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ARTICLE II.

THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN THE
UNITED STATES.

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THE preparation of a satisfactory statement concerning the Evangelical Lutheran Church, such as the *Bibliotheca Sacra* desires and reasonably expects, in completing the series of denominational Articles, is a task not easy of execution; and the writer does not even presume to hope that he will be entirely successful in the attempt. The most that he can promise himself or others is some fair degree of good intention and honest endeavor.

A number of things combine to enhance the difficulty of the undertaking. The Lutheran church boasts of the liberty in non-essentials granted to her children. She does not design to burden the conscience or fetter the free development of individual liberty. In everything not expressly revealed in the word of God, and included in the faith of the church, she allows and practices a large degree of diversity. Her great Confession distinctly declares that "for the true unity of the Christian church it is not necessary that uniform ceremonies, instituted by men, should be everywhere observed" (Augsburg Confession, Art. vii.). In this country, originally composed of different nationalities, conducting her worship in different tongues, constantly receiving large accessions from different countries, she exhibits more or less of the peculiarities which distinguish different parts of the church as existing in the several countries where she is known. Hence her organization is not so compact, nor her government and usages so uniform, as those of some other

[NOTE.—This is one of the Series of Articles representing the peculiar views of different theological sects or schools.]

denominations. Besides, the present condition of the church in this country is not the most favorable to such a statement or exposition, and indeed would seem almost to forbid any one to speak for the whole.

Still the Evangelical Lutheran church may justly claim the privilege of being heard, and others may justly claim to know something of her history, doctrines, usages, etc. For, besides being by far the largest Protestant body in the world, the Lutheran church has a distinct position in the United States among evangelical denominations, and Providence has given her a great work to do. Such a statement seems the more appropriate and important in this Journal, because in the region where it is published and has its largest circulation, the Evangelical Lutheran church is comparatively but little known. The writer would only further premise, that as he does not assume to speak for the whole church, he only claims or expects such weight to be given to his statements, as the truth will secure for itself.

NAME.

The Lutheran church is known in history by different titles. The name "Lutheran" was first applied by Eck, in the famous disputation with Luther, in the year 1519; and, being designed as a term of reproach, as well as liable to misapprehension and prejudice, it was opposed by the Reformer himself. He had no desire to have his name given to any portion of the church, and those who have been compelled to bear it, while holding in highest veneration the name of Luther, utterly disavow any sentiments that might seem to savor of undue homage to man, or regarding him in any other light than that of an instrument in the hands of God, chosen indeed, to reform and bless the church. At the Diet of Spires, in 1529, the name "Protestant" was given to those who protested against the usurpations and abuses of the Romish church, and this title was afterwards extensively applied to such as adhered to the Lutheran faith. The historical and official title, by which the church is known

in some countries at the present day, is that of "The Church of the Augsburg Confession." The term "German Lutheran Church" is used by some to designate the denomination, somewhat as German Reformed or Dutch Reformed is employed, although the church has not at all been confined to Germany, even on the continent of Europe, and in this country such a title has no fitness or propriety. The Lutheran reformers would have preferred the simple title "Evangelical"; but yielding to the force of circumstances, and submitting to the laws which fix and determine even names and titles, the church has accepted, as the generally received appellation, that of "Evangelical Lutheran"; and this serves, in name at least, to distinguish her both from the Roman Catholic church, and from other Protestant denominations.

EARLY HISTORY IN THE UNITED STATES.

The planting of the Lutheran church in this country dates back almost to the first settling of the colonies, and was the joint result of religious persecution in the Old World, and a sincere desire to extend the true religion of Christ in this western hemisphere. Gustavus Adolphus, that illustrious hero of the Protestant and the Lutheran faith, had been enthusiastic in his project to establish Protestant colonies in this newly-discovered country, and was only diverted from the carrying out of his plans, by being compelled to devote all his energies, with his noble life, to the defence of the faith at home. After his death, on the bloody but victorious field of Lützen, Oxenstiern, Prime Minister of Sweden, urged forward the important cause that was to secure in this land a home and refuge for all the oppressed. In the year 1637, only seventeen years after the landing of the Puritans at Plymouth Rock, and thirty after the first settlement at Jamestown, Virginia, two ship loads of Swedish Lutherans settled on the Delaware. This settlement was designed to be in the interest of Protestant Christianity, and of the Lutheran type. Much interest was manifested in the evan-

gelization of the Indians, and the first book ever translated and published in their language was Luther's Smaller Catechism. At the time Elliot was performing his truly apostolic labors in behalf of the Indians in New England, Swedish Lutheran missionaries were engaged in the same holy work in Delaware and Pennsylvania. The royal instructions to the governor of this colony enjoined especially that the true worship of God and a pure faith should be maintained.

Even prior to the Swedish settlement on the Delaware, among the settlers of New Amsterdam, now New York, were a few Lutherans, but they do not seem to have done much for their church, or to have enjoyed special favor with their Dutch neighbors who bore rule. The ties of relationship, a common faith, and the persecutions endured by Protestants before coming to America, were not all sufficient to teach them in every instance the lessons of charity and toleration, and the Lutherans at New Amsterdam were doomed to experience, from their fellow Protestants, somewhat of the rigor and unkind treatment both had suffered at home. It was not until 1664, after repeated applications, and when the New Netherlands had been surrendered to the crown of Great Britain, that Lutherans received the privilege of publicly worshipping God in New York, according to their own convictions. This privilege, now happily enjoyed by all in this land, was not then considered an inalienable right, and the denial of it to these Lutherans must be charged rather to the spirit of the age than set down to the discredit of the Dutch church, which is not behind any other in the love of freedom and respect for civil and religious rights. It is only alluded to here as an item of history.

The chief settlement however of Lutherans, and that from which a large part of the Lutheran church in this country has grown, was that of Germans in Pennsylvania, and neighboring States. For this movement preparations had been going on in Germany for half a century; and the hand of Providence was no less visible than in the settlement of other portions of the land by other denominations of Chris-

tians. The fires of persecution had been kindled, and so violently did they rage, that they threatened to devour the church. A single picture from Macaulay will give some faint idea of the hardships and sufferings endured by Protestants in some portions of Europe during this era. "Dumas received orders to turn one of the fairest regions of Europe into a wilderness. The French commander announced to nearly half a million of human beings that he granted them three days of grace, and that within that time they must shift for themselves. Soon the roads and fields, which then lay deep in snow, were blackened by innumerable multitudes of men, women, and children, flying from their homes. Many died of cold and hunger; but enough survived to fill the streets of all the cities of Europe with lean and squalid beggars, who had once been thriving farmers and shopkeepers. Meanwhile the work of destruction began. The flames went up from every market-place, every hamlet, every parish church, every country seat, within the devoted provinces." The imagination may be left to supply the rest. No wonder that multitudes sought homes in this New World, where Providence had prepared a refuge for the persecuted and oppressed. Some few had arrived earlier, but in the year 1710, the stream began to flow that poured its thousands and tens of thousands of German Lutherans upon these shores. The movement was liberally patronized by Queen Anne and the British government, and was designed to afford relief from the horrors of Romish persecution, and at the same time to people the British colonies.

These early emigrants suffered greatly in their religion, from the want of ministers, places of worship, and the stated means of grace. They had to depend on the father-land for ministers, and chiefly also for religious publications. Without regular organizations in many instances, and without churches, they enjoyed few privileges belonging to God's house; and yet in many a heart there continued to glow the fervor of Christian love and zeal.

A new epoch in the history of the church in this country

was marked by the coming of Muhlenberg. Arriving in 1742, he set himself vigorously to work, visiting the churches, gathering the scattered members, conferring with the pastors already on the ground, and in due time effecting somewhat of a regular organization. Muhlenberg is commonly looked back to as the patriarch, if not the founder, of Lutheranism in the United States. To him, more than to any other one man does it owe its firm establishment and its organic life. Six years after his arrival, in the year 1748, the first Evangelical Lutheran Synod was formed. At that time there were only eleven Lutheran ministers known in this country, six of whom, together with lay delegates, united in the formation of this first Synod, the others being too remote to join with their brethren in this action. Those present were Rev. Dr. Henry M. Muhlenberg, Revs. Brunnholtz, Handschuh, Hartwig, Sandin, and Naesman, the latter two of the Swedish Lutheran church. Among other acts was the setting apart of J. N. Kurtz to the work of the ministry; and from this time the church in America was no longer wholly dependent on the church in Europe for ministers of the gospel.

It may be well here, in passing, to notice the character of the Lutheranism of that early day. Judged by the ministry, we must accord to it the merit of superior excellence, uniting a high degree of learning and wisdom with earnest zeal in the work of salvation. The Lutheran ministers, coming from Germany, were among the most learned of the land, and in devotion to their calling were surpassed by none. They were abundant in labors. Coming chiefly from the Pietistic school in Germany, they happily combined in themselves thoroughness of training and ripeness of learning, with fervency of spirit. Removed alike from formalism and fanaticism, they possessed a zeal which was according to knowledge. Happy would it have been for the Lutheran church, had the successive ministers always equalled these pioneers in talents, learning, piety, and true Christian zeal.

It is worthy of special observation, in this age of churchism

against Christian union and fellowship, when some are seeking to build higher and stronger the walls of separation between orthodox Protestant denominations, that while adhering to the faith and usages of the Evangelical Lutheran church, they encouraged and practised the most enlarged catholicity of spirit and action among evangelical churches. They knew nothing in their practice of a narrow and intolerant spirit. Their system of Lutheranism was not that, whether of a former or later age, which looks with suspicion or distrust upon the genuineness of other churches, or refuses to recognize and hold fellowship with those who do not join with them in the very same views, and the very same utterances. It was enough for them that they had "one Lord, one faith, and one baptism"; and they cordially and joyously extended the hand of fellowship to the ministers of other communions. And this they did, not as a mere matter of Christian courtesy, but in good faith, according to them what they claimed for themselves, to be true ministers of Jesus Christ, and to be treated as brethren in the ministry. There was frequent interchange of visits among them with ministers of other churches, and the meetings of their ecclesiastical bodies witnessed the mutual esteem in which each other was held. We find the most friendly relations existing between Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and others, and such names as Muhlenberg and Tennant and Whitefield associated in the work of the Lord. They considered themselves brethren, servants of the same Master, and engaged in a common cause.¹

¹ "Both Swedish and German ministers manifested by brotherly visits to the clergy of other confessions that they were liberally disposed, and were desirous of maintaining a Christian friendship for and with all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity and truth. This course of conduct failed not to produce a reciprocal good will among the servants of our Lord in other churches. Brotherly kindness was on all sides extended to our preachers; they received the most friendly invitations to attend the conventions, conferences, associations, and synods of sister churches, which civilities they, in their turn, cheerfully reciprocated. Pastor Muhlenberg, for instance, attended by special invitation a convention of the English Episcopal church, and was received with distinguished kindness. On another occasion the celebrated Presbyterian minister, Tennant,

The Lutheran church continued to grow, but its increase was not in proportion to its promising beginning, nor was there a corresponding growth in intelligence, piety, and good works. For lack of English preaching many of the young went off to other churches, and no effort was made to remedy the loss. The church seemed only to be intended for Germans, and so intense was the prejudice, that some doubted whether genuine Lutheranism could exist in English churches. During the latter part of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the influence of German rationalism was strongly felt, and all the alarming symptoms of spiritual decay were but too manifest. Worldliness crept in like a flood, and with the decay of faith and piety came the usual accompaniments of neglect of the church and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom. The character of the ministry suffered in learning and piety, and corresponded but too well with the general condition of the church.

From a state of lamentable indifference and inactivity the church was again aroused, and the formation of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran church in the United States, was at once the result of a spiritual awakening, and the means of further improvement and enlargement. This event took place in the year 1820, and from this dates an entirely new era in the history and operations of the church.

paid Dr. Muhlenberg a visit, concerning which the latter expressed himself in a letter to a friend, as follows: 'The visit of Rev. Mr. Tennant I considered as a season of spiritual refreshment.' Another time the brethren Muhlenberg, J. N. Kurtz, Wrangel, and Brezelius, attended the solemnities of the Commencement of Princeton College by special invitation. In 1763 three ministers of the Episcopal church, Messrs. Durkee, Richard Peters, and Ingliss, three Presbyterian clergymen, Dr. Tennant, Dr. Finlay, President of Princeton College, and the Presbyterian minister at Newark in Jersey, and Rev. Mr. Whitefield, delighted our German and Swedish brethren with their presence and attention during the synodical sessions. Mr. Whitefield preached on that occasion, at the express request of the Lutheran ministerium, and also attended the examination of the children of the Philadelphia congregation in the truths of the Christian religion, at the close of which he endeavored, in his own happy manner, to impress the mutual duties of parents and children on the hearts of all present."—History of the American Lutheran Church, by E. L. Hazelius, D.D., pp. 88, 89; see also Church of the Redeemer, by Rev. Dr. S. S. Schmucker, pp. 83-98.

