

7. The Lutheran Doctrine of the Inspiration
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THE LUTHERAN DOCTRINE OF THE INSPIRATION

author unknown

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Synod of Wisconsin and Other States

NWC

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August 2 - 9, 1939

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MISCELLANEOUS RESOLUTIONS

1. The matter of the adoption of the Constitution of the Synodical Conference was referred to the districts for discussion at their next conventions and to the Joint Synod for action at its next convention.
2. By rising vote the convention honored the sixty years' service in the Church of Prof. Aug. Pieper.
3. The budget of \$435,715.89 for each year of the new biennium was adopted.
4. The delegates elected by the districts for the convention of the Synodical Conference were endorsed as the delegates of the Joint Synod.
5. A vote of thanks was extended to the local housing committee, the congregation of St. Mark's for the use of its church, and the women of the local congregations for their assistance in serving meals to the delegates.

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CONCLUSION

At 6:15 o'clock, Wednesday evening, August 9, the convention adjourned with prayer by the General President, and with the singing of the common doxology.

We repeat the closing words of the President: "In a convention of this kind there are represented as many Old Adams as individuals. When sinners can thus, in harmony and with success, work together and deliberate upon matters which often involve the giving up of their own inclination and sacrifice of their own opinions, without violation of the Truth for which they stand, this is proof for the fact that the Holy Spirit is among us. Soon many miles will again separate us at our various spots of duty. But let us cheerfully go home and work. And when misgivings assail us as to certain matters which may be reported to us about our brethren, let us call back to mind the days when we sat here at Watertown and found that all of us have but one common interest at heart, to serve the cause of our Savior. And may the Holy Spirit bridge the gap of miles that separate us and unite us in the great work which we still have to do."

KARL F. KRAUSS, *Secretary*.

Lansing, Michigan, September 23, 1939.

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The Lutheran Doctrine of the Inspiration

Anyone studying the theological literature of the Synodical Conference as it appeared during the years 1886-1890 will notice that the doctrine concerning the inspiration of the Scriptures played a large part in the discussions of those days. The controversy had been caused by such men as Tholuck, Kahnis, von Hofmann, Volk, Theo. Harnack, and many other German theologians, some of whom were members of the supposedly Lutheran faculties of Dorpat and Erlangen. These men were unanimous in their declaration that the old doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible as taught by the Lutheran theologians of the 16th and 17th century had to be abandoned. At best one could only speak of the inspiration of "Das Schriftganze," "the Scriptures as a Whole," or "the Totality of the Scriptures." Inspiration could be claimed for such statements only as pertained directly to our salvation. Inerrancy could not be claimed for the Scriptures as far as they referred merely to historical, numerical, geographical, and other secular matters.

The men who in those days rose in our midst in public defense of the scriptural and, therefore, Lutheran doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible were such men as D. Walther, D. Stoeckhardt, D. Franz Pieper, D. Hoenecke, and D. A. L. Graebner.

During the last few years the inspiration of the Bible has again come to the forefront of discussion among the Lutherans of America. The efforts to bring about unity among the divided Lutheran bodies of our land have brought this on. We have had a part in these efforts. We delegated representatives to the so-called "Intersynodical Committee," consisting of representatives of the synods of Missouri, Wisconsin, Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo, whose sessions were held at regular intervals during the years 1918-1928. In the course of its doctrinal discussions this committee also framed a confessional paragraph on "The Scriptures." It is incorporated in the "Intersynodical or Chicago Theses" so called because adopted in Chicago in 1928. The first part of that paragraph reads as follows: "We pledge adherence to the Holy Scriptures as the only source and norm of doctrine and faith (2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 19-21). Over against modern theology we maintain, now as formerly, the doctrine of the verbal inspiration (1 Cor. 2, 13; 2 Tim. 3, 16). We believe and confess that Scripture not only contains God's Word, but is God's Word, and hence no errors or contradictions of any sort are found therein."

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This paragraph had been adopted after a very brief discussion, as there seemed to be absolute unanimity among the members of the committee as to its contents and terminology. It is reported, however, that when a few years later the merger of the synods of Ohio, Iowa, and Buffalo — now called the American Lutheran Church — was to be brought about, the confessional paragraph on "The Inspiration of the Scriptures" proved quite a stumbling block in the discussions. The paragraph finally adopted avoids the term "verbal inspiration" (Quart. 1939, April, p. 147).

The "Inspiration of the Scriptures" was the rock upon which foundered the meetings of the commissioners of the United Lutheran Church and those of the Missouri Synod.

But the commissioners of the United Lutheran Church and those of the American Lutheran Church have arrived at an agreement in regard to "Inspiration." It is submitted in "The Pittsburgh Agreement," adopted at Pittsburgh in February, 1939. Its essential paragraph reads: "During recent years the greatest stumbling block to agreement has been the matter of the inspiration of the Scriptures. With regard to the following statement, however, the two commissions were in complete accord:

'By virtue of a unique operation of the Holy Spirit by which He supplied to the Holy Writers content and fitting word the separate books of the Bible are related to one another, and taken together, constitute a complete, errorless, unbreakable whole of which Christ is the center.'" This so-called agreement, however, is so plainly unionistic and evasive in its terminology that it gives comfort to and provides a hiding place for the old errors that our fathers fought so valiantly in the late eighties. Such agreements are also one of the signs of our time that Christians should observe (Matt. 16, 3). A renewed discussion of the "Inspiration of the Scriptures" surely is timely. May God through His Holy Spirit also make it *profitable* to all.

