

The Lutheran
SPOKESMAN



**“THE SCRIPTURE
CANNOT
BE BROKEN.”**

John 10, 35

OCTOBER 1958

HE HATH MADE US KINGS AND PRIESTS

"Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and has made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. Rev. 1: 5-6.

Here is that precious truth of the universal priesthood of believers. As though it were not enough that our Lord washed us from our sins and took us from the kingdom of Satan into His own blessed Kingdom: He now makes all His children kings and priests! He will not have it that those for whom He shed His blood be subjects of human beings in matters of faith and worship. No one dare stand between His people and their King! Every child of God walks as a king into the throne room of the Most High and bows only before Him who is the King of His kings. The King speaks directly to all His under-kings, His children, and in such a way that they can understand Him in all His utterances and teachings. This He does, of course, through His Word, the Bible.

This precious doctrine is of special comfort for our Christians at this time. For Satan is anxious to upset our people in their convictions, and uses many lies in order to accomplish this. Hasn't he troubled you with the thought: "How come there are so few that have left their synods for conscience sake in this matter of Church Fellowship?" He enlists our flesh in the cry: "How can so many

of our brethren be wrong? How can so many wise theologians go astray?" Or his question takes this turn, "Are you the only ones who have the Spirit of God?" Then remember the doctrine above about our kingship and priesthood and cheerfully answer the Old Foe that we did not learn our religion from majorities or great theologians, but that our blessed Savior has made us kings and that we learned our beliefs directly from the Great King. His Words are sure and clear whether the majorities accept them or not.

Dr. C. F. Walther in an essay delivered in 1883 had this to say on that matter: "Also in our present doctrinal controversy many think: 'Who knows who is right? The Holy Scriptures are not so clear that every person can distinguish that. Wherever the majority turn, that must be the truth.'—But the majority are not doing that in this case. Every Christian must base his faith alone on Holy Scripture. At one time when Arianism had taken hold on nearly the whole of Christendom, Emperor Constantine, who had sided with the Arians, asked Bishop Liberius, who had sided with Athanasius: How great a part of the globe are you, who alone side with the godless man Athanasius and disturb the peace of the whole world?' Liberius answered, 'That I stand alone does not take away the word of faith, for at one time there were to be found only three who opposed the command of the king, 'Daniel 3:1-30.'

Our Christians are also troubled with the remark that they have been

"brianwashed." Evidently this means that they have been misled by a few unstable pastors. Now, if a pastor gives false information or withholds information, this is indeed a very wicked thing. Every Christian should insist on full information, on all the facts. But when you have studied the actual resolutions and essays and articles in church papers of your synod; when you have studied the protests made against the resolutions and the answers to such protests; when you have evaluated these actions and teachings by the measure of the Words of your King and found them to be wanting,—then let no one shake you with such shameful accusations against the kings of the King. Though your pastor may have (as would be his normal duty) alerted you to the errors and drawn your attention to pertinent Bible passages, yet each of you as a king and priest used your royal right to do as the Bereans did (Acts 17, 11) and made your decision on the basis of God's Word.

Satan is not only troubling you with this talk of majorities and brainwashings, but offers them as pleasant salves, as false comfort, to many who have been disturbed by matters in the churches but have not made a decision. The Devil wants people to stop acting like kings and priests, that is, to critically test all things by the Word. He would much rather that all blindly accept the resolutions of synods as correct. He rejoices that these matters are often kept off the agenda of council and voters' meetings, though they

should be the first order of business. When these doctrinal matters are glossed over, then the rights of the kings and priests have been tampered with. When ministers are responsible for "keeping these things quiet" they have made themselves super-priests, who stand between the kings and priests and their King of kings.

