

SUMMARY OF THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF SIX ESSAYS ON THE  
COMMON CONFSSION.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COMMON CONFSSION'S STATEMENT ON THE "WORD"

ESSAYIST: PROF. R. HOENECKE

In summarizing his essay, Prof. Hoenecke gave the following three divisions of the material he had presented, following the historical background.

1. Serious weaknesses so far as confessional make-up is concerned,
2. Ambiguous language, affording a shelter for former erroneous teachings, and
3. A misleading presentation of what constitutes the Means of Grace.

Historical matters: Our position on the question of inspiration is not just another theory, nor the product of human logic and reasoning, nor a so-called "theological deduction." It is based on what the Scriptures say of themselves. The significance of the question is such that we recall Satan's question, "Yea, hath God said?" Upon the certainty of inspiration rests the certainty of every other doctrine taught in the Scriptures. If the Common Confession is inadequate in its statement of the doctrine of inspiration, we could say that the Common Confession is simply unsatisfactory.

Statements taken from the Lutheran Witness and from A.L.C. circles show that this doctrine has been in controversy between the two bodies that framed the Common Confession. Further, differences between Missouri and Iowa on this doctrine existed for many years, indeed date back to the very founding of the Iowa Synod in 1854, for "one of the chief purposes for organizing the Iowa Synod was to create a body in which divergent theological opinions on certain Biblical doctrines might enjoy equal rights." (Quartalschrift 4/50). All through the years Iowa's guiding principle has been expressed in the Sandusky Agreement of 1938, "that it is neither necessary nor possible to agree in all non-fundamental doctrines." It is finally this difference which has caused the A. L. C. to feel that it occupies a middle-of-the-road position that avoids the mistakes and exaggerations of both the extreme right and the extreme left in Am. Lutheranism. Although A. L. C. has never without some qualifications accepted the Brief Statement, which clearly and correctly sets forth the doctrine of inspiration, although it even rejected the Doctrinal Affirmation, it greeted the Common Confession with joy.

Scrutiny of Article: A closer scrutiny of the Common Confession reveals the following weaknesses concerning its statement on inspiration:

1. The doctrine is given a subordinate position, a practice contrary to that of our fathers.
2. The manner of offering proof - texts without relating them to specific parts of the statement is at best weak.

3. Omission of the rejection of specific error is a gross fault in view of the fact that for many years differences on this doctrine have been the center of controversy.
4. The significant term "verbal inspiration" has been omitted.

In addition, there are ambiguities that easily mislead the unwary and can be used to shelter error:

1. "Through the Holy Scriptures, which God caused to be written by men chosen and inspired by Him." Scriptures consist not of inspired men, but of inspired words.
2. "Holy Spirit ----- supplies ---- content and fitting word." Historically, A.L.C. assured the U. L. C. officially that this statement was "not an acceptance of the Verbal Inspiration doctrine."
3. "Word" is used in the singular. This was done by intent to satisfy the opponents of Verbal Inspiration.
4. "In its entirety" reminds one of the old error which holds that Scriptures as a whole and in a general way are inspired, but not word by word.
5. "Taught us by God" in the second paragraph of this article becomes meaningless in the light of the A.L.C. historical stand on the inerrancy of the Scriptures, i.e., they are not inerrant in historical, geographical, and secular matters.

Finally, this article introduces the Law in a treatment of the Means of Grace. This manner of doing was carried into A.L.C. by Iowa and forms a part for Iowa's false doctrine of conversion.

ESSAY II - REVIEW OF COMMON CONFSSION  
ESSAYIST: Pastor E. Wendland

ARTICLE VI - JUSTIFICATION

- A. The position ever hel by the Luth. Church and defended by the Synodical Conference for eighty years.
- B. Review of the position held by the A. L. Church in the past on this doctrine.
- C. The question whether or not the Common Confession clearly composes the old controversy and adequately confesses the truth.

A. - Justification is basically a declaratory act of God, in which He pronounces a sinner righteous. The Scriptural word for "justify" is used in this forensic way almost without exception. Those whom God justifies receive this as a free gift, and without any merit on their part, purely as an act of God's mercy and grace for Christ's sake. Christ has purchased and won this righteousness in His work of redemption.

This act of God's justification applies to the whole world (Rom. 5, 18-19) and was sealed by Christ's resurrection (Rom. 4, 25). Thus Scripture teaches the objective or universal justification of all men (2 Cor. 5, 19). This justification stands as an accomplished fact. Nothing in man -- his merit, faith, or the fact that he will come to faith -- conditions this justification. So the Brief Statement clearly set forth this doctrine.