In presenting "The Lutheran Doctrine Concerning the Inspiration of the Scriptures" I shall stress such points chiefly as are now at issue among the Lutheran church bodies of our land.

We shall discuss the subject under the following four heads:

1. The *purpose* of the Scripture, given by the inspiration of God.
2. The meaning of "Inspiration."
3. May we, and must we speak of "*Verbal Inspiration*," and can such "Inspiration" be called "mechanical"?
4. Does "Inspiration" pertain only to matters which, in the estimation of men, are directly concerned with our salvation, our Christian faith and life?

1. The Purpose of the Scriptures, Given by the Inspiration of God

The *chief* purpose for which the Holy Scriptures were given by the inspiration of God is clearly stated by the apostle Paul in 2 Tim. 3, 15: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, *which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.*" Paul makes a similar statement to the Corinthians when he says (1 Cor. 15, 3): "For I delivered unto you *first of all* that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures." Peter in his sermon before Cornelius gave expression to the same truth, saying (Acts 10, 43): "To Jesus of Nazareth give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." And long before the apostles had written this, Christ had said to the Jews (John 5, 39): "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." *Christ is the center of the Scriptures.* That should not need stressing among Lutherans.

And it is the chief purpose of the Scriptures to reveal that Christ to sinful men as their Savior from sin, the author of their salvation, their source of life eternal, that believing on Him they might have life through His name. Scripture has achieved this purpose in every one who puts his trust in Christ. We who have come to believe in Him *have life*: we have been born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever (1 Pet. 1, 23). By turning to Christ we have done the will of the Father, and *we know* that this doctrine is of God (John 7, 17). The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God (Rom. 8, 16). *We are men of God.*

It is for these men of God, the Christians, that the Scriptures have another purpose. The apostle does not only say that the Scriptures are to make us wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, but he adds (2 Tim. 3, 16, 17), "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." The man of God is to be fitted out, equipped for every good work. It is the purpose of the Scripture to supply that equipment. It is able to do so, because it is God-inspired. It supplies the equipment by being profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

For the purpose of this discussion I shall restrict myself to the first two statements regarding the profitableness of the Scrip-

tures: First, they are profitable or useful for doctrine or teaching. All the divine truth that men need for their own instruction or that of others is found in the Scriptures. Second, they are profitable for reproof or rather refutation. Every religious lie, falsehood, and fiction can be refuted or overthrown with the Scriptures.

And now take note, what an abundance of teaching there is in the Bible concerning itself. Next to speaking of Him who is the personal Word of God, the Logos, the Scripture, perhaps, speaks of nothing more than it does of itself: its origin, power, authority, and preciousness. What we need for teaching "the Inspiration of the Scriptures" is provided in the Scriptures. We need not look for support in long-winded human arguments, or sharp human conclusions. And every error in regard to the Scripture and its inspiration can be refuted with Scripture itself.

2. The Meaning of "Inspiration"

The word "Inspiration" is based on a New Testament expression taken from 2 Tim. 2, 16; but the fact of the "Inspiration" is established throughout the Old Testament Scriptures.

How did they come to be written? We shall let the different portions of the Old Testament give the answer. The Jews, and Jesus with them, summarized the Old Testament as consisting of "The Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms" (Luke 24, 44).

Let us first speak of the "Law of Moses." Hearing the name "Law of Moses" we are, of course, inclined first of all to think of laws, commandments, and statutes. But the "Law of Moses," in Hebrew, the Thora, the Five Books of Moses, or the Pentateuch, did not only contain laws. Through the Thora, meaning *instruction, Unterweisung*, there run like a golden thread the promises concerning the Seed of the Woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Shilo of Israel, the Star out of Jacob, the Prophet like unto Moses: all of them gracious promises of a coming Savior. The Thora contains law, statutes, and commandments, but also much of sacred history, and some songs or sacred poetry. How did all these come to be written; who is the author, who the writer? Let the Thora itself give the answer.

Soon after Israel left Egypt under the leadership of Moses, they were forced to battle Amalek. The foe was vanquished, and we read (Exodus 17, 14): "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven." *God spake, Moses wrote*, the history of

the battle, and the prophecy concerning the future punishment of Amalek.

Again, God wanted to give laws and ordinances for the government of his people. How did these come to pass? We read (Ex. 20, 21, 22 and Ex. 21, 1): "And Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was. And the Lord said unto Moses, These are the judgments which thou shalt set before them." These judgments are given in chapters 21, 22, and 23 of Exodus. Exodus 24, 4 then adds: "And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." We repeat, the Lord spoke, Moses wrote.

