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Does Paul Call Jesus God?

We need not point out at length that among the pillars on which the Christian faith rests the doctrine of the deity of Christ is one of the most important, and that, if this pillar is removed, the whole structure must collapse. What Christ is and what He did, the glory of His person and the glory of His work, are inseparably bound together. We may think of what John says, John 20, 31: "But these [signs] are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, ye might have life through His name." Evidently, according to the Scriptures, there is a close connection between the deity of Christ and the saving work of Christ. The Church has contended for the deity of her Lord from this very point of view. It was that great champion of orthodoxy, Athanasius, who, in the bitter controversy with the Arians, pointed out that, if we refuse to accept Christ as the true God, we lose the assurance and the comfort of the redemption. Half an hour's reading of Luther's writings will suffice to convince any one that the great Reformer recognized how intimately the two doctrines we are speaking of are united. He says, for instance (St. L. Ed., VII, 1557): "We must have a Savior who can rescue us from the power of the god and prince of this world, the devil, likewise from sin and death; that is, we need a Savior who is the true, eternal God, through whom all that believe on Him are justified and saved. For if He is nothing more nor any higher than Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, John the Baptist, etc., He is not our Redeemer. If He sheds His blood for us as the Son of God, to redeem and cleanse us from sin, and we believe this and poke it into the face of the devil (*dem Teufel vor die Nase halten*) whenever he terrifies and torments us on account of our sins, then the devil is soon defeated and has to retreat and to cease molesting us." The Church, then, is not battling for a mere abstract or speculative truth when it defends the doctrine of the deity of

- P. E. Kretzmann, *Search the Scriptures!* (the Bible itself, New Testament, being class text).
 Theo. Kuehnert, *Graded Memory Course* (Scripture-texts, hymns, prayers).
 Graebner, *The Story of Our Church*.
 Buchheimer, *Little Folded Hands*.

SCHEDULE 2.

We are lacking:—

- A selection of Bible stories suitable for Vacation-schools.
- A book of catechetical instruction, Schwan being quite out of consideration.
- Text containing outline of life of Jesus and of St. Paul.
- Elementary geography text, or, at least, maps (under consideration).
- Selection of references for reading gospels and epistles.
- An outline life of Luther.

The gathering of all material, including catechism, hymns, and prayers and everything listed in Schedule 2, into three handbooks for Primary (Grades 1—3), Intermediate (Grades 4—6), and Advanced (Grades 7 and 8) work is a prime necessity if the work of our Vacation-schools of Religion is to function properly for the purpose which has called them into being.

THE THEOLOGICAL OBSERVER.

These Drawn Up by Representatives of the Iowa, Ohio, and Buffalo Synods and the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America.

From various sides a copy of the document containing the "Agreement of Representatives of the Iowa, Ohio, and Buffalo Synods and the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, to be Submitted to Their Respective Synods for Action," has been kindly sent us, and we herewith submit this "Agreement" to our readers for perusal.

I. THE SCRIPTURES.

The synods signatory to these Articles of Agreement accept without exception all the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament, as a whole and in all their parts, as the divinely inspired, revealed, and inerrant Word of God and submit to this as the only infallible authority in all matters of faith and life.

II. THE LUTHERAN SYMBOLS.

1. These synods also, without reservation, accept the symbolical books of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, not in so far as, but because they are the presentation and explanation of the pure doctrine of the Word of God and a summary of the faith of the Lutheran Church, as this has found expression in response to the exigencies arising from time to time.

(The Norwegian Lutheran Church of America, in agreement with the position of the Lutheran Church of Norway and Denmark, has officially accepted only the three Ecumenical Creeds, the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, and Luther's Small Catechism. This position does not imply that the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America in any way whatsoever rejects the remaining symbolical books of the Lutheran Church, as the constant references to them in her theological literature amply testify, but since the other symbolical books are not known to her constituency generally, it has not been deemed necessary to require formal subscription to the entire Book of Concord.)