Hitherto the several district synods, which had been formed, had no organic connection, no true bond of union, and there was no mutual co-operation or combined effort in the work of building up and extending the Redeemer's kingdom. Each separate synod operated as best it could and in its own way. The evil was felt, and felt deeply. Not only were brethren of the same faith laboring without the sympathy and counsel so much needed, but there was a want of any agency by which the church could unite her means and energies in establishing institutions and associations for the furtherance of the gospel. At this time the church had no college or general theological seminary, no home or foreign missionary societies, no education, church extension, or publication boards — indeed no general agency of any kind by which the efforts of the church might be directed. The organization of the General Synod furnished a bond of union and a central power or agency, which, under God, has been the most efficient instrument in promoting the general welfare of the church.

One of the first acts of the General Synod was to found a theological seminary, and thus make better provision for the supply of ministers. Hitherto those preparing for the Lutheran ministry had either studied privately with some approved minister, or had gone to the theological seminaries of other denominations. From the establishment of a theological seminary there sprang up colleges and other institutions of learning and religion, until now the church can boast of no small number in different sections of the land. In connection also with the General Synod, more or less intimate, have been formed various societies of a benevolent and religious character, with a view to the greater efficiency and wider influence of the church. Publications recommended or authorized by the General Synod have been extensively used by the churches, and the influence has been of the most salutary kind.

At the time of the formation of the General Synod there were five Lutheran synods in the United States, four of which

united and took part in the organization of that body. One or two of these subsequently withdrew, and afterwards again united, and again withdrew. By division and accretion the number increased, until in 1861, when, on the breaking out of the war, the Southern synods were cut off, there were in the General Synod nearly thirty distinct synods, embracing almost the entire territory of the Union, and harmoniously co-operating in the work God had given them to do. Since that time new difficulties have arisen to mar the harmony of the church; but these are too recent to allow of an impartial judgment, and too uncertain in their results to hazard a conjecture as to the future. A very brief notice may be taken of some recent movements in the church before the close of this Article. The loss of the Southern synods, and other changes, left the number of district synods in the General Synod, at its last meeting, twenty-three.

Inasmuch as the establishment of the General Synod of the Lutheran church in the United States has had vastly more influence in determining the character of our Lutheranism, as well as in advancing the general welfare of the church, than any other one agency, some further notice of that body seems necessary to any correct or proper understanding of our subject.

This event took place, as already stated, in the year 1820, and after considerable correspondence and consultation. Peculiar, and apparently insuperable, difficulties stood in the way of such a movement. Rationalism in the father-land was still predominant, and its influence was widely felt in this country. There was great ignorance of the principles of genuine Lutheranism and opposition to them, on the part of many. Synods as well as individuals had become careless of orthodoxy, and there was an extreme sensitiveness about burdening the conscience or fettering the mind by ecclesiastical authority. The church had almost lost sight of her noble Confession, and ignorance of its contents was followed by disregard of its claims. Even the Synod of Pennsylvania, the mother-synod, and which has always been jealous of her

Lutheran character, had ceased to require of her ministers, at licensure and ordination, any adhesion even to the Augsburg Confession. For many years preceding and succeeding the formation of the General Synod, the Synod of Pennsylvania required no subscription but the word of God, and there was allowed a very wide latitude of interpretation. Laxity of doctrine, suspicion of authority, impatience of restraint, with wide-spread indifference, diversity of sentiment and language, and a scattered church, all combined to dishearten those who longed for union and the spiritual welfare of our Lutheran Zion. The fathers had fallen asleep, and the children had lost much of their spirit, and become estranged from one another.

But a divine voice was calling to the church to arise and shine. A few noble men set themselves to remedy the existing evils. With becoming reverence and sublime faith in "Jesus Christ, the Supreme Head of his church," they say: "Relying upon God our Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the guidance and direction of the Holy Spirit in the word of God, for the promotion of the practice of brotherly love, to the furtherance of Christian concord, to the firm establishment and continuance of the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,—We, the deputies, etc., etc., for ourselves and our successors, do adopt the following fundamental articles," etc. — Constitution, preamble.

As the General Synod was to be simply a union of synods, its powers were chiefly advisory, leaving the judicial and executive authority mainly in the hands of the district synods. It did not design to adopt formally a creed, but has in various ways given currency and prominence to the Augsburg Confession, and has been the chief means of reinstating in its proper position of honor and authority that universal symbol of the Lutheran faith.

The type of Lutheranism designed to be established was truly evangelical, yet liberal and catholic; such as might haply unite the various portions of the church, and also bring her into cordial and active co-operation with other evangeli-

cal churches, in the common work of evangelizing the world. No other union could then have been effected, and none less liberal would have satisfied the enlarged and catholic views of the founders of the General Synod. Nothing could have been further from their spirit and aim than the attempt to build up a narrow and exclusive sect. The Constitution adopted provides (Art. iii. sec. vii.): "The General Synod shall be sedulously and incessantly regardful of the circumstances of the times, and of every casual rise and progress of unity of sentiment among Christians in general, in order that the blessed opportunities to promote concord and unity, and the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom may not pass by neglected and unavailing."

Accordingly the General Synod has entered into correspondence, by interchange of delegates, with various other denominations, and has encouraged active co-operation with other churches, in the American Bible Society, Tract Society, Sunday School Union, and other national, benevolent, and Christian institutions.

Her efforts in behalf of theological education, in founding a general theological seminary, and encouraging the establishment of colleges and seminaries, have done much to increase the number and improve the character of the ministry of the church. Some four hundred ministers have already been trained in her theological seminary, while the number has been greatly increased by other institutions growing out of this. Indeed, but for the establishment of the General Synod, it is difficult to see how the church could have been supplied with ministers, or her continued existence in the land maintained; for previous to this nothing worthy had been attempted or accomplished. The General Synod having inaugurated such movements, leaves the carrying out of plans chiefly to the district synods, as they have the power to act more decisively and efficiently.

The preparation and publication of suitable "books and writings, such as catechisms, forms of liturgy, collections of hymns, etc.," for the use of the churches has also been a

work of the General Synod. This part of her work has been attended with peculiar difficulties, owing to the diversity of tastes, difference of language, constant change going on in the transition from German to English, and the disposition on the part of many to consult rather their own convenience or interest than the harmony and welfare of the whole. Still the General Synod has effected much in this direction, and there is a growing disposition to profit by her labors and counsels.

That the General Synod has not directly accomplished more, is not so much owing to any want of power, as to the very object and design of the organization, and the character of material that composed that body. It may be truly said it has surpassed the expectations of its earliest and best friends.

As it is not the design of this Article to furnish a history of the Lutheran church in the United States, or even a sketch of her history, any further than may aid in a clearer understanding of her present position, we may pass now to other points, leaving to a subsequent part any further presentation of facts that may be deemed of interest or importance. These historical references have already extended beyond our intention, and the reader may prefer to learn something about the faith, doctrines, usages, and distinctive peculiarities of the Lutheran church. What follows will refer chiefly to the Evangelical Lutheran church as embraced in the General Synod in the United States. This is the service to which the writer was specially invited. Hence the introduction so prominently of the General Synod, and hence the general tenor of what we may yet have to say. If less is said about other portions of the church, and special prominence given to this branch of Lutheranism, it is because this is the object and intention of the Article. To others will be allowed the task of telling their own story.

RULE OF FAITH.

In common with all orthodox Protestant churches, the Evangelical Lutheran church holds the canonical scriptures

of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired word of God and only infallible rule of faith. While in this there is nothing peculiar; yet in the interpretation of the scriptures she is perhaps less shackled than most churches by systems of doctrine or opinions of men. The history of the Lutheran church exhibits a remarkable freedom in the discussion of all doctrines, and even on those points on which she differs from other churches, she adheres to her own views of the faith only so far as she insists that these views are in accordance with the divine word and founded upon it. Without discarding philosophy, or depreciating the service of reason, or disregarding the voice of the church in other ages, she prefers to go to the Bible to learn what to believe and what to do, and to receive its teachings, without submitting them to the decisions of Fathers, or Councils, or Creeds. Those who prepared and presented the Augsburg Confession say: "We do not feel willing to transmit to our children and descendants, and entail upon them, any other doctrine than that of the pure divine word" (Art. xxi.); and further declare their purpose not to receive anything "either in doctrine or ceremonies contrary to the holy scriptures."

The Formula of Concord, regarded by some portions of the church as of symbolical authority, is alike decisive, and draws a clear distinction between the divine word and all systems prepared by uninspired men, when it says: "We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and standard, according to which all doctrines and teachers alike ought to be tried and judged, are the prophetic and apostolic scriptures of the Old and New Testaments alone"; adding that "the symbols and other writings are not authorities like the holy scriptures; but they are only a testimony and explanation of our faith, showing the manner in which at any time the holy scriptures were understood and explained by those who then lived."

The position of the church is thus one of direct antagonism: 1st. To Deists, and all others who deny the need of a divine revelation, and that the Bible is the word of God.

2d. To Rationalists, and all those who reject the supernatural, or deny the divine inspiration of the Bible, or who would subordinate its teachings to their own reason. 3d. To Romanists, and all who deny the sufficiency of the scriptures, or who would exalt tradition or the authority of the church to an equality with the word of God. 4th. To all, of whatever church, who deny the right of private interpretation, or that the scriptures are a safe guide in the hands of the people, who should read and judge for themselves.¹

The Evangelical Lutheran church must ignore her origin, discard her confession, and repudiate her history, before she can become anything else than what she has always been — the uncompromising friend of the divine authority, sufficiency, and inestimable value to all, of the divine word.

CONFESSION OF FAITH.

While the church holds the Bible to be the only and infallible rule of faith, she is not without a Confession, that it may be known how she understands the Bible, especially on all the most important points. The only Confession of Faith universally recognized by the Evangelical Lutheran church throughout the world, as well as in the United States, is that presented at the Diet of Augsburg, in 1530. It is the mother-symbol of Protestantism, and has had more to do with shaping the Confessions of Protestant Christendom than any other Confession of ancient or modern times. This is not the place to speak at large of the character or merits of this venerable Confession, but it may be stated that it has won the highest homage from the most distinguished theologians of other churches. Calvin says: "It is my pride willingly and cheer-

¹ The learned historian, Mosheim, observes: "According to the opinion of this church (Lutheran) the entire rule for a correct religious faith and for a holy life is to be drawn exclusively from the books dictated by God himself; and it believes that these books, of course, are so plain and so easy to be understood in respect to the way of salvation, that every man who possesses common sense, and who understands their language, can ascertain their meaning for himself, or without an interpreter." — Ecclesiastical History, Vol. iii. p. 129, Murdock's Translation.

fully to subscribe it." Bishop Bull of the church of England: "The Augsburg Confession is the noblest among Confessions, the English [Thirty-nine Articles] not excepted." Archbishop Laurence, of the same church, calls it "the boast of Germany and pride of the Reformation." D'Aubigne, the popular historian of the Reformation, describes it as "a production which will ever remain one of the master-pieces of the human mind, enlightened by the Spirit of God." The finished American scholar and divine, Dr. James W. Alexander, pronounces it "a beautiful and stirring argument and protest." Others might easily be cited, but these are sufficient to show that, great and good men of other churches being witnesses, the Lutheran church need not be ashamed of her noble Confession.

Besides the Augsburg Confession, there are other books called symbolical, and part or all of which have been received by portions of the church in some countries. These books are, The Apology to the Augsburg Confession, The Smalcald Articles, The Smaller and Larger Catechisms of Luther, and The Formula of Concord, the whole sometimes called The Book of Concord. Of these, the Smaller Catechism has been especially popular, and has been almost universally used in the church as a manual of instruction for the young. Its popularity may be judged from the fact that it has been translated into the Hebrew, Arabic, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, as well as nearly all living languages; and that thirty-seven years after its appearance, one hundred thousand copies had been printed and circulated. It is said to have had the largest circulation of any volume ever printed except the Bible. But the Augsburg Confession is the only universally recognized Confession of the Lutheran church in all lands, and the only one to which the General Synod of the Lutheran church in the United States demands adherence by synods uniting with it. No very serious attempt has been made in this country to bind the Lutheran church to the other symbolical books until quite recently; and now the effort is mainly by Lutherans from Europe, with a few Americans

who are acting in concert with them. The great mass of Lutherans, born and reared in the United States, know little about the symbolical books, and the ministers and churches do not desire so extended or so rigid a system as that contained in the entire collection of so-called symbolical books, but are satisfied with the one catholic universal symbol of Lutheranism — the Augsburg Confession.

SUBSCRIPTION.

The whole question of subscription to Creeds or Confessions must be considered as yet in a somewhat uncertain and indefinite light in the Protestant churches. There is the widest difference of views and practice among churches confessedly orthodox, some advocating a more rigid, and others maintaining a more liberal, subscription. The Lutheran church in Germany has been divided in sentiment on this subject, and the *quia* and *quatenus* have served as the shibboleths of party. The Lutheran church in the United States forms no exception to the general rule, and this subject is one that at present furnishes abundant cause for discord and strife.