When more laws were given, this is reported as follows (Exodus 34, 27): "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."

Besides receiving many laws, Israel *journeyed*. One record regarding these journeyings is found in Num. 33, 2: "And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the Lord: and these are their journeys according to their goings out." And then there follows what Moses wrote: 34 verses of names of encampments. God commanded, and Moses wrote: a long, long list of names.

The life of Moses was drawing to its close; Joshua has already been appointed to be the new leader of the people. What then transpired is told in these words (Deut. 31, 9-13): "And Moses wrote this law and delivered it unto the priests the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, When all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn, and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: And that their children, which have not known any thing, may hear, and learn to fear the Lord your God, as long as ye live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

But there was still a song to be written before Moses dies. In Deut. 31, 16, 19 and 22 we read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Behold thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel." The song

is given in chapter 32, 1-43. It begins, "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." And it ends, "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people; for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people."

And now we come to the last record regarding the writing of the "Law of Moses," Deut. 31, 24, 25, 26: "And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee."

Such being the origin of the "Law of Moses," the "Thora," is it any wonder that God should say to Joshua (Joshua 1, 8): "This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success"? Or that David should admonish his son, Solomon (1 Kings 2, 2, 3): "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and withersoever thou turnest thyself"?

Does it seem strange, that throughout the rest of the Old Testament there should be about 200 references to this "Thora of Moses," and that the man is called blessed whose delight is in the Law of the Lord and who meditates in that Law day and night? To the Holy Writers of the Old Testament the "Thora" was the Word of the Lord, given by the hand of Moses, His servant (Neh. 8, 8 and 9, 14).

We have gone in great detail into the question of how "The Law of Moses," the "Thora," came to be written; and that for reasons that will become more apparent as we progress in our essay. We may now speak of the authorship and the writers of "The Prophets" and of "The Psalms" more briefly.

In regard to "The Prophets" there is no other thought expressed in their writings than that the writers spoke and wrote the very words that God gave them. Let me quote from "Fundamentals," Vol. 7, page 30: "We find Isaiah saying, 'Hear the

word of the Lord' (Isa. 1, 10) and no fewer than twenty times does he explicitly declare that his writings are the 'words of the Lord.' Almost one hundred times does Jeremiah say, 'The word of the Lord came unto me,' or declare he was uttering the 'words of the Lord,' and the 'word of the living God.' Ezekiel says that his writings are the 'words of God' quite some sixty times. Here is an example: 'Son of man, all My words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. And go get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, 'Thus saith the Lord God' (Ezek. 3, 10, 11). Daniel said, 'And when I heard the voice of His words' (Dan. 10, 9). Hosea said, 'The word of the Lord' (Hosea 1, 1). The word of the Lord that came to Joel' (Joel 1, 1). Amos said, 'Hear the word of the Lord' (Amos 3, 1).

"Obadiah said, 'Thus saith the Lord God' (Oba. 1, 1). 'The word of the Lord came unto Jonah' (Jonah 1, 1). 'The word of the Lord that came to Micah' (Micah 1, 1). Nahum said, 'Thus saith the Lord' (Nah. 1, 12). Habakkuk wrote, 'The Lord answered me and said' (Hab. 2, 2). 'The word of the Lord which came to Zephaniah' (Zeph. 1, 1). "Came the word of the Lord by Haggai the Prophet" (Hag. 1, 1). 'Came the word of the Lord unto Zechariah' (Zech. 1, 1). "The word of the Lord to Israel by Malachi' (Mal. 1, 1): And in this last of the Old Testament book, is it twenty-four times said, "Thus saith the Lord."

That the words of the Lord were not only to be preached but also written is expressed by the prophet Jeremiah in this manner: "Take thee a roll of a book, and write therein all the words that I have spoken unto thee against Israel, and against Judah, and against all the nations, from the day I spake unto thee, from the days of Josiah, even unto this day" (Jer. 36, 2).

Whether we count Daniel as belonging with the other prophets or among the books numbered with "The Psalms," as did the Jews, his words regarding his own book are plain enough as we see from Dan. 12, 4: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased."

According to the Jewish grouping of the Books of the Bible the portion called "Psalms" or "The rest of the Books" included beside some historical books especially those we commonly term poetical. We have already heard of the origin of the song that Moses wrote. What of the songs of the other Holy Singers? Let him speak to whom are ascribed so many of the Psalms: "Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, The Spirit

of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me." (2 Sam. 23, 1-3).

We have so far heard the testimony of the Old Testament writers in regard to the origin of their writings. Their unanimous claim is: Our words are the Word of God.

But that is their own witness. What of the testimony of Him who was born and came into this world to bear witness unto the truth, and who said of Himself: "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak"? (John 12, 49, 50).

