your attempts and resolutions? Yet cast in your net once more, upon the command of Christ; venture once more to come to Him at His call and invitation; you know not what success He may give unto you. ... It may be you have prayed, and cried, and resolved, and vowed, but all without success, as you suppose; sin has broken through all; however, if you give not over, you shall prevail at last. You know not at what time God will come in with His grace, and Christ will manifest His love to you as to the poor woman, after many a rebuke.⁷

We are moved to ask: Is this part of a discourse on the glory of CHRIST? The Christ who said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," (Mt. 11:28)? The Christ who said: "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed . . .," (Lk. 17:6)? Who said: "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," (John 6:37)? Who immediately extended the warm invitation to a perplexed and searching Zacchaeus: "Make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house," (Lk. 19:5)? Is this the Christ who sent His Holy Spirit to record for our comfort the tearful cry of the anguished father: "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief," (Lk. 9:24)? Who sent the same Spirit to teach us the difference between faith and all works of the law in such passages as Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 3:28 and 4:16, and others? Is this the Christ through whom God reconciled the world to Himself, and in whom all His promises are Yea and Amen? "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price," (Is. 55:1).

Are we not perhaps reminded of those eloquent passages where Walther rejects as a gross perversion of Law and Gospel the teaching that by the internal anguish we generate in ourselves we thereby qualify ourselves to appropriate the Gospel? "The Pietists claim that faith must be preceded by a long time of penitence; yea, they have warned people not to believe too soon, telling them that they must allow the Holy Spirit to work them over thoroughly. . . . I know the awful effect of this teaching from experience. A Pietistic candidate of theology had instructed me in the manner which I have described. I did everything to become truly penitent and finally fell into despair."⁸

It is with equal dismay that we might turn to our own day to discover Dr. Carl Henry, widely regarded as dean of the "evangelicals," defining the Gospel in this way: "The Good News is that the Holy Spirit gives spiritual life to all who repent and receive divine salvation proffered in the incarnate, crucified and risen Redeemer."⁹

2. Our second quotation is from Abraham Kuyper.

This justifies us fully in our statement that Calvinism duly answers the three above-named conditions, and thus is incontestably entitled to take its stand by the side of Paganism, Islamism, Romanism and Modernism, and to claim for itself the glory of possessing a well-defined principle and an all-embracing life-system.¹⁰

We are moved to ask: Is that to be the glory of a theology? Has not the Holy Spirit rather taught us to say with Paul: "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," (Gal. 6:14)? Did He not record for us these words of Jesus: "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," (Mt. 18:3)? Has He not warned: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ," (Col. 2:8)? Has He not stressed the fact that the Gospel is foolishness to the natural man? Has He not served notice that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise? "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?", (I Cor. 1:18-20).

It is with equal dismay that we might turn to our own day to find Rousas Rushdoony writing: "Despite its great beginnings, Lutheranism has been unwilling to follow the Reformation faith to its philosophical conclusions."¹¹

The beginnings of Lutheranism? That takes us back to a statement that will bring joy, and not sorrow, to our hearts.

3. We turn now to our own confessions.

It is a remarkable favor of Almighty God that in these last times and in this old age of the world He has willed, according to His unspeakable love, forbearance, and mercy, that after the darkness of papistical superstitions the light of His Gospel and Word, through which alone we receive true salvation, should arise and shine clearly and purely in Germany, our most beloved fatherland.¹²

With this memorable statement, our Lutheran forefathers opened their preface to the *Christian Book of Concord*. Our renewed studies of the confessions in these anniversary years will undoubtedly lead us back to that preface and that sentence. And we would have to be stones not to be moved by the sentiments so beautifully expressed therein. Were our reading in the confessions for the day to stop at that point, that we might launch ourselves into the realm of meditation opened for us by this one sentence, we would be richly repaid. For therein we find embedded the entire spirit of the confessions.

