

A lutheran who became a LUTHERAN

Jeffrey S. Smith  
Senior Church History  
Professor Fredrich

Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary Library  
11831 N. Seminary Drive. 65W  
Mequon, Wisconsin

On January 2, 1883 Charles Porterfield Krauth a weary over-worked man of not even 60 years quietly breathed his last. The best years of his life had been given to an almost tireless effort on his part to bring the American Lutheran Church to a stance of solid confessionalism in both doctrine and practise. It would certainly be nice to be able to say that his efforts succeeded in his lifetime. It would be nice to say that those who followed him continued the struggle. It would even be nice to say that his church body today at least considers him the hero he rightfully was. But sad to say, his monumental efforts on behalf of Lutheranism are considered irrelevant today. At best he is an interesting historical figure who tried to stem the flow of ecumenicism.

How sad! We say "how sad" not for Krauth for he was a faithful servant of his Lord, but for his church body. For God had given them a rare opportunity. He had raised up a man in their midst who could have led them into the promised land of confessional Lutheranism. He had raised up a man who was willing to take up the Lutheran standard and fight the good fight of faith. He had raised up a man who had a clear understanding of what it meant to be a confessional Lutheran.

But Charles Porterfield Krauth was not always solidly confessional. His theological training at Gettysburg had given him what might be called an "evangelical" rather than a Lutheran start. His fellow pastors ranged from mildly confessional to anti-confessional methodists. And so the Holy Spirit had to do a lot of leading to bring him to the point that he finally reached later in life. And therein lies the purpose of this paper, to trace the theological development of this great theologian. In doing so we hope to see how he first come to grips with the confessional principle and then later how its practical implications for church fellowship became more and more apparent to him.

Charles Porterfield Krauth was born in Martinsburg, Virginia on March 17, 1823. He was the son of a General Synod pastor Charles Phillip Krauth who would achieve some degree of prominence in his own right as Gettysburg Seminary professor and first Pennsylvania College President. The father had no small degree of influence on his son and one can certainly make a good case that considering the times and his training it was a positive early influence when it came to the confessions. For he avoided being carried away by the wave of radical American Lutheranism which promised to discard Lutheranism and instead maintained a certain degree of reverence for the Symbols and writings of the dogmatists. In July 1849 he wrote in the "Evangelical Review" concerning the recent translation of "Schmid's Dogmatik of the Lutheran Church:

Our verdict is unequivocally in behalf of the study, the thorough study of this theology. We would have it thrown over our church with a liberal hand; we would have all our ministers acquainted with the Symbolical

Books; we would have them all versed in the distinctive theology of the Church. We would have introduced into our theological schools the study of the Symbols, and didactic and polemic theology so administered as to bring before the view pure, unadulterated Lutheranism. The gain to our ministry and to our Church would be immense, if this course were adopted. As things are we have no standard, no guide. Everyone is left to fix his own views; and while we presume there is general agreement in our Church on the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, our ministers display, in the opinions they entertain, sometimes a decided Calvinistic influence, sometimes an extreme Arminian, sometimes a Pelegian." (Adolph Spaeth, Charles Porterfield Krauth, 1898, Vol I, p. 22)

The young Krauth entered his college studies in 1834 and quickly developed what was described by one of his room-mates as a "voracious appetite for reading anything that he could get his hands on." (Spaeth p. 30) This tendency would later play an important role in his theological metamorphosis. After finishing college in 1839 he entered the Gettysburg Seminary at the age of 16. He spent the usual two years at the school and in 1841 after being examined was licensed as a preacher of the Gospel by the Synod of Maryland. He took up his first charge in that same year at "The Congregational Church" a small mission in Canton, Maryland adjoining Baltimore.

This church was quite a challenging experience for young Krauth and correspondence regarding this church gives one early insight into the unionistic tendencies of the synod. Regarding this congregation Dr. J.G. Morris, a General Synod Pastor, writes to Krauth's father: "The congregation would not be Lutheran in the beginning, it would be a bare missionary field, and of course none of our distinctive peculiarities could be held prominently forth at the beginning." (Spaeth p. 45) This statement in of itself need not indicate unionism and it could be taken to mean worship forms rather than doctrine, but young Krauth writes to his father:

"There is not to my knowledge one Lutheran in the the congregation, and although I have no reason to think the people are bigoted, I yet anticipated some difficulty from the diversity of opinion which exists among them. There are some few Universalists, and as it is the wish of those by whose influence I am brought here that they should be conciliated and as silence in regard to the points on which they are in error cannot for a moment be thought of, I am not without apprehension of giving offense." (Spaeth, I, p.49)

Here Krauth apparently began to experience the extreme difficulty of trying to be both Lutheran and inclusive.

