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*Book of Concord* references are to the 1854 edition [The Christian Book of Concord, Or, Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church](#). F. Bente's "[Historical Introductions](#)" of the *Triglotta*, p. 6, describes this English translation. *Triglotta* cross-references utilizing the old "BookOfConcord.org" and Google Books have been added]

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## PROCEEDINGS

OF A

### FREE ENGLISH LUTHERAN CONFERENCE,

HELD IN THE TOWN OF

**GRAVELTON, WAYNE CO., MO., AUGUST 17. -20., 1872.**

SATURDAY MORNING, AUGUST 17.

[*Thesis* [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#), [5](#), [6](#), [7](#), [8](#), [9](#), [10](#), [11](#), [12](#), [13](#), [14](#), [15](#), [16](#)]

After the singing of the 387th hymn in the Tennessee hymnbook and prayer by Rev. P. C. Henkel, the conference organized by electing Rev. J. Moser to act as President and Professor P. A. Schmidt as Secretary. \* The members formally constituting the conference were the following:

*From the* TENNESSEE SYNOD,

Rev. Polycarp C. Henkel, Rev. Jonathan R. Moser.

*Lay delegates:* Messrs. Laban M. Fox, Samuel Parman, Abel J. F. Moser, Francis E. Whitener, James M. Clubb, Marcus Young.

*From the* HOLSTON SYNOD,

Rev. Andrew Rader (of Webster Co.)

*Lay delegates:* James M. Davis, James R. Hannah, David J. McElwain.

*From the* MISSOURI SYNOD,

Rev. Prof. C. F. W. Walther, Rev. Ch. S. Kleppisch.

*From the* NORWEGIAN SYNOD,

Rev. Prof. F. A. Schmidt.

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\* On Friday morning at 11 o'clock Professor Schmidt preached a sermon from Rom. 1, 16. and in the afternoon of the same day, as well as during other intervals of the public conference, a free conference between the chosen delegates was held at the house of Rev. J. Moser. —Secretary.

It was then resolved to mention the subjects which it was deemed desirable to take up for consideration. Upon further motion it was resolved to make it the first business of Conference to consider a number of theses presented by Prof. Walther with a view of ascertaining, as well as giving expression to, our perfect unity in the faith.

As other matters of discussion there were proposed and adopted:

1st, What can we do for our scattered English Lutherans in the West, especially in regard to procuring faithful ministers for them?

2dly, The propriety or impropriety of forming some kind of an organization among the English Lutherans of the West.

3dly, The establishment of parochial schools. \*

The these of Professor Walther were first read as a whole and then each separate thesis, together with a testimony from the Book of Concord confirming it, was read again, and each individual member of the conference was called upon to make some suitable remarks or, at least, to express its cordial agreement with the point discussed. In the following pages we give the theses in full together with a brief summary of the remarks made by way of explanation or vindication.

### THESES 1st. ^

A.—*The written Word of God is the only rule and standard of Faith and Life.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “We believe, teach, and confess, that the only rule and standard, according to which all doctrines and teachers alike ought to be tried and judged, are the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone.” ([Formula of Concord I, Introd. p. 551](#) [[FC Ep, Summary, Rule and Norm, §1; Triglotta, p. 777](#)])

*Remarks:* —When we Lutherans appeal to our Symbolical Books, we do so not in order to prove that our faith is divine truth, but only to prove that it is the doctrine of our Lutheran Church. Because we Lutherans hold our Symbols in such high esteem, we are often accused of making a second Bible of our Confessions. The fact is, however, that we receive nothing but the Scriptures as our real rule of faith. As the sun in the heavens

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\* These three items, as well as sundry other doctrinal and practical questions, were discussed in the private conferences at the residence of Rev. Moser, the public conferences being totally engaged with the discussion of the theses. It not having been made the duty of the Secretary to take notes of these more free and social discussions, no official minutes concerning them can be published. Suffice it to say that the principles involved and the most profitable way of carrying them out, were thoroughly discussed and a firm and energetic purpose was formed to carry on the work of the church in full earnest. May the Lord bless our endeavors! — Secretary.

really is the only regulator of time, whilst a clock or watch that is used for the purpose of measuring time is set according to the sun, so also the Bible is and remains our absolute and supreme rule; the Confessions, however, are only a secondary and dependent rule. Not the Confessions, therefore, not Luther, not the pastors of our churches, not our Lutheran Church as a whole, is our Bible; but the Holy Scriptures alone are our Bible.

B. —*The written Word of God is the only source of Christian knowledge.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Nothing else but the Word of God, not even an angel, can establish articles of faith.” ([SA II, Art. 2, p. 370](#). [[SA 2, 2 \(Of the Mass\) \(§ 15; Triglotta, p. 467\)](#)])

*Remarks:* *Christian knowledge* is not communicated to us by God through any teachings of nature, nor by private manifestations. From the textbook of nature we may indeed learn that there is a God (Rom. 1, 19.), but in reference to the conversion and salvation of sinners, as well as all the specific truths of the Gospel, the Word of God is the only source of our instruction. God does not illumine our minds through the atmosphere, or without any means at all, but through the instrumentality of the Word of God by means of which the Spirit of God carries out his gracious work. The Word, therefore, is the only source from which true Christian knowledge is derived. —In our thesis we declare ourselves 1st against popery which ascribes to the pope the ability of making articles of faith; 2dly, against rationalists that make human reason a source of Christian knowledge; 3dly, against the fanatics who appeal to their visions and other new revelations; 4thly, against the spiritualists who pretend to ask the dead and receive answers from them. —Many who strenuously claim that they receive the Bible as their sole standard of faith, will yet accuse us Lutherans of being “servants of the letter,” because we firmly adhere to the doctrines expressed in the texts of Scripture, whilst they, on the other hand, claim that they are taught by the Spirit bearing witness in their hearts aside from the letter of the Word of God. But the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts is materially the same as that in the Bible, because the truth as contained in the Bible is the unerring revelation of that same Spirit of truth, and when the Spirit now bears witness in the heart of a believer, it is by means of “the word of truth.”—When men appeal to “the Spirit,” it may and does happen that exactly opposite doctrines are propounded as doctrines of “the Spirit,” whilst the truth as revealed in the Bible always is one only. Hence the Scriptures exhort us, saying: “*Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the*

world,” (1 John 4, 1). But how can we “try the spirits” unless by applying the Bible as our infallible touchstone?

C.—*The Word of God is always to be understood literally; —not always, indeed, properly; but figuratively only for cogent reasons.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Hence we are under obligation not to interpret these words of this eternal, true, and almighty Son of God, our Lord, our Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, as figurative, tropical, or strange expressions, and explain them so that they may appear conformable to our reason; but rather to receive these words as they read, in their proper and clear sense, with simple faith and due obedience; and we should not permit ourselves to be turned aside from them by any objections or human contradictions, derived from the reason of man, however agreeable they may appear to our reason.” ([FC II, Art. 7, p. 669](#). [[FC SD 7 § 45](#); [Triglotta, p. 987](#)])

*Remarks:* This thesis is very important. If we are not to take the words of Scripture as they read, then nothing short of divine inspiration is required to teach us what is the truth of God, nor would we then be able to come to an agreement on the articles of faith, as the Scripture plainly and explicitly requires of us in 1 Cor. 1, 10. Much of the divisions and controversies in the Church on various points of doctrine has its source and foundation right here: People want to have the right to neglect the plain letter of the Bible and to give it, each in his own peculiar way, a mystical or figurative interpretation. The words of institution in regard to the Holy Supper furnish a prominent example how important this rule is. The words of Christ: “THIS IS MY BODY; THIS IS MY BLOOD” certainly are as plain and clear as language possibly can be; —neither Christ himself, nor any of the evangelists or apostles gives us a hint, or explanation of them, to show that they are figurative; —nor can any sufficient reason be adduced from the Scriptures why we should not receive the words as they read, whilst there are many reasons that can be given from Scripture urging us to retain the plain text. How, then, can a believing Christian, who heartily bows to the authority of the divine Word in true obedience of faith, desert the explicit text and force his own interpretation upon it? —Never, and in no circumstance, can a Christian consciously depart from the Word of God; if any one does so, he ceases to be a Christian. — We Lutherans admit, of course, that the Scriptures, as well as all other language and books among men, make frequent use of figurative language. Hence, if any one should say to me: Do you not yourself deviate from the Bible when you explain the words “Herod the fox” to mean “Herod the sly fellow?” I should

answer: Not at all; because it is Scripture itself that teaches us that Herod was a *man*, and it requires no proof to show that a man is not a fox in the proper sense of the word. But when our Calvinists, and the sects generally, contend that the words of institution are figurative or symbolical, they actually maintain that Christ has employed his words contrary to all regular and authorized use of language. For although it is good figurative language to say: “Christ is the door (*i. e. spiritual* door), the way, the vine, the shepherd;” or: “Christians are trees (*i. e. spiritually*, or trees of righteousness), sheep (*i. e. spiritual* sheep of Christ) etc.; yet it would be altogether improper and contrary to the use of language, to point to the *natural* things themselves and say that *they* ARE what they are intended to symbolize.: For instance: THIS (*i. e. natural*) door way, vine, shepherd, is Christ; or: THIS (*i. e. natural*) tree, sheep, etc., is a true Christian. But Christ took *real, natural* bread and said: THIS is my body; hence it is plain that his language cannot be of the figurative or symbolical kind.