Scripture also speaks of a subjective justification. Man is justified by faith (Rom. 1, 17; 3, 22-28; 5, 1; 9, 30-31; 10, 6; Gal. 2, 16; 3, 24; 5, 5) (Formula of Concord, Epitome). Faith is described as the instrument whereby we lay hold of a righteousness which is already present before faith. Faith is never the cause of justification, but always and instrument of receiving universal justification. Dr. Stoeckhardt so presents this doctrine and shows the great comfort a Christian derives from it.

Though neither Luther and early Lutheran Confessions use the specific terminology of "objective" and "subjective" justification, they never misrepresent these two sides of the doctrine of justification; and the Synodical Conference has for eighty years taught the doctrine as here presented.

B. - The position of the A. L. Church on justification may be understood from a review of the Ohio Synod's opposition to Missouri in respect to that doctrine. Ohio has labeled Missouri's position on objective justification as a "sin against holiness", "insanity", "a miserable figment of man's own invention." Ohio has accused Missouri of destroying the doctrine of justification by faith by placing justification ahead of faith, so that faith must limp behind. Ohio states its own doctrine thusly; "Through the reconciliation of Christ the holy and gracious God has made advances to us, so that forgiveness of sin and justification have been made possible on His part; justification, however does not occur until through God's grace the spark of faith has been kindled in the heart of the poor sinner.

Was this difference between Ohio and Missouri on justification settled prior to the formulating of the Common Confession? In its "Declaration" (1938) the A. L. C. states: "(God) purposes to justify those who have come to faith." Dr. Le nski, too, goes to great lengths to attempt to prove that the justifying act of God applies only to believers after they have come to faith. He plainly recognizes no biblical doctrine of objective justification. Note his flat statement on Rom. 5, 19: "Nowhere in the Bible is any man constituted or declared righteous 'without' faith, before faith' all asseverations and argumentations to the contrary notwithstanding."

C. - Does the Common Confession compose the old controversy and adequately confess the truth?

In Art. VI, first sentence and parentheses, we cannot find the essential characteristic of objective justification, the fact that God "has already declared the whole world to be righteous in Christ" (cf. Brief Statement). "Secured and provided" do not convey the thought of an outright grant, declaring man as acquitted before the bar of God's justice. Perhaps they can be interpreted in that light by members of the Missouri Synod, but they can just as well be interpreted by the A. L. C. to mean that, although God has secured and provided forgiveness of sin by the redemptive work of Christ, He does not actually justify or declare the sinner to be righteous until the first spark of faith is kindled in his heart. A true confession must not permit ambiguous interpretation.

Quoting 2 Cor. 5, 19 is in itself no guarantee of its being correctly interpreted.

Referring to sentence, "Hence no sinner ----- him righteous", we know that A.L.C. never did say that man could merit his justification. The point is whether or not God justifies only after faith has been kindled (A. L. C.). Nor does the next statement, "God justifies ----- accepts by faith", clearly obviate the introduction of this error that in some manner justification follows faith.

We do not mean to state that the Common Confession should have ignored subjective justification (that faith is the instrument of receiving this declaration of God concerning the sinner's righteousness in Christ), as the Brief Statement clearly sets forth, but its statement on justification should leave no room for the old error (Ohio position).

Such a clear, positive statement on objective justification is found in the Brief Statement. (cf. pamphlet, pages 28-34). A clear antithetical statement should have been inserted in the Common Confession, even though the Confession was intended to be purely positive in its presentation.

## ARTICLE IV, COMMON CONFSSION

### ELECTION

Essayist: Prof. A. Schuetze

"The election of grace permits us to perceive properly what the grace of God is," writes Dr. Stoeckhardt. And so it is. Here God's grace shines forth in all its fullness.

Yet this doctrine was the first to cause controversy and division within the Syn. Conf. after its organization in 1872. (withdrawal of Ohio, 1881; withdrawal of Norwegian Synod, 1883; split in Nor. Sy., 1887; unsuccessful intersynodical conferences, 1903-1907; Chicago Theses).

Since 1935 Missouri and ALC have sought to reach agreement also on this doctrine. "Fellowship Committee" of ALC (1947) stated frankly that in its opinion doctrinal unity between the ALC and Missouri Synod did not exist in regard to a number of doctrines, among them doctrine of eternal election, (Quart. 1947, April, 132).

