

=====

WHY CAN'T WE ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN COMMON PRAYER SERVICES  
WITH IOWA AND OHIO (SYNODS)? *By F. Boake L.S.W. v. 51, #2 p. 99*

- 53

At the intersynodical conference in Detroit request was made by Iowans and Ohioans to open and close future free conferences with a joint prayer service. The delegates at the synodical conference protested this suggestion, announcing that this would make their future participation at these conferences impossible. Other members of the synodical conference pointed out that 'every participant certainly prays silently, but openly joined prayers of the congregation would certainly leave the wrong impression regarding unity of spirit and belief, and as if the teaching differences were of no special significance.

This position of the synodical conference has caused astonishment, even strong condemnation, in numerous church publications. Not just in the leaflets of sects and the united (Protestant Church), who reported the incident to their readers as a typical example of Lutheran intolerance, but also the Lutheran publications. But as much as we regret this imprudence of judgement especially by Lutheran publications, we are nevertheless not particularly surprised, since we are thoroughly familiar with the theological positions which precipitate these rash and unjust judgements. As far as Germany is concerned - how could we expect true interpretation of the clear word of God regarding church fellowship with heretics on the side of the synodical conference - and how, too, could we expect comprehension by representatives of such publications as the "Allgemeine Evangelisch-Lutherische Kirchenzeitung", "Alter Glaube", or "Evangelische Kirchenzeitung", who tolerate and even encourage spiritual communion with the

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY  
*Library*  
6633 W. WARTBURG CIRCLE  
MEQUON, WISCONSIN 53092

worst of the teachers of heresy and even deniers of Christ. Would they not condemn Missouri, they should have to damn themselves.

The same can be said about the local general synod, which tolerates and encourages joint prayers, church services and the Lords Supper and does not even shrink back from communion with Papists, Unitarians, Freemasons and Jews. (L & W 50, 369, 565) From these people one cannot simply expect comprehension of the peculiar position of the synodical conference in Detroit. Neither can one take serious their accusations of 'bigotry, narrowmindedness, arrogance, stubbornness, and Phariseeism'. One cannot expect these theologically half- or totally blind persons to perceive and show a clear vision of what is through God's Word right or wrong in the Church.

Rather ignorant and unsympathetic judgements regarding the synodical conference's position on communal prayers with persons of different faiths have also issued from the general council. D. Jacobs stated at the unionistic conference in Pittsburgh that 'it had been reported that the people at the Detroit conference had failed at a former conference to have common prayer, that that was the only question he was willing to discuss with them, and that when they were ready to pray with him, he would enter into communion with them' (L & W 50, 370). D. Jacobs does not only ask that Missouri, without further ado, join into public prayer communion with him, but also makes this anticipation of communion 'conditio sine qua non' for all future discussion of the unity of faith, etcetera. The "Lutheran" agreed with D. Jacobs and issued the statement that they certainly would "absolutely refuse" to participate in any future Lutheran conference which excludes loud common prayer of the

congregation." (L & W 50, 370) And as reason for their position in Detroit this noble sheet has nothing better to give than to accuse the Missourians of phariseeism and stubbornness. But these twisted and unsympathetic judgments may be explained by the unionism rampant throughout the general council. These councilists, together with the lax general synodists make the same grave mistake of judging the questions of church-and prayer communion by their own faulty theological position, instead of by the clear Word of God of Scripture. Should the general council sanction the position of the synodical conference in Detroit, they would have to nullify their entire unionistic existence.

And as concerns the Iowa synod - they have in the past year repeatedly identified themselves with the general council, and also embraced unionism in theory and praxis. Practical: through their communion with the German established churches, and theoretical: through their theory of open questions. We were therefore not particularly surprised to hear the Iowans' suggestion at Detroit to open and close the free conference with common liturgical services. And neither are we surprised to hear that they are now of one mind and spirit with the "Lutheran" and give approval to its unionistic statements regarding prayer communion with those of other faiths. The following facts show clearly how preposterous and unreasonable the Iowans' positions in this whole deal are: 1. In their "Kirchenblatt" (July 23 of last year) they erect the principle that 'one must not entertain companionships with those who deny the clear teachings of the Scripture'. 2. These same Iowans have now battled Missouri for the last 50 years, and for a quarter-century decried them as Calvinists; also declared repeatedly that the Missourian teaching of (Gnadenwahl) election of grace promotes division of the church. In the past year the Iowan "Kirchenblatt" has asked the Lutheran church in the East to join in the fight against Missouri, since 'these battles have

long assumed a basic character and we are fighting for nothing less than the preservation of the historical Lutheran church that is in danger of being turned into a sect by the synodical conference' (L & W 50, 275, 370).

3. These same Iowans have refused to retract their accusations, but now complacently wipe their mouths and demand that Missourians and all other members of the synodical conference make common cause with them and conduct 'joint liturgical church services'...and also complain loud and bitter in the face of all of Christianity about our refusal to do so (L & W 50, 370, 422). A position such as held by the Iowa synod is obviously absurd.

As concerns the Iowa synod, they have, according to the expressions of various speakers in Detroit, changed their former anti-unionistic position in favor of unionism. This actually adds a fourth controversy, regarding ecclesiastical unity with people of different faiths, to the established three questions on conversion, election of grace, and analogy of faith. Several months ago the "Alter Glaube" made the statement that the Iowa and Ohio synods differ inasmuch as the latter seems to draw nearer to the general synod. This statement is undoubtedly true in more than one respect. The same can also be said of the Iowa synod, just as it is true also of the general council. That quite a few members of the Ohio synod are following the same track is made obvious by other symptoms - for example, the acceptance of several pastors of the former Augsburg synod, not to mention their recently renewed connection with Herrmannsburg and eo ipso with the Hannoverians and the numerous liberal pastors and theologians of this particular church (L & W 50, 515).

