

What Is Heresy?

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The fact that *Theology of Fellowship* enters into a lengthy discussion of the term “heresy” necessitates a thorough study of the question, “What is heresy?”

Part I: Usage in the New Testament

I. Αἵρεσις

The word αἵρεσις is found nine times in the New Testament. Six of these occurrences are in the book of Acts. With but a single exception it is translated in the AV in these passages in Acts with the word “sect.” The first occasion is typical of the rest:

Then the high priest rose up, and all that were with him, (which is the *sect* [ἡ οὗσα αἵρεσις] of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation (Acts 5:17).

Cf. also Acts 15:5; 24:5; 26:5; 28:22.¹ There is no question that in these passages the first meaning given in ArndtGingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*,² is correct: “sect, party, school.”

In Acts 24:14 the AV translates αἵρεσις with “heresy”:

But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call *heresy* [κατὰ τὴν ὁδὸν ἣν λέγουσιν αἵρεσιν], so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets.

Here the RSV and the NEB have “sect” (also in 24:5 and 28:22). In 5:17 and 15:5 both translate with “party,” while in 26:5 the RSV has “party” and the NEB has “group.” Concerning 24:14 A-G says that here αἵρεσις inclines toward the sense of “heretical sect.” The fact that it is an explanation of the term ὁδόν, however, favors the translation “heresy” or “false opinion,” “false teaching,” “false way of thinking.”

We now list two passages where A-G gives the meaning “dissension, a faction”:

For there must be also heresies [αἵρεσεις—RSV: “factions”; NEB “dissensions”] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you (I Cor. 11:19).

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, *heresies* [αἵρεσεις—RSV: “party spirit”; NEB: “party intrigues”], envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God (Gal. 5:19–21).

A-G classifies this meaning as a subdivision of the first, which is quoted above.

The second definition given by A-G is “opinion, dogma,” for which II Peter 2:1 is listed:

¹ Acts 15:5, “But there rose up certain of the *sect* of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses.”

Acts 24:5, “For we have found this man a pestilent fellow, and a mover of sedition among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the *sect* of the Nazarenes.”

Acts 26:5, “Which knew me from the beginning, if they would testify, that after the most straitest *sect* of our religion I lived a Pharisee.”

Acts 28:22, “But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this *sect*, we know that every where it is spoken against.

² Cambridge and Chicago, 1957.

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable *heresies* [οἵτινες παρεισάξουσιν αἰρέσεις ἀπολείας —RSV: “destructive heresies”; NEB: “disastrous heresies”], even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Here A-G also offers the definition “way of thinking.”

II. Αἰρετικός

The word αἰρετικός, “heretic,” is found only once in the NT, viz., in Titus 3:9–11:

But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an *heretic* [αἰρετικὸν ἄνθρωπον —RSV: “a man that is factious”; NEB: “A heretic”] after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.

Here A-G gives the definitions: “factious, causing divisions, perh. heretical.”

III. Αἰρεῖσθαι and αἰρετίζειν

The verb αἰρεῖσθαι is found three times in the NT, always in the sense of “choose.” Cf., e.g., Philippians 1:22:

But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet what I shall *choose* [τί αἰρήσομαι] I wot not.

It is used similarly in II Thessalonians 2:13 and Hebrews 11:25.³

Αἰρετίζειν is found but once, also in the sense of “choose”:

Behold my servant, whom I have *chosen* [ὄν ἠρέτισα]; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased (Matt. 12:18).

IV. Kittel⁴

We find it necessary to comment on the remarks in Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*⁵, because they not only reflect but perhaps also have spawned current interpretations.

For αἰρέομαι (mid.) the meaning “choose” or “elect” is given. With reference to Philippians 1:22 and Hebrews 11:25 we are told, “It indicates selective preference as between two possibilities.” This point is well taken.

The discussion of αἵρεσις is rather lengthy. We can not here quote it in its entirety but select the following:

A. αἵρεσις in classical usage and Hellenism
αἵρεσις from αἰρεῖν, is used in classical Greek to indicate: a. “seizure,” e.g., of a city ...; b. “choice” (αἰρέομαι mid.), in the general sense of choice of a possibility or even to an office; “inclination” ...; and c. “resolve” or “enterprise,” “effort directed to a goal.”

From this there develops in Hellenism the predominant objective use of the term to denote a. “doctrine” and especially b. “school.” The αἵρεσις of the philosopher, which in antiquity always includes the choice of a distinctive *Bios*, is related to δόγματα to which others give their πρόσκλισις. It thus comes to be the αἵρεσις (teaching) of a particular αἵρεσις (school)... For the concept of such a fellowship ... the following aspects are important: the gathering of the αἵρεσις from a comprehensive society and therefore its delimitation from other schools; the self-chosen authority of a teacher; the relatively authoritarian and relatively disputable doctrine; and the private character of all these features.

³ II Thessalonians 2:13, “But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning *chosen* you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.”

Hebrews 11:25, “*Choosing* rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

⁴ Heinrich Schlier is the author of the article with which we are here concerned.

⁵ We are quoting from the translation by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, 1964), referred to hereafter as K.

For the moment we merely call attention to two things: “the predominant objective use of the term to denote a ‘doctrine’ ” and the statement, “It thus comes to be the αἵρεσις (teaching) of a particular αἵρεσις (school).”

B. αἵρεσις and ἵνῃ in the LXX and Judaism

In the LXX αἵρεσις is found occasionally in the general sense of “choice.” ... In Philo it is used ... to denote a Greek philosophical school.... In Josephus, too, αἵρεσις is used of the religious community of the Essenes. Josephus sees all the Jewish religious schools in terms of the Greek philosophical schools, the Essenes, Sadducees and Pharisees being the τρεῖς παρ’ ἡμῶν αἵρέσεις.... The corresponding term in Rabbinic Judaism is ἵνῃ, which can mean both αἵρεσις and αἵρετικός. Like αἵρεσις in Josephus ἵνῃ denoted in the first instance the trends and parties within Judaism. But soon, when certain minim separated themselves from the orthodox Rabbinic tradition, it came to be used only of trends within Judaism opposed by the Rabbis, and therefore *sensu malo*. The term thus stigmatised certain groups as “heretical.” ...

C. αἵρεσις in the NT

The NT statements concerning αἵρεσις are to be understood against the Hellenistic and Jewish background.

1. The usage in Acts corresponds to that of Josephus and the earlier Rabbis.... In these passages the term has the neutral flavor of “school.”

In the light of the foregoing analysis, the following unwarranted claims made by K are nothing less than astonishing:⁶

2. Against this background, it is impossible to solve the problem of the derivation of the special Christian sense of heresy. [!] For the development of the Christian concept is not wholly analogous to that of the Rabbinic ἵνῃ, as though, in the process of the separation of non-orthodox groups, the heterodox parties came to be designated heresy. On the contrary, the word seems to have been suspect in Christianity from the very first, and when it is used as a Christian technical term in conscious or unconscious connection either with the Greek philosophical schools or the Jewish sects it denotes at once societies outside Christianity and the Christian Church. [!—We shall have more to say on this point later.] Hence it does not owe its meaning to the development of an orthodoxy. The basis of the Christian concept of αἵρεσις is to be found in the new situation created by the introduction of the Christian ἐκκλησία. Ἐκκλησία and αἵρεσις are material opposites. The latter cannot accept the former; the former excludes the latter. This may be clearly seen in Gl. 5:20, where αἵρεσις is reckoned among the ἔργα τῆς σαρκός along with ἐχθραὶ, ζῆλος, θυμοὶ, ἐριθείαι and διχοτασίαι. Yet neither here nor elsewhere in the NT does αἵρεσις have a technical sense. In 1 C. 11:18f. we see even more clearly the impossibility of αἵρεσις within Christianity. Mention of the cultic assembly in which the community gathers as ἐκκλησία brings Paul back to the σχίσματα of 1 C. 1:10ff. σχίσματα are splits in the community caused by personally motivated disputes. Paul believes in part the accounts which have come to him of such divisions in the community. He does so because there must be (καὶ) αἵρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν in order that the tested might be made manifest. It makes no difference whether Paul is here using an apocryphal saying of the Lord.... The statement is for him an eschatologico-dogmatic statement in which αἵρεσις is understood as an eschatological magnitude. [?!] In this respect it is distinguished from σχίσμα, and obviously indicates something more serious. The greater seriousness consists in the fact that αἵρέσεις affect the foundation of the Church in doctrine (II Pt. 2:1) [NB!] and that they do so in such a fundamental way as to give rise to a new society alongside the ἐκκλησία. This the Church cannot accept, since as the lawful public assembly of the whole people of God the Church embraces this people exclusively and comprehensively. By its very nature, however, αἵρεσις is a private magnitude with a limited validity. [?!]⁷ It is, in fact, a school or party. If the Church accedes to αἵρέσεις, it will itself become a αἵρεσις and thus destroy its comprehensive “political” claim.... [?!]

⁶ The notations and comments in brackets are, naturally, our own.

⁷ The German expression is *eine private Groesse mit beschaenktem Geltungscharakter*.

In view of the close connection between αἵρεσις as “teaching” and αἵρεσις as “school” it is hard to see why K should find it “impossible to solve the problem of the derivation of the special Christian sense of heresy.” That αἰρέσεις “affect the foundation of the Church *in doctrine*” he himself admits. The claim that αἰρέσεις “denotes at once societies outside Christianity and the Christian Church” is wholly without foundation. In fact the “among you” (αἰρέσεις ἐν ὑμῖν) of I Corinthians 11:19 indicates the very opposite, namely, that the “heresies” would be *within* the Christian community, within the visible Church. Paul tells Titus to dissociate himself from a heretical person. The Church is to expel such. K, losing sight of the *context* which must determine the meaning in each instance, permits his thinking to be dominated unduly by the fact that this term is used for parties among the Jews like the Pharisees and Sadducees. He sees it, therefore, as a well established group, apparently even as a more or less organized society *extra ecclesiam et anti ecclesiam*.

Concerning αἰρετικός he writes, “In view of what we have said, this word need not detain us.... In Christianity it seems to have been used technically from the very first, and denotes the ‘adherent of a heresy.’ ” It ought to be self-evident that a party or sect (as the term is used in Acts 5:17, e.g.) presupposes a platform or doctrinal basis which distinguishes this group from others.

Concerning αἵρεσις in the early Church K adds, “In the age which followed αἵρεσις was still understood as an eschatologically threatening magnitude essentially opposed to the ἐκκλησία.... Within Christianity αἵρεσις always denotes hostile societies, and there is always consciousness of an inner relationship between heretics and the secular philosophical schools or Jewish sects.... What the Church usually has in view is Gnosticism. As seen by the Church, the Gnostics form schools....”

V. An Analysis of the Terms αἵρεσις and αἰρετικός in the New Testament

A careful examination of the passages in which the words αἵρεσις and αἰρετικός appear reveals the following:

1. On the basis of its etymology (αἰρεῖσθαι, “choose”) αἵρεσις denotes a self-chosen way. It is a way of thinking, an opinion, a teaching arrived at by conscious, deliberate choice. A heretic is one who chooses to follow his own rather than God’s thoughts. The very term implies that the truth, the doctrine of Scripture, has received a hearing and has been rejected. That the basic, etymological sense has *not* disappeared is apparent from the context of the passages in which αἵρεσις and αἰρετικός appear. As K pointed out, αἵρεσις is related to δόγματα Cremer-Koegel⁸ aptly defines αἵρεσις as “a confirmed way of thinking, independently pursuing its own course and separating itself from others,”⁹ and adds, “It is more than a divergent way of thinking inasmuch as the way the term is commonly used includes the thought of opposing the common faith.”¹⁰ C-K correctly defines αἰρετικός as “ketzerisch” with the added remark, “Since clearly a person who is still a member of the congregation is meant whom the congregation eventually will have to expel” (pp. 85, 86).¹¹ “Schlatter remarks that the *hairetikos* is the possessor of a definite will which obtains its contents from the context while αἵρεσις in its later significance characterizes the man who holds to it.”¹²

2. Heresy is brought in by false prophets and false teachers (II Pet. 2:1).¹³ It is their false teaching. This is what characterizes them as “false” prophets or “false” teachers. Ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι are men who teach lies. Ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι (a word found only here in the NT) is a synonym of ψευδοπροφήται.

