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Contents

PAGE

EDITORIAL

Toward Denver

RESPONSES TO "WHAT COMMITMENT TO THE 'SOLA GRATIA' IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS INVOLVES"

RICHARD J. SCHULTZ 3
ERICH H. HEINTZEN 7

RESPONSES TO "THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS AND 'SOLA SCRIPTURA'"

EUGENE F. KLUG 12
FRED KRAMER 23

RESPONSES TO "THE DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LUTHERAN CONFESSIONS"

JOHN F. JOHNSON 28
JAMES WEIS 34

BOOK REVIEWS 42

BOOKS RECEIVED 68

INDEX TO VOLUME 32 (1968-69) 70

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Address communications to the Editor, Erich H. Heintzen, Concordia Theological Seminary, Springfield, Illinois 62702.

Editorial

Toward Denver

IN THIS ISSUE the Springfield faculty is presenting a series of studies on the subject that is uppermost in the minds of all of us as we approach the Denver Convention, namely, the question of fellowship with the American Lutheran Church. Our faculty has been studying the essays prepared by the commissioners and are herewith presenting a series of reactions which had been presented to our faculty. They were received with such interest that we felt they deserved a wider audience. You will notice that there is a considerable range of opinion among the faculty from a position favoring fellowship to a position disposed to selective fellowship to a position calling for declining fellowship on the part of our church. We are presenting these essays in order to give the church an opportunity to look at all sides of the question. We feel that in so doing we are serving the church which is going to have to make this monumental decision. It has been notable in most of the papers of the church, official and unofficial, that usually there has been a party line and that the recommendations have been either entirely pro or entirely con. We feel that in presenting a spectrum of opinions we are giving our members an opportunity to evaluate the various positions which are offered.

It is my personal opinion that the Synod has about five possible courses of action. The option chosen will reflect the thinking of the delegates. We could vote for fellowship not only with the ALC but also with the LCA, and go on to the LWF and the World Council of Churches. There is nothing to prevent the church from doing these things if it so chooses. The second option is that we would stop at fellowship with the ALC and delay action on the other matters for further study. A third option is selective fellowship in which part of the church would practice pulpit and altar fellowship with part of the American Lutheran Church. A fourth option is to delay action until a later convention, and the final option is that the Synod could decline fellowship.

One of these things will take place. The delegates at Denver face a tremendous responsibility. We come out of a tradition which has believed in the clarity of Scripture and thus the possibility of pure doctrine. We thus face the question of whether or not the doctrinal position of the ALC (in connection with which we also must consider the fellowship of the ALC with the LCA) is sufficiently clear, Biblical and Confessional for us to establish pulpit and altar fellowship. This should be a time for prayer, for earnest study, and for application of the finest minds in our church to a matter which is of utmost importance, namely, our theological heritage.

May God keep us steadfast in His Word and in faith.

J. A. O. PREUS