It is very dangerous for Christians not to exercise their kingship when they have the opportunity. When they do not use their rights, others will fill the vacuum and exercise kingly rule over them. Then, indeed, brainwashing takes place. We must point to an unhappy example of this. The most effective propaganda is to tell the truth, but only part of it, only that which serves the purpose of the reporter. Thus in the June 22, 1958 issue of the Northwestern Lutheran, page 204, the kings and priests were provided with important information, a "progress report" on the work of the Joint Union Committees of the Synodical Conference, set up in 1956 to attempt to settle the differences which had arisen in the Synodical Conference. We read that the work was "progressing, . . . it was fruitful work too, . . . many a disturbance is seen more clearly . . . and some misunderstandings have been removed . . . It can be reported that a clear-cut, Christ-centered document on the Holy Scriptures was unanimously adopted . . . It remains for us to be patient . . ." Very clearly the members of the Synod were assured of splendid progress!

But what was worse than these

bland generalities with their obvious implications was the matter which was missing entirely. In October 1957 this joint committee met and heard papers on the doctrine of the "Antichrist." A committee then drew up a synthesis of the essays. In January 1958 the committees met and the synthesis was hailed as "clear and unequivocal." Now in this report of the May meeting this matter is not mentioned. Surely it was expected that the report on Anichrist would be adopted. That much progress could have been expected.

One has to search a bit to find the answer. It lies in the "Report to the 9 Districts," where on page 40 we have a short statement, saying: "It was resolved, however, to postpone final disposition of the matter (anti-christ) till we **SHALL HAVE ENTERED IN UPON THE DISCUSSION OF FELLOWSHIP**.'" (Capitals are mine. Ed.)

This is rather unhappy but nevertheless important information for the kings and priests. They would not be lulled into comfortable and patient waiting so readily if they knew that the committees could not even dispose of this matter which had been so fully discussed and agreed upon. This was a matter concerning a doctrine which had been clearly held and taught by the Lutheran Church for 400 years. Yet, they could not agree that this was God' teaching, doctrine of Scripture. But, above all, everyone should be patient, the committees are making good progress! WHO is be-

A TIME TO KEEP SILENCE

When false witnesses were brought against Him, Jesus answered nothing. He held His peace. When Herod questioned Jesus in many words, Jesus answered him nothing. What does this silence of Jesus mean? For one thing it meant that Jesus patiently and willingly endured all the evil that wicked men and hardened sinners heaped upon Him. As the innocent Lamb of God He bore it without opening His mouth. By observing the right time for silence He has atoned for the many times we have spoken when we should have been silent. By bearing the load of our sins without complaint, without striking back in anger, and without railing, Jesus paid the price of our Redemption.

But also Jesus' silence before the

 ing 'brainwashed'?

It was sad enough that Wisconsin was misled to think it was God's will to remain in fellowship with a false church. It was even sadder that people were taught that the problems were capable of being solved at this stage by committees. But when these committee reports are used to imply that great progress is being made, and adverse information is withheld, then God's kings have been mistreated and the honor of the King Himself is involved. Then one must fear that God is angry, as when He said: "**BECAUSE, EVEN BECAUSE THEY HAVE SEDUCED MY PEOPLE, SAYING, PEACE: AND THERE WAS NO PEACE.**" Ezekiel 13, 10a.—W.S.

chief priests, elders, and Herod be-tokened a judgment heavier than words could pronounce. They had their opportunities, golden opportunities to know the truth and to take them to heart. They had had the Word preached to them by powerful and faithful witnesses, but they had turned a deaf ear to the message. When admonished they had refused to repent. And now the time was at hand when silence met them. Jesus answered them not a word. They had refused the testimony and now testimony ceased. What a judgment this was.

Similar judgments come also today over those who refuse to take to heart the admonitions, the words of truth brought to them. There comes a time for faithful confessors of the truth to shake the dust off their feet and turn to those who will heed their words. The silence which ensues for those who have been left may be mistaken by them as a blessed release from troublesome people. They may feel relieved now that they can go their own way without being continually reminded of their misdeeds. But this silence is ominous and the air is heavy with its judgment.