In view of this long history and seriousness of the Controversy the question in judging this article must not merely be: Can we accept the statements of the article concerning the doctrine of election as Scripturally correct? but: Can we accept this article as the statement of this doctrine which on the basis of Scripture settles the differences that came to light during the election controversy?

What differences came to light? Dr. Walther stated (1881) them as follows:

1. Does the faith which was foreseen of God flow out of the election of grace, or does the election of grace flow out of the foreseen faith?
2. Is the election of grace based alone on God's mercy and Christ's merit, or also upon the conduct of man, which God foresaw?
3. Can and should a believing Christian become certain of his election and thus of his salvation, or can and should he not become certain of them?

As late as 1942 Dr. Gerfen (Kirchenblatt Quart. 1942, 218): "They (Walther's points) today yet are the real point of difference between the two synods."

Does the Common Confession resolve the differences?

1. The difference of faith to election. Which is the cause of the other, faith or election? "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" - Acts 13, 48. "God ----- predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Christ Jesus" - Eph. 1, 5. The relationship is clear: God set apart, chose certain people for salvation; they believed, believed because they had been ordained. Adoption takes place through faith; predestination is the cause of faith.

Schmidt and Ohio Synod, however, taught that faith is a cause of man's election. This, to solve the riddle, Why are some chosen, others not? ALC still holds to this error. Emch in "Lutheran Standard" on Acts 13, 48: "As many as God ordained to eternal life, - because He foresaw that His saving grace would accomplish in them his blessed purposed - believed."

In 1942 Dr. Gerfen rejected the expression "cause" and used the word "condition". He wrote "Naturally God did not look upon faith as the cause, but as the condition of election." But both make faith the determining factor in man's election. Does not give sole glory to God.

In the Common Confession nothing is said of the relationship of faith and election. It merely describes the ones who have been elected. The expression "without any cause is a vital point in this doctrine which has been under controversy for many years, a common confession with the ALC must speak out clearly on this. Brief Statement does so in par. 36. 2. Second difference Walther pointed to referred to man's conduct. Nowhere in Scripture is man, his works, his conduct given credit for election, but it is based alone on the grace of God and the merit of Christ. This picture of complete grace changes when it is said: God, being allknowing, knew that we would perform certain good works, that we would not resist His Gospel preaching willfully and permit ourselves to be brought to faith, and therefore chose us. Taught by ALC. Pastor Poovey of ALC is quoted in "Catechism of Differences" as follows: "In His wisdom God presaw the result that would occur when each man would come in contact with the Gospel. He thus knew that Luther would not resist, but allow the Holy Spirit to work in his heart. He saw Judas would accept for a time and then later harden his heart and turn away despite every effort of God to keep him in the truth. He saw that Cain would refuse even to consider the message of the Gospel. On this basis He was able to predestinate all mankind." Published in 1946.

Is this difference settled in Common Confession by words: "Solely --- whatever in man"? Who can tell? Poovey called man's conduct basis for election, Common Confession denies that it could be a cause. Must speak out clearly and repudiate false ideas and doctined. Not only should we be able to find correct teaching in the Common Confession, but it must compell us to find it. Not the case in this point.

3. Third point of Walther referred to certainty of election. Scripture uses terms "believes" and "elect" interchangeable. The believers are to consider themselves elect. Election also is effective. Matt. 24, 24. No one can pluck them out of the Savior's hands. John 10, 28.

ALC injected doubt. You must doubt, for you may fall away from faith like Judas. If man's faith is basis for election, how can you ever be certain?

Common Confession does confess that the Holy Spirit assures us of our status, of our election. Does not clearly point to the fact that this election is effective. Would prefer stressing that certainty of election flows out of universal justification, as Brief Statement does in par. 40.

4. A fourth point of controversy, discussed in the Brief Statement, pertained to the proper distinction between God's universal will of grace and the election of grace. Scripture teaches that it is the will of God to save all men eternally. I Tim. 2, 4; 2 Pet. 3, 9. It also teaches that God elected some in Christ unto salvation. These two teachings don't harmonize according to our human reason. But we accept both.

ALC tried to harmonize by using the analogy of faith, claiming that all teachings of Scripture must harmonize with one another according to our reason. This led to false doctrine. Some made election identical with the universal will of God. Common Confession silent on this point. We ask: Is this point settled or not? Brief Statement also denied an election unto damnation and election as only one part of God's counsel of salvation. Nothing in Common Confession

#### Conclusions:

1. Article does not speak clearly on the points of difference (Election cause of faith, not based on man's conduct).
2. Article omits some points under controversy. Are they now open questions?
3. Article falls far short of Brief Statement. Why turn from something clear to something less clear?
4. This article must be considered a compromising confession and whatever compromises the truth of Scripture must be considered false and rejected. Luther said to George Myer: "It is by your silence and cloaking that you cause suspicion upon yourself," etc. (Concordia Triglotto, Intro. page 94).