At the first organization of the General Synod in 1820, there was a failure to recognize, in any distinct or official manner, even the Augsburg Confession. This was chiefly owing to the nature of that body as a union of synods, and to the influence of some synods whose greatest complaint against the General Synod has since been, that it was not more distinctly symbolical and Lutheran. This defect or omission in the Constitution of the General Synod was deemed the less important, as that body was not intrusted with the power of regulating or adjusting the faith of the church. But the General Synod did give expression to its adherence to the Augsburg Confession very soon after its organization, by inserting an acknowledgment of it, both in the Professor's Oath or obligation, in the theological seminary then founded, and also in the "Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church." More

recently the General Synod has adopted an amendment to the constitution, and now requires of all synods uniting with it the following, namely: "Receiving and holding, with the Evangelical Lutheran church of our fathers, the word of God as contained in the canonical scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and the Augsburg Confession, as a correct exhibition of the fundamental doctrines of the divine word, and of the faith of our church founded upon that word," etc.

This may not satisfy all in the church, or meet the approbation of all in other churches. Some would have more and others less. There are those in the church, who will be satisfied with nothing short of an unconditional subscription to every jot and tittle in the Confession; while others have uneasy consciences that so much is exacted. This question cannot be here discussed at length, but the absurdity of demanding an unqualified adherence to the Confession "in every statement of doctrine," as maintained by some, and that the subscribers must "agree to use the same words in one and the same sense," in their interpretation of it, as a condition of ministerial fellowship, may be seen by a single illustration. The article in the Apostle's Creed, "He descended into hell," has not only been differently interpreted by different churches, but by different individuals in the same church, and this continues to be so, even in the Lutheran church, and yet all agree to receive this creed, this diversity notwithstanding.

No other Protestant church pretends to require or enforce an absolute agreement with everything contained in its Confession. Dr. Hodge of Princeton, an acknowledged authority, and one of the staunchest defenders of the most rigid Confessional orthodoxy among Presbyterians, declares in the Princeton Repertory of the Old School Presbyterian church, that it "could not hold together a week" if the "adoption of all the propositions" in the Westminster Confession were "made a condition of ministerial fellowship"; and that such a mode of subscription "could not be carried out without

working the certain and immediate ruin of the church." The most distinguished theologians of the Lutheran church in Germany have always maintained that subscription to the Confession should not carry with it an unqualified pledge to every non-essential part, or "every statement of doctrine" on points not fundamental. The introduction of these remarks has been in consequence of attempts in different quarters to impugn the orthodoxy of the General Synod because of not requiring a more rigid subscription. But until "a more excellent way" is shown, the General Synod may congratulate itself with having aimed at and attained to the *juste milieu*. It is believed that this doctrinal test secures about all that is secured by any test in any church, and that within the General Synod of the Lutheran church the orthodoxy is as sound and the harmony of views as great as in any other portion of the church, or as is secured by any other mode of subscription among other denominations. In accordance with the views just stated, and in accordance with the very best results secured by other modes of subscription by other orthodox churches, the General Synod, mindful of the truth on the one hand, and of Christian liberty on the other, has framed her requirement so as neither to sacrifice "the faith once delivered to the saints," nor to "burden the consciences of the brethren in Christ" (Constitution, Art. iii. Sec. 2).

DOCTRINES.

It is proposed now to present the leading doctrines, chiefly as exhibited in the Augsburg Confession, and understood and held by the church. In doing this it will be necessary to limit the presentation to the most prominent and important points, and to avoid all unnecessary details and explanations.

THEOLOGICAL.

Godhead.

The Evangelical Lutheran church does not differ from other orthodox churches on the doctrine of the Godhead.

Her faith is the faith of the early church, and in the unity of that faith the great body of the Christian church is agreed. Accepting and holding as her own the three ecumenical Creeds, the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian, there could be no departure from the general orthodox faith without at the same time involving a departure from the acknowledged standards. Satisfied with these, and believing that God had guided his church in the confession of the truth, the Lutheran church declared her union with the church of the early ages, in the words: "Our churches unanimously hold and teach, agreeably to the Decree of the Council of Nice, that there is only one Divine Essence, which is called, and truly is, God; but that there are three persons in this one Divine Essence, equally powerful, equally eternal—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost,—who are one Divine Essence, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite in power, wisdom, and goodness, the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible. And the word "person" is not intended to express a part or quality of another, but that which subsists of itself, precisely as the Fathers have employed this term on this subject." By way of contrast the Article adds: "Every heresy opposed to this Article is therefore condemned," and specifies the leading ones.

An analysis of the Article, so explicit in itself, will show that it teaches: 1st. The unity of the Divine Essence; 2d. The Trinity of persons in the Godhead, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; 3d. The term "person" understood in the sense of the Fathers; 4th. The divinity of each person, co-equal and co-eternal; 5th. The Triune God, the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible; 6th. The condemnation of all opposing views or doctrines.

Divine Decrees — Foreknowledge and Predestination.

The doctrine of the divine decrees is one that did not enter into the controversy between Protestants and Romanists at the time of the preparation of the Augsburg Confession. Happily, at that period, it did not engage special attention,

and was not made an article of faith. Luther and Melancthon were at first inclined to the Augustinian view; but they abandoned it, and it never became the received doctrine of the church. Although not prominent in the Lutheran system, the Formula of Concord presents the views of the Lutheran church, in distinct antagonism to the Calvinistic system, on this perplexing question. And, while the Lutheran church allows here a large degree of liberty, and has not considered it as fundamental, not being included in the Augsburg Confession, the views of her greatest theologians, as well as the general faith of the church, are in harmony with the doctrine as expressed in the Formula of Concord. The views of the Lutheran church may be considered as embracing the following:

1. A distinction is made between foreknowledge and predestination. The foreknowledge of God extends to all things, predestination to that which is according to his will. This distinction is absolutely necessary, unless we are willing to make God the author of evil as well as of good. He foresaw the fall of man, but he did not predestinate it, in any fair or proper meaning of the term. God foresees all the evil in the world, but to say that he predestinated it, is to charge him with being its author. God never predestinated or ordained that any man should sin, nor can it be according to his holy will or pleasure. Sin is always and everywhere opposed to God.

2. A distinction is likewise made between the decrees or purposes of God which are absolute or unconditional, and those which are conditional. God determined unconditionally to create the universe—to form the earth and place man upon it. In view of the fall, he determined unconditionally to provide salvation for the human race. But he determined to bestow salvation or eternal life, conditionally, on those who would repent and believe. The decrees of God, in reference to intelligent moral agents, are not arbitrary, “or as if the Lord would institute a certain military review, saying, this one shall be saved, but that one shall be lost; this one shall

persevere to the end, but that one shall not persevere" (Formula of Concord, Art. xi.).

3. The election of God to eternal life is according to foreknowledge, and conditioned upon repentance and faith. This is the doctrine of the divine word. Peter says, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father"; and Paul says, "whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son." As "God foresaw precisely, and with greatest certainty, before the world was made, and he knows still, who among those that are called will believe or will not believe; also who among the converted will remain steadfast, and who will not remain steadfast; who, if they fall back into sin, will return, and who will become hardened"; so the truly faithful may be said to be "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Formula of Concord).

4. The decree of reprobation from eternity is decidedly rejected. The Lutheran church utterly reject as erroneous the doctrine, that "solely through the bare counsel, purpose, and will of God some are destined to damnation, so that they cannot be saved." The "decretum quidem horribile" of Calvin finds no place in the Lutheran system or symbols. There is no eternal decree of God consigning any portion of the race to hopeless ruin simply "to the praise of his glorious justice."

5. The purposes of divine grace and mercy embrace the whole world (John iii. 16). The provision made by the death of Christ is for all men (Heb. ii. 9; 1 Jno. ii. 2). The offer of salvation is to all, and this offer is honest and sincere on the part of God (Rev. xxii. 17; Ezek. xxxiii. 11). God is willing to save all (1 Tim. ii. 4; 2 Pet. iii. 9). Those who are lost perish because of their own unbelief and continuance in sin.

6. It is altogether of divine grace and mercy that any are saved; and it is altogether of human depravity and perverseness that any are lost. "The mercy of God and the most holy merit of Christ" are declared to be "the only cause" of our election of God; as our guilt and refusal of mercy are the ground of our rejection and condemnation.

It may be very easy to arraign this view of the divine decrees, and to show what may seem insuperable difficulties. Apparent logical inconsistencies may be alleged. And it is not denied that there are difficulties, or pretended that such a view solves all the mysteries of this sublime subject. The Lutheran church does not feel bound to take care of the logical difficulties, in accepting just as they stand different portions of the divine word. She accepts what she finds in the Bible, whether she can construct all the different parts into one logically consistent system or not.

But it would be quite as easy to array insuperable difficulties against the opposing Calvinistic system. In seeking to be consistent, and giving more weight to logical deductions than to divine teaching, it may well be questioned whether conclusions have not been reached most prejudicial to the divine character and government, and to the freedom and responsibility of man. It is not, however, our intention to argue the case, or to defend the one or arraign the other, but simply to state the Lutheran view and to let it appear in contrast with opposing systems.

The difference between Lutheranism and Calvinism on this point, may be seen by a few extracts from their acknowledged standards.

Westminster Confession, Chap. iii.

“By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others fore-ordained to everlasting death. These angels and men thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.”

“Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God hath chosen without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing

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Formula of Concord, Art. xi.

“The eternal election or predestination of God does not pertain both to the good and the bad, but only to the children of God,” and rejects as erroneous the view “that God is not willing that all men shall be saved,” or that “some are destined to damnation so that they cannot be saved.”

“There is no doubt that God foresaw precisely and with the greatest certainty before the world was made, and he knows still, who among those that are called will believe or will

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in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereunto."

"Neither are any other redeemed by Christ. . . . The rest of mankind God was pleased to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of his glorious justice."

"Others not elected, although they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never truly come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved."

not believe; also who among the converted will remain steadfast, and who will not remain steadfast," etc.

"In his counsel God ordained that the human race shall be truly redeemed. . . . The reason that all who hear the word of God do not believe, and therefore meet with a deeper condemnation, is not to be found in God's unwillingness to bestow salvation. . . . For God does not desire that any man should be damned."

"As the preaching of repentance is universal, so is also the promise of the gospel, that is, it extends to all persons, Luke xxiv. 47. . . . And this call of God which is given through the preaching of the Word we should not regard as pretended and unreal, but we ought to know that through it God reveals his will; namely, that in those whom he thus calls he will operate through the Word, so that they may be enlightened, converted, and saved."

These citations are enough to show the divergence of the two systems, and this is the only object in thus presenting them. It may be proper to add, that while the Lutheran church decidedly rejects the absolute decree, assigning each individual, unconditionally, to eternal life or eternal death, she rejects with equal decision the opposite extremes into which Arminianism has sometimes run. The rigors of Calvinism and the laxity of Arminianism are alike opposed, and the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man maintained. To God is given all the glory of salvation, to man all the guilt of endless ruin.

ANTHROPOLOGICAL.

In regard to man, the Augsburg Confession teaches that the whole human family is involved in one common apostasy and ruin, in consequence of the fall of Adam, and the de-

scent of the race from him, and that all must perish, unless saved through "the merits and sufferings of Christ," being "born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit." This great and terrible truth is set forth as a simple matter of fact, resting alike on the word of God, and individual consciousness, so far as it comes within the sphere of consciousness, without any attempt to explain it according to any system of philosophy, or any theory of the origin of souls, or of the transmission of this evil nature. "The chief Confession of the Evangelical church, the Augsburg," says Julius Müller, "has with a wise reserve so laid down its explanation on this point, that a certain diversity of dogmatic theories may be reconciled with the same." Sin is treated more as a practical question, than one of theory; and we are pointed to the frightful disease, and the only sufficient remedy. Still it is not difficult to learn what the Confession and the church teach concerning man, for due, if not special, prominence is given to questions in anthropology. The second Article of the Augsburg Confession is as follows:

"We teach, that since the fall of Adam, all men who are naturally engendered, are conceived and born in sin; that is, that they all are from their mother's womb, full of evil desires and propensities, and can have by nature no true fear of God, no true faith in God; and that this innate disease, or original sin, is truly sin, which brings all those under the eternal wrath of God who are not born again by baptism and the Holy Spirit. Hence, we condemn the Pelagians and others, who deny that original corruption is sin, whereby they assert, to the disparagement of the merits and sufferings of Christ, that piety is the result of our natural powers."

In opposition to Pelagius, and all who deny the corruption of man by nature, the Confession recognizes a fall. Man is not now what he was as originally created, when he was in the image of God, of which the Apology says: "But the greatest excellency of this noble first creature, was a bright light in the heart to know God and his works, true fear of God, truly sincere confidence in him, and in all respects a

correct, reliable understanding, and a heart well disposed towards God and all divine things.”

The Article itself distinctly teaches, 1st. That all men are sinners. 2d. That this is in consequence of the fall of Adam. 3d. That this sin is innate, or born with us. 4th. That it is guilt, or exposing to the wrath of God. 5th. That those who are saved from it must be “born again.”

The different theories to account for, or explain this, find no place here. The doctrine does not rest on any uncertain speculation of men, but on the sure word of God. What the Article contains, may be much more in accordance with one theory than another, but is not framed to suit any theory but that of the divine word.