⁸ *Biblisches-theologisches Woerterbuch der neutestamentlichen Graezitaet* (Gotha, 1911).

⁹ *Eine in sich verfestigte, ihren eigenen Weg selbstaendig verfolgende, von anderen sich loesende Richtung.*

¹⁰ *Es ist mehr als Sonderrichtung, sofern d. Sprachgebr. d. Bestreitung d. Gemeinglaubens einschliesst.*

¹¹ *Da offenbar ein d. Gemeinde noch Angehoeriger gemeint ist, den d. Gemeinde event. von sich auszuscheiden hat.*

¹² Lenski, R. C. H., *The interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy, to Titus, and to Philemon*, Columbus, 1946, p. 942. Interesting is Lock’s observation in *The pastoral Epistles (The International Critical Commentary)*, New York, 1924, p. 157: “αἰρετικόν... here it is still an adjective, from the secondary meaning of αἵρεσις = either a self-chosen party, a sect ... or, self-chosen teaching, heresy (Ign. Eph. 6). Either is possible here. (a) factious (RV margin), partisan ... or (b) ‘given to heresie’ Tynd., heretical.... This suits vs. 9.10 better, and cf. Gal. 1:6–9, Rom. 16:17 ... which shows how close the two thoughts lay in St. Paul’s mind.”

¹³ “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

Any departure, any aberration from the teaching of Scripture is heresy. Scripture is the standard or norm by which heresy is to be recognized (cf. Isa. 8:20, “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them”). Lenski correctly observes, “It is confusing to introduce distinctions such as fundamental and non-fundamental, for these need careful definition when they are used in any connection, to say nothing of the present one.”¹⁴

3. A man shows himself to be a heretic when he, in spite of repeated admonition, stubbornly holds to his heretical, unscriptural views (Tit. 3:10).¹⁵ In this respect he differs from a weak brother, a Christian who has unwittingly fallen into some error. The weak brother is willing to accept correction from the Scriptures. A heretic refuses correction. He persistently adheres to his error. All attempts to show him the error of his views are fruitless. Lenski aptly comments, “An αἰρετικός is one who holds an αἵρεσις or a number of them, a chosen view of his own apart from the teaching of Scripture.... Thus any teaching that forsakes Scripture and certainly such as contradicts Scripture stamps a man as *hairetikos*. He chooses for himself what the Church by choosing Scripture must repudiate and disown. Whether this be little or much makes little difference since to the extent to which he chooses his own ideas to that extent the person concerned is *hairetikos*.... One additional point, we think, lies in the word, namely that the *hairetikos* comes out and stands for his separatistic, antisciptural opinions (call them ‘views’) to the damage of true Christians.”¹⁶

What Professor Lehninger wrote in his article, *Gibt es heute noch Ketzer?* is still very much to the point. We translate: “Peter foretells in his II Epistle, 2:1, that there would be ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι among the Christians as there formerly had been ψευδοπροφήται in Israel, who would bring in alongside αἵρεσις ἀπωλείας (destructive sects). It is not necessary to go into a special discussion here of the fact that here heresies are spoken of in the sense which later was the universal usage of the term in the Church, that is, false teachings or heretical doctrines. After all has been said there can be no doubt that the adjective αἰρετικός, Titus 3:10, is to designate a man who is an adherent of and confesses a heresy. It makes no difference whether it consists in making foolish and irrelevant things in the consideration of which there is no real benefit the main thing, or whether it does not teach the truths of salvation such as justification, regeneration, and sanctification correctly.”¹⁷

4. In Titus 3:9 Paul mentions some of the heresies threatening the church. He bids Titus:

Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain.

In I Timothy 1:4–11 we have a similar warning:

Neither give heed to *fables* and *endless genealogies*, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.... From which some having swerved have turned aside unto *vain jangling*, desiring to be teachers of the law.... Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners ... for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be *any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine*; according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which was committed to my trust.

I Timothy 4:1–3 is another example where Paul not only mentions specific heretical teachings but points also to their source, lying spirits and demons:

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience

14 Op. cit., p. 942.

15 “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject.” Huther in Meyer’s *Commentary on the New Testament* (translated by David Hunter, New York and London, 1885), p. 320, correctly observes, “αἰρετικός... is not equivalent to *contentiosus*, but is, according to Calvin: *quisquis sua protervia unitatem ecclesiae abruptit*, any one who causes departure from the pure sound doctrine of the gospel.”

16 Op. cit., pp. 942–943. Cf. also Prof. Martin Guenther in the preface of *Lehre und Wehre* of 1876 (tr. by P. E. K., *Concordia Theological Monthly*, April, 1941, p. 300): “Nor is that true when we are accused of declaring even such as heretics as *err from weakness*. For what does it mean to declare a person a heretic? It means to label him as a person who errs against the foundation of faith and deliberately adheres to, and propagates, his error. Have we ever regarded such as *err from weakness* in this way or treated them so? Never.”

17 *Theologische Quartalschrift*, April, 1940, pp. 90–91.

seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

We may also remind ourselves here of Paul's earnest warning to the elders of the church at Ephesus when he met with them at Miletus,

Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock... For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, *speaking perverse things* to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch (Acts 20:28–31)!

Peter also cites an example of heresy:

But there were false prophets also among the people, as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction (II Pet. 2:1).

Peter clearly indicates that this is an extreme case [*even* (καί, marking an intensification, even to the extent of) denying the Lord that bought them"]. That false teachers would be so bold and so open in their denial of Scriptural truth was almost unthinkable, but Peter wants his readers to know that the arrogance of error knows no bounds. Error of the kind Peter mentions subverts the very material foundation of Christian faith. More subtle forms of heresy are, of course, also included in Peter's warning (cf. "cunningly devised fables," vs. 16). A warning against the most drastic form includes all the lesser forms just as the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," prohibits not only the actual act of killing but strikes against all thoughts of hatred that may arise in the heart, and the prohibition, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," extends also to a lustful glance of the eyes and evil thoughts in the heart, as Jesus explains when He says, "Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:28). False teachers, regardless of the extent of their error, need to be recognized as such (cf. "mark them," Rom. 16:17). They come, to be sure, with "feigned words" (II Pet. 2:3), or, as Jesus tells us, "in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15).

5. Heresy is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20). It is a product of unbelief. It is a sin to which the flesh, the Old Adam, of the Christian, too, is inclined.¹⁸ Those who do not repent of this sin will not enter into the kingdom of God, as Paul reminds the Galatians.

6. Heresy leads to destruction (αἰρέσεις ἀπωλείας, lit. "of destruction"—II Pet. 2:1). Heresy of any kind may result in a total loss of faith. All false teaching is therefore "destructive" (RSV) or "damnable" (AV). It endangers men's salvation. That is why Jesus warns us to beware of false prophets, an admonition motivated by the Savior's loving concern for our salvation. For this reason also the Church is to exclude a heretic from its fellowship (Tit. 3:10). It is to do this promptly ("after the first and second admonition reject"). It is not to dally lest the error spread. It is to remember, "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:9). Rejection is an action designated in Romans 16:17 by "avoid." It is not to be identified in every respect with excommunication (Matt. 18:15–18), however. By avoiding false teaching churches, for example, we do not declare that all members of such erring Christian denominations are heathen and publicans. The fact remains, however, that the ultimate end of impenitence, whether the sin be an ungodly life or heretical teaching, is the same—destruction.

7. The false teachers (ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι) themselves, that is, not only the originators but also the peddlers of heresy, are in particular danger ["bring upon themselves swift (ταχινήν i.e., speedy, sudden) destruction"].

8. By its admonition the Church fulfils its obligation, pays its debt of love to the heretic. If he rejects this, the Church is not to concern itself with him any further. He has shown that he is "subverted" (AV) — ἐξέστραπται— (RSV: "perverted"; NEB: "has a distorted mind") and "sinneth" (AV) — ἁμαρτάνει (Tit. 3:11). His thinking, his teaching is warped, twisted. Under the influence of the "father of lies" he has turned aside from the path of true doctrine. Therefore the Church is to reject him (παραιτοῦ— RSV: "have nothing more to

18 Commenting on Werner Elert's *Abendmahl und Kirchengemeinschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsächliche des Ostens* (Berlin, 1954), Tom Hardt remarks, "From Elert's book one can actually learn the '*semper, ubique et ab omnibus*' of heresy" (*Lutherische Blätter*, July, 1960, p. 64).

do with him”; A-G: “here perhaps the word has the sense *dismiss, drive out*”). By his adamant refusal to accept correction he has shown that he is a heretic. The word “heretic” is used proleptically here; the thought is not that after the errorist has been identified or marked as persistent, in other words, as a heretic, the Church still owes it to him to admonish him once or twice more before breaking off relations and separating from him; as soon as he has been recognized for what he is, namely, as one who steadfastly and determinedly holds to his false teaching, he is to be shunned *immediately*. The welfare of the entire Church requires this, just as one who has a dangerous contagious disease is immediately isolated or quarantined for the safety of others as soon as his condition is recognized. The remarks of Schlatter are very apropos:

(Titus) should show him that he is not thinking or acting out of God’s will and His love but is going his own selfish ways. With all patience he should also do this for him a second time in case he is obstinate and will not permit himself to be persuaded to desist as a result of the first warning. But then he should bring his efforts to an end and not endlessly dispute with him, but terminate fellowship with such a person. Will he not now establish a sect of his own? Paul does not concern himself with this; a Christian teacher, who possesses no police powers or authority to persecute so that he could compel some one to refrain from spreading his ideas, does not have it within his power to prevent this. We must bear in mind the aim toward which in this matter too the concern and conscientiousness of the apostolic men were directed. They did not concern themselves with the question: What will the other person now do? Their concern was simply this that they seriously considered: Have *we* done our duty toward him? Is *our* conscience free and clear with respect to him? May *we* break off fellowship with him without denying the riches of Christ’s grace and patience? Yes, says Paul; let him go. He does not want Titus to trouble himself in the vain hope that he may, nevertheless, perhaps be able to help him. If he, in spite of being warned, manufactures his own religion and wants to gather his own following, he is out of his mind and, as far as his thinking and willing are concerned, sick to the root. Our ability to help and to teach is in such a case at an end. For he is sinning.¹⁹

19 Schlatter, Adolf, *Die Briefe an Timotheus und Titus* (Calw & Stuttgart, 1904), pp. 217–218: (*Titus*) soll ihm zeigen, dass er nicht aus Gottes Willen und aus seiner Liebe denkt und handelt, sondern seine eigensuechtigen Wege geht. Das soll er ihm mit aller Geduld auch ein zweitesmal tun, falls er eigensinnig ist und sich durch die erste Warnung nicht abhalten laeszt. Dann soll er aber seine Bemuehungen beschlieszen und nicht ohne Ende mit ihre disputieren, sondern die Gemeinschaft mit ihm abbrechen. Titus hat dadurch, dass er einen solchen einfach ablehnt, zu bewirken, dass er geht. Wird er nun nicht eine eigene Sekte stiften? Auf diese Sorge laeszt sich Paulus nicht ein; das zu verhueten, liegt nicht im Vermoegen eines christlichen Lehrers, der keine Polizeigewalt und Verfolgungsmacht besitzt, so dass er jemand zwingen koennte, die Verbreitung seiner Gedanken zu unterlassen. Wir haben auf die Richtung zu achten, in der sich auch hier die Sorge und Gewissenhaftigkeit der apostolischen Maenner bewegte, nicht dahin, dass sie sich kuemmerten: was macht nun wohl der andere? sondern dahin, dass sic sich ernsthaft ueberlegten legten: haben wir an ihm unsre Pflicht getan? ist unser Gewissen ihm gegenueber frei und klar? duerfen wir die Gemeinschaft mit ihm aufheben, ohne dass wir den Reichtum der Gnade und Geduld Christi verleugnen? Ja, sagt Paulus; lasz ihn gehen. Er will nicht, dass sich Titus mit der leeren Hoffnung abmuehe: er koenne ihm vielleicht doch helfen. Wenn er hartnaeckig, obwohl er gewarnt ist, seine Religion sich zurechtmacht und seine eigene Anhaengerschaft sich bereiten will, so ist er verdreht und in seinem Denken und Wollen bis in die Wurzel hinunter krank. Unsre Macht, zu helfen und zu lehren, ist in einem solchen Fall zu Ende. Denn er suendigt.

