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SERMON

ON THE

DOCTRINES AND DISCIPLINE

OF THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH,

PREACHED AT CHARLESTON, S. C.

NOVEMBER 12TH, 1837,

BY APPOINTMENT OF THE SYNOD OF SOUTH-CAROLINA,
AND ADJACENT STATES.

BY JOHN BACHMAN, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES.

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Extract from the minutes of the Fourteenth Meeting of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod, of South Carolina, and adjacent States, convened at Charleston, on Saturday, November 11th, 1837.

Resolved, That a Committee be appointed to present the thanks of Synod to Rev. Dr. Bachman, for his appropriate, lucid, and learned Discourse, on the Doctrines and Discipline of our Church, on Lord's Day evening, and to request him to furnish a copy of the manuscript for publication, because the information contained in the Sermon is highly important, to be communicated as soon as possible, to our respective congregations, and the religious world at large.

Ordered, That the Committee be composed of Rev. Dr. Hazelius, Messrs. Jacob F. Mintzing, Thomas Purse, and Henry Muller.

German Society Hall, Novemaer 15th, 1837.

REV. DR. BACHMAN,

Reverend and dear sir—It is our pleasing duty to offer you the thanks of Synod, for your able, lucid, and learned Discourse on the Doctrines and Discipline of the Lutheran Church, and to request you to furnish that body with a copy for publication.

With esteem, yours,

ERNEST L. HAZELIUS,
THOMAS PURSE,
JACOB F. MINTZING,
HENRY MULLER; } Committee.

Canonsborogh, November 16th, 1837.

Rev. Dr. HAZELIUS,
Messrs. THOMAS PURSE,
JACOB F. MINTZING,
HENRY MULLER, } Committee.

Gentlemen—I received your note, as a Committee appointed by the Synod, requesting a copy of my Sermon on the Doctrines and Discipline of the Church, for publication. As a minister of religion I regard my services at the disposal of the Church, and if it is conceived by my brethren, that the publication of my discourse will in any wise promote the cause of religion, it is at their disposal.

Yours, with esteem,

JOHN BACHMAN.

SERMON.

HEBREWS 10th CHAP. 23d v.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised.

IN various passages of holy writ faith is expressly enjoined as a duty—to the performance of it promises are annexed and the neglect of it is threatened with the anger and punishment of God. That the acceptance of it is a voluntary act on the part of man, we infer from several texts of scripture where we are commanded to “believe on the Gospel”—to “believe on the Son,” and also from the assurance that “those who believe not shall not see life.” Were faith, purely an involuntary act of the mind and the effect of mere physical necessity, a just and holy God would not accompany the performance or neglect of it either with sanctions or threatenings.

Faith, then is the object of a command of God, enjoined upon mankind to perform. Were man incapable of its performance, the duty would not be enjoined since it would militate against the goodness and mercy of God;—then virtue which is nothing else but a voluntary obedience to truth, and sin which is a voluntary obedience to error, would be mere empty names.—When therefore the great Apostle to the Gentiles exhorts the Hebrew christians to hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, and urges the faithful-

ness of him that promised, he enjoins a duty which thus aided by the power and mercy of God, may be performed by all who enjoy an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The voluntary and public profession of our faith is enjoined upon all true believers, and the Apostle in our text exhorts us to constancy and perseverance in the doctrines of the Gospel, when he urges us to “hold fast the profession of our faith.”

He who has chosen a system of christian doctrine, is presumed to have examined carefully the grounds of his faith, and to be able to give a reason of the hope that is in him. He who prizes his religion as he ought—who regards it as of inestimable value both to his present peace and future happiness, will carefully study its doctrines—strive to conform to the duty it enjoins, and cleave to its consolations and hopes through all the lights and shades of human life.

Having been appointed by this Synod to deliver a discourse on the doctrines and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, we will now endeavor, as far as we are able, to comply with this request.

That such expressions of our views of the doctrines and discipline of that branch of Christ's church to which we profess to belong are not uncalled for at the present day, especially in America, we may infer from the fact, that they appear to be but little understood by other denominations who have written on the subject, and that even many of our own people are but imperfectly acquainted with them. It is comparatively but of recent date, even within the remembrance of many of those who now hear us, that our religious services were first conducted in the English language. Our

clergy have since that period been so generally devoted to their pastoral duties, that little leisure has been afforded them to engage in the cares, anxieties and expenses of authorship. The few standard works by ministers of our church that have from time to time appeared in our country, have confessedly not been sufficiently diffused among the mass of our population. In Germany, however, there never has been any deficiency in theological and devotional books; on the contrary, in that land of free inquiry, where all religious opinions are tolerated, provided they do not interfere with the laws of the State, the press has teemed with some of the most valuable, as well as some of the most dangerous, productions that have yet appeared; whilst on the one hand, the wretched system of philosophy adopted by some of their writers has led them to the very borders of infidelity, their Evangelical Divines have, as is universally acknowledged, presented the world with some of the most valuable works on almost every branch of Christian Theology that are now extant in any language. It is feared, however, that many years will pass away before this deficiency can be fully supplied in the language of our country. In the mean time, it becomes the duty of the friends of our Church to furnish such aid as their experience and knowledge will permit, to enlighten the minds of our people on the true intent and meaning of the doctrines they profess to believe.

Time will not permit, even if it accorded with the objects of this address, to enter into a detail of the various steps by which, under the providence of God, the reformation of the Church was effected. Suffice it to say, that if ever the hand of God was visible in

carrying on a mighty reformation in the Church, by the instrumentality of men, destitute of power or wealth, opposed by the deep rooted prejudices, the personal interests and power of tyranny, it was that work.