The main points about which there have been differences of opinion among churches claiming to be orthodox are two; and upon these the Confession is by no means vague or uncertain:

1. “This innate disease, or original sin, is truly sin.” It is not regarded as some defect or calamity in no wise affecting the moral character of man, or as a mere disorder of the constitution, in consequence of which there is a proneness to sin. But it is sin, the parent sin, the root and source of all other sins in man. Many then, as before and since, were unwilling to allow to this natural corruption and depravity, the character of sin, or to admit that a sinful nature could be inherited. Systems of philosophy were allowed to determine their views of doctrine. “This active hereditary contagion,” says Melancthon in the Apology, “by which our whole nature is corrupted, by which we all inherit such hearts, minds, and thoughts from Adam as are immediately opposed to God, and to his first and greatest commandment, the scholastics pass over in silence.” He combats the views of those who taught that original sin was “merely a defect, an incumbrance which has come upon us from Adam, but of ourselves we are not involved in sin and inherited wrath,” and maintains “that not a *part* merely, but the *whole* man, with his whole nature, is born in sin, with a hereditary constitutional disease.”

“Evil lust and the want of original righteousness are sin and punishment. We here speak of the inborn evil character of the heart, not only of actual guilt, or of real crimes and sins.” Such utterances, which might be indefinitely multiplied, leave no room for doubt on this point.

2. Not less decisive is the teaching, that this original sin is guilt, *reatus*, exposing to the punishment and wrath of God. The Confession, as cited, calls it “truly sin, which brings all those under the eternal wrath of God, who are not born again.” The adversaries of this doctrine maintained that no one was condemned for this sin alone, “that it is not a sin which merits death and condemnation.” On the contrary, Melancthon argued in defence of the Confession, that this original sin “really is sin, deserving death and eternal condemnation;” and that so heinous is it before God, “that we need Christ the Mediator, in order that God may not impute it unto us, and the constant light and operation of the Holy Spirit to mortify and remove it.” Following the Bible, it is taught that we are “by nature the children of wrath.”

How this state of sin and condemnation is to be explained, whether on the theory of federal headship and representation in Adam, or of realistic union in him, so that his sin was the sin of each individual of the race, or of the natural propagation of a fallen and sinful nature, we are not instructed or required to believe. The language may be more in harmony with one mode of explanation than another, but the Confession rests in the fact. The Formula of Concord indeed condemns the view, “that original sin is only a *reatus*, or guilt contracted by the offence of another, without any corruption of our own nature.” Still we are not distinctly committed either to immediate or mediate imputation. Julius Müller represents “the trope of doctrine of the Lutheran dogmatic,” as stepping “in between two deviations in opposite directions,” and “the connection of our culpability with the fall of our first parents as a double one, mediate and immediate.”¹

¹ How nearly this accords with the latest conclusions of some who belong

Any one familiar with the history of the doctrine, and how it has distracted and rent certain portions of the Protestant church, will not fail to admire the wisdom and judgment displayed in setting it forth in the Confession of the Lutheran church. The doctrine itself of original sin is clearly taught, but the specific mode of explanation is left to the wisdom and discretion of the individual. We may here quote, in illustration and confirmation of what has been said, the words of Dr. Hodge, in the Princeton Repertory for July 1867: "Original sin, however, is one thing; the way in which it is accounted for is another. The doctrine is, that such is the relation between Adam and his posterity, that all mankind, descending from him by ordinary generation, are born in a state of sin and condemnation. Any man who admits this, holds the doctrine." This doctrine the Lutheran church firmly holds, and has happily escaped many difficulties which have beset some of the Reformed Confessions that have attempted to incorporate a specific explanation of the doctrine as a part of the faith.

Against any Supralapsarian views the Confession guards, by declaring (Art. xix), "As to the cause of sin, it is taught among us, that, although Almighty God has created and preserves all nature, yet the perverted will works sin in all evil-doers and despisers of God."

to the school of immediate imputation, the following brief extract will show: "There is doubtless a wide difference between imputed sin and inherent sin. We, however, have both, and that naturally; and it tends only to error to attempt to explicate either of them in disregard of the other, or to separate what God has indissolubly united, namely, our double relation to Adam. It is infinitely certain that God would never make a legal fiction a pretext to punish as sinners dependent and helpless creatures who were actually innocent. The imputation of our sins to Christ affords no pretext for such a statement, because that was done by the express consent of Christ, and was, in every respect, the most stupendous proof of divine grace. Nor is the righteousness of Christ ever imputed for justification except to the elect, nor ever received except by faith, which is a grace of the Spirit, peculiar to the renewed soul. In like manner the sin of Adam is imputed to us, but never irrespective of our nature and its inherent sin." — Breckenridge's Knowledge of God objectively considered, pp. 498, 499.

Ability and Free-will.

The questions of ability and free-will are treated, not in a metaphysical, but in a religious and practical manner; and as original sin is held to be universal, and the depravity of man total, extending to all his moral and spiritual powers, there is an utter want of ability on his part to begin or carry forward the work of his salvation. With an understanding that is blinded by sin, and a heart alienated from God and divine things, man cannot and will not, of himself, seek after God. He has no ability to do so, because he has no disposition or desire to do so. His mind is enmity against God, and the sinner has no power to change his own heart. He is under the dominion of Satan, and the slave of his own depraved nature. He has no more power than the blind man has to see, or the paralytic to walk, or the leper to cleanse himself. He is blind and paralytic and unclean; and must receive from some higher power the ability to see and walk and be clean. Of himself he can do nothing that is spiritually good.

The Confession makes a distinction, and allows to man a certain kind of freedom. It does not, indeed, intend to deny that freedom which belongs to him as a rational and accountable being. To be accountable he must be free — free from any compulsion to act contrary to his own inclination or choice, and free to choose according to his own disposition. But at the same time, owing to his depraved affections and desires, man always chooses the evil and never the good, until he is renewed by the Holy Ghost. Such is his choice in spiritual things. In things temporal or worldly he may choose better. Here natural reason may guide him to a wiser choice, and natural ability may enable him to act.

Article xviii. says: "Concerning free-will it is taught that, to some extent, man has freedom of will to lead a life outwardly honest, and to choose between things which reason comprehends." And further, quoting from Augustine with approbation: "We acknowledge that in all men there is

a free-will ; for they all, indeed, have natural connate understanding and reason ; not that they are able to act in things pertaining to God, such as to love and fear God from the heart, but only in external works of this life have they freedom to choose good or evil."

In like manner the Apology : " It is proper, therefore, to make this clear distinction : namely, that our reason and free-will enable us, to some extent, to live outwardly honest, but that the new birth, and the formation of a new heart and mind in us is solely the work of the Holy Ghost."

The inability in man is moral or spiritual, and not natural. It is natural in the sense of being a part of his corrupt nature and common to all, but it has reference, not to his natural, but his spiritual, powers, and not to natural but spiritual things. Without special divine assistance man can use his senses, exercise his understanding and judgment, or perform any act which comes within the province of the natural man. But he cannot discern spiritual things, or conform his own heart and life to the will of God. This requires the aid of the Holy Spirit ; and until man is born again he is utterly impotent to all spiritual good. Naturally he is free, but spiritually he is in bondage — " carnal, sold under sin."

According to the doctrine of the Evangelical Lutheran church, the work of renewing the soul in the image of God is wholly divine. It not only rejects the Pelagian view, that man possesses the ability of himself to please God, but also the view, that man co-operates to aid in the work of his regeneration, so that it is jointly the work of God and man. It ascribes the whole work to God. " Our reason and free-will possess in some measure the ability to produce an outwardly honest life, but the new birth, the inward change of the heart, mind, and disposition are works of the Holy Spirit alone " (Formula of Concord, on Free-will).

It must not, however, be supposed that the Lutheran church teaches the doctrine of necessity ; or that man has nothing at all to do in the work of his salvation. Both of these errors are contrary to the faith of the church, and care-

fully guarded against. The Formula of Concord, in harmony with the Augsburg Confession, condemns those "who taught that all that happens, so happens from necessity, and cannot otherwise occur; and that man does all through compulsion." On the other hand it says: "When the Holy Spirit has commenced his work of regeneration and renewal in us, through the word and the holy sacraments, that then, assuredly, we can and should co-operate through the power of the Holy Ghost, although still in great weakness. But this co-operation results, not from our natural and carnal powers, but from the new powers and gifts, which the Holy Spirit originated in us in conversions." The confession itself says (Art. xx.): "And because the Holy Spirit is given through faith, the heart becomes qualified to perform good works. For before this, while it is without the Holy Spirit, it is too weak."

Thus the church seeks to guard different points of this important subject, holding to the universality of sin through Adam, and individual guilt; the inability, yet freedom and responsibility, of man; his helpless dependence on divine aid, yet active co-operation with the Holy Spirit in working out his salvation.

SOTERIOLOGICAL.

The doctrine of salvation through Jesus Christ has chiefly to do with the person and work of our Divine Redeemer, including the application of the purchased redemption.

Person of Christ.

From the earliest times to the present, the doctrine of Christ's person has been considered of the utmost importance—fundamental among fundamental doctrines. It has secured due prominence in the Lutheran system, and has been guarded with a most jealous care. Article iii. of the Augsburg Confession, "On the Son of God," has the following:

"It is taught likewise, that God the Son became man, and was born of the blessed virgin Mary; and that the two

natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, are one Christ, who is true God and man, who was really born, who truly suffered, was crucified, died; and was buried; that he might be a sacrifice, not only for original sin, but also for all other sins, and might appease the wrath of God." This agrees with the doctrine as contained in the ancient ecumenical creeds, and with this also agrees all other exhibitions as contained in other symbols of the church. These need not here be cited.

In this brief statement are contained all the points involved in the true doctrine of Christ's person. These points are four, and which guard it against all opposing heresies:

1. The absolute divinity of Christ, as the eternal Son of God and second person in the Trinity. He is called "God the Son," and declared to be true God. The first Article of the Confession, already cited, declares the "three persons" to be "equally powerful, equally eternal"; and, according, as it does, with the Nicene or Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan creed, teaches the "eternal generation" of the Son. The title "Son of God" is not in consequence of his being born of the virgin Mary, or does not pertain to his human nature as such, but is used to denote a relation eternally existing with the Father. No discussion or proof of this doctrine would be in place here; but the evangelical Lutheran church holds fast to the early faith of the Nicene and Athanasian symbols.

2. The perfect humanity of Christ, as consisting of a natural human body and a rational soul. "God the Son became man — was born of the blessed virgin Mary — two natures, human and divine — true God and man — was really born, truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried." The proper humanity of Christ is insisted on, no less than his divinity. He is as truly man as he is God — Son of God and Son of Man.

3. The union of these two natures, the human and the divine, in the one person, Jesus Christ. "And that the two natures, human and divine, inseparably united in one person, are one Christ, who is true God and man." This union

is called inseparable, and the result is one person. The Saviour is the God-man, Immanuel, — not as God and man separate and distinct, the one apart from the other, but mysteriously and indissolubly united — Son of God and Son of Mary — “God manifest in the flesh.”

4: The distinction of these two natures, so that in the one person there is no commingling or admixture of the human and the divine. The “one person, who is true God and man,” has “the two natures,” and, although “inseparably united,” they are not commingled or confused. The divine remains divine, and the human remains human; each possessing its own essential, unchanged, and unchangeable attributes.

This doctrine arrays itself in the most direct antagonism to all opposing heresies touching the person of Christ. Every phase of Unitarianism, ancient and modern, with all Docetic, Gnostic, and Apollinarian views, is utterly discarded, and, along with them, all Eutychian and Nestorian errors and tendencies.

The Evangelical Lutheran church is very zealous in maintaining the doctrine that Christ, in the prosecution of his mediatorial work, acts in his entire person, as the God-man, and not now as God, and now as man. There are certain attributes and works that belong specifically to the one or the other nature; but, in the possession of these attributes and performance of these works, the one nature is to be considered as inseparably united with the other, and the whole to belong to the one person, who is Mediator and Redeemer. Thus it belongs to the human nature of Christ to suffer and die. The divine nature is incapable of suffering and death. But the person who suffered and died on the cross and rose again, was the Son of God as well as the Son of Man. It belongs to the divine nature of Christ to work miracles, in and of itself, to raise the dead and rule the elements; and yet he did these things as Jesus of Nazareth. So that Christ must not be looked upon as simply human or divine, but as both, inseparably united in the one person.

All that he does in his mediatorial work, he does as the God-man, Immanuel.