A further voucher for this turnaround to unionism within the Ohio synod is the demand posed by Ohioan pastors in Detroit to open and close the free conferences with joint prayer. There is no lack of pastors within the Ohio synod demanding joint church services to be conducted between themselves and the Iowans (and as far as we can see, the Ohio synod does nothing against it) even though they have fought for long years against their teachers of false doctrines; and the Missourians whom they denounced as dangerous heretics twenty-five years ago and whom they have ceaselessly accused ever since of dangerous heresy, Calvinism, etcetera in all their publications. This is gross unionism which is represented here by Ohio. The Columbus "Kirchenzeitung" has confessed on several occasions that there is a definite turn of the Ohio synod toward fellowship with members of other faiths. In their June 4 issue of last year they are quoted as follows: "Missouri demands complete agreement in all questions of teaching and doctrine and wants nothing to do with 'open questions'. This was heretofore, and still officially remains our position, even though some parts of our synod have shown a certain leaning toward Iowa - especially since Iowa agrees with us on doctrines of election of grace and conversion." (L & W 50, 275) This turnaround toward unionism also explains Ohio's position on the question of joint prayer services at inter-synodical conferences. Yes, even in the Ohio synod it may be considered an established fact that their former position on joint prayer at inter-synodical conferences is tenable only through sacrifice of a large part of their self-esteem.

Even though it is perfectly clear that the general condemnation of the Missourian refusal in Detroit has its

basis in the anti-scriptural unionistic position displayed by their critics (who cannot hand down a different judgement unless they renounce their false doctrines and recognize the true word of the holy scriptures) we shall not be discouraged and ceaselessly search God's word and make public the answers to the questions on communion with those of other faith. And this we do most gladly and willingly, especially since we are certain that the community of our adversaries contains many who neither lack sympathy for our cause nor interest and understanding of the truths which our conscience dictates us to fight for. So emphasizes (to name just one example) P. Offermann of the general council: "Communion of faith between single synods is mainly a declaration of creed, presuming that these synods agree completely in all phases of teaching and praxis and therefore recognize each other as Lutherans true to their faith." (L & W 50, 371)

The immediate causes that led us to answer the question at the beginning of this article are direct inquiries, notably a letter received from within the general council which states as follows: "I have followed the deliberations of the inter-synodical conference in Detroit with great interest. Myself and many others have questioned the position of the Missouri brethren who refused with great determination to open the sessions with communal prayer. Their reasons are not clear to me - not at all. But something else is perfectly clear to me, namely that only the very best reasons could have induced them to deny the request of the Iowans and Ohioans. I believe wholeheartedly that Missouri's position must be a grave matter of conscience. Far be it from me to interpret this as stiffneckedness, stubbornness, or lovelessness. It would have been immeasurably easier for

your synodical brethren to give in at this point. But especially for this reason I would like to know the basis for your reasoning and decision."

In our next article we shall mention several of the main points; why the synodical conference was unable to oblige the Ohioans' and Iowans' request without grave offense against God.

II.

(SECOND ARTICLE)

*1905*  
*L. O. W. RES. # 3. p 97-115*

The reason for our refusal to grant communion of faith and prayer to the Iowa and Ohio synods is certainly not because we do not recognize them any more as Christians. The reason for our separation is certainly not that we feel to be the only true professing Christians - lifting ourselves above all others in the mode of the pharisees. We judge only what is visible to the eye and leave the judgement of hearts to God. Even though we deny communion to Papists, Methodists, and other souls, that does not imply that no true children of God may be found within these denominations. The same applies of course to Ohioans and Iowans. Neither do we deny Lutheranism of either synod in every sense. Although we find it very difficult to see our adversaries as true-confessing genuine Lutherans, since they have fallen away from the true word of God in very important instances.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY  
*Library*  
6633 W. WARTBURG CIRCLE  
MEQUON, WISCONSIN 53092

In essence, the reason why we do not join in communal services with Iowa and Ohio is not because we deem them un-christian or sectarian.\*

(Footnote\* -Iowa has declared Missouri to be a sect, and Ohio has also threatened us with the same implication. D. Loy has stressed repeatedly in last years' "Columbus Theological Magazine" that the synodical conference, if persisting in their position, must be considered "a sect among other sects"(pg. 129), "a recognized portion of the Calvinistic Reformed Church, or a separate predestinarian sect"(pg. 133),"as a Calvinistic sect"(pg. 138).

1) On the other hand stands the fact that the spokesmen of Ohio and Iowa cannot be considered as weak and needing our brotherly support. According to the word of God we may differentiate carefully between the weak and those who may not be considered weak and therefore should not be treated as such. And we make this distinction not only in regard to life, but also in regard to the doctrine. If someone errs through weakness or lack of insight, we would certainly not deny him all communion of faith and prayer. On the contrary - as long as an erring brother is obviously weak and recognizes himself as such we would patiently support him and never deny him brotherly communion. We wholeheartedly agree with the "Apology", which says, "Ita jubet Paulus in ecclesia dilectionem existere, quae retineat concordiam, quae toleret, sicubi opus est, asperiores mores fratrum, quae dissimulet quaedam levia errata, ne dissiliat ecclesia in varia schismata et ex schismatis orientur odia, factiones et haereses."

(Müller, pg. 126, #110 - 123.)

But Iowans and Ohioans do not want to be considered as such weakly brethren - and even if they did we could not agree. The Iowans and Ohioans have withdrawn from



Missouri...Iowa fifty years ago and Ohio twenty-five years ago...to combat the divine truths defended by Missourians, and rally around their errors and heresies trying to make them victorious within the Lutheran church. The truth has been revealed to them through God's word and our Lutheran creed, not just once or twice but a hundred times over. But they rejected all advice and have fought the truth bitterly to this day. Verily, they have denied and blasphemed God's truths of conversion and election of grace and called them calvinistic heresies. And they have branded the defenders of these truths as calvinists, heretics, sectionists, wolves, and apostles of the devil. They have tolled the bells of alarm and fanned the flames of dissent and did not shrink back from defamation. No, we cannot accept these our old adversaries as weak brethren straying from the path of truth. We will never stop to show them the right way by word and letter, but we cannot join with them into communion of prayer and faith. And we would gladly approach Iowans and Ohioans - preachers as well as laymen - who have not heard the divine truth as represented by the synodical conference; but as long as they follow their leaders blindly and identify with them it is impossible for us to do more than show the way through word and letter. At the same time we admit freely that our main reason for joining these free conferences was the wish to approach the weak and wavering among our enemies.

