

Doctrinal Proceedings.

(Speaker: Dr. F. Pieper.)

Scripture.

The Christian doctrine, which Luther confessed to the whole world and church four hundred years ago at Worms, includes above all the truth that the Holy Scriptures are the only source and guide of Christian doctrine, because the Holy Scriptures are not the word of men, but the word of our great God and Savior, and through this word God wants to teach all men and rule their hearts and consciences. We all know the answer that Luther gave to the papal spokesman when he asked him at Worms to finally give a short and clear answer as to whether or not he wanted to revoke everything or something of his teaching. Luther's answer was: "Unless I am overcome by testimonies of Scripture or by bright reasons - for I believe neither the pope nor the councils alone, since it is evident that they have often erred and contradicted themselves -, I am

overcome by the passages of Scripture I have cited, and my conscience is captive to God's Word. I cannot and will not recant, because it is unsafe and dangerous to act contrary to conscience." From these words it is clear that Luther recognized no other authority in the Christian Church and for the conscience of each individual Christian than the Holy Scriptures. He rejects any other authority, be it the Pope or the Church Assembly, in the Christian Church. This is Luther's position, and he held to this position. Indeed, Luther did not leave immediately after his public appearance on April 17 and 18, but remained in Worms for seven more days, until April 26. And in this meantime a number of attempts were still made in several private meetings, also by the use of flattery, to push Luther away from fine "position on the Holy Scriptures. These meetings were held in the house of the Archbishop of Trier. He was one of the few papists with whom Luther had some confidence. Luther's words, "I cannot help it, my conscience is caught in God's Word," had made a tremendous impression on the whole assembly in Worms. And so the Archbishop of Trier, together with other Roman theologians, made an attempt to see if they could not dissuade Luther from his decisive standpoint. Four more meetings took place, on April 24 and 26, morning and afternoon. In the first meeting, Luther was asked to recognize the authority of the councils, especially the Kostnitz Council. Luther had written many good writings that were useful for Christians to read, and these writings would not be read if he rejected the authority of the councils. Luther answered that the councils could not be relied upon, as the Kostnitz Council had just proved by the unjust condemnation of John Hus; therefore he could not recognize the councils as authority. He stuck to sola Scriptura. Scripture alone must teach Christianity and govern hearts and consciences.

The organizers of the meeting withdrew for a consultation and then came forward with the suggestion that Luther should let the emperor and the empire judge his teaching. Luther replied that he was heartily willing to do so, on the condition that the emperor and the empire would judge on the basis of Scripture. On the following day, Thursday, April 26, another attempt was made to persuade Luther to submit to the Emperor and the Empire without reservation. They promised to see to it that Luther's writings would be submitted only to unsuspicious and just judges. Luther replied that in matters of Christian doctrine one could not and should not rely on men at all, not even on so-called impartial men, but only on God's word. He cited Jer. 17:5: "Cursed is the man who relies on men!"

Finally, it was suggested to Luther that he at least leave the decision about his doctrine to a future council. But Luther added the condition that he could submit to the decision of a future council only if the decision was proven by testimonies of the Holy Scripture. They now refrained from dissuading Luther from sola Scriptura. The following day, April 26, at 10 o'clock in the morning, Luther departed from Worms. From Friedberg, north of Worms, he sent another letter to the emperor and the imperial estates on April 28, in which he thanked them for granting him a hearing and safe conduct and offered himself to all obedience in worldly matters, but at the same time repeated that in matters of Christian doctrine his conscience was bound only in God's Word.

We will hardly find ourselves in a situation where we are placed before the emperor and the empire as Luther was four hundred years ago at Worms. But according to God's will we are to take the same position with regard to the Holy Scriptures. And we need the same position if we want to bring about the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls, by God's grace. By God's grace we also take this position. But in doing so, we have almost the whole world, the infernal army and the majority of today's external Christianity as enemies. We are not left alone. With the use of ridicule and scorn, with the use of apparently ungodly and pious-sounding speeches, also with the occasional use of flattery, that there is much good in our writings, that one likes to read them, etc., they try to push us away from the Holy Scriptures as the only foundation of our Christian faith. In addition, our own sinful flesh is very reluctant to recognize and accept the Holy Scriptures as God's own Word. But it is necessary to be victorious over the devil, the world and the flesh. God's Word is the only light in the darkness of this world when it comes to the question: What must I do to be saved? It is the only bridge that connects us to heaven in this life and carries us into life even through death.

Let us fortify ourselves for this struggle and victory by a doctrinal discussion of the Holy Scriptures, first by letting the Scriptures themselves testify to us what they are, namely God's own Word by inspiration, and then by recognizing and rejecting as null and void the objections that are raised against them. The following sentences about the Holy Scriptures may serve the discussion:

I. The Holy Scriptures, unlike all other books in the world, are God's own Word.

II. the Holy Scriptures are God's Word by inspiration, that is, by the fact that God gave or inspired the Scriptures to the holy writers.

III. the objections raised in this regard are null and void.

I.

The Holy Scriptures, unlike all other books in the world, are God's own Word.

Someone might ask: Is there anyone who wants to be a Christian and yet does not believe that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God? To this it must be replied: There was, however, a time when this truth was hardly contested by anyone in the Christian Church. Even if in the time which we usually call the time of the church fathers, the Christian doctrine was no longer taught publicly as purely as it was in the apostolic church, the so-called church fathers of the first centuries nevertheless confess in their writings the unquestionable divinity of the Holy Scriptures. Furthermore: In the time of the Christian Church, which we call the Middle Ages, the papist teachers falsified the Christian doctrine from the bottom up. They replaced the Gospel of Grace with the pagan doctrine of works and the Holy Scriptures with the decrees of the Pope and the Councils. But they left unchallenged, even if only outwardly, the sentence that the Holy Scripture is the Word of God. And as far as the time of the Reformation is concerned, in addition to the truth that man obtains forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ without the works of the law, Luther also put the truth back on the lampstand that the Holy Scriptures alone should be the articles of faith, on the grounds that the Scriptures alone are God's own and infallible Word. This truth remained quite unchallenged for more than two hundred years in Lutheran and also mostly in the so-called Protestant Christianity. It became different already in the third century after the Reformation. It became even worse in the fourth century.