Some, in their zeal for this doctrine, and what was supposed to be involved in it, have gone beyond this, and maintained what, in theological technology, is known as the *communicatio idiomatum*, that is, the communication of attributes or properties, so that the properties of the one nature are communicated to the other; or, in reality, rather, that certain of the attributes of the divine nature of Christ are communicated to his human nature. This doctrine does not maintain that the essential attributes of the one nature ever become the essential attributes of the other. The very contrary is affirmed. But that, in consequence of the personal union and communion of the two natures, "without any confusion of the natures and of their essential properties," there is a real communication of the divine properties to the human nature of Christ.¹ This doctrine is not found in the Augsburg Confession, or in any symbol universally received by the Lutheran church, and so cannot be held as an essential part of the Lutheran system of faith. It is found in the Formula of Concord, and was manifestly elaborated to sustain a particular view of the Saviour's presence in the eucharist. If, as some explain it, the doctrine means no more than "a common participation of the whole person in the properties of both natures," then there

¹ "Et quidem his vocabulis (realis communicatio realiter communicari) nunquam ullam physicam communicationem vel essentialem transfusionem (qua naturae in suis essentiis aut essentialibus proprietatibus confunderentur) docere volumus, ut quidam vocabula et phrases illas astute et malitiose falsa interpretatione, contra conscientiam suam, pervertere non dubitarunt, tantum, ut piam doctrinam suspicionibus iniquissimis gravarent. Sed vocabula et phrases illas verbali communicationi opposuimus, cum quidam fingerent communicationem idiomatum nihil aliud nisi phrasin et modum quendam loquendi, hoc est, mera tantum verba, nomina et titulos inanes esse. Et hanc verbalem communicationem adeo urserunt, ut de nulla alia communicatione audire quidquam vellent. Quapropter ad recte declarandam majestatem Christi vocabula (de reali communicatione) usurpavimus, ut significarem, communicationem illam vere et re ipsa (sine omni tamen naturarum et proprietatum essentialium confusione) factam esse." — Müller's Sym. Bücher der Ev. Luth. Kirche, Formula of Concord, §68.

is nothing peculiar in it; for all orthodox churches maintain this. But if it means a real communication of the attributes of the divine nature of Christ to his human nature, then it is, to say the least, without any clear warrant in the word of God, and has failed to receive the assent of many of the most distinguished theologians, as well as of the entire church. To show how fully other churches hold to the inseparable union of the two natures in Christ's person, and that both are united in his entire work, we need but quote a single authority, and that one of the most recent writers on dogmatic theology. Rev. Dr. R. J. Breckenridge says: "All the office-work of this Mediator looking to the salvation of man, or having any bearing thereon, is not to be considered as the special work of one nature or the other nature indissolubly united in his person, but is to be considered as the work of the person thus formed of these two natures, that is, the work of him who is God-man—the work of Immanuel—the work of the Mediator. We are not to divide our Saviour; for his fitness to be our Saviour lies precisely in this, that the two natures are hypostatically united in him. . . . His very fitness to be the Mediator between God and man depends upon this. . . . And we must bear in mind the intimate and mutual communication with each other which these two distinct natures united in the person of Christ must necessarily have, by virtue of their union in that indissoluble manner. This ineffable communication takes place immediately in the person of the Son, in which they are united." Any difference from this, in Lutheran theology, is rather one of definitions or terms and theoretic speculation than of substantial disagreement.

Work of Christ.

The work of Christ in its true, full, and comprehensive sense, embraces all that he accomplishes for us in his prophetic, priestly, and kingly offices, but a discussion of all these would unnecessarily add to the length of this Article. On some of these points, there is little diversity of views, and

they may be passed over here without prejudice or detriment to the truth. It will suffice to make a statement in regard to what is generally conceded to be the most prominent part of Christ's work, and about which there has been most difference of opinion. While, therefore, the prophetic and kingly offices are not depreciated, it is his priestly office that now claims attention, in which he provides redemption through his sacrificial, atoning death. This subject was viewed by the authors of the Confession, chiefly in its relation to the pardon and acceptance of the sinner with God. The sinner is guilty and at enmity with God. The question is: How can he be pardoned and restored to the divine favor? What will satisfy the offended Sovereign, and what will satisfy the guilty conscience? It was to find a remedy for sin, a remedy full and complete, that they looked to Christ. Accordingly, the Confession sets forth the infinite merit of Christ as the only ground of a sinner's justification. Against all meritorious works of righteousness, and all atonement or expiation that we ourselves can make, it holds up the work of Christ wrought in our behalf, and his sufferings and death as the only and perfect atonement for all sin.

As to the nature of Christ's sufferings and death, it is taught that they are vicarious and expiatory. He suffered in our stead, and to make expiation for sin. The law of God had been violated, and the justice of God required that sin should be punished: and this was done when Christ voluntarily submitted himself to the bitterest sufferings and most cruel death. He died for sinners, and to make satisfaction for sin. He was "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." The Augsburg Confession teaches not only that the Son of God became man, but as the God-man, "truly suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried, that he might be a sacrifice, not only for original sin, but also for all other sins, and might appease the wrath of God" (Art. iii.). It further declares "that there is no sacrifice for original sin, or for other sins, but the death of Christ" (Art. xxiv.). The Apology, in its defence of the Confession against Romish corrup-

tions of the doctrine of the atonement, speaks of "the death of Christ," as "an expiation for guilt," "a propitiatory sacrifice," and says, "that there has been but one sacrifice, namely, the death of Christ, which was intended to be an atonement for others, and to appease the wrath of God." These and similar declarations leave no room for reasonable doubt as to the doctrine of the church concerning the nature of the atonement. It was designed to meet the claims of God's law, and God's justice, and at the same time to meet a corresponding want on the part of the sinner, so that reconciliation might be effected, and God be just, while he justifies the believer in Christ Jesus.

Later, in the Formula of Concord, stress was laid upon the active obedience, as well as the sufferings and death of Christ; and Lutheran theologians have generally acquiesced in the propriety and importance of this distinction, so that the satisfaction of Christ is viewed as embracing both his active and passive obedience, or all he did and suffered for our sakes.

As to the extent of the atonement, the Evangelical Lutheran church has never held or taught any other view than that it was universal, or for the whole world. Any other view would conflict with the general system held, as well as with express statements of this particular doctrine. The atonement of Christ is not only deemed sufficient for the whole world, and adapted to the condition and wants of every sinner, but as actually provided for and to be offered to all. No theory of the divine purposes, or conclusions drawn from results actually attained, are allowed to mould the interpretation of the plain, simple, and reiterated declarations of the divine word. As the Bible teaches that "Christ tasted death for every man," and that his blood is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, so the church, with Melancthon in the Apology, holds that "Christ was given for us to atone for the sins of the world." The compassionate love of God in sending his Son, knew no limits short of the whole world of fallen human beings, and none will be

excluded from the benefits of his redemption, except those who exclude themselves.

In opposition to the Romish view, the atonement of Christ is held to be complete, not only sufficient for original sin, but for all actual sins. This error of the Romish church is most earnestly combatted and exposed, as prejudicial alike to the honor of Christ, and to the peace of souls. It is called "an abominable error," "an unparalleled innovation," and its utter groundlessness shown. Nothing is allowed to come between Christ and his righteousness, and the soul that is in need of pardon and grace. To the lost, guilty soul Christ is everything, and every other trust is but a refuge of lies.

On such a foundation as this it is taught "that we obtain the remission of sins, and are justified before God by grace for Christ's sake, through faith, if we believe that Christ suffered for us, and that for his sake our sins are remitted unto us, and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed on us" (Augsburg Confession, Art. vi.).

Christ having completed his atoning work on earth, now "sits at the right hand of God," and "is the only Saviour, High Priest, Propitiator, and Intercessor before God" (Augsburg Confession, Art. iii. xxi.).

APPLICATION OF REDEMPTION.

This is the peculiar and appropriate work of the Holy Ghost, as Christ said: "He shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." The necessity of the Holy Spirit's aid to apply the purchased redemption is everywhere taught or recognized. Luther teaches very fully in his Larger Catechism, that we never could know Christ, or believe on him, or come to him as our Lord, were it not for the Holy Ghost conferring on us the power, through the preaching of the gospel; and that the treasure obtained by the suffering, death, and resurrection of Christ, would remain hidden and unknown, did not the Holy Ghost reveal it and appropriate it to us. It is by faith in Christ that we become partakers of his salvation; and the Augsburg Confession teaches (Art. v.): "For the

purpose of obtaining this faith God has instituted the ministry, and given the gospel and the sacraments, through which, as means, he imparts the Holy Spirit, who in his own time and place works faith in those that hear the gospel," etc.

The word of God and the sacraments are the appointed means through which the Holy Spirit operates in awakening, renewing, and sanctifying the soul. Other aids may be employed, and in some sense may be called means, but these are God's own established means in his church, and without which ordinarily the Holy Spirit does not exert his efficacious and saving power. The Formula of Concord says (Art. ii.) : "Before the conversion of man there are but two efficient causes found producing conversion, namely, the Holy Spirit, and the word of God as the instrument of the Holy Spirit, through which he effects conversion and which man is to hear; he cannot, however, have faith in it and accept it through his own powers, but exclusively through the grace and operation of God the Holy Spirit." The view is condemned as erroneous "that God draws men to himself, enlightens, justifies, and saves them, without the hearing of the word of God, and without the use of the holy sacraments." The church does not regard these means as indifferent, but as divinely appointed and efficacious, so that they become a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death. The authority just quoted declares, "although both the planting and the watering by the preacher, and the running and willing by the hearer would be in vain, and conversion would not follow if the power and operation of the Holy Spirit were not super-added, who through the word preached and heard enlightens and converts the heart, so that men believe that word, and give their assent to it; nevertheless, neither the preacher nor the hearer should doubt of this grace and operation of the Holy Spirit, but should feel assured, when the word of God is preached in purity and sincerity according to the command and will of God, and people listen to it with diligence and earnestness, and meditate upon the same, that God is cer-

tainly present with his grace, and gives that which man cannot otherwise receive or give by his own strength."

But while honor is thus placed on the word of God and the sacraments ordained by Christ, the Holy Spirit is the efficient agent in the work of man's regeneration and sanctification, to which the larger Catechism thus testifies: "For as the Father is called Creator, the Son Redeemer, so also should the Holy Spirit, on account of his office, be called a Sanctifier, or one who sanctifies."

We may here briefly notice some of the most important changes in this process of salvation, in which the sinner passes from a state of spiritual death, under condemnation, to one of spiritual life, justification before God, and blessed heirship to heaven. We cannot attempt to trace minutely the successive steps, but only touch upon a few leading points.

Regeneration.

As this term is employed with considerable latitude of meaning, it will be desirable to define the sense in which it will be here used. Regeneration, strictly speaking, is distinguished from conversion: the former designating the work of the Holy Spirit wrought in us, the latter our turning to God, or from sin to holiness, under the gracious influence of that Divine Agent. The one is the result of the other. In regeneration we may be said to be passive, in conversion we are active. The two ought not to be confounded when clearness of distinction is needed. But as it will answer our present purpose, and secure greater brevity, we shall use the term as expressive of the whole change, that wrought in us and that effected by us, in which we pass from death unto life, and from the power of Satan unto God; only limiting it to the beginning of the new life, and not extending it to its continued growth and perfection. The very word itself indicates a beginning, a birth, as distinguished from subsequent progress and development. Thus understood, it will serve to give definiteness and clearness to our statement; to mark a few of the leading elements in this great change.

1. As to its nature it is spiritual and radical. It has reference to man as a spiritual being, and is clearly distinguished from any and every mere outward change, or moral reform, by involving a change of the heart. As sin affects the whole man, so does this; but it operates from the very heart and centre of his being; moulding the outward man after the inward renewal. "In true conversion a change, or new inclinations and tendencies, must take place in the understanding, will, and heart. God draws the person whom he converts, and so draws him, that out of a darkened understanding is created an enlightened understanding, and out of a rebellious will, an obedient will. And this the scriptures call creating a new heart, Ps. xli. 10" (Formula of Concord).

2. The result is, what is called "a new creature," or a "new man in Christ Jesus." It is not, indeed, meant that any new faculties have been imparted to the soul, or that there has been any change in its essence. As in the fall, man lost none of his original native powers or faculties, but only experienced an utter corruption of his nature, bringing him under the dominion of sin and death; so in regeneration no new faculties are bestowed, but only the quickening and renovation of what was spiritually dead. The essence of man remains the same, but his nature is changed from sin to holiness, and he passes from death unto life.

3. The efficient agent is the Holy Spirit, and the work is thus one of divine power. This has already been shown, and the means employed by the Holy Spirit briefly mentioned. The manner in which the Holy Spirit operates upon the heart, thus changing its entire spiritual character, while deeply mysterious and inscrutable to us, may be described as "a mode applicable to a rational creature." He does not compel any to be regenerated; and, although man is utterly impotent, being dead in trespasses and sins, yet he operates in him, according to the laws of his nature as a rational and accountable being.

4. The necessity of this change is absolute and universal. All are by nature sinful. This sin renders them unfit for

communion with God, or for an abode of holy blessedness. Without regeneration, a new birth, that which is flesh will remain flesh, and must be forever excluded from the presence and enjoyment of God and all the bliss of heaven. We may not always say when or precisely how it was effected, but we may say, for Christ has said: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

Justification.