Could a heartfelt expression of thankfulness to God be framed any more beautifully? Could there be any more forthright and heart-warming declaration of amazement at the "unspeakable love, forbearance, and mercy" of God? Could concern for the salvation of sinners through the shedding abroad of the glorious light of God's truth come any more purely and eloquently to expression? Could we be so cold as to remain unmoved by the spirit which God implanted in the hearts of these men? Does not their voice yet sound loudly and clearly in our own ears, despite the intervening centuries, and is not our pulse quickened as we take our stand alongside them who lived not long after the Reformation, directing our eyes with them over the previous decades, and permitting our vision to embrace, first, the previous dark and superstitious ages into which men had plunged themselves, and then the remarkable restoration of the enlightening, saving Gospel of Christ so miraculously worked by God? Is not everything that we so much enjoy in the confessions epitomized in this opening sentence?

For as surely as we have been made partakers of the true heavenly wisdom of the Gospel, as surely as we exercise the Spirit-granted disposition to speak because we have believed, as surely as we have been called to feed the Church of God and urged to take the oversight of the flock, not by constraint, but willingly, and as surely as our chief and ultimate concern as shepherds is to comfort the troubled conscience, to apply the healing balm of divine grace to the sin-stricken soul, to bring to the storm-tossed heart the peace which passes all understanding; so surely will we be refreshed, strengthened, and encouraged as we steep ourselves in the confessions, breathing deeply of their spirit of love for Christ and zeal for souls, enjoying every expression of concern for poor trembling consciences, assenting to every rejection of the traditions of men and every rebuke of the elevation of human reason above and against the revealed Word of God, and delighting in every repeated declaration that nothing dare be permitted to detract from the glory of Christ as Redeemer, nor to obscure the central doctrine that salvation is by grace alone through His merits.

To bring peace to the timid, trembling conscience -- that is the holy objective of all our labor in the ministry, as well as the goal to be advanced by all our study, whether of the Scriptures or of the confessions which draw from them. That this objective is so frequently obscured in one way or another, as we have seen from the previously adduced quotations, is sufficient evidence of the devil's widespread success in diverting men from promoting Christ's true kingdom, as well as strong incentive for us to seek the disposition and wisdom to carry out our calling, not in ourselves, but in a gracious God, who alone makes us sufficient for the work to which He has called us. Moreover, it is a powerful motive for us to offer continuing thanks to God for the living documents in which the spirit we seek to cultivate is permanently enshrined.

May we remember the real beginning and end of the Reformation: the despairing soul of Luther finding peace in the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ

and abiding therein with a child-like faith. And may we ever appreciate the true glory of our confessions.

R. E. Wehrwein

FOOTNOTES

1. *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge* (4 volumes; third edition, revised and enlarged; Toronto, New York, London; Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1891), Vol. 3, p. 1710.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 1712.
3. J. D. Douglas, general editor, *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1974), p. 573.
4. Jan Van Lonkhuyzen, "Abraham Kuyper -- A Modern Calvinist," *The Princeton Theological Review*, January, 1921, p. 136.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 132-135.
6. Frank N. Magill, editor, *Masterpieces of Christian Literature in Summary Form*, p. 969.
7. John Owen, *The Glory of Christ* (Chicago, Moody Press, 1949), pp. 236-238.
8. C. F. W. Walther, *The Proper Distinction between Law and Gospel* (CPH), p. 253. Cf. also p. 252 and p. 372.
9. "The House Divided: An Interview with Carl Henry," *Eternity*, October, 1976, p. 36.
10. Abraham Kuyper, *Lectures on Calvinism* (Grand Rapids, Associated Publishers and Authors, Inc.), p. 20.
11. Rousas Rushdoony, *Van Til* (Modern Thinkers Series: David H. Freeman, editor; Philadelphia, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1974), p. 31.
12. *Concordia Triglotta* (CPH), "Preface to the Christian Book of Concord," p. 7.

SERMON AT THE FUNERAL OF PASTOR W. SCHUETZE*

TEXT: Psalm 130:1-5

"Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O LORD. Lord, hear my voice: let thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

If thou, LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?