Let not, however, the objects of Luther and the other reformers be misunderstood. They pretended not to establish a new religion till then unknown in the world—they wished to reform, to purify the Church from corruptions in doctrines, and from useless ceremonies which had been accumulating for ages, and to bring it back to the purity and simplicity of the Apostolic days. They sought not to establish a religion of their own, but to become the blessed instruments in the hands of God of restoring to its original beauty the now tarnished glories of the Church of the Redeemer. If one branch of the Protestant Church was called after Luther, and another after Calvin, to designate their peculiar creeds, it was not by their approbation or that of their friends. These names were given by their opponents. In the address of the Elector of Saxony, and others, the friends and coadjutors of Luther, to the Emperor, they used the following sentiments expressive of their views on this subject: “The doctrines of Luther we only receive as far as they agree with the word of God. On this word we ground ourselves, and not on the person or doctrines of a man, let him be Luther or any other person; because all men may err. We will therefore be judged only by the word of God.” Those who hold the sentiments of our Church in Europe and America desire to be denominated the Evangelical Church.

The reformation openly commenced in Germany in

the year 1517. Luther was still a Monk, and a sincere Roman Catholic, but having carefully and prayerfully perused the Scriptures, desired only to correct what he regarded the abuses in that Church, and had not at that time any intention of separating himself from her communion and worship. His mind became gradually more and more enlightened as he advanced from step to step, until in June, 1530, the memorable confession of the Reformers was presented to the Diet of Augsburg. It contained twenty-eight articles, twenty-one of which represent the religious creed of the Reformers, and the remainder are levelled at the errors and abuses that led them to a separation from the Church of Rome. It was not until that period that the doctrines of the reformation can be said to have been clearly defined.

We do not desire to be understood that Luther was the only human agent that God at this time raised up to effect a reformation in the Church. There were indeed a concurrence of providential circumstances, all tending to the same great event. A memorable drama was to be acted on the theatre of the world, in an age when the art of printing, the winged commerce of the mind, had just been discovered,—when a constellation of the greatest monarchs occupied the thrones of Europe,—when Charles the Fifth was Emperor of Germany,—when Francis the First was King of France,—when Henry the Eighth was King of England,—when Solyman had ascended the Ottoman throne, and Leo the Tenth was the Roman Pontiff. It was in an age when Cardinal Woolsey bore sway in England, and Cajetan in Germany. An age when Calvin, Beza, Melancton, Erasmus, and Luther, acted each a con-

spicuous part. That the talents and the moral courage of Luther, however, together with the simplicity and purity of his life, enabled him to become a principal leader in this great moral revolution, no one, in this enlightened age, will be disposed to deny; and that this reformation has proved a blessing to the world every Protestant will cheerfully admit.

Having made these preliminary and somewhat desultory remarks, we proceed to enumerate, and in a few instances to explain, the articles of the Augsburg Confession, which contain the fundamental principles of our faith—which have been made the ground work of the thirty-nine articles in the Episcopal Church, and which, with some variations, contain the principles of all Protestant denominations.

The 1st article treats of God—of three persons in the Godhead, who are of the same essence and power, and are co-eternal, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The 2nd teaches the natural depravity of man. The 3rd the divinity of Christ, his incarnation, death, and atonement for sinners. The 4th is on justification, that men are not justified by their own works or merits, but through faith in Christ. The 5th on the ministerial office. The 6th on renewed obedience, or the good fruits or good works which are the results of a true faith. The 7th of the Church, showing that the Holy Christian Church is a congregation of the faithful, in which the Gospel is purely preached, and his holy sacraments administered agreeably to Christ's ordinance. The 8th who are the members that compose the Church. The 9th and 10th on baptism and the holy supper. The 11th on confession and forgiveness of sins. The 12th on the nature and duty of repentance.

The 13th on the number and use of the sacraments. The 14th and 15th on Church government and ordinances. The 16th on political governments. The 17th on the future judgment. The 18th on free will. The 19th on the cause of sin. The 20th on faith and good works. The 21st on the adoration of saints: in which it is shown that whilst we hold in remembrance the virtues of the good and pious who have gone before us, we are neither to invoke or adore them. The remaining seven articles are taken up in enumerating the corruptions of the Church, from which the Reformers had separated themselves, and are not usually printed with our formulas. They are included under the following heads: The communion in one form—the wine among Roman Catholics being denied to the laity—the celibacy of the Priests which in many instances has led to licentiousness—the sacrifice of the mass—auricular confession—the diversity of meats—monastic vows—the power of Bishops and Clergy. These errors and abuses are now regarded in the same light by all Protestant Christians.