D.—*The Word of God is its own interpreter. It is not to be interpreted by reason, tradition, or new revelations.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Now, there is no interpreter of the words of Jesus Christ, so faithful and able as Christ, the Lord, himself.” ([Formula of Concord II, 7, p. 670](#). [[FC SD 7, § 50](#); [Triglotta, p. 589](#)])

*Remarks:* The Scriptures are our light; and there is no light required outside of them, in order to make them a light. I might as well pretend to use a candle or torch as a means of enlightening the sun. The Word of God is the means of turning men from darkness to light, and hence it must *itself* be full of light and not in need of any outside interpreter to render it light. One portion of Scripture may, indeed, obtain light from another portion, but in such a case Scripture remains its own light and interpreter. If a passage of Scripture, however, is explained according to some outside rule, then it is made subject to a human authority. A true interpretation does not put any meaning on the words, but it merely sets forth from the text of Scripture itself what the real meaning of the words is. In order that Scripture may be its own interpreter, we must diligently and accurately compare Scripture with Scripture. But many who claim to interpret the Bible, merely set forth their own speculations and fancies, the foolishness of their own hearts. —When we Lutherans disagree with other communions and refuse to fellowship with them, it is often said: “Why, the difference between us is merely one of interpretation, and hence you ought not to lay so much stress on it.” But we answer: “The matter does not stand exactly thus; for no man can really interpret the Scrip-

ture; the question merely is, whether we or the others permit God himself to explain his own holy word.” The sects, however, take the liberty of interpreting the Bible according to their reason, their feelings or conscience, their new revelations etc. We Lutherans, because we strictly *interpret Scripture by Scripture*, actually have nothing but the Scripture as our rule of faith; whilst others, by bringing in some other means of interpretation, actually do not follow the Scriptures itself as their highest standard. Herein lieth the fundamental difference between us Lutherans and others. The Scripture itself declares that “no prophecy of the scripture is of any *private* interpretation” (2 Peter 1, 20.) that is, no man has any right to twist and turn the texts of Scripture according to his own preconceived notions, but the Holy Ghost is himself the proper interpreter.

Each separate sub-division of Thesis 1. was individually and unanimously adopted, whereupon Conference adjourned its public sessions till Monday morning, 8 o'clock.

#### MONDAY MORNING, AUGUST 19.

After the singing of hymn 328, verses 1-3, and the reading of the 133th psalm and prayer by Rev. Kleppisch, the roll was called and all members found to be present.

The Theses were then taken up for discussion.

#### THESES 2D. ^

*Man by nature has no free will in spiritual matters, and hence he is not able to co-operate towards his conversion.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “In opposition to both these parties, the pure teachers of the Augsburg Confession have taught and contended, that through the fall of our first parents, man became so corrupt, that he is blind by nature in divine things pertaining to our conversion and the salvation of our souls, neither understanding nor being able to understand the Word of God when it is preached, but regarding it as foolishness; and that he does not approach God of himself, but remains an enemy to him until he is converted, is made a believer, is regenerated, and renewed by the power of the Holy Spirit, through the preaching and hearing of the word, out of pure grace, without any co-operation on his own part.” ([Formula of Concord Art. II, 2. p. 610](#). [FC SD 2, §; [Triglotta. p. 881](#)])

“Therefore these dogmas of the schoolmen are mere errors and blindness contrary to this article, in which they teach: That

man has freedom of will [a free will] to do good, and omit evil, and on the contrary, to omit good, and do evil.” ([Smalcald Articles III, Art. 1. p. 375. 376.](#) [[§ 3, §5; Triglotta, p. 477](#)])

*Remarks:* We confess in this thesis that man has no free will in spiritual matters *i. e.* in matters pertaining to salvation. Man cannot comprehend divine things with his natural powers, as it is written: “the natural man *receiveth not* the things of the Spirit of God; for they are *foolishness* unto him; neither can he know them” (1 Cor. 2, 14.) We also confess that man cannot, by nature, choose that which is spiritually good or omit that which is evil. We do not deny, of course, the essence of man’s intellect or will, nor his sagacity in temporal things, nor his ability to abstain from gross vices and crimes and, on the other hand, to exercise outward or civil virtues. But in regard to *spiritual* things man is dead, and even more than dead, because he can offer resistance. —Man is only the object that is to be converted, and he does not himself co-operate towards it. He can indeed go to church, read the Bible, hear and even meditate the Word, etc., but the things which essentially pertain to conversion are exclusively the effects of the grace of God. Man, as our theologians say, is *passive, i. e.* suffering the work of divine grace to take place. We have here to do with a great mystery, because it seems as though it were the fault of God, if a person is not converted. It seems as though God passed by some men. But we hold fast that a converted person is such only by the grace of God; whilst an unconverted person is such by his own fault, because he wantonly resists the grace of God. When the Bible uses such expressions as: “Turn ye unto the Lord,” it does not mean to imply that man naturally has the power so to turn. For, as when the Saviour says to the dead Lazarus: “Lazarus, *come forth*,” these words do not at all indicate that the dead Lazarus had the power to come forth, but rather are words that communicate life to Lazarus, so also the Word of God is the great means of awakening the spiritually dead and of communicating life to them. —It is the doctrine of total depravity and corruption after the fall which we here assert, not only in opposition to such gross errors as are those by which original sin and our natural depravity are altogether denied, but also over against more refined aberrations from the truth, as when some degree of spiritual faculties, or some spark of the life of God, is ascribed to the natural man. —The doctrine of total depravity is absolutely necessary for the purpose of having a right apprehension of the doctrine of grace according to which, as Paul teaches, “*it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*” (Phil. 2, 13), and “*not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God*” (2 Cor. 3, 5.) The heart of man, as Scripture

teaches us, is utterly “dark” in spiritual things and hence it cannot understand them at all. But when God says: “Let there be light,” then that Word of the Lord, the shining light of the Gospel, is the divine means and power of creating light in the midst of darkness (2 Cor. 4, 6.) The “natural man” certainly continues to be such a natural man, until he is converted and changed by the grace of God; and hence, so long as he remains a natural or unconverted man, the things of the Spirit of God must also remain foolishness unto him and cannot be received by him.

Thesis 2d was now unanimously adopted by individual expression of agreement.

### THESES 3d. [^](#)

*By virtue of its personal union with the Godhead divine properties are really communicated to the human nature of Christ.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Wherefore we also believe, teach, and confess, that it was not a mere man only, who suffered for us, died, and was buried, who descended into hell, arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and was raised to the majesty and almighty power of God; but a man whose human nature has a union and a communication with the Son of God so inexpressibly intimate as to become one person with him. Hence we believe, teach, and confess, that the Son of man is exalted realiter, that is, in deed and in truth, according to the human nature, to the right hand of the omnipotent majesty and power of God, because the man was taken up in God, when he was conceived in his mother’s womb by the Holy Ghost, and his human nature was personally united with the Son of the Most High. This majesty Christ always possessed according to the personal union; and yet he divested himself of it in the state of his humiliation, Phil. 2, 7.; and for this reason he truly increased in all wisdom and favor with God and man, Luke 2, 52.; hence he did not always manifest this majesty, but only when it seemed good to him to do so, until he wholly and entirely laid aside the form of a servant, —but not however his human nature, —after his resurrection, and was established [collocaretur] in the full use, revelation, and manifestation of the divine majesty, and thus entered into his glory. He consequently now, not only as God, but also as man, knows all things, is able to do all things, is present to all creatures, and has under his feet and in his hands, all that is in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” ([Formula of Concord I, Art. 8. p. 576. 577](#) [[FC Ep 8 \(Of the Person of Christ\), §§ 13, 15-16; \*Triglotta\*, p. 821](#)].)

*Remarks:* We Lutherans alone heartily believe that God is truly become a man. The Reformed for instance say that Christ cannot be present in the Lord’s Supper, because a human body cannot be present in more than one place at a time. But this is



virtually a denial of the Incarnation, because it is a denial of a true intercommunion between the natures. We ought to consider that even our human body is dead and motionless as a stone without the soul; and what high properties of life and activity are communicated to it by a union with the soul! It receives spiritual properties. So also the human nature in Christ has received divine properties by its union with the divine nature. The Son of God was not only in Jesus, but Jesus, the Son of Mary, *is* true God, so that *God* was born of Mary, *God* was crucified, *God* died for us. If it were not so, then the redemption of the world by Christ would have been the work of a mere man, a work with which God really had nothing to do; and thus it could not have had divine power and efficacy in it. It only the *man* Jesus died for us, we cannot truly believe that his death has had a divine efficacy of freeing us from the power of sin and the devil. In the person of Christ the two natures and their attributes indeed always remain *essentially* distinct; but in virtue of the personal union between the natures the divine nature *personally* also possesses the attributes of the human nature, and *vice versa*. This the ancient theologians exemplified by the union existing between fire and iron in red-hot iron, where “the iron burns” in virtue of its union with fire. This whole doctrine is already clearly expressed in the 2d article of our Apostolic creed in which we confess that “the onlybegotten *Son of God, our Lord*” was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified, dead,” etc., and not a mere man. “Great is the mystery of godliness: *God* was manifest *in the flesh*.” The sects, however, separate the humanity from the divinity, so that when they represent the person that suffers on the cross, there is really nothing there but a man. Now, it is true that God in his abstract essence cannot die; but a person who *is* truly God, and at the same time a man, did actually die; for Christ *is* true God, and Christ died. We therefore contend, on the ground of Scripture,\* that Christ is the God-Man, and that when Christ died, the Son of God died, because the human nature in Christ has no personality of its own, but only in common with the divine nature, being assumed by it into the one eternal person of the Son of God. The sects, it is true, often *say* that “the Son of God” died; but whenever they are pressed to explain more fully and distinctly their real meaning, they make these words to *mean* something entirely different from what they say, in fact the very opposite of it, to wit, that “the Son of God” means the same as “the human nature only;” for they maintain that *God* really and truly had no part whatever in the sufferings and death of Jesus, the son of Mary. —Unanimously adopted.

