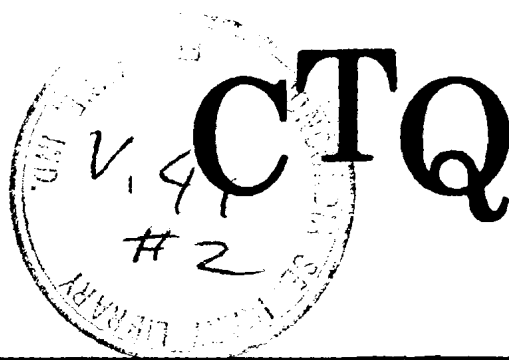


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The Smokescreen Vocabulary

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When reading theological works today, it is necessary for the reader to exercise a great deal of caution and discernment. Often contemporary theologians use the traditional terms of orthodox Christianity, but do so with changed meanings attached to them. In order to understand what these theologians are really saying, one must know what definitions they give to the words they use. The situation in our own Synod at the present time is an example of this problem. People on both sides of the controversy say, "I am totally committed to the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God." However, to understand what these words mean for the moderates in our church, it is necessary to carefully define the words *inspired*, *infallible*, *Word of God*, *Holy Scripture* and the *Bible*. This study will attempt to carefully examine and define the orthodox position of the Holy Christian Church and then compare it with the position of the moderates in our church. Several examples will follow of what redefined terminology can do to orthodox theology.

Our first inquiry concerns the word *inspired* or *inspiration*. The Christian Church from the earliest of times has defined *inspiration* as a quality of Scripture, its nature, its substance, what it *is* (God-breathed, *theopneustos*).¹ The Lutheran Church fathers also held to this definition of *inspiration*:

This agency of God, by means of which the Holy Scriptures were produced, we call *Inspiration* . . . "Divine inspiration was that agency by which God supernaturally communicated to the intellect of those who wrote, not only the correct conception of all that was to be written, but also the conception of the words themselves . . ."²

The inspiration of Scripture was considered to be not a theory but a doctrine of Scripture . . . As a doctrine of Scripture, the inspiration of Scripture becomes a matter of confession, a divisive article of faith; to deny the inspiration of Scripture is un-Lutheran.³

The church fathers of the LCMS held to the same definition of inspiration:

By confessing the doctrine of inspiration, we declare our belief—based on the words of the Bible itself—that the Holy Spirit exercised a special influence by which He guided His chosen instruments to speak the things He desired them to speak, and to write the things He desired them to write, in the precise manner and in the very words

in which He desired these things to be spoken or written.⁴ This same definition is seen in our Synodical catechism:

“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.)⁵

In *Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord, Part I* (FCFL I), leaders of the moderate group in our church define inspiration in a far different way:

Accordingly, the inspiration of the written Word pertains to the effective power of the Scriptures to bring men and women to salvation through the Gospel. We affirm, therefore, that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God.⁶

Orthodox Lutheran writings define inspiration as what Scripture *is*. But FCFL I defines it as to what Scripture *does*, in reality a definition of the *divine efficacy* of Scripture (the work of the Holy Spirit in leading people to Christ). Although the *efficacy* of Holy Scripture is obviously connected with its *inspiration*, the terms are not interchangeable.

When Lutheran theologians speak of the Spirit's operation associated with the *writing* of the Scriptures, they use the term “inspiration”; when they speak of the Spirit's operation *through* the Scriptures as the Word of God to produce acceptance of and obedience to Scriptural teaching, they use the term “divine efficacy” . . . therefore, it is a confusion of the relationship between inspiration and Biblical authority to say that the inspiration of the written Word of God pertains to the effective power of the Scriptures to bring men and women to salvation through the Gospel.⁷

This distinction of terms has been muddled by the moderates who accept what the Bible *does* (efficacy of Scripture), but are doubtful as to what it *is* (inspired). Thus, by changing the definition for *inspiration*, they can accept the word without believing its true meaning.

Since the inspiration of Scripture is a doctrine of the Bible and an article of faith, this redefinition by the moderates has caused a division in the unity of the church. Moderates feel that differences “regarding the precise manner of inspiration and the exact nature of inerrancy should not be divisive of our fellowship.”⁸ Here we see a clear break with orthodox Lutheran theology, for as was quoted earlier, “the inspiration of Scripture becomes . . . a divisive article of faith; to deny the inspiration of Scripture is un-Lutheran.”⁹

The next word to be studied is *infallible*, which is a synonym for

“inerrant”; Webster defines the terms as “incapable of error,” “not erring.” The early church fathers held that Scripture was “exempt from error.”¹⁰ The Reformers were of the same opinion. “God’s Word is not false and does not deceive” (FCE, VII, Part 13); “Believe the Scriptures, they will not lie to you” (LC, V, 76); “God does not lie . . . and the Word of God cannot err” (LC, IV, 57). For the Bible “cannot contain discrepancies or contradict itself” (LC, IV, 50; FCSD XI, 34-35). Luther shows that if ANY word of Scripture were false, the whole of Scripture would crumble and the Gospel would be lost, along with the assurance of forgiveness of sins through the sacraments, since they derive that power from the Word of God in the sacrament.¹¹ In fact, Luther confessed and believed in the absolute inerrancy of Scripture.¹² Our Lutheran forefathers held the same doctrine:

Inspiration and inerrancy are concomitants: the idea of an erring Scripture, an erring Word of God, is simple nonsense, a *contradictio in adjecto*. “Whatever is inspired by God,” says Quenstedt, “is to be believed simply on account of itself and is quite above all criticism; it is true for all times and immutably so; it is free from all error and untruth. An inspired falsehood is an impossibility, since God cannot lie either directly or through others.” To orthodox Lutheran theology, therefore, any charge against the truthfulness of Scripture is an attack on the truthfulness of God.¹³

Hence it follows, that everything that is contained in the Holy Scriptures is altogether, and in every particular, true and free from all error.¹⁴

Our church confesses the same belief in our Synodical catechism: “Every word of the Bible is *God’s Word*, and, therefore, the Bible is without error.”¹⁵ The Brief Statement of 1932 reaffirmed this position:

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 secular matters, John 10:35.¹⁶

The moderates, however, see the inerrancy of Scripture a bit differently:

The reliability or “inerrancy” of the Scriptures cannot be determined by twentieth century standards of factuality. Nor do the Scriptures link the work of the Holy Spirit with this kind of “inerrancy.” The purpose of the Spirit imparted by our Lord is to lead us into the whole truth about what God was doing in Jesus Christ, that we

might be redeemed and He may be glorified. In disclosing that Truth God does not err, and in achieving that purpose the spirit active in the Word does not lead us astray . . .¹⁷

Here is a subtle redefinition of *inerrancy/infalibility* on the part of the moderates. The above quotation states that one is inerrantly lead to Jesus Christ through the Scripture. Inerrancy goes only so far as the Gospel in the narrow sense. For FCFL, the Holy Spirit does not lead us astray only insofar as He reveals Christ.

From a reading of the rest of FCFL I, it is obvious that the authors and signers do not accept or believe that the Bible is free from all errors, but actually feel that the Holy Spirit and God's Word can be mistaken in matters of history. On page 29 FCFL I states that God does not have to fulfill all of His promises in order to be truthful (God can lie?); historical discrepancies are taken for granted (pp. 25-26); the Bible is stated to contain only imperfect human words (pp. 13, 37, 40, 41); certain isolated miraculous details are said to lack authenticity (truthfulness) (p. 19). Obviously FCFL I does not define *inerrant/infalible* as "without error in all its parts," but only "without error in showing the Gospel." Professor James M. Childs, moderate respondent at the April 1975 Convocation put it bluntly:

It is the judgment of many of us, who have studied this matter for many years, that the whole witness of Scripture to itself, both in its declaratory statements and in the character of its text, does not support the use of inerrancy as indicating flawlessness or factual precision in all parts of Scripture.¹⁸

The moderates in synod favor an error-filled "inerrant" Bible, which Lutheran orthodoxy rejected at its inception—once again an example of how a redefinition of terms can negate their actual meaning.¹⁹

Our attention now turns to the *Holy Scriptures* or the *Bible* (terms that are used interchangeably in orthodox Lutheran writings).²⁰ Orthodox Christianity has always held that the Scriptures are the *Word of God*:

If there ever was a general consent of the Church Catholic on any question, it exists on this. East and West, from the earliest to the latest times, concurred in assigning to Scripture a pre-eminence which consisted in its being—as no other collection of writings is—the Word of God.²¹

Chemnitz, in the *Examen*, quotes many church fathers to show this very point.²² The orthodox theologians of the early and medieval church all "regarded Scripture as the very Word of God in which God infallibly communcates divine truths."²³

Martin Luther unequivocally accepted the Scripture as the Word of God. "The two terms 'the Scriptures' and 'the Word of God' are, according to Luther, perfectly synonymous."²⁴ Even Paul Althaus, a critic of Luther's position, had to admit this point from his research:

This view of faith accords with the fact that although Luther criticized the Bible in specific details, he nonetheless followed the tradition of his time and basically accepted it as an essentially infallible book, inspired in its entire content by the Holy Spirit. It is therefore "the word of God," not only when it speaks to us in law and gospel . . . but also—and this is a matter of principle—in everything else that it says. Seen as a totality, its historical accounts, its world view, and all the miracle stories are "God's word" given by the Holy Spirit; they are therefore all unquestionable truths, to be "believed" precisely because they are contained in the book.²⁵

Althaus is not the only Luther scholar to reach this conclusion. A. Skevington Wood reaches the same conclusion in his book, *Captive to the Word*:

For the most part Luther adhered to his original practice of using "God's Word" as an equivalent for the Bible. He referred regularly to "Sacred Scripture" or "Holy Writ," each of which he brackets with "God's Word". He spoke of "Divine Scripture" or "God's Scripture", which again he associated with "God's Word". He often called the Bible simply "God's Book".²⁶

Luther even went beyond the statement that the Bible was the very Word of God to believing that the words recorded in the four Gospels, as spoken by Jesus, were in reality Jesus' actual words spoken in a given historical situation:

. . . the chief and foremost thing in the sacrament is the word of Christ, when he says: "*Take and eat, this is my body which is given for you.*" Likewise also, when he took the cup, he said: "*Take and drink of it, all of you, this is the cup of the new testament in my blood which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. As often as you do this, do it in remembrance of me.*" Everything depends on these words. Every Christian should and must know them and hold them fast. He must never let anyone take them away from him by any other kind of teaching, even though it were an angel of heaven (Gal. 1:8).²⁷

The very words of Christ were Luther's only defense against the Sacramentarian heresies. His unshakeable confidence in the

historicity of these words is coupled with his tenacity in insisting that they be believed.

