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partakers of
other men's sins,

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An Examination...

of the

*“Common
Confession”*

Drawn Up Jointly by

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An Examination of The "Common Confession"

I. Some Important Preliminary Considerations

1.—The Scriptural requirements for a God-pleasing church union are clearly set forth in the following passages:

1 Cor. 1, 10: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

Romans 16, 17: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

NOTE: Complete agreement in doctrine and practice based upon what the Word of God says. John 8, 31, 32; Eph. 2, 19, 20.

2.—This is the position set forth in the "Brief Statement" of the Missouri Synod, adopted in 1932; reaffirmed in 1947:

Paragraph 28: "On Church-Fellowship.—Since God ordained that His Word only, without the admixture of human doctrine, be taught and believed in the Christian Church, 1 Pet. 4, 11; John 8, 31, 32; 1 Tim. 6, 3, 4, all Christians are required by God to discriminate between orthodox and heterodox church-bodies, Matt. 7, 15, to have church-fellowship only with orthodox church-bodies, and, in case they have strayed into heterodox

church-bodies, to leave them, Rom. 16, 17. We repudiate **unionism**, that is, church-fellowship with the adherents of false doctrine, as disobedience to God's command, as causing divisions in the Church, Rom. 16, 17; 2 John, 9, 10, and as involving the constant danger of losing the Word of God entirely, 2 Tim. 2, 17 - 21."

Par. 29. "The orthodox character of a church is established not by its mere name nor by its outward acceptance of, and subscription to, an orthodox creed, but by the doctrine which is actually taught in its pulpits, in its theological seminaries, and in its publications. On the other hand, a church does not forfeit its orthodox character through the casual intrusion of errors, provided these are combated and eventually removed by means of doctrinal discipline. Acts 20, 30; 1 Tim. 1, 3."

3.—This is the position of our Lutheran Confessions, the Book of Concord of 1580:

As to how a confession should be worded which is to give expression to the unity arrived at by two contending parties, the "Formula of Concord" says it must be "a testimony and declaration of faith, as to how at any time the Holy Scriptures have been understood and explained in the articles in controversy in the Church of God by those then living, and how the **opposite dogma** was **rejected and condemned.**" (Concordia Triglot, p. 779).

It states also: "Moreover, since for the preservation of pure doctrine and for thorough, permanent, godly unity in the Church it is necessary, not only that the pure, wholesome doctrine be rightly presented, but also that the opponents who teach otherwise be reprov'd. 2 Tim. 3, 16; Tit. 1, 9.") (Page 855).

4.—This is set forth briefly also in our Synodical Catechism, Question and Answer 186 D:

We should "avoid all false churches," etc.

5.—It is the Scripturally required duty of all Christians, not only of pastors, professors, etc., to judge all matters of doctrine according to God's Word.

1 John 4, 1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (Compare 1 Pet.2,9). Therefore it is both right and necessary that the matters at hand be presented to the Christian congregation for study and examination.

II. The Doctrine of the Inspiration of the Bible

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

2 Peter 1, 21: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

2 Timothy 3, 16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God."

1 Cor. 2, 13: "Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

Therefore our Catechism says, Question & Answer 10: "**By inspiration of God** means that God the Holy Ghost moved the holy men to write, and put into their minds, the very thoughts which they expressed and **the very words** which they wrote. (Verbal Inspiration)".

Therefore also the "Brief Statement" says, Paragraph 1: "We teach . . . that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is . . . taught by direct statements of the Scriptures. . . . Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts **and words** the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10, 35."

B.—What the American Lutheran Church teaches:

1. The U. L. C. Report of the Union Committee to the Baltimore Convention, 1938: "Our commission was unable to accept the statement of the Missouri Synod that the Scriptures are the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters." The Baltimore Declaration itself says: "We therefore accept the Scriptures as the infallible truth of God in all matters that pertain to his revelation and our salvation." Furthermore, Dr. H. E. Jacobs of the U. L. C. writes: "The Holy Spirit, in making the sacred writers infallible recorders of the hitherto unknown will of God towards men, in no way inspired them to be teachers of astronomy, or geology, or physics. These spheres do not belong to revelation."

