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Dear President Preus:

I shall not try to apologize for my long silence. One of the reasons is my state of Health, I have to lie down 14 to 16 hours a day which means that my entire work in the house as well as in theology and church must be squeezed in the short time which remains. I have only very little domestic help and can afford secretarial help only in very rare cases. So my congratulations on and best wishes for the great work you have taken over with presidency of my beloved Americal alma mater come very late. But you ought to know that you as well as your brother are constantly in my thought and on my dipychs. We all have learned that prayer for the church and its servants is one of the foremost duties of our office which does not end with what the world calls retirement. I know what a tremendous burden lies upon you both. It is an almost superhuman task to restore Missouri. Whatever the final result of your endeavours may be, future church historians will recognize your work as one of the most difficult, but also of the most necessary works in present day Christendom. It is no consolation that you are facing a task with which all churches are confronted these days.

The great crisis in Missouri did not come suddenly. Your brother has seen it coming for many years. The same is true of many of your friends outside your circles. I know America since fifty years. It was in 1925 that I first came to Americal for a postgraduate year at Hartford, Conn. It was the time of the rising Social Gospel. The Lutheran churches were at that time not yet involved in the crisis of American Protestantism. But it was evident that also they would have to face the great problem of other churches. Least of all Missouri was involved. Only slowly this great still overwhelmingly German speaking church was to be affected by the winds of change. Missouri lived still in a sort of ghetto. Only slowly the change was approaching with the replacement of Luther's Bible by the Authorized Version which could not be a substitute for Luther's Bible. It might have been a great task for all Lutherans in America to create a new English Bible. But this was not possible. We in Australia have observed the same problems when we had to accept, with the King James Bible, the slow but soon increasing influence of Reformed Protestantism. For the transition to another Bible means always also a change in theology. The wonderful Luther Edition of St. Louis is, in spite of the fact that it was the reprint of Walch, a great monument to a scholarship which once existed in your church. It is still today an outstanding work through the inclusion of texts and documents which are not to be found elsewhere. Pieper's Dogmatics which came out since the Reformation Jubilee became the recognized textbook also outside Missouri. When this work was no longer studied, the De-Lutheranisation of American Lutheranism could not be stopped. Every textbook on Dogmatics is a dialog. Pieper had to fight and reject not only German theology of the 19th century, but he had already to take in account the theology of the Reformed churches in America. But his book could of course not take in account what was going on in European Protestantism, the new discoveries of Luther

research and the rise of Karl Barth. So your church was not prepared for the great encounter with the churches of Europe. Your Reformed churches met for the first time a great new theology in the encounter with Karl Barth in the thirties. There seemed to arise a possibility that this encounter would help to overcome American Modernism and answer the problem posed by the Fundamentalists. A series of articles in "Christian Century" by many leading theologians under the title "How I changed my Mine" (or something similar) could be the first sign of a great change of the theological climate in the USA. But soon it became apparent that the new movement called Neo-orthodoxy could not overcome that Modernism which had destroyed any possibility of a return to real Orthodoxy.

It was the great question for the Lutherans how they would come to grips with the developments that had taken place in Europe. Since they could not accept European Liberalism and wanted to retain their doctrinal heritage and their ecclesiastical identity, farsighted men like Michael Reu tried to find closer relations with the conservative circles in German and Scandinavian Lutheranism. One of the means was the membership in the old Lutheran World Convention whose programme it was - in contradistinction to the later LWF-to preserve the Lutheran Church as church.

The Second World War intervened. In every nation the great wars are the turning points of its history, also of the history of the churches (in U.S.A. the Civil War and the two world wars). A new epoch was to begin when the victorious armies invaded Germany followed by the first messengers of the American churches. Whatever this may have meant to other churches, the Lutherans of America were facing their great crisis. What your church concerns is the great change in Missouri's attitude towards other Christian churches and first of all to their fellow Lutherans. The time of the ghetto had definitely passed. The gates to the world were widely opened. Characteristic of the change was the "Statement of the 44", an attempt on the part of outstanding men in church life and theology. It was evident what these men wanted: a new, fraternal relationship with other Lutheran churches should terminate the old isolationism. We have not to discuss here the merits or otherwise of this pronouncement, but we state that its basic mistake was the failure to realize the theological, dogmatic issues to be tackled. These men found the fault of Missouri's isolationism in the realm of ethics. To them it had been a lack of Christian love, of brotherliness that had separated Missouri from the rest of the Christian and Lutheran world. This mistake led to bitter controversies. Different was the approach of the official Missouri to the problem. When Dr. Behnken with his co-workers appeared in Germany, soon to be followed by the first professors, Missouri made a deep impression on the Germans. It was not only the person of your then president, his warm, Christian personality which altered the situation, and not only the unselfish charity of the congregations of your church which found a wonderful expression in the unostentatious way in which their rich gifts were distributed among those in direct need irrespective of their church membership. The history of this encounter of Missouri and German Protestantism should be written on the basis of the sources still available. It would take

into consideration also the theological aspect which was less fortunate. Your men were surprised to find in Germany churches which were quite different from what was to be expected. They found churches which no longer adhered to the liberalism of the 19th century but which spoke of confession, dogma and the authority of the Word of God. This was partly due to the theological changes that had taken place since the Twenties, partly to the fight of what called itself "th confessing church" against the neopaganism of Nazism. The churches could not resist the temptation to capitalize on the changed picture they presented. Everybody who met Missourians was a Lutheran, even better Lutherans, as they believed themselves. Your delegates regarded it as their duty to strengthen this obvious tendency towards orthodoxy. The distributed the German edition of Pieper-Miller's Dogmatics, "Der Lutheraner" which appeared at that time still in German at St. Louis, was circulated and read, though the German language used in the paper was just as obsolete as its theology. Theological discussions were arranged in Bad Boll between German pastors and theologians of Missouri. The German free churches, mainly the Saxon Free Church which was an attempt of Missouri in earlier times to establish a truly Lutheran Church in its Saxon homeland, felt neglected and frustrated. Partly this was due to biased and incompetent reports they had made to their brethren in America at the time of the rise of Hitler. All polemics against other Lutherans and Evangelicals had to be stopped.

The great tragedy of this historic encounter was that the American visitors did not realize what actually was going on in German Protestantism. Only later they realized what even many Lutherans in the centres of Lutheranism like Bavaria and Hannover did not see that the great union movement of those years, supported by the ecumenical movement, was going to reach its climax in the formation of the "Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland" which was understood by the Lutherans as a federation of churches, but by the majority of pastors and laymen as a real church in which German Protestantism was reaching its unity on the basis of a new understanding of the confession of the church. All attempts on the part of faithful Lutherans to preserve the Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession were bound to fail. They were frustrated with the help of orthodox Missourians.

When the synod of Hannover had to decide whether or not to accept the constitution of the EKid and to join it or not, the decisive vote was against the motion and for the preservation of the Lutheran Church. This came as a great surprise. Then the chairman, the new Bishop Lilje, declared the proceedings as confidential and read to the assembly a letter written by one of the outstanding older men in St. Louis, a man of blameless othodoxy in the same of Walther and Pieper, as he was generally regarded. He was travelling in Europe and had just attended as a visitor the constituting assembly of the new World Council of Churches at Amsterdam, 1948. He wrote to Bishop Lilje. Don't follow the advice of the "Schwabacher Konvent" (the organisation of some hundreds of confessionally minded Lutheran pastors), and its leaders. There can be no objection against joining the EKiD and the WCC. - Do you want to be more Lutheran than Missouri, Lilje asked. The public was readmitted and a new

vote was taken in favour of the motion. This was the end of the endavours to restore the Church of the Augsburg Confession in Germany. It was not the fault of your church, but of one man who as it sometimes happens with old men had completely changed his formal views. But it must be kept in mind if one wants to understand the development of Missouri. This event showed clearly what was to come if the dogmatic compass of the great ship was no longer working properly.