The Confessions also equate Scripture and the Word of God. The preface to the Book of Concord is an excellent example of the confessional use of "the Word of God" as a synonym for "Holy Scripture."²⁸ Orthodox Lutheran theologians felt the same way:

Unequivocally and without reservation the orthodox Lutheran theologians call Scripture the Word of God . . . A typical definition of Scripture as God's Word is given by Gerhard: "Holy Scripture is the Word of God, reduced to writing according to His will by the evangelists and apostles, revealing perfectly and clearly the teaching of God's nature and will, in order that man might be instructed from it to life everlasting."²⁹

Our Synod's position was delineated by Dr. Pieper in his *Dogmatics*, where he powerfully shows from passages of Holy Scripture that the Bible is the Word of God.³⁰ He states that "Scripture and God's Word are therefore actually to be 'identified' . . . Holy Scripture and the Word of God are interchangeable terms."³¹ Dr. Engelder follows in this same tradition of orthodox Christianity and equates the Bible with the Word of God. He shows the grave errors that creep into the doctrines of the Church when so-called theologians no longer believe the Bible is in its entirety the Word of God, but only contains the Word of God.³² The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod officially holds to this orthodox belief that "the Bible is God's Word."³³ In the Common Confession adopted by the Missouri Synod in 1950, our church acknowledged ". . . the Holy Scriptures in their entirety as the inspired Word of God . . . We, therefore, recognize the Holy Scriptures as God's inerrant Word, and this *Word of God alone shall establish articles of faith*."³⁴

Now, Dr. Paul Bretscher, a leading moderate, in *After the Purifying*, acknowledges, to be sure, that Synod's official doctrinal position equates the Bible with the Word of God.

In the prevailing theology of our Synod, however, the Word of God is taken to mean the Holy Scriptures. And Scripture is the Word of God, not because its Gospel is the Word of God, but because God is the true author of every word in the Bible . . . Inevitably, then, the Scriptures are regarded as broader than the Gospel.³⁵

Bretscher clearly states, however, that the feelings of the moderate minority on this point differ greatly from the prevailing beliefs of the members of Synod:

But what do the members of the Synod have in mind when they hear and use that phrase, "the Word of God"? To many, perhaps most, it means the inspired and inerrant

Scriptures, with God as the true Author of every word. To a minority, however, "the Word of God" means the Spirit's proclamation of grace in Christ to sinners . . .³⁶

Bretschler goes further:

The Word of God, meaning Christ and the Gospel which proclaims Him, is the true glory and authority of the Bible. For the sake of that message, it is proper to call the Holy Scriptures "the Word of God."³⁷

The moderates no longer accept that the Bible *is* the Word of God. They only allow the Bible to be termed "Word of God" because of the Gospel contained in it. In other words, for the moderates, the Bible only *contains* the Word of God, an obvious departure from orthodox Lutheran theology. The moderates have thus lost sight of the fact

. . . that the *Sola Scriptura* of the Reformation depends on the firm belief that the Bible *is* the Word of God. Where this belief is shaken or even abandoned, the authority of Scripture collapses. This is the tragedy of modern Protestantism. We cannot deal here with the process of the collapse. We only note that first the theologians and then one after another of the churches severed Scripture from the Word in their official statements of faith. They were satisfied with the assumption that the Word is only contained somewhere in the Scriptures, or that the Scriptures are only a record of a past revelation in the mighty acts of God which were the true Word of God. Or we hear that under certain circumstances the Bible can become the Word of God.³⁸

Luther himself is brought into the controversy as Reverend Thomas Strieter, a moderate spokesperson, states that "the Word of God for Luther is always ultimately Christ."³⁹ Strieter does not accept the fact that Luther equated the Scriptures with the Word of God. This is an amazing assumption in light of Luther's statement:

The Holy Scripture is the Word of God, written and (as I might say) lettered and formed in letters, just as Christ is the eternal Word of God cloaked in human flesh. And just as Christ was embraced and handled by the world (*in der Welt gehalten and gehandelt*), so is the written Word of God too.⁴⁰

Luther asserts clearly that "Scripture is the Word of God."

Now, on the day of ordination a candidate for the Lutheran ministry in our midst is asked, "Dost thou believe the canonical books of the Old and New Testament to be the inspired Word of God and the only infallible rule of faith and practice?" The candidate then replies, "*I do so believe.*"⁴¹ Perhaps it is due to

their desire to give an affirmative answer to this ordination question that the moderates have felt constrained to redefine the terminology within it. But such a tactic is actually an evasion rather than an answer to the church's question. All this redefinition of theological terms relating to the Bible leads, moreover, to many other deviations from the traditional theology of the Synod. Several brief examples follow:

Dr. Alfred von Rohr Sauer, in his Bible-study of the book of Jonah⁴² for ELIM-PERCA (moderate educational group), concludes that the book is only a parable or a didactic narrative and not factual history (p. 2). He does not believe that the Jonah in the book is the prophet Jonah who lived during the age of Jereboam II (p. 3). He questions whether God really performed the miracles found in Jonah, and states that the evidence is negative (pp. 4-5). He further concludes that the book is strikingly similar to "some very well-known fairy tales" (p. 4). He implies that Jesus was too uninformed to know that the events recorded in the book of Jonah are not factual (pp. 5-6). Luther affirmed otherwise.⁴³