2. Adherence to our confessions pertains only to their doctrinal content (*i. e.*, to the doctrines declared to be the divine truth and to the rejection of opposite doctrines), but to these without exception or limitation in all articles and parts, no matter whether a doctrine is specifically cited as a confession or incidentally introduced for the purpose of elucidating or proving some other doctrine. All that pertains to the form of presentation (historical comments, questions purely exegetical, etc.) is not binding.

III. CHURCH FELLOWSHIP.

1. These synods agree that true Christians are found in every denomination which has so much of divine truth revealed in Holy Scripture that children of God can be born in it; that, according to the Word of God and our confessions, church-fellowship, that is, mutual recognition, altar- and pulpit-fellowship, and eventually co-operation in the strictly essential work of the Church, presupposes unanimity in the pure doctrines of the Gospel and in the confession of the same in word and deed.

Where the establishment and maintenance of church-fellowship ignores present doctrinal differences or declares them a matter of indifference, there is unionism, pretense of a union which does not exist.

2. These synods agree that the rule, "Lutheran pulpits for Lutheran pastors only and Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only," is not only in full accord with, but necessarily implied in, the teachings of the divine Word and the confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. This rule, implying the rejection of all unionism and syncretism, must be observed as setting forth a principle elementary to sound and conservative Lutheranism.

IV. POINTS OF DOCTRINE.

In 1920 all synods, with the exception of the Buffalo Synod (to which they had not been submitted), adopted theses on —

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| 1. The Work of Christ. | 5. Justification. (See Chicago Theses.) |
| 2. The Gospel. | 6. Faith. |
| 3. Absolution. | 7. Conversion. |
| 4. Holy Baptism. | 8. Election. |

After discussion of these theses the representatives present came to the conclusion that we are in full agreement in all essentials pertaining to these doctrines.

V. THE LODGE QUESTION.

1. These synods agree that all such organizations or societies, secret or open, as are either avowedly religious or practise the forms of religion without confessing as a matter of principle the Triune God and Jesus Christ as the Son of God, come into the flesh, and our Savior from sin, or instead of the Gospel teach salvation by human works or morality, are antichristian and destructive of the best interests of the Church and the individual soul, and that therefore the Church of Christ and its congregations can have no fellowship with them.

2. They agree that a Lutheran synod should not tolerate pastors who have affiliated themselves with any antichristian society. And they admonish their pastors and congregations to testify against the sin of lodgery and to put forth earnest efforts publicly and privately to enlighten and persuade persons who are members of antichristian societies to sever their connection with such organizations.

VI. RECOGNITION.

The representatives of the synods here present agree that the synods accepting these articles are one in doctrine and practise, recognize each other as truly Lutheran, and may enter into pulpit- and altar-fellowship.

The presidents of the synods here represented are asked to present this Agreement to their respective synods for adoption.

The members of the colloquium held at Minneapolis, Minn., November 18, 1925:—

For the Iowa Synod: Rev. Henry Hartig, Dr. M. Fritschel, Dr. M. Reu, Dr. F. Richter;

For the Joint Synod of Ohio: Dr. C. C. Hein, Dr. W. H. Lehmann, Dr. H. K. G. Doermann, Dr. H. J. Schuh;

For the Buffalo Synod: Rev. A. W. Walck, Rev. K. O. Hoessel, Rev. A. Haseley;

For the Norwegian Lutheran Church of America: Dr. J. Tanner, Dr. G. M. Bruce, Dr. H. G. Stub, and Dr. J. A. Aasgaard.

The above is a true and correct copy of the resolutions adopted at said meeting.

Dated at Minneapolis, Minn., November 18, 1925.

(Signed.) H. G. STUB, Chairman.

(Signed.) H. J. SCHUH, Secretary.

Theses Adopted in Chicago, March 11—13, 1919.

(The part dealing with doctrines considered. Cf. Sec. IV above.)