At present, in so-called Protestant Christendom, the doctrine that the Holy Scriptures are God's Word and therefore infallible truth is abandoned by most public teachers who have the great prestige. The Holy Scriptures are not supposed to be God's Word itself. It is not supposed to be the book in which God Himself speaks to us, but only a kind of congregational record of the first Christian congregations, in which people tell us how they understood the teachings of Christ. These people would have been under the illumination of the Holy Spirit working in the church, but human views and errors are not excluded. Scripture is called "God-human" in the sense that human error is found in Scripture alongside divine truth. It is therefore the task of the church, especially of the learned theologians, to distinguish between truth and error. With this, however, the sure ground of the apostles and prophets is abandoned and everything is put in doubt.

We Missourians and our fellow believers and confessors are widely regarded as "backward" people, lagging behind in necessary development. But by God's grace, we are not misled. We hold fast to the fact that the Holy Scriptures are God's own Word, as distinguished from all other writings that exist elsewhere in the world. When we open the Scriptures, we know that God is speaking to us. When the Scriptures are read, the congregation rises up, because God is speaking to them. There are, of course, many scriptures in the world that contain God's Word. Since the time of the apostles, hundreds of thousands of scriptures have been written that contain God's Word in the way that God's Word is recorded in them from the Scriptures. Augustine's writings, written in the fifth century, and Anselm's writings, written in the Middle Ages, contain God's Word more or less purely. Luther's, Gerhard's, Walther's writings contain God's word. And such writings are also useful to read. We should also look at and take to heart the Word of God contained in such writings as if God Himself spoke it to us. But what is really God's word in these writings has come into them from the Holy Scriptures. Many people have also been converted to Christ through reading such writings. But these writings have had this blessed effect only insofar as and through the fact that they absorbed the word of the Holy Scriptures. This is not a human thought, but clear teaching of Christ, when he says Joh. 17, 20 in the high priestly prayer that all Christians will believe in me "through their" - the apostles - "word" until the last day. But we have the word of the apostles in the writings of the apostles, which we now call the Holy Scriptures. That is why Luther, in his well-known instruction for theological study, rightly says: "First of all, you should know that the Holy Scriptures are such a book, which makes wisdom of all other books foolishness, because none teaches about eternal life without this alone." If, thank God, other books also teach of eternal life, that is, properly the way to eternal life, this is taken from the Holy Scriptures. We have books by Greek philosophers. But they do not contain God's word and do not teach anything about eternal life, because the Holy Scriptures were unknown to the writers of these books. Socrates is considered the wisest of all Greeks. When he was about to die - for he had to drink the poisoned cup - he did not express the confidence that he had a merciful God through faith in Christ, but said: "Do not forget to sacrifice a cock to Asclepius!"

Thus, we also maintain with Luther that the Holy Scriptures are a book of a unique nature, namely, in contrast to all books, God's book, that is, God's own Word. The Holy Scriptures form a class among all other books that exist.

for itself, "forming a class by itself".¹⁾ If we wanted to express the nature of the Bible externally in the arrangement of the books in a library, we could place the Bible, for example, on a book shelf that stands on its own or is placed in the center of the library. In short, we hold our thesis that the Holy Scriptures are God's own Word, as distinct from all other books in the world.

How do we know this? As we take all other teachings from the Scriptures, so also the teaching about the Scriptures themselves. So we ask: What does the Holy Scripture say about itself? And there is the answer: Scripture says of itself that it is God's Word, and this in several ways.

The words of the Old Testament Scriptures are quoted in the New Testament par excellence as God's words. Matth. 1, 23 the words are quoted from the prophet Isaiah, namely from Is. 7, 14: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son." But of these words it is said in v. 22 that the Lord spoke them through the prophet. Matth. 2, 15 are quoted from Hos. 11, 1 the words: "Out of Egypt I have called my son." With regard to these words it is immediately testified that the Lord spoke them through the prophet. Apost. 4:26 is quoted from the 2nd Psalm: "Why do the nations rebel, and the peoples take in vain?" But of these words it is said at the same time that God spoke them through the mouth of his servant David. Apost. 28, 26 the words of Isa. 6, 9.10 are held up to the Jews in Rome: "Go to this people and say, 'With your ears you will hear and not understand, and with your eyes you will see and not know,'" etc. And to these words is added at the same time the judgment that the Holy Spirit spoke them well (that is, accurately) through the prophet Isaiah to the fathers of Israel, b. 25. Heb. 3, 7 is said of a quotation from the 95th Psalm: "As the Holy Spirit saith, To day, if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts." Rom. 3, 2 is called the whole Holy Scripture Old Testament, which was entrusted to the Jewish church: "what God has spoken" (ta logia ton Theou, God's sayings, God's words). And because the whole scripture of the Old Testament is God's own word, therefore Christ says Joh. 10, 35 about this scripture that it cannot be broken in a single word.

More. There are a number of passages of Scripture that are sometimes overlooked when talking about Scripture being God's Word. But they are a tremendous proof of the divinity of the Scriptures. These are the passages of Scripture in which it is said that all events in the world must be according to the word of Scripture or must come to pass. Everything that has happened and will happen, from the

1) Davis, *Bible Dictionary*, sub "Bible."

From the beginning to the end of the world, this had to happen and will happen, as it is written. Thus Matth. 1, 22, as we have already heard, says of the birth of Christ from the Virgin Mary that it happened "so that the scripture might be fulfilled". Joh. 17,12 the Savior speaks of Judas' apostasy and end and adds: "that the scripture might be fulfilled". When Peter wants to save Christ from capture with the sword in the garden, Christ also defends him with the words: "How would the Scripture be fulfilled? It must be so." And only about what happened to Christ, especially about His suffering and the following glory, Christ Himself says Luk 24, 44 ff: "All things must be fulfilled that are written of Me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms," etc. If everything that is written in the Scriptures must come to pass, then the Scriptures must not be the word of men, but the word of Him who has everything in heaven and on earth in His hand, who directs all events, without whom nothing can happen in heaven and on earth, who is omnipotent and omniscient, in short, the great, majestic God Himself.