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\*See 2 Cor. 5, 19. Acts 20, 28. Rom. 5, 10. Gal. 4, 4. 5. 1 John 1, 7; 3, 8. Hebr. 4, 14; 5, 8. Acts 3, 15. 1 Cor. 2, 8.

# THESIS 4TH. ^

*Christ has perfectly and completely reconciled the whole world unto God.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “In his counsel and purpose God ordained: 1. that the human race shall be truly redeemed and reconciled to God through Christ, who by his innocent obedience, suffering, and death, has merited for us that righteousness which avails before God, and eternal life. If therefore we would profitably consider our eternal election to salvation, we must firmly and constantly observe this point, that, as the preaching of repentance is universal, so is also the promise of the Gospel, that is, it extends to all persons, Luke 24, 47.” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 11. p. 713. 714.](#) [[FC SD 11 § 14-15; \*Triglotta\*. p. 1069](#)])

*Remarks:* This article, too, Lutherans only truly believe. Calvinists believe that only the elect are redeemed. Others, again, believe and teach that Christ has only brought about thus much for us that we can now, by our conversion and prayers, render God propitious, procure his favor and thus obtain our salvation. But this is an impious doctrine, however specious an appearance of piety it may take. Christ has already obtained and brought about everything that is necessary for our salvation; he has already completely acquired the forgiveness of sins and procured righteousness, life and salvation for us. What is necessary on our part is to accept of “the gift of God” (Rom. 6, 23.) in true faith which embraces the promise of God. Deliverance is fully procured already; it is now only to be personally appropriated by laying hold upon the merit of Christ. In refusing the gracious offer of God the unbeliever refuses to accept of that pardon and forgiveness which actually exists for him in Christ and is offered to him in the Gospel. How could the apostles, how can ministers of the Gospel in our day, preach “the word of reconciliation,” if the world is not really reconciled unto God? How can they preach “the remission of sins,” if that remission is not fully brought about? —The sects, however, preach “another Gospel” according to which Christ has only rendered it possible for us to redeem and save ourselves by procuring the favor of God and thus bringing about a change, as it were, in the heart of God, when we are sorry for our sins and pray to God for forgiveness. —Unanimously adopted.

## THESIS 5TH. ^

A. —*By the means of grace alone, to wit, the Word and the Sacraments, the merit and benefits of Christ are really communicated to men.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “In his counsel and purpose God ordained... 2. that this merit of Christ and his benefits should be offered, administered, and distributed to us, through his Word and Sacraments.” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 11, p. 713](#). [[FC SD 11, § 16](#); [Triglotta, p. 1069](#)])

“In respect to those points, which concern the oral, external word, we should maintain firmly, *that God grants his Spirit or grace to no one, unless through or with the external word delivered [praecedente-preceding]* We should and must, therefore, constantly maintain, that God will not confer with us men, unless through his external word and sacraments. But all that is boasted of, independently of such word and sacraments, as being the Spirit, is the very devil.” ([Smalcald Articles III, Art. 8, p. 386, 387](#). [[SA 3 \(8\): Of Confession, § 3](#); [Triglotta p. 495](#)])

*Remarks:* Christ having perfectly reconciled us unto God, the question now arises: How are we to obtain the merit of Christ? The sects say: You must kneel down and pray and wrestle with God, until it pleases him to send his grace down from heaven into your heart by making you feel its presence. The sects, therefore, really have not any *means* of grace, that is, channels through which God conveys to us and confers upon *his* divine grace, but at best they have only *signs* or *tokens* of grace that signify the existence of grace, but do not really exhibit it. We Lutherans, of course, do not deny that conversion is necessary for salvation, nor that conversion is often accompanied with a feeling of the divine grace; but this feeling is not grace itself, and it may be absent, although the person is in a converted and believing state. We Lutherans, therefore, believe and confess that the means of grace are *the hand of God* by which he really exhibits to us the treasure of Christ’s merit and thus invites us *to* accept of that forgiveness of sins which Christ has already acquired for us. If a man, however, thinks he has divine grace aside from these means of grace, he certainly is following the devices of the devil. The means of grace are not only *instruments* by means of which God effects a change in the heart of man, but they are also, as it were, *vessels* into which God has laid down the treasure of the merit of Christ in the promise of forgiveness and by means of which God conveys the blessings of redemption to us. —If a person has become reconciled unto me, how shall the fact be of any use or comfort to me, unless he gives me his word for it? So also God has sent the Gospel into all the world as “the word of reconciliation.” And as a man, in

order to assure us more perfectly of his pardon, may also add the gift of a ring as an additional sign and testimony of his forgiveness, so also God has instituted Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper as additional sure promises of his grace and powerful testimonies of the reconciliation effected through Christ, in order to make, as we say, assurance doubly sure. —Unanimously adopted.

- B. —*The Gospel is not a mere announcement of the grace of Christ, but it is also at the same time an offer of the same to all who hear, and a communication of it to all who believe.*

“Again, the Gospel is a preaching which exhibits and presents nothing else but grace and forgiveness in Christ,” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 5. p. 651](#). [[FC SD 5, § 12](#); [Triglotta, p. 955](#)])

*Remarks:* The sects teach that the Gospel merely is a narrative concerning Christ from which we are to take instruction as to what we are to do in order to obtain the forgiveness and salvation which Christ has only rendered possible, not real. They indeed acknowledge that the Gospel *shows* us a possibility of obtaining grace, but not that it also really *gives* grace and *confers* forgiveness and salvation. They receive the Gospel as a voice of instruction, but not as a hand of God which also brings and offers us a treasure. We Lutherans, however, teach and confess that the Gospel, besides instructing us as it truly does, also actually *presents to us the treasures* of Christ's redemption and confers upon us the grace of God. The Gospel is a word from the heavenly king to this world of sinners who are prisoners under the curse of the law and the wrath of God; it is a word of pardon and forgiveness from God, in and through which the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free is actually conveyed and brought to the prisoners. The Gospel, therefore, is not an empty sound without any real contents in it, but a present offer of grace, a testimony full of divine pardon; and those who resist and reject it, actually reject the benefits promised and presented therein, as John says: “He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And *this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son,*” 1 John 5, 10. 11. See also Acts 13, 38. 46. 1 Cor. 15, 1. 2. —Unanimously adopted.

- C. —*Private absolution is the Gospel directed to individual persons and an offer and donation of the remission of sins on the part of God.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “The people, moreover, are diligently instructed with regard to the comfort afforded by the words of absolution, and the high and great estimation in which

it is to be held; for it is not the voice or word of the individual present, but it is the word of God, who here forgives sins. For it is spoken in God's stead, and by his command. Concerning this command and power of the keys, it is taught with the greatest assiduity how comfortable, how useful they are to alarmed consciences, and besides how God requires confidence in this absolution, no less than if the voice of God was heard from heaven; and by this we comfort ourselves, and know that through such faith we obtain the remission of sins." ([Augsburg Confession, Art. 25. p. 125. \[AC 25. § 2; Triglotta, p. 69\]](#))

"Our adversaries cannot deny, that the doctrines advanced [preached, written, and taught] by our divines on the subject of absolution and the keys, are so thoroughly Christian, so judicious, and pure, that many sorrowful and afflicted souls derive great consolation therefrom, after receiving proper instructions on this vital subject; namely that it is the *command* of God and the *proper use of the Gospel*, to believe the absolution of our sins, and to be assured that they are forgiven us without any merit of our own, through Christ, and that, when we believe the words of absolution, we are as surely reconciled to God, as if we heard a voice from heaven." ([Apol., Art. 7 & 8. p. 228. \[Ap 11 \(Of Confession\), § 59; Triglotta, p. 249\]](#))

"Now the power of the keys announces to us the Gospel, through absolution; for [the word of] absolution proclaims peace to the soul, and is the Gospel itself." ([Apol., Art. 5. p. 236. \[Ap 12 \(Of Repentance\) § 39; Triglotta, p. 261\]](#))

*Remarks:* Nothing is a matter of greater offence to the sects than the practice of Absolution in our Lutheran churches, whether it be public and general absolution from the pulpit or private and individual absolution of communicants. They say: "Why, this is an awful thing and an impious papistical practice; God alone can forgive sins and no man dare assume the authority of forgiving sins without incurring the guilt of blasphemy." We Lutherans, however, teach and confess that God has reconciled the whole world unto himself: the whole world, therefore, has in Christ obtained the forgiveness of sins, and it is this reconciliation and forgiveness which absolution brings, wherefore it never can be, in and of itself, valueless or invalid. -- This Word of the Gospel, or of Absolution, containing the sure *promise* and present offer of forgiveness, belongs to the whole Church of true believers, not merely to a set of priests, as though these had a personal privilege, or a privilege of their order, to do so great and holy a thing as forgiving sins, whilst no one else was able or had any title to do the same thing. In fact, all Christians, when they console one another with the Gospel, they actually absolve. —Many indeed think: "Of what use can this absolution be to me? For if I am penitent, I have forgiveness of my sins already; if I am not, I shall have no forgiveness in spite of the absolution spoken; the minister can't look into my heart and know whether

