

The Lutheran
SPOKESMAN



**“THE SCRIPTURE
CANNOT
BE BROKEN.”**

John 10, 35

DECEMBER 1958

Vol. 1

No. 4

Oh, Come! Oh, Come! Emmanuel

ONE OF MANY APPEALS

Note: The following editorial consists of our remarks addressed to the 34th Convention of the Wisconsin Synod at New Ulm, Minnesota in August, 1957. Shortly thereafter the vote was taken on the report of the floor committee on matters of church union. These few brief sentences are submitted here in the belief that they are still of value to us, especially in this present Advent-Christmas season. If the logical progression leaps occasionally, it is because the speakers were limited to 5 minutes at the time, forcing one to hop, skip, and jump to the conclusion.

"We, the delegates of this 34th convention are now faced with one of the greatest decisions of our lives. The Lord is setting this before us and upon us and we know we shall be held to account for what we do. As we prepare to vote it is essential that we be reminded of what exactly is involved in our vote.

The question is not primarily whether we win a brother or not; it is bigger than that. The question is not which vote will keep the Synod together, for it is much bigger than the synod. The question has to do with a Baby, a little Child. For 4000 years the gracious God was preparing a gift for His people on earth. In the fulness of time He placed before the world His only Son, and in Him a full and complete salvation for all. This Babe, the only beautiful thing in all the world, Paul had the

privilege of carrying to the heathen.

He carried this Child untiringly, patiently, lovingly to souls in every hamlet and town, to bless them therewith. But in one thing the Spirit was adamant: this precious gift, our Christ-child, which Paul was carrying from town to town and house to house, **dare not be mutilated.** If the sinful reason of man attacked this life-giving message, then there was enormous danger for all. If the Child was tampered with, then what was left? Then the Churches in Asia Minor, or Macedonia, or Greece would have lost that which alone could save souls, win the erring, comfort the weak and afflicted. And that is why the same Church, which works so lovingly, forgivingly, and patiently with sinners, is nevertheless instructed to take violent, sharp, and decisive action whenever the hand of man is raised against the Christ-child, i.e. when His Word is attacked.

But the churches seldom heeded this. Again and again in each century of the last twenty, men were reluctant and slow to isolate error. Again and again visible churches permitted this precious gift to be spoiled. **The candlestick was taken away, the Child removed from their arms, and the churches permitted to go their own way.**

Now the Lord has been outstandingly gracious and given us His Child to carry before men for 100 years. And in America during the past 50 years Satan has been aiming at us, seeking constantly to contaminate our

beautiful message, to mutilate our Child. The waves of liberalism and unionism, indifference to doctrine and subjectivism have assailed us, and now the godless chatter is eating like a canker at our vital organs. The Church is not at stake, for Christ always conquers. The question in our voting is only this: 'Will He use us in building His Church? May we carry the Christ-child to the world, or do we become a useless vessel, numbered among the many churches which did not appreciate the Gospel enough to suffer all for its preservation? 'Our Church exists to dispense forgiveness of sins. The preservation in our midst of the Child who richly forgives is at stake. Your vote can stem the tide and turn the arrows of the wicked

One, or open the floodgates which will engulf us all. Lord, have mercy upon us!"

Postscript:

I am sure our readers know what followed at the convention. The Wisconsin Synod voted down the recommendation of the Floor Committee to separate from the Missouri Synod on the basis of God's Word. It thereby solidified its sinful position which began with their 1953 resolutions and was continued in 1955 and 1956. In this coming Christmas Season may God bring us all closer to His dear Son, that beholding His glory we may be empowered to count all else in this world as nothing, as long as we have Him, our only Treasure!

W.S.

BRIEF NEWS ITEMS

A new congregation has been organized at Red Wing, Minnesota with about 80 communicants. They are conducting a Christian Day School. The Pastor is the Rev. G. Barthels. They separated from St. John Lutheran Church of the Wisconsin Synod when that congregation determined to stay with the Synodical Conference.

Change of Address:

The Rev. E. Reim

P. O. Box 701

Rhineland, Wisconsin

The Rev. Paul Prueter, formerly of Viroqua, Wisconsin, is now serving our families at Monroe, Michigan.