Early in his ministry Krauth recognized the value of continued study. His letters to his father almost always contained some request for books. His library was ever

expanding. And right from the beginning he disciplined himself to do a daily routine of study which always included work in the original languages.

When he accepted a call to Second English Lutheran Church of Baltimore in 1842 his study continued. His library grew to several hundred volumes including works of Martin Chemnitz. He had gained a particular interest in Hebrew reading which he probably inherited from his Father who taught Old Testament at the Seminary. He also made steady progress in the German language with the goal of having the equivalent skill of his native tongue. But without a doubt it was his daily and systematic exegesis of the Old and New Testament carried on through the years which paved the way for a fruitful investigation of Lutheran theology. Again his father advised him wisely: "Study my dear son, the original languages thoroughly, lean but little on commentators...your great business is not to read a great deal, but to study the Bible as I have again and again instructed you...Would that I have read much less myself and studied more." (Spaeth, I, p. 90)

His years at Second English found him closely following the lax fellowship practises of General Synod churches of his day. For example when his congregation experienced a period of financial difficulty they merged Sunday-schools with a Presbyterian church and jointly occupied a building. And in line with his unionism he related to his father in 1843 that he had preached in a local Methodist congregation. (Spaeth I, pp.79,89)

The Synod of Maryland during those days was disturbed by a struggle which was brewing throughout the General Synod. The synod was experiencing the continuing friction between the "New Measure Men" and the "Symbolists." The state of affairs is typified in 1844 when at a synod meeting some New Measure men the most radical of which was Dr. B Kurtz were assigned to prepare an "Abstract of the Doctrines and Practise of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland." This was no doubt the predecessor to the Definite Platform. Fourteen articles were produced which contradicted the Lutheran Confessions in many ways. In conversion it was Arminian. In the Supper, it argued a spiritual presence. With respect to the confessions, it considered them useful but not "binding" "except where they agreed with the Word of God."

Even though Krauth was a mere 21 years of age, the Lord was not going to leave him on the sidelines. He was about to bring him on another leg of his journey towards a true Lutheran doctrine. At the same synod meeting in 1844, he was appointed to prepare a sermon on the Lutheran view of the Lord's Supper. Here Krauth like Luther ~~was at times~~ was forced to search the Scriptures and all other resources he could put his hands on to investigate the topic.

His study was revealing. His historical research and his observations regarding the state of General Synod beliefs led him to ask the question, "Are we truly Lutherans?" His answer was

lengthy but included this statement, "The truth in regard to American Lutheranism is that beyond a doubt it is a title that has not expressed a unity..." His sermon declares,

"There is not in ecclesiastical testimony one disputed doctrine on which the testimony of the church has varied so little, and has been so continued and so universal as on this that there is a real presence of Christ as distinguished from the spiritual one..." (Spaeth I, p.132)

He also comments on this doctrine's importance in the Lutheran system,

"They are not aware that it is not one question but many, that the view which we have of it materially affects the whole system of religion, and that of the two great questions on which the Reformed and Lutherans divided, the real presence and predestination, this is the more important." (Spaeth, I, p.134)

Krauth had come to a Lutheran understanding but not quite a Lutheran belief. For he wrote to his father regarding his sermon, "I shall never be able to believe in the SUBSTANTIAL presence of Christ's body and blood in, with and under the elements." But note the progress, "my conviction became very clear in the process of investigation, that our views of Christ's presence are tending to the other and far more dangerous extreme, and that for His personal and distinct official character, the disposition is to infuse a vague and Unitarian idea of divine ubiquity." (Spaeth, p.135)

Krauth next entered a pastorate in 1847 of Martinsburg Virginia which was followed quickly in 1848 by a change to Winchester Virginia where he stayed through 1852. This naturally required a change in his synod affiliation to Virginia. During that time he was asked to chair a committee that would consider the Pennsylvania Synod's Liturgy of 1842. They presented an elaborate report to the Virginia Synod which seemed to indicate a continuing growth beyond his piers in appreciation for the doctrines and life of the Lutheran Church of the Reformation. For besides other recommendations that brought back the older forms of the Reformation, they wanted to include the Augsburg Confession and Catechism in the new Church Book. (Spaeth, I, p.155)