2. The "Pittsburgh Agreement" between the union committees of the U. L. C. and the A. L. C., 1939, states:

a) The Bible (that is, the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments) is primarily not a code of doctrines, still less a code of morals, but the history of God's revelation for the salvation of mankind and of man's reaction to it. It preserves for all generations and presents, ever anew, this revelation of God, which culminated

and centers in Christ, the Crucified and Risen One. It is itself the Word of God, His permanent revelation, aside from which, until Christ's return in glory, no other is to be expected.

b) The Bible consists of a number of separate books, written at various times, on various occasions, and for various purposes. Their authors were living, thinking personalities, each endowed by the Creator with an individuality of his own, and each having his peculiar style, his own manner of presentation, even at times using such sources of information as were at hand. Nevertheless, by virtue of a unique operation of the Holy Spirit (2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 21), by which He supplied to the holy writers **content and fitting word** (2 Pet. 1, 21; 1 Cor. 2, 12,13), the separate books of the Bible are related to one another and, **taken together**, constitute a complete, errorless, unbreakable **whole** of which Christ is the center (John,10,35). They are rightly called the Word of God. This unique operation of the Holy Spirit upon the writers is named inspiration. We do not venture to define its mode, or manner, but accept it as a fact.

c) Believing therefore, that the Bible came into existence by this unique cooperation of the Holy Spirit and the human writers, we accept it (**as a whole and in all its parts**) as the permanent divine revelation, as the Word of God, the only source, rule, and norm for faith and life, and as the ever fresh and inexhaustible fountain of all comfort, strength, wisdom, and guidance for all mankind."

Note: Missouri's Committee on Lutheran Union reported to Missouri's convention in 1941, Proceedings, P. 279: "We on our part found the Pittsburgh Agreement not adequate because it contains loopholes for a denial of the

verbal inspiration and inerrancy of the Scriptures."

Note: When Dr. Graebner in the "Lutheran Witness" hailed the U. L. C.'s acceptance of the Pittsburgh Agreement as indicating that the U. L. C. now accepts verbal inspiration, Dr. Wentz, president of Gettysburg Seminary (U. L. C.) replied (his letter printed in the Lutheran Witness) that Dr. Graebner had misunderstood the U. L. C.'s action, that he and many others opposed the Pittsburgh Agreement because they feared that it bound them to verbal inspiration, and that they supported adoption of the Agreement only after they had been officially assured on the floor of the U. L. C. convention that the Agreement does NOT bind them to verbal inspiration. (U. L. C. Omaha Convention, 1940).

C.—What the "Common Confession" says:

1. This document does not treat the doctrine of inspiration in a separate article, but states, under the heading "Means of Grace": "Through the Holy Scriptures, which God caused to be written by men chosen and inspired by Him, God instructs and assures us regarding His will for us. The Holy Scriptures constitute His Word to men, centering in the revelation of Himself in the person and work of Jesus Christ for our salvation. Through the Holy Scriptures God continues to speak to men in all ages until the end of time. He speaks as the infallible and unchanging God, Whose message to mankind never changes. Since the Holy Spirit by divine inspiration supplied to the holy writers **content and fitting word**, therefore we acknowledge the Holy Scriptures **in their entirety** as the inspired Word of God. . . ."

2. Note that the CC says that God inspired the writers, but does not state directly that He inspired what they wrote. The latter is men-

tioned only as a deduction from the former. But Scripture tells us that all **Scripture** is inspired. 2 Tim. 3, 16.

3. Note that "**verbal inspiration**" is **not even mentioned** in the CC. A member of Missouri's Union Committee explained to the Convention of Missouri, Milwaukee, 1950, that it had been **purposely left out**.