2 This is said first of all of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. But that the writings of the apostles of the New Testament are of the same nature, namely also God's own word, is taught in 1 Petr. 1, 10-12 taught, where it is first said of the prophets of the Old Testament that they prophesied of the future grace of the New Testament by the Spirit of Christ which was in them, but then with respect to the apostles of the New Testament it is added: "Which now [at the time of the New Testament] is preached unto you by them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven." Here it is clearly taught that, as the word of the prophets of the Old Testament, so also the word of the apostles of the New Testament is the word of the Holy Spirit. The objection that here we are speaking only of the oral word, not of the writings of the apostles, does not apply, because the apostles expressly say that they wrote the same thing that they proclaimed orally. Thus the apostle John writes 1 John 1:3, 4: "That which we have seen and heard we declare unto you, . . . and these things we write unto you, that your joy may be full." Likewise, the apostle Paul exhorts the Thessalonians to make no distinction between what the apostle preached to them orally and what he wrote to them, saying, "Stand therefore, brethren, and hold fast the statutes which ye are taught, whether by our word or epistle." 2 Thess. 2:15. Yes, even more: the apostles urge very decidedly *sola* Scriptura, the written word. The apostle Paul explicitly refers the Christian churches of his time to his epistles and demands that the churches accept the epistles written by him as God's word and commandment. In the church at Corinth there were people who were

They boasted that they were also prophets and had the Holy Spirit, and therefore put their word next to and above Paul's word. The apostle points out to them that all who boast of being prophets and spiritual must prove themselves to be true prophets and truly spiritual people by acknowledging the written word of the apostle as God's word and by submitting to this word. He writes 1 Cor. 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge what I write unto you: for they are the commandments of the Lord." Even in the time of the apostles, it happened that people referred to oral tradition, that is, to words that were supposedly spoken by the apostles, and to letters that supposedly came from the apostles. Paul therefore writes 2 Thess. 2, 2 to the Christians at Thessalonica that they should not be swayed and terrified, "neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letters, as sent by us." So that the Christian churches could distinguish genuine apostles' writings from those that had been foisted on them, Paul refers to his handwriting in 2 Thess. 3, 17: "The greeting with my hand of Paul. This is the sign in all the epistles; thus I write." So abundantly is it testified in Scripture that, as the writing of the Old Testament, so also the writing of the New Testament is God's Word.

So Luther and the old Lutheran teachers. Luther: "Thou shalt thus deal with the Scriptures, that thou mayest think as God Himself speaks." (St. L. III, 21.) Gerhard: "According to the matter, there is no difference between God's Word and Holy Scripture." (St. L. de Scriptura Sacra, § 7.) There is only a difference of expression whether we say, "Scripture says," or, "God says." In substance, they are one and the same.

The truth that the Holy Scripture is God's Word easily fades into the background because the Holy Scripture speaks to us in such simple, human words and also deals with the things of human life, e.g. household, agriculture, animal husbandry, clothing and food, etc. The Holy Scripture is therefore concerned with what happened to Christ at the time he walked on earth. Therefore, the Holy Scripture tells us how Christ was at the time when he walked on earth. Because Christ was found to be like a man in appearance, the Jewish audience considered him to be a mere man like John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or the prophets, Matth. 16, 14. So also with regard to the Holy Scriptures. Because it is written in simple, human language, it is not considered God's Word, but is put in a class with human books and criticized. May never a Lutheran pastor in the pulpit or a teacher in the school criticize the Scriptures! May God also preserve us especially from professors who criticize God's Word because the Scriptures outwardly wear such a plain dress! Luther says in fine preface to the Old Testament (St. L. XIV, 3 f.): "I faithfully ask and warn a jeg-".

Every devout Christian not to be offended by the simple speech and history that he often encounters, but do not doubt how badly it can always be seen that words, works, judgments and history are vain compared to the high divine majesty, power and wisdom. For this is the Scripture which makes fools of all the wise and prudent, and is open only to the little and foolish, as Christ saith Matt. 11:26. Wherefore let thy conceit and feeling depart, and think of this Scripture as the very highest, noblest sanctuary, as of the very richest treasure, which may never be sufficiently well-founded, that thou mayest find the divine wisdom, which God here so foolishly and plainly sets before thee, that he may subdue all pride."

Is Scripture also God's Word to us personally?

We conclude this section with a self-examination of whether we, too, hold the Holy Scriptures with right seriousness for God's Word and the only source and guide of Christian teaching. Let us ask ourselves:

Do we consider every time we open our Bible that this is a book in which not a man but the great God Himself, the Creator of heaven and earth, and our Beatificator, speaks to us? And yet it is indeed so. Walther used to say, "When I have my Bible under my arm, I feel exceedingly rich; for in this Bible God speaks to me." When we use the Bible in this way, we use it according to the truth that the Bible is God's own word. God is an invisible God to us in this life; no one has ever seen God. We know, of course, that God is and works everywhere. We see from every blade of grass: this is God's work. But the work of creation does not open God's heart to us, as it is to us sinners. It is not written on the mountains or in the valleys, on the stars or in the depths of the earth, that God does not want to condemn us but to take us to heaven for Christ's sake; God tells us this only in his word. There he speaks to us as a man speaks to men. We cannot come closer to God for our salvation in this life than in his word. We are not misled by the fact that some say: Christ has appeared to me. Luther repeatedly says that he does not want Christ to communicate with him through appearances, because there would be the possibility that under God's permission the devil could disguise himself as an angel of light. But he, Luther, was sure that Christ was with him, not mute, but speaking, in his revealed word. (St. L. 1,1118 ff.) So it is. Christ pointed us to his word: "If you abide in my word, then you are my true disciples and will know the truth, and the truth will set you free", Joh. 8, 31. 32. Let us keep this in mind when we open our Bible or read the words of the Bible.

hear, that we may worship in reverence to God in His Word, saying, "Speak, O Lord, for your servant hears!"