How important it is that we all give a ready ear and show a responsive heart to those who admonish us from Scripture. This certainly has its application in the realtions between children and parents, pupils and teachers, parishioners and pastors and as between one synod and the other. Those who admonish us in the Lord and give

THINGS TO GUARD AGAINST IN OUR APPROACH TOWARD RE-ALIGNMENT

Essay prepared for Spring Conference
Cheyenne, Wyoming, May 6, 1958

E. REIM

Dear Brethren:

When your program committee asked me to write a paper on the subject indicated in the above title, I welcomed the assignment, not for the sake of having something to keep me busy (that has been the least of my problems during these recent months) but for the sake of the topic. Although the committee gave me a free hand to reword its formulation, I have left it just as it appears on the conference program. It recognizes the necessity of a realignment. It suggests careful deliberation rather than precipitate action. It implies that we do not consider ourselves **The** Remnant, but as part of a remnant; not the end-product, but a stage in a process of sifting, the duration of which is entirely in the hands of our good Lord. Above all, it recognizes that there **are** "Things to Guard Against," dangers to be faced, pit-falls to be avoided, temptations to be overcome. I am well aware of the responsibility involved in the writing of such a paper. I know that this will call for searching and perhaps painful self-examination and self-criticism. I pray that you may not be disappointed in the

us sound Scriptural instruction are indeed our true friends.

C. M. Gullerud

In the Lutheran Sentinel.

trust which you have placed in me.

We are gathered as a group that has taken matters of doctrine seriously, both with regard to the statement of such doctrine, and the way in which it is to be translated into life. We have come through a crisis and arrived at a decision. At such times it is so natural to relax, to find a certain measure of satisfaction in having stood one's ground, to engage in a process of building up one's own self-esteem, usually at the expense of others who (in our estimation)* did not meet the test so well. For after all, haven't we stood for the right doctrine?—Or we may sense the danger of such an attitude of complacency and, feeling the need of justifying ourselves before the world as well as before our own consciences, launch forth into an endless round of reviewing the issues, restating the arguments, re-refuting the counter-arguments, reformulating our conclusions—all with the plea that we are contending for the doctrine! Yes, let us hold fast to the form of sound doctrine. But let us not forget another matter which also calls for our keen concern. In his letter to Timothy (I, 4:16) Paul says: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them, for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee."

This Apostolic word suggests not

* This does not, of course, imply that the issue itself is merely a matter of human judgment.—Footnotes added for the sake of preventing possible misunderstanding. —E.R.

only the need for, but also the direction of our study. Let there be no doubt as to the need, namely that we take heed, that danger threatens. Paul spells this out for us in detail when he warns, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And the direction of our study must be that we search our own hearts, frankly and unsparingly. For the foe who has wrought such havoc and confusion in our beloved Synod** is still at work. The partial success that he undeniably achieved last summer will not satisfy him. If some have resisted him when he was seeking to move us to the left, in the direction of indifferentism and incipient unionism, will he not then seek to swerve just those into the opposite direction?

To ignore this danger would be the very blindness against which the Apostle so urgently warns us.

Satan is defeated when men stand on the simple truth of God's Word. But he gains precious ground, not only when men weaken in their adherence to this Word, but also when in an excess of zeal they go beyond it, when they seek to fortify it by well-meant but misguided additions of their own. That is how the Scribes and Pharisees became what they were in the days of the public ministry of our Lord. Let us clearly understand that one particular danger facing us lies in the direction of developing a superorthodoxy, an arrogant attitude of pride

** Referring to the outcome of the 1957 Convention of the Joint Synod of Wisconsin.

and self-esteem that someone in Germany has with rare discernment described as "**Lehrgerechtigkeit.**" I am not suggesting that this would be anyone's conscious and deliberate attitude. But that Satan will be trying to move us in that direction, of that there can be no doubt. And since he did not hesitate to use God's own Word in tempting our Lord Jesus, he will certainly come to us also with his deceitful "It is written." There is good reason for careful and even critical scrutiny of the way in which others have handled Scripture in our controversy. We shall need to continue this procedure. But in so doing, let us learn to be most critical of ourselves, of our own method of interpreting and applying Scripture. Having some rather strong convictions, and aiming at some rather definite objectives, let us be sure, very sure, that we are really drawing those conclusions **out** of Scripture, rather than reading them **into** it. The Devil is an expert on the psychology of controversy!