4. The language of the CC on this doctrine is to a great extent the very language of the Pittsburgh Agreement. Compare: "content and fitting word" (not words); "the Holy Scriptures in their entirety" (which can be taken by those who still deny verbal inspiration to mean "as a whole" but not "in every word".)

5. The CC does not present the true doctrine **over against the false**, thereby repudiating and rejecting it, as Scripture and our Confessions require, and as the "Brief Statement" does so capably when it states: The Holy Scriptures "are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10, 35."

6. Note, in summary: 1) The U. L. C. plainly refuses to accept, with us, the Scriptural doctrine of verbal inspiration. 2) The Pittsburgh Agreement is an agreement between the U. L. C. and the A. L. C. on inspiration. 3) The CC is intended to be an agreement on inspiration between the A. L. C. and the Missouri Synod.

III. The Doctrine of Justification

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

2 Cor. 5, 18-21 (especially v. 19 & 20): "God was in Christ, **reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them**; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Consult also: Romans 4, 25 and Romans 5, 18 & 19.

The "Brief Statement", Par. 17: "Scripture teaches that God has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ, (Passages quoted)"; (Note: This is Objective Justification.) "that therefore not for the sake of their good works, but without the works of the Law, by grace, for Christ's sake, He justifies, that is, accounts as righteous, all those who believe in Christ, that is, believe, accept, and rely on, the fact that for Christ's sake their sins are forgiven." (Note: This is Subjective, or Personal, Justification.)

Our "Concordia Cyclopedia", quot-

ing Dr. A. L. Graebner, says p. 381, col. 1: "By the same judicial act by which He pronounced Him guilty who was the world's Substitute, God acquitted and absolved the world, whose sins and guilt He laid to the charge of the Mediator. 2 Cor. 5, 19. . . . From all this it appears that this **objective justification** of the world is by no means identical with the work of redemption. . . . The payment of a debt is one thing, and giving credit to the debtor is another thing, and to confound the latter with the former is to disregard the nature of both. . . . the acceptance of Christ and His benefits is faith. . . . When God thus accounts, or imputes, faith for righteousness, this is the particular, subjective justification of the individual believer. . . ."

B.—What the A. L. C. Teaches:

1. The A. L. C. "Declaration" of 1938: "God purposes to justify those who have come to faith."

2. "Proceedings", Missouri Synod Convention, 1941, p. 280: The A. L. C. was asked to accept as its posi-

tion "that God has already in Christ absolved all the world of its sins." This it failed to do.

3. Dr. Lenski (A. L. C.) writes in his recent Bible Commentary regarding the above named Bible passages: "We do not find the idea that Paul here says that when Christ died . . . God then and there forgave all sins to the whole world." (Note: A.L.C. does not confess Objective Justification.)

C.—What the "Common Confession" says:

"By His redemptive work Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; hence, forgiveness of sin has been secured and provided for all men. (This is often spoken of as objective justification.)—2 Cor. 5, 19 is quoted here.—Hence no sinner need be eternally lost on account of his sins." (The CC then speaks of the means of grace through which the blessings earned by Christ are offered to all men; and of faith, wrought by the Holy

Spirit, through which we receive and retain the blessed assurance, etc.)

NOTE: While this article in the CC is headed "Justification", what is described here is not the doctrine of Objective Justification, but the redemptive work of Christ. While quoting 2 Cor. 5, 19, the CC does not declare what the passage says; namely, that God the Father has already in Christ forgiven the trespasses of the whole world. Thus the CC does not settle the doctrinal difference between the A. L. C. and Missouri in regard to Objective Justification. Instead of treating this clearly, it speaks of something else instead, namely the redemptive work of Christ.

Example: If a teacher in school asks a pupil: "What is 2 times 2?", and the pupils answers: "In 1492 Columbus discovered America," what he says is not an untrue statement in itself; yet it does not answer the question that is asked. It leaves it as unsettled as before.

IV. The Doctrine of Conversion

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

Eph. 2, 8 & 9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Eph. 1, 19 & 20: "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places."