Luther’s comments are also worth repeating: “James puts it very well, 4:7, ‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.’ He does not say: Argue with Satan and with the heretic; but oppose him in this manner: There is God’s Word—if you will believe it, fine; but if you won’t, then go to Paris and argue there. If you deal differently with heretics and talk in a friendly way with them, the devil will tempt you in order to snatch the Word out of your heart. ‘A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject,’ Titus 3:10.” (*Jacobus spricht sehr wohl 4, 7: Widerstehet dem Teufel, so fleucht er von euch. Er spricht nicht: Disputieret mit dem Satan, und mit dem Ketzner, sonder widerstehet ihm auf diese Weise: Da ist Gottes Wort, willst du glauben, wohl gut; willst du nicht, so gehe nach Paris, und disputire da. Gehest du mit den Ketzern anders um, und redest freundlich mit ihnen, so ficht dich der Teufel an, dass er das Wort aus deinem Herzen nehme. Einen ketzerischen Menschen meide, wenn er einmal und abermal ermahnet ist, Titus Cap. 3, V. 10, Geist aus Luthers Schriften oder Concordanz der Ansichten und Urtheils des groszen Reformators*, edited by F. W. Lomler, G. F. Lucius, J. Rust, L. Sackreuter, and Ernst Zimmermann, Darmstadt, 1830, hereinafter cited as *Concordanz*, Vol. III, p. 36, our translation).

Dr. C. F. W. Walther in his article, “The False Arguments for the Modern Theory of Open Questions,” (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, May, 1939, p. 355, tr. by A.) asks: “Now what is to be done if a person teaches an error which indeed is non-fundamental but opposes a clear Word of God and if he has been convicted by the clear word so that he is not able to reply? What is to be done if such an erring person stubbornly insists on maintaining his error, refuses to be instructed, and it becomes evident that he clings to his error not through weakness of intellect, but because he is unwilling to yield to the Word of God? What is to be done if he by clinging to his error does indeed not subvert the real or dogmatic but the organic foundation of faith, the authority of Holy Scripture? Are we, after he

9. A heretic is self-condemned (αὐτοκατάκριτος). Αὐτοκατάκριτος is a *hapax legomenon*. Its meaning is clear from the context, however. The heretic has condemned himself by the very fact that he by his own deliberate choice rejects the truth which has been shown to him. This does not necessarily mean that he acknowledges or recognizes that he is an errorist. He may very well have *deceived himself*. He may well be sincere in his self-delusion. But the fact that he rejects the truth in spite of the fact that it has been pointed out to him a number of times condemns him. He stands self-condemned by his act of refusal to accept correction from the Scriptures. We may think of Zwingli at Marburg, for example.²⁰

To the extent that a man is enmeshed in error, to that extent he is an unbeliever.²¹ Our fathers have always correctly recognized, however, the possibility of a “happy inconsistency” between what a man says with

has been made conscious of his error and all admonitions have been in vain, to drop the controversy and tolerate the error? Are we to bring about peace in this manner, that we declare the point in debate an open question because it does not pertain to a fundamental article of faith? What human being, what angel, has the right to excuse us from obedience to the Word of God? Who can destroy and dissolve the Word of God even in one small tittle? ... Can there be any clearer proof that a body is not a true Church of God than if it will not unconditionally submit to the divine Word? Can it in this case, in true faith, hold the other teachings which it claims to accept and believe? Never!”

20 Luther (op. cit., p. 320) rightly refers to I Timothy 4:2 (“having their conscience seared with a hot iron”) and comments, “Αὐτοκατάκριτος is equivalent to κεκαυστηριασμένος τὴν ἰδίαν συνείδησιν.” His explanation (“He sins with the consciousness of his guilt and of his own condemnation”) misses the point, however. The point is that conscience has been resisted so often that it no longer functions as it should. It no longer reacts because it has become calloused. Lenski (op. cit., p. 944) is right: “Neither Paul nor Titus and the church need to condemn him, the *hairetikos* himself does this.... The very word *hairetikos* implies that this man has the truth before him but rejects it and prefers his own contrary ideas. Then comes the *nouthesia* or remonstrance; this, too, the man rejects. His guilt is evident, also his self-condemnation, for his rejection is the adverse judgment pronounced by himself.” His additional remarks bear repeating: “Today thousands openly disagree with Paul. When one has been turned away from the true teaching of God and Christ, this is not considered as sinning and as self-condemnation. Such men are not blamed in the churches, they often receive no remonstrance, they are often highly honored, nor do the leaders of the churches or the churches themselves obey v. 9; they themselves may have been turned and in varying degrees become *hairetikoi*. Although they themselves are guilty *they naturally seek to acquit themselves*, and thus they also acquit others” (our emphasis).

In regard to a heretic’s self-deception Luther writes: “Picture to yourself a person who is sleeping. How badly he is deceived at that time. For one who is sound asleep can not notice that he is being deceived in a dream. It seems to him that things are actually happening that way.... So is every one who has let himself be deceived by an opinion of the flesh; just as all heretics, who have been deceived by visions like those which they see in a dream, can not imagine anything else than that they have the most certain truth. For that reason Jude in his Epistle, v. 8, gives them that name which is exceptionally appropriate when he calls such people ‘dreamers’ who follow fleshly wisdom. For although they are wise as far as the world and reason are concerned, in divine things and in matters of religion they are, indeed, real dreamers who can not distinguish between an empty figment of the imagination and a true fact, between a dream and the truth. But they say, in accordance with the unreal image of their dreams: Bread and wine are not the Body. The matter is settled and is the truth itself, as they write. But that it is a dream pure and simple, that they do not see” (*Concordanz*, Vol. III, p. 29–30, our trans.).

Cf. also Huelsemann, “For error in regard to the faith and the persistent assertion of it makes a heretic, *not only the knowledge of error*, I Tim. 4:3–5, *although as a result of blindness and corruption the mind so teaches*, II Tim. 3:7.” (*Error enim circa fidem ejusque pertinax assertio facit haereticum, non sole agnitio erroris*, I Tim. 4:3–5, *quamquam ex caecitate et corruptione intellectus sic doceat*, II Tim. 3:7, Baier-Walther, *Compendium Theologiae Positivae*, St. Louis, 1879, Vol. III, p. 657, our translation.)

Walther also speaks of the necessity of separating from those who are erring when they “stubbornly reject all instruction from the divine Word and thus become manifest as people who, though they apparently do not wish to violate the dogmatic foundation, the analogy of faith, nevertheless shake and subvert the organic foundation, Holy Scripture itself” (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, May, 1939, p. 353).

21 Cf. Prof. J. P. Meyer’s discussion of “unbelievers” in II Corinthians 6:14 in *Ministers of Christ* (Milwaukee, 1963), p. 133f. We select a few key sentences: “In speaking about unbelievers, Paul does not have in mind some weak brother. The minds of true believers may be tinged with deep and dangerous delusions, but since they are in all humility, prayerfully seeking the truth and are willing to be instructed by the Word of God, they are not unbelievers.... Here he has in mind unbelievers, men who take a firm stand on some error of theirs. Were they out-and-out unbelievers, men who rejected the Gospel in toto? ... Paul does not question their sincerity when they claim to preach Christ—they were deceivers who themselves had been deceived—nor does he question their general ability. He does not call them theological nincompoops, but because of the error with which they adulterated the pure Gospel, he calls them unbelievers in spite of the fact that they professed allegiance to Christ.”

his mouth and what he believes in his heart.²² The practice of fellowship, to be sure, is to be based on one's confession in word and deed; only God "looketh upon the heart" (I Sam. 16:7).

10. God permits heresies "that they which are approved may be made manifest" (I Cor. 11:19). The stand men take toward false teaching separates those who have God's approval from those who do not. Heretics, insofar as they are errorists, do not have God's approval. Luther also points out, "Heresy and the sects, although they do a great deal of damage, nevertheless, also result in this that they drive us to a more diligent study of God's Word."²³

11. Heresy is responsible for the divisions in the church. It causes disruptions. It produces sects. Not those who in obedience to God's command separate themselves from heretics are the division makers, but the heretics "cause divisions and offenses," and they do this by teaching "contrary to the doctrine" we have learned from the Scriptures (Rom. 16:17). Hence, the term *αἵρεσις* is also applied to the groups of those who hold heretical views.

12. The claim that "heresies" are groups which are "outside Christianity and the Christian Church" (Kittel) is patently without foundation (cf. I Cor. 11:19, "heresies among you"). If these were *extra ecclesiam*, there would be no reason for Paul to speak of them as *ἐν ὑμῖν*. In Galatians 5:19–21 Paul lists "heresies" among the works of the flesh to which the flesh of Christians also is prone. Note also II Peter 2:1, "false teachers among you [*ἐν ὑμῖν*, i.e., *within* the Christian community, the visible Church], who privily shall *bring in* [παρεισάξουσιν—introduce into the Church alongside the truth] damnable heresies."

Prof. Lehninger aptly points out, "Not the enemies from without who openly and boldly ("mit offenem Visier") attack the Christian religion are the heretics against whom the Scriptures warn us in so many places, but they are people who arise within the Church and who clothe themselves in the mantle of Christianity."²⁴ Luther says categorically, "No heresies arise except in the churches and out of the churches."²⁵ While Satan, the archenemy, on the one hand endeavors to destroy the Church by persecution from without, he also, on the other hand, carries on a fifth column activity, seeking to destroy it from within by undermining its doctrinal foundation.²⁶

13. Before we conclude this discussion of the meaning of the terms "heresy" and "heretic" in Scripture, a few thoughts which were briefly alluded to in the foregoing analysis need to be amplified and emphasized.

22 Cf., e.g., Francis Pieper, *Christian Dogmatics* (St. Louis, 1950), Vol. I, p. 6: "We do not call into question the personal faith of every theologian who from the safe retreat of his study or lecture room attacks the *satisfactio vicaria*. Luther, too, takes cognizance of such a 'felicitous inconsistency' when he says of the theologians whom Erasmus quoted against him that the language they used *inter disputandum* was not the language their heart spoke before God." He refers to Luther Opp. va. VII, 166; St. L. XVIII: 1730. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston in *Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will* (London, 1957), pp. 114–115, translate the passage as follows: "Admittedly, these selfsame saints, when engaged in argument, spoke of 'free-will' in a different strain. But that just illustrates what I see to be a universal experience: men are different when occupied with words and disputations from what they are when occupied with experience and practice. In the former case, their speech does not accord with what they previously felt; in the latter, their feelings do not accord with what they previously said. Men should therefore be assessed, godly and ungodly alike, rather by what they feel than by what they say." Similarly, Dr. C. F. W. Walther writes: "We know that there are errors which proceed from weakness, just as there are sins that are caused by weakness, and that a Christian may intellectually err even with respect to a fundamental matter without subverting the foundation in his heart, not to mention how wrong it would be to assume that a person necessarily destroys the foundation of faith if he errs in a non-fundamental point," (op. cit., p. 354).

23 *Die Ketzerei und Secten, ob sie schon fast schaden, so schaffen sic doch das damit, dasz sie uns zur fleisigern Erkenntnis goettlicher Schrift treiben* (Concordanz, III, p. 32).

24 Op. cit., p. 91.

25 *Es entstehen keine Ketzereien, ohne allein in den Kirchen und aus den Kirchen*, Concordanz, p. 23.

26 How the devil repeatedly dips into the same old bag of tricks in order to tempt succeeding generations has been perceptively set forth by Prof. E. Reim in "Ancient Heresies in Modern Garb," *Theologische Quartalschrift*, January, 1949, p. 11ff. Prof. Reim also reminds us of the only effective means of protection we have against the devil's insidious attacks: "It is good to know something about the ancient heresies. It is better to be able to recognize them also in their modern form. But unless we ourselves are deeply rooted in the Word of His Grace, in the Gospel of Salvation through the Blood of the Son of God, all this head knowledge will avail us nothing. The blessed inheritance of which Paul speaks will slip from our nerveless fingers and will be lost just as surely as though it were torn from us by the very hands of Anti-Christ himself" (p. 12).

That there is to be no more fellowshiping with a false teacher after it has become clear that he is persistent in his error is, as we have seen, expressly stated in Titus 3:10, “A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition *reject*.” The unity which the state of fellowship and its outward manifestation or exercise necessarily presuppose has been ruptured. There are, therefore, to be no further fellowship activities.