Why is it no longer working? There must have been a fault somewhere in the theology of Missouri. This is to be discovered and rectified. So your church was confronted with the tremendous task to re-think and re-shape its theology. But obviously the strength to do that was missing. It was missing not only in your church, for all Christendom was confronted with this task of a renewal. This becomes evident from the great crisis of the Christian faith which is obvious in all Christendom, in the entire Protestant world as very significantly also in Roman Catholicism. Since you could not solve the problem by your own strength your theologians made the worst blunder they could make; they borrowed the theology from other churches without realizing that by so doing they abondoned what could help to solve your problems: the strong sense of Missouri for the authority of Holy Scripture and the faithful preservation of some of the great truths of the Reformation. It would be ridiculous, were it not a real tragedy, to observe the way in which the other Lutheran churches of America tried to oversome their theological quandary. They simply took over uncritically and carelessly what just was offered on the European market of the newest theological or pseudotheological fashions. The ALC e.g. which had a strong tradition in the doctrine of the sacraments failed to re-think and to investigate this tradition. Instead they simply took over the alleged solution of the controversies concerning the Lord's Supper reached at Arnoldshain by modernist German scholars. They learned from German theologians that the "immortality of the Soul" is not a Biblical doctrine. This alleged doctrine of genuine Lutheranism which denies a life after death before the resurrection has been revoked on his deathbed by the man who had propagated this theory. But today it seems to be fashionable in America. The damage done to the Lutheran churches in U.S.A. is inestimable. Now Missouri did the same. Already in 1948 it was quite obvious at St. Louis that there were two Missouris, one presided over by Dr. Behnken, the other under the leadership of the president of Conoordia, St. Louis. The conflict was unavoidable since Missouri, in contradistinction from other bodies had a strong conservative majority among pastors and laymen who on the long run would not allow Modernism to spread throughout the whole church. One wonders that it took almost a quarter of a century to reveal the true situation. It was the historic merit of your brother that he dared to take up the challenge and took the appropriate action. This coincided, by the way, with the general return of other bodies of Christendom to the dogmatic traditions of past generations.

The split within the faculty of St. Louis revealed the real situation. The forty or more dissenters who tried to resist the action of your Convention of New Orleans and formed what they called a "Concordia Seminary in exile" with the support of the modernistic "United Church of Christ" and the not less

modernistic Jesuits believed to be the true representatives of the "Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod". But aside from the question in whose name they could speak, what was the theology they represented? They were forty individuals with very different ideas, held together only by the rejection of the old theology of Missouri as represented by Pieper and his school. Otherwise they were divided among themselves. How many of them would have regarded the late Professor Piepkorn, who certainly was one of the most representative men of that group, as othodox? Everybody knew what he was teaching. He himself expressed his convictions at the Reformation Jubilee by answering the question: What is Lutheran in doctrine?. His answer was: not the Sola Scriptura, not the Sola Fide, but what our confessions have in common with Rome. This answer was generally known because it had been published in the "American Lutheran". His theology was exactly what the Anglo-Catholics teach in their church. He attributed to Luther the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of Mary as it was proclaimed in 1854 in "Ineffabilis Deus" including the words "in view of the merits of her Son" which were meant to assuage the qualms of the Dominicans. I choose this example because I do not want to hurt living persons. Where was the loud protest of his colleagues? They stuck together in the defense of what they understood by academic freedom without realizing that this freedom was limited by the solemn obligations they had taken over when joining the faculty. The "academic" theologians all over America sided with them, even the "Lutheran" faculties outside the orbit of Missouri. More was at stake than the freedom of these "academics" whose theological achievements were very scarce or totally absent. It was the freedom of the Gospel, the whole Gospel, which was defended by your brother and his supporters. The importance of this fight goes far beyond America. Here were men, nay a whole church, who dared to reject the demythogolisation of the Gospel by "theology" which threatened to destroy the Church. Whatever may be the final result for Missouri, such fight cannot be without far reaching results for the rest of Christendom. But this is not all that has to be said. Why did these dissenters protest so vividly? It must be admitted that they believed to be fighting for the future of their church and of Lutheranism as a whole as they understood it. They have tried to grapple with a problem which remains a problem for Missouri. It was not only the freedom of the Gospel for which the conservatives are fighting, but the Gospel in the hard shell of a theology which is time conditioned and therefore cannot be regarded as a 'theologiaperennis'. This limitation became obvious at the dialog held at Bad Boll between Missourians and German theologians. One of the lectures given by a professor of St. Louis began with words: "Als der liebe Gott vor 6000 Jahren die Welt schuf". This was not only the beginning of a dialog, it was also its end. What is the source of the doctrine that the world was created in 4000 (or to correct this figure from the chronology of the New Testament, 4004 B.C.) ? It is not the doctrine of Holy Scripture, for nobody has ever been able to find it - directly or indirectly - in the Bible, perhaps by adding the historical figures found in the Genesis. It belongs to the traditions of the church which is contradicted by other traditions. The Jews e.g. count the years from the time of creation, but it differs from the Christian eras (the Eastern Church had always other figures differing from the

era of Dionysius Exiguus). The learned Jewish rabbis knew that the Bible does not answer the question of the time of creation. So the Jewish era was made in the 4th century A.D. on the basis of astronomical calculations. Why had one to know time time of the creation? It was the desire to have a means to date historical events. The origin of the various eras lies in the Hellenistic civilisation which produced eras such as the Seleucidian. In Rome, Varro followed with the era "ab urbe condita". The Greeks had their Olympiades. Islam developed later the era from the Hegra. The Christian era was "ab incarnatione Domini". It took centuries until it replaced other means of determining the time of historical events. In Russia it was introduced as late as in the 18th century. Why was the era from the creation of the world so important? It allowed to determine historical dates in the time before Christ. This was the reason why the Reformers made their account, Melanchthon deviating from Luther and accepted the Luther between the 1st and the Rest of Luther's work, (Wittenberg). For the splendid idea that one could count the years also backwards, B.C. was invented only by the humanists of the 16th century. When Luther who was always interested in history needed an era from the creation he wrote his "Supputatic annorum mundi" first for his private use, later he published it at the request of friends. Here we find the year 4004 B.C. From where has he this? The motto of the little book reveals this. The Prophet Elijah said that the world will last 6000 years, to be followed by the millenum. According to the statement that one day is like a thousand years the six days of creation seemed to indicate the figure 6000. But where is this alleged saying of Elijah to be found? Of course not in the Bible. It comes form the Talmud. An old rabbinic tradition has survived in the Church. So still in our days one of the old scholars of Missouri, Prof. Rehwinkel has published a little book "The Age of the Earth" (it appeared first in Adelaide where the author was a guest lecturer at Concordia Seminary in 1965, later at Conc. Publ. House St. Louis). Rehwinkel does not take in account Luther, but relies mainly on a "monumental work" of an unknown English clergyman and on the famous chronology of Bishop Usher (around 1600) which has gained a sort of canonical dignity in the English speaking world (his figures appear even in Bible editions). Rehwinkel tries to improve Ushers figures on the basis of the Septuagint and arrives at the "most likely" date 5556 B.C. He concludes this investigation with a triumphant "Verbum Dei Manet in Aeternum", after he has shown - in Australia he proclaimed that even to our congregations - that any basic doubt concerning this Biblical chronology would endeanger our faith in Jesus Christ.

If the forty scholars of "Seminex" had taken up such issues and dared to critisize publicly this type of old fashioned theology, replacing it with a better Biblical theology, they would have deserved the gratitude of every Lutheran for whom the old Bishop Usher is not an authority. The fitting occasion might have been the renewal of the authority of the "Brief Statement" in 1959 when it was made clear that this condensation of current Missourian Theology had not the authority of a confession, but was meant only as a guide-line for theologians and should be frankly criticized by those who would disagree with it. But there was silence. Obviously no one dared to touch this hot iron. But without a frank discussion of matters which are not taught by

the Bible, but based only on a venerable tradition, such problems can not be settled. This delay of a frank open discussion of certain problems of the historic traditions of Missouri has caused the present conflicts. There will be no solution to the problems confronting Missouri and any Bible believing church today until these matters are taken up. The beginnings of a re-thinking of Missouri's theology are noticeable. It is perhaps significant that they did not come from the "liberal" side, if it is permitted to use this term. One may well ask: Where are the great books written by the dissenting professors? A large faculty like St. Louis must produce important works and not only some textbooks and occasional papers. There was not, and this is true of the entire Lutheran world, an outstanding leader such as Missouri had them in former days, But this can be no excuse for the failure to make a beginning. The books published in recent years by you and your brother together with some similar publications made by others are a really promising beginning of a new indigenous Lutheran theology in America. It may be significant that they have not come from the dissenters.