2 Cor. 4, 6: "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

Phil. 2, 13: "For it is God which worketh in you **both to will and to**

do of his good pleasure."

Ezek. 36, 26 & 27: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh," etc.

Hos. 13, 9: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."

Romans 8, 7: "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

Col. 2, 12 & 13: ". . . And you . . . dead in sins . . . hath he quickened," etc.

NOTE: Men can do nothing whatsoever toward their own conversion, for all men by nature stubbornly and wilfully resist the working of the Holy Ghost. Man's conversion is never due to his refraining from wilful resistance, since this wilful resistance is found in all unconverted men. Conversion is the work of

God's grace and almighty power alone, by which He "changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men."—"Brief Statement", Par. 11.)

Our Catechism states, Question 164: "According to the Scriptures I am by nature **spiritually blind, dead, and an enemy of God**; therefore I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to him."

Our Lutheran Confessions (Formula of Concord, Con. Trig. p. 915): "**God in conversion changes stubborn and unwilling into willing men** through the drawing of the Holy Ghost." (See also page 905.)

B.—What the A. L. C. Teaches:

Dr. Reu (Dogmatics, Vol. 2, p. 136, A.D. 1941): "His natural resistance has now assumed the form of voluntary opposition (mutwilliges Widerstreben); the hour of grace has been idled away."

Dr. Reu again states (Vol. 1, p. 7): "In every one who does not wilfully resist, He creates faith as the hand that accepts God and salvation."

Dr. Fritschel (Iowa Synod) states: "By some His gracious purpose is frustrated because they stubbornly and wilfully resist the grace offered to them, whereas in the others God's work is accomplished because they do not wilfully resist, but let God's work be done on themselves." (Cf. Wicke: "Catechism of Differences, p. 22.)

Dr. Lenski (in his recent Commentary, on 2 Kings 5, 1-19, page 249): "Naaman furnishes us a fine case of what our old dogmaticians call natural resistance. . . . We ought

not to think that this is wilful resistance. . . . Naaman allowed himself to be corrected in time to gain the promised blessing."

NOTE: While the term "cooperation" is not being used in the A. L. C. today, the old error is nevertheless still being taught in its midst, and is not rejected; namely: An unscriptural distinction is made between "natural resistance" and "wilful resistance" in natural man. Absence of the latter is said to explain the possibility of conversion. It is said that the Holy Ghost cannot overcome wilful resistance, - that this would make grace irresistible. This is tampering with the doctrine of the natural depravity of man.

C.—What the "Common Confession" says:

"The sinner's conversion takes place when God brings the contrite sinner to faith in Christ as his Savior. This change of heart with respect to sin and this reliance upon Christ for salvation from sin is the work of God the Holy Spirit without any cooperation whatsoever from sinful man."

NOTE: While this excludes all active cooperation on the part of man in his conversion, it does not rule out the error of the A. L. C., which is still taught today, as pointed out above. (Here our reader should refer again to page 2 of our Examination, and note that it is required in Scripture and our Lutheran Symbols that not only the true doctrine be rightly presented but that also the opposite, conflicting doctrines be rejected.)

V. The Doctrine of Election

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

Eph. 1, 3-7: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; According as he hath chosen

us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the

praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the Beloved. In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Acts 13, 48: "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."

Rom. 8, 28-30: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

"Brief Statement", Par. 39: "God, before the foundation of the world, from pure grace, because of the redemption of Christ, has chosen for His own a definite number of persons out of the corrupt mass and has determined to bring them, through Word and Sacrament, to faith and salvation."

"Brief Statement", Par. 37: Eternal election is a cause why the elect are brought to faith in time, Acts 13, 48."

NOTE: The universal will of God to save all men, and the election of certain individuals to faith and salvation are two separate doctrines, and the distinction between them must be observed. (Brief Statement, Par. 38; which see!) (Compare Lutheran Confessions, "Formula of Concord", Con. Tr., p. 1063 ff.) (Compare also our Synodical Catechism, Ques. & Ans. 199.)