Whether the fellowshiping participants recognize it or not, the practice of fellowship inevitably implies and constitutes a public testimony to the fact that those engaging in such manifestations of fellowship are actually “of one heart and of one soul” (Acts 4:32). If they are not in complete doctrinal agreement, by practicing fellowship with one another they indicate that they do not regard their differences as divisive, that they on their part do not consider them to be an obstacle to joint worship or religious work.

All expressions of fellowship are predicated on a fundamental unity, on a basic agreement in what the fellowshiping participants consider essential. In other words, as long as one church body continues to practice fellowship with another, or as soon as it begins to engage in fellowship activities with another, it is declaring that it does not regard the body to which it is extending the hand of fellowship as heretical. It is declaring that it does not regard as heresy any doctrines which the other body may uphold which differ from its own position.

According to Titus 3:10, as soon as the Church has come to the realization that a false teacher insists on clinging to his error in spite of its earnest and repeated effort to correct him, all joint religious activities with him are to cease at once. All joint preaching and teaching, whether carried on formally or informally (which is *always* “pulpit fellowship” even when not carried on from a pulpit), a joint ministry in any form, joint participation in the Sacrament of the Altar, all forms of joint worship (including joining in prayer, which is “prayer fellowship,” or, more accurately, *fellowship in prayer*, even when it involves only an occasional joint prayer), all common efforts and every joint endeavor in the work of the Church (which is the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other terms, confessing Christ in word and deed), all joint support of any undertaking that falls within this realm—in short, anything and everything that either assumes, or creates the impression of, oneness of faith or of unity in doctrine and its practical application—is excluded when such unity does not in fact exist. Under such circumstances the “reject” of Titus 3:10 and the “avoid” of Romans 16:17 apply. Engaging in activities such as those just described *is* practicing fellowship. Engaging in such activities when unity does not actually exist is, therefore, a denial of the truth. Engaging in such activities under these conditions is disobedience to God’s Word. Not even a statement to the effect that the participants acknowledge the fact that they are not in doctrinal agreement can legitimize such joint activities or change the fact that the action as such constitutes a denial of the truth by the orthodox party. Nor do these passages of Holy Writ permit some expressions of fellowship when there is a certain measure of agreement and an increased level of joint worship and work when a greater degree of unity prevails.

Fellowship activities are to give outward expression to a holy, precious, and blessed relationship created by the Holy Spirit. He, and He alone, can create that unity, that agreement, that oneness of spirit of which Paul speaks in I Corinthians 1:10, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” Such oneness of spirit is a gift of God, not a work of man. No doctrinal compromises, no amount of friendly socializing, no high-pressure demands for union because of the “exigencies of the time” can produce it.

14. Self-evidently, the process of identifying one who has fallen into error as a heretic involves a period of time. Only time will show whether the errorist is a weak brother who has unintentionally slipped into an error which he will be ready to repudiate when he is shown from the Scriptures that his teaching is false, or whether he will refuse correction and will insist on holding to his error. The hand of fellowship is not to be withdrawn at once. He is to be admonished. Every effort is to be made to show him in what respect he has deviated from God’s holy Word. If this first effort fails, a second admonition is to be given.

The first and the second admonition are, naturally, not simultaneous. They are successive. How soon it will become evident whether the first admonition has been fruitless or whether it has had the desired effect will depend on the circumstances in each case. It may become evident very quickly. Again, especially when a

church body is the one to whom the admonition is directed, a more extended period of time may be involved. Here, certainly, no one should presume to set down any hard and fast rules.

Even when it is clear, however, that the testimony which has been given either has been rejected outright or is being ignored, the errorist still is not to be branded as a heretic. A second admonition is called for. A second sincere attempt is to be made to point out to him that he is no longer continuing in Jesus' Word and that, therefore, he no longer truly is one of Jesus' disciples (John 8:31, 32).

The stipulation that there is to be a second admonition is intended to guard against undue, precipitate haste in pronouncing a man a heretic. On the other hand, the specific enumeration, "after the first and second admonition," clearly indicates that there is to be no inordinate delay, no endless procrastination in coming to a decision in the case. If the second effort also fails, the conclusion is warranted: This man is persistent in his error; this man is a heretic; or: This church body is heretical; it is heterodox.

Circumstances, then, will determine in each case how long it will take to recognize that a man or a church body is persistent in adhering to error. Recognizing persistence is an area where Christian judgment is to a certain extent involved. The length of time it will take to arrive at a final verdict will vary from case to case.

The instructions given in Titus 3:10, we must also bear in mind, are not to be followed mechanically or legalistically. Such a spirit would be just as foreign to the Gospel in this instance as it would be in carrying out the three steps of admonition in Matthew 18. Thus in admonishing a delinquent member, a pastor, for example, may make a number of visits before entering upon the second step and taking one or two members of the church council with him to help him convince the sinner of the error of his ways. Depending on the results of their first visit, these two or three may also find it advisable to make several additional attempts before enlisting the aid of the entire congregation in bringing the sinner to repentance.

In admonishing a false teacher according to Titus 3:10, as in carrying out the admonition of a sinner according to the procedure outlined in Matthew 18, love is all-important. Genuine, heartfelt Christian love is to govern the entire proceeding. Warm and sincere concern is to characterize the spirit in which the admonition is offered. The goal is to convince the errorist that his teaching actually contradicts and conflicts with Scripture. The aim and purpose is to show him in what respect he is not heeding the command of Jesus, "Teaching them to observe *all things* whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matt. 28:20). Until his persistence is evident, the Church's objective must ever be to recall the errorist from his error. And therefore, until it is clear that he is persistent and unwilling to accept correction from the Scriptures, until it is clear, in other words, that he is a heretic, the Church is to treat and deal with him as a brother, a weak brother to be sure, but, nevertheless, as a brother (II Thess. 3:14, 15).^{26a}

In determining whether a member of the Church who has advanced false teachings is persistent, Christian judgment, therefore, plays a necessary and legitimate role. The response to the admonition, for example, may not be a clear-cut rejection. It may be clothed in ambiguous terms. Moreover, when two church bodies are involved, the fact that the erring body is persisting in its error may be evident to some but may not be clear to all. It is then the duty of those who are convinced of the persistence of the errorists to furnish their brethren with all the necessary information and proof in order that the body as such may arrive at a common judgment. In Romans 16:17 all of this is embraced in the one word "mark" (σκοπεῖν).^{26b} Marking covers the

26a "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man [τοῦτον σημειοῦσθε] and have no company with him [μὴ συναναμίγνυσθαι αὐτῷ, i.e., do not continue to associate with him], that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother [ὡς ἀδελφόν, inasmuch as that is his actual status until it is evident that the admonition has been fruitless; in that event it will be necessary to take the further step of terminating the fraternal relationship].

26b Incidentally, it is to be noted that σκοπεῖν is the *present* tense, not the aorist. The action is, therefore, not punctiliar but linear, durative, and continuous. It indicates an ongoing activity or process. Accordingly, σκοπεῖν means "to continue being on the lookout for," "to be on constant guard against," "continually to keep a watchful eye on." The word calls to mind a lookout, standing watch on the walls of a city, keeping his eyes open for an approaching enemy. When he sees a cloud of dust in the distance, he fastens his eyes on the approaching riders, straining to identify them as friends or foes.

Similarly, the Christian Church is to be on the lookout for errorists. It may be able to identify them very quickly as enemies who create divisions and offenses by teaching contrary to the doctrine taught in the Scriptures. Again, it may be necessary to keep them under surveillance, to fasten one's eyes upon them, to watch them carefully and take note of them for some time before it becomes

clear what type of errorists they are. The latter may be particularly true when the errorist arises within the brotherhood. The Church will have to determine whether it is dealing with a weak brother or with a persistent errorist, a heretic, one who creates divisions and offenses by his false teaching.

It is self-evident that the action designated by σκοπεῖν includes the identification when the errorist is a heretic. The translation “mark” (AV) may, however, create a wrong impression. It has at times been understood in the sense of “brand, designate.” Conclusive identification is, to be sure, a vital step in the lookout process, but all that leads up to this is also included, as well as continued watchfulness thereafter. Σκοπεῖν thus denotes the same careful vigilance which Jesus enjoins in Matthew 7:15 when He says, “Beware of [προσέχετε, also a present tense: constantly and continuously be on your guard against] false prophets.” It is also to be noted that προσέχετε, like σκοπεῖν, involves the identification of the false prophets. If some one within the brotherhood has fallen into error, it will be necessary to take a careful look at him. Admonition is called for. It will be necessary to determine whether the errorist is a weak brother (in that event he will readily heed the admonition and accept correction), or whether he is a false prophet, a heretic. If the latter is true—and his persistent, unyielding rejection of the Church’s brotherly admonition identifies him as such—he is to be shunned and avoided.

The similarity between σκοπεῖν and προσέχετε comes out in Luke 11:35, “Take heed [σκόπει RSV: *be careful*] therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.” Careful observation by keeping one’s eyes fastened on some one is the predominant thought in Philippians 3:17, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark [σκοπεῖτε again, a continuous action, a *process*] them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” See also II Cor. 4:18; Gal. 6:1; Phil. 2:4.

The force of the word σκοπεῖν has been recognized by Prof. Walter A. Schumann, who writes: “This verb is derived from a sturdy old Greek root σκε/οπ, a parent of a long line of Greek—and English words, too. The noun σκοπός is a watchman, a look-out man, a guardian, a scout. The verb means ‘to look out,’ ‘to guard watchfully.’ We can best demonstrate its meaning with the hand: ‘to shade the eyes and critically examine.’ This also is the etymological meaning of our English word ‘sceptic.’ Paul then writes: Now I earnestly admonish you, brethren, critically, watchfully to examine, or to look out for those causing divisions and death-traps contrary to the doctrine which you on your part learned” (*Theologische Quartalschrift*, October, 1941, p. 263).

The lexica bear this out. Arndt-Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, defines σκοπέω, “look(out) for, notice, keep one’s eyes on some one or something.” Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, under σκέπτομαι offers “to look about carefully, spy,” and cites the *Iliad* (16.361): “σκέπετ’ ὄϊστῶν τε ῥοῖζον καὶ δοῦπον ἀκόντων, he looked after the whistling of the darts (so as to shun them).” Cf. also Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek* (4th English ed., tr. by Wm. Urwick), “to look towards an object, to contemplate, to give attention to; literally, to spy out.”

Luther translates σκοπεῖν with *aufsehen*: “*Ich ermahne abet euch, liebe Brueder, dasz ihr aufsehet auf die, die da Zertrennung und Aergernis anrichten, neben der Lehre, die ihr gelernet habt, und weicht yon denselbigen.*”

Note also R. C. H. Lenski, “Σκοπεῖν = ‘look out for,’ ‘be keeping your eyes open for.’ The rendering, ‘mark them who’ (AV) in our versions implies that such errorists were present in Rome; they were not, but some of them might drift into Rome at any time, and ‘look out for them’ sounds the warning to be on guard” (*The Interpretation of St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, Columbus, 1945, p. 915). G. Stoeckhardt, “And if then this eventually should come to pass [viz., that the false teachers with whom Paul had had to contend elsewhere should come also to Rome], then the Roman Christians should take careful note of [*wohl ins Auge fassen*], σκοπεῖν, those teachers who brought a new, strange doctrine, in order to be on their guard against them, and they should avoid them” (*Commentar ueber den Brief Pauli an die Roemer*, St. Louis, 1907, p. 641, our translation). W. Sanday and A. C. Headlam, “He gives one definite and direct warning against false teachers. It was probably not against teachers actually in Rome, but against such as he knew of as existing in other churches which he had founded, whose advent to Rome he dreads” (*The Epistle to the Romans, The International Critical Commentary*, New York, 1905, p. 429). So also F. Godet, “As the expression: *to mark. have the eyes open to* (σκοπεῖν), refers to an enemy expected rather than present, we must apply the last words of the verse: *avoid them, to the time when they shall be present, and shall seek to do their work*” (*Commentary on St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, tr. by A. Cusin. New York, 1885, p. 496).