The dispute between the synodical conference and their Ohioan and Iowan adversaries is not concerned with things that are not made perfectly clear through the word of God and are of no special meaning to our Christian faith, even though Iowa insists this is so, especially in regard to several special points which are being questioned between us. The teachings of church and ministry, Sabbath, Antichrist, and the Millenium have been declared open questions by Iowa; there are no divisions of scripture and symbol and they do not touch the heart of Christendom in any way. But in this instance also we cannot agree with our adversaries, as "Lehre und Wehre" has amply demonstrated this past year. And if within the general council and general synod these current arguments concerning conversion, election of grace, and principle of faith are denoted as a battle over dark, obscure questions which are of no relevance to the welfare of the church, so would even Iowa and Ohio disagree. And in this our opponents are certainly right.

The disagreements between the synodical conference and their detractors can certainly not be classified as sophistry but as great and evident doctrine, clearly revealed in God's word - and of utmost importance to the welfare of the Church. Yes, we are convinced that it would constitute a great calamity to the Lutheran church of America if the synergistic and rationalistic theory of our adversaries should win the upper hand. And we would consider it treason to the divine truth, to our symbolism and the Lutheran church if we should sit with hands in lap and let the Ohioans and Iowans forge ahead. In combating the erroneous theories of our opponents we see a special duty asked of us by God

and church. The argument concerning the analogia fidei involves nothin less than the question whether the clear word of God alone constitutes the source and norm of our faith or whether the same should be subordinated to the judgement of "enlightened reason". Should in this instance a decision be left to the word of God - or to human reason? which according to Ohio should watch over all doctrine and condemn anything that seems to be without rhyme or reason. This is the issue between us and our adversaries. Missouri will submit absolutely to each and every clear word of God, but Iowa and Ohio will do so only their "enlightened reason" has given its 'placet'. Missouri teaches without restriction that 'Verbum Dei condat articulos fidei et praeterea nemo, ne angelus quidem'. Ohio actually restricts this statement to: 'only such thesis of clear writing will we accept as is acceptable to the enlightened reasoning of our theologians'. And conversion is concerned with the 'sola gratia' which is superior in all Lutheran doctrine, namely the question whether divine grace is the only necessary basis of declaration for our redemption and salvation, or whether human conduct is also a factor....basically the old question of whether man may be redeemed by God's grace or by his own merits. The synodical conference clings herewith steadfastly to the catechismal truth: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in our Jesus Christ, my Lord, nor come to Him, but that God promised and sent the Holy Ghost, who gives salvation to us through faith and keeps us unto everlasting life." To this, Ohio adds the limitation that salvation and everlasting life are partly influenced by a person's conduct, namely neglect of willful resistance. In such a great but simple catechismal question the synodical conference and their adversaries stand as clearly opposed as Yes and No. And the same may be said of election of grace, which poses

the question whether God redeems us for our own merit or by his grace alone (Eph. 1, Apost. 13). It is nothing less than the two most important question of the entire theology: sola gratia and sola scriptura. We would consider it treason to do anything which could be interpreted as wavering or inconstancy of our position, or as tolerance of the opponents' false teachings. We have to protect ourselves from all ambiguous talks and questionable tactics. And we have one all-important duty toward Ohio and Iowa: to proclaim God's truth ceaselessly. In comparison to this task, all other interests seem minor. Surely, peace, harmony and brotherly intercourse and communion are dear and precious things. "Truly" (writes L & W 8, 19), "whose soul is not aflame with brotherly communion, and whose heart is not sorely saddened by separation, he is but a lip-serving hypocrite and dead Lutheran!" But the dearest treasure of the church is not brotherly communion, but the truth of the Holy Gospel. And even if there were nothing more between us and our opponents the Antichrist, Sabbath and the Millenium - we still could not say: here anybody may believe what he wants...let us embrace as brothers! For these questions are also concerned with the true interpretation of the gospel, which no man may ever declare indifferent or unimportant. The all-important Lutheran sola gratia and sola scriptura must come foremost and relegate all other interests to the background. In brief: we cannot agree with the indifferent viewpoint which declares the differences between the synodical conference and their opponents as nitpicking.

As it stands now we possess clear words of God which forbid us all communion of faith and prayer under these circumstances. If something is made perfectly clear in the holy scriptures, it is the statement that we should

not cultivate contact with heretics and those who cannot be deemed 'weak in enlightenment'. As concerns conversion, election of grace, and scriptural analogy - the Iowans and Ohioans must be considered false prophets. Christ admonishes us in Matth. 7, 15: "Beware of false prophets!". This means: do not be on their side, do not consort with them, do not have ecumenical fellowship with them, but go away and avoid them. Christ's warning to stay away from false prophets is repeated in several versions by the apostles, especially Paul. We point to Rom. 16,17 as just one example. Here Paul speaks of doctrinal division within Rome and writes as follows: "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause division and offenses contrary to the doctrine which you have learned: and avoid them." The apostle speaks here about the people in the Roman community who embraced a teaching contrary to the teachings of Christ and tried to convince others to change their ways also. In this respect those Romans may be compared to the Iowans and Ohioans with a remarkable similarity. They too have new teachings - of human endeavor, of redemption by works and deeds, of the authority of enlightened reason - which stem neither from the scriptures nor from Lutheran symbols. The truth has been clearly held before them but they will not see and cling to their false doctrines, subscribing to them. They have separated from the truth and eagerly seek to surround themselves with new disciples to their false teachings. The spokesmen of the Ohioans and Iowans are like the heretics Paul speaks of in Ro. 16,17. Even if the Bible does not name our adversaries as such, they are still very clearly described in scripture. And how does the apostle's order to all Christians regarding false prophets read? Does he say to be sure and keep close communion with them in prayer and faith or at

least join them in liturgical services? Just the opposite! "Keep away from them!" Or is it avoidance to share in joint prayer? As regards the false teachers who arise within the church - Paul gives the same admonishment in Rom. 16,17 as also in 2 Cor. 6: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness?...  
...wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord." No less clearly speak 1Tim.6,3,5 and Tit.3,10. Would therefore the synodical conference in Detroit direct themselves to God's word and not according to the desires of our unionistic opponents and the indifferent spirit of our times, they should act solely as they have done. And as long as there exists Rom.16,17 and the Ohioans remain in their present position, we have no alternative but to remain in ours. But we would embrace them with a thousand arms if only they would reject their false teachings. But as long as they are resolved to cling to their wrong ways and be disciples to their false prophets and with their help obtain dominion in the Lutheran church - so long will Rom.16,17 remain a dividing wall between us. Our arms are tied, we cannot embrace them as brothers.