The moderates are also led to question whether the actual words of Jesus are recorded in the Bible. Dr. Frederick W. Danker concludes in his commentary on Luke, "therefore it is impossible to recover without argument the very words of Jesus spoken on a given historical situation."⁴⁴ "This statement jeopardizes the power of the Gospel to forgive sins through the sacraments. Christ's commands to baptize and to eat and drink His body and blood become suspect and doubtful, as these commands are attributed to Him only in two specific historical situations (Ascension Day and Maundy Thursday). These words of Christ, recorded in the Bible, are what give the sacraments the power to forgive sins. If these words are doubted or become suspect, then the forgiveness of sins dispensed through them is lost. Luther, however, stood on the exact words of Christ, and defended them and the Gospel message they spoke against all attack."⁴⁵

Dr. John Tietjen, president of Seminex and focal point for many moderates, goes even further in an interview in the October 5-6, 1974, St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*. In response to the question, "What is your devil then?" Dr. Tietjen replied:

The devil of doubt. Really basic doubt. Not did Jesus actually walk on water, but the question of whether the really basic tenets of the Gospel are true: that God exists, that He is actively involved in the history of the world, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.⁴⁶

From Jonah, to Jesus' words, to the truth of Jesus' ultimate victory over death, the moderate movement from redefined terminology to doubting theology is clear. We can only hope and

pray that if some men wish to hold to a different theology that they openly and honestly invent new terms, rather than attempt to cover their doubts by a smokescreen of words that can only confuse and cover the clear theological differences that exist.

FOOTNOTES

1. Herman Sasse, "The Inspiration of Scripture," in J. W. Montgomery, *Crisis in Lutheran Theology*, Vol. II (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1973), pp. 13-14. Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. I, Committee trans. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1950), pp. 265-276. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration," in Carl F. Henry, ed., *The Revelation of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1958), pp. 205-217. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines* (New York: Harper & Row, 1960), pp. 60-64. C. H. Pinnock, *Biblical Revelation* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), pp. 53-106, 147-174. H. B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966), pp. 12, 18, 381-385. P. E. Kretzmann, "The Inspiration of the New Testament," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. II, No. 9 (September, 1931), pp. 655-666, No. 10 (October, 1931), pp. 754-761. Siegbert W. Becker, *The Scriptures: Inspired of God* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1971). Wm. Jurgens, ed., *The Faith of the Early Fathers* (Collegeville, Minn.: The Liturgical Press, 1970), pp. 69, 74, 76, 177, 192, 203. B. B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1948). L. Gausson, *Divine Inspiration of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, n.d.).
2. H. Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, trans. by C. A. Hay & H. E. Jacobs (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 39.
3. Robert D. Preus, *The Theology of Post-Reformation Lutheranism*, Vol. I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1970), p. 274. See also pages 254-403. E. F. Klug, *From Luther to Chemnitz* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1971), pp. 17-25, 154-160; this book contains excellent studies of Luther's concept of inspiration and inerrancy, as well as Chemnitz. Robert D. Preus, *The Inspiration of Scripture* (Mankato: Lutheran Synod Book Company, 1955), pp. 26-49. See also Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 276-298 for a discussion of Luther's doctrine of inspiration; see also pp. 303-306 for a clear discussion of the results of a denial of the inspiration of Scripture. Alan M. Stibbs, "The Witness of Scripture to Its Inspiration," in Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-118.
4. L. Fuerbringer, Th. Engelder, P. E. Kretzmann, eds., *The Concordia Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1927), p. 77; see also p. 78. Walter F. Albrecht, "Holy Scripture the Word of God," in Theo. Laetsch, ed., *The Abiding Word* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1947), pp. 1-34. Erwin Lueker, ed. *Lutheran Cyclopedia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1975), pp. 413-414. Dr. C. F. W. Walther boldly confessed the doctrine of the inspiration of Scripture, see Robert D. Preus, "Walther and the Scriptures," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXXII, No. 11 (November, 1961), pp. 670-677. For an excellent discussion of the relationship between the doctrine of the Incarnation and inspiration see Olav Valen-Sendstad, *The Word That Can Never Die*, trans. by N.A. Madson, Sr. and Ahlert H. Strand (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 26-53. J. A. O. Preus, *It Is Written* (St. Louis: Con-

cordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 15-19, 31-40, 48, 52-55. David P. Scaer, *The Apostolic Scriptures* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 11-17.

5. *Luther's Small Catechism* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), p. 41. Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-228. J. A. O. Preus, "A Study Edition of A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles," CTCR Document (St. Louis: n.n., 1972), pp. 18-20, 26-29.
6. *Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord*, Part I (n.p.: n.n., n.d.), p. 36. The moderates also use the term inspiration in a blanket way for all the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian as well as the inspiring of the authors of the Bible to write. In other words, the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the individual Christian that helps his preaching, teaching, witnessing, etc. is placed on the same level as the inspiration of the writers of the Bible. The moderates see very little, if any, difference between the two things.