With regard to the majority of the doctrines contained in the Augsburg Confession, nearly all Orthodox Protestants agree with us, and have adopted our sentiments, and to these it will be unnecessary to refer more particularly. A few of our articles, however, have been misrepresented, or are misunderstood, and require from us no concealment, but a fair and candid expression of the sentiments of the Church. This seems to be more particularly called for at the present time, when errors of doctrine which we regard as dangerous to morals and religion are inculcated, and in some places attempted to be palmed on the commu-

nity as the true doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Some years ago several individuals residing in North-Carolina, who had previously been members of our Church, on account of some dissatisfaction, separated themselves from our communion. They chose as a leader an individual by the name of Hinkel, (hence are called Hinkelites,) a weak and illiterate man, whose ground of dissent, as far as can be gathered from the crude, visionary, and inflammatory publications, which have from time to time appeared, either under his name or that of his sect, was that the Evangelical Church had departed from the true doctrines of the reformation, which he and his Church attempted to restore. As these individuals are unconnected with us we consider it unnecessary to notice all their errors, such as their opposition to Synods, to Sunday School, Bible, Missionary, and Temperance societies, &c., but shall confine ourselves to those doctrines which they profess to have derived from the Lutheran Church. They may be classed under the three following heads: 1st, that baptism is regeneration. 2nd, that in the Lord's supper the elements become the actual flesh and blood of Christ; and thirdly, that the participation of the sacraments entitles us to salvation. These sentiments, so directly opposed to the Gospel of Christ, and the express declarations of the Reformers, and fraught with so much evil, were immediately denounced by all the members of our Church as unscriptural, and not warranted by any article in our creed. No Synod in our country has ever acknowledged, or given countenance, to this sect. They had taken possession of some of our Churches in North-Carolina, from which they were excluded, by a decision of the court, as having

departed from the Lutheran Church. Years of contention, bitterness and strife, ensued, and the lovers of order and peace were deeply grieved at the injury which the cause of true religion had sustained. In the process of time, as their doctrines became better understood, their numbers greatly declined in North-Carolina. At present they have established themselves in Tennessee, and designate themselves as the Tennessee Conference. There in the abodes of obscurity we would have willingly left this declining and unenlightened sect, with the charitable hope and prayer that God might enlighten their minds, and restore them to purity of faith, and righteousness of life. But the evil has recently come nearer to us than we had at first anticipated. Their ministers and their doctrines have been introduced into the very bosom of some of our Churches, which till now have been in regular connexion with this Synod. Under these circumstances, the duty which we owe to the flock over which we are appointed the overseers, is enjoined on us to defend the doctrines of our faith, and to preserve our people, as far as we are able, from the influence of error. But whilst we contend earnestly for the divine principles of truth in our Master's cause, we should beware lest our zeal even in a good cause may lead us to lose sight of those sentiments of charity, which constitute the most important features in the Christian character. We are living in a land of Christian liberty, where every variety of sentiment is tolerated by our laws. The cause of truth has gained nothing either by violence or abuse. In order to reform our erring fellow men, we must convince their judgments, and endeavor to exhibit in our lives and characters those principles which

will evidence the purity of our motives. We will then endeavor to show from that holy volume to which Luther, Melancton, and the learned and pious Reformers ever resorted for light and knowledge, that their doctrines are unscriptural, and that the sentiments they promulgate are not contained in the articles of our Church or in the writings of the Reformers. Whilst, therefore, we feel no disposition to persecute them for the opinions they entertain, we wish to convince them and all others, that there is an evident act of injustice in advocating sentiments as coming from the Reformers which are directly opposed throughout the whole tenor of their writings.

1st. Then let us inquire whether the holy Scriptures any where inculcate the belief that baptism is regeneration.

We will first endeavor to explain those passages of Scripture that are usually urged in favor of this doctrine. In a conversation with Nicodemus, (John, 3rd chap.) our Saviour instructs him as to the nature of the new birth, or regeneration. In the 3rd verse he says, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." The meaning in the original is, except a man be born from above. Every man must have two births, one from the earth, which enables him to see the light and experience the enjoyments of this world, and one from above, which fits him for the kingdom of glory hereafter. Nicodemus could not comprehend how a man could be born when he was old. Our Lord then reiterates his first declaration with an addition,—“Except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” When men became converted to the Christian reli-

gion they were admitted by water baptism as members of the Church of the Redeemer. But the water which was used was only an emblem of the Holy Spirit. This baptism admitted them into the visible kingdom of God—into the family of believers. Something more was necessary, and our Saviour taught Nicodemus, that in order to be prepared for the invisible kingdom of God he must be born of the Spirit—his heart must be converted to God by the divine influences from above. If baptism alone was regeneration why does the Saviour lay such stress on the necessity of a new birth, as effected by the Holy Spirit? In the 16th chapter of Mark, after our Lord had given his commission to his Apostles, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, he tells them, “He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.” “He that believeth”—that accepts this Gospel as a revelation from God—“and is baptised”—that is, makes an open profession of it in the way which God has instituted, by baptism—“shall be saved;”—“but he that believeth not”—that is, he that yields no faith or obedience to this Gospel, (and here no reference is made to baptism)—“shall be damned”—because he rejects the Gospel, the only provision that could be effectual in saving his soul. The following passage contained in Paul’s Epistle to Titus, 3rd chapter, 5th verse, has also been brought forward as evidence in favor of their doctrine. “According to his mercy he saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.” If these words have reference to the ordinance of baptism, they can only mean that baptism which Christ has established in his Church,

is symbolical of that change of the heart which is necessary to salvation. Thus far, therefore, we find nothing in the holy Scriptures that can warrant us in believing so dangerous a doctrine.

But let us inquire in what manner were men under the Gospel dispensation converted to God. When the Apostles received their commission, they were commanded to preach the Gospel to every creature, and baptism was to be an evidence of their faith, and not faith the result of baptism. They preached first repentance and faith, and then enjoined the duty of baptism. We read that Lydia was baptised, but not until the Lord had opened her heart. The Jailor was baptised in consequence of his faith. Paul was not baptised until after he had been converted in a miraculous manner. And when the Eunuch said to Philip, see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised, Philip replied, if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest.