Upon no point of doctrine has the Lutheran church been more decided and earnest than upon this. The great Reformation of the sixteenth century turned upon it. The doctrine of justification by faith, was the centre around which everything moved, and the church clings to it as her treasure and her crown. Other articles of faith she may "earnestly contend for," but this one she holds, as Luther said, "the article of a standing or a falling church." The Lutheran church does not pretend that this doctrine is peculiar to herself, or that others may not hold it in equal purity, but she does claim to hold it with a peculiar affection, and to give it a special prominence in her system of doctrine. The very life of the church began in this, and in it must continue or perish. If it should be asked to what doctrine does the Evangelical Lutheran church give prominence above every other, the answer would be, to the doctrine of justification by faith in the atonement and righteousness of Jesus Christ.¹ Melancthon says in the Apology (Art. iv.): "This concerns the principal and most important article of the whole Christian doctrine, and much indeed depends upon this article, which contributes especially to a clear, correct apprehension of all the holy scriptures, and which alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure, and true knowledge of Christ: yea, which is the only key to the whole Bible, and without which

¹ "Luther, by the deep experience of his own heart and life, was led to the material principle of Protestantism, namely, justification by faith, which is the central point for the right understanding of the development of the whole Protestant system of theology" — Hagenbach's *Hist. of Doctrines*, Vol. ii. pp. 141.

the poor conscience can have no true, invariable, fixed hope, nor conceive the riches of the grace of Christ."

1. Justification is used to signify, not infused or imparted righteousness, but the declaring and counting as righteous. "We are justified before God, by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith. . . . God regards this faith, and imputes it as righteousness in his sight" (Augsburg Confession, Art. iv.). The Apology, in explanation and defence, repeatedly states that justification is used in a forensic sense, and marks the distinction between counting and treating as righteous, and making righteous; or between justification, as a simple act of pardon and acceptance, and sanctification, or righteousness wrought in the believer. "Et justificari significat hic non ex impio justum effici, sed usu forensi justum pronuntiari. — Justificare hoc loco (Rom. v. 1) forensi consuetudino significat reum absolvere et pronuntiare justum." — "We believe, teach, and confess, that according to the phraseology of the holy scriptures, the word to justify, in this article, signifies to *absolve*, that is, to pronounce a sentence of release from sin, as illustrated in the following passages, Prov. xvii. 15; Rom. viii. 33" (Formula of Concord). This distinction between imputed righteousness, and infused righteousness, or counting and making righteous, so generally recognized among those who are considered evangelical and orthodox, has found its opponents not only in the church of Rome, but also among some individuals and parties in Protestant churches. But the Lutheran church has sought clearly to distinguish justification from every other act, however intimately associated or inseparably united with it, that thus it might stand forth in the clearest light. "If we wish to retain in its purity the article concerning justification, great diligence and care are to be observed, lest that which precedes faith, and that which follows it, be at the same time intermingled and introduced into the article concerning justification, as necessary and pertaining to it. . . . For to justification these alone belong and are necessary: the grace of God, the merit of Christ, and faith which accepts these in the promise of the gospel, and

thus the righteousness of Christ is imputed unto us; whence we obtain and have remission of sins, reconciliation with God, the adoption, and the inheritance of eternal life" (Formula of Concord). Much more of the same kind might be adduced, from the symbolical books and from standard theologians, but it is unnecessary. The church still adheres to this view, and deems any departure from it adapted to obscure the merit of Christ, and to deprive the soul of all true hope and consolation.

2. The ground of our justification is thus stated (Augsburg Confession, Art. iv.): "It is further taught that we cannot obtain righteousness and the forgiveness of sin before God by our own merits, works, and atonement; but that we obtain the remission of sins, and are justified before God, by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, if we believe that Christ suffered for us, and that for his sake our sins are remitted unto us, and righteousness and eternal life are bestowed on us. For God regards this faith and imputes it as righteousness in his sight, as Paul says, Rom. iii. and iv." In harmony with this is every utterance of the church. The Formula of Concord but reiterates the truth when it says: "Accordingly, we believe, teach, and confess that our righteousness before God is this — that God forgives us our sins out of pure grace, without any regard to our antecedent, present, or subsequent works, merit, or worthiness; granting and imputing to us the righteousness of the obedience of Christ, on account of which righteousness we are received into favor with God, and reputed as just."

3. The sole condition on which we receive Christ, and the medium and instrument by which we apprehend him, is faith alone. This faith is a divine gift, imparted to us by the Holy Spirit working in us, and is not a bare assent to the truth of the gospel, but a confiding trust in Christ, as our righteousness and our all. In the exercise of this faith the whole heart goes out after Christ, and he is received as its Redeemer and Saviour.

4. The faith that justifies never stands alone. "True

contrition precedes justification," and "love is also a fruit which certainly and necessarily follows after faith. The renewal and sanctification of man, although they do not pertain to the article or subject of justification before God, yet they follow after it. After a man is justified through faith, true and living faith worketh by love" (Formula of Concord).

Sanctification.

The work of sanotification, begun in the believer in regeneration, is carried on through life. He is to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Where there is a genuine faith, it will not fail to work the fruits of holy living. The faith that does not purify the heart is not a faith that will avail to our justification. These two, justification and sanctification, though distinct, must not be so separated, as though we could have the one without the other. The Lutheran church teaches, that, while justification is complete, so that there "is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," sanctification is progressive, and never reaches a point in this life beyond which there is no room or demand for improvement. The Christian is to press onward and to follow after holiness. The chief means of growth in the divine life, or of sanctification, are the word and sacraments. Jesus prayed: "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth."

GOOD WORKS.

The controversies in the church of the sixteenth century with Romanists, and sometimes among Protestants themselves, about good works, have ceased to occasion discussion. The objection that evangelical doctrines were unfavorable to good works has been disproved by arguments and facts. The Lutheran church has always maintained that, while works could avail nothing to our justification before God, they must follow faith, as its fruit, and as the command of God. The Christian cannot merit heaven by any good

deeds ; but " the unprofitable servant " may prepare himself for an inheritance of shame and contempt. No higher motives can be presented than are contained in the gospel to the most earnest efforts in the doing of good. Our works evidence our faith, and glorify him who has called us to holiness and obedience in the gospel.

THE SACRAMENTS.

Here, perhaps, if anywhere — or more than anywhere else, — the doctrine of the Lutheran church is supposed to differ from that of some other evangelical churches. And yet the difference on the general subject is by no means what ignorance and prejudice have sometimes made it ; nor does the church hold any such views of the individual sacraments as have been very commonly charged to her. As there has been much misapprehension on this point, we may be allowed to give a somewhat fuller statement than on others where there is no dispute. And, as there may be some difference of views among Lutherans themselves, the appeal will be chiefly to the Confession and to the Apology, written by the same hand. The leading Article of the Augsburg Confession treating of this subject, the thirteenth, is as follows :

" Concerning the use of the sacraments, it is taught that the sacraments have been instituted, not only as tokens by which Christians may be known externally, but as signs and evidences of the divine will towards us, for the purpose of exciting and strengthening our faith. Hence they also require faith ; and they are properly used, then, only when received in faith, and when faith is strengthened by them."

Taking this as our guide, with the explanations of the Apology, we learn :

1. As to their nature, " sacraments are external signs and seals of the promises " — " efficacious signs and sure testimonies of God's grace and purpose towards us." " A visible word, for the external sign is like a picture, and signifies the same thing that is preached by the word " (Apology, Art. vii.).

2. As to their design, they are intended as means of grace "for the purpose of exciting and strengthening our faith"; "to admonish and strengthen our hearts to believe the more firmly and joyfully"; "As the word enters our ears, so the external signs are placed before our eyes, inwardly to excite and move our hearts to faith"; "and thereby console our alarmed, timid hearts, and rest assured that the word and promises of God cannot fail, but are as sure, nay, more so, than a new divine voice, or a new miracle from heaven, promising grace to us" (Apology, Art. vii.).

3. As to their use, they require faith. "We cannot too carefully consider, or speak too freely of the abuses and errors introduced by the pernicious, shameful, and impious doctrine of the *opus operatum*, namely, that the mere use of the sacraments, the work performed, makes us just before God, and secures his grace, even without a good disposition of heart. We therefore say that the proper use of the sacraments requires faith to believe the divine promises and receive the promised grace which is offered through the sacraments and the word. For the divine promises can be accepted by faith alone" (Apology, Art. vii.).

4. As to their efficacy, they "are not mere signs," but "efficacious signs and sure testimonies"—"seals of the promises"; and "we should firmly believe that the grace and remission of sins promised in the New Testament are imparted to us. This proper use of the sacraments really consoles and refreshes the heart" (Apology, Art. vii.).

From these statements, drawn directly from the confessional writings of the church, it will be seen that the views embraced and taught are different from those of the Romish church, which ascribe an efficacy to the sacraments themselves, so that the mere use of them insures divine grace, and also from the opposite extreme of denying all efficacy save as mere exhibitions of truth. They are the divinely appointed signs, instruments, and seals of the grace promised to us in the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Something yet must be added in regard to each of the sacraments separately.

Baptism.

“Respecting baptism it is taught that it is necessary; that grace is offered through it, and that children ought to be baptized, who through such baptism are presented to God, and become acceptable to him” (Augsburg Confession, Art. ix.).

The Lutheran church holds to the necessity of baptism, and that it is a means of grace. The necessity is not absolute, so that no soul can be saved without it; but necessary as of divine appointment, and the ordinary means through which God is pleased to dispense his blessings, so that those who despise or neglect the ordinance, exclude themselves from the promises of his grace. Children are to be baptized “in order that they may become participants of the gospel, the promise of salvation and grace, as Christ commands, (Matt. xxviii. 19). For in and with baptism, universal grace and the treasure of the gospel are offered to them” (Apology).

Baptismal regeneration, in the usual sense of that term, as meaning that baptism, *ex opere operato*, works regeneration, has no place in the Lutheran system, but is directly opposed to its whole genius as well as its express declarations. Some expressions may be strained to bear such a meaning, but it is contradicted by the full and unequivocal meaning of other passages. Everything is made to turn upon faith. Luther strongly says, in his larger Catechism, and reiterates the doctrine: “Without faith baptism is of no benefit, although in itself it is a divine, inestimable treasure. For it is irrevocably decreed, that whatever is not faith profits nothing in obtaining salvation, nor can it receive any blessing.” But baptism, rightly administered and received, is taught to be a means of grace; and through it Christ seals to his disciples the blessings of his redemption.

The uniform mode of baptism in the Lutheran church has been by affusion or pouring. In the symbols written by Luther himself, he has shown a preference for immersion as

the mode, but this has never been adopted by the church; and while the quantity of water, as well as the mode of application, is not deemed essential, the uniform practice and decided preference of the church have been shown in favor of affusion or pouring, instead of immersion. The extreme view of Baptists on immersion is opposed to the whole free spirit of Lutheranism, attaching an importance to the mode of an external ordinance which does not really belong to the externals of Christianity. Lutheranism cannot make an essential to church membership, or to genuine fellowship among the disciples of Christ, anything so unimportant and questionable as the quantity and mode of applying water in baptism; and while the validity of immersion would not be denied, the uniform and chosen practice of the church is in favor of a different mode, as truly scriptural and proper.

Lord's Supper.

On this subject it is well known that the Lutherans and Reformed could not agree at Marburg. This constituted the chief point of difference then, as it is the point around which most of the doctrinal differences and controversies centre now. Three hundred years have not served to settle the difficulty.

Then, they agreed so far as jointly to say: "The sacrament of the altar is the sacrament of the true body and blood of Christ, and the spiritual partaking of this body and blood is necessary for every Christian. . . . And, although we are not agreed at present on the question, whether the real body and blood of Christ are corporeally present in the bread and wine, yet both parties shall cherish more and more a truly Christian charity so far as conscience permits" (Articles of Marburg Conference, 1529, Art. xv.).

Luther then insisted on the literal interpretation of the words "this is my body," while the Reformed dissented from such an interpretation. When the Augsburg Confession was prepared and presented, it contained (Art. x.): "Concerning the Supper of the Lord it is taught that the true body and

blood of Christ are truly present, under the form of bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, and are there administered and received."

It is not easy to determine precisely what meaning was attached to these words by Melancthon when written, or what they actually teach. It would perhaps be easier to say what they do not, and were not intended to, teach. This much at least is certain, that the Lutheran church has repudiated and rejected nearly every view or interpretation that has been placed upon them by those holding opposite opinions. The church not only rejects transubstantiation, but consubstantiation, so persistently charged upon her, and subpanation and impanation and every other view that involves a gross corporeal presence, or that the body and blood of Christ are locally included in the bread and wine. Even the oral manducation of the Formula of Concord, with all its refined distinctions, has no place here, and is no part of the Augsburg Confession, or of the faith of the Lutheran church. Every idea of a physical or sensible presence is utterly excluded in the interpretation of the church, and the whole is regarded as supernatural and above our understandings. At the same time it is equally certain that these words were designed to express, and do express, a meaning different from the view entertained by the Reformed; and to teach the doctrine of a true presence of the body and blood of Christ in this sacrament. They mean to teach that Christ is truly present, and present according to both natures, and that in this sacrament his body and blood are communicated and received. How this is effected is not stated, except that the presence is "under the form of bread and wine." As to any union between the outward and visible signs, and the true body and blood of Christ, the church affirms none, but commonly calls it a sacramental union, as the presence is called a true or real presence, and sometimes a sacramental presence.