I ought to have forgiveness or not.” To this we reply: A minister can absolve the whole world, because God has already done the same thing in raising up Christ; Christ has freed the whole world and the Father has declared that he accepts of the work of Christ as complete and satisfactory. "With *our* sins upon him Christ entered into the prisonhouse of death; absolved from *our* sins he was set free in his resurrection. Hence it is seen that the resurrection of Christ who was our substitute actually involves an absolution of the whole world, and the absolution we pronounce is nothing but a repetition or echo of what God has long since pronounced in raising up Christ from the dead. If people insist: “God alone can forgive sins,” we reply: This is very true, so far as the primary and original authority of forgiving sins is concerned; but this does not prove that God cannot delegate this power to others and employ them as instruments through which he exercises his divine prerogative and authority, just as the power of performing miracles truly is a divine prerogative, and yet the prophets and apostles acted as the agents of God in performing divine miracles. —When the Saviour says to the apostles: “Whosoever sins *ye remit*, they are remitted unto them” (John 20, 23), he plainly ascribes to them the power “to remit sins;” and hence it must be admitted that the apostles, at least, did remit sins without being guilty of blasphemy. But in Matt. 18, 17. 18. the same authority is ascribed to “*the church*,” saying: “Whatsoever *ye shall loose* on earth, shall be loosed in heaven.” In Matt. 16, 19. this same authority is called “the keys of the kingdom of heaven;” hence, if we would not assert that the church has lost these “keys” and thus also the possibility of entering herself, and of admitting others, into heaven, we must not deny that the church truly has authority on earth to remit sins. In fact, Baptism is a private absolution, and the person saying: “I baptize you” at the same time says: “I absolve you.” So also the Lord’s Supper is an absolution; and even the blessing pronounced is, in effect, an absolution. The validity of absolution is not, of course, founded upon the judgment of the priest, as the Papists say, so that if the priest be mistaken, then the absolution also should be void; but it is solely founded on two facts, 1st that God has already absolved the whole world; and 2dly that God has commanded this Gospel or glad tidings to be preached in the world.

Recess of one hour taken.

## MONDAY AFTERNOON.

Explanation of Thesis 4, subdivision C. continued.

Some think that because they have heard the general proclamation of the Gospel preached, they need no other absolution, just as many others even go so far as to despise and neglect Baptism and the Lord's Supper from the same mistaken grounds. Now it is plain, in regard to the sacraments, that we must fix our eyes upon the earnest command of God and consider our own real need. Those who despise these ordinances of God, despise "the counsel of God" (Luke 7, 30.) So also with reference to absolution; for God has not given his Church this authority without just cause. God has not reserved to himself the word of reconciliation, but as Paul expressly declares: "he hath *given to us* the ministry of reconciliation," "he hath *committed unto us* the word of reconciliation." Hence the ministers of the Gospel, when they forgive sins, they act as commissioners of God and in his name and stead. Who has authority to baptize save Jesus Christ? Yet, he has committed unto us that water of reconciliation and commissioned us to baptize in his name and by his authority. Our baptism is no less the baptism of Christ than if he had personally performed it, as John says: "Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John, though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples" (John 4, 1-2.) Thus Christ, in a real and proper sense, does all the baptizing and all the true Gospel preaching that is done on earth, because the authority to do so comes from him. Thus, then, there remains merely the question whether Christ has actually given his Church the authority of forgiving sins on earth—a question which Scripture has settled by the clearest of texts. Again, as none but God can expel anyone from his Church which is "the house of God," and yet the Church herself has been authorized to bind and expel, in the name and by the authority of God, all openly impenitent sinners, so also the Church is authorized by God to absolve in his name those who are penitent. The real reason why the sects so violently reject the doctrine of Absolution doubtless is, because they know so little about what the Gospel really is. On the other hand, we Lutherans are so much more in duty bound to hold fast the true doctrine of Absolution, in order that the sects may also learn to understand what the true doctrine concerning the Gospel is, as our Lutheran Church teaches it in its purity. —Unanimously adopted.

D. —*Absolution demands faith, and faith alone receives what is offered and given by it; neither absolution, nor any other means of grace, operates EX OPERE OPERATO.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “But that [the word of] absolution cannot be received, except through faith, can be proved with Paul, (Rom. 4, 16), who says that no one can receive the promise of God, except through faith [alone.] Absolution, however, is nothing but the Gospel, a divine promise of the grace and favor of God, &c. Therefore, no one can possess or obtain it, except through faith [alone.] For how can the declarations of absolution benefit those who do not believe them? But to doubt absolution is to make God a liar. While the heart wavers and doubts, it regards the promises of God as uncertain. It is therefore written, 1 John 5, 10: “He that believeth not God, hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.” ([Apol., Art. 5. p. 240. 241.](#) [[Ap 12 \(Of Repentance\) § 62;](#) [Triglotta, p. 269](#)])

“Here we must freely condemn all the scholastics and their false doctrines that those who simply use the sacraments, and do not oppose their operation, obtain, *ex opere operato*, the grace of God, even if the heart at the time has no good emotions. But it is clearly a Jewish error..... We therefore say, that the proper use of the Sacraments requires faith..... Here we are speaking of special faith, namely the belief, that our own sins are surely forgiven, and not of general faith, believing that there is a God..... Augustine says, directly to the contrary (of the doctrine of the scholastics) that it is not the Sacraments that justify, but faith, when we use them, justifies us in the sight of God.” ([Apol., Art. 7. p. 266. 267.](#) [[Ap 13 \(Of the Number and Use of the Sacraments\) § 18, 21-22](#)])

*Remarks:* This part of the thesis is opposed to two sorts of errorists: —1st, the Papists who teach the *opus operatum*, *i. e.* the work merely done, so that if a person only uses the sacrament and does not draw the bolt (*obicem ponit*) by adultery, murder, or some such open vice or crime, although he have neither faith nor any good emotion, yet he will become a partaker of grace. We Lutherans, therefore, confess that faith is necessary, it being the means or hand on our part by which we receive and embrace the divine grace offered to us. The act of hearing the Word and using the sacraments is not, as the Papists teach, in itself a meritorious work securing the favor of God. —2dly, Our present thesis (D) is also opposed to the fanatics who say that you cannot absolve anyone, unless you know previously, whether he is truly penitent. But we Lutherans teach that Absolution, spoken in the name and by the authority of God, demands and requires faith of us. Our faith does not *make* the Absolution, but only *receives* it as “a voice of God,” just as the Gospel in and of itself always is and remains a glad tidings and a treasure of salvation,



and yet it requires faith on our part, otherwise “the word preached does not profit them that hear it, not being mixed with faith.” Hebr. 4, 2. It is necessary, here, to bear in mind that there is a great difference between ‘not having a *right*’ to believe and ‘not being *able*’ to believe. All have a right to believe; nay, all ought to believe according to the invitation and earnest command of God, so that unbelief is a grievous sin against the call and express command of God. But those only can believe who are heartily sorry for their sins. The sects, however, tell a poor sinner: “Now, you must not take hold of the Gospel too soon, or apply the Gospel comfort to yourself, before you are ready by feeling the presence of the grace of God.” As though God did not truly invite all poor, penitent sinners, *just as they are*, to embrace the Gospel or did not command them all to believe in its precious truths.

## THESIS 6TH. <sup>^</sup>

### A. —*Faith alone justifies and saves. This is the main article of the whole Christian religion.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “The adversaries condemn the doctrine taught in the fourth, fifth, sixth, and twentieth articles of our Confession, that believers obtain the remission of their sins through Christ, by faith alone, without any merit of their own; and insolently reject these two tenets: first, that we deny that man can obtain remission of his sins through his own merit; and secondly, that we hold, teach, and confess that no one is reconciled to God, or obtains remission of his sins, but through faith in Christ alone. Now, since this controversy concerns the principal and most important articles of the whole Christian doctrine, and as much indeed depends upon this article, which contributes especially to a clear, correct apprehension of all the Holy Scriptures, and which alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and the true knowledge of Christ; yea, which is the only key to the whole Bible, and without which the poor conscience can have no true, invariable, fixed hope, nor conceive the riches of the grace of Christ; —we therefore pray your Imperial Majesty, graciously to hear us concerning these great, momentous, and all important subjects, as the nature of the case demands.” ([Apol., Art. 4. p. 156. 157.](#) [[Ap 4 \(Of Justification\) § 1-2](#); [Triglotta. p. 119](#)])

Adopted unanimously by individual expression of hearty consent, without any further remarks.