Do we read the Scriptures diligently? It is proper to do so. The Holy Scriptures are a letter from God to us human beings. Luther says repeatedly: Letters of lords and princes should be read two or three times, for they are written thoughtfully. But the Scriptures, our God's letter, should be read unceasingly, a hundred and a thousand times. (St. L. I, 1055; XXII, 544. 1069.) Now there is hardly a house in our synod in which a Bible is not found. Yes, the Bible is probably present in several copies in almost all houses. But in order to test ourselves as to whether we take the Holy Scriptures for God's Word in all seriousness, we should ask ourselves the question: Is the Bible the most read or the least read book in our house? If we investigate, we will find that there is much sin on our part on this point. And this is because we forget that the Bible is God's own Word, God's letter, written to every man. If we want to establish diligent Bible reading in our congregations, we have to point this out again and again: Consider, dear Christian, what you have in your Bible! It is God's letter, addressed especially to you. In it you are told: God is gracious to you; you, sinner, are reconciled to God through Christ's death; God has accepted you for the sake of Christ's blood.

Do we diligently hear God's word when it is preached in public? God not only wants His Word to be read, but He has also ordained that His Word be preached in public by persons competent and appointed to do so. What follows from this? Everything that has feet to walk and ears to hear should go to church for public preaching, unless God Himself tells us through the circumstances at hand: You are not going to church today. Only ministries of love, such as nursing the sick, should prevent us from doing so. It is a contempt of the Holy Scriptures as the Word of God if we become slothful and indolent in attending public worship services.

4. do we let God's word dwell among us richly, even in conversation and intercourse with the brethren? Christians can and should talk with each other also about the things that belong to their worldly and civil profession. They will also discuss the events of the time. The world errs in judging the events of the time. Christians do not need to err with the world. They can and should put all these things in the light of the Word of God. For this purpose, God has written the letter of His Word to them. That is why Christians talk among themselves about God's Word and church things before anything else. This was better in our synod in the past than it is now. We pastors should at all times

exhort them not to forget to let the word of Christ dwell among them richly in their social gatherings.

Are we diligent to memorize as many words of Scripture as possible, so that God's Word may be present to us as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, even when we do not have our Bible with us? In the home and in school, care should be taken to memorize such a selection of stories and Bible verses in which the main points of Christian doctrine and life are expressed.

Are we demonstrating diligence and zeal in Bible dissemination? The Bible is to be read. "Search the Scriptures!" Let us not forget: when we spread the Bible, we bring into the hands even of unbelievers the book in which God speaks to them. But with the speech of God in the Scriptures the Holy Spirit is connected, both with the Law and with the Gospel. Through the law the Holy Spirit works knowledge of sin, through the gospel faith in Christ. So, give the Bible a chance! We do this by spreading the Bible. Many unbelievers have been converted to Christ by reading the Bible. All Christians, not only the pastors, should therefore always have Bibles and Testaments in their homes to be able to distribute them occasionally. Thus it behooves us to believe that the Bible is God's own book, written to each and every person.

7. are we diligent in the work of training teachers and preachers who make it their life's calling to teach God's word? God wants His Word preached even in the public preaching ministry, as we have already heard. But the preachers we must train. Christ himself taught his disciples for three years. The apostles also already had a kind of seminary. The apostle Paul writes to Timothy, "Hold fast to the example of the saving words which you have heard from me!" 2 Tim. 1, 13; and Timothy is to look around in the churches for such people "who are able to teach others also," chap. 2, 2. We must also do this. It should be our constant concern that people who teach the Holy Scriptures publicly are also trained for this office. A synod that neglects its teaching institutions proves that it does not believe with all its heart that the Scriptures are God's own Word.

II.

The Holy Scriptures are God's Word by inspiration, that is, by the fact that God gave or inspired the Scriptures to the holy writers.

The Holy Scriptures not only tell us the fact that they are God's Word, but also teach us very clearly from where

This is because the Holy Scriptures were breathed or inspired by God into the men through whom they were written. It is said of 2 Tim. 3:16 of the Holy Scriptures, "All Scripture is inspired by God," and of 2 Pet. 1:21 of the writers of the Holy Scriptures, "The holy men of God have spoken, impelled by the Holy Spirit." It is in this divine act of inspiration that the Holy Scriptures, though written by men and in human language, are not the word of men, but the word of God. In the Scripture statements cited about inspiration, the following is included:

The inspiration of the Scripture is the inspiration of the words of the Holy Scripture, in theological expression: verbal inspiration, verbal inspiration, xtennr^ inspiration. It is quite strange how now and then even well-meaning people who want to advocate the divinity of Scripture nevertheless express doubts with regard to word or verbal inspiration. In Germany, there are a number of pastors who have been advocating the: Unbelief want to stand up for the divinity of the Scriptures, also for the inspiration of the Scriptures, but miraculously reject the inspiration of the words of the Scriptures. One wants to admit that the persons who wrote the Scriptures were inspired (personal inspiration), but the inspiration should not extend to the words used by the sacred writers. One also wants to admit that the things about which they wrote were presented to the holy writers (real inspiration), but the inspiration is not also to extend to the words with which the things are described. But these are both foolish and contrary to Scripture thoughts. As certainly as 2 Tim. 3:16 says of Scripture "inspired by God", and Scripture, as everyone admits, does not consist of "persons" or "things" but of words, so certainly is the inspiration of Scripture word or verbal inspiration. The same is evident from 2 Pet. 1:21: "The holy men of God spake, impelled by the Holy Ghost." From this passage it is clear that the holy men of God, being driven by the Holy Spirit, did not merely think or contemplate, but that they spoke, that is, they produced words. That we are speaking here of the written words of the Scriptures, and not merely of the oral word, is expressly stated in the preceding verse (v. 20), where the words produced by the holy men of God are more specifically designated as "prophecy in the Scriptures." And when we look at the use that Christ and the apostles made of the Scriptures, we see that they press precisely on the words of the Scriptures. When Christ John 10:35 says of the Scriptures that they cannot be broken, he understands this precisely of the words of the Scriptures. He bases his argument against the Jews on the fact that he did not