1. In regard to the Work of Christ, Redemption, and Reconciliation:—

Jesus Christ, God and Man, has not only for the benefit of, but in the place of, the human race taken upon Himself the sins of the world with the just penalties for them. In the place of the world

for its benefit He has, by His holy life, fulfilled the Law and by His suffering and death, by His blood, paid the penalty for the whole world, truly and completely satisfied the divine justice, redeemed the world from guilt and punishment of sin, and brought about the reconciliation of God, whose wrath had come upon mankind on account of sin and whose justice required satisfaction.

2. In regard to the Gospel:—

The Gospel is not only a story, a narrative of what Jesus Christ has done, but at the same time it offers, and gives the result of, the work of Christ; above all, forgiveness of sin. Yea, it even, at the same time, gives power to accept what it offers.

3. In regard to Absolution:—

Absolution does not essentially differ from the forgiveness of sin offered by the Gospel. The only difference is that absolution is the direct application of forgiveness of sin to the individual desiring the consolation of the Gospel. Absolution is not a judgment passed by the pastor on those being absolved, declaring that they now have forgiveness.

4. In regard to Holy Baptism and the Gospel:—

The Holy Ghost works regeneration of the sinner both through Baptism and the Gospel. Both are therefore justly called the means of regeneration.

5. In regard to Justification:—

Justification is not an act in man, but an act by God in heaven, declaring the repentant and believing just or stating that he is regarded as such on account of the imputation of the righteousness of Christ by faith.

6. In regard to Faith:—

Faith is not in any measure a human effort. Faith is an act of man in so far as it is man who believes. But both the power to believe and the act of believing are God's work and gift in the human soul, or heart.

7. In regard to Conversion:—

Conversion, as the word is commonly used in our Lutheran Confessions, comprises contrition and faith produced by the Law and the Gospel. If man is not converted, the responsibility and guilt fall on him because, in spite of God's all-sufficient grace through the call, he "would not" according to the Word of Christ, Matt. 23, 37: "How often would I have gathered thy children, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wing, and ye would not."

If a man is converted, the glory belongs to God alone, whose work of grace it is throughout. Before conversion or in conversion there is no cooperation of man; but at the very moment man is converted, cooperation begins through the new powers given in conversion; though this cooperation is never independent of the Holy Spirit, but always "to such an extent and so long as God by His Holy Spirit rules, guides, and leads him." (*Form. Concord.*)

8. In regard to Election:—

The causes of election to salvation are the mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ; nothing in us on account of which God has elected us to eternal life.

On the one hand, we reject all forms of synergism which in any way would deprive God of His glory as the only Savior. On the other hand, we reject all forms of Calvinism which directly or indirectly would conflict with the order of salvation and would not give to all a full and equally great opportunity of salvation, or which in any manner would violate the Word of God, which says that God will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 1 Tim. 2, 4.

A Few Comments.—The theses given above have a Lutheran ring, as anybody who is at all acquainted with documents of this kind will soon notice. 1) It was with joy that we read the declaration on the Scriptures which positively opposes the modern view that the Bible merely contains the Word of God or that it is a book which, in spite of a divine origin, is marred by some minor errors and inconsistencies. 2) Our full approval was given, furthermore, to the paragraphs on the Lutheran symbols, where an adherence to the Confessions, *quia*, and not *quatenus*, they teach the truth, is explicitly taught. 3) Of the theses adopted in Chicago 1919 the one relating to the redemption of Christ teaches very clearly the fundamental doctrines of the vicarious atonement and of the objective justification of the sinful world; and the paragraphs on the Gospel, Holy Baptism and the Gospel, Justification, and Faith, while not exhaustive, present vital aspects of the respective doctrines. 4) Concerning the statement on Conversion we are glad to note that it rejects Synergism by emphasizing that Conversion is throughout a work of God's grace. 5) While the theses thus bear testimony to important Scripture truths, there are several strictures which we feel compelled to make. Generally speaking, the theses ought to be more complete; several subjects on which one expects a declaration are not touched on. Besides, the statements could be more definite. Here and there one feels that the language is vague and ambiguous. 6) The first paragraph on Church-fellowship is excellent, but it contains a phrase which is vague and weakens the statement. We refer to the words, "[cooperation] in the strictly essential work of the Church." Does not the limitation "strictly essential" afford the lax element in a synod adopting this paragraph a loophole where it may introduce its unionistic practises? We fear that this element will label its unscriptural fellowshiping with errorists as occurring in the sphere of the unessential work of the Church. It is quite true that the preceding words, "mutual recognition," "altar- and pulpit-fellowship," ought to exclude such a use of the phrase; but experience has taught that the advocates of unionism employ the aforementioned expression to justify their unscriptural attitude. 7) Again, it is certainly commendable that the lodge question is dwelt on in the Articles of Agreement. What is said on that topic ought to be accepted by every Lutheran. But does it