It need not be concealed that this doctrine has been the occasion of serious difficulties in the very bosom of the

Lutheran church itself, and that its reception has been very far from being cordial and universal. Only ten years after the publication of the Augsburg Confession, Melanchthon altered the tenth Article so as to read, "quod corpus et sanguis Christi vere exhibeantur vescentibus in coena domini," that is, "that the body and blood of Christ are truly represented in the Lord's supper"; and although this change never received formally the sanction of the church, but at a later day was condemned as unauthorized, yet it is certain that the Melanchthonian view continued to have many adherents, and that at all times there has been considerable difference of opinion among those considered consistent and genuine Lutherans, as to the interpretation of this Article, or how it should be received.¹ The interpretation put upon

¹ Gieseler, in his History of the Church, says: "As to the new edition of the Augsburg Confession in 1540, the so-called Variata, afterward so much calumniated, no one at that time thought of taking offence at it. It was considered as a revision, which made the Confession more plain; very much praised by Brenta, and immediately used at the Colloquy of Worms, January 1541. . . . As long as Melanchthon lived the Variata was universally used without objections, even by the most decided opponents of Melanchthon, as Westphal, and in the Weimar Confutation Book" (Vol. iv. pp. 432, 433).

It is even affirmed that Luther revised and approved this edition: Nic. Selnecker (Catalogus Brevis Præcipuorum Conciliorum) "Recognita est Aug. Conf. posterior, relegente et approbante Luthero, ut vivi adhuc testes affirmant." Casper Pencer, son-in-law of Melanchthon: "mandante, recognoscente et approbante Luthero" (Preface to Melanchthon's Works, 1562, Vol. i.).

The Confession of the Saxony churches, written by Melanchthon 1551, to be presented to the Council of Trent, has: "In hac communionem vere et substantialiter adesse Christum, et vere exhiberi sumentibus corpus et sanguinem Christi" (Works 1562, Vol. i. p. 134).

How little he sympathized with those who obstinately insisted on a peculiar view as essential to church fellowship, a few brief citations will show: To Bucur, April 1531: "Melius illi toti causæ consultum fuerit, si sinamus paulatim consulescere has tragicas contentiones" (Corp. Ref. ii. pp. 498). To Vitus Theodorus, April 1538: "Ego ne longissime recederem a veteribus, posui in usu sacramentalem præsentiam, et dixi, datis his rebus Christum vere adesse et efficacem esse. Id profecto satis est. . . . Sacramenta pacta sunt, ut rebus sumptis adsit aliud. Quid requiris amplius?" (Corp. Ref. iii. 514). Responsio ad Criminationes Staphyli et Avii, 1558: "Intuens Ecclesiarum nostrarum vulnera, cum propter alias causas multas ingenti dolore afficior, tum vero eo magis crucior, quod occupati intestinis bellis non studemus vel συγκρητισμῶν, ut olim dicebatur, nos adversus communes hostes conjungere" (Works, 1564, Vol. iv. p. 813).

it by the other later symbolical books, is not only contrary to the oft-repeated views of Melancthon, but has not been generally accepted; and the mode of the Saviour's presence, and the manner of this reception, must be left largely to the faith and conscience of individuals. The same liberty at least must be granted, as was allowed by Luther and Melancthon during their lives, and implicit agreement in every particular cannot be expected, or, if expected by any, will not be secured.

To show how cautiously the most distinguished Lutheran divines have expressed themselves on this controverted question, a few brief citations will be given:

Chemnitz: "The presence of Christ's body in the supper is not natural. It is easier, therefore, to show what the sacramental eating is not than what it is."

Hunnius: "The Lord's supper is a spiritual work, instituted and ordained by Christ himself, whereby, in the consecrated bread, he gives unto the believer his body to eat, and in the consecrated wine his blood to drink, in order thereby to apply unto every individual more specially all the promises of the gospel, to seal them to him, strengthen his faith, and give him food and everlasting life."

Hollaz: "The mode in which the body of Christ is present in the bread used in the Lord's supper is not determined; and, though there is a sacramental union of the bread with the body of Christ, this is not dependent on a definite mode of the presence, but on the special divine promise."

Mosheim: "What the nature of this presence is, we know not. . . . We deny that Christ is present and received in a physical or material manner. But should any one ask how he is present, our answer is, we know not. We commonly call his presence in this holy ordinance a sacramental presence."

The General Synod of the Lutheran church, besides having no special jurisdiction in matters of faith, beyond requiring of synods uniting with it a reception of the Augsburg Confession, as already stated, purposely allows and sanctions some degree of liberty in interpreting the Confession. Well

knowing that a similar diversity of views on this very subject prevailed in the early church, without division, and not regarding this peculiar aspect of the sacrament as a fundamental doctrine, there is no disposition to press the matter upon the conscience of any. Within certain limits, well enough understood, freedom of opinion and liberty of conscience are cheerfully granted. While some adhere more strictly to what they understand to be the doctrine of the Confession on this point, the views commonly entertained do not probably differ materially from those of other orthodox churches; except that there may be a disposition to lay more stress upon the ordinance, and to insist more emphatically on the presence of Christ, and that he is present as the God-man who suffered and died for us. The sacrament, too, is maintained as something more than a mere exhibition of truth—a symbolical representation; it is a means of grace, in which the believer has true fellowship with his crucified and exalted Redeemer, and in which there are sealed to him all the blessings of a purchased salvation.

In regard to the design of this sacrament, we suppose every Lutheran cordially adopts the language of Melancthon in the Apology: "The sacrament was instituted by Christ to console the alarmed conscience, to strengthen our faith when we believe that the flesh of Christ was given for the life of the world, and that by this nourishment we are united with Christ and obtain grace and life"; and also the language of the Formula of Concord: "This most august sacrament was to be a perpetual memorial of his bitter passion and death, and of all his benefits, a sealing of the New Testament, a consolation for afflicted hearts; and a continual bond and union of Christians with Christ their head and among themselves."

There are those in the Lutheran church in this country; who rigidly insist on the view as drawn out and stated in the Formula of Concord—the real, substantial presence of the true body and blood of Christ, and that the body and blood are received by the mouth. And they are unwilling

to acknowledge, or associate with, as Lutherans, any who do not profess the same faith. This, however, has never been, nor is it now, the spirit of the General Synod of the Lutheran church. Within it the largest liberty consistent with purity of doctrine, has always been the rule. In common with very many and very distinguished divines of other churches, the opinion generally prevails within the General Synod, that there is no such fundamental difference between Lutherans and other orthodox churches, in regard to the Lord's supper, as should be any bar to their Christian fellowship, or to their harmonious co-operation in the work of advancing our common Christianity.¹

ECCLESIOLOGICAL.

The constitution and government of the Lutheran church have differed somewhat in different countries. The church does not profess to find a definite and fully developed system of government in the New Testament, and hence has allowed such modifications as the times and circumstances seemed to favor or demand. In some European countries, as Sweden and Denmark, a modified form of episcopacy prevails; while in Germany the government is chiefly by consistories, without bishops. In the United States the church recognizes "three judicatories; the council of each individual church, the district synods, consisting of all the clergy and an equal number of laymen from a particular district of country, and one General Synod formed by representatives from the district synods" (Formula of Government, Chap. i.; prepared by S. S. Schmucker, D.D.).

It must not be supposed, however, that the Lutheran church

¹ In the Article on the "Lutheran Church" in Appleton's American Encyclopaedia, Vol. x. (1860), understood to be from the pen of C. P. Krauth, D.D., of Philadelphia, the writer after quoting learned authorities to show that "as to Lutherans and Calvinists, however widely they may appear to differ in words and names," yet there is "an essential unity," and only "a secondary diversity in the two parties"; and further truly adds: "Many learned writers of different denominations have found nothing in the doctrines or usages of Lutherans to prevent a union between them and other Protestants."

has no system of ecclesiastical polity, or that she regards all systems as equally scriptural and equally good. Nothing could be further from the truth. For upon all points her judgment has been fully expressed; and it is only as a matter of necessity, or of divine right, that many points are not considered as absolutely fixed by the New Testament. According to her view the true church may, and does, exist under different forms of external organization and government.

The Lutheran church holds to the establishment of the Christian church as a divine institution, and which will continue until the end of the world. This church "is the congregation of all believers, among whom the gospel is preached in its purity, and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel" (Augsburg Confession, Art. vii.). This church is essentially one, but its unity is spiritual, and in order to this "it is not necessary that uniform ceremonies and regulations instituted by men should everywhere be observed." In the visible church are many unworthy members, which, however does not destroy its character as the true church of Christ.

The church and state, or ecclesiastical and civil power, are to be clearly distinguished, and each is to be considered as supreme within its own sphere. Both are of divine appointment, but for wholly different ends. Both are to be upheld in the legitimate exercise of their power. "These two governments, the civil and ecclesiastical, ought not to be mingled and confounded. . . . Both, on account of God's commandment, ought to be honored and sustained with all sincerity, as the two greatest blessings on earth. . . . The churches undoubtedly retain the authority to call, to elect, and ordain ministers. And this authority is a privilege which God has given especially to the church; and it cannot be taken away from the church by any human power." Civil government "relates to matters entirely different from the gospel, and protects with its power, not the souls of men, but their bodies and possessions against external violence by

the sword and bodily penalties" (Augsburg Confession, Art. xxviii. xvi. Smalcald Articles, Appendix).

The ministry is also divinely instituted, not as a distinct order, but as an office to which men must be duly called and set apart that they may publicly preach and administer the sacraments. The Lutheran church fully recognizes and holds the universal priesthood of believers, and that all have one High Priest, Jesus Christ, "who has passed into heaven, now to appear in the presence of God for us." No other priesthood or hierarchical order is acknowledged to stand between God and the people. The Christian ministry is simply an office in the church, and ministers are distinguished from the laity only because they have been called to this office of ministering in holy things. Every hierarchical tendency is opposed to the spirit of the gospel, and to the universal rights of Christian believers (Augsburg Confession; Art. v. xiv.).

No distinction of grade among ministers is recognized as of divine appointment, but the parity in office of these servants of Christ is steadfastly maintained. "According to divine authority, there is no difference between bishops and pastors or ministers; all who preside over the church have this command alike [to preach the gospel, administer the sacraments, etc.], whether they be called pastors or presbyters or bishops. . . . For the office and the authority are entirely the same" (Smalcald Articles, Appendix). Where any distinction has been allowed in the Lutheran church, it has been entirely a matter of toleration or expediency, and not any concession to a claim of divine right.

Ecclesiastical power really vests in the church itself, or in the members constituting the church. Each individual congregation, embracing pastor and people, has full authority under Christ to act for itself. Here is the beginning and seat of ecclesiastical authority and power. But as the church is one, and is to act in a united capacity, congregations may unite in forming ecclesiastical bodies or synods, and, by delegation and representation, these synods act for

individual congregations; and their acts are the acts of the church. This principle is believed to be fully exhibited in the New Testament, and is universally recognized in our ecclesiastical affairs. These synods may again unite in forming a General Synod. In accordance with such views and principles has the Evangelical Lutheran church in the United States been organized. The position occupied is intermediate between Presbyterianism and Congregationalism. More power and freedom are claimed for individual churches than is acknowledged by Presbyterianism, and more authority and power granted to synods than is acknowledged by Congregationalism. If a political term might be employed, we would call the government federal-republican, in which the members of the churches, through congregations and synods, form a union for the good of the whole.

In all ecclesiastical bodies of the Lutheran church the equal rights of the laity are fully admitted. In district synods and General Synod they have an equality with the ministry in numbers, and equal privileges in speech and voting; and these rights are carefully guaranteed and duly respected. No hierarchical spirit is allowed here any more than in the service of the sanctuary. The church is a Christian brotherhood, as well as a universal priesthood.

ESCHATOLOGICAL.

There is nothing peculiar in the doctrine of the Lutheran church on the points embraced under this general head. In common with other orthodox Christians, she believes in a future world, the resurrection of the body, the immortality of man, a final judgment, and the eternity of rewards and punishments. The office of raising the dead and judging all men Christ will execute when he comes again in power and glory.

The doctrine of Millenarianism, as currently taught and understood, is contrary to the Confession of the church and to the teaching of her most distinguished theologians. When-

ever and wherever such a doctrine has appeared in the church, and has been advocated by individuals, it has only been tolerated as not a fundamental heresy; but such a faith is utterly inconsistent with the whole system of Lutheran doctrine. The Augsburg Confession (Art. xvii.) says: "It is also taught that on the last day our Lord Jesus Christ will come to raise and to judge all the dead"; and adds, "In like manner certain Jewish doctrines are condemned, which are circulated even now, that, prior to the resurrection of the dead, the holy and pious alone will occupy a temporal kingdom, and that all the wicked will be exterminated." That Christ's kingdom on earth is a spiritual kingdom is taught in Art. iii.: "And sits at the right hand of God, that he may perpetually reign over all creatures, and govern them, through the Holy Spirit sanctify, purify, strengthen, and console all those that believe in him. . . . Also, that finally this same Christ will return visibly to judge the living and the dead, etc., according to the Apostles' Creed."