The fact that in the 82nd Psalm the word "gods" is even used by mere men, by the judges on earth, shows that in the Scriptures it is precisely the words that matter and that every dispute is decided by the words. That in the Scriptures it is precisely the words that matter, and by the words every dispute is decided, we see from the story of the temptation of Christ. With the threefold "It is written" Christ confronts the devil with the words of Scripture and wins the victory. The Savior says: "It is written: Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes through the mouth of God", Matth. 4, 4. "Again, it is also written: Thou shalt not tempt thy Lord God", v. 7. "It is written: Thou shalt worship God thy Lord, and him only shalt thou serve," v. 10. That the divine revelation to men depends on the very words to which faith is to adhere, Christ also says John 8:31, 32: "If ye continue in my word, ye are my disciples indeed, and ye shall know the truth." So much does everything depend on the words that the apostle Paul says of all teachers who do not abide in Christ's words that they are darkened and know nothing, 1 Tim. 6, 3 ff. In short, if we did not hold that the inspiration of Scripture is word inspiration or verbal inspiration, so that the words of Scripture are God's words, then Scripture would be of no use to us, because we would always have to remain in doubt as to whether the human writers had also found the right words in the high divine things. But since the Scriptures - that is, the words that make up the Scriptures - are inspired by God, our faith has a foundation on which it can rest securely, because it stands firmer than heaven and earth. That is why we dare not depart from God's written Word in any piece. Luther calls those frivolous despisers of Scripture who even ignore a clear saying as if it did not exist, and adds for his person: "So it is to me that every saying makes the world too narrow for me. (St. L. XX, 788.) In short, the Holy Scripture teaches nothing else than verbal inspiration.

The inspiration of the Scriptures does not consist in a mere guidance of the holy scribes (assistencia, assistance, direction) and their preservation from error, but in the divine presentation or the divine giving of the words of which the Scriptures consist. It is said of Scripture in 2 Tim. 3:16, not merely, "All Scripture directed or directed by God," but, "All Scripture inspired by God." Directed or directed by God and inspired by God are quite different terms. Within the Lutheran Church of the seventeenth century, the Helmstedt theologian Georg Calixt wanted to establish a mere divine "direction" with respect to such things in Scripture that were already known to the sacred writers and were of lesser importance in general.

Assume guidance and preservation from error. 2) To some, this seems innocuous at first glance. But Calixt's opinion was rightly rejected by the old Lutheran theologians as contrary to Scripture, because thereby a change in the Scriptural statement 2 Tim. 3,16 is made, namely, for the statement "inspired by God" another, according to the content different statement: "directed or guided by God", is inserted. Furthermore, it was rightly pointed out by our old theologians that with the, substitute "direction" in place of "inspiration" or "inspiration" the Scripture would be at best flawless human word, but not God's word itself. The majestic Word of God itself is the Scripture only through inspiration.3)

In the church of God, only "out of God's mouth" should be spoken. Already the prophet Jeremiah warns the children of Israel: "Do not obey the words of the prophets who prophesy to you. They deceive you, because they preach from the face of their heart and not from the mouth of the Lord", Jer. 23, 16. Let us pay attention to the difference between church and state: In the state, people are allowed, yes, commanded, to speak from reason; the civil society is to be instructed about good and evil from reason. But in the church there is a very different order. The church is God's house, God's temple, and in this house only, as Luther often says, the word of the great landlord is to resound. If, for example, a member of the congregation comes to the pastor and says, "Pastor, I cannot accept what you have said," the pastor must be able to say and prove: I spoke from God's mouth, not from my mouth; so says God in His Word. Likewise, our school teachers and professors must be able to say: I teach from God's mouth; thus speaks the Lord; thus is written in the Scriptures.

3. inspiration does not extend only to a part of the Scriptures, for instance to the main things or to what was unknown to the holy writers before, etc., but to the whole Scriptures. What is a part of Scripture is also inspired by God. This and nothing else comes to expression in the words, "All Scripture inspired of God." We would do violence to these words if we wanted to exclude parts in Scripture from inspiration, such as those parts which contain interwoven historical remarks, or present descriptions of lands and natural things, or even events which were known beforehand to the sacred writers. In discussing the question of how far inspiration extends in the Scriptures, we underline the word "all": "all"

2) Thus already before Calixt the Jesuit Bellarmin († 1621) and other Jesuits. In Quenstedt I, 99 sq. Likewise Grotius († 1645 in Rostock). In Quenstedt, I. c., p. 100.

3) Quenstedt I, 98 sq., against Calixt and Bellarmin.

Scripture inspired by God".4) Joh. 10, 35 also belongs here again: "The Scripture cannot be broken after all."

4 The inspiration of the Scriptures naturally includes the divine impulse and command to write. If Roman theologians, such as Bellarmin and other Jesuits, admit that the writings of the New Testament were also inspired by God to the evangelists and apostles, but nevertheless deny that the evangelists and apostles had God's will and command for their writing,5) this is a contradiction in terms. st. God would not have inspired the holy writers with their writings if they had not had God's will and command for writing them. Therefore, the old Lutheran theologians rightly say that inspiration always includes God's will and command to perform the act of writing (importare). That the Romans deny this nonsensically comes from the fact that they want to depress the prestige of the Holy Scriptures and, on the other hand, to raise the prestige of the "oral tradition" they fabricate. Also such recent Protestants who deny the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures have claimed that the apostles wrote their letters from "accidental causes". The intention is the same as that of the Romans. They also want to evade the divine authority of the Holy Scriptures. So they argue: The writings of the apostles were only prompted by special conditions in the individual congregations of their time and therefore could not be a rule and guideline for the church of later times until the Last Day. The Epistle to the Romans was caused by the fact that the apostle Paul "coincidentally" had not yet been in Rome and therefore had the idea to write a letter to the Roman church, Rom. 1, 13 ff. The apostle had written to the Corinthians because it had become known to him "by chance" through those from Chloe's company that the church was suffering from partisanship. But whoever calls these occasions "accidental" and wants to prove from them that the apostle's word is not the source and guide of Christian doctrine for the church of all times, must basically deny that there is a God who has all "accidental occasions" in his hand. Christ explicitly says that he teaches Christianity until the last day through the word of his apostles, Joh. 17, 20. Also the apostles are aware that their teaching covers the whole period of the church until the end of time, 1 Cor. 11, 26; 18, 12; 1 Tim. 6, 13. 14. Also Luther was already aware of the objection that the letters of the apostles could not have general validity because they were caused by special circumstances in the individual churches. Cr deals with this in his writing "On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church," where he says (XIX, 19 f.):

4) Quenstedt I, 98.

5) Bellarmin, De Verbo Dei IV, 3; in Quenstedt I, 94.