Christ had to accuse the Jews of many things, but He never accuses them of having tampered with the text or the Books of the Scriptures. He acknowledges their Holy Scriptures. His word is: "*They have Moses and the prophets*, let them hear them" (Luke 16, 29). Nor does He raise any doubts as to the acknowledged writers: The Law or the Thora he ascribes to Moses; David's name he connects with the Psalms; the prophecies of Isaiah are attributed to Isaiah, and those of Daniel to Daniel. But above all does He uphold the Holy Writers in the claim that their words are the Word of God, given to them of God. Christ makes it very plain that when He quotes the Old Testament Scripture He is not quoting *human* authorities. While He admits that the fourth commandment was transmitted to the Jews by Moses, He leaves no doubt as to the real author of that commandment. In Mark 7, 9, 10 He says: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death."

To establish His deity Jesus quotes a psalm of David, the 110th, and states that in that Psalm David spoke "in Spirit," which may well be translated: moved or guided by the Spirit or in German, "Auf Anregen und Eingeben des Heiligen Geistes."

But the use that He makes of the Scriptures best shows that to Him they are the Word of the Father whose will He came to do. In the great temptation of the desert they are His guide, support, and all-powerful weapon. They are His guideposts on His last journey to Jerusalem where all *must* be fulfilled that was spoken by the prophets, not because Moses and Isaiah have so decreed, but because through them and their writings there is revealed the gracious will of the Father. And being the Word of His Father, the Scriptures cannot be broken, no, not in one

word (John 10, 35); Moses and the prophets must be fulfilled, and that in every jot and tittle. His word is: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled" (Matt. 5, 17, 18). To Christ, Holy Scripture and the Word of God were interchangeable terms. He not only says: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them," but also, "Blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." Therefore, with phrases like "It is written," "Have you not read," He constantly points men to the Scriptures. It is said that Jesus quotes them or alludes to them in over 400 places. We may summarize as the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ: *In the Scriptures God speaks and writes through the Holy Writers.*

And as Christ, so the Apostles. What is their answer to the question: How did the Scriptures come to be written? The very first quotation found in the New Testament gives the complete answer. In Matt. 1, 22 we read: "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet." In this text there are two Greek prepositions involved: *from* (God), and *by* (the prophet). The one used with God *Υπο*, meaning of, from, the German "von," states the original source of the prophecy; the other: *Dia*, meaning through, or by, the German "durch," stating the instrument or medium through which the prophecy comes. For illustration I might say: You receive a letter "Υπο," from, the head of a business house, but "Dia," through or by, his stenographer. God speaking "by the prophets" is the constant New Testament term for Old Testament quotations. We could cite scores of such examples, five alone from the first two chapters of Matthew.

Acts 1, 16 states the same truth with a slight variation: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, *which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas*, which was guide to them that took Jesus." The New Testament writers were so steeped in the idea that in the Scripture God is speaking, that they speak of it as though it were a person, God Himself. In Gal. 3, 8 we read: "And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." And in Rom. 9, 17 we read as follows: "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth."

And all that we so far have heard of the Scriptures the Holy Spirit through the apostle Paul pours into one expression, found

in 2 Tim. 3, 16, the Greek word "theopneustos," meaning God-breathed, God-inspired, in German "Gott-gehaucht," "von Gott eingegeben." In verse 15 of that chapter the apostle had spoken to Timothy of the Holy Writings he had learned in his youth. There was no doubt in the mind of the apostle nor in that of Timothy as to where these "Holy Writings" were. The Apostle once said: "To the Jews were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. 3, 2). For Paul and Timothy "The Holy Writings" were comprized in "The Thora, the Prophets, and the Psalms, our present-day Old Testament." And referring to these, in Verse 16, he says: Every God-breathed, God-inspired Scripture is also profitable for doctrine, for reproof, etc. He speaks of the "Holy Writings" individually, let us say he has in mind the individual books of the Thora, or the "Prophet Isaiah" or whatever the name of that "Scripture" might be, and to one and all he applies the term "Theopneustos, God-breathed, Gott-gehaucht." For the apostle Paul a writing is either inspired or not inspired. He knows of no writings that are partly inspired, or of which he speaks "as far as they are inspired." If any writing is to be counted among "The Holy Writings" it is so counted because it is in toto, completely, "God-inspired." Inspiration of that mysterious "Schriftganze," "The Scripture taken as a Whole" or "The Totality of Scripture" certainly finds no support in 2 Tim. 3, 16.

Peter has a similar summarizing statement concerning the origin of the Old Testament. It is given in 2 Pet. 1, 19-21. He, too, in that context has been speaking of the Old Testament Scriptures, calling it "The Prophetic Word." Then he continues in 2 Pet. 1, 20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Literally translated the last phrase reads: But of the Holy Ghost being carried along, spoke the men of God. The word used to describe the action of the Holy Spirit means to carry, to bear. "Getragen vom Heiligen Geist" would be the closest German translation. No one thing needed for the prophecy came out of the will of man. The Holy Spirit provided everything: Provided the urge to write, provided the prophetic thought and carried the prophet into using the right word for its expression. The Holy Spirit is the real author of the prophecies; the Holy Writers are only the God-supported but *personal* instruments for speaking and writing.