JAPAN FURLOUGH FUND REPORT

Receipts to date:

Redeemer Lutheran Church

Cheyenne, Wyo. -----\$ 43.51

Rev. Gordon Radtke,

Mankato, Minn. ----- 50.00

Orthodox Luth. Church,

(Rev. Erhart), St. Louis -- 40.00

Total -----\$133.51

Submitted by Pastor M. Witt

Things To Guard Against In Our Approach Toward Realignment

(A continuation of an essay delivered in May 1958, by the Rev. E. Reim) After touching on at least some of the dangers that confront us in our approach toward realignment, the hope is expressed "that recognizing the quality of these dangers will immediately suggest the nature of the cure."

It is first of all, of course, the example of our patient Lord and Savior Himself: who, when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. Let us learn to pray the "Father, forgive them . . .," but not with an air of smug superiority, but as men that are keenly aware of our own need for forgiveness, and who desire nothing more than the restoration of the fellowship that we have lost.

The Apostle Paul elaborates the thought suggested by the above words of Peter, when he writes to the Philippians (ch. 2:5-8):

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The point which the Apostle is here

making, the mind that he would cultivate in his Philippians, is the double one of humility and obedience, or better still, the blending of these two concepts into the single one of a humility that manifests itself in absolute obedience. We shall do well to take each of these concepts by itself. Note how Paul emphasizes the amazing quality of the humility of Christ by pointing to the fact that though He was God, He did not exploit this to His own advantage. Forgoing by deliberate design the opportunities to build His own reputation, He took the successive steps that were to lead to His shameful death. The mind fails to grasp such utter humility, such complete forgetfulness of self. Yet that is the attitude which Paul is trying to instill in us. This will cure us of all posing, of the striking of heroic attitudes, of any attempts to become dramatic in the role that has been assigned to us—as well as of any tendency to become impressed with a sense of our own importance. This will make us willing to be truly humble servants of God, after the pattern of the EBED JEHOVAH, the great Servant of Isaiah 53. And yet, even here a word of warning must be spoken. For true humility is not achieved by talking about it. It is not for us to describe ourselves in such terms time and again. Such an attitude can become both pharasaical and nauseating. Rather than talking about it, let us

simply **be** humble, and let others say it of us. We know that we shall never achieve perfection in this Christian virtue, but we shall be on our way.

The humility of our Lord culminated in His obedience unto death, an obedience that did not falter even though it was the most shameful and cruel death that human ingenuity could invent. It was an obedience that followed along the way that the Heavenly Father and His Holy Spirit led, that implicitly accepted every decision that was thus made for Him.—Here again our obedience inevitably falls far short of that perfection of our Lord, so that our sole comfort is that He was obedient for us, fulfill-

ing **all** righteousness. And yet we follow after, haltingly indeed, but earnestly nevertheless, in order that this mind be also in us, which was in Christ Jesus. Learning His spirit of utter willingness (I delight to do thy will, O my God.—Ps. 40:8); observing His method (It is written—It is written **again**); striving for that attentive listening which notes every inflection, every shading of the Word (which is the real HYPAKOUEIN); and finally, the full and unqualified acceptance that simply says, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Admittedly, we have much to learn in this respect. But surely, we can desire no other way.

(To be continued)

Let Us Pray: "Hallowed Be Thy Name"

"Worthy is the lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the lamb for ever and ever." With all our hearts we desire to join in that heavenly song of praise to the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. But how can it be possible for such sinful mortals as us, to join in a song so heavenly and so sublime that it would hardly seem to have a place

upon this sin-tainted and guilt-laden earth? How can we dare to pray that God's name may be hallowed among us when we see so much of wrong and evil in our lives to which our conscience daily bears witness? It would seem arrogant and unseemly on our part to ask that God's Holy Name should be hallowed among us.

We see the enormity and the terrible nature of our sins as the vials of God's wrath are poured out upon His innocent and holy Son Who is made to be sin for us. If we could see only the suffering which our sins brought to the Savior we would tremble with a nameless fear. We should wish that we had never been born.