It was to be expected that your first interest was concentrated on our orthodox fathers - this corresponds to the heritage of your church. Your great work on "The theology of post-Reformation Lutheranism" is an impressive refutation of the popular view that our orthodox fathers have not been able to preserve the heritage of the Reformation. Your presentation of the vast material explains the fact that just this period of our church has produced the greates hymns of our liturgy and thus proved the old rule that dogmatics and liturgy are inseparable as already the word "confession" in its various meanings indicates. You have also successfully refuted Elert's theses concerning their view of nature and the current misunderstanding of the orthodox view of inspiration. I am convinced that your work will in this respect have a great and wholesome influence on the coming generation of Lutheran theologians in America. It is the work of a dogmatician - I hate the word "systematician" though the orthodox fathers of the later period by giving up the methods of "Loci" have paved the way to what the modern church understands by systematic theology. Your work needs to be supplemented by an equally scholarly discussion of the historical problems. I have never quite understood your distinction of a Golden and Silver age of Orthodoxy, interrupted by "High Orthodoxy". The norms of periodisation and of theperiods of historical development should have been taken from the history concerned. The historians furthermore, should look at the Age of Orthodoxy as a period of theology and church history in all Christendom. One of the features of that age is the great dialog which took place between Lutherans, Catholics and Reformed of various colours. It is a strange fact that this period covers the time of the counter-Reformation with its terrible religious war. But the noise of world history does not resound in the studies and lecture rooms of the scholars, at least not in their books. One is reminded of the peaceful dialog between Christians, Jews and Muslim in medieval Spain at a time when the worst religious wars and mass murders took place in Occident and Orient.

One of the features of that age of a tremendous scholarship - the 17th century has been called the most scholarly time in the modern world - was the rebirth

of the philosophy of Aristotle in all churches of Christendom. The possession of a common philosophy made the dialog possible.

This rebirth of Aristotelian philosophy has determined also the Lutheran theology of that age. Its greatness and its weakness is due to the revival of a philosophy which Luther had so emphatically rejected. Here lies the deepest problem of Lutheran Orthodoxy. These great men had to solve the problem how the heritage of Luther could be preserved in the hard shell of a thoroughly un-Lutheran and basically unchristian philosophy.

This was an unavoidable destiny. But why? What a strange sight is the revival of Aristotle in the church of the Reformation after Luther had shown that his philosophy, including his logic, contradicts the Biblical revelation. But even Luther was powerless over against the authority of that great thinker who for many centuries was the embodiment of human scholarship, the philosophus kat' exochen equally for Christians, Muslim and Jews. Wherever a great thinker in the East appeared he was called the second (Farabi) or the third (Avicenna) Aristotle. The strangest thing is the fact that they all including the philosophy of the Muslim as that of the Christians and Jews (e.g. Salomon Ibn Gebirol, by the Christians regarded as a Muslim and calles Avicerbron) were actually Neoplatonists up to the end of the 12th century. But Aristotle was the authority. His fame grew with the discovery of his entire literary work. The authority of this man has prevented the rise of the heliocentric view of the world which goes back to the Hellenistic astronomers in the 3rd century B.C. for at least 1800 years. In the system of Thomas Aquinas he has celebrated perhaps the greatest triumph. Thomas was perhaps the humblest of all philosophers, a believing Christian who philosophized so to speak with his hands [illegible] in constant prayer. His great synthesis of Biblical revelation and Aristotelian philosophy has lasted in the Roman Church up to the present time, until modern science refuted definitely by wayof irrefutable experiments the basis of Aristotelian thought. At the time of the Reformation there existed no lasting alternative to this system. It exceeds perhaps the power of the human mind to produce at the same time a religious Reformation and a new philosophy of the rank of the greatest thinker of Greece. At any rate, there was no other philosophical tool available to the scholars of the Reformation like Melanchton and Schegk. The praeceptor Germaniae who was the great organizer of all higher education of the Lutheran church had no choice. Aristotle's logic at least remained the "Organon", the tool of scholarly thought also in the Post-Reformation period. Luther's warning voice was not heeded, because it could not be heeded. The great achievement of our Orthodox fathers was that theywere able to preserve the heritage of Luther by a new synthesis between Biblical theology and the "philosophia perennis" they had inherited from the Middle Ages. Theyhave repeated in their way on a smaller scale the work of Aquinas.

In the church of the Dominicans in Rome (Santa Maria sopra Minerva) a famous painting by Filippino Lippi shows "The Triumph of Thomas Aquinas". The master sits on his cathedra, surrounded by saints and churchmen. One of his feet rests on the volume of his Summa theologica, the other on his defeated foe Averroes.

In his left hand he holds the Sacra Pagina, the Bible. In large letters one reads "Sapientiam sapientium perdam" (1 Cor. 1:19.) It is the pseudo-wisdom of Averroism which had begun to penetrate the Church, the view that when the Biblical revelation and the philosophy of Aristotle clash one must follow the philosophus. In one of the most crucial times of Christendom Thomas had overcome that pernicious heresy in his great system which sought to combine the truths of reason and the truth of revelation. The articles of faith cannot be found by way of reason. They must be believed on the basis of Holy Writ. However, they do not contradict, but rather presuppose and perfect the preambles of faith which are attainable to human reason. A very similar situation existed in the 16th and 17th centuries when radical Humanism and early enlightenment threatend the Christian faith. So the great synthesis of Aquinas had to be repeated on another scale. Again it was Aristotelian philosophy which offered its help to the Church. Orthodox theology, based on Holy Scripture found its ally in the old philosophy. It repudiated, of course, not only the ethics, but also the metaphysics of the great philosophus. They would never accept his distinction of articles of and preambles to the faith which had made even the existence of God a philosophical truth, a mere preamble of faith. How could the sons of the Reformation ever forget that "Whoever would draw near to God must <u>believe</u> that he exists (Hebr. 11:6) and that also the creation of the world is an article of faith (v. 3). What they wanted to take over from Aristotle was nothing but his logic. This had also been the intention of the ancient Christians especially in Antioch and all Syria, who had regarded the logical writings of Aristotle as the "organon", the indispensable tool of the scholar and passed on this heritage to the coming centuries. And why should they not be accepted in a ministerial function? However, it became soon evident that the organon cannot be separated from the rest of the vast work of this comprehensive thinker. He made a deep impression especially on the arabic world which developed a quasi-religious vegeneration of Aristotle which was taken over by the Latin West when mainly from arabic sources the whole lifework of the great thinker, his ethics, his works on the natural sciences, his metaphysics and his writings on rhetoric, literature and politics became shortly before 1200 known to the Latin world, while the Greek scholars who had never lost this literature made use of them, but without the enthusiasm of the Latin West. The indivisibility of the various branches of the Aristotelian system should have been seen by Thomas when he in his amazing life work tried to separate that which could be accepted by the church and that which had to be repudiated. The worst mistake was made already in his acceptance of the proofs of the existence of God which Aristotle had developed on the basis of Plato and which now got their classical expression in Christian theology. We take as one example the second of the five proofs (S. Th. I, q. 2,3) in which Aristotle's "prima causa" is identified with God. I asked a Catholic theologian whether he could apply the Tedeum to Aristotle's God and sing: "Te priman causam laudamus, te primam causam confitemur...Sancta, sancta, sancta est prima causa ..." His answer was that he could do that. But the God of Aristotle cannot hear it, was my objection. He cannot hear prayers. In the very moment when God, the actus purus, who in all eternity thinks only the highest, namely himself, would hear and answer a prayer he would cease to be God and the whole

universe would at once collapse.