This phenomenon is seen in the ELIM document just released by John D. Frey, "Is the Bible Inerrant?" (Prairie Village, Kansas: n.n., 1976), pp. 20-21, 28-34. On page 32, Frey declares that Paul ascribes "inspiration, not just to the apostles, but to all Christians of all generations . . . the Holy Spirit stands behind the Christ-centered message of every sincere disciple, witness and pastor." In their confessional document (*Faithful I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 35-37), too, the moderates equate the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Christian (illumination) and the unique work of God the Holy Spirit in moving holy men to write (inspiration). Pieper clearly saw this damaging error among the modernist, liberal clergy of the 1920's. Dr. Pieper writes (*op. cit.*, p. 283):

We have seen that it is a characteristic of modern theology to place the inspiration of Scripture essentially on the same level with the illumination of all Christians; to assume with reference to the knowledge and teaching of the truth, not a specific difference, but only one of degree between the writers of Holy Scripture and all Christians with their teachers; and to argue that as the illumination does not make Christians and their teachers inerrant, so, too, the inspiration of the holy writers does not guarantee the inerrancy of Scripture, though, of course, the writers of Scripture did enjoy a richer measure of the Holy Ghost. Luther, on the other hand, holds that there is not merely a difference in degree, but a specific difference between illumination and inspiration, between illumined teachers of the Church and the inspired writers of Scripture. What the inspired writers of Holy Scripture teach is out and out God's own Word; as to the enlightened teachers of the Church, such as Luther and the rest, they teach God's Word only inasmuch and insofar as "we repeat and preach what we have heard and learned from the Prophets and Apostles." (St. L. III: 1890).

Hence, we see that to equate illumination with inspiration—as the moderates have done—is either to elevate man's words to being God's Word, or to pull God's Word down to the level of all other human discourse: both are a denial of the orthodox Christian doctrine of inspiration.

7. "The Inspiration of Scripture," CTCR Document (n.p.: n.n., 1975), p. 15.
8. *Together In Mission*, Vol. II, No. 1 (May, 1975), p. 4. *Report of the Advisory Committee on Doctrine and Conciliation* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), pp. 1-32.
9. R. Preus, *Post-Reformation*, *op. cit.*

10. Kelly, *op. cit.*, p. 61. See also J. A. O. Preus, *Written, op. cit.*, pp. 24-28, 56-60. Scaer, *op. cit.*, pp. 66-67. Pierre Ch. Marcel, "Our Lord's Use of Scripture," Henry, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-134. "If there was one point of universal agreement among all of these (Calvin, Tridentine decrees, pre-Reformation Scholasticism) aside from the nude assertions of the Ecumenical Creeds, it was the authority, the inspiration, and the inerrancy of the Sacred Scriptures. It is not surprising, therefore, that we do not have an explicit article on the Sacred Scriptures in the Lutheran Symbols." Note well how all parties at the time of the Reformation were in agreement here! Arthur Carl Piepkorn, "The Position of the Church and Her Symbols," in "Essays on the Inspiration of Scripture," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXV (October, 1954), p. 740. "The infallibility of Scripture was the consensus of the church irrespective of denominational affiliations until long after A.D. 1700." Helmut Echterbach, "The Lutheran Doctrine of the 'Autopistia' of Holy Scripture," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXIII, No. 4 (April, 1952), p. 260. "Study the sacred scriptures which are true and given by the Holy Spirit. 3. Bear in mind that nothing wrong or falsified is written in them." St. Clement, "Letter to the Corinthians" (45, 2-3), in Robert M. Grant, ed., *The Apostolic Fathers*, Vol. II, trans. Holt H. Graham (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965), p. 74. "Neither does Scripture falsify anything, nor does the Holy Spirit deceive His servants, the prophets, through whom He is pleased to announce to men the will of God." St. Hippolytus of Rome, "Commentary on Daniel" (4,6), in Jurgens, *op. cit.*, p. 164; see also pages 11, 65, 88, 175. "The apostles, being disciples of the truth, are apart from every lie. For a lie has no fellowship with the truth, any more than light with darkness, but the presence of one excludes the other." Irenaeus, "Against Heresies" (Book III, 5,1), in Cyril Richardson, ed., *Early Christian Fathers* ("The Library of Christian Classics," Vol. I; Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1953), p. 376; see also pp. 370-375.
11. "Neither does it help them to assert that at all other points they have a high and noble regard for God's words and the entire gospel, except in this matter. My friend, God's Word is God's Word; this point does not require much haggling! When one blasphemously gives the lie to God in a single word, or says it is a minor matter if God is blasphemed or called a liar, one blasphemes the entire God and makes light of all blasphemy. There is only one God who does not permit himself to be divided, praised at one place and chided at another, glorified in one word and scorned in another. The Jews believe the Old Testament, but because they do not believe Christ, it does them no good. You see, the circumcision of Abraham (Gen. 12:10 ff.) is an old dead thing and no longer useful. But if I were to say that God did not command it in its time, it would do me no good even if I believed the gospel." LW 37, 26. See also pp. 131, 308.
12. M. Reu, *Luther and the Scriptures* (Columbus: Wartburg Press, 1944); reprinted in *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXIV, No. 2 (August, 1960). See especially chapters 5 and 6 which are titled, "Luther Never Admitted Any Error In Scripture." and "Even Those Parts of Scripture That Do Not Concern Our Salvation Were Considered Errorless By Luther." John W. Montgomery, "Lessons From Luther on the Inerrancy of Holy Writ." in J. W. Montgomery, ed., *God's Inerrant Word* (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1974), pp. 63-94. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-114.
13. R. Preus, *Post-Reformation, op. cit.*, p. 342; also pp. 339-362. R. Preus, *Inspiration, op. cit.*, pp. 76-87. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 218-224.
14. Schmid, *op. cit.*, pp. 39.
15. *Small Catechism, op. cit.*, p. 41. Walther confessed and believed the inerrancy of Scripture, see R. Preus, *CTM, op. cit.*, pp. 685-691. J. A. O.