suffice to say that a "Lutheran synod should not tolerate *pastors* [italics ours] who have affiliated themselves with any antichristian society"? The agreement fails to point out that lodge-membership is a sin which must ordinarily lead to excommunication if persisted in. 8) The last sentence of the paragraph on Absolution lacks clearness. If the word "pastor," as we think the authors intend, is emphasized, then the statement is correct. As it stands, it can easily be interpreted to deny the doctrine of absolution as confessed by our Lutheran Church. 9) Concerning the paragraph on Election the question suggested itself to us whether it is not too brief. While the statements made are Scriptural and important, they are not specific enough to exclude, for instance, the error of Huber, who identified the decree of Redemption and the decree of Election. In this connection a question arises with reference to the Norwegian Lutheran Church in America. This body stands committed to the *Opgjoer*, which agitated men's minds a decade ago. Will the *Opgjoer* continue to represent the official position of the Norwegian Lutheran Church when these theses have been adopted, or will it be superseded by the declaration we are considering? Does this agreement imply that the two objectionable features of the *Opgjoer*, namely, that, on the one hand, it places the *intuitu fidei* view of Election on a par with the doctrine taught in Article XI of the Formula of Concord, and that, on the other hand, it fails to be specific enough in its rejection of synergism, will be corrected? We, who were among the critics of the *Opgjoer*, regret that these matters are not touched upon. 10) Finally, it will strike the reader as strange that controverted subjects like Chiliasm, the Church, and the Office of the Ministry are not treated. It was partly on this account that we stated above that the document, in our view, ought to be more comprehensive.

The "Lutheran" on Dr. Soederblom. — One would think that a Lutheran could have but one opinion of the Archbishop of Sweden. Archbishop Soederblom believes that Christianity is a product of natural evolution. He is an extreme "liberal" and as such a pronounced unionist. He will fraternize with any kind of sectarian and many kinds of infidels. The *Lutheran* has two opinions of him. On the second page of its issue of January 6, which contains Dr. Soederblom's "New Year's Message to the *Lutheran*," it has a rather good opinion of him. It styles him "a great man with distinctively twentieth-century obligations" and a "Lutheran leader." Though conceding that "perhaps admiration for the strange cults he studied during his career as a university teacher in Germany and Sweden has dulled his accuracy in appraising the distinctive tenets of Lutheranism" (and still "a Lutheran leader"!), it does not seem to be in full sympathy with those who have taken him to task for his glaring aberrations. Says the opinion of page two: "His 'breadth' is not acceptable to all the Swedish clergy, and he is just plain anathema in some American Lutheran circles. . . . Maybe he is correct and justified in his notion that the Lutheranism of our modern age has been molded into orthodoxism." On page fifteen the *Lutheran* has a poor opinion of Dr. Soederblom. It says there editorially: "What

is to be lamented to-day is not differences as to such minor things as the mode of baptism or forms of worship and church government and administration, but indifference as to unity in the saving truths of the Gospel." The subject under discussion here is Dr. Fosdick's indifferentism. But Dr. Fosdick's indifferentism is of exactly the same nature, qualitatively and quantitatively, as Dr. Soederblom's. The *Lutheran's* Lutheran condemnation of indifference as to unity in the saving truths of the Gospel is a direct condemnation of Dr. Soederblom's position. Perhaps the opinion of page fifteen may cause Dr. Soederblom to repeat his complaint that American Lutheranism is being molded into orthodoxism. E.