During this period, 1847-52, Krauth was very busy in literary activities. This literary work built upon his solid foundation of exegesis of the Scripture in its original languages no doubt continued his progress towards confessionalism. Some publications were translations that indicated that he had progressed to the point in German and Latin of being able to do careful study of the Lutheran fathers. We especially note such publications as: "The Person of Christ" translated from H. Schmid's Dogmatik; "The Relation of our Confessions to the Reformation, and the importance of their Study, with an outline

of the Early History of the Augsburg Confession;" In 1849; "The Articles of Torgau," translated in 1850.

The question has been raised by some as to when significant change began to show itself in Krauth's theology. Various opinions have been offered by friends, relatives and associates. Dr. B.M. Schmucker said that he had been aware of the change already by 1848 and 1849 during their regular study together as pastors. His father indicated his belief that the "Loci of Chemnitz" had instigated the change. But regardless of at what point the changes began, we find Krauth at this point in his life heavily involved with patristic theology, following the course of thought and controversy of the Church through the ages, and already having an intimate knowledge of the words and phrases of the Book of Concord. He was studying the doctrinal disputes of the Reformation, building his library of literature that dealt with the disputes, and "the result at each successive stage was to confirm and deepen the conviction that the whole truth of the authoritative Word was nowhere set forth with such clearness, purity, and fulness as in the collected Confessions of the Lutheran Church..." (Spaeth, I, p.160) He was still a distance away from his destination of Lutheran confessionalism. His inner convictions had not yet worked themselves out. There still existed false notions and contradictions in his views. But he was now on solid ground to begin building his later edifice of Lutheranism.

While Krauth continued a steady growth towards Lutheranism, he also came to see all the more how far many General Synod pastors had departed from the Augsburg Confession and the great latitude his church body tolerated. An article concerning the sacramental presence that he wrote for the Lutheran Observer of June 29, 1849 reveals this quite clearly. First he observes:

"In this complex body (the American Lutheran Church) it is well known that there is diversity of sentiment on the question of Christ's presence in the Eucharist, a diversity not merely verbal but real. Some hold in the most positive form, the doctrine of the Augsburg confession...From this high position there are almost all shades of dissent and descent, not only to that which is popularly called the Zwinglian, and which the Lutheran Observer may be considered the exponent, but yet lower to that which we may call, for want of a better name, Socinian."

Having pointed to the wide degree of divergence, he argues that the truly Lutheran doctrine is that of the Augsburg confession. But then he notes:

"...it is the usual reply that the General Synod binds only in a very loose way, in the Formula suggested: "do you believe that the fundamental doctrines of the Word of God are taught in a manner substantially correct in the doctrinal articles of the Augsburg Confession?"

He insists that all the articles are fundamental. And to show the ridiculousness of those who insist that an article is not fundamental, he makes the point:

"Any member of any denomination in this land, might freely sign our Confession if his opinion of what is fundamental is to be taken as standard."

Little did Krauth fully comprehend at the time that that was in effect the state of things in the General Synod.

Another article printed in the Evangelical Review of October 1849 (and later included in his "Conservative Reformation and Its Theology" pp. 201-214) gives the greatest indication of his new commitment to and high regard for the Confessions. Some quotations that stand out as indicating this commitment follow:

"It is with a solemn and holy delight we have learned to traverse the venerable edifice, which the hands of our fathers have erected in the sixteenth century."

"This much we can safely assert, that those who understand best the theology of the Reformation, have most confidence in it, and the strongest affection for it..."

"But how shall we make ourselves worthy of their respect, and lift ourselves out of the sphere of that pitiful little sectarianism which is crawling continually over all that is churchly and stable? We must begin by knowing ourselves, and being true to that knowledge."