It would be farthest from our thoughts to presume to pray that God's name might be hallowed among us, a people who had been the cause of such misery and anguish to One who had not deserved to suffer and to die. To see Him in the garden struggling with the thought of death to the point where His sweat fell to the ground as drops of blood, to see Him shackled and led away to endure the jeers of a scoffing mob, to see Him stripped and scourged, to see Him nailed to the cross, to see Him expiring on the accursed tree—and know that our sins caused it all, this would bring us to flee in terror from the presence of God if it were not for the blessed fact that God has told us clearly that all this the Son has suffered to free us from our sin. This He has done in order to gain for us the privilege of sons and daughters who may pray "Hallowed be Thy name."

As adopted children we pray that all the teaching and preaching among us may from beginning to end be a glorification of the blessed name of Jesus. As the redeemed of God who have been purchased at such a great price we have and should have the greatest abhorrence for the slightest that would bring dishonor to His name. For this reason we pray that God would preserve us from each and every teaching which deviates by so much as one hair's breadth from a single Word of Holy Scripture. We should be ready to endure the extremest pain and the loss of all temporal possessions rather than to sur-

render one jot or tittle of the Holy Word of God. That the pure doctrine of Holy Scripture might be preserved among us in truth and purity—that we might be kept from each and every false teaching, for this we pray when we lift up our hearts to God and say, "Hallowed be Thy Name." The love which God showed when He delivered up His Son for us gives the assurance that this prayer of faith shall be heard and answered.

"Hallowed be Thy Name"—In this prayer we also ask that we might lead lives in accordance with the Holy Word of God. How much we daily need to pray this prayer we may know from the many sins which daily come forth in our lives. As children of God, it is our greatest sorrow and grief to see that in spite of our best intentions and most fervent efforts, words and deeds come forth which do not serve the hallowing of God's name among us. But as such who are truly sorry for this and sincerely desire to put away sin and serve God with a holy life, we call upon God in the first petition to grant us the grace and strength to lead a life which is in accord with the Word of God. "We are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." We pray then in this petition for pure doctrine and a godly life. This grant us dear Father in Heaven.

C. M. GULLERUD
in the Lutheran Sentinel

PHOENIX, ARIZONA

Holy Cross Lutheran Church of Phoenix, Arizona, was organized in two meetings held October 8 and 22. It numbers seven communicants and nine children. This group traces its origin to the summer of 1956, when the Alfred Fremder family moved from Mankato, Minnesota, to Phoenix. (Prof. Fremder was head of the music department at Bethany College.) After worshipping with a Wisconsin Synod congregation for several months, they came to a realization of the fact that this congregation did not support its pastor in his correct position regarding the Missouri Synod and Wisconsin's disobedience to Rom. 16:17.

Together with another family, the Roger Ericsons, who shared this correct position, the Fremders began holding services in their home. They made use of tape recordings generously provided by Immanuel, Mankato. In July of this year they were joined by Richard Hawley of Milwaukee, who began preaching to the group. In August the undersigned and his family moved to Phoenix, thus bringing the group to its present size.

In September a small hall was rented at 1500 East Thomas Road, not far from the center of population of metropolitan Phoenix. This hall will provide ample seating room for 75 and also room for Sunday School. We pray the Lord that our growth may be such that we may soon call a pastor. Until that time, Mr. Hawley

has kindly consented to conduct services for us.

Plans for conducting an intensive canvass are nearly complete, and it is anticipated that Sunday School will begin November 9.

Although the congregation does not feel the need of a formal constitution as yet, it has adopted a "preamble," or reason for existence, in the form of the following confessional statement:

Since the Ev. Lutheran Synodical Conference of North America has become guilty of unionism and indifferentism, and has caused divisions and offences by its failure to maintain complete agreement in doctrine and practice, it has become necessary for a number of congregations, pastors, and individuals to leave the conference. A number of individuals who felt constrained to be ruled alone by the Word of God in doctrine and practice have found it necessary to have that Word preserved among them. In order that this might be accomplished in a God-pleasing manner, these individuals have organized Holy Cross Lutheran Church. In addition to having that Word preserved among them, they also wish to extend the Word to others as Christ commanded in Matt. 28:19-20.

Members of the Holy Cross Lutheran Church believe, teach, and confess

1) The canonical books of the Old and New Testaments are the

inspired, inerrant Word of God; the Word is the sole authority in all matters of doctrine, practice, and life.