B.—What the American Lutheran Church Teaches:

Rev. W. A. Poovey (A. L. C.) in the book "Questions that Trouble Christians" writes: "In His wisdom God foresaw the result that would occur when each man would come in contact with the Gospel. He thus

knew that Luther would not resist, but allow the Holy Spirit to work in his heart. He saw Judas, etc. . . . On this basis He was able to predestinate all mankind. . . . He chose those who He knew could be saved and resolved to supply them with every opportunity and with all the necessary help so that they would be saved and would persist in that faith." (P. 92 ff.) (Cf. Catechism of Differences, pp. 27 & 28).

NOTE: This leaves room for the old A. L. C. doctrine that God has elected some **in view of their faith** which He foresaw; that is not alone by grace. Note also that the A. L. C. has never taught an election of a definite number of persons out of corrupt mankind because of God's pure grace in Christ; nor has it taught that election is "a cause why the elect are brot to faith in time." (Br. St., Par. 37). It has, moreover, condemned as the "error of Missouri on predestination" the Scriptural distinction which we make between the universal will of God and the eternal decree of election. (Toledo Theses, A. L. C., VI, a.)

C.—What the "Common Confession" Says:

"God from eternity, solely because of His grace in Christ and without any cause whatever in man, elected as His own all those whom He makes and keeps members of His kingdom and heirs of eternal life. The Holy Spirit by the Gospel has called us and assured us of our status before God, testifying to us that He has chosen us for Himself in Christ from the foundation of the world, and by the imputation of Christ's righteousness has given us the assurance that He will present us faultless before the throne of His glory." (Scripture references given.)

NOTE: 1) This does not specifically reject the error "in view of faith". Instead of speaking of the election of a certain number out of the corrupt mass of humanity, it speaks

of electing believers. 2) This does not define what election is but only states who those are who have been elected. 3) The CC gives not election but the imputation of Christ's

righteousness as the assurance of final salvation. 4) Note that "from the foundation of the world" is not correct. It should read "before". (Eph. 1, 4.)

VI. The Doctrine of the Church

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

Luke 17, 20 & 21: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."

Col. 3, 3 & 4: "Your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

"Brief Statement", Par. 25: "Since it is by faith in the Gospel alone that men become members of the Christian Church, and since this faith cannot be seen by men, but is known to God alone (Passages are quoted), therefore **the Christian Church on earth is invisible**, Luke 17, 20, and will remain invisible till Judgment Day, Col. 3, 3, 4."

(Compare our Synodical Catechism, Ques. & Ans. 175 & 176.)

B.—What the American Lutheran Church Teaches:

The 1938 "Declaration" of the A. L. C. states: "We declare that to do so (that is, to speak of a visible side of the Church when defining its essence) is not a false doctrine if by this visible side nothing else is meant but the use of the means of grace."

C.—What the "Common Confession" Says:

"All believers in Christ constitute the one, holy, apostolic (in agreement with the Apostles' doctrine), and catholic (universal) Church. Jesus Christ is its Head. Through the means of grace He calls all its members into fellowship with Himself, and also unites the members in fellowship with one another. . . ."

NOTE: While the "Brief Statement" clearly rejects the A. L. C. teaching that the means of grace are the visible side of the church (Br. St., Par. 25), the CC simply remains silent on this matter.

VII. The Doctrine of the Antichrist

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

2 Thess. 2, 3 - 12: (To save space here, read this from the Bible itself!)

Our Lutheran Confessions, "Small-cald Articles" (Con. Tr., p. 475) state: "This teaching shows forcefully that **the Pope is the very Antichrist**, who has exalted himself above, and opposed himself against Christ, etc."

Compare also our Lutheran "Liturgy and Agenda", 1936, in the Reformation Prayer, page 200: ". . . If the enemy should again rise up

against us, be Thou our Refuge and Strength, beat down Satan under our feet, and consume utterly at the last the son of perdition, **the Roman Antichrist**, with the Spirit of Thy mouth. . . ."