Another vulnerable target at which he is sure to aim is our flesh, the flesh which we admittedly all have. Was he not already doing this when, long before we came to the point of breaking with our Synod, he showed us in greatest detail just what the dire consequences of such an action would be for our respective careers, when he pointed up the external advantages of staying with an organized church body, when he suggested methods of modulating one's voice of protest just

sufficiently to remain in good standing, even while quieting one's own conscience by what one **has** said? Was not this the old familiar "Spare thyself!" "This shall not be unto thee!"? —And if, by the grace of God, this temptation has been recognized for what it is, will he not come right back with an attack on the other side of this same flesh, seeking to move it to an excess of righteous indignation, to a type of polemical discussion which is deliberately provocative and insufferably sure of having a monopoly of the truth? Furthermore, he knows all about the corrosive effects of self-pity, and will make every effort to lead us into feeling ourselves wronged, misunderstood, mistreated, and to see ourselves as men whose true worth has not been recognized—until we yield to discouragement and withdraw into a shell of bitterness and paralyzing hopelessness. There are many facets to this morbid phenomenon of the martyr complex, and he will explore them all in his efforts to ensnare us. He will try to close our eyes, our understanding, yes, even our hearts, to the efforts that others are making—perhaps along other lines than we have chosen, yet with the same end in view;* perhaps by methods, the inadequacy of which has already been demonstrated to **our** satisfaction, but to which **they** still are clinging in a desperate effort to stave off what they—even as we—

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* and in sincere support of the same principles.

THE BREAD OF LIFE

At this time we introduce the third important book for family devotions, the Lutheran Hymnal. In place of a correlated study in the catechism to supplement the Scripture Reading, we have selected appropriate verses from our finest Chorales. These may be read by a member of the family after the Bible reading or if it is possible, the family may join in singing them.

These mighty hymns which the Lord gave to His Church are powerful weapons. But they are weapons which have to a great extent been moth-balled. These chorales proclaim the mighty works of God and they enlist not only the mind, but the heart itself in worship of the Holy, Holy, Holy. This makes things very difficult for the Evil One. It troubles him enough when the Christian at Christmas re-learns that the Bethlehem-Child is in truth the Son of God. But when with the aid of the truly Lutheran Christmas songs the whole heart and soul of the Christian enters the stable and picks up that Wonderful Babe and holds it tightly, then the Devil is utterly routed.

A very practical reason dictated that we make this change at this time. We have been told by quite a number that they do not use or own the Revised Gausewitz text, which we had been employing. This may involve that we print these devotions separately from the SPOKESMAN in a format where we have space to give alternate references to the old Gausewitz

Catechism. It depends upon what we hear from you.

—W. S.

The numbers after the Scripture Reference refer to the hymns and stanzas in the Lutheran Hymnal.