- Preus, "Study Edition," *op. cit.*, pp. 31-34. R. Preus, "Notes On the Inerrancy of Scripture," in Montgomery, *Crisis*, Vol. II, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-47; this article is also found in *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 6 (June, 1967), pp. 363-375. H. Roepe, "The Proper Use of the Bible," in Theo. Laetsch, ed., *The Abiding Word*, Vol. I (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1946), pp. 67-84. Milton L. Rudnick, *Fundamentalism & the Missouri Synod* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1966), pp. 111-113.
16. "Brief Statement of the Doctrinal Position of the Missouri Synod" (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), p. 3. P. E. Kretzmann, *The Foundations Must Stand* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, n.d.), pp. 69 ff. P. E. Kretzmann and Theo. Graebner, *Toward Lutheran Union* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1943), pp. 1-22. ACDC, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-32, 67-110. See also Robert G. Johnston, *The Scriptures: Sacred Fact or Pious Fiction?* (Milwaukee: Northwestern Publishing House, 1970). J. W. Montgomery, "Biblical Inerrancy: What Is at Stake," and C. H. Pinrock, "The Inspiration of Scripture and the Authority of Jesus Christ," in Montgomery, *Inerrant Word*, *op. cit.*, pp. 15-42, 201-218. Paul Woolley, ed., *The Infallible Word* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967).
17. *Faithful I*, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Robert H. Smith, Seminex professor, provides an interesting and informative view of the moderate (middle of the road) position on inerrancy. In *Currents In Theology and Mission*, Vol. II, No. 1 (February, 1975), p. 46, Smith describes Roman Catholic theologian, Raymond Brown, as a middle of the road theologian, "recognizing that the Bible can be fallible in matters of history, that the Bible utilizes many literary forms including fiction and parable, and that the Bible nevertheless is the inspired and inerrant Word of God's truth." See also the clear distinctions and differences between the moderate view of inerrancy and the orthodox Lutheran doctrine in "A Comparative Study of Varying Contemporary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation." CTCR Document (n.p.: n.n., 1973), p. 6. This report is all the more revealing when it is noted that a leading moderate spokesperson, Dr. Paul Bretscher, helped to write the moderate column of this document. Differences between the moderates and orthodox Lutherans are seen in other areas of theology throughout the rest of this document, which is also found in *Convention Workbook* 1973, pp. 435-448. ACDC, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-31. Kurt Marquart, "In the Name of God . . . What 'False Doctrine?'" *Christian News*, April 5, 1976, pp. 7-11.
18. James M. Childs, Jr., "A Response to Dr. Tepker's 'The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Holy Scriptures'" (paper presented at the April 1975 Convocation). For a reprint of this paper, see *Christian News* (April 21, 1975), p. 11.

Caution is also necessary when reading "Is the Bible Inerrant?" by John Frey, *op. cit.* This document cleverly redefines inerrancy so that it no longer means exempt from *all* error. This new definition of inerrancy is conditional—by the author's own admission (p. 42): the conditions being: (a) Does Scripture say what it intends to say? (b) Does what Scripture intends to say correspond to fact? This, of course, narrows inerrancy down to the Gospel since "it is the intent of Scripture to bear witness to Christ, lead us to faith in Him" (p. 41). And since what Scripture says corresponds to fact (i.e., Scripture *really* bears witness to Christ and reveals the way of righteousness), the Bible, therefore, *may be called* "inerrant," (p. 41). No matter how boldly the author may claim to confess the inerrancy of Scripture, his booklet states that he does not—unless one accepts his redefinition of the term "inerrant." The author calls the Bible "inerrant" even though he finds it filled with discrepancies, conflicts,

mistakes, contradictions, flaws, differences, diversity, variations, problems, differences in detail, disagreements, inaccuracies, deficiencies, oversights, misunderstandings, and a lack of precision.

The use of Scripture in this document calls to mind this statement of Luther concerning the Sacramentarians (LW 37,51; pp. 74, 110):

It is shameful, however, that they have not enough decency and honesty to admit openly what they really wish in their hearts . . . but allege instead that the Scriptures constrain them—which they know is not true, for they seize the Scriptures with guile and malice in order to use them as a cloak before the people, and under the guise of Scripture they spread their poison among the people.