WISCONSIN LUTHERAN SEMINARY  
*Library*  
6533 W. WARTBURG CIRCLE  
MEQUON, WISCONSIN 53092

Another word of God which influenced our decision is Mat.10:32,33 where Christ tells us: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my father, which is in heaven." It is therefore a sacred duty to confess Christ; and to deny him is a grave sin. We know Jesus Christ only through his own word and we can confess him only by adhering in all ways to his teaching. If we adhere to false teachings, we deny Christ. 'Whosoever harkens onto my voice is my true disciple' (Transl.?) / The Iowans and Ohioans are deviating in several instances from Christ's teachings and in doing so they deny Jesus. So much more is it our duty to confess these truths in the face of ignorants and adversaries. And at no time must we grow slack in our efforts, especially not during a free conference where it is doubly important to confess Christ and the truth. Yes, not even for the half hour it might take for communal prayers must we neglect this sacred duty. Wherever we meet with Iowans and Ohioans we must remember this duty which is laid upon us by Mat. 10 and from which no man can grant us dispensation. There is no possibility of truce between us as long as Iowa and Ohio insist on their present position. Confess - not deny - is the motto of our eternal Leader and all who strive to follow him. To join in prayer with our adversaries while denying the truth would be nothing less than a truce with them against the will of God, and basically nothing else but a denial of Christ and his truth. Truth must prevail, truth alone, truth forever. And truth must never cede to lies, not for one moment. Whenever truth and falsehood meet there ensues war, long and bitter - only ending when one or the other are subdued. To silence

truth is to kill it. Truth with its lips sealed is like a bell without sound, a light that does not shine. Would we therefore consent to common prayer, we should damn our own conscience and tell ourselves: you shall confess Christ and his truth, but alas, you have covered your mouth and muzzled yourself. We must even avoid the appearance of temporary suspension of our truthful confession and zeal.

The main reason given by our creed against consorting with heretics is that through this we take their sins upon ourselves. And in this our creed echo the scriptures, as we read in 2 John:10,11: "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine (the doctrine of Christ, see V.9), receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." John is obviously talking here of ecumenical communion and brotherly intercourse (i.e. liturgical communion and prayer) with those of false faith. He is talking of just such a communion as is asked for by Iowa and Ohio. And his judgement points toward the fact that this would make us partners to their own sin and transgression. This part of scripture also justifies our decision at the synodical conference in Detroit. Through a joint prayer with our adversaries our reputation would have been soiled with their errors and transgressions. It would have designated these errors as insignificant, indifferent, harmless and of no particular hindrance. It would wrap their errors in a cloak of inoffensiveness and so, indirectly, boost and strengthen them. In short, we would have shared the heresies of our opponents. By this the representatives at the Detroit synodical conference would have defiled their souls with a grave sin. In these indifferent times, however, it is commonly held that the practice, advertisement, and distribution of false



doctrines is rather harmless - even moral. But our judgement must never be swayed by *aura popularis* but only by the word of God. Scripture declared false doctrine as an abomination against the first tablet of the ten commandments, for a sin as terrible and equal to blasphemy, cursing, conjuring, lying, cheating, theft, adultery and murder. There are few transgressions which the scriptures warn against as seriously, and threaten against as terribly, as the sin of heresy. One thinks of Christ's word, "...inwardly they are ravening wolves." (Mat. 7:15), and of God's word spoken through the prophet Jeremiah (Jer.23:31,32): "Behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that use their tongues and say, He saith..." a.s.f. These serious transgressions include the false doctrines of Iowans and Ohioans, in which they attack the highest truths of Christendom. Yes, these are terrible sins which they make themselves guilty of, with their war against truth. And we thank the Lord for keeping our representatives at the Detroit synodical conference safe from these transgressions. We must not evoke the slightest shadow of doubt regarding our position. There can be no talk ever of joint prayer services between them and us.

Another detriment to common prayers would be the eighth commandment with its request for truthfulness, honesty, and purity, and its condemnation of hypocrisy and falsehood. Had we in Detroit entered into communion with Stellhorn, Allwardt, Schmidt, etc., we would have had to pretend to be something we are not. We would have created an impression without any foundation in fact. Not only would our action been inconsequential, but we would also have created the impression of denial of all our previous actions and made mockery of our conscience.

Our actions and thoughts would have been in discord, we would have to conceal our thoughts and pretend unity when there was none, we would have created a sham. We would have been sentenced by our own conscience, not only as people who neglect the word of God, but also as devious deceitful men. We are convinced through God's word that the Iowans and Ohioans subscribe to greatly corrupting false doctrines and that we do not at all agree with them and differ completely in regard to the most important questions. Would we now pray together with Ohio and Iowa, we should actually declare before the world that we agree with our adversaries - or at least that our differences are negligible - which would also be untrue. We have fought them in the past with great earnestness as dangerous heretics and if our adversaries remain as they are, it will be necessary to do the same in the future. Would we now join in brotherly prayer with our enemies, we should have to judge ourselves as people who at these free conferences act differently from the way they write in their publications; as people who at the one hand combat the same Ohioans and Iowans as heretics in St. Louis, and on the other hand embrace them as brothers in Detroit. We could never burden our conscience with such dishonesty, pretense and inconstancy. And we have to admit that our adversaries' request in Detroit seems without rhyme or reason. It is not compatible with their previous position and with their writings against Missouri. If our foes truly believe the accusations which they have broadcast against us for decades and if their conscience truly dictates a separation from Missouri - how then can they account for the sudden reversal to a request for common prayer? The only explanation would seem to be that they are after all not certain in their hearts of the things they have accused us of, and don't take themselves serious. Yes, there is a definite discrepancy between their writings and actions