If the doctrine were true that baptism is regeneration, then all those vast hoards of Indian captives that were driven to the baptismal font, by Cortes, Pizarro, and their infamous hosts of plunderers, who held over them the sword in the one hand and the cross in the other, must have been suddenly converted from heathenism to the true faith, and been fitted for the kingdom of God; and the world has been unjust in censuring them for crimes, which, however great may have been the tortures they inflicted on their fellow men, were yet the instruments of saving their souls.

Thus far we have only taken into consideration the persons of adults, who had been converted and baptised. But the individuals who have adopted these unscriptural sentiments, are, in common with us, advo-

cates of infant baptism. Among the Jews the proselytes from heathenism were baptised as well as their children, and in the new Testament we read that whole families were baptised; witness those of the Jailor at Philippi—of Lydia and Stephanus; and we are no where told that children were excluded. A vast majority of the Christian world has acknowledged a belief in the necessity of infant baptism, and our opponents are equally strenuous with ourselves on this subject. If baptism is regeneration, why does not every child baptised in infancy, henceforth walk with God, and lead a devoted pious life. Now is this the fact? Have we not on the contrary the most unquestionable evidence, from the conduct of thousands of young persons, that their hearts are yet unchanged—that they are still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity.

We have now, we think, conclusively shown, that this doctrine is every where opposed by the letter and meaning of the Scriptures; it may, however, be inquired, is it not countenanced by the creed of our Church, from whence it is pretended to be derived? We answer, let the language of our confession speak for itself. The following is the whole of our article on baptism.

“Concerning baptism, our Churches teach that it is a necessary ordinance, that it is a *means of grace*, and ought to be administered also to children, who are thereby dedicated to God, and received into his favor.”

Here then it is plainly declared that baptism is only the means of grace, and in conformity to these views, our Churches, both in Europe and America, teach no other doctrine, and feel themselves authorized, from

the Scriptures, and the articles of their faith, to declare that baptism is not regeneration.

The next error which is pretended to be sanctioned by the doctrines of our Church, is that, which the Reformers opposed by all the force of argument, and by all the authority of the plainest interpretations of the word of God. "That in the Lord's supper the elements become the actual flesh and blood of Christ."

This, as well as the last, is a doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church. It is contained in the decision of the council of Trent (Concil. Trid. Less. XIII, cap. IV,) in these words.

"If any one shall deny that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist, there are contained, truly, really, and substantially, the body and blood, together with the soul and divinity, of our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore the whole Christ, and say that it is only as a sign or figure, or by his influence—he is accursed."

According to this doctrine the priest is supposed to possess the miraculous power, by pronouncing these four words—*Hoc est corpus meum*—(this is my body,) of converting a piece of bread, in the form of a wafer, into the real body and blood, soul and divinity, of Jesus Christ.

Among persons of plain common sense, especially among Protestants, it is scarcely necessary to expose the absurdity of this doctrine by serious argument. Our own senses give us the most positive evidence of its untruth; we see, we feel, we taste, and smell, that what was bread and wine before consecration, is bread and wine still. If a man can once bring his mind to believe such a doctrine, he must have arrived at a state

of credulity that will render him incapable of deciding between truth and error. "It is a doctrine," as Dean Swift says, "the belief of which makes every thing else unbelievable." And before an audience, like that which has favored us with their attention this evening, it is unnecessary to enter into those arguments which reason suggests, and the evidences with which the Scriptures abound, to prove its absurdity and error.

But, it will be inquired, what were the sentiments of the early Reformers of the Church on this subject, and especially of Luther, who was slow in laying aside the errors in which he had been educated; who commenced writing and publishing as soon as he discovered the abuses in the Romish Church; but whose mind was for a long time shackled by early prejudices, and trammelled by the education and habits of a monastic life. Let us deal as honestly with Luther as he dealt with himself. He renounced, towards the close of his life, several of the doctrines which he had advocated at an earlier period. In an address, written in the evening of his days, he says, "I entreat you to read my writings with cool consideration, and even with much pity. I wish you to know that when I began the affair of indulgences, I was a Monk, and a most mad Papist. I went seriously to work, as one who had a horrible dread of the day of judgment, and who, from his inmost soul, was anxious for salvation. You will find, therefore, in my earlier writings, many things of which I do not now approve." It will, consequently, not be difficult to find in the writings of Luther, previous to 1530, some things in favor of errors, which he afterwards renounced, and which

the Church to which he was attached subsequently brought nearer to Scripture truth. And this was in conformity to his dying commands. "Many things," said he, "are yet to be made better. We have only made the beginning, and we have retained some customs for fear of giving offence to weak minds. They that come after us, we hope will be enabled, by the spirit of God, to do more."

Let us, however, see what Luther says of a doctrine to which, or to a kindred one, he is said to have been favorable.

It will be recollected that Henry the Eighth, who was then a Papist, made an attack on Luther, for which he received from the Pope, the title of Defender of the Faith. His treatise was in Latin, of which we have seen no English translation. We have endeavored to give the literal meaning of a few extracts, as well as a translation of Luther's answer, which was written in German.

Henry says, "doth not he (Luther,) say that he does no violence to the word of God, when he declares that what Christ calls bread, in the sacrament, means only bread, and what he declares to be wine, means no more than wine. We acknowledge that it was bread when he took it, but we deny that it was any longer bread when he had made it into his body."