11-1: Gen. 42:18-28; 529, 1-5

11-2: Gen. 42:29-38; 523, 1-4

11-3: Gen. 43:1-10; 523, 5-8

11-4: Gen. 43:11-15; 521, 1-2

11-5: Gen. 43: 16-25; 521, 3-4

11-6: Gen. 43: 26-34; 521, 5-6

11-7: Gen. 44:1-13; 520, 1-4

11-8: Gen. 44:14-17; 520, 5-9

11-9: Gen. 44:18-34; 520, 10-12

11-10: Gen. 45:1-15; 535, 1-4

11-11: Gen. 45:16-28; 535, 5-9

11-12: Gen. 46:1-7; 518, 1-4

11-13: Gen. 46:28-35; 518, 5-7

11-14: Gen. 47:1-12; 25, 1

11-15: Gen. 47:13-19; 25, 2

11-16: Gen. 47: 20-26; 25, 3-4

11-17: Gen. 47:27-31; 25, 5-6

11-18: Gen. 48:1-11; 598, 1-2

11-19: Gen. 48:12-22; 598, 3-5

11-20: Gen. 49:1-7; 598, 6-8

11-21: Gen. 49:8-12; 598, 9-11

11-22: Gen. 49:13-21; 590, 1

11-23: Gen. 49:22-27; 590, 2

11-24: Gen. 49:28 50:3; 590, 3

11-25: Gen. 50:4-14; 596, 1-4

11-26: Gen. 50:15-26; 596, 5-8

11-27: Ps. 150; 36, 1-3

11-28: Ps. 103; 1-12; 34, 1-2

11-29: Ps. 103:13-22; 34, 3-4

11-30: Ps. 24; 73, 1-3

12-1: Ps. 85; 73, 4-5

12-2: Ps. 2; 69, 1-3

12-3: Psalm 110; 69, 4-6

12-4: Psalm 19; 61, 1-2

12-5: Psalm 145; 61, 3-4

12-6: Psalm 118:1-18; 267

12-7: Psalm 118:19-29; 265, 1-5

12-8: Psalm 6; 62, 1-4

12-9: Psalm 96; 67, 1-3

12-10: Psalm 98; 67, 4-7

12-11: Psalm 72:1-11; 59, 1-3

12-12: Psalm 72:12-20; 59, 4-6

12-13: Luke 1:1-7; 91, 1-5

12-14: Luke 1:8-17; 91, 6-9

12-15: Luke 1:18-25; 92, 1-4

12-16: Luke 1:26-31; 645, 1-5

12-17: Luke 1:32-38; 81, 1-3

12-18: Luke 1:39-45; 81, 4-6

12-19: Luke 1:46-50; 105, 1-4

12-20: Luke 1:51-56; 105, 5-8

12-21: Luke 1:57-66; 77, 1-5

12-22: Luke 1:67-75; 77, 6-10

12-23: Luke 1:76-80; 77, 11-15

12-24: Luke 2:1-7; 85, 1-5

12-25: Luke 2:8-14; 85, 6-10

12-26: Luke 2:15-20; 85, 11-15

12-27: Matt. 1:18-25; 108, 1-4

12-28: John 1:1-14; 80, 1-5

12-29: Luke 2:21-32; 90, 1-4

12-30: Luke 2:33-40; 90, 5-8

12-31: Psalm 90; 112, 1-6

—THINGS TO GUARD AGAINST

(Continued from page 7)

consider a profound catastrophe. If he can get us to ridicule their efforts, to denounce them with an air of lofty condescension, if he can get us to judge them without first sincerely seeking to understand their thinking, then Satan will again have scored a signal success in his unceasing warfare against the souls of men.

These are at least some of the dangers that confront us, or—as our topic has it—“things to guard against in our approach toward realignment.”

(To be continued)

GEMS OF SCRIPTURE

Rom. 3:28, "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

If you would be wise in God's sight, you must despair of your own wisdom and become a fool, "for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God" (1 Cor. 3:18 f).

By means of this paradox St. Paul teaches us that the wisdom of God and the wisdom of this world are completely opposed to one another when it comes to the chief question of Scripture: "WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?" (Acts 16:30). The wisdom of the world answers: "Live a good life, be honest and fair, and you will be saved." On the other hand, the Wisdom of God replies: "Despair of your own goodness and trust alone in Jesus' blood and righteousness, and you will be saved." Thus the wisdom of the world points man to the works of man, while the Wisdom of God directs him alone to the work of Christ which is imputed to him by faith.

THE WISDOM OF MAN

Unfortunately, the wisdom of man—salvation by works—is the doctrine which seems most reasonable to the human mind. It is the natural religion of man and forms the basis of all man-made, heathen religions. Indeed, it is this doctrine of merit and reward which also appeals to the Christian's old Adam, and therefore he must be constantly on his guard.