To show that this is not a personal opinion of mine I quote Heinrich Scholz, a German philosopher who was one of the great authorities on Aristotle whom he knew not only from translations. As professor at Münster (for some years a colleague of Karl Barth) he specialized in "Grundwissenschaft", the logical and metaphysical basis of modern mathematics and natural science. He writes concerning our problem: "Ein einziger Sonn- und Feiertag, mit den Gebeten, die er in den christlichen kirchen aller Konfessionen...hervorruft, würde, wenn das höchste Wesen so existiert, dass es diese Gebete vernimmt, genügen, um die Aristotelische Welt, den Aristotischen Kosmos, in ein Chaos zu verwandeln" (Eros und Caritas. Die Platonische Liebe und die Liebe im Sinne des Christentums, 1929) S. 55.

This was the tragedy of the greatest of the Christian thinkers in the Middle Ages. Was this tragedy to repeat itself in the Lutheran Church? No one, of course, wanted that and everything has been done by the Lutheran thinkers to preserve the Biblical doctrine of God. But was the acceptance of the Aristotelian philosophy not bound to influence also the theology? You have shown how seriously the orthodox fathers tried to avoid that. The role of philosophy was to be only a ministerial, not a magisterial one. Aristotle's logic was to be the anchilla theologiae. But it happens very often that indispensable handmaidens show a fateful tendency to rule the house. In every major domus there lives a desire to become king. It is most significant how seriously Joh. Gerhard defends the idea that the existence of God is not a preamble only, but a genuine article of faith. He quotes expressly the passages from Hebr. 11 we have mentioned. But he cannot resist the temptation to accept the five proofs of the existence of God from Thomas under the same title as Thomas. "Utrum Deus sit" is the title of art. 3 in the second Quaestio of the Summa theol. I. Gerhard deals in the Prooemium of Locus II, art. 4 with the "Quaestio, an Deus sit". The only difference is that he relates the arguments to the God of the Bible, in the conviction that this is the correct interpretation of the Scripture, especially Rom. 1. So the God of revelation becomes the "primum movens", the "prima causa" etc.

It can be no doubt that this implies not only the acceptance of Aristotle's logic, but that also his metaphysics is involved. One may well ask whether it serves the elucidation of the Biblical doctrines if each of them is dealt with under the leading question: What is the forma, what the materia of that particular object (Holy Scripture, the Church, each of the sacraments etc.). These concepts and the distinction between substantia and accidentia, the different causes (efficiens, instrumentalis etc.) belong to metaphysics. Certainly the argumentation is always based on the Scripture. But it is inevitable that the form of argumentation colours the content. This should have come out more clearly in your interpretation of Gerhard's theology, although I fully understand your endeavour to do full justice to the great teacher of our church, perhaps the greatest dogmatician Lutheranism has ever had. What you could not see and what most of our present conservative theologians cannot know is the fact that not only the physics and metaphysics, but also the logic of

Aristotle has today lost the old validity.

Why, you will ask? How can that be true? My reply is: This is not the view of a few theologians, but it is the indubitable result of modern science, especially of theoretical physics. I was born in the universe of Newton with its Euclidean geometry and its unviolable laws of mechanics. When I was ten I was painlessly transferred into the space-time continuum of Einstein, a universe in which space and time had lost its absolute character. On the 3rd of August 1914 when the university of Berlin was assembled on its commemoration day while outside the troops were marching to the battle fields, I heard a famous lecture by Max Planck on the question whether the principle of causality was the unalterable rule of all natural phenomena or whether it had to be given up. Not yet, was the answer of the founder of the theory of the quantum, but the time might come. It had come when 13 years later Heisenberg discovered the fact that there are processes in nature, which are indeterminable. This made the laws if nature laws of statistics only. To illustrate the great change I quote a scientist of our day (H. Rohrbach "Naturwissenschaft, Weltbild, Glaube", 1973 p. 128): "Ein weiteres Beispiel aus der aristotelischen Logik ist das sogenannte 'tertium non datur', d. h. ein Drittes gibt es nicht. Entweder ist ein Sachverhalt so oder er ist nicht so. Dieses als notwendig empfundene 'tertium non datur' hatte zur Folge gehabt, dass die Physiker jahrhundertelang immer wieder bei der Frage nach dem Wesen des Lichts sagten: Entweder es ist ein Wellenvorgang oder es ist ein Korpuskularvorgang, aber doch nicht beides zugleich. Es kann nur das eine sein oder das andere, tertium non datur. Wir dagegen müssen heute zugeben: Es ist das eine und es ist das andere. Wir kommen also mit dem tertium non datur von Aristoteles nicht mehr durch. Wir müssen statt des Entweder-Oder das Sowohl-als auch zulassen, in dem bestimmten Sinn - im Zusammenhang mit einem konkreten Experiment -, wie ich es am Beispiel des Lichts auseinandersetzte. Mit anderen Worten...wir müssen uns für die funktionelle Denkweise von Aristoteles und von der Scholastik absetzen. Die philosophischen Grundprinzipen des Satzes vom Widerspruch Des Satzes von zureichenden Grunde und des Satzes vom ausgeschlossenen Dritten sind in der Mikrophysik nicht anwendbar". (Die Sperrungen stammen von mir). If somebody would say: We are not interested in microphysics. These are things we cannot see, the answer would be: The hundreds of thousand who at Hiroshima and elsewhere have died as victims of the practical application of microphysics in the theory of the nature and structure of the atom are a terrific confirmation of what we would be inclined to call a mere theory of a few scientists.

Non of our fathers could, of course, be aware of the possibility of such changes. To them the logic of Aristotle was a "philosophic perennis", valid for all men and at all times. Even our generation has the greatest difficulties in accepting the great change. And yet it has to be accepted as the Copernican revolution. We do not blame the men of your dissent for not understanding the scientific facts behind this change. But they should have taken cognizance at least of the theological works in which these problems are discussed as far as they affect our theological thought. (e.g. the books by Karl Heim which are now available in good English translations).

If Missouri has now to rethink its theology one of the first tasks will be to re-examine the philosophical presuppositions of your traditional theology. This is

especially true of the problem of the Inspiration and Inerrancy of Holy Scripture. Your discussion of the doctrine of our orthodox fathers on these problems should open up the doors to a fresh approach to this problem which is of greatest concern to all Christian churches and which may be the basic question underlying the troubles of your church. You refute rightly the wrong conceptions of inspiration as if the Biblical authors had been only the penmen of the Holy Spirit who dictated to them the holy books. You are fighting in an impressive way simultaneously the theory of a mechanic dictation as well as the untenable reaction of modern theologians who are watering down or bluntly rejecting the doctrine of Inspiration altogether, as it is being done even by otherwise conservative thinkers like Werner Elert whose Dogmatics are marred by this blunder. I remember how deeply distressed his best friends were when his book ("Der Christliche Glaube") appeared in 1940, He and his followers should not have forgotten that the inspiration of scripture is firstly the doctrine of the entire New Testament, and secondly that it is firmly confessed in the Creed. The words in the article on the Holy Spirit "who spoke by the prophets" has always been understood in this way. One should expect that Inspiration was thoroughly discussed in the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as one of His great works. But this is not the case. It should never have been forgotten that the Holy Spirit became an object of theological discussion only in the fourth century when the doctrine of the Trinity was finalized. Still the old Nicene Creed of 325 is actually a binitarian creed with the appendix "and in the Holy Spirit". But the doctrine of the Spirit has never been finalized in the ancient Church. Beginnings made by Augustine were left as a bequest to the Latin Middle Ages which created the so called Athanasian Creed and inserted in the liturgy acclamations and hymns addressed to the Third Person of the Trinity, while in the East even the epiclesis was addressed to the Father. It took many centuries until the Reformation drew its conclusions from the full divinity of the Spirit.