and actions and their recent demands in Detroit. And if these demands are in accord with the thoughts innermost in their hearts, then they are in discords with their previous works and deeds, which after all they do not wish to retract. Ohio's and Iowa's request in Detroit reminds us of Zwingli, who fought Luther to the utmost in Marburg and at the same time offered his brotherly hand; which gave Luther the right to figure that Zwingli was not certain in his belief of the things he taught against Luther. Whichever way one tries to rhyme our foes' contradictions, we cannot accept them in good conscience. We know that we walk in God's truth for we have clear words of God under our feet. We also see clearly the grave errors our foes have fallen into. Would we therefore without restraint join into communion with Ohio and Iowa, we should be damned by God's word as deniers of the divine truth and also by our own hearts and consciences as people whose acts differ from their thoughts, who pretend unity where there is discord, and who change their words and actions according to place and time.

The quotations of the holy scriptures which warn Christians not to give offense also belong here. In Mat.18:7 Christ speaks: "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" Missouri could never oblige their enemies in Detroit without falling into the judgement of those terrible words. To be sure, our foes based their request on the assumption that the whole world would take great offense if the free conferences in Detroit were not opened and closed with common prayer. But this only gives new proof of their unionistic way of thinking. Many might have been offended by the scripture-wise position of the synodical conference. But this is not a given offense but a token one. And that such an offense

would ensue we knew quite well. We also knew that we could have set ourselves in favor and reaped great praise - not only from unionistic Lutherans in America and Europe but also from unionists and sectists - if we had paid no attention to God's words and instead sought the honor of men. That we did not do so, but rather through our actions chastised the unionistic and indifferent spirit of our times - this is what offended them. However much men take offense - we still preserve a good cheerful conscience toward God. It is after all the same offense Paul speaks of when he says that Christ's gospel is a vexation to the Greeks and a folly to the Jews. And the word is fulfilled in us which states: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake." (Luk.21:17) And again: "Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven; for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets." (Luk.6:22,23) A true offense would have been committed by us if we had not held the position which offended our enemies. And this would not only have offended the world but also Christendom - not just her enemies but also her brothers in Christ. The opponents, especially the weak among them, because such wavering and yielding would have strengthened their errors and actually appeased their consciences; the confessors of truth, because such denial would not only have sorely saddened them but also shaken their faith. Unionism and indifference which flood our times could very well have pierced our own dams. Our Ohioan and Iowan adversaries also would have interpreted and exploited our agreement to common prayers as nothing less than a quasi recognition and unionistic sufferance of their teachings. Our critics among the sects, unionists, and united Lutherans in

Germany and America would have thought no different. In these unionistic and syncretistic times in which doctrine and unity in doctrine are declared non-essential, people praise just such communal prayers as were suggested in Detroit as emphasis on the leniency of doctrine, as bighearted concession to the opponent, and as recognition of the equality of his doctrine. These joint prayers between adversaries are commonly looked upon with the saying: We agree to differ. We would have to be very foolish to labor under the delusion that the requested prayer union in Detroit would have been received by Christendom as anything else but a Missourian 'tolerari potest' of opposing heresies. The unionists in all communities would have triumphed: "Finally even Missouri has realized that there is no need to be so exacting with church doctrine and there is no reason to give up church unity." Woe to us if we had given such offense! Nothing agrees more with natural man than indifference toward pure doctrine. And nothing is as hateful to him as the statement that man must have true faith in order to attain salvation. And this indifference we would have fostered in all the world through prayer communion with Iowa and Ohio, and also in our own congregations; and thus opened the doors to non-denominational religion of which Pope sings: "For modes of faith let jarring bigots fight. His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.

Our critics and detractors have repeatedly made the assertion that the basic motivation of the Missourians is stubbornness, selfrighteousness, arrogance phariseeism and obvious lack of love. According to rethorists and sophists, Missouri is concerned neither with love nor with truth, but only with victory and disputatiousness. An aggressive article in last year's Iowan "Kirchliche Zeitschrift" (pg.191) By G. J. F. closed with the words:

"Missouri negotiates only in order to defeat their enemies - ad majorem gloriam ipsius." The only was underlined by G. J. F. himself. He also asserts emphatically that in their position against Ohio and Iowa the Missourians have only one motive: dogmatic disputatiousness. This equally unjust and general judgement by the gentleman from Iowa is not shared by all our opponents. But almost all do share the opinion that our denial to join in liturgical services at the free conferences constitutes a great lack of love. It would be a sad occasion for Missouri to realize that this should prove to be true - especially the Iowans' excessively hard-hearted judgement. But the truth is that the representatives at the synodical conferences in Detroit based their decision not only on the truth, but also made it dependant on the right love demanded by God - not just the love of God and his word but also the love of our fellowman and enemies. Yes, especially the love of our theological detractors is our main motive, the reason why we deny them prayer communion. This true devotion demands that we declare the truth to those who err, that we show them again and again the errors which can lead them off the right path; that we do nothing to strengthen these errors and sins, and that we show them by word and deed that we endeavor to do so with holy earnestness. Yes, true love which seeks true salvation of fellow men also asks that the representatives at the Detroit synodical conference tell the Iowans and Ohioans that: "As the situation stands now, we cannot conduct and hold joint prayers with you." True love does not give in to every wrong desire and harmful longing of a loved one. True love does not say Yes to everything; it also knows a hard and definite No. True love does not grant a request that robs God of honor and does harm to the one who asks it and to many others. The love which denies God's truth and harms men's souls is a mendacious love - is not caritas but carnalitas, a fleshly sinful thing.