## ARTICLE VII - CONVERSION

Essayist: Pastor T. Adascheck

A study of the doctrine of Conversion will of necessity answer three questions:

1. What does the Bible teach concerning Conversion?
2. What have the Synods forming the Synodical Conference on the one hand and the Synods forming the A.L.C., on the other hand, been teaching concerning the Doctrine of Conversion?
3. Does the article on Conversion as found in the Common Confession resolve the conflicting teachings between the Synodical Conference and the A.L.C.?

I. - Man was created in the image of God, i. e. he possessed true righteousness and holiness.

Then sin entered the world through Satan, and man lost this image of God (Eph. 2,1; Joh. 3, 19; I Cor. 2,14).

But it is not the will of God that man should remain in such lost condition but that the image of God be restored unto him. To accomplish His will, He promised to send forth His own Son to redeem man (Gal. 4, 5-6; Titus 2, 11; Joh. 3, 16).

Fallen man cannot by his own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ or come to Him. If the lost image of God is to be restored to man, man must be converted to God - he must become a new creature. Since the sinner is dead in trespasses and sins, the work of conversion is entirely God's work (Form. Con., pg. 779).

This work of converting the sinner God does by having the Holy Spirit work saving faith in the heart of the sinner through the means of Grace. In this work man neither assists nor cooperates; he is acted upon (2 Cor. 4, 6; I Cor. 15, 10).

II - In the development of the history of the various Lutheran synods forming the Synodical Conference and those of the A.L.C., the doctrine of Conversion has always been a point of controversy, and the whole argument has rested on the nature of conversion.

The synods forming the Synodical Conference have always taught the doctrine of Conversion as the Word of God teaches (cf. Part I), no matter how great a mystery this leaves unsolved. Their attitude and approach has been - Ps. 46, 10; Is. 66, 27. Scripture does not answer the question, Why are only some and not all saved.

The Ohio and Iowa Synods, seeking a reasonable answer to that question, taught that God's grace could overcome only the natural resistance of man, while it was ineffective in those who offered willful resistance. These are the beliefs that have been adopted into the A.L.C. The Word of God makes no such distinction but teaches that divine grace in Conversion overcomes all resistance in man.

Dr. Fritschel in 1872 wrote concerning the natural



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and willful resistance in man. He set forth that the will of man can cooperate with the Holy Spirit as the result of a certain prevenient grace communicated to man by the Holy Spirit; hence, man assists God in his own conversion.

The Ohio Synod continued to hold and to teach this position of two kinds of resistance and conduct in man toward the saving Grace of God: Kirchenzeitung: "After God has done all that is necessary for the conversion and salvation of all men, -----, everything depends on the conduct of man over against the Grace of God." Dr. Fritschel in Seebold Theses: "Hence, the eternal lot of man does not depend upon an unconditional decree of an electional grace operating irresistably, -----, but the different conduct of man over against the grace offered is to be taken into consideration.

Later this open synergism (man cooperating with God in Conversion) was denied by employing a different phraseology, but the old error was continued. In the Chicago Theses the error seems to have been dropped, yet Dr. Fritschel, one of the authors of the theses, plainly stated that the truth can be expressed in all kinds of phrases but that the doctrine remained that of the Seebold Theses. Dr. Rew and Dr. Lenski in their writings speak the language of Dr. Fritschel.

A. L. C. is preaching and living today the old false doctrine of Iowa - that man can in some manner assist God in his own conversion.

III - Does the Common Confession resolve the controversy? The article on Conversion contains two short sentences, which are Scripturally correct. What they say has been taught by the Syn. Conf., and by Ohio right along; but they do not settle the controversy. The inadequacy of the article consists, not in what it says, but in what it omits. The floodgates for the admission of false doctrine stand wide open. This article plainly does not present the whole Counsel of God.

This article does not do what it was intended to do - resolve the differences in doctrine. Confessional honesty demands not only a thetical but also an anti-thetical treatment of the doctrine of Conversion.

God tells us that only then do we have a right to continue as a true church in upbuilding His kingdom among all men if we continue in His word and abide in His truth.