That the Scriptures are the work of the Spirit was taught by our Nicene Creed of 381: ".....who spoke by the prophets". For this clause has always been understood as embracing all authors of the Scriptures. It must be remembered that this doctrine was not only based on 1. Tim. 3 and 2. Peter 1, but that it is the silent presupposition of the entire New Testament - with special clarity in Hebrews - and on our Lord Himself who with his Jewish people accepted the Scripture as word of God ("the word that proceeds from the mouth of God".) The idea that there are divine writings occurs in the history of human religions everywhere since the invention of the art of writing. Two ways of understanding the origin of a divine book existed. Either the book existed first in heaven and was brought to earth, or a divine being or divine power has given it to men. This general conception existed also with the Jews. It was a doctrine of the rabbis that the Torah was preexistent in heaven. God Himself had written it before the creation of the world and sent it to earth through Moses. Jesus has never accepted it. The second theory like the theory of the Muslim which was applied especially to the prophets, later also to the psalms and the "ketubim" was that they have their origin in a divine inspiration. This concept of a divine inspiration goes back into very early times of mankind and is applied equally to the oral and the written word, as also in the Bible there is no difference between the oral proclamation and the writing (e.g. with Jeremiah).

A divine power overcomes man and makes him a "new man" ("another man" 1. Sam. 10:6), a "theios aner", as the Greeks call it, a "superman" (Montanus). Not only a prophet, but also a poet, wise man, a ruler, an artist are products of such "inspiration." In the Bible the question is always whether it is a "spirit from God" or a demon who inspires man, whether a prophecy is genuine or a prophecy of lie. The distinction between spirit in general and the Holy Spirit is essential for the Biblical faith in the Old as in the New Testament. Prophecy, written or oral, can be both. Hence it is necessary to discern the spirits. The genuine prophecy and its writing is to be regarded as the divine work of the Holy Spitit, the "ruach Jahve" or ruach haqodesh. In this sense Jesus shares the faith of his people in the understanding of the divine character of the Scriptures. The great question is always which books are to be regarded as divinely inspired and which not. Hence the synagogue was confronted with the same problem which the church soon had to face. The formation of the canon is left to the believers. It is in our case the work of the church. This should never have been denied. There have been often differences of opinion. In the case of the synagogue, the sadducees regard only the Torah as divine in the full sence. On the whole the Old Testament canon was finalized in the first century. There were some doubts about the divine inspiration of Proverbs and Qoheleth (Has Salomo written them from his own wisdom?), Song of Songs (was it perhaps secular poetry? and Esther (it can be read on the feast of Purim, but otherwise not). But on the whole our Hebrew Old Testament canon was established in the first century. Jesus had essentially the same Bible as we have it in the Hebrew text, while the Greek speaking synagogue had a larger canon which then became the canon of the Greek and the Latin Churches.

Luther could not convince himself that certain writings of the New Testament were of apostolic origin and had therefore not to be regarded as canonical. So he put them at the end of the canon, originally in smaller print. They were regarded as "deuterocanonical" until later this distinction vanished, in Missouri with the transition from Luther's text to the English King James version. All this must be kept in mind. God the Holy Spirit gives the books. The Church makes the canon by selecting from the existing literature those books which are to be regarded as difinely inspired. Can the church err in making such a decision? It can, of course, because no Council is infallible. The Council of Trent made the definite canon of the Roman Church which included the Greek "apocrypha". Since the Council is regarded as infallible, Rome has to stand by it. The Lutheran Church criticized that. It is of great significance that we cannot say what Rome says of its Bible and the Mohammedans say of the Koran: "What is between to two covers is the word of God". Our concept of Scripture is different.

Not, however, different as far as the inspiration is concerned. Only books of which the Church can be sure that they are inspired can be canonical. Books or part of books (e.g. the additions to Mark 16) whose apostolic origin is doubtful may be used in the church, but not as a source of doctrine. Our orthodox fathers dealt with the problem of Scripture in the Prolegomena of their works in the beginning of their dogmatics. They discuss the doctrine De sacra scriptura. As in all dogmas they base their discussion on the Aristotelian scheme. It is an amazing amount of scholarly material, biblical and historical, they squeeze into that scheme by asking what the

causa efficiens (principalis and instrumentalis etc.) what the forma and materia of the Sacred Scripture is. You give, Dr. Preus, in your work an impressive presentation. Your conclusion is that they on the whole have preserved Luther's doctrine of Holy Scripture. This is true. The Church of the orthodox fathers was a Bible believing church, church of the Sola Scriptura and the sola fide which both are inseparable. But the presentation of the doctrine De sacra scriptura in the terms of Aristotelian philosophy could not remain without influence on the subject. Joh. Gerhard concludes his long Tractatus in 27 chapters on 227 large pages with the definition: "Sacra Scriptura est verbum Dei ejusdem voluntate a prophetis, evangelistis et apostolis in literas redactum, doctrinam de essentia et voluntate Dei perfecte ac perspicue exponens, ut ex eo homines erudiantur ad vitam aeternam. "This is doubtless correct, but it does not exhaust the subject. Gerhard himself feels that more must be said. So he adds the prayer: "Conserva et sanctifica nos, Deus, in veritate tua, sermo tuus veritas est, Joh. 17:17."
But Holy Scriptura remains also with this addition a divinely given book to educate us for life eternal. Despite the discussion of the effect of scripture, derived from 2. Tim. 3:16, something is missing. "Is not my work like fir, says the Lord, and like a hammer which breaks the rock in piece" (Jer. 23:29). "The Lord put forth his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me, 'Behold I have put my words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and break down, to destroy and to over-throw, to build and to plant' " (1:8f.). To read such treatis, is to look into a herbarium where the plants are wonderfully preserved. Everything is there. But life has become a theoria in Aristotle's sense.

Perhaps nowhere the loss is becoming more obvious than in the treatment of Inspiration. It is true, what you, Dr. Preus, and also Bengt Hägglung (Die Hl. Schrift und ihre Deutung in der Theologia Johann Gerhards) point out that we do not find with Gerhard as with all the earlier fathers that elaborate theory of the process of Inspiration as impulsus ad scribendum, suggestio rerum and suggestio verborum. It is true: "Lutheran theology means to say nothing more by its doctrine of inspiration than that Scripture is vere et propie God's Word." But his is true of any doctrine of Biblical inspiration, be it the theology of the Church fathers or of the medieval schoolmen or the Roman Church in Vatican I. "As an adjunct to the doctrine of the divine origin of Scripture, the doctrine of inspiration tells us that the Bible did not drop from heaven as a finished product but that God's Word in scripture comes to us in the human words of prophets and apostles and in the style and thought forms of real men, who wrote out of their own concrete situation and experience, but men whom He has claimed for Himself, called, enlightened, and moved to write not their own thoughts, fancies or insights but His Word" (I, p. 274). This would almost be generally acceptable if the last sentence were clarified. I for one would be ready to accept these sentences, provided it were admitted - and this seems to be implied in the previous sentence - that what Paul wrote, not only God's Word, but also the thought of the apostle. Only then the paradox of which you speak very aptly p. 290f could exist. The holy writers were not only totally involved in the writing of Scripture and wrote from deepest spiritual conviction and experience if what they wrote was also their word and thought. Think of a document like Philemon. In other words: God is certainly the auctor primarius of

the epistle to the Roman, but in such a way that the secondary author, Paul, is also author in the full sense of human authorship. This paradox is obscured or destroyed if say that God provided them with the very words of Scripture and only accommodated Hinself to their linguistic peculiarities of the individual writer. As soon as Paul ceases to be the author of the cry of desperation Rom. 7:24, the meaning of the whole chapter and probably of the whole epistle would vanish. In that case we might as well accept the crude dictation theory in the form of suggestio rerum et verborum and make the holy writers to be mere calami. There is certainly a great difference between Gerhard and the later orthodox formulation, but only a difference of the degree of the expressions used.