"Die Lieb is rechter Art,  
die sich in Werken zeigt;  
doch wird sie falsch, sobald  
die Wahrheit sie verschweigt."

Never has Luther shown greater and purer love as precisely in the situation where all historians accused him of callousness and lack of love: namely in 1529, when he replied to Zwingli's tears: "You have a different spirit from ours, we cannot practice brotherly communion with one another." This was the language of pure holy love. And the love which we owe our adversaries consists mainly of testifying to the truth and not to encourage them in their errors. By granting them their request in Detroit, we would have denied them this necessary love. We would have created in them a false and perditious illusion: 'the Missourians are really unsure of themselves and don't deem our techings dangerous.' In brief, we would have encouraged our opponents in their erroneous ways, rather than convert them to the truth. But this is not the way of true love. We admit freely that our flesh is hard put to say No when we are tempted as in Detroit, since we know from past experience that such a No is the signal for many to attack the "phariseean", "loveless", and "dogmatic" Missourians. But what is the use? God's true word and the demands of true love must mean more to us than world and the flesh and the smother-love of blind partiality, which respect neither God's word nor true well-being of one's fellowmen.

Real prayer communion beteen<sup>we</sup> Missourians who are true to their convictions and true Ohioans is not only an immoral thing, but a dreadful abomination; it should be obvious to anyone who elucidates the real meaning of such a communion. Ohioans and Missourians cannot appear jointly in prayer before the throne of God's mercy. Their teachings are as far apart as the earth's poles:

their prayers drift apart and against one another. Yes, Missourians and Ohioans may pray against each other, but they cannot ask one and the same of God. A praying Ohioan, especially surrounded by hundreds of Missourians, can only follow his conviction and ask God to convert the Missourians to his own beliefs. But such a prayer would be abhorred by the Missourians as blasphemy, and he would rather ask God to show his foes the errors of their ways. The thoughts, hopes, wishes and pleas of Missourians and Ohioans drift apart and turn against each other. While Missouri is begging for the victory of the sola gratia and sola scriptura and for extermination of the false doctrine of partial dependence of conversion and salvation upon human conduct, consequent Ohioans are praying for victory of their heresy and defeat of the divine truth. And this is also the case if the spoken words of prayer are identical. The thoughts and wishes which both connect with the same words go astray, Not even the Lord's prayer could be said by Ohioans and Missourians with the same implication. The thoughts and wishes connected with the first three requests of the Lord's prayer have completely different meanings for a Missourian than for a true Ohioan. Where therefore remains the common prayer, if even the same words take on different meanings and one prays basically against the other? How is a truly common prayer possible between them if they can't even say the Lord's prayer with the same meaning? And what a selfdelusion for a free conference to imagine the accomplishment of a true united prayer by using the identical words - while connecting them with opposed thoughts and meanings! As long as the innermost wishes of Iowans and Ohioans point toward the plea for God to open Missouri's eyes and make them accept their synergistic teachings, so long can there be no talk, from their point of view, of a joint prayer with those who detest these heresies. And as long as the



innermost desire of Missourians culminates in the plea to God to free their opponents from this synergism, so long must a joint prayer with these same opponents be an abomination to them. The essence of communal prayer does not exist in meeting of various Ohioans and Missourians at the same church, sitting on the same benches, singing the same songs and reciting the same words of a prayer, but exists in bringing the same thoughts and wishes before God. This cannot be possible until all profess to the same doctrine and are filled with the same heartfelt thoughts and wishes. A public prayer at which the true desires of men are in opposition may in vain be called united. In fact it is a sinful, reprehensible thing, since the mouth pretends to unity of which the heart knows nothing. What a terrible discord must such a prayer be in the ear of God! Everyone surely admits that Missourians could not take part in a common service where an officiating Ohioan or Iowan chaplain would pray publicly for God to dissuade them from their ways and convert them to the Ohioan synergism. And yet this man would have said only what he thinks and wishes according to his true convictions. In short, as things are standing now, prayer union with our adversaries is a thing that cannot be accomplished without lies and deceit, controversy and in consequence.

To this one must add that logically the synodical conference could not have stopped at liturgical prayer services. The conference would have pushed on inexorably, further than even Ohio and Iowa would have cared to go. Those who say 'A' and conduct joint services, must say 'B' and institute joint sermons and the Lord's Supper. Whosoever grants joint prayer to Ohio, has given them the most intimate and deepest gift a Christian can give, and cannot deny them any other form of brotherly intercourse.

There is no closer communion on earth as when people come together in the name of Jesus to pour out a common desire before God. This means, to truly intermingle their souls and so become one heart and one soul. Can we so be one in prayer with Ohio, so must we also invite them to our altars and lead them to our pulpits, and recommend their churches, pulpits, and altars to our preachers and laymen, and all polemics must be silenced. And all this we must not logically restrict to the Ohioans and Iowans. The same brotherly communion in prayer, at the altar and on the pulpit would have to be extended to general council, general synod, sects, and the established German churches with all their fractions. How could we exclude the (Conciliten); especially since they interact as brothers with the Iowans? And how could we reject the general synodists, since they go arm in arm with the (Conciliten)? Indeed, how could we draw the line at the sects, considering their brotherly relations with the general synodists? And the same goes for the established churches in Germany, with whom the Iowans and Ohioans are directly or indirectly linked. If we cultivate ecumenical unity with the Iowans and Ohioans, so could and should we not reject anyone they bring along as brother. So, had the synodical conference in Detroit agreed to say "A", they would necessarily have had to follow with the entire alphabet of denominations. But even the Iowans and Ohioans have no intention to go that far. Even the general synod does not seem to be included in their plans for unity. This is an inconsequence which cannot be accomplished and which our adversaries do not clearly execute. But with this deed our opponents are clearly admitting that the position of the synodical conference is consequent and right without argument. The demands of our foes involve something that they themselves condemn as immoral and un-Christian. spiritual communion with general synodists and sectists.