ARTICLE IX AND X, COMMON CONFSSION  
Essayist: Prof. E. Kowalke

If the Common Confession were being submitted to us by a body with which we had never been in controversy regarding the doctrine of the Church, we could accept the article on the Church with but few changes.

But the Common Confession is being presented to us as a basis for the establishment of full pulpit and altar fellowship with the A.L.C., which is a merger of the old Iowa, Ohio, and Buffalo Synods. The Iowa Synod never disavowed its teachings on the Church which caused the controversy with Missouri. The Common Confession passes over the point of controversy in silence. In 1940 Dr. Reu wrote of the visible side of the Church when defining its essence. He stated that the use of the means of grace is of the essence of the Church. Missouri always objected to Dr. Reu's position. Iowa always clung to it. The Common Confession ignores the matter. We ought to know whether the Common Confession endorses Dr. Reu's teaching or rejects it.

We cannot accept Dr. Reu's statement. Though true that the Holy Ghost does not convert sinners except by means of grace, that through the means of grace the Church is established, nourished, preserved, the use of the means of grace is not of essence of the Church and does not constitute its visible side.

We grant that the Church of Christ on earth does not exist apart from the means of grace. The holy Christian Church is the body of Christ, the Christians are its members; that is all that the Scriptures plainly say about the essence of the Church.

To say that the Church in its essence has a visible side and that this visible side is nothing else than the use of the means of grace makes the Church identifiable to us as to its members. We must distinguish between those who profess and those who believe. The Kingdom of God as it appears upon earth is not exactly synonymous with the holy Christian Church. Christ warned that we should not attempt to segregate from the identifiable group the true members of the body of Christ (Mt. 13, 24-43; 25, 1-13).

If the use of the means of grace is in any sense of the essence of the communion of saints, then the use of the means of grace and the Church can never be separated, either in this world or in the world to come, for Scripture when speaking of the Church makes no distinction between the saints on earth and the saints in heaven. This oneness is clearly stated in Hebrews 12, 22-24. But in heaven the means of grace are no longer used. By their use here on earth we have been brought to the Church of Christ and kept in it while here on earth, but the use of them does not extend into heaven.

Is the Common Confession's omission serious enough to bar a confession of church fellowship? A little leaven leavens the whole lump.

The sentence "Through the means of grace ----- with one another" may reflect Iowa's emphasis on the

visible side of the Church. Does the sentence mean that by the use of the means of grace the fellowship with Christ and one another must now also become apparent and visible? As worded, the sentence permits that interpretation. If not so intended, a clear statement to the effect that only through the means of grace does the Holy Spirit call sinners into faith and fellowship with Christ and one another could easily have been made.

The second paragraph in Art. IX would have been clearer if it stopped with the words: "---- set forth in His Word." (cf. 1 Pet. 2, 9)

The second sentence of paragraph two could be taken to serve as a restriction on sentence one. Each sentence, standing alone is perfectly correct, but taken together, they are unclear. Is a limitation here placed on the universal priesthood of all believers?

The third paragraph, in explaining the origin of local congregations, employs the words, "It is therefore the duty ----." That is a legalistic interpretation. In the N. T. the formation of local congregations was a fruit of faith in the Gospel, and the congregations took the form that the Gospel suggested. True, they were founded as a consequence of the divinely given mission to preach the Gospel and baptize, but also true that as members of Body of Christ they were drawn together, suffered and rejoiced together.

The Gospel creates its own forms. There is no law of God that makes it a duty to form local congregations. What when political oppression successfully prevents the formation and normal functioning of local congregations? Do we then feel that the Church has been destroyed?

In the 5th paragraph the subject of unionism is taken up, to wit, "Therefore we dare not --- refuse to be corrected by God's word." The Brief Statement reads: "We repudiate unionism, that is, Church fellowship with adherents of false doctrine." The two expressions do not say the same thing. Luther: "Who, but the devil himself would say, 'I refuse to be corrected by God's Word.'" If we accept the rule that we dare not have pulpit and altar fellowship with those that refuse to be corrected by God's Word, then the way is opened to fellowship with adherents of false doctrine so long as they do not admit that they know what God's Word requires but refuse to be corrected by it.

The last two sentences of Art. IX are based on the Lord's intercessory prayer, Joh. 17. Our quarrel here is not with the statement that we must be alert to maintain fellowship with those who are one with us in the faith, but rather with the interpretation placed on the prayer that is referred to Christ's prayer, Joh. 17, does not refer to the visible fellowship of church organizations and religious groups but rather to the invisible unity of the spirit, to the fellowship that all true believers have in Christ with the Father.