Krauth's eyes were opened, the truth was becoming more clearly defined for him and he was beginning to see what was really important. The doctrines and ambitions of the American Lutherans he now saw as false and dangerous. He writes to his friend Dr. B. Schmucker on June 8, 1849:

Is not the Lutheran Observer (attacking the doctrine of the real presence) of this week infamous? I do declare before God that were I satisfied that such sentiments and such a spirit did characterize our American Lutheran Church and were continuing to be the prevailing tone in it, I would repudiate it, I would hold to our Germanic brethren, or abandon the ministry... (Spaeth I, p.185)

You would think then that when the Definite Platform appeared in September 1855 Krauth would have taken S.S. Schmucker and B. Kurtz to task. You would think that this would have thrust him into action against the American Lutherans. To us today it would seem that he would have thrown up his hands in dismay and have done what he promised to do in the above letter, "repudiate it." But it is very interesting to note that it was his father, Charles Philip Krauth who took the hardest line in the controversy. The younger Krauth took issue with a number of the points expressed in the article but never directly attacked the men who wrote the Platform. And as bad as things looked, he still continued like his father to have high hopes for his

church body. "Israel was forty years in the desert and yet came out. We may never live to see our beloved Church taking full possession of Canaan..." (Spaeth, I, p.376) For both Krauths a split was unthinkable. Conciliation and compromise were still acceptable, although undesirable.

Maybe here a comment is in order on Krauth's personality. He had inherited a very gentle and patient disposition from his father. He was averse to controversy and was highly desirous of peace even if he had to bear up under his adversaries. And perhaps if there is a criticism that can be justly laid at the feet of this great theologian it's that he was too patient with his adversaries. We have to admire his love, his patience and perseverance. And it's easy for us to look back now in judgment on history. But there seems to come a time when the stand must be taken. There seems to come a time when the opponents must part ways. This it appears Krauth was not willing to do unless forced by events.

And so Krauth in a series of articles which appeared in the Missionary from April 30 to May 14, 1857 set forth his views as to how to mend the synod. They revealed that the church body was still more important to him than the solid confession of that body. What was his solution to the problem? Reject the Definite Platform. Keep the Augsburg Confession while not requiring any subscription to the other Confessions. But unify under a "defined" General Synod formula which spoke of "fundamental" articles being "substantially" correct. This he claimed would thereby allow an acceptable degree of latitude in non-fundamentals apart from the Augsburg Confession and certain reservations as to its substance while at the same time avoiding the present formula's abuse. Speaking of the formula he says:

"Thus interpreted, the most devoted friend of the Confession, in all its parts, as well as he who is compelled to make a reservation as to some portions, can freely use the Formula...The church in the United States wants neither Symbolatry nor Schism, neither a German Lutheranism in the exclusive sense nor an American Lutheranism in a separatistic one, but an EVANGELICAL LUTHERANISM broad enough to embrace both...(Spaeth I, p.401)

This is unionism pure and simple. Krauth was attempting to mediate a union based on an ambiguous formula just like Melancthon did after the Reformation. It no doubt encouraged the previously discouraged New Measure men. Years later Krauth would rightly refer to his statements as "well meant but full of inconsistencies brought about by the struggle between the influences of education and the incoming, but yet imperfectly developed, power of a truly consistent Lutheranism." (Spaeth, I, p.380)

Two more times we would see Krauth act as a liberal mediator in behalf of peace and unity in the Synod. He would first stand up for his former Professor Dr. S.S. Schmucker, President of the



Seminary when he was attacked by Dr J.A. Brown for false views on original sin and justification. Again we are amazed at the lengths that Krauth was willing to go to defend this man who held such an important post for influencing future ministers in his Synod. He virtually bent over backwards to put the best construction on Schmucker's writings. And after all, Schmucker had made himself very clear in the Definite Platform.

The next time he would act as a mediator of peace would be at the convention of May 1859 over the issue of admitting the Melancthon Synod. This synod had been organized by B. Kurtz and subscribed to the Augsburg confession in a very limited fashion eliminating and repudiating certain articles in like manner to the Definite Platform. This raised serious reservations in the minds of the conservatives without a portion of whose votes the Melancthon Synod could not be admitted. Initially Krauth strongly opposed the admission. But it occurred to him when the convention deadlocked that it would be grossly inconsistent to reject this synod while others member synods had already thrown out the Augustana for the Definite Platform. And so he acted to avoid a split-up of the General Synod. He offered a resolution to accept the Melancthon Synod which "affectionately requested" that they remove the cause of offense in their constitution. Here even though Krauth seemed to be between a rock and a hard spot, he revealed once more his poorly founded hope in the General Synod. (Spaeth, I, p.412)

In October 1859, Krauth became Pastor of St Mark's church in Philadelphia. This was a congregation consisting mainly of people with other religious backgrounds. It was almost inevitable that some dispute would arise and one did. His pastorette there was marked right away by a dispute over whether he should wear a clerical robe or not. This seemingly trivial issue became a full-fledged dispute over Christian Liberty and later resulted in the secession of a number from the church. The men of the Lutheran Observer could not keep quiet about this dispute and used it to once again get off a skathing attack on certain Lutheran doctrines. This resulted in a number of literary skirmishes between the Observer and Krauth in the Lutheran.