The church looks for the triumph of Christ over all his enemies — not only the subjection of the nations to his sway, but the purification of this world from sin, and the establishment of a new heavens and a new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness.

An attempt will now be made to gather up the most important and most interesting facts that may serve to give a general view of the progress and present position of the church.

STATISTICS.

Entirely reliable and accurate statistics of the church are scarcely to be obtained; and all that can be attempted is an approximation to the truth. Different synods have had different methods of reporting, and the changes have been so constant and so great that, after considerable examination and comparison of data, allowance must be made for want of strict accuracy. The following, however, will serve to form a general judgment:

In 1748, when the first synod was formed, there were eleven Lutheran ministers in the Colonies. In 1820, at the formation of the General Synod, there were five synods, and about one hundred and forty ministers, and some thirty thousand members. In 1823, the synod of Pennsylvania, more than one half of the entire church, withdrew, leaving the number of ministers in connection with the General Synod only about sixty. For the next forty years the growth of the General Synod may be thus exhibited :

	Synods.	Ministers.	Churches.	Members.
1823,	5	61	200	10,000
1833,	4	80	250	15,000
1843,	12	300	600	60,000
1853,	20	560	1,250	112,000
1863,	27	900	1,700	170,000

During the same period the entire Lutheran church in the United States, according to the same estimates, would exhibit about the following ;

	Synods.	Ministers.	Churches.	Members.
1823,	5	175	900	40,000
1833,	9	240	1,000	60,000
1843,	19	430	1,400	150,000
1853,	31	900	1,800	200,000
1863,	40	1,400	2,500	260,000

The present numbers are, 44 synods, 1,725 ministers, 3,100 congregations, 350,000 members.

The theological seminary of the General Synod at Gettysburg was founded in 1825. The Hartwick Seminary had been founded a few years before. In 1832, Pennsylvania College, at Gettysburg, the first college in the United States under Lutheran auspices, was founded. Since that, literary and theological institutions have multiplied, until now there are some fifteen theological seminaries and seventeen colleges, with academies and female seminaries. If the quality were equal to the quantity, there would be no lack of educational institutions; but, while some of them are respectably endowed, and have a competent corps of professors, others have to struggle to maintain an existence. Some three hundred thousand dollars have been raised during the past

three years for these institutions, and the sum will probably be largely increased during the present jubilee year (from October 31, 1867, to October 31, 1868).

GENERAL BENEVOLENT INSTITUTIONS.

In connection with the General Synod, and under its auspices, have been formed various benevolent societies designed to enlist and direct the energies of the church. Of these, the Parent Education Society was organized in 1835 (the work it was designed to do, and which for a number of years it did accomplish, has been left of late to the education societies of the district synods); the Foreign Missionary Society, organized in 1837, and which has sustained missions in India and Africa, yet it must be confessed on too limited a scale; the Home Missionary Society, organized in 1845; the Church Extension Society, organized in 1853; besides, the Publication Society, organized in 1851, and the Historical Society, founded in 1845.

The Lutheran church has not given to the cause of foreign missions and general benevolence, in proportion to her numbers and wealth, nor in proportion to what other churches have done. This is doubtless in part owing to the want of a spirit of benevolence, but other causes have combined to restrain benevolent contributions in that direction. The rapid increase of the church at home, the constant and growing demand for ministers and church edifices to supply the newly organized churches, with the effort to establish institutions for the furtherance of this work, have engrossed most of the attention, and received most of the contributions, of the church. Yet there is a very general feeling among the intelligent and reflecting portions of the church, that we have been sadly deficient in missionary zeal, and that the cry of the heathen has been too much neglected. The amount contributed directly to foreign missions is not more than about ten thousand dollars a year, a very small sum for such an object and by such a church. Home missions have received much more attention. The work in this depart-

ment is carried on jointly by synodical societies, and by a General Home Missionary Society. Most of the synods attend to the work on their own territory, and some of them sustain individual missions in the West, handing over only the surplus funds to the General Society, so that its exhibit would furnish a very meagre and incorrect view of what is actually accomplished. At present it may perhaps be said that theological education and home missions have the chief place in the heart of the church.

Quite a number of institutions of an eleemosynary character, for orphans, widows, and the infirm, have been established in different parts of the church, and some of them have received liberal contributions. At present there are more than a dozen of these houses of mercy, and the number is annually increasing. The church deems it a sacred duty to care for the poor and fatherless, and in this at least has not been behind other denominations.

PUBLICATIONS.

Besides a general Publication Society, with its office and depository in Philadelphia, there are about thirty Lutheran periodicals published in the United States, of which more than one half are in the German, Swedish, and Norwegian languages. This diversity of languages, while it has greatly increased the difficulty in supplying the church with a suitable religious literature, has tended to diminish the circulation of any one of these publications. Still, some of these periodicals will not suffer by comparison with those of other churches. The Publication Society has not yet sufficient age or means to accomplish what may be hoped for in years to come. It is yet in its childhood, if not infancy, and must have time to grow.

CULTURE AND WORSHIP.

From the beginning, the Lutheran church has been an educating church, and if in the United States she has not equalled her renown in the Old World, she has been striving

amidst many difficulties to advance. A prominent feature in her educational efforts, is the catechizing of the young. Every Lutheran pastor is expected to pay due, if not special, attention to this part of his work. Annually, or from time to time, the young are assembled and carefully instructed in the doctrines and duties of our holy religion. There is no part of the Lutheran system that is more highly prized than this, and none that has yielded more abundant fruits. Under ordinary circumstances, this is part of the regular preparation for admission to the communion of the church; and, while mere intellectual acquaintance with the truth is not deemed by any means all, or the chief, part of what is required, it is deemed of too much importance to be overlooked or neglected. The church thus aims at reaching both head and heart, and uniting intelligence with piety. Like everything else, catechizing may be perverted and made a merely formal process, by which individuals are supposed to be prepared for church membership; but this is not its true design, nor its intelligent use. Thousands and tens of thousands could testify to its spiritual advantages. In very many of the churches it is combined with individual personal conversation, and special efforts for the awakening and salvation of the young. The Catechism has been called the Bible for the young, and is intended to go hand in hand with the divine word, of which it is a simple explanation.

In the services of the sanctuary, the preaching of the word deservedly holds the most prominent place. Yet the Lutheran church seeks to elevate what is more strictly worship. Believing that the preaching of the gospel is God's ordinance for the salvation of the world, and also that his house is the house of prayer and the place of praise, the extremes are avoided of making the sanctuary simply a place to hear preaching, or, on the other hand, a place where the people attend service. Romish pomp and ceremony and Puritanic baldness, are alike foreign to the Lutheran idea of the services of God's house. Discarding all display that merely addresses the senses, the Lutheran church would retain whatever may

aid devotion, and give solemnity and dignity to the different parts of divine worship. The organ is a very common accompaniment in the singing of God's praise. The use of a brief liturgical service, though optional with pastor and people, is provided for, and found conducive to uniformity and solemnity. Extemporaneous prayer is by no means interfered with or depreciated, but such use of liturgical forms encouraged as may suit the tastes and preferences of those who use them. The mingling of solemn confession, humble prayer, and sacred song, with devout preaching and hearing of the word, contributes to the completeness and impressiveness of divine service.

The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper are administered according to the order prescribed in the Liturgy. Preceding the Lord's supper it is the uniform custom to hold what is usually called a "preparatory service," in which those who intend to participate at the communion, make a general and public confession of sin, implore the divine forgiveness, and receive the divine promises to the truly penitent and believing. Confession and private absolution, enjoined in the Augsburg Confession and other symbolical books, have never been practised in the churches of the General Synod, and, indeed, have never been general in any part of the church. Some few churches, rigidly symbolical, profess to continue the practice; but the mass of those out of, as well as in, the General Synod have only a general and public confession. The absolution, so called, within the churches of the General Synod, at least, is only declarative — the announcement of the divine promise of pardon and acceptance through Jesus Christ.

Confirmation is practised as a solemn, appropriate, and scriptural usage; and those who have been baptized in infancy, after careful religious instruction, and on their own voluntary profession, are thus publicly recognized and admitted to all the privileges of "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." This solemn rite, however, is not regarded as essential to membership; and

those coming from churches where it is not practised are received by certificate without confirmation. While honored and practised in the Lutheran church, it does not hold the place that it does in the Episcopal and Catholic churches.

The ecclesiastical festivals are observed. With no superstitious reverence for days, but with the conviction that an intelligent observance of them may be found eminently conducive to the faith and spirituality of the church, the General Synod has adopted the following: "Resolved, that the churches in connection with the General Synod be recommended to observe our regular ecclesiastical festivals in commemoration of the fundamental facts of our religion, namely, Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension-Day, and Whit-Sunday, in the hope and persuasion that, by the Divine blessing, they will be found to be, as they have often proved, occasions of reviving to our congregations."

In addition to these, the observance of days of prayer, and the 31st of October, as the anniversary of the Reformation, have been recommended. The present year, commencing October 31, 1867, being the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Reformation, will be observed as a jubilee. During this year efforts will be made to awaken a deeper interest in the great doctrines restored through the Reformation, and to quicken the zeal and liberality of the church. No one need be afraid of the Lutheran church running off into Romanism by this observance of festival days and seasons. The church thinks there is no necessity of giving all that is good in such things to Rome and the devil, but prefers to claim and exercise Christian liberty.

PRESENT CONDITION.

It is not easy in a few sentences, if at all, to describe the present condition of the Lutheran church in the United States. It may be said that the church is still in a formative process. Diversity in doctrine, worship, organization, and spirit still prevails. The liberty of which the church has boasted is freely exercised to disintegration as well as to edi-

fication. In doctrine the diversity ranges from the liberal, consistent, evangelical position of the General Synod to the most extreme and rigid symbolism, holding to every jot and tittle in the Confession, and unchurching all who will not coincide. In worship the range is from puritanic simplicity to ritualistic ceremonials. In organization, besides the General Synod, two or three other ecclesiastical unions have been formed. Through the Rebellion, the Southern synods were separated from the General Synod, and have organized themselves, numbering some five or six synods, into the "Evangelical Lutheran General Synod in North America." Recently a few other synods and parts of synods withdrew from the General Synod, and, with some bodies not in the General Synod — in all numbering eleven, — have organized the "General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America." The former of the two is the result purely of political difficulties, and grew out of the late war. The latter is the result of professed dissatisfaction with the General Synod's liberal basis and practice, and a desire to establish a more rigid Lutheranism. Its "Fundamental Principles of Faith and Church Polity," acknowledging all the symbolical books, declare that the Confessions "must be accepted in every statement of doctrine," and that "those who set them forth and subscribe them, must not only agree to use the same words, but must use and understand those words in one and the same sense." Notwithstanding this declaration, several of the larger and more rigidly symbolical synods refused to unite with the "General Council," on account of doctrinal and other difficulties; the "General Council," in the face of its profession, having prominent Millenarians among its members, as well as allowing, in some of the churches, mixed communion with other denominations, interchange of pulpits, tolerating secret societies and other practices deemed inconsistent with the purity of the church.¹

¹ The Joint Synod of Ohio, before uniting, desired the General Council to give "information on the following points: 1. What relation will this venerable body in future sustain to Chiliasm? 2. Mixed communion? 3. The exchanging of pulpits with sectarians? 4. Secret or unchurchly societies?"

It would be premature to express too decided a judgment as to the result of these different movements. A number of synods still stand separate, finding no union to suit their tastes. Meanwhile the General Synod, with a history of nearly half a century, and having secured and enjoyed the respect and confidence of other denominations, will continue on its way, inviting and encouraging those who love its position and doctrines to unite with it in extending the blessings of "brotherly love and Christian concord." The spirit of the Lutheran church as represented by the General Synod, is one of liberality and good will to all evangelical churches. Her pulpits, her altars, her ecclesiastical conventions are open to all who profess a common Lord and a common Christian faith. She invites all the true friends of Christ to her communion-table, and rejoices in "the communion of saints." While laboring in her own sphere to do the Master's work, she rejoices in all the prosperity and success of others laboring in the same blessed cause.

With few distinctive peculiarities, but combining what is good in all churches; not seeking to magnify non-essential differences, but looking at the things in which we all agree; deeming unity in spirit more important than unity in forms and ceremonials; fully recognizing the superscription and image of Christ in other churches, the Evangelical Lutheran church says to fellow Christians of every name, who hold "the truth as it is in Jesus": "We be all brethren, children of one Father, and serve one Master, who is Christ the Lord."

If we have spoken partially or too kindly of the Evangelical Lutheran church, it is as becomes a son to speak of his own mother; if too feebly, it must be set down to lack of ability to speak on such a subject. In the words of the author of 2d Maccabees: "If I have done well, and as is fitting the story, it is that which I desired; but if slenderly and meanly, it is that which I could attain unto."

The Synod of Iowa presented a paper "involving most of these same questions." The general Council was not prepared to give any definite or decisive answer to these questions; and these Synods, with the Missouri Synod, declined to unite with that body. — Minutes of General Council, First Convention, 1867.