"If we admit that any letter of Paul or any passage of any letter does not concern the general church, then the whole reputation of Paul is already destroyed. For the Corinthians will say that what he teaches about faith in the letter to the Romans does not concern them. What could be more blasphemous and nonsensical than this foolishness? Far be it, far be it, that there is any fool in the whole of Paul whom the whole general church should not follow and hold! The fathers did not have such an opinion until these perilous times, in which, as Paul foretold, there would be blasphemers and blind men and people of broken senses."

In the fact that the Holy Scripture is inspired by God and therefore is God's own Word, its complete infallibility is also included (infallibilitas Scripturae Sacrae, infallibility, inerrancy of Holy Scripture), because "to err is human", but not divine. That there can be no error in the Holy Scripture, for this we still have, as we repeatedly remembered, the testimony of the Son of God Himself, when He says John 10:35: "Surely the Scripture cannot be broken." One of our old Lutheran theologians, namely Quenstedt, states: "In the canonical Holy Scriptures there is found no lie, no false statement, no, not even the slightest error, either in things or in words, but the whole and the particular is perfectly true, whatever is taught therein, may it concern doctrine of faith, or doctrine of morals, or history, reckoning of time, description of places, or mention of names, and no ignorance, no carelessness or forgetfulness, no error of memory can or may be imputed to the scribes of the Holy Spirit in writing the Scriptures." 6) These words of Quenstedt sound appalling to modern ears, but they do not go even one line beyond Christ's words, "Surely the Scriptures cannot be broken," and beyond his apostle's words, "All Scripture inspired by God."

The relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writers of Scripture.

Newer theologians declare the relation of the Holy Spirit to be an unsolvable problem. They want the relationship to be left undetermined. But they speak here of an insoluble problem in the interest of their position, according to which the boundary between truth and error cannot be clearly determined in Scripture. But the Scriptures give the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the writers of the Scriptures very precisely, saying that the Lord "spoke through the prophet" (Matth. 1, 22; 2, 15), the Holy Spirit "spoke through the mouth of David" (Apost. 1, 16; 4, 25). According to this, God has appointed the holy scribes as his mouth, that is, as

6) Systema I, 112..

His organs or instruments, in the way that they did not write their word but God's word. Paul tells the Corinthian church 1 Cor. 14, 37: "What I write are the commandments of the Lord", and thereby justifies the demand that all who considered themselves "prophets" and "spiritual" in the church were subject to His word. The people of the Jews had the advantage over other peoples that they were entrusted with the Holy Scriptures, what "God has spoken". Thus the Scriptures themselves give very clear information about the relationship of the Holy Spirit to the writers of the Holy Scriptures. The sacred scribes were no more and no less than organs or instruments of the Holy Spirit in bringing about the Holy Scriptures. To designate this relationship (of Instrumentality), both the Church Fathers and the ancient Lutheran theologians call the sacred scribes feathers of the Holy Spirit, hands of the Holy Spirit, notaries, scribes, secretaries of the Holy Spirit. These expressions are much ridiculed by newer theologians. But these expressions are scriptural as long as the point of comparison (the tertium comparationis is held, namely, that the holy scribes were only God's instruments in writing the Scriptures. They are intended to express no more and no less than that the sacred writers wrote not their own word, but God's word. And this is true, as we have seen from the Scriptures themselves. But that the sacred scribes were not dead, mechanical, but living instruments, equipped with reason and will and a certain style, a certain mode of expression (modus dicendi), has also been very emphatically stressed by the ancient theologians. If newer theologians ascribe to our ancient theologians a purely mechanical concept of Inspiration, this is a pure invention and at best due to ignorance of the ancient dogmatists. Quenstedt I, 109 f. states in quotations from the church fathers and Lutheran teachers of the longer that the Holy Spirit took the natural disposition and education of the individual writers into his service. He also uses the image of the Church Fathers of a musical instrument. In a musical instrument (e.g. in an organ) the pipes sound unequally, but the player is only one. Quenstedt also describes in detail the different style in the writings of the Old and New Testament.

III.

The objections to the inspiration of Scripture are null and void.

The objections to the literal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures do not reveal cleverness or sharpness of mind, but the very opposite. We have in the objections a clear example of the fact that every critic of the Word of God is ignorant of God's

Penal judgment is met, and also in the respect that the critic also denies his natural understanding, becomes unreasonable and illogical. This is what we will encounter when we examine the objections.

(1) The different styles found in the various books of the Holy Scriptures have been objected against inspiration. By style we mean the particular manner we perceive in a given writer in the use of certain words and modes of speech, in the formation of sentences, in the connection of sentences with one another, etc. Just as people are distinguished from one another by their facial features so that they can be known from one another - incidentally, a very useful divine institution among men - so people are distinguished from one another by the way they express their thoughts orally and in writing. To give some examples: Luther writes in a different style from Melancthon and Chemnitz, Gerhard in a different style from Dannhauer, Walther in a different style from Sihler, Goethe in a different style from Schiller, Shakespeare in a different style from Longfellow. So also in the Holy Scriptures. Isaiah writes clearly recognizably another style than Amos, Matthew another than John, Paul another than Peter. This is also recognizable in the translations. The argument used by the deniers of inspiration goes like this: If all Scripture were inspired by God, then only one style should be found in all Scripture. This argument is much imagined, and yet it is very foolish. - We reply to this argument: The different style does not contradict the divine inspiration, but is required by it, because God did not speak only through one, but through several men, each of whom had his own style, and which God used for the communication of his word, as he found it in the individual writers. God could not use his own divine style when he wanted to speak to us humans, because we would not understand it at all. This can also be seen in 2 Cor. 12. There the apostle Paul reports that he was enraptured in the heavenly paradise and heard words there. But they were "unspeakable words that no man can utter", 2 Cor. 12:4, namely on earth, in human society. Thanks be to God for His grace in speaking to us men in the human style He found in the holy writers, in order to lead us to heaven! The heavenly style, which we cannot understand here on earth, we will understand once in heaven. Quenstedt says (I, 109): "As the holy scribes were educated or accustomed to speak and write more loftily or more simple-mindedly, so the Holy Spirit used them and willed to adapt and condescend to the condition of men." It behaves with the human speech in the Scriptures like with the change

Christ on earth in the thirty-three years. In order to redeem us humans, that is, in order to fulfill the law in our place and to suffer and die in our place, Christ had to become like another man and be found as a man in appearance, Phil. 2, 7. If he had appeared in divine glory, everything in the Jewish land would have fled before him from Dan to Beersaba. Thus Christ, after having acquired salvation for all mankind, became man in the Holy Scriptures in order to be able to distribute the acquired salvation to the people. This could not be done in heavenly speech, which we humans would not have understood, but only in the speech and the mode of expression in which humans communicate with each other here on earth.