But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. I wait for the LORD, my soul doth wait, and in his word to I hope."

"SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS GOING TO HAPPEN. I AM GOING TO DIE." We are told that these were the last conscious words of the world-famed novelist Sinclair Lewis as he buried his head in his secretary's arms like a frightened child. Death to him was something terrifying. But then, we can well understand why, since he had not learned to know what life and death is really all about.

What a contrast between such words and the words of God's people concerning death. For example, the Apostle Paul said shortly before leaving this world, "I am now ready to be offered and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at

* We are here presenting the sermon preached at the funeral of Pastor Waldemar A. Schuetze. Pastor L. D. Redlin officiated at the service which was held at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Mankato on March 22. Pastor Schuetze served his Lord in the public ministry for 45 years and was one of the founding fathers of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. He was known among us as a faithful witness of the eternal and unchanging truth of God's Word. On March 19 he entered into the joy of everlasting life which had been the central theme of his Christian ministry.

that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing" (II Tim. 4:6-8). Yea, the Apostle could say without fear and without a shadow of doubt in his mind, "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Phil. 1:21).

So also, what a contrast between one terrified by death and the attitude of our dear departed brother, as he faced the possibility of death every day for a number of weeks. The words of our text may well sum up his disposition: "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope."

To demonstrate the spiritual posture of our departed brother: As his doctor struggled in an attempt to put the results of his tests into words our dear brother encouraged the physician to tell it as it was. "For after all," he said, "regardless of what you have to tell me I am not afraid. In Christ Jesus I am prepared for whatever news you have to bring." In other words, "I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait, and in His word do I hope."

And so, finally, what makes the difference? How can some people have good reason to face death with peace and confidence while others have good reason to face death with horror and fear?

The world is filled with answers. And the prevailing one is, of course: if you have been a scoundrel you'll get yours in the end. If you have been a good person the Lord will bless you. With that as a standard, I suppose, then, we should try to list all the things in the life of our departed brother which would be classified as good. But what a sorry state of affairs that would be! Not because our departed brother was a bad man. But the fact of the matter is that before God man in his best state is altogether vanity. Yea, Isaiah has made it crystal clear when he is inspired to confess: WE ARE ALL AS AN UNCLEAN THING AND ALL OUR RIGHTEOUSNESSES ARE AS FILTHY RAGS: AND WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF: AND OUR INIQUITIES, LIKE THE WIND, HAVE TAKEN US AWAY (Is. 64:6). And so it is that the Psalmist cries out in our text: IF THOU,

LORD, SHOULDEST MARK INIQUITIES, O LORD, WHO SHALL STAND?

Yes, beloved, think of it! If peace for heart and soul in this hour of bereavement depended upon even the tiniest thing that man must do or accomplish, this would be a very sad day.

But I suppose that there are some that might say: "Well, I don't know about that. This is different. This was a man of the cloth. This was a man who studied the Word of God regularly. This was a man who advised others out of the Scriptures. This was a man who mightily defended the truth of God in word and action when the majority of his brethren decided to let reason guide their ways. Therefore, isn't it different with him?"

Knowing the departed we feel strange even to ask the question. But we do so only to emphasize the blessed truth of grace -- to underline the rhetorical question of our text which includes all without fail when the question is asked: IF THOU, LORD, SHOULDEST MARK INIQUITIES, O LORD, WHO SHALL STAND? The answer, of course, is: NOBODY! For where is there the JUST MAN UPON EARTH THAT DOETH GOOD AND SINNETH NOT (Eccles. 7:20)?

For 45 years our departed brother taught what the Scriptures teach about mankind. THERE IS NONE RIGHT-EOUS, NOT ONE (Rom. 3:10). All are cast into one giant heap. For God is not a respecter of persons. The rich and the poor, the mighty and the weak, the pastor and the flock, the black and the white, the yellow and the brown, the child and the adult, the Jew and the Gentile -- all are alike in the eyes of God. For 45 years the departed preached the Law in all of its severity that all might see themselves for what they are by nature -- lost sinners, and he knew that he was in the midst of them all.