To this Luther replies. [See Luther's works, vol. 19th, p. 321-2, Walch's edition, 1740.] "I have established myself on the word of Christ, who speaks by the Evangelist. He took bread and said, take and eat, this is my body; and Paul says, 1st Cor., 10th chap. and 16th verse, the bread that we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ! Now, what

God calls bread, man ought not to deny that it is only bread." (p. 323.) "You say the words are plain, this is my body; they are indeed plain, but they do not say that it ceases to be bread, but on the contrary, that it is bread. For the words "this is," points to the bread, and the words "he took, he blessed, he gave," all refer to the bread which he held in his hand; and of that which he had taken into his hand, which he blessed and brake, and gave to them,—he says, "this is my body." Therefore, that these words in every construction of language, point to the *bread*, is clear to all but the blind sophists, who do no more than pervert the language."

Whilst on the subject of this answer to the king, we may be pardoned for a momentary digression. It is said by several writers, that in this reply, Luther forgot the courtesy that was due to royalty. We admit the fact. Luther had no great respect for the character of Henry, and was unfavorably impressed with regard to his religious sincerity, and after events proved that he had not mistaken his character. But we must make some allowance for the age in which the combatants lived, and the provocation which this vascillating and tyrannical monarch gave the Reformer. His book, which was dedicated to Leo Tenth, concludes in these words. "Finally, let us, with all the fury with which we have opposed the Turks, Saracens, and Infidels, stand up against this one man, who, though weak in power, holds sentiments far more dangerous than all Turks, Saracens, and Infidels."

And in a letter to Charles Fifth, he exhorts him "to destroy Luther and his books, by fire, by power and the sword, and to tear out by the roots a pestilence

which to all future times shall be hated and accursed."

That a man who, in all but truth and talents, was weak and powerless, should feel indignant that a foreign king was using all his influence among the monarchs of Europe to cause him to be burnt, as well as the books which contained the sentiments of the Reformation, which he valued more than life itself, cannot surprise those who are acquainted with human nature; and that he should in his turn rebuke the royal theologian in no measured phrases, may be easily conceived by those who are acquainted with the fearless character of the Reformer.

But we will return once more to the sentiments of Luther on the doctrine of transubstantiation. In the 17th vol. p. 729, of his works, he speaks of "Den irrthum von der transubstantiation daraus viel abgoetterey gefolgt," "The error of transubstantiation which is followed by much idolatry," and in the Smalkaldian Articles, which were written by Luther himself, and are found in his 16th vol. 2358th page, we find these words.

"Of transubstantiation we do not regard the deceitful sophistry of those who teach that bread and wine lose their natural substance, and only preserve the appearance and color of bread, without being real bread. For it accords best with the meaning of the Scriptures, that the bread remains bread, as St. Paul himself says, "the bread that we break," and also, "eat ye of this bread."

Whilst, however, all the Reformers agreed in rejecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, they unfortunately differed among themselves as to what they

should substitute in its stead, and Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, Zwinglius, and others, all had their peculiar views, in which there may be traced considerable shades of difference, as well as obscurity. The language of Christ at the institution being highly figurative, "This is my body," led the majority to adopt the sentiment that the Saviour's spiritual body was present in the Eucharist. What they meant by this spiritual presence, can perhaps be best shown by a quotation from the writings of a learned modern divine. [Smucker's Popular Theology, p. 248-9.]

"That agreeably to the declarations of the Apostle Paul, all human bodies will experience a very great change at death, and prior to the resurrection in their glorified form. The extent of this change, they regarded as such, that although enough of the old body would remain to serve, as the basis of identity, (its substance or essence,) its properties would be entirely changed, and it would no longer be subject to the laws and limitations which now regulate matter. In this sense they understood the declarations of the Apostle, that the glorified body shall be incorruptible and immortal, yea, so highly refined in its properties, that it may be said to partake of the properties of a spirit, and may justly be called a spiritual body. Now it cannot be denied that the body of the Saviour has also experienced the change described by Paul, nay, that it is endowed with properties still higher than those which the glorified body of the Saints will possess; and that it was, therefore, even less restricted by those laws which now regulate the matter known to us."

"With these premises, their view of this subject may be advantageously stated thus.

“The bread and wine remain in all respects unchanged; but the invisible and glorified body and blood of Christ are also actually present at the celebration of the Eucharist, and exert an influence on all those who receive the bread and wine; not indeed present in that form, nor with those properties, which belonged to the Saviour’s body on earth, such as visibility, tangibility, &c., for these it no longer possesses, but present with the new and elevated properties which now belong to its glorified state.”

This then is the extent of Luther’s doctrine of consubstantiation, or subpanation, as it has been sometimes, but improperly, called. The views of Melancton were, that the Saviour was merely virtually or influentially present in the sacrament. Many other Lutheran divines believe that, “whilst the bread and wine are merely symbolical representations of the Saviour’s absent body, by which we are reminded of his suffering, there is also a peculiar and spiritual blessing bestowed on all worthy communicants. In fact, the Lutheran Church has, for a century past, ceased to agitate this question—leaving its members to follow the dictates of conscience agreeably to the light of Scripture. This we are authorized to do without a departure from the creed of our Church, since at our ordination, in this country especially, we only profess to believe, “that the fundamental articles of the word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession.”