One revealing sidelight before moving on is Krauth's influence on St Mark's. St Mark's was a church which had been born in revival, and belonged to the East Pennsylvania Synod which thought highly of "new measures." But within months of Pastor Krauth's resignation in 1861 this church of diverse backgrounds left the East Pennsylvania Synod for the Pennsylvania Ministerium which by this time had taken on a much more Lutheran character. This seems indicative of some strongly developed convictions in Krauth. (Spaeth, II, p. 24f)

Krauth resigned his Pastorette at St Mark's to take up the editorship of the Lutheran and Missionary. Up until then the only real paper of Eastern Lutheranism was the Lutheran Observer. Because of the radicalism of its editor Benjamin Kurtz who

expressed on numerous occasions his hostility to the Confessions, an urgent need was felt to have a paper which expressed a more conservative Lutheran viewpoint. Other papers had failed to provide any formidable opposition to views of the Observer. But now the Lutheran and Missionary under the able editorship of Krauth would rise to the task of carrying out a very intense literary fight with the radical American Lutheranism of Kurtz.

Right from the start Krauth marked his enemy well and was anxious to engage him. After Kurtz had left the editorial chair of the Observer and returned shortly thereafter Krauth said of his opponent:

"If we are to have definite platformism, a low standard of ministerial education, elective affinity, anxious benches, noise in meetings, women making prayer in public, denunciation of the doctrines and useages of the Church, we wish them to be sustained by somebody who will not mince matters, by somebody who is not afraid of the inferences from his premises, but accepts the results of his own logic; and such a man is Dr. Kurtz. He is the leader in the extremest un-Lutheranism of the Lutheran Church in America, and his connection with the Observer will determine its effective character." (Spaeth II, p.30f)

Hence began the literary battle for the hearts and minds of the General Synod.

The Lutheran and Missionary had many obstacles to overcome. But perhaps the most difficult was that it was a conservative Lutheran paper aimed at a church body which had grown thoroughly indifferent to and ignorant of the teaching and spirit of the Reformation. And this had not just happened overnight. Rather according to Krauth, after its Patriarchs the General Synod had steadily become alienated from the Confessions.

But Krauth and his co-editor Passervant did not get discouraged. And it seems that during this controversy Krauth made great strides in his development as a Lutheran: Some samples from the Lutheran and Missionary give evidence to that development. Here he shows a solid Lutheran approach to the Word:

"Why then do they (Reformed and Lutheran) differ in the interpretation of some parts of it. Mainly because the spirit of Lutheranism is one of un-resolved submission to the letter of the Word. It disavows utterly the right of reason to stand in judgement." (Lutheran and Missionary, Nov 21, 1861)

"The Bible is the only rule of faith with the Confessions built on the rule." (L&M, Jan 16, 1862)

In an article entitled, "Our General Synod, the Theological Character of the Era of Formation he says:

"It is a radically false mode of reaching doctrinal and moral obligations of our General Synod to assume...it could now be latitudinal, rationalistic, infidel

because that was the way of some at founding."  
(L&M, April 17, 1862)

In an attempt to shore up the General Synod's already shaky confessional basis against those trying to abuse it he says:

"Is not the effort to show that the Augsburg Confession is not only not substantially correct, but substantially incorrect and radically wrong in regard to any one of these doctrines, is this not in conflict with the General Synod's own utterances." (L&M, June 5, 1862)

Krauth had seen now what doctrinal anarchy had done to his church body. He now saw that union was meaningless and dangerous unless it was based on truth.