### B. —*Faith, if it is true faith, renews a man’s heart, mind, disposition and all faculties, purifies the heart and is active in charity and good works.*

*Testimony of the Church:* For “faith (as Dr. Luther writes in his Preface to the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans) is a divine

work in us, which changes us, and regenerates us of God, and mortifies the old Adam, making us quite different persons, in heart, mind, disposition, and in all our faculties, and bringing with itself the Holy Spirit. Oh! this faith is a living, active, efficacious, powerful principle; it must incessantly perform that which is good. It never asks whether good works are to be performed, but before the inquiry is made, it has done them, and it is always in action. But he who does not perform such works, has no faith, and gropes and looks about for faith and good works, not knowing what they are, yet prating and talking much about them. Faith is a living, unshaken confidence in the grace of God, so firm, that the person would rather die a thousand times than permit this confidence to be wrested from him. And this confidence and knowledge of divine grace, makes us courageous, cheerful, and joyful toward God and all creatures, all of which the Holy Ghost accomplishes through faith. Hence man, without constraint, becomes willing and desirous to do good unto all, to serve all, and to endure all things to the honor and praise of God who manifested this grace to him; so that it is impossible to separate works from faith, yes, as impossible as it is to separate heat and light from fire.” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 4. p. 643. 644. \[FC SC 4 \(Of Good Works\), § 10-12; Triglotta, p. 941\]](#))

*Remarks:* The Papists say to us: “You Lutherans are wretched fellows; you reject good works and want to be saved by faith alone; that is an easy thing to be done and altogether too easy a way of salvation.” But all who speak thus only show their blindness and that they know nothing of faith. All works and all sanctification not growing out of faith are nothing but Pharisaical hypocrisy. Faith alone is the true source and fountain of really good works. Even Wesley, the founder of the Methodist sect, confessed that the passage of Luther inserted above had been the means of first enlightening his mind unto a true conversion. —Unanimously adopted.

### THESIS 7TH. [^](#)

*Good works are only such as are commanded by God, provided they are done in faith.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Thus human reason judges also of other bodily exercises, such as fasts, &c.; for they tend to restrain the old Adamic nature. But reason soon conceives that they reconcile us to God [Literally: Fasting serves to tame the old Adam. Then reason forthwith strikes upon it and makes a work out of it that reconciles us to God], as Thomas writes: ‘Fasting is efficacious in removing our guilt before God, and afterwards preventing it.’ These are the very words of Thomas. Thus these very plausible services make a great display, and

have a strong semblance of holiness before the people..... Now, when the people are deceived by this great and pompous display of holiness, the consequence is unspeakable danger and evil; the knowledge of Christ and the Gospel is neglected, and their whole confidence is placed on such works. Moreover, the really good works, which God requires in the ten Commandments, are (it grieves us to say) wholly suppressed by such hypocritical acts; for it seems that these alone are spiritual, holy, and perfect life, and are preferred far above the genuine, holy, good works which each one is bound, by the law of God, to perform, as, for instance, the fulfillment of our vocation, the faithful and diligent administration of government, Christian discipline in our family and domestic relations. These are not regarded as divine, but worldly works; and consequently many have been troubled in their conscience; for it is known that some have abandoned their principalities, and others wedlock, to enter into cloisters, for the purpose of becoming holy and spiritual.” ([Apol., Art. 8. p. 271. 272.](#) [[Ap 15\(Of Of Human Traditions in the Church\) § 24-26; \*Triglotta\*, p. 321\]](#))

*Remarks:* In the age of Luther, people wanted to be holy by means of fasting, pilgrimages, monasticism, etc., all of them things not commanded in the Word of God. Such self-chosen holiness we reject as Lutherans. Among Protestants of our age, however, we often find a similar ardor and zeal in regard to certain religious undertakings and actions, *e. g.* long and loud prayers at the prayer meeting, ability in exhorting, zeal for temperance or even abstinence, etc., and there are many who regard the outward zeal for such things as a sure sign of special holiness. Many, too, engage with great zeal in such and other churchly works, whilst they wantonly neglect their most positive duties in their family or towards their fellowmen. Even the discipline of the Church is often exercised exclusively with reference to such churchly works, whilst open offence against other plain Christian duties passes uncensured and almost unnoticed. We say, therefore, 1st, that good works are those involved in the ten commandments; 2dly, “whatsoever is not of faith, is *sin*,” however specious its outward appearance be. —Adopted as usual.

### THESIS 8TH. [^](#)

A. —*Baptism effects regeneration and imparts everlasting salvation to them that receive the same in faith.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Here you perceive again how precious and valuable Baptism is to be esteemed, since we obtain in it such an inestimable treasure, —a circumstance which goes far to prove that Baptism cannot be mere, simple water; for simple water could not effect what is thus accomplished by the word *of* God, and because, as previously said, the name of God is in it.

But wherever the name of God is, there also must he life and salvation; hence it is truly a divine, blissful, fruitful, and gracious water; for through the word it obtains the power to become a washing of regeneration, as Paul terms it, Titus 8, 5. But in reply to our sophists, the innovating spirits, who assert that faith alone saves, and that works and external things add, nothing to salvation, we say, it is true, that nothing in us effects it, but faith, as we shall hear subsequently. But these blind leaders will not observe, that faith must have something which it believes, that is, to which it adheres, and upon which it rests and depends. Thus, faith adheres to the water, and believes that in Baptism are embraced life and eternal happiness, not through any virtue of the water, as has been sufficiently stated, but through Baptism's being connected with the word and ordinance of God, and ennobled by his name. Now, if I believe this, in what else do I believe but in God, as in him who has given and implanted his name in Baptism, and proposed to us this external object, in which we are able to lay hold of this treasure? Now, these innovators are so insane as to separate faith and the object to which it adheres, although that object is external. Indeed it should and must be external, so that it can be perceived and apprehended by the senses, and conveyed to the heart through them; for the whole Gospel is an external and oral message. In a word, whatever God does and performs in us, he wishes to effect through such external ordinances. Now, wherever he speaks, to this the eyes of faith are to be directed, and to this faith must cleave. Now, here we have the words: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' In reference to what else are these words spoken, but to Baptism; that is, the water embraced in the ordinance of God? It therefore follows, that whoever rejects Baptism, rejects the Word of God, rejects faith, and Christ, who refers and binds us to Baptism." ([Larger Catechism IV. p. 523.](#)[\[LC 4 \(Holy Baptism\). § 26-31; Triglotta. p. 739\]](#))

*Remarks:* In the beginning of this ministry, Jesus said: "Except a man be born again *of water, and of the Spirit*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3, 5.); and when he left this world, he commanded his disciples, saying: "Go ye and make all nations *disciples by baptizing* them," etc. "Whosoever believeth *and is baptized*, shall be saved." The sects, however, say: "Can this handful of water be a means of grace and salvation? Can this outward washing with water bring forth spiritual and eternal effects? And what great things can this washing of water do in comparison with my ardent devotion in prayer, my wrestling with God," etc. Now we Lutherans do not, of course, reject or despise truly devout prayer. But the question here is: What are the means that God has ordained to be the channels communicating to us his invisible grace acquired by Christ?

And if God has ordained any such means, can any man lawfully and without harm despise or neglect them? —He that rejects Baptism on account of its poor appearance, is offended at nothing less than the doctrine that we are saved by the mere grace of God. It is the free promise of that grace which God has annexed to Holy Baptism and of which he gives every baptized individual a strong assurance. It is this free promise of which I must lay hold in faith, even in Baptism. If God had annexed the free promise of his divine grace to ever small a trifle, *e. g.* to “the picking up of a straw,” as Luther says, it would certainly become a precious thing above all that *we* can devise or do. He that rejects Baptism, rejects God himself; for he rejects the gracious word and promise of God on account of its looking like a poor, powerless thing under the outward form of the act of washing. If the Baptists were not Pelagians who deny that our children are so corrupted that they must be born again, then they would not deny the necessity of infant Baptism, thus depriving their children of the very means of grace which God has appointed for them.

B. —*By sins against conscience the grace of Baptism is lost.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “But when those who are baptized act against their conscience, permit sin to rule over them, and thus grieve and lose the Holy Spirit in them, they are not, indeed, to be re-baptized, but they must be re-converted.” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 2, p. 624](#), [[FC SD 2 § 69](#); [Triglotta, p. 907](#)])

*Remarks:* When we Lutherans say that we have all been regenerated in Baptism, the sects say: “That is an awful doctrine! How can Baptism be regeneration! Do we not experience the necessity of conversion by the preaching of the Word, when we are grown up? You Lutherans are enemies of true godliness, you reject conversion,” etc. We simply answer: We do not teach that Baptism *is* regeneration, but that it *works* regeneration and *is a washing of* regeneration. When a baptized person, however, falls into willful sin, he certainly loses the grace he had once embraced in Baptism, and he must then, in order to be saved, return to the covenant of Baptism. This return is effected by conversion. For Conversion is not a new or second vessel that carries us into the port of heaven, but it is merely an act of returning to the old and first vessel, viz.: Holy Baptism.

C. —*Baptism stands immovable on the point of God, even when man falls; by repentance, therefore, he may and shall return to the same.*

*Testimony of the Church:* ‘(It is) written by Jerome: “Repentance is a subsidiary plank, which is intended to rescue us, and upon which we must swim and pass over the sea of this

world, after the vessel is broken, into which we had stept and taken sail, when we entered into the community of the Christian church.’ But by these words, the use of Baptism is destroyed, so that it can be of no more benefit to us. They are, therefore, neither correctly spoken, nor rightly conceived; for Baptism does not fail, since, as already said, it is the order or institution of God, and not a device of ours: but it is not a rare occurrence to depart from it; yet if any one departs, let him see that he swim to it, and hold on, till he gets on board again, and pursues his course in it, as he had commenced.” ([Larger Catechism IV, p. 530](#). [[LC 4 \(Baptism\)\(§ 81-82; Triglotta, p. 751\)](#)])

*Remarks:* Although a person can lose the grace of Baptism, yet Baptism itself stands firm. When I hear the Gospel, the devil may raise doubts and say: “These glad tidings do not pertain to you, because you are too great and inveterate a sinner;” but the comfort of Holy Baptism consists in this that the person baptized is for ever expressly designated as one particular individual whom God has given the promise of grace and salvation through Jesus Christ. —Unanimously adopted.