A Misdirected Criticism.—A correspondent of the *Lutheran* (Jan. 13, 1927) brings this remarkable incident to the notice of the Church: "Dr. Diffenderfer of the Lutheran Memorial Church preached the sermon of the community Christmas worship. This service is arranged by the City Ministers' Association and was held this year in one of the Methodist edifices. Dr. Diffenderfer's discourse dealt in part with changes that have occurred in the world since its Messiah came. President and Mrs. Coolidge were in attendance; it is said to be the first time a President in Washington has been before a pulpit occupied by the Lutheran clergyman. At the close of the service, President Coolidge left the church on the arm of Dr. Diffenderfer; they were greeted by the usual battery of cameras." The correspondent is greatly displeased with something that occurred in connection with this affair. Thus: "The *Washington Star* reported the pair accurately. Most of the 'journalists' had too little regard for accuracy to get Dr. Diffenderfer's name and denomination correctly. One wonders why a city editor allows his reporters to get by with mistakes at a public worship that would earn a rebuke in connection with a police case." Certainly these reporters were derelict in their duty. But what about the central figure of the story? Shall not Dr. Diffenderfer be rebuked for his "mistake at a public worship"? E.

Private Conferences with the Pastor.—Recently Dr. H. E. Fosdick, pastor of the Park Avenue Baptist Church, New York, in speaking before more than a thousand ministers and laymen at the annual luncheon of the Greater New York Federation of Churches, urgently advocated the confessional for all Protestants. The *Lutheran Church Herald* comments on this suggestion as follows: "Private confession, or repentance, as it is called in the *Formula of Concord*, together with private absolution, was practised by Luther and the Reformers in its purified and evangelical form as it was practised by the fathers of our American Lutheran Church. There are some of us who recall to this day the blessed spiritual experience of a quiet season with the pastor as confessor in the sacristy or pastor's study. Certain mental difficulties were solved; our faith was clarified and strengthened by the intimate, personal conversation with the pastor and the expert manner in which he comprehended the trouble and was apt to remedy it as the teacher sent of God. . . .

"In our humble opinion, then, there should be certain hours of the week set aside in the church vestry for private conference with the pastor regarding the intellectual, spiritual, and other difficulties of the individual parishioner. He should be to the parish a messenger of God to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation. In the confessional and in absolution as well as in the pulpit he is the voice of God Himself. Through him Christ sends out the invitation: 'Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' With no embarrassment caused by the presence of others; with no critics or eaves-droppers to disturb the mind, the penitent is free to unburden his soul to the comprehending and sympathizing heart of his discreet and faithful friend, the pastor, and to hear the words of absolution as from God Himself: 'Son, thy sins are forgiven thee.' In the wilderness of the world's endless noises, amid the shoutings of the aggressive horde of self-constituted leaders of men, burning in the hot simooms of philosophy, and shivering beneath the icy blasts of materialism, what a benediction to find an oasis, a 'safe and secret place,' where naught is heard by the harried soul but the words of Jesus, 'I will give thee rest.'"

The *Augsburg Confession* does not merely recommend private absolution, but urges that it "*ought to be retained in the churches*" (Triglot, p. 47), "although the enumeration of sins is not necessary" (p. 251, § 65).
MUELLER.