At the time of Christ it was taught by the Pharisees, and the Lord Jesus

warned His disciples against it: "BEWARE OF THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES" (Mark 8:15, etc.) At the time of Paul, it was professed by the Judaizers, and the Apostle roundly condemned them: "IF ANY MAN PREACH ANY OTHER GOSPEL UNTO YOU THEN THAT YE HAVE RECEIVED, LET HIM BE ACCURSED" (Gal. 1:9). In the same way Luther rejected the wisdom of man—salvation by works—which was taught by the Papists of his day. And, indeed, we also reject this doctrine which is taught by all heathen religions, the work-righteous Papists and the moralizing Protestants of our own day.

In place of the wisdom of man, the Bible and especially the Gospel of Christ, teaches us the Wisdom of God. To the mind of man it seems utterly foolish and unreasonable—that God should save an individual simply by free grace and mercy—that the merits of one Man, Christ, should be imputed to all men. Still more unreasonable is the fact that this grace and mercy is bestowed upon the individual **simply by his believing it and without any effort on his part**. But that, dear friend, is the glorious doctrine contained in the passage before us: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law". Let us consider further this WISDOM OF GOD.

THE WISDOM OF GOD

The above passage is stated in the form of an axiom or a well-established truth. In the previous chapters

St. Paul has shown, first, that the Gentiles have fallen under the condemnation of the law. Next he proves that the Jews themselves are no better. He admonishes them: "Wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things" (Rom. 2:1). Although the Jews possessed the Old Testament "oracles of God," they observed God's law merely in an outward fashion and not from the heart, in spirit or in truth. The situation was just as David had described it by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost: "There is none righteous, no, not one . . . They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable: there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10, 12). **THEREFORE BY THE DEEDS OF THE LAW,"** declares the Apostle, **"THERE SHALL NO FLESH BE JUSTIFIED IN HIS (GOD'S) SIGHT: FOR BY THE LAW IS THE KNOWLEDGE OF SIN"** (Rom. 3:20).

Is there, then, a way in which man can be saved? Indeed there is, thank God! It is the way revealed in the Old Testament prophecies and in the New Testament fulfillment: It is the glad tidings of Christ's merciful work of atonement. Those wonderful tidings most of us have known from our childhood: How the almighty Son of God was miraculously born of the Virgin Mary, how He lived a life of perfect obedience to the will of His heavenly Father, and how He innocently suffered and died for the sins of all men.

Scripture further declares that this redemptive work of Christ was performed specifically for you and for me and for all mankind: For "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them . . . For He hath made Him (Jesus) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:19, 21). Indeed, **CHRIST DIED FOR ALL, AND IN HIS DEATH GOD HAS DECLARED THE WHOLE WORLD JUST!**

Therefore anyone and everyone who despairs of his own righteousness and relies on the righteousness of Christ can rest assured that he too is reconciled to God. Our passage tells us that such a person is "justified" or "declared just by faith"—not by his own works, but simply by **believing in the Lord Jesus as his Savior.** And because he is justified by faith, he has become a dear child of God and has been delivered from God's wrath, from sin, death and eternal damnation. What a wonderful doctrine! The words of the hymn are indeed true!

"Jesus sinners doth receive
Oh, may all this saying ponder
Who in sin's delusions live
And from God and heaven wander!
Here is hope for all who grieve—
Jesus sinners doth receive."
**THE EXPERIENCE OF EVERY
TRUE BELIEVER**

As we approach the Festival of Reformation, we are again reminded of Martin Luther's experience with

this glorious truth of Scripture. Already in his youth Luther's conscience convicted him of sin. But in those early years, he tried to satisfy God's wrath by performing works of merit. Under this delusion he entered the cloister and labored as a monk. He prayed and fasted and tortured himself, but all in vain. He still was a sinner, and in all of his works he found no peace of conscience.