The position of the synodical conference in Detroit is proven true not only by scripture but is also proven to be the only Lutheran position. This special question has been asked of us: If we could call on Luther and the Lutheran symbol to verify our decision? We shall therefore quote several passages which are a clear indication that this is indeed the case. The Augustana declares in its seventh article that: "For true unity of Christian churches, it is necessary to preach the gospel harmoniously with pure reason." "Consentire de doctrina evangelii", this is the only but also the essential condition for Christian unity. To the teachings of the gospel we also have to add on the sola gratia and sola scriptura, which are attacked by our opponents. In the appendix to the Smalcaldian articles we read in paragraph #41 regarding the papacy: "While this is so, all Christians should diligently beware that they will not take part in such godless teachings, blasphemy and unjustified fury, and stay away from the pope and all his members or adherents and avoid him like the Antichrist and his dominion, and curse him (deserere et execrari debent); as Christ admonished, : 'Stay away from false prophets.' - and Paul directs us to avoid false prophets and curse them as an abomination. In 2 Cor.:6 he says: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion has light with darkness?'. It is difficult to be divided from so many lands and people and believe unto a different doctrine. But here stands God's command, that everyone should beware of those who practice false teachings or try to spread them by force (ne sint socii et propugnatores impietatis et injustae saevitiae). For this our conscience may be pardoned and insured."

The following quotation, also from the Concordian formulas, makes it perfectly clear: 1. that one should have no part of false teachings; 2. one should avoid false prop-

hets; 3. that this division, even though it be hard to bear, has been ordered by God. Must we now consider as false teachings the sentences which set our teachings apart from the Ohioans and Iowans, so it follows that we are also to avoid the perpetrators of these sentences as false prophets.

Following are the main parts of the Concordian formulas which touch on our question: The tenth article states:

(\*) (see attached;\* Please translate from your own English source...our little village library does not carry Luther's works. /hjb/ )

...According to the above, Christians must do nothing to give the impression that there is no particular difference between true and false teaching, or that one should give in and agree with false teachers. Each Christian furthermore has the sacred duty to confess true teaching by word and deed and yield not even in (Mitteldingen), if this could be construed as a suppression and denial of the truth. All yielding and comparison of exterior matters must be preceded by unification of doctrine. If this is not done first, the heretics would be strengthened in their false beliefs and the righteous should be sorely saddened vexed, and weakened. For ecumenical unity nothing more or less is needed than complete agreement in all articles of doctrine. All unification that takes anything away from the divine truth and adorns heresy is objectionable. The only God-pleasing unity is that through which "nothing is taken away from the divine truth of the holy gospel" and "no concession is made to the slightest error".

As in our creed, so also teaches Luther. In the seventh article, the Concordian formulas cite, from the last

„Unter die rechte freie adiaphora oder Mittelbänge nicht sollen gerechnet werden solche Ceremonien, die den Schein haben oder, dadurch Verfolgung zu vermeiden, den Schein fürgeben wollten, als wäre unsere Religion mit der papistischen nicht weit von einander, oder wäre uns dieselbe ja nicht hoch entgegen, oder wann solche Ceremonien dahin gemeinet, also erfordert oder aufgenommen (accipitur), als ob damit und dadurch beide widerwärtige Religion verglichen und ein Corpus worden, oder wiederum ein Zutritt zum Papstthum und ein Abweichen von der reinen Lehre des Evangelii und wahren Religion geschehen oder gemächlich daraus erfolgen sollte. Denn in diesem Fall soll und muß gelten, das Paulus schreibt 2 Cor. 6: „Zieheth nicht am fremden Joch“ 2c. (S. 698, § 5. 6.) Ferner § 10: „Wir gläuben, lehren und bekennen auch, daß zur Zeit der Bekenntniß, da die Feinde Gottes Wort die reine Lehre des heiligen Evangelii begehren unterzudrücken, die ganze Gemeine Gottes, ja ein jeder Christenmensch, besonders aber die Diener des Wortes als die Vorsteher der Gemeine Gottes, schuldig sein, vermöge Gottes Wortes, die Lehre und was zur ganzen Religion gehöret, frei öffentlich nicht allein mit Worten, sondern auch im Werk und mit der That zu bekennen, und daß alsdann in diesem Fall, auch in solchen Mittelbängen, den Widersachern nicht zu weichen.“ Ferner § 16 f.: „So werden auch durch solch Nachgeben und Beraleichen in äußerlichen Dingen, da man zuvor in der Lehre nicht

Christlich vereiniget, die Abgöttischen in ihrer Abgötterei gestärket; dagegen die Rechtgläubigen betrübet, geärgert und in ihrem Glauben geschwächet: welches beides ein jeder Christ bei seiner Seelen Heil und Seligkeit zu meiden schuldig ist, wie geschrieben stehet: „Wehe der Welt der Aergerniß halben.“ Item: „Wer den Geringsten ärgert deren, die an mich gläuben, dem wäre es besser, daß ihm ein Mühlstein an seinem Hals hinge, und er erfäuset würde im Meer, da es am tiefsten ist.“ Sonderlich aber ist zu bedenken, daß Christus sagt: „Wer mich bekennet für den Menschen, den will ich auch bekennen für meinem himmlischen Vater“, Matth. 10.“ Ferner im Schlußparagraphen des zehnten Artikels: „Solchergestalt werden die Kirchen von wegen Ungleichheit der Ceremonien, da in christlicher Freiheit eine weniger oder mehr derselben hat, einander nicht verdammen, wann sie sonst in der Lehr und allen derselben Artikeln (in doctrina et in omnibus illius partibus), auch rechtem Gebrauch der heiligen Sacrament mit einander einig.“ (703, § 31.) Endlich schreibt die Concordienformel mit Bezug auf alle in den elf vorausgehenden Artikeln dargelegten Lehren und die Einigkeit der Kirche also: „Aus welcher unser Erklärung Freund und Feind, und also männiglich, klar abzunehmen, daß wir nicht bedacht um zeitliches Friedens, Ruh und Einigkeit willen, etwas der ewigen, unwandelbaren Wahrheit Gottes (wie auch solches zu thun in unserer Macht nicht stehet) zu begeben, welcher Fried und Einigkeit, da sie wider die Wahrheit und zu Unterdrückung derselben gemeinet, auch keinen Bestand haben würde; noch viel weniger gesinnet, Verfälschung der reinen Lehre und öffentliche verdamnte Irrthümer zu schmücken und zu decken. Sondern zu solcher Einigkeit herzlich Lust und Liebe tragen, und dieselbe unsers Theils nach unserm äußersten Vermögen zu befördern von Herzen geneigt und begierig, durch welche Gott seine Ehre unverleht, der göttlichen Wahrheit des heiligen Evangelii nichts begeben, dem wenigsten Irrthum nichts eingeräumer, die armen Sünder zu wahrhaftiger rechter Buß gebracht, durch den Glauben aufgerichtet, im neuen Gehorsam gestärket und also allein durch den einigen Verdienst Christi gerecht und ewig selig werden.“ (724, § 95—99.)