While these two passages are still fresh in our memory it is perhaps best to hear how one of the teachers at the first seminary of the Wisconsin Synod, the Dr. A. L. Graebner, speaks of Inspiration in his "Outlines on Doctrinal Theology," page 5: "The

Bible was written by divine inspiration inasmuch as the inspired penmen performed their work as the personal organs of God, especially of the Holy Spirit, who not only prompted and actuated them toward writing what they wrote, but also suggested to them both the thoughts and the words they uttered as they wrote."

But what of the inspiration of the New Testament? Our faith in a God-inspired New Testament rests firmly on the Word of the Lord as it comes to us in the promises of Christ and the assurances of the Holy Spirit through the Apostles and the New Testament writers.

On the evening of Easter Day the Risen Christ gave this commission to His disciples: "As my Father has sent me, so send I you." For their task they shall not lack equipment, for Jesus added: "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." That had always been Christ's promise: The Holy Ghost will enable you to fulfill every God-appointed task. He will be your defense in persecution: "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you" (Matt. 10, 19, 20). The Holy Spirit is to equip them to become the *teachers* of the church for the ages to come (John 14, 26 and John 16, 13). "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall *teach* you all things, and *bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* And he *will shew you things to come.*"

What the Lord promised, the Apostles experienced, and testify of it. Men carp at verbal inspiration, even Lutherans shy at the expression. But what would you call that which happened to the disciples on the day of Pentecost when they were filled with the Holy Ghost and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance? On that day the Holy Ghost even provided a new vocabulary, and the grammar to go with it, to speak the wonderful works of God. On that day no one said, "Oh, how mechanical! What a degradation for the Apostles that the Holy Spirit should even supply every word." That day many were amazed and marveled.

After that event it is the unanimous claim of the Holy Writers of the New Testament *that as God had given His word to the prophets so had they received God's Word and Gospel of the Holy Ghost that they might preach and write it.*

As the prophets, so the Apostle, says St. Paul: "Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures)" (Rom. 1, 1, 2).

The Apostles' word, the very Word of God: For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2, 13).

Revealed to the Apostles of the Holy Ghost: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things; yea, the deep things of God" (1 Cor. 2, 10).

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" (1 Tim. 4, 1).

Revealed to the Apostles in the Spirit's words: "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Cor. 2, 12, 13).

For the Apostles to preach and to write: "Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or by epistle" (2 Thess. 2, 15).

"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord" (1 Cor. 14, 37).

With all this Peter is in full agreement as a few of his statements will strikingly show:

1 Pet. 1, 10-12: Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

1 Pet. 1, 25: "But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

2 Pet. 3, 1-3: "This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance: That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Savior: Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts."

Verses 15, 16: "Even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things."

Add to this the testimony of St. John:

"But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20, 31).

"That which was from the beginning, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you,* that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. *And these things write we unto you,* that your joy may be full" (1 John 1, 1-4).

"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches" (Rev. 1, 10, 11).

Well may John close the Book with these words: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen." Rev. 22, 18-21.

What Christ had promised, the Apostles found fulfilled: the Spirit taught them all things, he brought to remembrance all things whatsoever Jesus had said unto them (think of the sermon on the mount, the lengthy discourses and prayers of Christ in the Gospel of St. John!) and showed them things to come. Summing it all up we say: the New Testament, the same as the Old Testament, was written by men of God, whose writings were God-inspired and therefore "Holy Scriptures," to whom apply the words of Paul in Tim. 3, 15-17. And they are the last of "Holy Scriptures," we need no others, and expect no others: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son" (Heb. 1, 1, 2).

This might close our discussion; but errorists of old and of

modern times will not permit it. They force upon us the discussion of our next point.

3. May We, and Must We Speak of "Verbal Inspiration," "Wort-Inspiration," and Can Such Inspiration Be Called "Mechanical"?

In 1928 the representatives of the synods now united in the American Lutheran Church confessed, together with the representatives of the Synodical Conference, the "verbal inspiration of the Scriptures" (Cf. Chicago Theses, Par. on "Scriptures").

Since 1928 the American Lutheran Church or its representatives have avoided the term "verbal inspiration" in every one of their confessional declarations (Cf. The Constitution of the American Lutheran Church; The Minneapolis Theses; The Declaration; The Pittsburgh Agreement).

While it must be admitted that the term "verbal inspiration" (the same as some other terms used in the history of the church, such as "Holy Trinity," the "Triune God"; Homouosios, Homoi-ousios) is not used in the Scripture just in that form, the truth involved in that term is a Scriptural truth that must be upheld against all gainsayers.