If anything is characteristic of Luther's understanding of inspiration it is the paradox that one and the same words are truly God's own words and yet at the same time truly human words. The relationship between the divine and the human author can not be described as co-operation of two authors, not as the relationship between the author and his secretary, not a relationship of co-operation between two authors. It is rather, as Luther saw, quite clearly to be understood as the relationship between the divine and the human nature of Christ. He speaks of this in an exegesis of John 14:16 (Das 14. und 15. Kapitel S. Johannis...gepredigt und ausgelegt, WA 45, 465ff.; das Zitat S. 55 f.): "Wie reimen sich aber diese Wort; 'ich will den Vater bitten etc' zu dem, das er droben gesagt hat: 'Was ihr bitten werdet in meinen Namen, das will ich tun'? damit or anseiget, dass er wahrhaftiger Gott sei und selbet geben wolle, was sie von ihm begehren, hier aber sagt er, Er wolle den Vater bitten, dass er ihnen einen Tröster gebe etc. Wie kann solches von dem, so wahrhaftiger Gott ist und selbat geben wollt, gesagt werden? Dass er selle etwas von einem anderen bitten? denn das gehört ja nicht Gott zu, dass er einem andern untertan sei und von ihm etwas nehmen müsse, sondern dass er selbst alles vermöge, geben und tun könnte. Spitzfindige Köpfe könnten daraus schliessen: "O, das sind nicht Gottes, sondern eines lautern Menschen Wort." In dieser Weise möchten sie "den heiligen Geist zur Schule fuhren", d.h. sie wollen kluger sein als der der uns die Schrift gegeben hat, Luther continues by making clear that there are words in which Christ speaks as true man, and others in which he speaks as God. He, the Godman, is one person, but always in two natures. Luther explains to his hearers briefly the doctrine of the communicatio idiomatum. But in his speech Christ cannot speak simultaneously as God and as man. No one would understand him. "Christus, Gottes Sohn, bittet den Vater etc. nicht nach der göttlichen Natur und Wesen, nach der er mit dem Vater gleich allmächtig ist, sondern darum, dass er wahrhaftiger Mensch und Marien Sohn ist" (556, 25ff,). Hence it is necessary to distinguish between the one person and the two natures.

If we apply this mutatis mutandis to the Bible as the Word of God, we must regard the Scriptures as the Word of God, but we must distinguish between the divine and the human character. We cannot separate them. We cannot say of certain words; they are divine, and of others: they are human. They are all simultaneously divine and human, "indivise" and "inseparabiliter", to use the terms of the Chalcedonense on the natures of Christ. On the other hand we must keep them each in its own nature, "inconfuse, inseparabiliter." The human word in Scripture remains human word, the divine word remains God's Word, and yet they belong together as the divine-human

word, as Christ remains one person in two natures.. The parallel has, of course, its limitations. The oneness of the Godman is not the same as the oneness of the Bible. The Bible is not a divine hypostasis. The unity of the Bible as God's Word and human word is not a "unio hypostatica". It is a unity sui generis. The Bible is not our God as in the religion of the Sikhs, that strange mixture of Hinduism and Islam, who regard their holy book, the Granth as God. But the doctrine of the "Enhypostasia", the assumption that the human nature has its "hypostasis", its "person" in the eternal Son of God might help to elucidate our problem. If I went into a bookshop to buy a Bible, I should not tell the bookseller: I want a copy of the Word of God. He might reply: which book, the Christian or the Jewish or the Koran or the Avesta, or the Upanishads etc.? For the believers of all sorts of religion have different books which they call "Word of God". Hw would find for ma a Christian Bible and say: Why did you not tell me that at once? I have a lot of them, it is still a bestseller. But why is the Bible a bestseller? Suppose it were lost and some archaeologist found it and would try to have it published, he would not find a publisher. Who would buy such a strange book consisting of many quite different scriptures, old laws which are of no importance today, genealogies, stories of different literary value, some very well told and really interesting, others which are full of repetitions and could hardly be appreciated today, books of history which seem to contradict in many places each other. This would certainly be of no interest to modern man. There are side by side wonderful poetry and endless prosaic genealogies. Perhaps a selection from these writings might be feasible, but the present Bible would not be possibly printed.

What then is it, what makes this long series of writings one, a real unity and a very important book at that? It is He, a living person, very God and very man. Genealogies play a great role in the history of mankind. They belong to the oldest forms of human literature, the first attempts at historiography. We find them everywhere on earth. They are regarded as sacred texts. In the old American civilisations they have even been sung by the priests. The genealogies of the Bible end in the genealogies of Jesus. All history from the beginnings of mankind aim at that last geneology which is the geneology of Christ. "To Him all the prophets bear witness ...." says Peter Acts (10:43), and not only the prophets proper, but also the historical books of the Old Testament which are called the "prior prophets" in the Hebrew canon. How can one read the history of King David without thinking of him who is "David's son and Lord"? It has always been the deep conviction of the church that the entire Old Testament is witness to Christ. In the Gospel the risen Lord, enumerating the parts of the canon, says about the whole content of the Old Testament: "These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). The Scripture, which we call the Old Testament, contains the whole Gospel: "Thus it is written that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be preached in his name to all nations..." (v. 45f.).

This is the secret of the Bible. From its first words "And God said" (Gen. 1:3) to its end "Surely I am coming soon" its content is Christ, the eternal Word; the

promise of His coming; His incarnation; His death on the cross; His resurrection and ascension; His coming again in glory to judge the quick and the dead. This is the reason why it remains a sealed book to the world. Even to God's own people with very few exceptions it remained a hidden book, covered with a veil. "To this day", says Paul (2. Cor. 3:14) "When they read the old covenant, that same veil remains unlifted, because only through Christ it is taken away. Yes to this day whenever Moses is read a veil lies over their minds, but when a man turns to the Lord, the veil is removed" (vv. 15f.) What a deep mystery is this lack of understnading. For many centuries this book had accompanied the history of Israel. It grew with this history.

It was read and listened to with deep devotion as God's own word. The psalms were sung in the temple. It was explained in the synagogues. It was memorized by the scholars. I know of people in present day Israel who know the whole book of Isaiah by heart. It was expounded by the rabbis, not very weel indeed. One has to read the treatises of the Mishna, the vast volumes of the entire Talmud to understand the tremendous work done by Jewish scholars for centuries. But the tremendous tragedy was that all these labours, these minute attempts to understand the holy words have not produced anything worthwhile. As soon as Jesus was rejected, the Old Testament became the Bible of the Church and was no longer understood in the synagogue. Not one great commentary has been written by the rabbis. Their scholarship remained in the sphere of casuistic interpretations of the numerous laws, in the investigation of the secret meaning of individual words and letters. Some rabbis became philosophers and wrote highly important philosophical treatises. But even there where their political and social situation would have made it possible no work on great Biblical theology was produced. Only modern Judaism, influenced and encouraged by Christian theology, has produced a new theological literature.

A christological understanding of Holy Scripture would have been attainable to our orthodox fathers if they had tried to understand the inspiration of the Scriptures primarily as an important chapter of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. There are many gifts and many functions of the Holy Spirit. But according to what Jesus Himself teaches in his last discourses according to St. John nothing is more important than the witness He bears to Christ: "He will bear witness to me" (John 15:26) "He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you" (16:14). This does not refer to the gospels only. Our fathers should have seen that the Bible is not essentially first <u>information</u> about God and about what we need for our salvation. Such information the Holy Spirit gives us, of course, the most reliable, truthful information (14:26; 15:26; 16:13). For He is the "Spirit of truth". How could he speak anything else but truth. But the truth of the Word of God is obviously more than correct and complete information. It could well be that a person has the fullest knowledge of the Bible, full information on the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the person of Christ and yet something would be missing. Even the devil knows and accepts as correct the statements of the Creeds - with one exception. He could not say "our Lord". He had to leave out from the Nicene Creed the words "for <u>us</u> and for <u>our</u> salvation", "crucified for <u>us</u>.". And just in these words that is contained which makes the information truth in the full sense of the Christian faith, <u>saving truth</u>, truth not as a sum of theoretical statements, but as a person.