Then, one day in the convent library of Erfurt, young Luther came upon the words of the Prophet Habakkuk: "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." "The just shall live," the young monk reasoned to himself, "by penance and pain, by fasting and fear." As yet the true meaning of these words remained hidden from Martin Luther. Some years later these words occurred to him again as he lay seriously ill in the convent at Bologna: "THE JUST SHALL LIVE BY FAITH;" but still Luther, the monk, failed to grasp their true meaning. Finally, a third time, these same words ran through his mind as he painfully climbed on his hands and knees up the Lateran staircase in Rome. On that occasion the true meaning finally dawned upon him, and thereafter these words became the theme of his life: "The just," he whom God had justified, "shall live by faith," not by his own works but simply by trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Before these words broke upon my mind," the Reformer declared some years later, "I hated God and was

angry with Him because, not content with frightening us sinners by the law and by the miseries of life, He still further increased our torture by the gospel. But when, by the Spirit of God, I understood these words—"The just shall live by faith!"—then I felt born again like a new man; I entered through the open doors into the very Paradise of God!"

The same experience will also be ours, dear friend, when the Holy Spirit leads us to despair of our own righteousness and trust solely and alone in the righteousness of Christ. There is no other righteousness. Christ and His righteousness alone is the Cornerstone and the Rock upon which the true Church of God is built. May we hold fast this Truth to our dying day and ever confess with the Apostle: "Therefore I conclude that I am justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Of ourselves we are poor, lost and condemned creatures, who have transgressed God's commandments in thought, word and deed. But by God's pure grace and mercy we have been justified by faith, we have been made God's dear children, we have peace with God! Yea,

"Now my conscience is at peace
From the Law I stand acquitted;
Christ hath purchased my release
And my every sin remitted.
Naught remains my soul to grieve—
Jesus sinners doth receive."

OH, THANK HIM FOR HIS
GOODNESS! Amen.

—Richard C. Kuehne.

CHURCH FELLOWSHIP

An Epitome of our Faith and Confession

We present to our readers the summary of the confession concerning Church Fellowship, which is being developed at our conferences. The thorough declaration of these various points at present constitutes about 36 pages. The first half, the positive section, was approved as to doctrine last May and the negative section in August of this year at Spokane. An epitome should actually be made after the full text has been revised and approved, serving as a handy summary. This is better called a tentative epitome, which in this case had to precede the thorough treatment since it was a group activity. In drafting such a document it was advisable to agree first on the general outline and the salient points to be treated. It is printed here as a statement of our position in this area of doctrine concerning which so much confusion has been sown in our beloved Lutheran Church. Though our pastors and delegates have agreed on all doctrinal points, text revision is still being made, and thus your comments and suggestions are warmly welcomed.

I. The State of the Controversy.

The conflict which has arisen in regard to this doctrine in the Lutheran Churches in the 20th century centers around two issues: the one has to do with the **extensiveness** of the application of the Scripture injunctions to separate from false churches and

teachers, i.e. **who** is to be avoided; the other has to do with the **intensiveness** of such separation. One side would forbid all joint religious work and worship with such false churches and teachers, while others would tolerate a limited amount and a varied degree of fellowship or cooperation in religious matters with such people as are considered errorists. It is generally agreed that Scripture (with certain exceptions) does not forbid social contacts and associations in these injunctions.

II. The Affirmative.

In this controversy our doctrine, faith, and confession is:

1. Scriptures teach that members of the Church must all speak the same thing. 1 Cor. 1, 10;
2. The Scriptures forbid church fellowship with all who deviate in their teachings from the Word of God;
3. Such forbidden fellowship includes altar, pulpit (the entire ministry of teaching), and prayer fellowship; yes, all working together in the spiritual realm;
4. Suspension of an established fellowship is to take place when it is ascertained that a person or group through a false position is causing divisions and offenses in the church.