The Phipps Bill. — The present Phipps Bill, which proposes to enlarge the powers of the Federal Bureau of Education, is vigorously opposed by *America* for the following reasons: "The Phipps Bill seeks to establish the principle that it is the duty and the right of the Federal Government to watch over the schools of the States. That principle cannot be admitted. The duties of the Federal Government are stated, either explicitly or by necessary implication, in the Federal Constitution. But nowhere does the Constitution state directly that it is the duty of the Federal Government to watch over the educational policies of the States. Nor is this alleged duty implied by any clause of the Constitution. The Federal Government can fulfil its every duty and enforce all its lawful authority without even adverting to the existence of schools in the several States. Nor is it the right of the Federal Government to watch the local educational systems. Since this right is reserved to the several States, it is prohibited to the Federal Government. We therefore conclude that the right and duty contemplated by the Phipps Bill has no constitutional existence or warranty."

The real reason for this opposition is, of course, the danger that would accrue to the Catholic schools if this bill were accepted and passed; for the new Phipps Bill is nothing else than the old Smith-Towner Bill, championed especially by the Freemasons of our country. The criticism of *America* is well founded.
MUELLER.

Evolution the Religion of Self-Worship. — A sermon contributed by Rev. G. R. Dodson, of St. Louis, to the controversy that has lately been raging about the Missouri Anti-Evolution Bill discloses quite

plainly what there is about the doctrine of evolution that renders it so alluring and captivating to proud and puny man. If he was reported correctly, the preacher said: "A great many people have found to their delight that evolution is capable of a religious interpretation. It is regarded by them as God's method in creation. And since evolution is still going on, this means that creation is incomplete; that we are present at creation; God is in the universe and is working still, and we, His children, are no longer mere spectators. But since we can do something to promote truth, beauty, and goodness, we are cooperators with God in the increasing and unending creation." So, then, evolution awakens religious feelings and develops religious worship. Religion has to do with the worship of God. And evolution instructs its votaries to worship God for this, that He has endowed man with creative powers. The *Te Deum Laudamus* of Evolution contains this versicle: "We are cooperators with God in the unceasing and unending creation." Or, as another worshiper has put it: "A divinity is within him [man]. It doth not yet appear what he or his may become." (*Monthly*, Vol. VI, p. 56.) The Christian worships God, in the Redeemer Jesus Christ, as the sole Creator of heaven and earth. The evolutionist sings praise to God, the wondrous Creator, and to man, God's efficient cooperator "in the unceasing and unending *creation*." — When the preacher said: "We can do something to promote truth, beauty, and goodness," he was not speaking to the point. The Missouri legislators were discussing the question whether man had an animal origin. The speaker presumably confined himself to the work of man in the field of "truth, beauty, and goodness" because his alleged work in the creative direction has, unaccountably, come to an absolute end. — Besides, the speaker confines himself to the discussion of theistic evolution, while the bill before the House was not an anti-atheistic evolution or an anti-theistic evolution, but an anti-evolution bill. To be fair to the legislators, he should have pointed out what the religion and who the god of atheistic evolution is. But whatever the difference between these two evolutionistic denominations, both are agreed on denying that God created heaven and earth, on admiring the creative faculty of those beings who evolved humanity out of bestiality, on the deification of man, and, if Dr. Dodson's reasoning is correct, of man's apelike ancestors. Any theory which ascribes divine qualities to man is sure of gaining a wide following among puny, proud mankind.

E.

The Praying-Wheel Christianized. — Press dispatch: "Rev. E. Haley, of Yucaipa, concluded the Book of Revelation in the annual non-stop Bible-reading ceremony here last night. Methodist Church packed. Reading finished 9.29 last night. Bettered the mark of last year by 20 minutes, the total time taken being 69 hours, 20 minutes." Why not revert at once to the Tibetan praying wheel, the number of revolutions per hour constituting the points, or, if one must be up to date, have two Victrolas with a sufficient number of records compete? It would conserve human energy and have the same effect. E.