### THESIS 9TH. ^

*In the Holy Supper the true body and blood of Christ are truly present, are distributed under the bread and wine, and eaten and drank both by the worthy and unworthy communicants; by the former for the remission of sins, by the latter unto judgment.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “And Doctor Luther, who certainly understood the true and proper meaning of the Augsburg Confession, rather than others, and constantly adhered to it and defended it, till the end of his life, in his last confession, a little before his death, confessed his faith concerning this article, with great seal, and repeated it in the following words, where he thus writes: ‘I reckon all those in the same number, that is, as Sacramentarians and fanatics— for such they are—who will not believe that the bread of the Lord in the Supper is his true natural body, which the ungodly or Judas, as well as St. Peter and all other saints, receive orally; whoever, I say, will not believe this, should let me alone, and not expect to hold fellowship with me; and to this principle I must adhere.’ From this exposition, but more especially from Doctor Luther’s explanation, who is the principle divine of the Augsburg Confession, every intelligent person, who loves truth and peace, can perceive with certainty what has always been the proper meaning and sense of the Augsburg Confession concerning this article.” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 7, p. 667](#). [[FC SD 7, § 33-34; Triglotta, p. 983](#)])

*Remarks:* The question here is whether we agree in believing and teaching

1st, that the body and blood of Christ in the Lord's Supper is not a *figurative* body and blood, but the *natural* body and blood of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary, crucified, shed, etc.;

2dly, that the presence of the body and blood of Christ in the Holy Supper is not one effected by *our imagination*, but a *true* and *real* presence;

3dly, that the body and blood of Christ are not communicated *in heaven* through faith's ascending thither, as the Calvinists teach, but that they are given *in, with* and *under* the bread and wine;

4thly, that the body and blood of Christ are distributed to both the worthy and the unworthy;

5thly, that the body and blood of Christ are received, *not by faith*, so far as the substance of the sacrament itself is concerned, but with the *mouth*;

6thly, that the body and blood of Christ are received unto the remission of sins by believers, but unto judgment by unbelievers. —Unanimously adopted.

### THESIS 10TH. ^

A. —*It is a part of Christian liberty to be freed from the Jewish ceremonial and political laws.*

B. —*By virtue of this Christian liberty a believer in the time of the New Testament is no more bound to the observance of a Sabbath.*

*Testimony of the Church:* "The doctrine of Christian liberty must be retained in the church, namely, that the servitude of the law is not necessary to justification, as Saint Paul writes to the Galatians: 'Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage,' Gal. 5, 1. For the chief article of the Gospel, that without our merit we obtain the grace of God through faith in Christ, must be maintained, and that we do not merit it in consequence of rites instituted by men. What, then (*igitur*), should be held concerning *Sunday* and other similar church ordinances and ceremonies? To this we make the following reply: —That the bishops or pastors may make regulations, so that things may be carried on orderly in the church, —not to obtain the grace of God, nor yet to atone for sins, or to bind the consciences of men to hold these regulations as necessary services of God, and to regard them, as if those commit sin, who break them without offence to others. In like manner such is the case with the institution (*observatio*) of Sunday, of Easter, of Pentecost, and the like holidays and rites. Those, then, who are of opinion, that such institution (*observatio*) of Sunday instead of the Sabbath, was established as a thing necessary, err very much. For the holy Scripture has abolished the Sabbath, and it teaches, that all

ceremonies of the old law, since the revelation of the Gospel, may be discontinued. And yet as it was necessary to appoint a certain day, so that the people might know when they should assemble, the Christian church ordained Sunday for that purpose, and possessed rather more inclination and willingness for this alteration, in order that the people might have an example of Christian liberty, that they might know that neither the observance of the Sabbath, nor of any other day, is indispensable.” ([Augsburg Confession, Art. 28. p. 137. 138.](#) [[AC 28 \(Of Ecclesiastical Power\), § 51-60; Triglotta, p. 91, 93\]](#))

*Remarks:* We Lutherans do not believe that Sunday is instituted by God in the New Testament, as was the Sabbath in the Old Testament. The Christian Church has, in the free use of her liberty, chosen this day, because some time or other must be selected, not on account of any command of God, but on account of our need. Hence we are not bound, by any law of *God*, to observe either Sunday or any other day. As Christians we are not bound to observe the Ceremonial Law of the Jews, and hence neither the Sabbath. In the third Commandment we are commanded, morally, to handle the Word of God, even in public. This point of doctrine is of such immense importance, because the whole doctrine of our liberty from the Law in general depends upon it. —Unanimously adopted.

## THESES 11TH.<sup>^</sup>

A. —*The Church, in the proper sence of the term, is the invisible totality of all true believers in Christ.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “On the other hand, the consolatory article was inserted in the Symbol: —‘I believe in a catholic, universal, Christian church,’ that we might be assured and not doubt, but firmly and fully believe, that there really is and will continue to be, a Christian church on earth, till the end of the world; that we may never doubt the existence on earth of a Christian church, which is the bride of Christ, although the ungodly predominate; and that here on earth, in the assembly which is called the church, Christ the Lord, daily operates, remits sins, constantly hears our prayers, and ever comforts his servants, in their trials, with rich and efficient consolation: This article was, moreover, designed to prevent anyone from thinking, that the church, like any external government, is confined to this or that country, kingdom or state, as the pope of Rome would have it; and it positively maintains, that the true church is the great [? ] body of true believers in all parts of the world, from the rising of the sun to his setting, who have but one Gospel, one Christ, the same Baptism and Holy Supper, and are ruled by one Holy Spirit; although they have different ceremonies.” ([Apol., Art. 7. & 8. p. 217.](#) [[Ap 7-8 \(Of the Church\) § 9-10 ; Triglotta, p. 229\]](#))—Unanimously adopted.



B. —*The characteristic marks of the Church are pure doctrine and unadulterated sacraments.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “It is taught likewise, that one holy Christian church shall ever continue to exist, which is the congregation of all believers, among whom the Gospel is preached in its purity and the holy sacraments are administered according to the Gospel.” ([Augsburg Confession, Art. 7. p. 111.](#) [[AC 7 \(Of the Church\), § 1; Triglotta, p. 47\]](#))—Unanimously adopted.

C. —*Ecclesiastical communion is to be cherished only with those who agree in all articles of faith.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “In this manner the congregations, on account of dissimilitude of ceremonies, when in Christian liberty one observes more or less of these than the other, should not condemn one another, if they are otherwise united with each other in doctrine and in all doctrinal articles, as also in a right use of the holy sacraments.” ([Formula of Concord II, Art. 10. p. 710.](#) [[FC SD 10 \(Adiaphora\), § 31; Triglotta, p. 1063\]](#))

*Remarks:* Our arguments for this position are

*1st,* The express command of God in 1 Cor. 1, 10: “that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; and that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment;”

*2dly,* Love towards the erring persons requires of us that we thus rebuke their errors; for otherwise they would not get rid of their errors, but rather be confirmed in them;

*3dly,* In Eph. 4, 5. we learn that there is “One Lord, One FAITH, one Baptism;” and this divine declaration implies that all the members of the Church should be joined together in the confession of that “*one faith;*”

*4thly,* We become responsible for the errors of those with whom we cherish church-fellowship, as being “partakers of other men’s sins.”

Hence it follows that none but true Lutherans are to be admitted into our pulpits, or to our altars, or into connection with our congregations. Nor can we, for the same reasons, allow our members to enter into secret societies in which they would have to perform acts of worship in fellowship with infidels and heterodox persons. We condemn the *errors*, not the *persons*; for we know very well and are glad to admit that there are many children of God among the false-believing churches. But we can have no fellowship with them, because we would thus become partakers of other men’s disobedience towards the Word of God. —Unanimously adopted.

## THESIS 12TH. ^

A. —*It is the duty of the Church to maintain church-discipline and, consequently, to excommunicate obstinate errorists or sinners.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “The less, that is, the true Christian *excommunication*, is, not to permit manifest and obstinate sinners to come to the Sacrament, or to other communion of the church, until they amend their lives and abstain from wickedness.” ([Smalcald Articles III, Art. 9. p. 387. 388.](#) [[Part III, Art. IX: Of Excommunication; Triglotta p. 497](#)])

*Remarks:* In Matthew 18, 15-17. the Saviour has given his Church a plain instruction in regard to the observance of the three degrees of Christian discipline, and his command is: “if he, *i. e.* thy sinning brother, neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” And Paul says in 1 Cor. 5.: “Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” It is a clear command of God, therefore, that we should exercise proper church-discipline. Nor can it be truly advantageous to the condition or growth of the Church, if this command of God is left unobserved. It is wrong to say, as we sometimes hear people lay it down as a principle: “Take them all into the church and do not put any out, because the church is the place in which they ought to be corrected and reformed;” for it is only those of whom we can in charity believe that they are true and orthodox Christians that ought to be received into the Church and retained in the same, and not any others.