In the following two quotations the watchfulness to be exercised *when the errorists have appeared* is emphasized more strongly than the attitude of watchfulness in anticipation of their possible appearance: “Now they must *keep a watchful eye on* any one who may deviate (παρά) from the doctrine which they had learned [our emphasis]... When Paul is here speaking of a deviation in doctrine, he is not thinking of a casual lapse, something that may happen to anyone, he is thinking of such as persist in their wrong course” (Prof. Joh. P. Meyer, “Prayer Fellowship” *Quartalschrift*, April 1950, p. 131). “The Roman Christians should *take note of* those who are causing divisions and offenses in opposition to the doctrine which had been taught to them... They were well able *to keep a watchful eye on* anyone who deviated from the doctrine which they had learned [our emphasis]. Paul earnestly urged them to do so. Also here Paul is not thinking of anyone who might casually make an erroneous doctrinal statement. No, he had such in mind as cling to their error and with it create divisions” (Prof. Carl Lawrenz, “The Scriptural Principles Concerning Church Fellowship,” *Quartalschrift*, October, 1954, pp. 287, 288).

As was noted above, conclusive identification is a necessary step in the process of being on guard against heretics, against those who persistently deviate from the doctrine of the Scriptures and thus cause divisions and offenses. Moreover, when the positive identification or diagnosis has been made, the command, “Avoid!” applies at once. But it would be a mistake to assume, as some do, that thereupon one no longer needs to be on the guard against them, to take note of them, to keep a watchful eye on them. It would be a mistake to assume that the action designated by σκοπεῖν has then been concluded, even as it is a mistake to limit the action of

entire process of identifying the one who has fallen into error as a heretic, that is, as one who despite all efforts to show him his error from Scripture steadfastly and persistently clings to it. It also includes keeping him, subsequently, under surveillance. Once his condition has been diagnosed, however, the course which the Church must follow is clearly spelled out: reject, avoid. From this point on man's judgment plays no role whatsoever. God Himself prescribes the action which His Church is now to take. And in this the preservation of the Gospel in all its truth and purity is God's greatest concern. His motive is love, love for His Church, which lives by the Gospel, and love for the world, whose one and only hope of salvation is the Gospel, God's own Word of saving Truth.

Part II, Later Usage

I. Re: 2, Church Fellowship After the Death of the Apostles (Theology of Fellowship, hereafter cited as TOF, p. 13)

The problem, contrary to the claim of TOF, was not so much a matter of *definition* ("the definition of heresy and heretic, and of schism and schismatic was not simple"). The church knew what heresy was, namely, persistent adherence to anti-scriptural teaching. There may, to be sure, have been confusion in the minds of some on this point. But the real difficulty was that the Church, having lost its first love for the Gospel and not taking to heart the many earnest warnings to "take heed ... unto the doctrine" (I Tim. 4:16) and to "hold fast the form of sound words" (II Tim. 1:13), failed to recognize the subtle forms in which heresy appeared as being in fact heresy.²⁷ In short, the basic problem was an *indifference toward doctrine* that was beginning to set in, and with it a lack of concern about fellowship principles.

II. Re: 3, St. Augustine's Definition of Heresy and Schism (TOF, p. 13, 14)

TOF correctly states, "Augustine recognized in heresy an *objective* element which is common to all heresy, and he also recognized in heretics a number of *subjective* elements."

It continues, "The objective element which all heresies and heretics have in common is error in doctrine." So far so good. But then TOF adds, "that is, a departure from some phase of the rule of faith as it gradually took form amid the labors and struggles of the church, first in the so-called Baptismal Confession, and in time in the Apostles' Creed."

Such a limitation is wholly unwarranted. Neve points out that Calov in the seventeenth century reminded Calixt, "If adoption of the Apostles' Creed only is sufficient as evidence of orthodoxy, then even the Arians, Socinians, Arminians, and Anabaptists could not have been charged with heresy."²⁸ Certainly the quotation

σκοπεῖν to the identification or diagnosis as such, to the exclusion of a constant state of vigilance against heretics who may appear and to the exclusion of the entire process of careful examination and scrutiny of the errorist whenever false teaching arises.

²⁷ The problem, which has its roots in doctrinal indifference, was not peculiar to that age. It is a very real threat to the Church of today. Immanuel G. Frey in *The Northwestern Lutheran*, October 31, 1965, p. 339, lays his finger on the heart of the matter: "Heresy, as the term is generally understood, is doctrine contrary to the truth. And if no one knows what heresy is any more, then it follows that nobody knows what the truth is, either; for if the truth were known, heresy could be detected by means of it.

"The fact is that the truth can be known. Christ Himself assures His believers of that. He asserted. 'If ye continue in my word ... ye shall know the truth.'

"Inability to recognize heresy results only from failure to continue in Christ's Word. We are not warned against false prophets and enjoined to 'try the spirits whether they are of God' without being provided with a standard according to which they may be tested. That standard is Christ's Word, revealed and recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Through it we *can* detect heresy when it emerges."

²⁸ Neve, J. L., *A History of Christian Thought* (Philadelphia, 1946), Vol. II, p. 8. Cf. also Heinrich Schmid, *Geschichte der syncretistischen Streitigkeiten in der Zeit des Georg Calixt* (Erlangen, 1846), pp. 261–264. According to Calov the position of Calixt was this: "Heretics in the proper sense of the word are only those who, when Christians wish to hear, positively, expressly, and directly deny and reject as false a certain dogma of faith necessary for salvation or an article of the Apostles' Creed which has been set forth and in that respect is not unknown." (*Haeretici proprie non sunt, nisi qui euro Christiani audire cupiant, dogma quoddam fidei*

from Augustine's interpretation of the tares among the wheat which is cited does not by any stretch of the imagination offer such a limited definition of heresy: "The children of the evil one (*mali*) are heretics, who, though begotten out of the same seed of the Gospel and name of Christ, have been turned to wicked opinions and false dogmas."

Consequently, the conclusion is also false: "In this [viz., narrow, restricted] understanding of the objective element of heresy Augustine is at one with the understanding of the church both before and after him." It would be correct, however, to say that in his understanding of the objective element of heresy Augustine is at one with the understanding of the Church both before and after him, namely, in recognizing it to be "wicked opinions and false dogmas," that is, those contrary to Scripture.

Augustine's observation that obstinacy in defending his error belongs to the subjective characteristics of the genuine heretic is well founded. A distinction is to be made between a heretic and an erring Christian who is not a heretic. The latter is one who is willing to be corrected from Scripture. (Cf. Augustine as quoted on p. 14 of TOF: "Those who maintain their own opinion, however false and perverted, without obstinate will ... those who seek truth with careful industry, ready to be corrected when they have found it, are not to be rated among heretics.") In this light Augustine's statement, "Err I may; a heretic I will not be," must be understood. Augustine does not want to hold obstinately to any opinion which can be shown from Scripture to be false.²⁹

ad salutem necessarium vel symboli ap. articulum propositum et eatenus non incognitum, positive, expresse ac directe negant ac tanquam falsum rejiciunt, syncr, p. 158).

Calov argues, "If only those are heretics in the proper sense of the term and those alone are to be put under an anathema for false teachings who directly deny an article which has been expressed in the Apostles' Creed, the whole catholic Church has erred in the ecumenical symbols since it strikes with an anathema other dogmas also which are not directly contrary to the Creed." (*Si haeretici tantum illi proprie sunt, iique soli anathemati ob dogmata erronea subjiciendi, qui directe negant articulum symbolo ap. expressum, erravit tota ecclesia catholica in symbolis oecumenicis, anathemate percutiens etiam alia dogmate, quae synbolo directe contraria non sunt, syncr., 164).*

Again Calov writes, "If the definition of Calixt is admitted, neither the Pelagians, nor the Anabaptists, nor the Arminians, nor the Calvinists, nor the Papists would be heretics in the proper sense of the term: indeed, Calixt scarcely asserts that these deny articles which it is necessary to believe for salvation. And what must be said about the Arians, what about the Socinians?" (*Si Calixti definitio admittatur, nec Pelagiani nec Anabaptistae nec Arminiani nec Calviniani nec Pontificii proptie haeretici fuerint: quos quidem articulos creditu ad salutem necessarios inficiari vix asserit Calixtus. Et quid de Arianis, quid de Socinianis statuendum?*)

With heavy irony he adds, "Surely those must therefore not be called heretics since they do not directly and explicitly deny any article of the Apostles' Creed, which Calixt believes are the only articles that it is necessary to believe, but all these profess that they accept the Creed!" (*Num illi ideo haeretici non dicendi, quod directe et explicite nullum symboli ap. articulum, quos solum credit necesarios creditu Calixtus, negate sed omnes sese admittere profiteantur!* digr. de n. th. H., p. 923). But Calixt's position is the very one TOF erroneously attributes to St. Augustine! (The Latin quotations which we have translated here may be found in Schmid, pp. 261–263.)

²⁹ Note the distinction between "heresy" and "schism." Elert (*Abendmahl und Kirchenoemeinschaft in der alten Kirche hauptsaechlich des Ostens*, Berlin, 1954, p. 89) states it well: "From ancient times on, the language of the Church has distinguished between heresy and schism. Heresy is false doctrine, heterodoxy, and denial of orthodox church doctrine. Schism is a split on other grounds, for example, because of a deviation from ecclesiastical regulations or because of a conflict as to competence, without, however, any dogmatical divergence.... The concept of heresy serves in any case where this distinction is made as the opposite of the concept of orthodoxy." (*Die Kirchensprache unterscheidet seit alter Zeit Haeresis und Schisma. Haeresis ist Irrlehre, Heterodoxie, Widerspruch gegen die orthodoxe Kirchenlehre. Schisma is Abspaltung aus einem andern Grunde, zum Beispiel wegen Abweichung in der Kirchlichen Ordnung oder wegen eines Kompetenzkonfliktes, jedoeh ohne dogmatische Divergenz.... Der Begriff der Haeresis ist jedenfalls bei dieser Unterscheidung am Begriff der Orthodoxie als Widerspiel ausgerichtet.*)

Elert also observes, "The gross heretics of the ancient church likewise want to be orthodox, but with inverted musical signatures." (*Die groszen Ketzer der alten Kirche wollen ebenfalls orthodox sein, nur mir umgekehrten Vorzeichen*, p. 89.)

We append a few additional comments by Elert which reflect the post-apostolic Church's concept of heresy: "Since there was never any question in the ancient Church that agreement in doctrine [NB!] was also one of the conditions for communion fellowship, therefore no false teacher could commune with an orthodox congregation." (*Da in der alten Kirche niemals zweifelhaft war, dasz zu den Bedingungen der Abendmahlsgemeinschaft auch die Uebereinstimmung in der Lehre gehoert, mithin kein Irrlehrer mit einer orthodoxen Gemeinde kommunizieren kann*, p. 90.)

Referring to the writers in the ancient Church who opposed Gnosticism, he says, "Among them the term 'heresy' as a designation for Gnostic tendencies is standard usage. The understanding that this is false doctrine is always involved. In Irenaeus and Tertullian one already finds a clear differentiation from the concept of schism." (*Bei ihnen ist die Bezeichnung Haeresis ruer die gnostischen*

III. Re: 4, The Concept of Heresy and Heretic in Luther (TOF, p. 14, 15)

TOF, having attempted to foist a *limited* definition of the objective side of heresy on St. Augustine, now proceeds to attempt to ascribe such a view to Luther: “Essentially his statements agree with those of the Bishop of Hippo.” This statement of Luther is quoted: “A heretic is a person who does not believe those parts [scil. of the Christian doctrine] which are necessary to believe” (TOF, p. 14). It is implied that according to Luther it is not necessary to believe everything in Scripture. The argument that Luther denied that he was a heretic for having written against indulgences because indulgences are not an article of faith hardly serves to establish this point!

The next quotation serves to demonstrate the very opposite: “Within Christendom all those are called heretics, who step outside the unity and common manner of the Christian faith ... and believe in a manner peculiar to themselves, and choose ways for themselves.... Therefore *haereticus* really means a man who has his own opinion in divine matters, a peculiar man (*ein Sonderling*) who knows something better, and chooses his own way to heaven” (TOF, p. 14).³⁰

Luther cites many examples of heresy. Only one who limits the scope of the term “articles of faith” and fails to recognize that this includes *all* doctrines of Scripture would fail to grasp the broad sweep of Luther’s statement: “That man must be called a heretic who errs stubbornly in an article of faith, and maintains his error” (TOF, p. 14).³¹ We take note here incidentally also of the statement of Herbert J. A. Bouman, quoted in TOF, p. 18: “This does not mean that the specific *locus* ‘*de justificatione*’ considered by itself is all that the Lutherans consider indispensable. Rather they regard the entire *corpus doctrinae* as bound up inextricably with justification. All doctrines have their place in this doctrine. All doctrines stand or fall with the doctrine of justification.”