2) The Book of Concord (1580), which contains the three universal or ecumenical creeds, The Augsburg Confession, The Apology of the Augsburg Confession., The Smalcald Articles, The Small and Large Catechisms of Dr. Martin Luther, and the Formula of Concord, is a true exposition of the Word of God.

We bespeak the prayers of our fellow-Christians everywhere.

Officers of the congregation are
Mr. Alfred Fremder, President
4219 Indian Lane, NW, Phoenix
Mr. Roger Ericson, Secy-Treas.,
8043 N. 10th St., Phoenix, Ariz.

Submitted by,
Vernon Gerlach

(NOTE—This congregation is in need of Communion ware. Anyone able to help please send to, or communicate with, Mr. Alfred Fremder at above address.—Ed.)

C O N F E R E N C E

PLACE:

Immanuel Lutheran Church
Mankato, Minnesota

PASTOR:

The Rev. G. Radtke
1603 N. Broad St.
Mankato, Minnesota

TIME:

Tuesday, January 13,
9:00 A.M.
to Thursday, January 15,
5:00 P.M.

Please announce your intentions promptly to the host pastor.

AGENDA

Church & Ministry, L. Bernthal;
Concerning Church Fellowship,
W. Schaller, Jr.

Doing Justice to the Gospel in
our Preaching,
M. Witt

Signs of the Last Times,
T. Pederson

First Teachers' Conference in
conjunction

Observers who are interested in working together with us on the drafting of a truly Lutheran confessional position are cordially invited to attend.

E. Reim, Chairman

The Bread of Life

The suggested reading for January and February again include appropriate hymn verses from The Lutheran Hymnal. It might be well to add to this a prayer from The Lutheran Book of Prayer or some other prayer book, before closing with the Lord's Prayer and Blessing. If some had enjoyed the use of the Catechism we would suggest that it would be very profitable to read a small portion of the Catechism at each devotion, simply in sequence, even if the subject matter is not directly related to the reading. Our main goal is that the head of each house utilize the Bible, the Hymnal, and the Catechism in daily devotions.

- 1-1: Psalm 91; 122, 1-5
- 1-2: Psalm 121; 122, 6-8
- 1-3: Psalm 1; 120, 4-6
- 1-4: Matt. 2: 1-6; 130, 1-3
- 1-5: Matt. 2: 7-12; 130, 5-6
- 1-6: Matt. 2: 13-15; 554, 5-6
- 1-7: Matt. 2: 16-18; 273, 1-4
- 1-8: Matt. 2: 19-23; 563, 1-4
- 1-9: Luke 2: 41-47; 296, 1-2
- 1-10: Luke 2: 48-52; 625, 1-5
- 1-11: Matt. 3: 1-6; 63, 1-3
- 1-12: Matt. 3: 7-10; 329, 1-3
- 1-13: Matt. 3: 11-12; 329, 4-5
- 1-14: Matt. 3: 13-17; 387, 5-7
- 1-15: Matt. 4: 1-4; 425, 1-2
- 1-16: Matt. 4: 5-7; 402, 1-3
- 1-17: Matt. 4: 8-11; 402, 4-5

- 1-18: Matt. 4: 12-17; 126, 1-5
- 1-19: Matt. 4: 18-22; 410, 1-4
- 1-20: Matt. 4: 23-25; 34, 1
- 1-21: Matt. 5: 1-6; 523, 1-4
- 1-22: Matt. 5: 7-12; 523, 5-8
- 1-23: Matt. 5: 13-16; 500, 1-3
- 1-24: Matt. 5: 17-20; 377, 1-2
- 1-25: Matt. 5: 21-26; 377, 3-4
- 1-26: Matt. 5: 27-32; 377, 5-6
- 1-27: Matt. 5: 33-37; 377, 7-8
- 1-28: Matt. 5: 38-42; 377, 9-10
- 1-29: Matt. 5: 43-48; 369, 1-6
- 1-30: Matt. 6: 1-4; 640, 3-4
- 1-31: Matt. 6: 5-8; 458, 1-3
- 2-1: Matt. 6: 9-13; 458, 4-6
- 2-2: Matt. 6: 14-18; 458, 7-9
- 2-3: Matt. 6: 19-23; 430, 1-3
- 2-4: Matt. 6: 24-27; 430, 4-6
- 2-5: Matt. 6: 28-34; 430, 7-8
- 2-6: Matt. 7: 1-6; 260, 1-2
- 2-7: Matt. 7: 7-12; 260, 3-4
- 2-8: Matt. 7: 13-20; 260, 5-6
- 2-9: Matt. 7: 21-23; 261, 1-3
- 2-10: Matt. 7: 24-29; 381, 1
- 2-11: Matt. 16: 21-23; 142, 1-2
- 2-12: Matt. 16: 24-28; 142, 3-4
- 1-13: Luke 18: 31-34; 142, 5-6
- 2-14: Luke 9: 51-56; 140, 1-2