"Can we have genuine unity, without a hearty consent to the same articles of faith, accepted in the same sense? Can we permanently succeed as an Evangelical Lutheran Church, which we reject, ignore, or leave to personal whim, any part of the the faith in which our Church anchored herself, while the storms of centuries spent themselves on our Fathers." (L&M March 6, 1862)

"The Lutheran Church in this country will yet see that liberty for any other system within her communion, means proscription of Lutheranism itself- that if she allow any other faith than her own to find shelter within her, she will cease to allow her own..." (L&M April 4, 1866)

It was during this period of literary battle with the Observer that Krauth made what was heralded by Walther as a manly retraction, similar to what would appear in his preface (xiii) to his great historical-theological work, The Conservative Reformation and its Theology. This retraction was contained in an article entitled "The Aimless Battle" which appeared on July 13, 1865. In it he insisted that every doctrinal article of the Augsburg Confession is fundamental and that true unity requires a subscription to all fundamentals without "reservation or ambiguity." It is hard not to be impressed by what follows:

This is our deep conviction and we hereby retract, before God and his Church, formally, as we have earnestly and repeatedly done indirectly, every thing we have written or said in conflict with this our present conviction" (L&M)

This apparent change would be used by Krauth's opposition time and time again to try to discredit him. But he would merely insist, "the law of life is the law of growth." And we have to agree, his life was a continual growth in knowledge, understanding and depth of commitment in the Confessions of his beloved Church.

Krauth had come a long way since his early days. He had come to see the vital importance of a strict adherence to the Augsburg Confession as a minimal basis for any union. But as far

as he had come he still had a ways to go. His confessional views had not yet worked themselves out into a consistent view of church fellowship. We see that in an editorial reply concerning "close communion."

"We may add that "close communion" is in conflict with our own personal sympathies, our practice, our declarations, made 100's of times, at every communion and set forth especially in sermons on Christian liberty and in our paper..." (L&M May 15, 1862)

It's very interesting that during these same years the Pennsylvania Ministerium also continued its progress towards a sound Lutheranism. It became clear to many as well as Krauth in the Ministerium that the Gettysburg Seminary had become a seat of American Lutheranism and was no longer able to provide the kind of training that they would want in their ministers. And so the Ministerium in 1864 resolved to found its own seminary in Philadelphia. The General Synod went into an uproar over such a divisive step. But Krauth sets forth in no uncertain terms the seminary's necessity in the Lutheran and Missionary:

"It is needed for the sake of pure doctrine...We need it for the sake of internal homogeneousness among the men who are to be trained for our ministry...It is most unnatural and dangerous that in the same communion, and under the same roof, one set of students should be taught to regard as Romish abominations and dangerous errors what others are taught to consider as the very truth of God...This homogeneousness of doctrinal influence and coordination of languages will tend to produce unity of spirit in our young ministry and through them, in the whole Church." (August 11, 1864)

The break with the General Synod was inevitable and it is well known what transpired. The General Council turned to Krauth for theological leadership in its formation in 1867. It adopted his "Fundamental Principles" as a basis for its constitution. But soon after its founding the Synod of Iowa made a request which would force the Council and especially Krauth to now turn their attention to the proper practice of church fellowship. Iowa wanted the Council to spell out what they considered was implied in the Fundamental Principles, that is "no church fellowship with non-Lutherans."

What followed for Krauth was a process similar to his movement towards Lutheran orthodoxy. During that time he had moved through various stages of unclarity but finally arrived at a consistent principle of firm adherence to all articles of faith. Now the Council and especially Krauth were being asked to apply this principle to the life of the church. What were the implications of this confessional principle for fellowship? At first Krauth was inconsistent with his principles but finally when he fixed on their necessary implications, he became one of the most ardent advocates of a pure pulpit and altar the Lutheran Church has ever seen.

The question of church fellowship was first thoroughly discussed at the Pittsburgh convention of 1868. Krauth was asked to chair a committee to report on the questions of Pulpit and Altar fellowship as raised by the "Four Points." Iowa as well as other Western synods wanted the line drawn between Lutheran and non-Lutheran. Krauth was not ready to do that.