It should be remembered, however, that with Luther at the Marburg Colloquy true Lutherans maintain that “every article of faith is a principle in itself and does not need to be proved by another article.”³² They insist on holding to *every single doctrine* taught in the Scriptures, even when no logical connection with the doctrine of justification is apparent, as, for example, between the doctrine of justification and the doctrine of angels. They recognize the Scriptural principle that error in respect to any one doctrine, even a peripheral, non-

Richtungen fester Sprachgebrauch. Es verbindet sich damit stets das Verstaendnis als Irrlehre. Bei Irenaeus und Tertullian finder sich bereits die deutliche Abgrenzung gegen den Begriff des Schismas, p. 90.)

“The heretic who contradicts the confession of the congregation, *ipso facto* separates himself from it... Heterodoxy terminates church fellowship and self-evidently communion fellowship above all.” (*Der Haeretiker, der dem Bekenntnis der Gemeinde widerspricht, vollzieht ipso facto die Trennung von ihr... Heterodoxie hebt die Kirchengemeinschaft auf und selbstverstaendlich erst recht die Abendmahlsgemeinschaft, p. 94.)*

The synods of the fourth century, as Elert points out, maintained, “One must have no dealings with heretics and schismatics; in particular, one must not pray together with them.” (*Mit Haeretikern und Schismatikern darf man keinerlei Verkehr haben, insbesondere nicht zusammen beten. [NB!] p. 96.)*

30 Numerous quotations showing Luther’s conception of the terms “heresy” and “heretic” have been assembled by Prof. M. Lehninger in his article, *Gibt es heute noch Ketzer?* in the *Theologische Quartalschrift*, April, 1940, pp. 83–92. We call attention to only a few (the references are to the St. Louis edition): “He must be called a heretic who stubbornly errs in an article of faith and upholds the error.” (*Der musz ein Ketzer genannt werden, welcher in einem Artikel des Glaubens halsstarrig irrt und den Irrtum behauptet, XIX, 960.)* “According to the testimony of all ancient and recent teachers heresy is nothing else than a persistent error contrary to Holy Writ.” (*Nach aller alten und neuen Lehrer Zeugnis ist Ketzerei nichts anders, denn ein halsstarriger Irrtum wider die heilige Schrift, XVII, 1119.)* Note the broad, all-inclusive sweep of the latter definition, “a persistent error contrary to Holy Writ”!

31 Prof. J.P. Meyer answers the question, “What is an article of faith,” as follows: “Every statement contained in the Scriptures must be accepted by us as absolute truth, but not every statement is an article of faith. An article of faith stands in relation to our salvation, some in direct, some in more remote relation. Thus the story of Jonah and the whale must be believed, but it is not in itself an article of faith, though it certainly contains elements that illustrate many such articles, e.g. God’s power, His forgiving grace, His hearing of prayers, etc. This example points to the use we may make of the historical statements of the Scriptures: they illustrate truths, but do not establish articles of faith” (*Theologische Quartalschrift*, January, 1948, p. 16).

32 The Marburg Colloquy, translated in *This Is My Body* by Herman Sasse, Minneapolis, 1959, p. 261.

fundamental one, inevitably carries with it implications and consequences which ultimately corrupt the entire *corpus doctrinae*. “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9).

This fundamental principle distinguishes Lutheran, Biblical theology from Reformed theology. On this essential, basic point they are diametrically and irreconcilably opposed. Doctrinal compromise is not only inconceivable but anathema (Gal. 1:8) to genuine Lutheranism. It is a spirit, coursing like a cancer through the veins of Reformed theology, however, from the very beginning. At the close of the Marburg Colloquy Bucer asked Luther, “Will you recognize me as a brother, or will you show me my errors that I may overcome them?” To this Luther replied, “I am neither your Lord, nor your judge, nor your teacher. Your spirit and our spirit cannot go together. Indeed, it is quite obvious that we do not have the same spirit.”

The last sentence of this statement is quoted more frequently in the form of Luther’s later recollection of it, “You have another spirit than we.”³³ Luther’s attitude stands in marked contrast to the doctrinal indifference and latitudinarianism of Zwingli, who in his opening remarks appealed to Luther: “In fact, you yourself recognize that spiritual eating gives comfort. Since we are unanimous in this point, for the sake of Christ’s love I beg not to accuse anyone of heresy on account of this dissension.”³⁴

That Luther by no means considered other doctrines aside from justification unimportant or believed that with regard to such doctrines one might take for himself the privilege of believing or teaching otherwise than Scripture teaches has been ably set forth by Tom Hardt in *Lutherische Btaetter*, July, 1960, p. 67:

When a present day theologian like H. W. Gensichen (*Damnamus*, p. 45) reads Luther’s words in “A Brief Confession of the Holy Sacrament”: “Plainly and simply, one must either believe anything and everything or believe nothing; the Holy Ghost will not permit Himself to be torn apart or divided, that He should permit one part to be taught or believed truthfully and another falsely” (WA 54, 158), he asks himself uneasily: Does this not, however, disavow the preeminence of the doctrine of justification, and is not false doctrine now after all conceived of as a violation of a *corpus doctrinae*, which is thought of as being objective and composed of a sum of articles. Most certainly, this preeminence is “disavowed,” yes, what is more, it never existed in Luther’s theology! Whoever teaches even “*unum articulum parvum*” (WA II, 48) falsely, does despite to the Holy Ghost, who is immanent in the entire canon and who withdraws from him who steadfastly opposes Him. “So it will not help the enthusiasts that with regard to the Sacrament they prate so much of spiritual eating and drinking of the body and blood and of the love and unity of Christians” (WA 54, 160). One has to be a member of an ecumenical organization to fail to see that Luther was a miserable confessionalist.³⁵

In what a broad sense Luther understands the term “heresy” is apparent also from the remarks preceding the quotation found in TOF, p. 14, from Luther’s comments on Acts 24:14:

The word *haeresis* is derived from the Greek language and means “elect,” “choose,” and “single out.” Hence, *haeresis* means one’s own separate, chosen, self-devised teaching and way of living and believing apart from the common way, which we now call sects, classes, and orders. Accordingly, the Jews called the Christians a *haeresin*, or sect, of the Nazarenes, Acts 24:14. But Paul did not wish to designate them this way, but rather as a “way,” and said: I live according to the way which they call *haeresin* or sect. So it has come about in Christendom that all those are called heretics who step out of the unity and the

33 Ibid., p. 265.

34 Ibid., p. 238.

35 Wenn ein heutiger Theologe wie H. W. Gensichen (“*Damnamus*,” S. 45) die Worte Luthers im “*Kurzen Bekenntnis vom heiligen Sakrament*” liest: “Rund und rein, ganz und alles geglaubt, oder nicht geglaubt, der heilige Geist leszt sich nicht trennen noch teilen, dos er ein stueck solt warhaftig und des ander falsch leren oder glauben lessen” (WA 54, 168), fragt er sich unruhig: Ist damit abet nicht der Vorrang des Rechtfertigungsglaubens widerrufen, und ist die Irrlehre nun nicht doch els Verletzung eines gegenstaendlich gedachten, aus einer Summe von Artikeln sich zusammensetzenden **corpus doctrinae** begriffen? Ganz gewisz, dieser Vorrang ist “widerrufen,” ja, vielmehr, er hat hie in Luthers Theologie existleft! Wet auch “**unum articulum parvum**” (WA 40 II, 48) falsch lehrt, trotz dem Hl. Geist, der dem ganzen Kanon innewohnt und von dem weicht, der ihn beharrlick bekaempft. “Also wird die Schwermer nichts helfen, des sic bei dem Sacrament seer gros gewesch treiben von dem geistlichen essen und trinken des Leibs und Blurs und von der liebe und einigkeit der Christen” (WA 54, 160). Es bederr der Zugehoerigkeit zu einer oekumenischen Organisation, um nicht zu verstehen, dasz Luther ein elender Konfessionalist war.

common manner of Christian faith and life and believe in their own separate manner and choose ways for themselves.³⁶

Defining “heresy” as *Sonderlichkeit* and *Eigenwilligkeit* Luther compares this vice to leprosy:

From this it is clear that leprosy, which is to represent heresy, signifies nothing else than one’s own reason, one’s personal opinion, the pious view which separates itself from the congregation in those things which pertain to the soul and to God, of which Moses says, Deut. 12:8, *Ye shall not do what seems right in your own eyes*. And there is no other vice so diametrically opposed to the true way and faith, with the result that the Apostles Peter and Paul were deeply troubled about it and the mother of God calls that same serpent’s head, *Mens cordis sui*, the imagination of their hearts, Luke 1:51. And the German term for leprosy (*Aussatz*) appropriately implies that such persons will be set apart, separated from the body, and also will be put out of the congregation. Similarly, St. Paul’s word when he says to Titus (Titus 3:10), He should avoid such a one.³⁷

Luther points out that not a single Christian, inasmuch as he has an Old Adam who is thoroughly corrupt and inclined toward sins of every kind, is entirely free from this sin:

It is true that heresy is contrary to Scripture; accordingly, every error and all sin, including daily sin, yes, even one idle word is contrary to Scripture. It means indeed that also that sin (which no man can escape or avoid, no matter how saintly he may be) is contrary to Scripture of which St. Paul himself complains when he says, Rom. 7:23, “I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, etc.”³⁸

That Luther considered his definition of heresy to be the same as Augustine’s is clear from the following:

Augustine and others differentiate between a heretic, a schismatic, who causes a split and division, and a Christian who lives wickedly. A heretic is one who originates false opinions and views in

36 *Das Woertlein Haeresis kommt aus griechischer Sprache herein, des heiszt erwaehlen, erlesen und aussondern. Daher heiszt Haeresis eine sondere, erwaehlte, selbst erdachte, eigene Lehre und Weise zu leben und glauben auszer der gemeinen Weise, das man jetzt Secten, Staende und Orden keiszet. Also nenneten die Jueden die Christen eine Haeresin, oder Secte der Nazarener, Apostelgesch. 24, 14. Aber Paulus wollte sic nicht also nennen, sondern einen Weg, und sprach: Ich wandele nach dem Wege, den sic Haeresin oder Secte heissen. Daher ists kommen in der Christenheit, dasz alle die Haeretici heissen, die auszer der Einigkeit und gemeinen Weise des christlichen Glaubens und Wesens treten, und eine sondere eigene Weise glaeuben, und Wege ruer sich erwaehlen, etc. (Geist aus Luthers Schriften oder Concordanz der Ansichten und Urtheils des groszen Reformators, edited by F. W. Lomler, G. F. Lucius, J. Rust, L. Sackreuter, and Ernst Zimmermann, Darmstadt, 1830, hereafter cited as Concordanz, Vol. III, p. 14).*

Dr. Walther (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, May, 1939, pp. 356–357) calls attention to the following statement by Luther in his comments on Galatians 5:12, “Here you see what St. Paul thinks of a little error in doctrine which apparently is insignificant, or even seems to represent the truth. He considers it so grave and dangerous that he is justified in denouncing its sponsors as false prophets, even though they appear to be eminent people. Therefore it is not right for us to consider the leaven of false teaching a little matter. Let it be as little as it pleases; if it is not watched, it will result in the collapse of truth and salvation and in the denial of God. For if the Word is adulterated and denied and blasphemed (a result which will necessarily follow), all hope of salvation is gone.... For this reason we should learn to accord great and high esteem to the majesty and glory of the Word; for it is not such a small and light matter as the false enthusiasts of our day imagine, but one single tittle of it is greater and of more weight than heaven and earth. Hence we in this instance do not concern ourselves with Christian unity or love, but we straightway express our judgment, that is, we condemn and denounce all those who even in the smallest particle adulterate and change the majesty of the Word; for ‘a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.’ ”