For an evangelical Christian treatment of many of the passages used by Frey see W. Arndt, *Does the Bible Contradict Itself?* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1976), and W. Arndt, *Bible Difficulties* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971). Luther's statements concerning some of these passages can be seen in Reu, *op. cit.*, chapters 5 and 6. His conclusion—absolute inerrancy. Luther became disturbed with so-called theologians who became enamored with the supposedly contradictory passages in the Bible, were lead to doubt the authority of the Bible and would use such passages to "try hard to shake the reliability of sacred history," LW 6, 315. Luther warned those who thought it praiseworthy to pass unrestricted judgments concerning the dark and difficult statements of Scripture (i.e., as a result of these dark passages, the Bible must have mistakes, flaws, etc.) that this was "a disease of our nature against which an exegete of Holy Scripture should carefully guard himself." WA 42, 430, 35ff., quoted in Reu, *op. cit.*, p. 52. "It is impossible that Scripture should contradict itself; it only appears so to senseless and obstinate hypocrites," WA 9, 356, quoted in Montgomery, *Inerrant Word. op. cit.*, p. 66. "Scripture cannot err," LW 40, 351. "The Word of God is the very wisdom of God and the absolutely infallible truth," LW I, 122. "Only Holy Scripture is to be considered inerrant," WA 34, 347; SL 13b, 1976, quoted in Klug, *op. cit.*, p. 109. See also LW 13, 383; LW 16, 96; LW 27, 324; LW 32, 11; LW 36, 343; LW 37, 49-51, 279; LW 45, 147. For an excellent treatment of Luther on the inerrancy of Holy Writ see Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-114. See also Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 232-303 for a clear refutation of the errors in Frey's booklet.

19. For an excellent discussion of the analytical and theological meaninglessness of a non-inerrant inspired Scripture in the light of the moderate redefinition of inerrancy, see John W. Montgomery, "Inspiration and Inerrancy; A New Departure." in J. W. Montgomery, ed., *Crisis In Lutheran Theology*, Vol. I (Minneapolis: Bethany Fellowship, Inc., 1973), pp. 33-42. For a clear analysis of the theological differences between moderates and orthodox Lutherans, see John W. Montgomery, "Theological Issues and Problems of Biblical Interpretations Now Facing the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod," *Crisis*, Vol. I, *op. cit.*, pp. 81-109; especially pp. 95-100. C. H. Pinnock, *A Defense of Biblical Infallibility* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1967).
20. *Small Catechism, op. cit.*, p. 40; *Concordia Cyclopedia, op. cit.*, p. 77; Pieper, *op. cit.*, p. 213.
21. Pinnock, *Revelation, op. cit.*, p. 148. "The Medieval Western Church had never questioned the divine inspiration and authority of the canonical writings of the Old and the New Testament. In their conflict with Rome, the Lutherans could take for granted that they and their opponents ac-

- cepted the Bible as God's Word." F. E. Mayer, *The Religious Bodies of America*, 4th ed. (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1961), p. 144.
22. Martin Chemnitz, *Examination of the Council of Trent*, trans. by F. Kramer (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1971), pp. 150-163.
23. Pinnock, *Revelation*, *op. cit.*, p. 152.
24. E. H. Klotsche and J. T. Mueller, *The History of Christian Doctrine* (Burlington, Iowa: The Lutheran Literary Board, 1945), p. 169.
25. Paul Althaus, *The Theology of Martin Luther*, trans. by R. C. Schultz (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), pp. 50-51.
26. A. Skevington Wood, *Captive to the Word* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1969), p. 140; see also pp. 141-143. Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 278 ff. Th. Engelder, *Scripture Cannot Be Broken* (Yuba City, Cal.: Scriptural Anchor Publications, n.d.), pp. 290-291, footnote 241. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-38.
27. LW 36, 277. See also LW37, pp. 25, 28, 64, 79, 139, 149. J. Dillenberger, ed., *Martin Luther: Selections From His Writings* (Garden City: Doubleday & Co., Inc., p. 260).
28. F. Bente, ed., *Concordia Triglotta* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), pp. 5-25. "The Luth. Confessions do not include a separate systematic treatment of inspiration; they take for granted that the Bible is God's Word and the only infallible guide and authority," Lueker, *op. cit.*, p. 413. "The Lutheran Confessions take for granted that a Christian accepts the Scriptures as God' Word, both as God speaking in this Word here and now and as God's Word spoken in times past through the holy writers," Mayer, *op. cit.*, p. 146. See also R. Bohlmann, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation in the Lutheran Confessions* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1968), pp. 23-37. A. Boehme, "Faithful to Our Calling, Faithful to Our Lord, Part I—A Study: In the Light of the Lutheran Confessions" (unpublished M. Div. thesis, Concordia Theological Seminary Library, Springfield), pp. 23-47. "We have seen on the basis of many quotations from the symbolical books of the Lutheran Church that the Lutheran confessors regarded Holy Scripture as the Word of God and that they used it as 'the pure, clear fountain of Israel,' from which alone they wished to draw their doctrine." F. Kramer, "Sacra Scriptura and Verbum Dei in the Lutheran Confessions," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2 (February, 1955), p. 92.
29. R. Preus, *Post-Reformation*, *op. cit.*, p. 263; see also pages 264-273. R. Preus, *Inspiration*, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-23. Klug, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-178. Rudnick, *op. cit.*, pp. 67-74.
30. Pieper, *op. cit.*, pp. 213-217.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 216.
32. Engelder, *op. cit.*, pp. 382-409.
33. Erwin L. Lueker, ed., *Lutheran Cyclopdia* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1954), p. 512.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 514.
35. P. Bretscher, *After the Purifying* (LEA Yearbook, 1975), p. 63.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16. David P. Scaer finds that Bretscher considers any objective understanding of the Bible as the Word of God un-Christian, or at least sub-Christian, unbiblical, and unconfessional. Scaer finds Bretscher stating that in some portions of Scripture there may be no Word of God at all. David P. Scaer, "The Law-Gospel Debate in the Missouri Synod Continued," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XL, No. 2 (September, 1976), p. 118. footnotes 25, 26; see also p. 115.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 19; see also pages 41 and 77. Also *Faithful I*, *op. cit.*, pp. 21-22;