Have we not a right then to appeal to the candor and liberality of our Protestant brethren, between whose faith and ours, the difference is so slight that it can scarcely be detected. What if some of our mem-

bers believe that the spiritual body of their risen and ascended Saviour be present in the sacrament, and after their rejection of transubstantiation, it can only be present in a spiritual manner, does our article differ materially from the creeds of other Churches. In the confession of the Reformed Church of the Netherlands, we find the following words, "We confess that Jesus Christ nourishes us in the Holy Supper with his true body and blood, and that he really and verily communicates to us what he therein represents. [See Risler's extracts.] Calvin in his Institutes, says, "I therefore maintain, that in the mystery of the Supper, by the emblems of bread and wine, Christ is really exhibited to us; that is his body and blood, in which he yielded full obedience, in order to work out a righteousness for us; by which we may, in the first place, become united with him into one body; and secondly, being made partakers of the substance of himself, also be strengthened by the reception of every blessing." [Calvin's Institut. Lib. IV., ch. XVII.]

The Episcopal Church, in her 28th article, holds the following language. "It" (the Supper of the Lord,) "is a sacrament of redemption by Christ's death, inasmuch that to such as rightly worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we take is a partaking of the body of Christ, and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ." In the same article she rejects the doctrine of transubstantiation, and then adds, "The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a spiritual and heavenly manner." The most strenuous followers of Luther in advocating our creed, even according to the letter—"that the body and blood of Christ are actually

present under the emblems of bread and wine"—do not contend for more than this.

We proceed to the third, and last, error which has been adopted by those who profess to have derived the doctrine from the creed of the Lutheran Church, viz: "That in partaking of the sacraments we become entitled to salvation." We have, in discussing the two previous heads, already shown, at least in part, that this doctrine is unscriptural. The Scriptures every where assure us, that the Gospel is the great instrument of regeneration. The Gospel (says St. Paul,) is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. Being born again (says St. Peter,) not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God. And we ask, were not Simon, Magus, Hymenaeus, Philetus, Phygellus, and Hermogenes, all baptised, even by inspired ministers? Were not the gross transgressors in the seven Churches of Asia once baptised, and communicants?—and did not Judas receive from the hands of the Saviour himself the sacrament, and was he not a devil—and did he not die the miserable death of a suicide?

But what say our articles, "Baptism (as we have already shown) is a means of grace." In the 13th article, on the use of the sacraments, we read these words.

"Concerning the use of the sacraments, our Churches teach, that they were instituted not only as marks of a Christian profession amongst men, but rather as signs and evidences of the divine disposition towards us, tendered for the purpose of exciting and confirming the faith of those who use them. Hence the sacraments ought to be received with faith, in the promises

which are exhibited and proposed by them. They, therefore, condemn those who maintain that the sacraments produce justification in their recipients as matters of course, (*ex opere operato*), and who do not teach that faith is necessary, in the reception of the sacraments, to the remission of sins." [Sckmucher's Translations.]

The meaning of this article is so evident that it seems to require no further illustration.

Brethren, we have detained you long in an explanation of the unscriptural nature and dangerous tendency of doctrines which few of those who now hear us, could have supposed would have found advocates among those who profess to be Protestants. Were we addressing the stated worshippers of this Church alone, we should have considered these arguments and illustrations as superfluous. But we are surrounded by our ministering brethren, and the delegates from other portions of our Church, and by some of those who have had an opportunity of seeing, and who in common with us, feel and lament the demoralizing effects which the dissemination of such unscriptural doctrines, are calculated to produce. To them we would say, in the language of the Apostle in our text, "Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised." "You have the bible, and the sentiments and prayers of good men, on your side,—be not dismayed." "The Lord is our defence, and God is the rock of our refuge." He will never abandon his people or his Church. In the spirit of your Master, go on fearlessly, but meekly, humbly and prayerfully, in the performance of duty. Let us evidence an increased spirit of devotion, of watchfulness and prayer, and the providence of God may yet over-

rule these dark and discouraging events, to the benefit of his Church, and the glory of his name.

The remaining doctrines of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, seem to require no particular explanation, since the most important and essential ones have been adopted by all other Protestant Churches.

We do not believe in the doctrine of unconditional election. We practice the rite of confirmation as a mode of admitting members into the Church, accompanied by the profession of faith, but we do not regard confirmation as a sacrament. Our Church government is of a simple form, corresponding in this respect with the republican institutions of our land. We recognize but one order of clergy, and our laity have an equal right in the administration of the affairs of the Church. For the sake of order we are governed by Synods. Our officers are elected by their brethren, and hold their offices during a limited term. We have no objections to the name of a Bishop, as the overseer of the Church. For we have such overseers, that go under the names of Bishops, Presidents, or Superintendents; but we have not been able to convince ourselves that any additional powers can be granted him by a re-ordination.

Our Church has never desired the aid of the State, in support of its ministers. The cry of danger to our free institutions, in a supposed attempt at a union of Church and State, has sometimes been raised in this country, by the enemies of religion; but it will be easily seen, that from the nature of things, this would be impossible, even if the attempt were made. The different views among the various denominations, and sectional prejudices, would present an unsurmountable

obstacle ; but above all, our Church, from the principles we hold, could never harbor such an idea,—or if it even did, the smallness of our number clearly shows its utter impracticability, and the charge, if ever made in earnest, is too absurd to require a refutation. Nor is it likely that our Synods will pass any law, oppressive to the people. The Church is represented by an equal number of ministers and lay-delegates—the latter being annually elected by the people. We are governed by a constitution which cannot be altered, but by a slow process—after a considerable lapse of time for deliberation—and not without a final assent by the people. The discipline to which our ministers and members are subjected, is that which they themselves consent to adopt, for the sake of order. This discipline is certainly opposed to vice in every form ; but it is not intended to discountenance free inquiry, and it has ever been the practice, both among ministers and people, to communicate their thoughts freely to each other, without the danger of being suspected as heretics. We believe, however, that the best discipline for the walk and conversation of man, comes from a renewed heart, and that without this our strictest rules are unavailing. We do not desire to deprive our people of their rights and liberties ; but as order in God's house is necessary, such rules are formed for the government of its members, as the collected wisdom and piety of the Church may conceive necessary to its purity and prosperity. In the calls, which we are frequently obliged to make on our people, for pecuniary aid, to support those operations which are deemed necessary to the advancement of religion, we do not seek our own, but the public good. When we ask their assistance in