The Lutheran and other Christian teachers who use the term "verbal inspiration" (Verbalinspiration oder Wortinspiration, not Wörter-Inspiration) do so in order to express their firm faith, based on the Scripture, that every word and expression used in the original Scripture is the inerrant, infallible, unalterable Word of God, so given to the Holy Writers by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

Christ and His apostles have so taught us by the manner in which they appeal to individual words and expressions. When Jesus tried to convince the Jews that the Christ is more than just the human son of David, he took His Scriptural proof from Psalm 110, where David calls the coming Christ "My Lord" (Matt. 22, 42-45). It is Christ's express word that the Holy Spirit had put that very term "My Lord" into the heart and pen of David to prophesy for all times that Jesus Christ is not only a man, but the Lord and God of David and of all men. Similarly does Jesus lay stress on the word "gods" as used in Psalm 82, 6. We read in John 10, 34. 35. 36: "Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken; Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"

In this matter of making an appeal to an individual word or

expression used by a Holy Writer the apostle Paul followed in his master's footsteps. In Gal. 3, 16 an argument hinges on the use of the plural of a noun: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

To Christ and His apostles every word and expression of the Scriptures was a God-given word and expression. Our Lutheran and other Christian teachers say, Christ and the apostles teach: *verbal inspiration*.

It is against this doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible that the Modernists — and some of them so-called Lutherans — direct their fiercest darts. Because the old dogmatists of the 16th and the 17th century had spoken of the Holy Writers as the penmen of God, the scribes and notaries of the Holy Ghost, they accuse them of teaching a "mechanical" inspiration, one that degrades the Holy Writers to mere writing machines. Especially did they pounce on the expression: "Scripture came by the 'dictation' of the Holy Ghost."

Dr. Stoeckhardt has given these men their answer as long ago as 1886, an answer that might well be studied and pondered by our theologians of today. In the 19th century one of the most outspoken critics of "verbal inspiration" was Dr. Kahnis. In derision of that doctrine he had asked the question: "Am I to believe that Luke wrote his gospel by the dictation of the Holy Ghost?" Stoeckhardt says (*Lehre und Wehre*, 1886, pp. 282, 283):

"So kann man nur fragen, wenn man den orthodoxen Lehrern eine kindische, grob sinnliche Vorstellung von dem Diktat des Heiligen Geistes beimisst. Das Diktieren des Heiligen Geistes war kein mechanisches Vorsprechen, dem ein mechanisches Nachschreiben zur Seite gegangen wäre. Die heiligen Menschen Gottes haben nicht geschlafen und geträumt, da sie redeten, da sie schrieben, getrieben von dem Heiligen Geist. Ihr Innerstes, Wille und Verstand, war dabei in Bewegung. Sie haben eben wirklich geredet, geschrieben. Und das ist eine vernünftige Tätigkeit vernünftiger Personen. Sie haben bei dem Schreiben die gemein menschliche Weise eingehalten, haben sich der Mittel bedient, die sonst auch Schriftsteller zu gebrauchen pflegen. Lucas hat allerdings, da er die Geschichten, so in Israel ergangen waren, die Taten Christi, berichten wollte, zuvor alles von Anbeginn genau erkundet, wie er selbst Luk. 1, 1-4 bezeugt. Matthäus, Johannes, welche Augen- und Ohrenzeugen gewesen waren, hatten das, was sie gesehen und gehört, gar wohl in ihrem Gedächtnis, als sie ihre Evangelien verfassten. Die Apostel haben bei ihren Schriften einen bestimmten Plan und Zweck verfolgt. Matthäus wollte in seinem Evangelium dartun, dass Christus die Weissagung des

Alten Bundes erfüllt habe. Johannes hat in seinem Evangelium den Beweis geführt, dass Jesus Christus sei der Sohn Gottes, der Welt Heiland. Also nicht nur der Griffel, auch der Geist der heiligen Scribenten war bei der Entstehung der heiligen Schriften in Tätigkeit.

“Aber bei dem allen wurden sie von dem Heiligen Geist getrieben, getragen (*pheromenoi*). Der Heilige Geist hat diesen ganzen Apparat, das menschliche Forschen, Denken, Disponieren, in Bewegung gesetzt, in seinen Dienst genommen, zum Medium seiner Wirksamkeit, seines Redens gemacht. Nicht die Griffel, mit denen Propheten und Apostel das Papier oder Pergament beschrieben, nein, die Propheten und Apostel selbst, die lebendigen Personen mit ihrem Willen, Denken, Forschen, Concipiren waren Griffel, *calami*, des Heiligen Geistes. Der Heilige Geist hat sie, da sie schrieben, nicht etwa nur vor Irrtum bewahrt oder ihr Schreiben etwa nur auf ein gewisses Ziel hingeleitet, nein, unter dem Forschen, Denken, Schreiben hat der Geist Gottes seine himmlische Weisheit, die ewigen Gottesgedanken, und auch die rechten Worte an die Hand gegeben, gleichsam unter der Hand ihnen eingegeben. Das ist's, was die Alten mit der *suggestio rerum et verborum* meinen. Es liegt auch hier ein unbegreifliches Geheimnis vor, das der menschliche Verstand nicht lichten kann. Dass der Heilige Geist der eigentliche Autor der Schrift ist und durch die Propheten und Apostel geredet hat, glauben und bekennen wir nach der Schrift. Das Wie? aber ist verborgen. Wie es bei der Inspiration hergegangen ist, wie der Heilige Geist das Seine den heiligen Menschen vermittelt hat, können wir nicht ergründen. Kein Mensch hat in diese Werkstatt des Heiligen Geistes hineingesehen. Wir haben genug an dem schliesslichen Resultat, an dem Wort der Propheten und Apostel, welches wahrhaftig Gottes Wort ist. Daran hängt unser Glaube, unsere Seligkeit.”