- here the moderates equate the Sacred Scriptures with the Gospel, for the Law is said to be biblical and true, but "something less than the Sacred Scriptures." In another article, Bretscher denies that Scripture can properly be called the Word of God, and claims that the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture are enemies of Christ and destroy the purity of the Gospel. Paul Bretscher, "What Is the Word of God?" *Missouri in Perspective*, Vol. III, No. 14 (May 10, 1976), p. 4. See also Paul Bretscher, "The Root of the Missouri Synod Turmoil," *Missouri in Perspective*, Vol. III, No. 20 (August 2, 1976), pp. 4A-4D.
38. Sasse, *op. cit.*, p. 16. For an excellent discussion of the proper relationship of the Gospel to Scripture, read all of "Gospel and Scripture." CTCR Document (n.p.: n.n., 1972). See also J. A. O. Preus, "Study Edition," *op. cit.*, pp. 23-26. *ACDC*, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-66. See also K. Marquart, "The Swing of the Pendulum: An Attempt to Understand the St. Louis 'Affirmations and Discussions,'" and Horace Hummel, "Gospel and Bible," in *Affirm: Occasional Papers*, Spring, 1973, pp. 12-30.
 39. Thomas Strieter, "Luther's View of Scripture in Light of the Crisis in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" (n.p., n.n., n.d.), p. 14.
 40. WA 48, 31; SL 9, 1770; quoted in Kiug, *op. cit.*, p. 29. Other pungent quotes also show this truth (that Luther believed the Bible is God's Word!) which is so often denied by the moderates: "No other doctrine should be proclaimed in the Church than the pure Word of God, that is, the Holy Scriptures," SL 9, 87. "It is our unbelief and corrupt carnal mind which would not allow us to perceive and consider what God spoke to us in Scripture, or the Scripture is the Word of God," SL 9, 1818, quoted in Raymond F. Surburg, "Paul Bretscher's *After the Purifying: A Review Article*," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 4 (March, 1976), p. 214. "For Holy Scripture, which is God's Word, says so; and I abide by what it states," LW 22, 6.
 41. *The Lutheran Agenda* (St. Louis: CPH, n.d.), p. 106.
 42. Alfred von Rohr Sauer, "The Book of Jonah" (n.p.: n.n., n.d.—ELIMPERCA Bible Study Guide).
 43. LW 19, 36-39, 89, 102-104.
 44. Fredrick W. Danker, *Jesus and the New Age According to Luke* (St. Louis: Clayton Publishing House, 1972), p. xviii.
 45. LW 37, 25-55: *passim*. The statement quoted above in footnote 44 does what Luther saw the Sacramentarians do, "tear God's Word away from the bread and wine, and let nothing remain but eating and drinking . . ." (LW 37, 141). Luther furiously fought the Sacramentarian's figurative interpretations, textual changes, and other attempts to sweep away the clear texts of Scripture, and proved beyond a shadow of a doubt "That These Words of Christ, 'This Is My Body,' etc., Still Stand Firm Against the Fanatics" who try to remove them from the Scriptures (LW 37, 13).
- In the Large Catechism, Luther again shows that the ability of the Sacraments to forgive sins comes *only* from Christ's very words recorded in the Bible, and that the very words of Christ are *the chief thing* in the Sacraments (LC V, 1-4, 8-14, 31; IV, 1-5):
- And all these are established by the words by which Christ has instituted it, and which every one who desires to be a Christian and go to the Sacrament should know . . . The words, however, are these: Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same night . . .
- The chief point is the Word and ordinance or command of God . . . It is the Word which makes and distinguishes this Sacrament . . . For although the work is accomplished and the forgiveness of sins acquired on the cross, yet it cannot come to

us in any other way than through the Word.

In the first place, we must above all things know well the words upon which Baptism is founded, and to which everything refers that is to be said on the subject, namely, where the Lord Christ speaks in the last chapter of Matthew, v. 19: Go ye therefore and teach . . .

The Small Catechism also emphasizes this interrelationship of Word and Sacrament. It asks how we receive the benefits of the Sacrament of the Altar: "We receive this benefit *only by believing these words*, 'Given and shed for you for the remission of sins . . . ' But he that does not believe these words, or doubts, is unworthy and unprepared; for the words 'for you' require all hearts to believe," *Small Catechism, op. cit.*, p. 202; see also pp. 176-177).

Danker's assertion places him in the same liberal theological camp as Eugene Brand, who stated that "the great commission can hardly be the actual words of Jesus," that baptism cannot be based "on the actual words of Jesus," and that to base baptism on the actual words of Jesus "would not stand up under New Testament scholarship." Brand's conclusions were reached through the use of the historical-critical methodology, which the moderates say must be used to get at the real meaning of the Bible (Carl Bornemann, "The Twenty-Seventh Institute of Liturgical Studies," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXIX, No. 1 (June, 1975), p. 40). Hence, we see how redefined terminology, as well as historical-critical methodology, cause the loss of the Gospel and the forgiveness of sins.

See also A. Boehme, "A Study in Luther's Anti-Sacramentarian Writings," *The Springfielder*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 4 (March, 1975), pp. 307-313.

46. If *Globe Democrat* is not available, the interview is also found in *Christian News*, October 14, 1974, p. 5.