III. The Negative.

1. We reject and condemn any limitations on the extent of the application of the Scriptural injunctions to separate from false churches and teachers.

- a. We reject the teaching that the application is limited to non-Christian bodies.
- b. We reject as false the restricting of such separation to those who in some way deny the redemptive work of Christ.
- c. Though there is a correct and proper distinction made between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines, we reject as false the teaching that we are required to separate only from churches and teachers who err in the fundamental doctrines.
- d. We further reject the teaching that only when false teachers and churches no longer listen to admonition are they to be avoided. The errorist is dishonoring Christ and causing divisions by reason of his false position, not by reason of any reaction to admonition. It is not in the sphere of human judgment to determine whether there be any hope that errorists will ever turn from their false paths.

2. We also reject and condemn all limitations on the intensiveness of such divinely commanded separation from errorists.

- a. We reject as false the teaching which would forbid only joint worship services with errorists.
- b. We condemn as false the distinction made between prayer fellowship and joint prayer, as though even when general fellowship is prohibited, an occasional prayer would not be objectionable under certain circumstances.

BOOK REVIEW

DAY BY DAY WE MAGNIFY THEE, Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, Pa., 1950, 437 pages, \$3.00. A book of daily meditations from Luther's writings, arranged according to the year of the church. Compiled and translated by Margarete Steiner and Percy Scott.

This book provides a splendid opportunity for becoming acquainted with the manifold writings of the Reformer, in a little gem for each day of the church year. As the subtitle suggests, the book is arranged with a meditation for each day according to the year of the church, providing a Scripture reading and a short meditation from one of Dr. Luther's sermons or other writings. The authors have done a great deal of work in compiling short, pithy sections which can lead us to know Luther and his approach to the Scriptures very well.

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- c. We also reject fellowshipping (where fellowship has been forbidden) under various guises, such as fellowship without complicity in error, external fellowship without fellowship in the heart, protesting fellowships, cooperation in externals, and the like. Though such expressions are capable of a correct use, they have been used so extensively as licenses for disobedience to the Word of God, that they must be condemned in their misused sense.

However, due care has not always been exercised by the compilers in selecting a portion to go with the Scripture lesson at the head of each page. In some of the sections Luther was not always speaking of precisely the subject of which the text speaks. Also, some of the selections are from the very early works of the Reformer, thereby giving a poor view of his later, more mature theology. Witness, for example, the meditation for Christmas Day, page 33, from his sermon for Christmas Day, 1522, which still contains a measure of Mariolatry.

All in all, however, even with those failings, this is a book full of edification for all of us. On page after page the compilers have let Luther speak and have let us see that what he had to say was not a message solely for his time and his conditions, but that it is the timeless message of the Gospel. An example of just how timely these gems can be is shown us on page 384, a section which might have been written today in this period of unionism. We wish to reproduce this meditation in full that the reader may get a feeling for the real value of this book.

"TRUTH IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN UNITY"

'For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 2 Corinthians 13:8.

"This is so great a good that no

human heart can grasp it (therefore it necessitates such a great and hard fight). It must not be treated lightly, as the world maintains and many people who do not understand, saying we should not fight so hard about an article and thus trample on Christian love; rather, although we err on one small point, if we agree on everything else, we should give in and overlook the difference in order to preserve brotherly and Christian unity and fellowship.

"No, my dear man, do not recommend to me peace and unity when thereby God's Word is lost, for then eternal life and everything else would be lost. In this matter there can be no yielding nor giving way, no, not for love of you or any other person, but everything must yield to the Word, whether it be friend or foe. The Word was given unto us for eternal life and not to further outward peace and unity. The Word and doctrine will create Christian unity or fellowship. Where they reign all else will follow. Where they are not, no concord will ever abide. Therefore do not talk to me about love and friendship, if that means breaking with the Word, or the faith, for the Gospel does not say love brings eternal life, God's grace, and all heavenly treasures, but the Word.

"Sermons from the year 1531. W.A. 34. II.387."

—N. R. C.

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