But the joy in the ministry of our departed brother was to declare the blessed, simple Gospel of God's forgiving love. As the Psalmist proclaims: BUT

THERE IS FORGIVENESS WITH THEE THAT THOU MAYEST BE FEARED.

And the very Gospel of peace and joy and comfort which our brother, now fallen asleep, so enjoyed to proclaim to others was his peace and joy in his final hours and is also ours today as we lay the earthly remains of our dear brother to rest in the bowels of the earth.

As Thomas Kingo teaches us to sing in one of our finest Easter hymns:

Thou hast died for my transgression,
All my sins on Thee were laid;
Thou hast won for me salvation,
On the cross my debt was paid.
From the grave I shall arise
And shall meet Thee in the skies.
Death itself is transitory;
I shall lift my head in glory.

Yea, beloved, Jesus makes the difference. In the Christ our heart may rest at total peace. For the covenant of God's grace with us has been signed and sealed with the blood of Jesus Christ, Who totally lived our lives for us and was made to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. He was stretched out upon the accursed tree, buried in the grave, raised again triumphant over sin, death, and the power of Satan and now cries out to all the world:

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE: AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE (John 11:25-26).

.For 45 years our Lord used our departed brother to declare this grand and glorious message during his life. And just as He used him in life He used him also in death. His confidence, his hope, his peace in the Lord was declared day after day as he waited for the Lord and hoped in Him.

Once again today we are brought to understand anew what the Lord our God means when He causes the Psalmist to write: PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF THE LORD IS THE DEATH OF HIS SAINTS (Ps. 116:15). The death of His saints, that is, the death of His dear believing children, is so very, very precious, because another soul has been brought to the faith, kept in the faith, and finally rescued safe and sound from this sin-laden world through the Gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation. Another saint has finished his course and has kept the faith. There is joy in heaven. Can there be anything but joy here?

O, yes, to us who knew the departed and especially for you, Erma, and you, his children, there will be a vacant spot in our lives. And because of that vacancy there may be sadness. But even though he belonged to you as a husband, a father, and a grandfather, yet above all he belonged to God. For our gracious God purchased him with a price -- the price of the blood of His Son. There is now a vacancy here, but the place reserved for him in heaven has now been filled.

We should not feel selfish in wondering why he could not have stayed a while longer. He finished his course, beloved. He fought a good fight, as we well know. And by God's grace he kept the faith. Can you possibly find a better conclusion to life than that?

WE YET WAIT FOR THE LORD, OUR SOUL DOTH WAIT, AND
IN HIS WORD DO WE HOPE.

And finally when the last trump shall sound, we who have by God's grace finished our course in the Lord shall, together with our departed brother and all saints in Christ, join the glorious throng of heavenly hosts in an everlasting song of praise.

L. D. Redlin

PAIDEIA

AN EXAMINATION OF MILTON'S TRACT: *OF EDUCATION*

It has been an interesting phenomenon to observe, in considering current trends in education, the so-called "back to basics" movement. Many modern parents have been so dissatisfied, over the years, with the failure of the public school system revealed by ever-decreasing achievement test scores, that they have demanded fewer frills and greater concentration upon teaching basic skills. There has also been an increasing complaint that too much of the taxpayers' money has been spent on "social" education, to the detriment of practical or classical education.

In the same connection, there has been a recent series of programs aired on National Public Radio (NPR) examining the current interest in some 10,000 American homes (according to estimate) in which the parents are conducting private schools for their own children. Also in these instances there appears to be a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction with the education offered their children in the public school system, frequently as to quality, but more commonly as to the inability of the public school to handle moral problems and concepts. There are thirty-two states which do not have laws prohibiting such home schools, and there are two essential methods by which parents may establish such schools. One method is to obtain permission from the local school board to operate "home study" programs. When such permission is granted, the parents may obtain guidance and even materials for their program through the office of their superintendent of schools. The other method is to incorporate as a "private school," either merely involving one family or even several families. In this case, of course, the public school system would not be directly involved, and guidance for the parent/teacher, curricula, and materials would have to be obtained elsewhere. Organizations and agencies have already been established for the purpose of providing such assistance.