Gems of Scripture

Luke 2:13-14

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

To the shepherds keeping watch over their flock in the fields near Bethlehem, the angel of the Lord announced the birth of the Savior. We know that this Savior is none other than the promised Prophet, Priest, and King—the Christ promised unto Adam and Eve and the fathers of the Old Testament.

The day of salvation, the time for the fulfillment of Jehovah's gracious promises to all believers of the Old Testament, has arrived. In the manger in Bethlehem lies a little babe wrapped in swaddling clothes. This babe is different from all other human babies. He is God's eternal Son, born a true man of the Virgin Mary. The eternal majestic God has taken upon Himself the form of true man, in order to redeem all men from sin and eternal separation from the God of love.

Heavenly glory floods the fields of Bethlehem, when the heaven-sent messenger announces the glorious message of the promised Savior's arrival. Suddenly a multitude of the heavenly messengers surround the awe-filled shepherds. The most glorious event in world history is praised by the lips

and voices of an heaven-sent choral group. Angel voices and harmony praise the God of glory, saying: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.

The eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, merciful, majestic God could rightly expect this refrain of praise to have been taken up by the millions of the earth's inhabitants. The angels' song of praise should have resounded from one corner of the earth to the other, as news of the glorious event spread from country to country, and as all creation learned of the birth of God's Son, the Savior of the world. The Psalmist voices the praise which all men should render to the God of salvation thus: "O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless His name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the heathen, His wonders among all people. For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods, etc." (Ps. 96. Please read the remainder of the Psalm in your Bible.)

Alas, even as was the case at the time of Christ's birth, so today the majority of men give glory, not to the Savior-God, but to idols of their own invention, and furthermore, are wittingly or unwittingly intent on self-glorification.

The news announced by the angel some 2,000 years ago has been preached unto all the nations of the earth. In the land of Japan, plans are being made to celebrate the centennial of the year of arrival of the first Protestant missionary. Yet this land is steeped in idolatrous giving of glory to self-created gods. Not only are the ancient Buddhist temples and Shinto shrines making great effort toward reconstructing their places of worship (many of which were destroyed during the war), but this reconstruction is accomplished with money donated by the public, whose attendance at Buddhist and Shinto places of worship is increasing year by year.

Not only are the old temples and shrines being reconstructed, but new shrines dedicated to new deities are increasing. Recently in Japan a \$10,000 shrine was dedicated to the "god of confection and sweets;" another was dedicated to the "god of culinary arts" by restaurant operators from all over the country; another shrine with a nationwide fund-raising campaign is in progress for the "god of noodles;" still others for the "god of the entertainment arts shrine" and "aviation shrine." At the latter, requiem rites are observed annually for all dead victims of airplane crashes, Japanese and foreign.

Ah, it is easy for us to recognize such gross idolatry as a violation of God's majesty, and as ignorance of the eternal glory manifested through God's gift in Christ Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem.

Lest we Americans react to such gross idolatry only with self-righteous horror, we will remind you of a few ways in which we fail to "declare his glory among the heathen," and in fact participate in such gross idolatry. If the earnest Japanese inquirer of the way of salvation attends the unionistic general Protestant chaplain's services in the Tokyo or Yokohama military chapel, what message will he hear? As we would expect, he will hear (generally speaking) a message which reflects the "do-unto-others-as-you-would-have-them-do-unto-you" or the "Jesus-was-a-great-example" type of moralizing address, which has become the mainstay of American community type church message and the unionistic Protestant military chaplains. Such messages touch no one deeply (it is a Buddhist morality with only the names changed,) have a veneer of religiousness—and rob God of His eternal glory as revealed in the birth of Christ Jesus, and give offense to the Japanese inquirer.