2 The fact that the sacred writers refer to human research, human communications and human knowledge has also been objected against inspiration. However, this is the case. The evangelist Luke says that he, what he writes, "explored everything from the beginning" (Luk 1, 3). The apostle Paul says 1 Cor. 1:11: "It has been reported to me, indicated, by those of Chloe's household [family], that there is strife among you." The apostle John says 1 John 1:3, 4: "What we have seen and heard we declare unto you, . . . and these things we write unto you." Now the argument which the deniers of inspiration wish to take from this against inspiration runs thus: If the holy writers were inspired by God what they should write, why do they refer for what they have written to their own investigation, communication from others and to their own experience? This is contradictory! Why do they not simply stick to what they admittedly also say: God, Christ, the Holy Spirit speaks through us? Answer: This objection belongs to the same class as the objection based on the different style. Just as the Holy Spirit used the style that he found in the individual writers, he also used the historical knowledge that the writers had through their own experience or through research or through communication from other people. We have an example of this in the account of the first Pentecost, Apost. 2. The apostles knew about the resurrection of Christ through their own experience. They had seen and heard the Risen One. Nevertheless, on the first day of Pentecost they also spoke of the resurrection of Christ, "as the Spirit gave them utterance," Acts 2:4. 2, 4. In the Psalms David speaks of the anguish of sin and the consolation of grace also from his own experience, and at the same time he attributes his Psalms to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, when he says of 2 Sam. 28, 2 precisely also of his Psalms: "The Spirit of the Lord has spoken through me, and his speech has been through my tongue." On this Luther remarks (St. L. III, 1890), "What a glorious, haughty boast is this! He who may boast that the Spirit of the Lord has spoken through

When the prophet speaks, and his tongue speaks the word of the Holy Spirit, he must be very sure of what he is saying. This will not be David, Jesse's son, born in sins, but he who is raised to be a prophet by God's promise. Should he not make sweet psalms who has such a master, who teaches him and speaks through him? Hear now who has ears to hear! My speech is not my speech, but he that heareth me heareth God; he that despiseth me despiseth God. For I see that many of my descendants will not hear my words, to their great hurt. Such fame neither we [Luther - Chemnitz, Gerhard, Quenstedt - Walther, Sihler - professors in St. Louis - pastors from the pulpit - teachers in the schoolroom] nor no one who is not a prophet may lead. This we may do, provided we also be holy and have the Holy Ghost, that we catechumens and disciples of the prophets may boast ourselves, as which we repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the prophets and apostles, and are also sure that the prophets taught it. These are called in the Old Testament the 'prophets' children,' who put nothing of their own nor new, as the prophets do, but teach what they have from the prophets, and are 'Israel,' as David says, to whom he makes the Psalms." The writings of Christian teachers contain God's Word, taken from Scripture; the Holy Scriptures, on the other hand, are God's Word, precisely also in the Psalms, which the Holy Spirit speaks "out of David's experience."

(3) The inspiration of the Holy Scriptures has been further objected to by the various readings (variants) found in the copies we have of the original writings. However, these different readings are a fact. The factual situation is this: We no longer have the original Apostles' writings, written in the first century, but only copies. The oldest copies that have come down to us are from the fourth century of the Christian Church. And in these copies, in some places, there are minor discrepancies that were caused by oversights on the part of the copyists. The argument, which the deniers of inspiration want to take from this, is as follows: Because in the copies obviously writing errors occurred, so it can no longer be determined exactly which are the original words of God, and therefore the word inspiration is to be given up as useless. The first answer to this is: Writing errors in copies have nothing whatsoever to do with the inspiration of the original writings. Let us take an example from our civil circumstances. Our state legislatures adopt laws. If errors occur in the copies or imprints due to an oversight on the part of the copyists or the printer, we do not reasonably conclude from this that the law was not written in a certain wording at all.

had been accepted. We refute the further objection that we cannot know exactly whether we still have the necessary word of God in our time, which Christ gave to the church through his apostles, in two ways. That we nevertheless possess the word of the apostles, despite the slight differences in the copies, we know first of all quite exactly and before all human investigation from the divine promise. Our Savior says John 8:31, 32: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, and shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." This exhortation of Christ to abide in his word applies, of course, to the whole period of the Christian Church until the Last Day. But the exhortation to abide in His Word foresees that Christ's Word will be present until the Last Day. But that we have Christ's word in the word of His apostles, Christ Himself says in the high priestly prayer, John 17, where v. 20 says: "Now I pray not for them [namely, the apostles] only, but also for them who shall believe on Me through their [namely, the apostles'] word." If all Christians come to believe until the Last Day through the apostles' word, it is thereby presupposed and promised that the apostles' word will not be lost until the Last Day, but will be present. The same is evident from Eph. 2:20, where it is said of the Christian church for the whole time of its existence: "Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets." That we nevertheless possess the word of the apostles, despite the slight differences in the copies, we also know secondly through human investigation, which we can also call scientific research. We can state that the different readings (variants) do not change the Christian doctrine in the slightest. This is admitted by the very men who have made the investigation of the different readings their special study. It would be a futile objection if someone wanted to say: Because 1 John 6, 7 contains the words of the three witnesses in heaven. Because the words about the three witnesses in heaven are missing in the oldest copies, the testimony about the Holy Trinity is missing in the New Testament. Folly! For this teaching there are other very clear passages, e.g. Matth. 28, 19: "Baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit", and 2 Cor. 13, 13: "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all!"