B.—What the American Lutheran Church Teaches:

1. The 1938 "Declaration" of the A. L. C. speaks of the identification of the Pope as the Antichrist as the mere historical judgment of Luther, and adds that there may

still be in the future that is before us a "special unfolding" of the antichristian power and "a still more comprehensive fulfillment of 2 Thessalonians 2."

2. On May 2 to 6, 1946, the Dakota District of the A. L. C. adopted the following statement: "We reject the statement . . . that the Pope is THE Antichrist."

C.—What the "Common Confession" Says (Article XII):

"Among the signs of His approaching return for judgment the distinguishing features of the Antichrist, as portrayed in the Holy

Scriptures, are **still** clearly discernible in the Roman Papacy, the climax of all human usurpations of Christ's authority in the Church."

NOTE: Why the insertion of the words "are **still** clearly discernible"? This indeed leaves room for the A. L. C. error noted above to be carried into the future.

NOTE ALSO: To deny the fulfillment of a prophecy is to deny the prophecy itself. It is a denial of God's Word. Example: The Jews cannot be said to accept the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament while, at the same time, they reject the fact that these are fulfilled in Christ Jesus.

VIII. The Doctrine of the Last Things

A.—The Correct Scripture Doctrine:

Acts 14, 22: "We must through much **tribulation** enter into the Kingdom of God."

Luke 18, 8: "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

(Note: The Church will remain under the cross till the end of the world. Compare John 16, 33).

Matt. 25, 31.32.34.46: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory . . . before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them. . . . And these shall go away into **everlasting** punishment, but the righteous into **eternal life**." (Note: At Christ's Second coming, the **final** judgment will take place.) (Compare also 2 Timothy 4, 1.)

2 Peter 3, 10: "The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, **the earth** also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (He will **destroy the earth** at His coming.)

John 5, 28.29: "The hour is com-

ing, in the which **all** that are in the graves shall hear His voice, And shall come forth . . . good . . . and evil." (There will be only **one** resurrection; not two.) (Cf. also John 6, 39.)

Mark 13, 32. 37: "But of that day and that hour **knoweth no man**, . . . And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch." (No one on earth will be able to know when the Last Day is coming.)

Romans 11, 7.25. "What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." (Not all of physical Israel will be saved. Compare also 2 Cor. 3, 14 and Rom. 9, 6 - 8. Note: The true Israel are all the believers in Christ.)

"Brief Statement", Par. 42: "With the Augsburg Confession (Art. XVII) we reject every type of Millennialism, or Chiliasm, the opinions that Christ will return visibly to this earth a thousand years before the end of the world and establish a dominion of the Church over the world; or that before the end of the world the Church is to enjoy a season of special prosperity; or that before the general resurrection on

Judgment Day a number of departed Christians or martyrs are to be raised again to reign in glory in this world; or that before the end of the world a universal conversion of the Jewish nation (of Israel according to the flesh) will take place."

NOTE: The teachings mentioned just above, being contrary to clear Scripture, are not so-called "**open questions**", but are divisive of church fellowship. (Br. St., Par. 44: "Those questions in the domain of Christian doctrine may be termed open questions which Scripture answers either not at all or not clearly. . . . **Not** to be included in the number of **open questions** are the following: the doctrine of the Church and Ministry, of Sunday, of Chiliasm, and of Antichrist, these doctrines being **clearly defined in Scripture.**")

B.—What the American Lutheran Church Teaches:

The A. L. C. "Declaration" of 1938, Sec. III & VI,b (regarding The Visible Side of the Church and the Last Things) states: "We expect no more than this, that the Hon. Synod of Missouri will declare that the points mentioned there are not disruptive of church-fellowship." This

has reference to the following false teachings within the A. L. C.: The Antichrist, An earlier resurrection of the martyrs, The Conversion of all Israel according to the flesh, and The Millennial Reign of Christ.