confession Luthers, the following: (See attached and (\*) on Page 28.)

In a letter, Luther writes: "It will be necessary that one is above all certain" (before one enters spiritual union with the reformed) "whether the others" (reformed preachers) "practice the same, as Bucerus means hopefully, or whether one teaches the people" (the Lutheran doctrine of the Holy Supper) "and practices openly; otherwise the union might have a bas foundation and later cause vexation; as I, D. Luther, told Bucerus in Coburg diligently, that one should start such a union on a solid, pure foundation, or better let it be." (Erl. Ausg. 54, pg. 216)

In a letter to Dr. Brück in 1541 Luther writes: (See (\*) on Page 28). (Erl. Ausg. 55, pg. 299)

While in Marburg in 1529, Luther wrote to his wife on October 4th: (See (\*) on page 28). (Erl. Ausg. 54, pg. 107)

..."Brotherhood they have desired from us;" Luther writes also from Marburg, "we had to deny them at this time and could not agree. For if we accept them as brothers and sisters, we would have to accept their teachings." In a letter to D. Major Luther wrote: "He who deems his doctrine, belief, and creed as true, right, and certain..." (See (\*) on page 28). (Erl. Ausg. 65, pg. 86)

Also, "Should I have a fault, I would rather that I speak too harshly and emphasize the truth too forcefully, than that I feigned and kept the truth to myself." (Erl. Ausg. 52, pg. 162)

"What worth has peace and unity," says Luther in another place, "whereover one loses the word of God: for with this our eternal life and all else would be lost. There must be no yielding, nor giving way, for your or your fellowmen's sake; but all things must give way to the word, be it friend or foe." Luther obviously wanted no part of any kind of brotherly communion with those

An 4. October 1529 schrieb Luther aus Marburg an seine Frau: „Gnad und Friede in Christo. Lieber Herr Râth, wisset, daß unser freundlich Gespräch zu Marburg ein Ende hat, und sind fast in allen Stücken eins, ohne daß die Widertheil wollen eitel Brod im Abendmahl behalten und Christum geistlich darinnen gegenwärtig bekennen.“

Heut handelt der Landgraf, ob wir könnten eins werden, oder doch gleichwohl, so wir uneins blieben, dennoch Brüder und Christus' Glieder unter einander uns halten. Da arbeitet der Landgraf heftig. Aber wir wollen des Brüderns und Gliederns nicht, friedlich und guts wollen wir wohl!“ (Erl. Ausg. 54, S. 107.)

„Mein lieber Herr Doctor, mit euch rede ich, als für M. G. Herrn gegenwärtig, daß mich's genug verdreust auf den Landgrafen und die Seinen, daß sie das Vater- Unser so umkehren, und erstlich Ruhe und Friede suchen, unangesehen, wo das Erste, nämlich Gottes Name, Reich und Wille, bleibt. Was ist's, daß man die Mücken seiget und die Kameele verschlinget? Will man in der Religion Vergleichung suchen, so hebe man erst an, da die gründlichen Stücke sind, als Lehre und Sacrament; wenn dieselbigen verglichen sind, wird das andere, Neufferliche, das sie Neutralia heißen, selbst sich schicken, wie es in unsern Kirchen geschehen ist: so wäre Gott mit in der Concordia und würde die Ruhe und Friede beständig. Wo man aber die großen Stücke will lassen stehen und die Neutralia handeln, so ist Gottes vergessen; da mag denn ein Friede ohne Gott werden, dafür man lieber möchte allen Unfrieden leiden. Es wird doch gehen, wie Christus Matth. 9 spricht: Der neue Lappe auf einen alten Rock macht den Riß ärger, und der neue Most zersprengt die alten Fässer. Man mach's entweder gar neu, oder laß das Flicken anstehen, wie wir gethan haben, sonst ist alles vergebliche Arbeit.“ (Erl. Ausg. 55, S. 299.)

„Ich rechne sie alle in Einen Kuchen, das ist, für Sacramentirer und Schwärmer, wie sie auch sind, die nicht gläuben wollen, daß des Herrn Brod im Abendmahl sei sein rechter natürlicher Leib, welchen der Gottlose oder Judas ebensowohl mündlich empfähet als St. Petrus und alle Heiligen; wer das, sage ich, nicht gläuben will, der lasse mich nur zufrieden und hoffe bei mir keine Gemeinschaft; da wird nichts anders aus!“

„Wer seine Lehre, Glauben und Bekenntniß für wahr, recht und gewiß hält, der kann mit andern, so falsche Lehre führen oder derselben zugethan sind, nicht in Einem Stall stehen, noch immer gute Wort dem Teufel und seinen Schuppen geben.“ (Erl. Ausg. 65, S. 86.)

who do not agree with him on doctrine. Even though his soul burned with longing for unity and brotherly communion. "As God be my witness", he writes in regard to the controversy over Holy Communion, "I would, if it were possible, buy off this disunion with my body and blood (even if I had more than one body)." (Erl. Ausg. 55, Pg. 75)

Luther's position is also our position. We have a heartfelt desire for brotherly union, especially with the Ohioans and Iowans. But to anticipate any form of real unity with unionistic tendencies - this we cannot, must not, and will not.

F.B.

-----