37 *Aus dem ist klar, dasz der Aussatz, der da Ketzerei bedeuten soll, bedeutet nichts anders, denn den eigenen Sinn, den Gutduenhel, die gute Meinung, der sich selbst aussetzt von der Gemeinde, in den Dingen, die Seele und Gott belangend, davon Moses sagt 5 Mos. 12, 8: Du sollst nicht thun, was dich recht duenkt. Und ist kein Laster so stracks dem rechten Wege und Glauben zuwider, daz die Apostel, Petrus und Paulus, viel Sorge darner gehabt haben, und die Mutter Gottes nennet denselben Schlangenkopf, Mens cordis sui, den Duenkel ihres Herzens, Luc. 1, 51. Und der deutsche Name, Aussatz, tauter zumal rein darauf, dasz solche Leute aussaetzig, von dem Haufen, auch aus der Gemeinde gesetzt werden. Item, St. Pauli Wort, da er soot zu Tito (Tit. 3, 10): Er solle einen solchen meiden (Concordanz, III, p. 14).*

38 *Wahr ist’s, dasz Ketzerei wider die Schrift ist, darnetch ein jeder Irrthum und alle Suende, auch taegliche, ja auch ein unnuetz Wort wider die Schrift ist; will mehr sagen, dasz auch die Suende (welche kein Mensch umgehen, noch metden kann, so heilig er auch sein mag), wider die Schrift ist, darueber St. Paul selbst klaget Roem. 7, 2–3. da er spricht: Ich sehe ein ander Gesetz in meinen Gliedern, das da widerstreitet dem Gesetz in meinem Gemueth, und nimmt mich gefangen in der Suenden Gesetz u.s.w. (Ibid., p. 15.) The entire section on *Ketzer, Ketzerei, Concordanz, III, pp. 14–40*, shows how Luther understood these words.*

opposition to the articles of the Christian faith, aside from and contrary to the right understanding of Holy Writ.³⁹

Like Augustine, Luther recognizes *persistence in adhering to error* as one of the essential characteristics of a heretic. With him a distinction is to be made between a Christian who errs but who, like St. Augustine, “will gladly confess his error, and be instructed,” on the one hand, and heretics on the other, “who are not willing to be corrected, defend their error as being right, and fight against the truth which they have come to know” (TOF, p. 15). Again he says, “I must, however, confess that an error, no matter how great it may be, can neither be called nor be heretical if it is not obstinately considered to be true and is not defended”⁴⁰ And yet again, “Being in error does not make one a heretic. but when one stubbornly attempts to defend and protect error.”⁴¹

The quotation from Gerhard TOF, Footnote 24, p. 22 clearly shows that persistence or stubbornness in holding to one’s error even after the truth from Scripture has been pointed out must be present before an errorist becomes a heretic. “Not all that err with respect to the faith or the interpretation of Scripture are *immediately* heretics.” This plainly implies also, however, that such an errorist may eventually become a heretic. So also does the following, where reference is made to errors in non-fundamental doctrines: “To consider such *at once* heretics is by no means proper, since heretics seek a different foundation outside of Christ, while these build on the foundation the stubble of erroneous opinions.” Such errorists may, however, also eventually become heretics, and their error may in fact ultimately lead to seeking “a different foundation outside of Christ.”

Gerhard’s statement, “Heresy embraces at the same time error in the intellect, and, in the will, stubbornness” (TOF, p. 22), points both to the objective and the subjective elements of the definition. At the same time the fact that the field in which the error of heretics may occur is not restricted to fundamental doctrines is to be noted in Gerhard’s quotation from Augustine, “Those in the Church of Christ who savor *anything morbid and depraved*, and on being corrected . . . contumaciously resist . . . are heretics.”

Prof. Lehninger has clearly demonstrated why little was said about heresy and heretics during the age of Pietism and Rationalism. During that time there was little concern for pure doctrine. The Thirty Years’ War had had a devastating effect upon all aspects of life, including church life, in Germany. As a result of the fact that the Lutheran Church was a state church, every citizen was considered *ipso facto* to be a member of the Church.

39 *Augustinus und Andere machen diesen Unterschied unter einem Ketzer, schismatico, der Spaltung und Trennung anrichtet, und einem boesen Christen. Ein Ketzer ist der, so falsche Opinionen und Meinungen wider die Artikel des christlichen Glaubens, auszer und wider den rechten Verstand der heiligen Schrift, aufbringet, und halsstarrig vertheidiget* (ibid., p. 15).

Notice also that Augustine, according to Luther, very correctly defines a schismatic as one who brings about a division on other than doctrinal grounds: “A schismatic and division maker is one who is of the true faith with the true Christian Church, but who does not stay with it and is not at one with it because of certain ceremonies and customs. A wicked Christian holds to both, the faith or the doctrine and ceremonies, but lives wickedly and leads an evil and offensive life. (*Ein Schismaticus und Trennungsmacher heiszt, der eines rechten Glaubens mit der rechten christlichen Kirche ist, haelt abet und ist nicht reit ihr einig, um etlicher Ceremonieen und Braeuche willen. Ein boeser Christ haelt beides, Glauben oder die Lehre und Ceremonieen, lebet abet uebel und fuehret einen boesen und aergerlichen Wandel* (ibid., p. 15–16).

Unfortunately, however, this sound and correct distinction has not always been consistently observed in the Church. Cf., e.g., Walther, “Should the error pertain to less principal points clearly revealed in the Scriptures but of a non-fundamental character, then even a stubborn clinging to such points does not make a teacher a heretic but merely a schismatic, and his association does not get to be a sect, but a schismatic body” (*Concordia Theological Monthly*, May, 1939, p. 357).

Walther in this same article, however, made it crystal clear that error in non-fundamental doctrines, yes, even in historical matters, when stubbornly defended will undermine the organic foundation of the Church, i.e., the doctrine concerning Scripture: “It may well happen that a simple-minded Christian will oppose some important secondary fundamental article and nevertheless possess true saving faith in his heart, while he who knowingly, contrary to Holy Scripture and the Confessions, would deny merely that the suffering of Christ took place *under Pontius Pilate* (a historical detail which certainly does not belong to the fundamental articles) would surely not be a true believer. Through nothing does an erring person manifest more clearly that his error is of a fundamental nature than by showing that in his error he rejects the Word of God, a thing which may take place in opposing non-fundamental as well as fundamental Bible-teachings; in fact, the fashion in which he handles mere problems may bring this to light” (ibid., p. 353).

⁴⁰ *Ich musz abet bekennen, dasz ein Irrthum, so grosz er auch ist, nicht ketzerisch kann heissen oder sein, wo er nicht halsstarriglich fuer recht gehalten und vertheidiget wird* (*Concordanz*, III, p. 15).

⁴¹ *Das Irren macht keinen Ketzer, sondern wo man Irrthum halsstarriglick vertheidigen und beschuetzen will* (ibid., III, p. 16).

Consequently, the Christianity of the masses became to a large extent a mere outward form. Pietism then arose as a reaction to the worldliness that had made such sweeping inroads into the Church. Since the objective truths of Scripture were no longer considered important, it was easy for Rationalism subsequently to take root. Professor Lehninger writes:

It is not surprising that in the age of Pietism and above all in that of Rationalism one hardly ever spoke about false doctrine or heresy.⁴²

The succeeding age of the Reawakening of Faith brought little change as far as sensitivity toward heresy was concerned, as Professor Lehninger points out:

Confessional consciousness had, of course, virtually disappeared, and without any prejudice whatsoever every one who loved the Lord Jesus rejoiced in the first place over every likeminded soul and was ready to make common cause with him against the forces of unbelief—without any regard whatsoever to the confession, whether Lutheran, Reformed, or Catholic, to which he originally belonged.⁴³

Turning to the “scientific” theology of the twentieth century, Professor Lehninger comments:

In the standard theological literature of the broadest Protestant circles of our day expressions like “false teacher,” “heretic,” “false prophet,” are, one may well say, taboo, with the exception of occasions when they are rejected with disapproving criticism.⁴⁴

The reason for this state of affairs has not escaped Professor Lehninger either. His observations are still valid and relevant in our mid 60’s, when Kierkegaardian existentialism is ensconced like a queen on a throne and holds virtually undisputed sway over most of the theological world:

Because the solid rock of Scripture has been abandoned and the “believing subject” has been set as judge over it, the most diverse positions are championed in the Protestant churches of the world, also in those that call themselves Lutheran—as many positions almost as there are literary theologians. If Scripture is not the judge but is rather judged, every one has a right to his own opinion. If some one claims this for himself, fairness and common decency demand that he also grant this same right to any one else. Who can, who should decide on whose side truth and on whose side error lies? There is finally nothing left but to shrug one’s shoulders and to ask Pilate’s question. Under these circumstances it is easy to see how out of place, how pointless the use of the term “heretic” would be. It is after all not a matter of unshakable, certain doctrines, the denial of which one would have to call heresy, error, but finally only a matter of views, of human opinions. Be such speculations ever so brilliant and concealed under the mantle of science—they are, nevertheless, nothing but hypotheses, unproved and incapable of proof! No, indeed, in “scientific” theology concepts like “heretic” are not current coin.⁴⁵

The fact remains that to a Christian each and every word of Scripture is precious. It is the Word of his God. It is the voice of his Good Shepherd. It is the water of life, sweeter to his mouth than honey, more to be

42 *Theologische Quartalschrift*, April, 1940, p. 87. In a masterful way Prof. Lehninger has sketched the historical developments. We offer the following pertinent section in translation:

“The Pietists did not, indeed, at least in the first better period, take issue with any of the public doctrines of the Church. They felt, however, that the strong emphasis on justification was one-sided and improper because it could easily lull Christians into carnal security. One would rather have to pay more attention to sanctification and allocate first place to this in teaching and preaching if there was to be any hope of effectively counteracting the growing corruption. Instead of looking to their objective salvation in Christ, Christians were to be held to look into their own heart to see whether they were actually converted, whether the love of Christ dwelt in them, and whether they were adorning their faith with a sanctified life. This had the result that concern for Scriptural teaching soon appeared to be secondary and was displayed by concern for a genuinely Christian life. One was not so much concerned now about the question: What does God say in the Gospel concerning my, the sinner’s, state of grace. One asked rather: What does my own heart say concerning it. This subjectivism, which more and more entered into conscious opposition to the objectivism of the orthodox period, permitted doctrinal differences to seem insignificant so that in spite of them one might extend the hand of fellowship to a believing Christian of another confession. Once a person’s subjective feeling rather than objective Scriptural truth had become the criterion of Christianity, it became relatively easy, when the surge of the often artificially stimulated emotions inevitably cooled, to prepare a clear road for the Rationalism of the second half of the eighteenth century and in place of the emotions to make another function of the human soul, reason, the decisive norm in matters of faith” (pp. 86–87).

43 *Ibid.*, p. 87.

44 *Ibid.*, pp. 87–88.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

desired than gold, yea, than much fine gold. Inasmuch as he is a child of God through faith in Christ Jesus, the Christian, therefore, receives each and every word that his heavenly Father speaks to him in the Scriptures with holy reverence and joy and shuns each and every aberration from it with holy horror.

IV. The Ultimate Consequences

What a limited definition of heresy, such as TOF sponsors, ultimately leads to is apparent in the April, 1965, issue of the *Seminarian*,⁴⁶ where the writer decries what he claims is a “false distinction between heterodoxy and orthodoxy which involves a misuse of the term ‘purity of doctrine.’” He holds that in the Confessions “purity” with reference to the Gospel means simply “effective preaching of the Gospel” and claims that “when the term is used in this sense we can say that the Baptists or Methodists, to mention a few denominations, also have purity of doctrine.” The writer emphasizes and expands this thought when he says, “If we use the word doctrine as it is used in Scripture and the Confessions and link the word up with the Gospel, then we can say that all denominations are orthodox, or contain purity of doctrine insofar as the Gospel is effectively communicated to the hearts of its members.” Having wiped out the distinction between orthodoxy and heterodoxy, between sound doctrine and heresy, the author then makes a plea for fellowship with all Christian denominations, denying the hand of fellowship only to non-Christians. *Caveat emptor!*

He also writes:

Pieper and many of his disciples use several Bible passages to support their view that members of this “orthodox” church should not practice any kind of fellowship with members of the “heterodox” church. Among these passages are: Rom. 16:17–18; II Jn. 10; Titus 3:10 and 1:16; Matt. 7:15 and 24:4–11; Deut. 13:1–5; and Jer. 23:28. A careful examination of every one of these passages, however, reveals that not one of these, by any stretch of the imagination (or of the passage), could possibly apply to other Christian denominations. All of these passages are speaking of heathen, people who are not Christian. The passages must be seen in this light, and to apply them to other Christians would be using Scripture out of context, and not permitting Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Incidentally, this article is a tragic example of “it-would-seem” theology, the theology of uncertainty, that insidious witches’ brew called “exploratory theology.” Within the brief compass of six pages expressions like “it would seem” or “it appears” occur no less than 19 times! We cite but one example, “It would seem that there is no word in Scripture which forbids or even discourages that practice” (p. 20).