B. —*Applicants to communion must be examined ere they are admitted.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Confession is not abolished by our ministers. For the custom is retained among us, not to administer the Sacrament unto those who have not been *previously examined* and absolved.” ([Augsburg Confession, Art. 25. p. 125.](#) [[AC 25 \(Of Confession\) § 1; Triglotta, p. 69](#)])

*Remarks:* Many folks say: “Let every one examine himself; the minister has no right to examine us.” But we reply: —1st, Ministers are not mere mechanical distributors of the holy things, but “*stewards* of the mysteries of God” (1 Cor. 4, 1.), and as such they are held not to give the holy thing to anyone for whom it is not designed. 2dly, In Matt. 7, 6. the Saviour says: “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.” If it has become manifest, therefore, that persons are “dogs,” that is despisers of the Word, or “swine,” that is servants of sin, it is the command of Christ that they should be excluded from the table of the Lord. 3dly, All that eat unworthily, eat unto judgment; but if a pastor knows that any of the communicants is such an unworthy eater, it would be a violation of love towards him not to warn him. —The sects say that this is the auricular confession of the Papists, but they thus

only betray their gross ignorance. The institution of pastoral interviews before a communion season certainly is a most excellent means of building up flourishing congregations in a truly spiritual respect. "Where it has not been in use heretofore, many will of course say: "If we have got along thus far without it, we can also do without it in the future." But the importance of the matter is so great that all pastors and congregations should acknowledge that such pastoral interviews are a matter in accordance with the Word of God and without which profanation of the sacrament cannot be avoided. And where it is not introduced, zealous efforts ought to be made to introduce it again. — Unanimously agreed to.

C. —*Ignorant people are not to be admitted to the sacrament.*

*Testimony of the Church:* "We have prepared this little work (the catechism) with no other view than to adapt it to the instruction of the young and illiterate. Hence among the ancients in the Greek language, it was called Catechism, a word which signifies juvenile instruction. This book necessarily should be perspicuous and plain [*cuivis Christianorum perspecta et cognita*], so that if any one should not have a knowledge of it, he might justly not be considered in the number of Christians, nor admitted as a recipient of the Sacraments." ([Larger Catechism, Preface p. 435.](#)[\[LC Preface, § 1-2; Triglotta, p. 575\]](#))

*Remarks:* Since the apostle says: "Let a man *examine himself* and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. 11, 28.), it is plain that every person that is to be admitted to the sacrament must at least have a knowledge of the way of salvation, and it is the pastor's duty to see to it that an applicant for communion is not too ignorant to be able to examine himself. How gross a violation of the command of God is it, therefore, when the sects invite and admit to their communion persons concerning whose spiritual condition they are entirely ignorant. —Unanimously adopted in the manner previously stated.

TUESDAY MORNING, AUGUST 20.

After the singing of a hymn and prayer by Rev. P. C. Henkel the theses were taken up again.

### THESIS 13TH. [^](#)

*The power of the keys is not an exclusive privilege of ordained ministers, but a power of the whole believing Church that possesses the same originally and immediately.*

*Testimony of the Church:* "And this, moreover, must be confessed, that the *keys* belong and were given not to one person

only, but to the whole church, as it can be sufficiently proved by clear and intestable reasons. For precisely as the promise of the Gospel pertains, without limitation [belongs certainly and *immediately*], to the whole church, so the keys pertain to the whole church, without limitation [belong *immediately* to the whole church], since the keys are nothing else but the office through which this promise is imparted to every one that desires it; it is evident, then, that the church, in effect, has power to ordain ministers. And Christ, Matt. 18, 18. with these words—‘Whatsoever ye shall bind,’ &c. —declares and specifies to whom he gave the keys, namely, to the church: ‘Where two or three are gathered together in my name,’ &c. verse 20. Again, verse 17, Christ refers the *highest and last judgment* to the church, where he says: ‘Tell it unto the church.’” ([Smalcald Articles, App. I. p. 396. \[SA Tr \(On the Power and Primacy of the Pope\), § 24; Triglotta, p. 511\]](#))

*Remarks:* This is an extraordinary important thesis. We must thank God that our Lutheran Church is not a popish, hierarchical church, but a free and evangelical church that holds fast the true Christian liberty. We Lutherans give to true Christians that high and noble position which they really ought to occupy according to the Bible. Christ says: “One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are *brethren*” (Matt. 23, 8.) When he gives the keys to Peter, he does not give them because Peter is an *apostle*, but because he is a *believer*. In Matt. 18, 18. the “keys of the kingdom” are clearly ascribed to the church: “Whatsoever ye, *i. e.* ye Christians, shall bind, or loose;” for the Saviour is there speaking of the whole congregation. Paul, in 1 Cor. 5, 2, censures the whole congregation for having omitted to exercise the power of the keys by excommunicating the incestuous person; while the whole congregation must have been in possession of the power. The church of believers has the power of the keys from Christ; the ministers have it from the Church in virtue of delegation through the call. By the “Church which has the keys” we mean the true believers in the visible church, whilst the hypocrites that are admixed have part only in the external exercise of the power of the keys. Since it is the Church itself that has the power of the keys and is to make provision for its proper exercise and administration, it is also the plain duty of the Church and of its individual congregations to labor earnestly for the education of suitable persons who may perform the functions of that holy office which properly and originally belongs to the Church itself, just as the office of a Governor or President in a republic is not a personal prerogative of any order or succession of men, but the common property of the whole free and sovereign nation which delegates its right to the office through election to this or that man and holds him responsible for the manner in which he administers the functions of the

office. It is, therefore, also clear from our thesis that the Church is not to let its pastors or bishops do as they please in their office; because that office is not a property of the persons administering it, but it belongs to the Church, and hence the Church, as being the *true owner*, is held to exercise a strict supervision as to how its ministers employ its precious prerogative. If all the pastors in the Church at any time should die or turn heretics, would not the Church then still have the keys and the office? Or if a number of Christians should be thrown out upon a remote and desolate island, would not they then still have the genuine keys of the kingdom and power to elect and ordain ministers? Christ has not, as even Romanizing Lutherans have said, given the power of the keys to a certain order of men who exercise the same “for the benefit of the Church,” but he has rather given it, *immediately*, to the Church itself, whilst the elected pastors exercise their office in the name of the Church. —In connection with this thesis it was remarked that the English translation of the Book of Concord is rather defective in the passage quoted from the Smalcald Articles, especially because the important word “*immediately*” is omitted. —Unanimously adopted.

#### THESES 14TH. <sup>△</sup>

A.—*Ministers do not form a peculiar holy priestly order in opposition to laymen.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Among other reasons for not administering both elements to the laity, Gabriel assigns this also: That there must be a difference between the priests and the laity. And I truly believe that the principal reason for maintaining this doctrine so strenuously at this day, is, that the *priesthood may appear holier than the laity*. This is a human device, the design of which can easily be inferred.” ([Apol. Art. 10. p. 295.](#) [[Ap. XXII \(X\) \(Of Both Kinds In the Lord's Supper\). § 9; Triglotta. p. 359\]](#))

*Remarks:* In the Old Testament God had placed his believers under a certain guardianship, as it were, by establishing a certain separate order of priests, the Levites and the sons of Aaron, so that when a person not a priest offered, prayed, blessed, etc., it was not a true priestly act. In the New Testament, however, all Christians are “*a royal priesthood*” (1 Peter 2, 9.) and the pastors are the servants of the Church, who perform the functions of the office in the place and name of the Church. As there was a regulation among the priests of the Old Testament, by which some of them sacrificed and performed other priestly functions in the name of the whole priesthood, so also in the New Testament the chosen ministers of the Gospel perform the duties of their office in the name and stead of the entire “royal priesthood.” If a minister is a true Christian, he is, like all other true Christians, a royal, priest himself; if he is not a true

Christian, he only exercises the functions of the office into which he is elected in the name and by the authority of others who are “royal priests.” In 1 Cor. 3, 5. Paul says: “Who then is Paul, and who is Apollo, but *ministers* by whom ye believed?” But “ministers” does not mean lords or masters, but servants. Again, in v. 21. 22. he says: “*All things are yours*; whether Paul, or Appolos, or Cephas,” etc. Hence even the apostles were not lords over the churches, but their servants. In 1 Cor. 4, 1. they are called “the ministers of Christ and *stewards* of the mysteries of God;” but “stewards” does not mean lords or masters in the house of God, but accountable servants.

B. —*The pastoral office is nothing but an office, instituted of God, of ministering unto the Church.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “So *Liturgia* in Greek properly signifies an office in which service is rendered to the public; this corresponds exactly with our doctrine, that the priest, as public servant, renders service to those who wish to commune, and administers to them the holy Sacrament.” ([Apol., Art. 12. p. 327.](#) [[Ap. 24 \(12\) \(Of the Mass\) § 79-80; \*Triglotta\*, p. 411\]](#))

C. —*To call preachers is a right of the congregation to whom they are to minister. Ordination is only a confirmation of this call and an apostolic ecclesiastical institution.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “‘Ye are a royal priesthood,’ 1 Peter 2, 9. These words relate specifically to the true church, which, because it alone possesses a priesthood, must also have power to choose and ordain ministers. The common usages of the church likewise prove this: for in former times *the people elected* clergymen and bishops; then the bishops living in or near the same place, came and confirmed those elected, by the laying on of hands; and at that time, ordination was nothing else than this approbation.” ([Smalcald Articles. App. II. p. 404.](#) [[Treatise Tr 69-70; \*Triglotta\*, p. 523, 525\]](#))

*Remarks:* We have thus far seen that the ministry is not any priestly order, but an office of ministration administering the rights of the Church, whence it follows that the congregation appoints its servants by calling them to fill this office. Ordination, therefore, does not *confer* the ministry, as Papists and others assert, for it is the call of the congregation that actually confers the ministry, and Ordination is only a public testimony and confirmation of the call. It is very wrong and papistical, too, when Methodists and others appoint ministers for congregations, so that the churches cannot exercise their divine right of calling their own ministers, but are obliged to accept as their pastors whosoever is sent them.

