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A BRIEF STATEMENT  
OF THE  
DOCTRINAL POSITION OF THE MISSOURI SYNOD.

By F. PIEPER.

*In the Year of the Jubilee, 1897.*

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(Translated from the German by W. H. T. D.)

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The doctrine taught and professed by our Synod has been repeatedly called *new*. Such has been the experience of the fathers and founders of our Synod, and such is still our own experience at the present time. However, our doctrine is not new, neither wholly, nor in part, but is as old as the Revelation of the Holy Scriptures. Our doctrine is none other than that which God has revealed in the writings of the apostles and prophets, and which the Lutheran church in her public Confessions professes from, and in accordance with, the Scriptures. This fact is attested by every sermon which is preached on Sundays from the pulpits of our congregations. It can also be observed in our periodicals and in other publications of our Synod. Still, it may not be improper, on the occasion of the semi-centennial of our Synod, to present on the following pages a brief statement of our faith and confession, embracing the leading points of doctrine, which we profess over against ancient and modern error.

ures and men they shall vote for, and what they shall do and what not, in matters which the laws of God and the state leave to their own free choice. Even in purely external affairs these sons of bondage remain the slaves of Rome in the midst of free America. And in as far as the Puritan sects are spiritually unfree and regard themselves as still bound by the law of Moses, they, too, come short of the full enjoyment of that liberty which our country would give to them also. Full enjoyment of American liberty is attainable only to him whom Christ has freed, freed also from all commandments of men.

Hence, when we Lutherans stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and suffer neither papists nor Puritans to entangle us in the yoke of bondage; and when we, out of gratitude to God, are bent on winning over our fellow citizens to the Lutheran liberty, which is fairer and grander than everything else in the world: we at the same time establish and strengthen what is great in Americanism—personal, political, national, and religious liberty.

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## Theological Review.

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**Experimental Religion.** The Experiences of Christophoros from his Awakening to his Falling Asleep in Jesus. By F. K.: VIRGINIUS. 198 pages. Augusta Publishing Co., Crimora, Va. Price, 75 cents.

According to this allegory Christopher, a young man of the world, happens into a country church, where he is stirred up to a sense of his guilt. In the metropolis he is invited to sinful pleasures, but he declines and begins to read the Bible. He falls in with Rev. Legal and is taught to rid himself of sin by keeping the law; but he finds no peace. His heart is tormented with fears, doubts, and despair, until he hears an Easter sermon on justification by V., the pastor of the country church. Joy and peace enter his heart. His father, however, declares him an enthusiast, and revivalists call him a dead

formalist. But by the Bible and the witness of the Spirit he is convinced of the genuineness of his conversion, which he proves by works of love. On an ocean voyage, however, he falls in with seductive company, and in a metropolis of Spanish America he lives like the Prodigal. On his way home he repents, and henceforth he proves himself an humble and faithful Christian in performing his various duties, as well as in resisting and overcoming great temptations. — Evidently the object of this allegory is to show that genuine religious experience is the effect of pure religious teaching. Dogmatic and experimental religion go together. The latter does not and cannot exist without the former. Religious experiences that cannot be traced to Bible truths as their effective causes are heathen delusions. Religious emotions and feelings flowing from human opinions and false religious teachings are mere hallucinations (a species of insanity), "ein selbstgemachter Wahn vom Glauben," as Luther says. Real religious experiences presuppose real religious truths as their sufficient causes. What is neither true nor real cannot, properly speaking, be *experienced*. Therefore, since the pure doctrines of Christianity, as taught by the Lutheran confessions, are the *only true* doctrines, they, and they alone, are productive of genuine and real Christian experience. Modern theologians and revivalists who despise dogmatic, and prate experimental Christianity may produce what psychology calls "religious emotions," but genuine Christian experience, *i. e.*, real, sound, and sane religious experience — never. Experimental Christianity is the effect of dogmatic Christianity. For the title, "Experimental Religion," the author could have substituted, "Dogmatic Religion." In his allegory he exemplifies the effects of the Law and Gospel on a sinner, and shows that Christian experience is true faith: the divine assurance of the Gospel truth: Your sins are forgiven you for Jesus' sake. And this new light in a terror-stricken soul is, indeed, the very essence and source of all genuine religious experience. Regarding the preaching of the Law and the Gospel the *Apology* says: "It truly *penetrates* into the heart, strikes the conscience with *alarm*, and is not a jest, but great *terror*, in which the soul *feels* its wretchedness and sins, and the wrath of God. While in this terror, the heart should again seek *consolation*, which takes place when we *believe* in the promise of Christ, that, through Him, we receive remission of sin. The faith, which, in such fear and terror, *cheers* the heart and consoles it, receives and *experiences* (empfaehet und empfindet) remission of sin, justifies us and brings life; *for this strong consolation is a new birth and a new life.*"