It is encouraging, it seems to me, that there is this trend. It demonstrates that more and more parents are both realizing and accepting the responsibility for personally involving themselves in their children's training and education. After all, it is in accordance with God's revealed will that the parents bring up their children, especially as they do that "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and although they may make use of other agencies to perform the actual work of instruction, nevertheless the basic responsibility will always remain theirs. Actually, as we know, parents who would expect the public schools to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" are making a most serious and tragic mistake. Parents who take full responsibility for their divine calling as parents must learn that they must look to themselves, first of all, and then to their church schools, their Christian teachers, and their pastors as the proper agency for carrying out the task of truly educating their children according to the will of God.

Martin Luther knew this full well, as can be seen from his well-known preface to his Small Catechism. There he made it eminently clear that it was the responsibility of the *Hausvater*, under God, to teach his family, including his servants as well as his children, the essentials of Christian doctrine. This responsibility is not taken away, furthermore, even though Luther also advocated the establishment of schools by the government, as, for example, he did when he wrote to the Margrave of Brandenburg: "It would certainly be good if Your Grace would establish one or two universities at suitable places in your principality ..."; for Luther adds: "... where not only the Holy Scriptures but also law and all sorts of arts would be taught." (Ewald Plass: *What Luther Says*, Vol. I, p. 451.) Of course, in this connection, Plass' footnote brings us the helpful reminder: "When Luther entrusted education to the state, he did not have in mind the complete secularization of the schools but wanted them to have a distinctly Christian character. The Doctor's views on this point continued to be

colored by his medieval idea of the Christian state." (*Ibid.*, p. 449.)

When John Milton issued his tract, *Of Education*, in 1644, he, like Luther, considered education to be an essential part of the work of the Reformation. He shared the conviction of his contemporary, John Hall, who regarded educational reform as the final step in the Protestant Reformation in England ("An Humble Motion to the Parliament of England Concerning the Advancement of Learning and Reformation of the Universities," 1649.) Hall could, of course, make his presentation to the Parliament because by that time Charles I had been defeated and perhaps even executed, and the Puritans were in control, whereas Milton's tract was written during the height of the Civil War in England.

The Puritan movement in England demanded many sweeping changes, not the least of which involved education. Much of the impetus toward educational reform had been spurred on by the writings of Samuel Hartlib, the child of a Polish father and an English mother, who had emigrated from Poland to England around 1628. While living in Prussia, Hartlib had come into contact with Comenius, one of whose works on education, "A Reformation of Schooles," he translated and published in 1642. Milton wrote his tract, addressed to Mr. Hartlib, in response to the latter's suggestion that he set forth his views on education.

Milton assumes, as do others of his time, that the very early education of the children is taken care of in the home, either by the parents or by governesses and tutors. It must be remembered that to provide a general primary education for both sexes would have been a revolutionary concept far beyond comprehension at that time. Milton's reform program, therefore, involves only male children and he limited it to ages 12 through 21.

He proposes a number of institutions, each for a total of about 150 students. It would be necessary to locate, as he writes, "a spacious house and ground

about it fit for an academy." He suggests a staff of about 20 attendants. The place should be both school and university, so that the entire educational program for the individual will not require his moving to another location.