This note of uncertainty is not absent in TOF either, e.g., p. 27, “The following guidelines *appear* Scripturally sound” (our emphasis). How foreign this hesitant, trial-balloon type of statement is to sound theology solidly grounded in the Scriptures! Scriptural theology does not hesitate to affirm: “Thus saith the Lord!” Γέγραπται! “It is written!”

46 Pp. 15–20, “A Second Look at Selective Fellowship,” by Albert L. Neibacher, Jr. The *Seminarian* is, to be sure, a student publication. Nevertheless, it is edited under the advisorship of Professors Kenneth H. Breimeier and Harry G. Coiner of the St. Louis faculty. Of necessity, therefore, this implies either faculty agreement with what is published, or, at the very least, recognition that the teachings espoused may legitimately be held, taught, and defended in the Church—unless the distinction between truth and error has been completely obliterated or is blandly ignored in the name of academic freedom or exploratory theology. Furthermore, it must not be forgotten that today’s students are tomorrow’s teachers of the Church.

Neibacher makes an unabashed frontal assault on the theology of fellowship formerly taught by the Missouri Synod and the Synodical Conference. He notes, “In the light of the contemporary ecumenical revival, inter-church fellowship or cooperation is an area which is of the utmost relevance.” He makes the further observation. “If the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod seems, at least in part, to be on the outside of this movement, it is no doubt due, to a certain degree, to the influence of one of the church’s leading theologians of the past. Franz August Otto Pieper.” In view of this, the author declares. “It would seem fitting to evaluate critically this traditional view (as reflected in the writing of Pieper) concerning the practice of selective fellowship.”

Notice, incidentally, how the practice of fellowship which takes into account the restrictions which Scripture itself imposes is here designated “*selective* fellowship,” a term for the unscriptural practice advocated by the ALC (cf. Minutes of the ALC, 1946 and 1956, as found in *Church in Fellowship*, edited by Vilmos Vajta. Minneapolis, 1963, pp. 48 and 50), and specifically rejected by the Missouri Synod (“Resolutions Against Selective Fellowship,” 1947 and 1953, Vajta, pp. 62–63).

What a far cry such “it-would-seem” theology is from that which has the ring of authority—authority which is rooted, of course, in the divine authority of the Scriptures—and which sounds the note of conviction and certainty! “If the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” (I Cor. 14:8). “It-would-seem” theology, on the other hand, has developed its own mode of expression. Its very language breathes uncertainty and doubt, the only exception being the imperious absolutism with which it rejects those Scripture truths that it does not want to recognize.

“It-would-seem” theology was the stock in trade of the scribes. Jesus, however, “taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matt. 7:29). So also as far as the Church is concerned, the divine directive is clear: “If any man speak, let him speak *as the oracles of God*” (I Pet. 4:11). Woe to us if we no longer recognize that Scripture is authoritative and that it is clear!

It is self-evident, of course, that if we no longer know what Scripture says, then we will no longer be able to recognize heresy either. A word of Luther’s is very pertinent here:

Away, now, with Sceptics and Academics from the company of us Christians; let us have men who will assert, men twice as inflexible as the very Stoics! Take the Apostle Paul—how often does he call for that “full assurance” which is, simply, an assertion of conscience, of the highest degree of certainty and conviction. In Rom. 10 he calls it “confession”—“with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (vs. 10). Christ says, “Whosoever confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father” (Matt. 10:32). Peter commands us to give a reason for the hope that is in us (I Pet. 3:15). And what need is there of a multitude of proofs? Nothing is more familiar or characteristic among Christians than assertion. Take away assertions, and you take away Christianity.⁴⁷

Insisting on the perspicuity of Scripture, Luther adds:

I certainly grant that many *passages* in the Scriptures are obscure and hard to elucidate, but that is due, not to the exalted nature of their subject, but to our own linguistic and grammatical ignorance; and it does not in any way prevent our knowing all the *contents* of Scripture.... Thus it is unintelligent, and ungodly too, when you know that the contents of Scripture are as clear as can be, to pronounce them obscure on account of those few obscure words. If words are obscure in one place, they are clear in another. What God has so plainly declared to the world is in some parts of Scripture stated in plain words, while in other parts it still lies hidden under obscure words. But when something stands in broad daylight, and a mass of evidence for it is in broad daylight also, it does not matter whether there is any evidence for it in the dark. Who will maintain that the town fountain does not stand in the light because the people down some alley cannot see it, while everyone in the square can see it?⁴⁸

V. A Final Word

In conclusion, we are constrained to ask: In the revision of TOF, for what purpose has this historical study—inaccurate as it is—of the term “heresy” been introduced? Is the purpose perhaps to attempt to lay a basis for the claim that the hand of fellowship must be extended to all within Christendom and that it must be denied only to those who attack fundamental doctrines? That the word “heretic” has at times been used in the language of the Church in a narrow sense with reference to such who are outside the visible Christian Church and to be grouped together with the Jews and the heathen no one will deny. But, we ask, *why was almost no attention given to the usage and meaning of the words “heresy” and “heretic” in Scripture?* Why was no attention paid to statements of Luther, the seventeenth century dogmaticians, or Walther like the following:

Luther: We must, of course, admit that the enthusiasts have the Scriptures and God’s Word in other articles, and whoever hears it from them and believes will be saved, in spite of the fact that they are unholy heretics and blphemers of Christ.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Martin Luther on the Bondage of the Will, translated by J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston, London. 1957, p. 67.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 71–72.

⁴⁹ *Muessen wir doch bekennen, dass die Schwaermer die Schrift und Gottes Wort haben in andern Artikeln, und wer es von ihnen hoeret und glaeubt, der wird selig, wiewohl sic unheilige Ketzler und Laesterer Christi sind* (Baier-Walther, *Compendium*, I, 64).

Kromayer: What about this—the fact that *any impure doctrine whatsoever* outside of and beyond the divinely inspired Word, when it is *stubbornly* defended, can become heresy, taking the word in its natural sense?⁵⁰

Huelsemann: And it is sufficient for denying church fellowship (a form of which is the fellowship of competent judgment in a council) to the heterodox if the orthodox are certain from the application to the Word of God of genuine means of interpretation and from the intrinsic testimony of the Holy Spirit that the heterodox do not agree with the Word of God, *although they want to be tolerated in the external fellowship of the Church* and are of the opinion also that they have departed neither from the sense of the divine Word nor from the public doctrine of the universal Church. For error in regard to the faith and the persistent assertion of it makes a heretic, not only the knowledge of error, I Tim. 6:3–5, although as a result of blindness and corruption the mind so teaches, II Tim. 3:7. Also, those who are ever learning and never come to the knowledge of the truth, if they resist the truth, are disapproved and are not to be permitted to render judgment concerning the faith.⁵¹

Walther: There are children of God also in heterodox, heretical congregations; there, too, the true Church becomes evident in the pure Word and Sacrament which still remain in them.⁵²

Similarly, in the Confessions one repeatedly finds terms such as “error” and “erroneous, heretical doctrines” used synonymously. For example, Article XII, Thor. Decl., of *The Formula of Concord* carries the heading, *De Aliis Haereticis et Sectariis, qui Augustanam Confessionem nunquam sunt amplexi*.⁵³ Referring to “the sects and factions which never have embraced the Augsburg Confession . . . such as are the Anabaptists, Schwenckfeldians, New Arians, and Anti-Trinitarians,” Article XII expressly states, “We have neither part nor fellowship with their errors, be they many or few, but reject and condemn them, one and all, as wrong and heretical (*ketzerisch*), and contrary to the Scriptures of the prophets and apostles, and to our Christian Augsburg Confession, well grounded in God’s Word.”⁵⁴

From all of this it is clear that in the literature of the Church the term “heretic” is used not only in the narrow sense with reference to those who err in fundamental doctrines, but also in the wider sense which it has in Scripture, namely, with reference to those who persistently adhere to any unscriptural teaching, yes, with reference to those who still teach the fundamental articles of the Christian faith but are heterodox or false teachers because they depart in one or more points from Scriptural doctrine. The fathers of the Synodical Conference were not always consistent in their use of the terms, but when they used the words “heresy” and “heretic” in the broad sense, this usage was fully justified and in full accord with the accepted usage of the Church throughout its history. Their application of Titus 3:10 to heterodox Lutherans, furthermore, was not

50 *Quid? quod quaevis adulterina doctrina extra et praeter verbum θεόπνευστον, quando pertinaciter defenditur, haereseos nomine γενικώς sumto venire queat* (ibid., I, 63).

51 *Et sufficere ad denegandam heterodoxis communionem ecclesiasticam (cujus species est communio competentis iudicii in concilio), si orthodoxi certi sint ex adhibitione genuinorum interpretandi mediorum ad verbum Dei et testimonio intrinseco Sp. Sancti, heterodoxos non consentire cum verbo Dei, quamquam cupiant in externa communione ecclesiae tolerari, atque opinentur etiam, se neque a sensu verbi divini neque doctrina publica universalis ecclesiae discessisse. Error enim circa fidem ejusque pertinax assertio facit haereticum, non sola agnitio erroris, I Tim. 6:3–5, quamquam ex caecitate et corruptione intellectus sic doceat, 2 Tim. 3:7. Etiam illi, qui semper discunt et nunquam ad veritatis agnitionem perveniunt, si resistent veritati, ἁδόκιμοι sunt nec admittendi sunt ad iudicium περὶ τὴν πίστιν ferendum* (ibid., III, 657).

52 *Auch in irrgläubigen, ketzerischen Gemeinden giebt es Kinder Gottes, auch da wird die wahre Kirche an dem darin noch uebrig gebliebenen reinen Wort und Sakrament offenbar (Kirche und Amt, 4th ed., Zwickau, 1894, p. 95, Thesis VIII, A).*

Walther also cites the following statement by Luther: “For this reason the Church is holy everywhere, also in those places where the enthusiasts and factious spirits rule *provided only that they do not completely deny and reject the Word and Sacrament*. For those who deny these things altogether are no longer a church. *But where Word and Sacrament are essentially preserved, there also a holy Church is still to be found*.... But Jews, Turks, enthusiasts and factious spirits or heretics are not the Church.” (*Derhalben so ist die Kirche allenthalben heilig, auch an den Oertern, da gleich die Schwaermer und Rottengeister regieren, soferne sie nur das Wort und Sakrament nicht allerdings verleugnen und verwerfen. Denn die diese Dinge ganz und gar verleugnen, sind keine Kirche mehr. Wo aber Wort und Sakrament wesentlich bleiben, da bleibt auch eine heilige Kirche*.... *Aber Juden, Tuerken, Schwaermer und Rottengeister oder Ketzer sind nicht die Kirche* (ibid., p. 98).

53 *Concordia Triglotta*, p. 1094.

54 Ibid., pp. 1095–1097.

without precedent or Scriptural warrant. Their use of this passage, contrary to the charge which is so frequently leveled against them, did not wrest the Scriptures or do violence to the context.

If the limitation which is, as we have seen, improperly ascribed to Augustine as well as to the Church before and after him (TOF, p. 13), namely, that the objective element which all heresies and heretics have in common is “a departure from some phase of the rule of faith as it gradually took form amid the labors and struggles of the church, first in the so-called Baptismal Confession, and in time in the Apostles’ Creed,” were Scriptural, then we would be obliged to extend the hand of fellowship to all except to such as the Unitarians, Christian Scientists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and the like. Is this the contention of TOF? Does it aim to make room for a position like that espoused in the article in the *Seminarian* from which we quoted? That is not the Scriptural doctrine on fellowship—and it is not ours!