The message of the Bible is not; There is a God, but "I am the God of your father, The God of Abroham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob" (Ex. 3:6), the "I AM WHO I AM" (v. 14)). This great I am is continued in the Ego Eimi of the Fourth Gospel: "I am the good shepherd", "I am the light of the World", "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" etc. The entire Old Testament is witness to the coming Christ. In the Bible, the whole Bible, God speaks to us and demands from us the answer of faith. All this our fathers knew. But speaking not only the language of Christian theology, but also the language of Aristotle's philosophy, they did not express it clearly enough in their basic statements. Of course, they deal with the love of God in several places, e.g. in the discussion of the bonitas and the misericirdia Dei, but the bulk of the treatise is dedicated to the attributes which belong to the sphere of philosophy. One is tempted to think of the famous words from Pascal's Memorial in that night hour of 1653 when the reality of God overwhelmed him: "Dieu d'Abraham, Dieu d'Isaac, Dieu de Jacob, non des philosophes et les sages..." This is the God of Scripture, the God to whom the Holy Spirit bears witness.

This was Luther's understanding of Holy Scripture, He accepts the traditional doctrine of the inspiration of the Bible as a matter of course, but without the emphasis of his successors. Whilst not in the Bible I would not believe that 600,000 people who went through the Red Sea in two hours, he says after he has figured out how much time that passage would require under normal circumstances. He does not doubt any of the Biblical statements. But what does this mean for the understanding of Scripture? The problem of inerrancy, so widely today, was to him no problem at all. One can accept the absolute accuracy of all the facts recorded in the Bible without being a Christian. Luthers exegetical writings was well as his sermons show what to him it means to understand the Bible. It means to find Christ in it, not by way of artificial allegoresis, though he sometimes in his sermons seems to forget his rule. His own interpretation has been called a "spiritual understanding" (see Karl Holl, Luthers Bedeutung für den Fortschritt der Auslegungskunst, Gesammelte Aufsätze Bd.I.) While the later fathers tried to prove that the Bible is the most perfect book, also in its language free from grammatical mistakes and unrefined speech, Luther has a very realistic view of the Scriptures, especially the Old Testament which might not correspond to our literary taste. He compares it with the manger and the swaddling clothes in which Christ lies. His favourite book in the Old Testament was the Psalter. One may well ask whether his christological understanding of so many psalms does justice to their original meaning. Many of his views would not be shared by us. But as regards the psalms as a whole, one can say that his "unhistorical" interpretation does reach into depths which are otherwise inaccessible to the ordinary reader today. It should not be forgotten that the Psalter has been the foremost devotional book of the Church. Psalms belong to the daily prayer of the church. Each of them gets a new meaning by the custom to add to its text the Gloria Patri. This praise of the Triune God is the seal by which we declare: This psalm belongs to the church and can be properly understood in the church only.

This leads to the problem of the historical understanding of the Bible. Our fathers agree with Luther that the Bible must be understood as a book or a collection of books written in the courses of centuries as documents of a holy history. It is quite astonishing to observe thediligence with which Luther tried to understand this history. The orthodox fathers have been his worthy successors also in this respect. An amazing amountof historical knowledge is contained in the vast dogmatic volumes. They were, of course, limited by the fact that the means and methods of historical research were still underdeveloped. One must never forget that the Middle Ages had to rely on very limited sources. Church history was at the time of Luther mainly determined by the remnants of historical traditions contained in the Historia Tripartita. All the proof texts which Aquinas quotes for his doctrine of the papacy are forgeries of the Dark Ages when pious monks wrote historical documents as they should have existed. One of the greatest weaknesses of the theological argumentation of Thomas is his constant reliance on Dionysius Arepogatia whom he quoted in more than 1700 passages as an apostolic authority. His argument for infant baptism e.g. is a quotation of the "Ecclesiastical Hiearchy": "Our divine leaders (i.e. the apostles) have approved that infants may be accepted for baptism". This was for him Pauline theology since Dionysius regarded a disciple of Paul (Acts 17:34). Only slowly the forgeries were discovered by the great humanists like laurentius Valla. In this context the greatest of the historians of the Orthodox age should have more appreciated than it is being done in your great work, Matthias Flacius. His deviations in the doctrine of man have nigrated his name with the fathers although he was, as far as I can see, the only one who had fully understood Luther's rejection of the theologia naturalis. To do justice to him I quote Wilhelm Dilthey ("Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen...Ges. Aufsätze Vol. II, 117; but see the whole passage 117-27) who says of him: "Ursprünglich von philologischen Studien in Deutschland und Italien ausgegangen, der erste umfassende protestantische Kirchenhistoriker, dem die ganze patristische Literatur mit ihrer hermeneutischen Methode und Regelaufstellung vertraut war, ein eminenter Kenner der Bibel, wie ihm dies selbst Richard Simon zugestand: "übertrifft Flacius, nach dem Masse seiner Zeit gemessen, in bezug auf selbständige Forschung und aus ihr erwachsener Regelbildung die Mehrzahl seiner Nachfolger, und hat so auf lange hinaus die hermeneutische Wissenschaft bestimmt." Dilthey finds his importance especially in his Clavis of 1567 (der "goldene Schlüsses, wie ihn die dankbare lutherische Kirche nennt"). Dilthey mentions especially the second preface in which Flacius shows how the lack of linguistic knowledge and the influence of the philosophy of Aristotle had perverted the true understanding of the Scriptures and how pious teachers, first of all Luther, had restored the pure word of life. In great modesty he wants to join these teachers.

It would be worthwhile to study again this great historian who was neglected because the Orthodox fathers had to concentrate on dogmatics. Then it would become clear where his limitations are. His hermeneutics is mainly directed against the Roman theology which had at Trent condemned the sola scriptura. He emphasises the sufficiency and perspicuity of the Bible and elaborates on Luthers principle that Scripture must be interpreted by Scripture. What he did not see and what no scholar of his age could understand, is a difficulty which the Bible itself presents. What

is inspiration of Holy Scripture? When the church fathers had to answer this question they could not understand a basic difference between that inspiration which was ascribed in the ancient world to many books, and the Inspiration which is peculiar to the Biblical writings. The word "inspiration" is used in very many meanings. The present English language loves this word so that any address or lecture or political speech may be called "inspiring" - which may be an ingeritance of the 17th century witts its multitude of religious enthusiasts. Even in the Lutheran churches you can hear today "inspiring" speeches. In Pietistic meetings the participants "feel" the presence of the Spirit. It is astonishing to see the multitude of effects which are attributed to the Holy Spirit from worldwide ecumenical gatherings to the small meetings of some Christian students. Americal has produced even some new holy Scriptures, the Book of Mormon and "Science and Health" by that lady who was too modest to claim that she herself had produced it. In Europe, especially in Germany, the Holy Spirit puts new confessions in the mouth of people who are tired of the ones, (Barmen, Leuenberg). We seem to live in a Pentecostal Age even apart from the Pentecostal Movements proper.

There are, of course, inspirations of a different type as that experience in which Nietzsche wrote his "Zarathustra" or Max Werfel his "Song of Bernadette". We have touching stories of great scientists who describe how their great discoveries were "given" to them. There are cases of a sort of "automatic writing", not caused by ordinary means. We know of such phenomena also in the Bible. They were claimed by genuine or by false prophets, which then raises the question what is genuine inspiration and what not, what is inspiration by the Holy Spirit and what is caused by the devil and demonic influences.

The Church grew up in a world full of such phenomena. This made it compulsory for the men of the church and especially for its theologians "to discern the spirits". The apostles Paul and John had to face this problem in their congregations. The rise of the Montanist movement in the 2nd century caused Miltiades to write his book "That a prophet must not speak in ecstasy" which has been lost. The same movement which almost split the church in East and soon also in Carthage caused the great Bible scholar Origen to abandon the "mantic" theory of the inspiration of the Scripture which had been held by Philo and to understand inspiration as a sort of illumination. It is noteworthy that there was not a properly Christian theory on the nature of Inspiration. The simple reason is that the Bible reports only the fact of inspiration in a few short passages, but says nothing on the process of inspiration. This is true even of the loci classici 2. Tim. 3:16 and 2 Peter 1:19ff. All we learn is that all Scipture is inspired by God, that the prophets have not spoken on their own will, but at the impulse of the Holy Spirit and that there is no essential difference between the oral proclamation and the written Word of God. These passages must of course be supplemented by the numerous passages in the Bible which describe the way how the Word of God came to men in various ways. But the Bible does not contain a description of the process or processes of inspiration. As in many cases we have to be satisfied with what we read and not to try to know more than what God has told us in his word.