God Himself will preserve that unity of all the saints. Schisms and heresies cannot mar that unity; nor can synodical affiliation and denominational membership

make or break it.

Scripture enjoins us to preach the Word in its purity, to confess it and continue in it, to avoid those who cause divisions and offenses contrary to it, and, as much as lieth in us, to live peaceably with all men.

#### ARTICLE X THE MINISTRY

This article, too, passes over a teaching that members of A.L.C. had never rejected.

We maintain that the commission to preach the Gospel, to use the means of grace, and to exercise the office of the keys was given by Christ to all Christians, and that all Christians are meant when God says: "Ye are a chosen generation -----." Spiritual gifts, such as learning, teaching, and others, are variously distributed, but the commission to preach and confess the Gospel was not given to any one class.

Iowa taught that Office of the Keys belonged not to the individual but "to the Church in its totality," and that the office of pastor was derived originally, not from the priesthood of the individual Christian, but rather from the organized congregation, and it was suggested that even the individual congregation had to be represented by the "church at large" is it wished to call a pastor. In a subtle way this teaching establishes the clergy as an order with special divine rights. There is a touch of popery in that. Can we accept the Common Confession as a basis of union with A.L.C. when the discussion of this peculiar teaching is omitted?

## ARTICLE XII, COMMON CONFSSION

### THE LAST THINGS

Essayist: Rev. O. Sieger

To discuss an article on the last things is nothing new in the history of the Christian Church. From the days of the Apostle Paul to the Reformation, for example, certain men of the Church exposed such teachings as the following as false according to the Scriptures: that Christ would establish a thousand-year visible kingdom here on earth following the first resurrection, that there would be a bodily resurrection of the martyrs before the general resurrection, and others. And the framers of the Augsburg Confession found it necessary to include an article against those who spread such opinions.

During the Reformation period Luther effectively exposed the Pope as being the very Antichrist "who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." (2 Thess. 2, 4); and that became the public doctrine of the Lutheran Church.

In the early years of the Lutheran Synods in our country strange teachings again appeared and were fostered particularly by the Iowa Synod. In addition to reviving old false doctrines (general conversion of the Jews, bodily resurrection of the martyrs, thousand-year earthly rule of Christ) this synod began to question that the Pope was the very Antichrist, as Luther had established according to the Scriptures. The Iowans said that the Scriptures just were not clear on these questions and called them "open questions", "theological problems", on which a person might have his own opinion without being guilty of holding to false doctrine.

Against such teachers Dr. Walther of the Missouri Synod led his synod into taking a firm stand. In respect to the Antichrist, he affirmed that the prophecies give such a complete and accurate description as they do of the Roman papacy, we must call white, white and black, black.

While these differences between the Syn. Conf. and the Iowa Synod (member of A.L.C.) continued, various attempts were made at reconciling them on the basis of God's Word, but with no success. In 1932 Missouri in its "Brief Statement" still staunchly upheld the view of the Syn. Conference. In 1938 the "Declaration" of the A.L.C. still held, however, that these teachings (mentioned above) are open to various interpretations.

Then came the so-called "Doctrinal Affirmation" drawn up by the representatives of both the A.L.C. and the Mo. Synod. It represented a reversal of the clear position for which Mo. had so long contended. The Roman papacy was simply called "a fulfillment" of Scriptural prophecies on the Antichrist, not necessarily the fulfillment, and the statement was furthermore called "a historical judgment", as Iowa had always contended.

Though the Mo. Synod did not accept the "Affirmation", there was good reason for concern over the fact that such a document should even have appeared in print. }

In the second paragraph of Art. XII of the Common Confession, we find these words: "are still clearly discernible in the Roman papacy, -----." Here is a disappointing lack of clearness. Because of the insertion of the word "still", the meaning could be this: Up to 1951 the Roman papacy fits the picture drawn by the Word of God, but will it continue to do so during the next century?

The last sentence of this paragraph, as far as it goes, speaks a clear language with which we can heartily agree. However, we cannot overlook an essay accepted by the Iowa District of the A.L.C. four years ago and published in the Wartburg Seminary Quarterly. In one form or another this essay upholds the old false teachings concerning the Last Things and even labels our position as "a prefabricated interpretation ----- a violence to God's Word." Though it might be said with some justification that we are not now considering the viewpoints and teachings of individual members within the A.L.C. but the Common Confession on its own merits, it seems reasonable to suppose that even this last sentence of Art. XII, is not being understood in certain sections of A.L.C. as we understand it.