Krauth had no trouble seeing the vital necessity of pure pulpits and altars. But in the discussions Krauth argued that there was a difference in the way the church has considered those who disagree with our Confessions and those who differ on the Ecumenical Creeds. He had no difficulty with excluding all those who differ from the creeds. But when it came to those who did not agree with our confessions, he was not so willing. Instead he would at least consider them for admittance. This was inconsistent with his belief that all the Lutheran doctrines were "fundamental" and even though he saw that inconsistency he was not ready to draw the proper confessional line. (Spaeth, II, pp.200f)

As a result the Council lost Wisconsin in 1869 and Minnesota initiated another inquiry on the "Four Points." In the Lancaster convention in 1870 the Council replied to Minnesota by stating that although Lutheran doctrines are fundamental, fundamental errorists are those who "willfully, wickedly or persistent destroy" the faith. (R. C. Wolf, Documents of Lutheran Unity in America, p.77) Again Krauth and the Council were inconsistent by appealing to the motives for erring rather than the confession of lips and action. This time Minnesota and Illinois withdrew.

Iowa persisted in its request for clarification. They insisted that they were not looking for pastoral advice as in the Pittsburgh declaration but rather a confessional principle. And so at the Akron convention in 1872 they requested that certain verbal declarations of a confessional principle by President Krauth be adopted by the Council. The principle was adopted and is known today as the Akron Rule.

The exceptions to the rule became the source of much discussion in the Council, especially from those who did not want to abide with the principle. But it is safe to say that at this point Krauth had already come to a firm confessional view of proper fellowship practice. In 1871, he had stated in private conversation, "that the the position of the Iowa Synod on the question of church fellowship was the only correct and consistent position." (Spaeth, II, p.204) In the years to follow, Krauth would have an opportunity to spell out his newly defined stance.

At Galesburg in 1875 the Council re-affirmed the Akron rule and added that the rule accorded with the Word of God. This action stirred the waters of controversy and now Krauth found himself under increasing attack by even his good friend and co-worker J.A. Seiss. His life from thereon in would be one characterized by attacks and accusations.

Nevertheless Krauth continued to try to persuade his brothers. In the Lutheran and Missionary in 1875 he wrote a

series of 14 articles on the "Purity of the Pulpit and the Sanctity of the Altar." At the Philadelphia convention he presented his "105 Thesis on Pulpit and Altar Fellowship." The exceptions had been used as a loophole for justifying un-Lutheran practise. But here Krauth closed the loophole by spelling out to the Council the proper Lutheran position:

11:3 The determination of what are exceptions is to be made in consonance with the principles. No exception can be made which implies... that a claim of right to our pulpits and altars can be made in any case by those not Lutherans.

12. ... the interdenominational exchange of pulpits and interdenominational invitations to altars, whether regular or occasional were regarded (at Galesburg) not only as not cases of exception, but as pre-eminently the cases which need to be guarded against by the Declaration..."

Also in 1877, Krauth attended the "First Free Lutheran Diet." There he presented a paper on "The Relations of the Lutheran Church to the Denominations Around Us." Therein we see Krauth the church historian, logician, and orthodox Lutheran masterfully show that the confessional principle does not only belong to the Lutheran Church but is also practised by all denominations that are faithful to their own confessions. Having said this he asserts that the most consistent practice includes the following:

4. That churches are to be judged by and treated in accordance with their Confessions and the official interpretation of them.

6. That subjection to tests and discipline of a Church are essential to the right to enjoy its privileges.

7. That avowed or implied rejection of the Confession, is in fact a rejection of the Church which accepts it, and should bar access to its pulpits and altars. (First Free Lutheran Diet, p.51)

Krauth had reached his destination of confessional Lutheranism. He continued to labor towards that goal for his church until his death in 1883. He left his post as Council President in 1880 and continued on as both Seminary and University Professor until the last month of his life. He never lost heart. He never lost hope even though the fellowship question was not settled in his lifetime.

After his death no one was interested in following the course Krauth had charted to lead the church to a truly confessional position. Again we have to say, "How Sad!" How sad that Krauth had led his people to the very border of the promised land, but they did not want to enter it. But on the other hand, we don't have to close the book with a feeling of emptiness and sadness as if his life was a waste. For we can rejoice in what the Lord was able to make of this man who entered his ministry barely a Lutheran. We can rejoice that the Lord provided this

man who helped carry the torch of confessional Lutheranism a few years further into history. And we can pray and be confident that the Lord will continue to raise up such men for his Church not only for our sakes but for the sake of the General Synod of today, the ELCA.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Adolph Spaeth, Charles Porterfield Krauth, Volumes 1&2, 1969
2. H.E.Jacobs, First Free Lutheran Diet in America 1878, pp. 27-69
3. Lutheran and Missionary