Milton takes pains to point out an essential purpose of his reform proposals: namely, to avoid the purposeless study of the classical languages. "Language is but the instrument conveying to us things useful to be known. And though a linguist should pride himself to have all the tongues that Babel cleft the world into, yet, if he have not studied the solid things in them as well as the words and lexicons, he were nothing so much to be esteemed a learned man as any yeoman or tradesman competently wise in his mother dialect only." So Milton complains of the system of language study in vogue in the educational system of his day: "We do amiss to spend seven or eight years merely in scraping together so much miserable Latin and Greek as might be learned otherwise easily and delightfully in one year." (Those souls among us in whose hearts a responsive chord has been struck at reading this comment should not rejoice too soon, however! The key words in the sentences quoted are "purposeless" and "miserable." Milton advocates study in depth, not only of Latin and Greek, but also Hebrew, German, French, and Italian, just for starters!)

Languages learned, then, merely for the sake of mental exercise or discipline are, in Milton's view, worse than useless. When one examines the long list of Latin and Greek authors Milton wants the students to read, as they progress in their grasp of the language, one understands the practical usefulness he feels that language study in depth actually has. Milton has felt that heretofore too much time was spent in drilling and grammatical exercises which are dull and repetitious, and that the student had been downright stultified by endless exercises in attempting to write essays, also in the classical language. Rather, he felt, the student should be encouraged, after a year or so of studying basic grammar, to read as much classical literature as he can manage. A careful selection of

such literature on the part of the instructors will also provide learning in all branches. For example, to learn mathematics one reads Euclid; to learn agriculture, Cato or Varro; to learn history, Pliny or Xenophon; to learn philosophy, read Aristotle and Plato; etc. Thus Milton's curriculum extends for page after page.

Milton is opposed to long and frequent "vacancies," as he terms vacations and holidays. But he is very much in favor of athletic and military exercise, recommending that about an hour and a half should be allowed for this every day, before the noon meal. He is especially interested that each young gentleman learn swordsmanship and wrestling, above all. Time should also be given to military drill, with sham battles and practice maneuvers predominating. Such exercises should also take place daily, after afternoon study and before the evening repast. Milton's program also included daily training and practice in music. He speaks fondly of the "beautiful harmonies of the skilled organist," and recommends music highly, for whether it be "religious, martial, or civil," it has "a great power over dispositions and manners to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions."

As the student grows in knowledge and maturity, in his development from age 12 to 21, his horizons are gradually widened. As the years pass, his competence in Latin and Greek enables him to continue his reading in the classical authors, always with the emphasis on learning the content of their writings. After some years, Hebrew, Chaldee, and Aramaic are added, as well as German, French, and Italian -- always with the same goal in mind. The sacred languages are added especially to benefit the student in his religious studies, for throughout the curriculum, as the student can handle it, Sundays and every evening are "spent in the highest matters of theology and church history ancient and modern."

Logic and rhetoric are important phases of Milton's system of education, but they are presented

near the end -- after the student has a deep background and is well read in many areas. Then, really for the first time, the student begins to offer his ideas and views on a subject. After all, until he has become acquainted with the ideas and concepts of those who have gone before, how can he know how or what to think?

Much of Milton's thinking in the matter of education strikes a responsive chord in the minds of many of our readers. Many of us were brought up in church-supported institutions that were run in a very similar fashion -- even, in years past, to the military companies and sham battles! Many teachers, I am sure, who have experienced the eager willingness of the child to "discuss," in contrast with the child's unwillingness to dig out facts and figures to aid in the "discussion," will feel an amount of sympathy with Milton's emphasis on "read and learn first -- then offer your own thoughts and opinions"!

What was Milton's goal in seeking educational reform? There are two rather well-known statements of his, contained in the tract under examination, that sum up his intentions. The first: "I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." It is this, he declares, that is to be accomplished "between twelve and one and twenty, less time than is now bestowed in pure trifling at grammar and sophistry."

The other quotation gets more deeply into the heart of the goal of education. There is, of course, imbedded into it the "Christian humanism," so-called, and also the Arminianism which Milton followed. Yet, had the declaration the proper reliance upon Christ, the Master Educator, we, too, would regard it highly: "The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection."