supporting institutions, designed by the blessing of God to prepare Christian laborers in that field, from which we will ere long be removed,—when we solicit them to aid us in supporting Sunday Schools, and to send the Bible and the Missionary to those who are living in darkness, ignorance, and sin, we are but acting in accordance with the commission we have received, to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which enjoins upon us the duty of remembering the poor and ignorant, and of promoting benevolence and mercy among men. In thus performing our duty, our people will not blame us, for we ask it not for ourselves. From the little that we have, we give it freely to the same objects. The ministers of our Church are proverbially poor; we do not complain of our lot; we were fully aware of it when we assumed our offices,—but could our people enter into the details of the anxieties and cares, and the struggles with adversity, of nine-tenths of their clergy, they would, at least, withhold the cruel charge, that our profession is chosen, or pursued, for the sake of gain.

We have endeavored to give a hasty sketch of the doctrines and discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church—a Church that made the first successful opposition to the corruptions and intolerance of that of Rome; for although Wickliff, Huss, and Jerome of Prague, had inveighed against these corruptions, yet the hand of power had been imbrued in their blood—the minds of men had been left in deeper gloom, and the darkness of error had covered all the earth. It was Luther, and his fellow laborers in the great cause of the Reformation of the Church, that came forward fearlessly, armed by the panoply of truth, cheered

by the prophecies and hopes contained in the book of God, and pledged in that fearful contest their lives and all that earth holds dear, and all their hopes of Heaven. The labors of their gigantic minds, and the fervent piety of their devoted hearts, ended only with their lives. But they lived long enough to witness the dawn of brighter days—to behold deep rooted in the hearts of men those principles, which in the process of time, would give religious toleration to the human race. And can it be denied, that our venerable Church is the mother of Protestants? That her doctrines and her principles have formed the ground work of the creeds and sentiments which govern our brethren of other denominations, who, although there may be shades of difference in our faith and forms of worship, must still acknowledge, that in the essential doctrines of the Reformation we all agree.

We would not be so uncharitable as to believe that our Protestant brethren would intentionally misrepresent our doctrines. A Church which has ever exercised charity and brotherly kindness to its brethren of other denominations, has a right to claim that her doctrines and her principles should be weighed with all that candor which we ought to bring to the investigation of religious truth. Yet from some cause,—probably the want of correct information as to our creed,—we are sometimes charged with entertaining superstitious and unscriptural notions; and in a comparatively recent work, (Buck's Theological Dictionary,) which is a standard book, in the hands of all denominations, it is stated that, "The Lutherans, of all Protestants, are said to differ least from the Romish Church."

Now we would ask in all fairness and candor, whether we are deserving of this charge? And wherein are we more like the Romish Church than any other Protestants? Is it in our doctrines? And would it not be well first to inquire, what important tenet do other Protestants hold which has not been derived from our Church? What is there in the doctrines of the followers of Calvin but his decrees, that has not been borrowed from us? And what are there in the thirty-nine articles, save that on Episcopacy, and in the sentiments of the excellent form of prayer of the Episcopal Church, that has not, in a great measure, come from the same source? Has not one of their most cherished divines, Bishop Laurence, a high dignitary of the Episcopal Church, recently shown in his Brampton Lectures, and acknowledged with pleasure and gratitude, that all their essential articles, as well as many of their forms of devotion were almost literal translations from the writings of Melancton, Luther, and their co-adjutors?

The following is his language. "They (meaning their articles,) were neither the productions of Parker nor the convocation"—"they were not borrowed from any Calvinistical or Zuinglian, but from a Lutheran creed." "Their resemblance, (he continues,) was not confined to a mere affinity of idea, or the occasional adoption of an individual expression; but in some cases entire extracts were copied, without the slightest omission, or minutest variation. In the first compilation many prominent passages were taken from the Augsburg, and in the second, from the Wirtemberg Confessions. These were Lutheran creeds." [Laurence's Brampton Lectures, p. 42 and 3.]

Are we most like the Roman Catholics in the power of

our priesthood, and the pomp and parade of our religious worship? Our ministers preclude themselves from holding any offices in the State. We have no overgrown hierarchy—the Church is destitute of wealth or of power—its pastors are chosen by the people—its temples are without images or imposing pictures, and its forms of worship are of the simplest kind. Do we differ least from them in the intolerant and persecuting spirit of that Church? And where, we ask, has the Lutheran Church ever betrayed a spirit of intolerance? When the dangerous fanatics of Munster created disturbances in Thuringia, Moravia, and Switzerland, Luther, although he opposed their sentiments, labored to stay the arm of persecution. “It is not right,” said he, “to persecute, to murder, to burn and destroy, such poor people, on account of their religious tenets. We should let every one believe what he thinks right!” And to the Council of Nuremberg, he wrote, “I am always opposed to the shedding of blood for the sake of religion, and I shall never give my vote to persecute those whom we suppose to be false teachers.”