C.—What the "Common Confession Teaches:

"Among the signs of His approaching return for judgment. . . . We hold it to be an error to teach anything as a sign of Christ's second advent not promised or foretold in the Holy Scriptures, such as the expectation of a mass conversion of the Jews, a preliminary resurrection of martyrs, and a visible millennial reign of Christ on the earth before the Day of Judgment."

NOTE: These things are not spoken of in the CC as being errors in themselves but only when taught "as a **sign** of Christ's second advent." Again the real issue is evaded, room being left for the errors themselves still to be taught.

NOTE ALSO: Since the A. L. C. stated in its "Declaration" that these are **not** doctrines divisive of fellowship, it is necessary for the CC to state clearly that they **are** divisive. (1 Corinthians 1, 10; Romans 16, 17.)

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IX. Note, in Conclusion

A.—The Purpose of the "Common Confession", as stated by the Missouri Synod, is to serve as a basis for establishing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church.

This is evident from the Proceedings of Synod, 1947, Page 510:

1. (Resolved) That Synod declare that the 1938 resolutions shall no longer be considered as a basis for the purpose of establishing fellowship with the American Lutheran Church; and

2. That Synod encourage its Committee on Doctrinal Unity to

continue discussion on a soundly Scriptural basis, using the **Brief Statement** and such other documents as are already in existence or as it may be necessary to formulate; and

3. That Synod's Committee on Doctrinal Unity be instructed to make every effort to arrive ultimately at **one document which is Scriptural, clear, concise, and unequivocal; . . .**"

Note that in 1947 Synod required that such a document must be "Scriptural, clear, concise, and unequivocal."

B.—At its 1950 Convention, the Missouri Synod accepted the “Common Confession” for the purpose stated in spite of the fact that it had been pointed out clearly both in printed memorials submitted to the convention and in remarks made by many on the floor of the convention that it does not fulfill the Scriptural and Confessional requirements noted above.

Note in particular that, while the resolutions passed allow for additional statements to be added, they do not leave the door open for correction of statements already made on the doctrines treated in it. This should be evident to every honest observer from the following resolutions (Proceedings, 1950, page 585 & 586):

“Resolved, That we accept the ‘Common Confession’ as a statement of these doctrines in harmony with Scriptures; and be it further

Resolved, That if the American Lutheran Church, in convention assembled, accepts it, the ‘Common Confession’ shall be recognized as a statement of agreement on these doctrines between us and the American Lutheran Church. . . .

Resolved, That additional statements, originating in the same manner . . . may be submitted.” Note: It is utterly unreasonable to assume a statement of doctrine still open to correction when it has already been declared to be in harmony with Scripture! Note also that the CC was accepted by the A. L. C. in convention assembled, October, 1950. Shall it now be changed?

signed, being at this time still members of Synod, reject and C.—We therefore, the under-

repudiate the “Common Confession” and hold that, by adopting it, Synod has placed itself upon a false confessional basis with the American Lutheran Church, due to the following facts:

1. The C. C. is not a faithful and correct presentation of what God’s Word teaches on a number of doctrines treated in it, as shown in this “Examination.” Neither do the resolutions of Synod by which it was accepted allow for it to be adequately corrected in this respect.

2. The CC fails to exclude and reject false doctrines which have been and still are officially taught in the American Lutheran Church and thus fails to meet the requirements of Scripture and the Lutheran Confessions, as we have also herewith pointed out.

3. The CC, adopted in spite of protests made both before and during the Convention, was adopted in evident violation of Christian consciences bound in the Word of God. (1 Cor. 1, 10; 2 Cor. 10, 5).

4. The CC was adopted not un-animously but by a majority vote (Lutheran Witness, July 25, 1950, p. 228). Thus it was adopted in violation of Synod’s Constitution, Article VIII-C, which reads: (“At Synodical Meetings) all matters of doctrine and of conscience shall be decided only by the Word of God. All other matters shall be decided by a majority vote.”

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November, 1950.

(Prepared primarily for study by our congregations. Acts 20, 28.)

Questions about this Examination and requests for further information should be directed to the authors.

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