If we ask the question what the Bible tells us about the origin of the biblical writings we have first to realize that this question is not answered by the doctrine of Inspiration. This doctrine tells us how the Scriptures came into existence as the Word of God. But we have seen that they came always simultaneously into existence as truly human word. What else they may be to us Christians, they are alos human literature. In many cases it is not difficult to understand the human process. We know how and why Paul wrote his letter to Philemon. We also know how the Gospel of Luke came into existence, for Luke himself has told us that. The same is true of writings of the Old Testament, e.g. the books of Jeremiah and Ezecfiel, of Amos and Hosea. But in many cases we cannot resonstruct the process. That Moses wrote the pentateuch, perhaps with the exception of the last verses which the rabbis ascribed to Josuah, cannot be concluded from the fact that Jesus quotes the Pentateuch as "Moses". How should he have quoted it? Perhaps with a scientific explanation of the possibility of sources? That he quotes Is. 53 as "Isaiah" does not mean that he expressly rejects the possibility that the book of Isaiah was later augmented. It is the name of the book which he uses as everybody did and still today does. We know how the writing of the book began. The prophet told his disciples to write the prophecies in a book. We have many cases in the history of ancient literature that a book of an author is augmented by members of his school. The disciples of Pythagoras, who formed a sort of almost religious fellowship, were originally forbidden to write something under their own name. All their thoughts and words had to be attributed to their master. The origin of famous and important books was always a problem. Whether Salomon is the author of the entire content of "Proverbs" was already doubted by the rabbis. We find a lot of Wisdom literature in the Orient feely used and quoted everywhere, as we do not know the author of our proverbs. Entire chapters of Proverbs occur in Egyptian literature. Similar problems occur in the New Testament. The use of pseudonyms must not be always regarded as a lie.

These are problems of which the orthodox fathers were not aware, though they could have learnt something of Luther's broadmindedness in such matters. But the problems had to come up. How slowly, is shown even by the history of the Socinians who rejected the doctrine of the Trinity and other essential doctrines, but originally not from arguments of reason. They were strictly Biblicistic in their argumentations. Their original theologians were reluctant to reject what they regarded as doctrine of Scripture. Unbaptized persons they would never admit to their membership. It was only in the course of the 18th century that Rationalism arose which rejected the miracles of the Bible and everything that was not in harmony with human reason. One must clearly distinguish between historical research and rationalistic doubts of the Bible and its doctrines.

Why was historical research necessary? Because the Bible as human work is human literature. It would cease to be the true Word of God if it were not God's Word in the form of human literature. To understand this then is the necessary presupposition for the understanding of the Bible as God's Word. A strange riddle pervades the whole Bible which no theologian has been able to solve. Why is it that almost every important event in the history of salvation is told not once, but twice or

even more often: the conversion of Paul is told three times. In the case of the Gospel we have even a fourfold strand. Why is it that these doublets are not merely simple repetitions, but that they vary from or even contradict each other? Why have we two decalogs, two Lord's Prayer, two baptismal formulas etc.? Already the first church has wondered why we have four gospels and not only one. Harmonies have been attempted, but without success. The Church of Syria replaced the four "separated" ones by Tatian's Diatessaran. Is it accidental that just this church became heretical until it returned to the four? Augustine wrote his famous harmony "De consensu evagelistarum" which is, despite all acumen he displayed, perhaps his weakest book. He tried to harmonize everything. Since his Bible was in Latin he had the task even to harmonize the Greek Bible with the Latin translation from Hebrew. According to the Greek version Jona preached at Niniven for forty days, according to the Hebrew three. He has to harmonize this contradiction by way of allegorizing. The time of the Reformation was confronted with a similar tasks. Flacius, whose hermeneutics is rightly praised by Dilthey, developed the principle that if a certain event is told three times and in different ways it must have occurred three times. So the daughter of Jaivus must have been raised from the death three times. Poor girl and poor parents. In what frame of mind must they have been when the miracle occurred for the third time. What kind of a Saviour must Jesus be if he has no other way to save the beloved dogma of "inerrancy". Something is wrong with the whole mehtod. It has pleased the Holy Spirit to give us the Word in this shape. Obviously what to us is an "error", is not to Him who is the Spirit of Truth. But the matter becomes still more complicated when we look at the Old Testament. Why these constant repetitions in the Pentateuch? Why have we the history of Israel in two versions and with what to any not preconceived reader must be contradictions. Which is the true David, the David of the books of Samuel or the pious David of Chronicles? The differences are of course explained by the various traditions used by the Holy writers. Hence there cannot be any serious objection against the sources underlying the Pentateuch. The pious people who make their jokes about J, E, D and P are just as rediculous as the modern little Jahvusts who proclaim to the American congregations the wisdom which they have learned from infallible professors in Germany. But worse things are to come. We have not only different books and traditions, written or oral, we have even two Bibles, the Hebrew canon and the Septuagint. Our orthodox fathers could not see that problem, but it is evident that the LXX is not only a translation. One has only to think of what it means that the name Jahve is rendered by Kyrios which means, among other things, that any Old Testament passage which has the name Kyrios is referred to Jesus. Everyone knows the problem of the different numbers of years in the Hebrew text and in the Greek speaking synagogues in Jerusalem. Why does the New Testament recognize both Old Testaments, the Hebrew and the Greek? All this wouldbe impossible if the concept of truth which the church had taken over from Greek philosophy were the only possible understanding of truth. In another context we have pointed out that Aristotle's logic does even not apply to the facts of madern science. How much less is God bound to it. His truth can appear, to say it with Luther, "sub specie contra ria". It is the saving truth which may come to us in the disguise of what seems to us false. It is the truth we have to believe,

even where we cannot see it. As Christ's divinity is hidden under his full humanity, so the truth of the Bible may be hidden in, with and under the literary forms of the ancient world in which these books have been written and first published. In the enumeration of the ships which went to Troy for the great war in Homer's Ilias true? Yes, a pious Greek reader of older times might say. For the poet has them direct from the Muse, the daughter of Apollo, The God of truth. This was the understanding of inspiration in ancient paganism. It is not the understanding of Holy Scripture.

What does all this mean to the theologians of Missouri today? It means that they as we all have to rethink our doctrine De Sacra Scriptura. Rethink does not mean that we should copy what German scholarship is presenting to us today. Historical scholarship is not what certain people today call the "historical-critical Method". Such method does not exist. What we need is thorough historical research, accompanied by thorough dogmatic thought. Adolf Harnack was certainly a critical scholar. But strangely enough he held very conservative views concerning the authenticity of the New Testament writings. He was a critic of those scholars who lightheartedly rejected New Testament books or passages because they seemed to them not authentic. The New Testament, said Harnack, is such a small book, the fragment of fragments, that one cannot learn from it only the methods of solid historical citicism. He demanded that the New Testament professor should at least be at home in another field of historical research, be it Old Testament or Judaism or Patristics. Only the knowledge of many writings could give a man that sense of proportion which is needed for solid judgments. And we should clearly distinguish between historical and theological judgments. The historian as such cannot pass a judgment on the historicity of the Virgin Birth or the bodily resurrection of Christ. If he does this, in a positive or negative way, this is a metabasis eis allo genos. I personally fail to see how a Christian theologian can refuse to believe these miracles. If he refuses this faith he acts not as historian.

Dear Doctor and Friend,

Please forgive the length of this letter. It was written under very great difficulties and without the external means which in other parts of the world are at the disposal of theologians. I leave it to you to make any use of what I wrote.

2. February, the of the Nunc dijittis.

Yours in Christ,

(Hermann Sasse.)