After passing through the most memorable struggle that ever signalized any age, save that at the first introduction of the Christian faith by the Son of God, and after having endured with fortitude, the persecutions of bigotry and power, our Church at last became triumphant, and her doctrines were established as the national religion of Prussia, Denmark, and Sweden. Mark the temper she exhibited in the day of triumph. She commenced no retaliation against her persecutors. She encouraged no bitter spirit of revenge. Her former opponents of the Romish Church were allowed to dwell unmolested in the land,

there, to this day, their temples and their monasteries remain, as the monuments of the toleration of our Church.

Do we differ least from them in withholding the word of God from the common people? He who has ever visited Germany, cannot have failed to remark, that every Protestant family, nay, every individual of that family, from the King down to the humblest peasant, possesses a copy of the Scriptures; nor can he easily forget the deep veneration with which that sacred volume, the rule of their faith and life, is regarded. It descends, as a rich treasure, from parents to children, and is often their only legacy. The rest of the Protestant world, in preferring their own language and forms of worship, may perhaps place but a light value on the services of the great Reformer; but the Germans will never forget who it was that translated their Bible, and composed many of those sublime hymns, which have been read and sung for the last three hundred years, in every temple, and in the habitation of every Christian family, from the mountain tops to the lowest valley—that have accompanied the shepherd to the hills, the peasant to his fields, and the emigrant to distant lands. The German does not easily forget his father-land, but should it ever occur, that in the lapse of time, and under changes of circumstances, his early recollections of home and country should fade from his memory, yet as long as his language remains, and his Bible and devotional songs are dear to his heart, the memory and services of Luther will not die.

Do we differ least from them in advocating their principles? 'Tis true we do not lend a willing ear to every idle tale promulgated by bigotry, against the morals of their priests and people, but we do not

countenance their errors. And who would charge the Lutheran Church, of all others, with advocating the system of papacy? The persecutions, the trials, and sufferings, of her Reformers, and the labors of their mighty minds will be handed down, by history, to the end of time: nor will her struggles in the cause of truth be ever forgotten, so long as the heroic language of Luther shall be remembered, who, when summoned before the diet of Worms, and commanded to recant his opinions, fearlessly refused, in the spirit of a willing martyr, declared, in the face of the assembled multitude, that were thirsting for his blood, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise—God help me."

But, it may be inquired, has God in an especial manner favored this branch of the Christian Church with his presence? Have the number of her professors increased? Has she contributed her means in forwarding the benevolent operations of the day, and has she aided in the dissemination of the Scriptures, and in carrying to destitute and desolate regions, the religion of the cross? To this we answer, that the sentiments of our Church have, in Europe, been adopted by Prussia, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, Lapland, Finland, and parts of France, Hungary, and Russia, amounting, according to the computation of a good author, to 27,000,000 of inhabitants in Europe alone, and embracing in it seventeen reigning sovereigns. [Smucker's Popular Theology.] The number of its members, therefore, is more than twice as great as that of any other Protestant denomination. In the United States, where our number is small, compared with that of other denominations, we have twelve Synods, and a

General Synod—4 Theological Seminaries—about 1100 Churches, and 50,000 regular communing members.

In all the benevolent operations of Christians, for the dissemination of the Scriptures, and for the spread of the Gospel, our Church has united with Christian zeal, and borne her share of labor and expense. Her successful missions to the East and the West bear testimony to this truth. It was this Christian spirit that led Balzius, Muhlenberg, Storcke, and others, to bear the standard of the cross to the then deserts of our own land. It was this that cheered and animated the devoted Swartz, and his fellow laborers, in establishing their missions in the withering climate of the East Indies, where exiling themselves forever from their native homes, they wore out their lives in imparting religious truth to the heathen. It is this spirit, which has in this, our day, carried the learned and the pious Gutzlaff to the hitherto interdicted regions of China, and where his judicious and enlightened labors are duly appreciated by the whole Christian world. And it is finally this spirit, which, when a recent call was made upon us, by Renius, and his fellow Missionaries, at Palmacotta, in the East, with an assurance that a door of access to the heathen was now open to us, awoke the slumbering energies of our American Lutheran Churches, and from every quarter of our land the response has been simultaneously made, "We will go forward to their assistance."

That we are attached to the altars where our fathers worshipped, and where we have plighted our vows of fidelity to our Master in Heaven, will not be regarded as an unreasonable prejudice by others. That we

should represent her in as favorable a light as truth will permit, is very natural. But in advocating the claims of this eldest branch of the Protestant Church, to which we belong, we disclaim the slightest intention of throwing one shadow of disrespect on the sentiments of our brethren of other Churches. We have never boasted of being an exclusive Church, whose doctrines were more Scriptural, or whose professors were purer, than those of other denominations, by whom we were surrounded. We have endeavored to discountenance that spirit of proselytism, which has been the fruitful source of so much dissention in our land. We are willing to unite with every lover of the Gospel of Christ, in producing the downfall of Sectarianism, though not the obliteration of sects. Our pulpits have ever been open to the ministers of every Christian denomination, and to our communions we invite the followers of Jesus, of every name. We desire the candid judgment, and the brotherly fellowship of all Christians, and if from their more favored circumstances, they surpass us in zeal and usefulness, we will sincerely rejoice in their success, and endeavor to imitate their example. Brethren we are journeying together to the land of rest and reward. The time is not far distant when our faculties will be enlarged in the regions of light and knowledge. There our differences of sentiment will be lost in the contemplation of the glorious perfections of him that loved us ; and there may we sit down with Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God—Amen.