So answered Dr. Stoekhardt, and Dr. Hoenecke spoke in a similar vein as may be seen from his *Dogmatik*, Vol. I, page 344.

That the Holy Writers were not mere writing-machines, becomes evident enough from looking at a few of their Scriptures.

In Gal. 1, 8:9, the apostle writes: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.” Surely, that is God's curse directed against the perverters of His Gospel. But has any one in the whole history of the church believed that it was only the *hand* of Paul that wrote these words? Is it not evident from the very words that Paul's own conviction, emotion, and soul find expression in that curse?

Or take another Scripture by St. Paul, 2 Cor. 2, 4: “For out of much anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you.” Paul wrote this, moved by the Holy Ghost, but he did not write it mechanically, the apostle *was* in deep anguish while writing. 1 Cor. 13 is conceded to be among the loftiest things that have ever been penned by the hand of man. We Christians are convinced that only God could inspire these words: “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing” (1 Cor. 13, 1-3). But is it possible for you to believe that anyone could in all sincerity accuse the Lutheran dogmaticians of the 16th and 17th century of having held the opinion that Paul wrote Corinthians Thirteen merely *mechanically* by the dictation of the Holy Ghost? Paul certainly wrote that chapter as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, but no one who believes in verbal inspiration has ever held the opinion that it was only his *hand* that wrote.

Or let us turn to another spiritual poem, taken from the Old Testament, Psalm 45, 1:2: “My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Thou art fairer than the children of men: grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.” Only God could so prophesy of that eternal King and His Bride, the church. But body and soul were wrapped up in the writing of the Psalm. Inspiration is verbal inspiration, but it certainly is not mechanical. And until some one has found a better expression for confessing the truth involved in that term, just so long must we contend for the “verbal inspiration of the Scripture.” The Pittsburgh agreement certainly is not a clear confession of the truth that every word of Holy Writ is inspired of God.

4. Does “Inspiration” Pertain Only to Matters Which, in the Estimation of Men, are Directly Concerned With Our Salvation, Our Christian Faith and Life?

There are theologians who believe that distinction must be made in regard to matters contained in the Scriptures as to their inspiration. They say that inspiration could not be claimed for

all statements contained in the Scriptures. As late as last summer the head of the United Lutheran Church stated in a sermon preached before that church body: "The crucial difference, developed in recent discussions, rests in the matter of a verbal inspiration of an original text of the Scriptures (which of course does not exist) including every numerical, geographical, historical, or other purely secular statement." It seems a fair inference to conclude that the head of the United Lutheran Church is on the side of those who believe, and, I suppose, teach that inspiration can not be claimed for all geographical, historical and other merely secular statements contained in the Scripture.

We are, of course, all agreed that the Scriptures were not given to make us wise in secular history, geography, and other merely secular matters. The Scriptures are God-inspired to make us wise unto salvation. They are, however, also profitable for doctrine, that is for spiritual instruction and learning. And this spiritual learning is intimately connected with matters in the Scriptures that men would term "merely historical geographical and secular." For it is just in reference to such spiritual instruction and learning Paul says in Rom. 15, 4: "For *whatsoever things* were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." All that is written in the Scripture, no matter what its nature may be, is written for our learning. Nothing is excluded. There is nothing in the Bible that is *merely* historical, geographical, or *merely* secular. All has been written by the inspiration of God for the purpose of our spiritual instruction and comfort, although our blind eyes may not in every case notice the intended instruction.

It is very apparent from the Scriptures that God has drawn upon things from sacred history for our learning and comfort. God commanded Moses to write the story of the battle with Amalek. In that story we read of the extended arms of Moses, the supporting arms of Aaron and Hur until the final victory is attained. We also read of the curse that comes upon those who oppose God's people. Then there is the record, written upon the express command of God, about Israel's journeyings, that long, long list of geographical names, so difficult to pronounce and almost impossible to remember. But among those names is Elim with its ten fountains of water and its threescore and ten palm trees. What instruction Jesus knew to draw from the Bible's histories including their geographical reference He draws on the story of the creation of Adam and Eve to teach us about marriage. For their warning he reminds men of the days when Noah entered the ark or when Lot left the city of Sodom, doomed for

destruction. He calls upon the men of Nineveh and the queen of the South for witnesses against the evil and adulterous generation of His day. In defense of His disciples He reminds the Pharisees of what David did when he was an hungered, how he entered the house of God and did eat the shewbread. But above all does He confirm as a God-inspired prophecy that story which so often is the butt of scoffers: the story of Jonah and the whale. We read in Matt. 12, 40: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

In Cor. 10, 1-12 we may read how Paul by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit used the historical statements concerning Israel for our instruction and learning:

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples; and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

There are no "merely historical, geographical, secular statements in the Bible": all is God-inspired record for our learning. And he who would teach us concerning the Scripture to distinguish between things inspired and un-inspired or less-inspired, is not speaking according to the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4, 11). Of the 400 references that Jesus makes to the Old Testament or the 300 that the apostles are said to have made, *which Scripture would he quote?* And surely, he would be a bold Lutheran theologian who would promise to furnish us with a precise list of things historical, geographical, secular, contained in the Scriptures, but not inspired of the Holy Ghost.