Luther said it better. First, in dealing with curricular matters, he wrote: "Speaking for myself, if I had children and could achieve my purpose, they would have to study not only the languages and history but also singing, music, and all the branches of mathematics. For what is all this but mere child's play in which the Greeks in former times trained their children, and which certainly developed them into men and women of wondrous ability, skilled in every pursuit. How I regret now that I did not read more poets and historians and that no one taught me them! Instead of them I had to read, at great cost, with labor and injury, that devil's filth, the writings of the philosophers and sophists, so that I have all I can do to purge myself of their falsehood." (Plass, Vol. I, p. 448.)

In connection with the goal of education, Luther wrote: "Above all things, the principal and most general subject of study, both in the higher and the lower schools, should be the Holy Scriptures." And: "But where the Holy Scripture does not rule I certainly advise no one to send his child. Everyone not unceasingly occupied with the Word of God must become corrupt; therefore we must see what people in the higher schools are and grow up to be. ... I greatly fear that schools for higher learning are wide gates to hell if they do not diligently teach the Holy Scriptures and impress them on the young folk." (Plass, Vol. I, p. 449.)

John Lau

A CORRECTION

There is an omission near the middle of p. 19 of the previous (March, 1979) *Journal*. Beginning with the second sentence of the long paragraph, it should read as follows: "It is a testament, by virtue of the fact that the testator did indeed die. It is also a covenant by virtue of the fact that He is now alive."

B O O K N O T I C E S

The Lutheran Confessions -- A Harmony and Resource Book, edited by Neelak S. Tjernagel (Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1979); 220 pp.; \$11.75, paper-bound; \$14.75, hard-cover.

The frontispiece of this book states: "This edition of the Confessions has taken the Catechism as its starting point and has organized the doctrines of the Book of Concord under the subject headings of the Small Catechism." As an aid to the review of a given doctrine the reader will find citations of and references to the pertinent parts of the Book of Concord where this doctrine is treated. The resource section contains valuable references and an extensive bibliography together with a glossary, outlines and analyses. This book will be appreciated by all who desire to refresh and renew their acquaintance with the Lutheran Confessions. A fine addition to any church and school library.

Gospel Devotions For Children, by Adolph Fehlauer (Northwestern Publishing House, 1978); 195 pp.; \$5.75.

This book, designed for children ages 8-12, presents 180 short devotions with hymn selections, Scripture readings, meditations, and prayers. This volume will be welcomed by teachers and parents as an aid in directing the devotions of children committed to their care. An index of topics and Scripture readings is added.

Luther's English Connection, by James Edward McGoldrick (Northwestern Publishing House, 1979); 232 pp.; paper-bound, \$6.95.

This volume will be of special interest to those who wish to pursue a study of Robert Barnes' and William Tyndale's connections with Luther's theology.

The Way, by A. L. Anderson (Northwestern Publishing House, 1978); 72 pp.; 4½ x 6 booklet, \$1.75.

This pocket-size booklet is intended to show the unity of the Old and New Testaments in presenting God's plan of salvation to mankind.

C. M. Gullerud

A QUOTABLE QUOTE ON THE
MEANING OF SUBSCRIPTION
TO A CONFESSION

The subscription to a Confession is simply a just and easy mode of testifying to those who have a right to ask it of us, that we are what we claim and profess to be. So to sign a Confession as to imply that we are what we are not, or to leave it an open question what we are, is not the just result of the right of private judgment, or of any right whatever, but is utterly wrong. For it is a first element of truth, with which no right, private or public, can conflict, that names shall honestly represent things. What immorality is more patent than the pretence that the right of private judgment is something which authorizes a man to make his whole life a falsehood; is something which fills the world with names, which no longer represent things, fills it with black things, that are called white, with bitter things, that are called sweet, and with lies, that are called truths, with monarchists, who are called republicans, with Socinians, who are called Trinitarians, with Arminians, who are called Calvinists, with Romanists, Rationalists, fanatics, or sectarians, who are called Lutherans?

(C. P. Krauth, *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, pp. 171-172.)



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