Thesis unanimously adopted, each subdivision by itself.

### THESIS 15TH. ^

*The doctrine according to which a glorification of the Church in a millennial reign is to be expected, is a contradiction to several articles of the Christian faith and is consequently to be rejected.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “Here, in like manner, certain Jewish doctrines are condemned, which are circulated even now, that prior to the resurrection of the dead, the holy and pious alone will occupy a temporal *kingdom*, and that all the wicked will be exterminated.” ([Augsburg Confession, Art. 17. p. 114g](#). [[AC 17 \(Of Christ's Return to Judgment\) § 4; Triglotta, p. 51](#)])

“Whose kingdom shall have no end.” ([Nicene Symbol, p. 101](#). [[Nicene Creed; Triglotta, p. 31](#)])

*Remarks:* It is a common fanatical opinion that the Church is to enjoy a millennial reign, when it is to be freed from the cross, is to conquer and rule over the world, and the ungodly are to be subdued. But this doctrine is very dangerous, because it invites and teaches men to hope for a glorification in this world, instead of in the world to come. The chiliastic doctrine contradicts the following Bible truths:

1st, the doctrine that the Church is to be “a kingdom of subject to the cross,” even unto the end of the world, and that the glorification of believers is to take place in the world to come;

2dly, the Bible doctrine that there are no more than two advents of Christ, viz. his first coming into the world by Incarnation, to save the world; and his second coming on the last day, to judge the world. The Bible knows nothing however, of a third coming of Christ, in order to bring on the Millennium;

3dly, the Bible doctrine of *universal* resurrection taking place on the last day; but chiliasts teach a particular resurrection of believers, or of martyrs, taking place before the end;

4thly, the doctrine that the kingdom of Christ is an *eternal* kingdom, and not one of only a thousand years. The Bible also teaches us to expect an increasing depravity and apostacy towards the end of the world, rather than a brilliant period of the universal reign of the Gospel and of the fear of God. —Unanimously adopted.

### THESIS 16TH. ^

*The Romish pope is the Antichrist, as prophesied in the Holy Scriptures.*

*Testimony of the Church:* “This fact proves fully that he (the pope) is opposed to Christ, and is the true *Antichrist*, who has set himself against, and elevated himself above Christ, since he will not permit Christians to be saved without his power; nothing of which, however, is either ordered or commanded of God. This may with propriety be termed setting one’s self above and against God, as Paul, 2 Thess. 2, 4, says.” ([Smalcald Articles II, Art. 4. p. 374](#). [[SA 2, 4 \(Of the Papacy\) § 10-11; Triglotta, p. 475](#)])

*Remarks:* In the beginning, as Holy Writ teaches us, Satan did everything in his power to rob man of life eternal. Christ redeemed the world again and obtained grace and salvation for mankind. Now the Bible teaches that a counter-Christ is to come, who will do what he can, under the outward name and appearance of Christianity, to lead souls away from Christ. We Lutherans believe that the pope of Rome is this Anti-Christ who, as is prophesied in 2 Thess. 2., “sitteth *in the temple* of God, showing himself that he is God,” for the pope even claims the divine prerogative of infallibility. We believe the pope to be the Antichrist especially for two reasons: — 1st, because he condemns and curses the principal article of our Christian faith, to wit, Justification by Faith alone in Christ; — 2dly, because the pope says that all who desire to be saved must adhere to him and follow him, even when he teaches false doctrines or alters the commandments of God. No sect or head of a sect has ever set forth such impious, blasphemous claims. We therefore adhere to the doctrine of our Confessions which expressly declare that the pope at Rome is the very Antichrist of whom Scripture has prophesied. —Unanimously adopted.

After these theses had thus been discussed and adopted, Conference adjourned until such a time and place as might be agreed upon by private correspondence.

During the sessions of Conference divine service was held at four different times. On Friday morning Prof. F. A. Schmidt preached a sermon, in English, from Romans 1, 16.; on Sunday morning Prof. C. F. W. Walther preached a sermon, in German, from Acts 16, 19—34.; in the afternoon Rev. Ch. S. Kleppisch preached, in English, from 1 John 1, 9.; on Tuesday morning Rev. A. Rader preached from Eph. 2, 20.

After the official sessions had been adjourned and the larger part of the members of Conference had absented themselves on account of other pressing business, the remaining members read and sanctioned the following draft of a constitution which, it is expected, will be laid before the congregations and reported upon at the next meeting.

## CONSTITUTION OF THE ENGLISH EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CONFERENCE OF MISSOURI.

*Preliminary Remarks:* In conformity with the example of the Apostolic Church (Acts 15, 1-31.) and in obedience to the will of the Lord that the diversity of gifts should “profit withal” (1 Cor. 12, 4-31), this Conference is designed to labor for the following ends:



1st, The united propagation of the kingdom of God and the furtherance of churchly objects, especially an energetic prosecution of missionary labors among the scattered and destitute English members of our Church in the West;

2dly, The maintenance and furtherance of the unity of the pure confession among ourselves (Eph. 4, 3-6. 1 Cor. 1, 10.);

3dly, The united warding off of separatistical and sectarian disorder (Rom. 16, 17.);

4thly, The protecting and guarding of the right and duties of pastors and congregations; and

5thly, In regard to church-usages, the greatest possible uniformity;

*Article I.* —This Conference receives the Canonical Books of the Old and New Testaments as being throughout the inspired Word of God and the only rule and standard of faith and life.

*Article II.* —As a pure and faithful exhibition of the doctrines of the Holy Scriptures this Conference receives the Symbolical Books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church contained in the Book of Concord, viz.: the three Ancient Symbols of the Church—the Apostolic, Nicene and Athanasian Creed—; the Unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology; the Smalcald Articles; the Smaller and Larger Catechisms of Dr. Luther; and the Formula of Concord.

*Article III.* —This Conference rejects all ecclesiastical union and co-operation that is not based upon the pure Lutheran faith, such as: having charge of mixed congregations; exchange of pulpits with non-Lutherans; mixed communion; forming religious societies conjointly with sectarians, and the like.

*Article IV.* —All the books that are to be adopted or introduced for use in our churches and schools, such as liturgies, catechisms, hymnbooks, etc., shall be in accordance with our Lutheran Confessions.

*Article V.* —It shall be the duty of our congregations to give their pastors a regular and permanent call, not a temporary one that is renewed from time to time. No candidate of the Holy Ministry shall be ordained on trial or licensed to exercise the functions of the public ministry without having previously been duly called to be pastor of a congregation.

*Article VI.* —It shall be the duty of our congregations to make suitable provision for the instruction of their youth in the doctrines of our Church and its training on truly Christian principles.

*Article VII.* —No one shall be received into connection with this Conference, unless he have previously furnished due evidence

of his occupying a sound position in regard to doctrine and of his leading a Christian life. —No pastor shall be admitted who is a member of a secret society.

*Article VIII.* —Conference shall hold regular meetings, at least once a year, upon its own adjournments. In these meetings Conference shall

1st, discuss doctrinal questions, especially the distinctive features of our Lutheran faith;

2dly, oppose invading sects, errors, and sins, as well as un-Christian tendencies of the age;

3dly, supervise the official conduct of all standing members, as well as the condition of the congregations in a churchly point of view;

4thly, pay special attention to the destitute condition of our scattered English Lutherans in the West, by seeking to obtain every possible information as to where they are and how they fare, and by endeavoring to make the best possible arrangements for providing them with the pure Word and Sacraments.

*Article IX.* —The regular meetings of Conference shall be composed (1) of the ministers of the churches in connection with Conference, and (2) of the regularly chosen laydelegates from the congregations, each congregation being entitled to send one. These ministers and laydelegates comprise the voting members of Conference. Ministers whose congregations have not formally joined this Conference by adopting these Articles of Union, as well as candidates of the Holy Ministry and teachers of parochial schools, may become permanent advising members of Conference. Only such guests at the meetings of Conference as heartily and fully concur with it in the pure faith and confession of the Word of God, shall be received as occasional advisory members. At its regular meetings Conference elects a President and Secretary who shall serve at least one year.

*Article X.* —Matters of faith and conscience shall not be decided by a majority vote, but only by the Word of God. All other matters are decided simply by a majority vote, the President having the casting vote in case of a tie.

*Article XI.* —The resolutions of Conference requiring any action on the part of a congregation shall have in themselves no more than an advisory character over against each individual congregation and they can only then become binding on the congregation when it has formally made such resolution its own. If a congregation finds that such a resolution is contrary to the Word of God, it shall be the duty of the congregation to report the grounds of its judgment to the regular convention of Con-

ference, If such a resolution is merely deemed inexpedient, the congregation may simply refuse to adopt it.

*Article XII.* —Any member of Conference that teaches false doctrine, or leads an ungodly life, or willfully neglects the duties of his office, shall be duly admonished; and in case such admonition proves to be fruitless, he shall be excluded from the Conference and thereby lose all the privileges of membership.

*Article XII.* —This Constitution can be altered or amended by a vote of three-fourths in a regular meeting, provided that the proposed change or amendment shall have been laid before the congregations connected with the Conference and approved by three-fourths of them; and also provided that such proposed changes or amendments shall not conflict with the principles expressed in Articles I.-VII. of the present Constitution.

F. A. SCHMIDT, *Secretary*.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY,  
St. Louis, Mo., August 28., 1872.

SOLI DEO GLORIA!