For unity in the Lutheran Church of America we need above all unity of confession regarding the Scriptures, the only source

and norm of doctrine and faith. The Church needs a confessional statement regarding the Scriptures that clearly states the truth without ambiguous terms, and clearly condemns all opposing error.

All who are truly Lutheran should have no difficulty in adopting the confessional paragraph on the Scriptures as found in the Chicago Theses, or the "Brief Statement" of our sister synod concerning the Holy Scriptures. The latter reads as follows:

"We teach that the Holy Scriptures differ from all other books in the world in that they are the Word of God. They are the Word of God because the holy men of God who wrote the Scriptures wrote only that which the Holy Ghost communicated to them by inspiration, 2 Tim. 3, 16; 2 Pet. 1, 21. We teach also that the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures is not a so-called "theological deduction," but that it is taught by direct statements of the Scriptures, 2 Tim. 3, 16; John 10, 35; Rom. 3, 2; 1 Cor. 2, 13. Since the Holy Scriptures are the Word of God, it goes without saying that they contain no errors or contradictions, but that they are in all their parts and words the infallible truth, also in those parts which treat of historical, geographical, and other secular matters, John 10, 35.

We reject the doctrine which under the name of science has gained wide popularity in the Church of our day, that Holy Scripture is not in all its parts the Word of God, but in part the Word of God and in part the word of man and hence does, or at least might, contain error. We reject this erroneous doctrine as horrible and blasphemous, since it flatly contradicts Christ and His holy apostles, sets up men as judges over the Word of God, and thus overthrows the foundation of the Christian Church and its faith."

DAS WORT SIE SOLLEN LASSEN STAHN!

Jesu Zeugnis von seiner Person und seinem Werk.

So lautet das mir gestellte Thema, worüber ich vor dieser Versammlung reden soll. Es ist das ein sehr weites Thema, da es, kurz gesagt, alles umfaßt, was Jesus von sich selbst sagt und zeugt. Es kann deshalb leicht zur Weitfchweifigkeit führen. Sollte deshalb der eine oder andere Gedanke, den die Zuhörer in Verbindung mit dem Thema erwarten, fehlen, so deshalb, weil ich mich der Kürze zu befleißigen suchte.

Vorausshiden möchte ich, daß mir Jesu Zeugnis von sich ein dreifaches ist, nämlich: 1. die von ihm selbst über seine Person und sein Werk gemachten Aussagen, 2. Zeugnisse oder Aussagen, die andere von ihm, seiner Person und seinem Werk tun, denen er zustimmt, 3. das, was er von sich, seiner Person und seinem Werk zeugt durch sein Handeln oder Tun.

Diese drei Arten des Selbstzeugnisses Jesu lassen sich nicht auseinanderhalten. Ich mache nur hier einleitend darauf aufmerksam, damit die Versammlung weiß, was ich zum Selbstzeugnis Jesu rechne. Ueber die erste Art brauche ich nichts weiter zu sagen. Betreffs der zweiten Art verweise ich auf Beispiele, als Petri Bekenntnis von Jesu, sodann die an Jesu vor dem Hohen Rat von dem Hohenpriester gerichtete Frage, ob er Christus sei. Betreffs der dritten Art verweise ich auf Jesu Wundertaten, seine Krankenheilungen usw.

Durch das Thema selbst ist mein Vortrag in zwei Teile geteilt:

1. Das Zeugnis Jesu von seiner Person; 2. sein Zeugnis von seinem Werk.

Da es sich um das Selbstzeugnis Jesu, um das handelt, was er selbst von sich in bezug auf sein Werk und seine Person sagt, so bin ich für die Ausarbeitung meines Vortrags auf die vier Evangelien und etliche Verse des 1. Kapitels der Apostelgeschichte als Quellen angewiesen. Die Offenbarung habe ich nicht berücksichtigt. Auch würden durch ihre Benutzung keine neuen Gedanken oder Gesichtspunkte sich ergeben.

1. Jesu Zeugnis von seiner Person.

Jesu Zeugnis von seiner Person ist, kurz gesagt, das, daß er der Gottmensch ist, wahrhaftiger Gott und wahrhaftiger Mensch in einer unzertrennten Person. Das führt von selbst zu einer Teilung in drei Abschnitte: Jesus zeugt von seiner Person, daß er A. wahrhaftiger Gott ist, B. daß er wahrhaftiger Mensch ist und C. daß er der Gottmensch ist, zwei Naturen in einer Person.

A. Jesu zeugt von sich, daß er wahrhaftiger Gott ist. Er tut das sehr oft und viel mit Wort und Tat bis ins einzelste hinein.