Finally, they deny the inspiration of Scripture by claiming that there are contradictory passages in Scripture. With respect to these alleged contradictions, the situation is, briefly summarized, as follows: With reasonably good will and with reasonably diligent attention, the possibility of a balance can be easily demonstrated in most cases. One has, for example, a

Contradiction found between 1 Cor. 10, 8 and 4 Mos. 26, 9. In the former passage the apostle Paul writes: "In one day 23,000 fell," while in the latter passage it says: "In the plague 24,000 were killed." This apparent contradiction was very recently given by a pastor outside our synod as a reason why he could not accept the word inspiration of the Scriptures. But here, too, a balance is easily struck. The apostle Paul gives the number of those who fell in one day, as he himself says, and that was 23,000, while Num. 25:9 gives the number of those who were killed in the whole plague. If Paul gives only 23,000, he does not count the chiefs of the people that Moses had killed by hanging according to 4Mos. 25, 4 by God's command. This could have been 1000. If one adds these, then the 24,000 come out. Everyone should admit that this compensation is possible. And a possibility of a compensation may be enough for every reasonable thinking person. It is unreasonable to demand the proof that a certain solution of the apparent contradiction is the only correct one. Because we do not know exactly the closer circumstances (place and time conditions) with some reported events, so we must admit from the outset several possibilities of the balance. Thus our old Lutheran theologians speak out. By the way, even in the fellowship of sects there are still theologians from time to time who decisively declare the Scriptures to be God's Word and therefore also say the right thing about the resolution of apparent contradictions. Thus A. T. Robertson (in Broadus, Harmony of the Gospels, p. 232) says: "In explaining a difficulty, it is always to be remembered that even one possible explanation is sufficient to meet the objector. If several possible explanations are suggested, it becomes all the more unreasonable to contend that the discrepancy is irreconcilable. It is work of supererogation to proceed to show that this or that explanation is the real solution of the problem." But if a case should occur to us where we do not recognize a possibility of reconciliation, we as Christians leave the matter alone, because we believe the inerrancy of Scripture on the authority and clear testimony of the Son of God, who says John 10:35 precisely in regard to the words of Scripture: "And yet the Scripture cannot be broken." Pastor G. Schulze in Walsleben said very correctly, "We await the time when it will be cleared up, and die confidently, even if it does not happen." (Quoted in L. u. W. 1891, p. 357.) All objections to inspiration, and therefore also to the inerrancy of Scripture, are unworthy of a Christian, because they place human judgment in regard to Holy Scripture above the judgment of Christ, the Son of God. Whoever believes Christ Joh.

3, 16: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son", can also believe John 10, 35, where he says: "The scripture cannot be broken".

This is also Luther's verdict on Scripture, not only at the beginning of fine appearance, but also at the end of his life. He writes in 1520: "Scripture cannot err." (St. L. XIX, 1073.) In the same year, "Scripture has never erred." (XV, 1481.) In 1624: "Scripture agrees everywhere." (III, 18.) In 1627: "It is certain that Scripture may not disagree with itself." (XX, 798.) In 1536: "It is impossible that the Scriptures should be contrary to themselves, without alone that the unintelligent, coarse, and obdurate hypocrites should think so." (W. VIII, 2141.) In the years 1541 and 1645 Luther speaks in his "Chronikon" of the fact that the time indications of the old human historians sometimes do not agree with the time indications of the Holy Scriptures, and adds that in such a case the Holy Scriptures are always right, because they are God's word. Luther says (St. L. XIV, 491): "I use them (namely the human historians) in such a way that I am not forced to contradict the Scriptures. For I believe that in the Scriptures the true God speaks, but in the histories good men show their diligence and faithfulness (but as men), or at least that the copyists could have erred."

Summary.

Let us not forget, then, that the Holy Scriptures are the book in which God Himself speaks to us. Let us consider daily what a wonderful, unique book it is, which we have in our homes and can use at any time. God reveals to us in it first of all our sin, by which we have earned God's wrath and eternal damnation. But God reveals our sin to us in the Bible, not to destroy us, but to inflict upon us through the same Bible the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. - Furthermore, God Himself tells us not only once but often in the Bible what works are pleasing to Him and what works we must avoid so that we do not lose our heavenly inheritance. And when tribulation comes upon us, and we open our Bible, or someone reads to us from the Bible, it is God Himself who comforts us as one's mother comforts one.

Thank God for giving us the Holy Scriptures! With the Bible in our hands, we can walk confidently and safely through this life. In it we have sufficient light in the darkness of this world. In it we also have sufficient strength in our weakness; for because the Bible is God's Word, divine power is inherent in it, which becomes effective in us and passes over into us as often as we

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31

Use the Bible. It works in us both so that we do not err with the erring world and so that we do not run with it into the same disorderly being. It also keeps us from being sluggish in the works that God wants us to do and that are pleasing to Him. For if we want to become cold and sluggish in good works, let us open our Bible and warm our hearts with the fire of divine love that comes to us in such Bible words as: "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life," John 3:16. Therefore our prayer is:

Let your word, O Lord, be
universal
The light at our feet,
Obtain it with us clear and
pure,
Help us to enjoy from it
strength,
Advice and comfort in all
distress,
That in life and in death
Constantly trust in it!

God the Father, for your
glory let your word spread
far and wide; help, Jesus,
that your teaching may
enlighten and guide us;
O Holy Spirit, your divine
Word, let patience, love,
hope and faith continue to
work in us!

(No. 178, 9. 10.)

Amen.

Business Negotiations.

Committees.

- 1st credentials: P. R. Deye, teacher Redeler, Mr. O. Keller.
2. letters of apology: P. Harre, teacher Schild, Mr. E. Husemann.
- 3rd election committee: P. H. Hansen, teacher Sieving, Mr. W. Richelmann.
- 4th Gemeindeordmmgen: P. Henkel, teacher Bnrstädt, Mr. H. F. Stellhorn.
5. consenrence protocols:
 - a. of Randolph and Monroe Counties - Pastoral Conference: PP. Bernthal, Railroad Teacher Wendling.
 - b. the Okawville pastoral consenrence: PP. Härtling, Peterson; Teacher Scheiwe.
 - c. of the Litchfield Pastoral Conference: PP. Hesemann, W. Koch; teacher Weinrich.
 - d. of the teachers' conference: P. Behrens, teachers Persson and Röhl.
6. report of the church building fund: P. Wildgrube, teacher Jutzi, Mr. J. Lohmeier.
7. travel funds: P. Harre, teacher Hergenröder, Mr. W. Gehner.