"Fear not"—thus the angel prefaced his announcement to the shepherds. We have need of those words when we stand in the presence of the glory of the Lord, when we remember our past neglect and indifference in singing the praises of His inestimable love and mercy shown to us through Christ Jesus. Surely, we would not say that we have been unaffected by the materialistic and self-glorifying attitude of our American environment. Have we lived in such manner that in thought, word, and deed our lives have

reflected the eternal glory of the God-man Christ Jesus, our Savior from sin and giver of eternal life and happiness? Oh, trust in your God who gave such an heavenly gift to us poor sinners, and who restored unto us forgiveness of sins, life and an eternal communion with the Father.

Daily we need to increase in knowledge and appreciation of the good tidings of great joy, which God revealed through the giving of Jesus as the Redeemer from our sins, death, and eternal punishment. By this gift God made known His good will toward men; viz., that the sacrificial life and blood of this God-man shall remove the guilt of all men. By the forgiveness of sins through this gift of the Christ-child, God restores peace between Himself and the sin-cursed human race.

No preacher of the Word, no devout Bible-student member of a congregation will lay claim to a perfect knowledge of God's inestimable gift. As we associate with our heavenly Father by daily study of His Word, the roots of faith in Jesus grow deeper and deeper in the soil of our hearts, our knowledge of and joy in the Savior increases as the years pass. Thus the Apostle prays for the Ephesian Christians: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be

strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph. 3:14-19.) Even as God has promised the believer the great blessedness and joy in heaven when he shall see the Savior face to face, and know Him as He is in the fullness of His divine glory, so God has granted His believers here in time the joy of foretasting heaven, when we behold His glory with the eye of faith through the revelation of this glory in the written Word.

Such a life will also know how to make known to others the gracious good will of the Lord of glory who announced through the angel: "Good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people." Sin-darkened souls are waiting to hear the praises of the Lord of glory and Savior from sin, from your lips and the lips of your chosen and supported representatives.

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (I Cor. 1:30-31.)

Fred G. Tiefel
(abridged)

Theses on Church and Ministry

The companion issue in the troubled churches of today to the matter of church fellowship, is the question of the Church and Ministry. It surely is a sign of the general decadence and externalism of our times that the past generation in the Synodical Conference was unsuccessful in resolving the problems and differences which arose in the early years of this century. The controversy on this doctrine degenerated all too often to the level of "defending a synod's position." In our work of realignment this matter cannot be overlooked. In fact it is not only necessary, but also this is a most propitious time to approach the entire doctrine from a scriptural basis without the hindrance of any partisan attitudes, which have plagued so many previous attempts. The January convention at Mankato will give high priority to a full presentation and discussion of the doctrine of the Church and Ministry. Pastor Leonard Bernthal of Clarkston, Washington will lead the discussion of his paper. For your advance thinking we provide you with his two main thetical formulations:

1. No one is able to understand

the scriptural teaching of the Church unless he keeps fast before his eyes that the word 'church' in the New Testament does not ever mean anything else than congregation of saints or believers.

2. The Lord has entrusted the preaching of the Gospel, and with it the authority of the keys, to His Church, the congregation of saints, not to a corporate body of confessing Christians existing according to an outward prescribed form comprising believers and hypocrites, nor to any specific form of the ministry.

At this time the essayist is preparing a third section on the "Office of the Keys." May the gracious Spirit of the Almighty God give us to discover the same unity here as was our blessing on the doctrine of "Church Fellowship."

W. S.

NOTE: As we go to press we take note of the arrival of the section on the "Authority of the Keys." The thesis for this part reads: "The authority of the keys will never become a tyranny so long as it is exercised solely according to the Word of God upon which it is founded."

REDEEMING THE TIMES

That we are living in times of religious confusion need hardly be said, and yet this confusion crops up in places and to degrees which can only lead us to believe that the falling away which our Lord described as a mark of the last times is indeed upon us.

On June 24-26 of this year the Pacific Northwest District of the Wisconsin Synod met, and according to the Secretary's Report in the NORTH-WESTERN LUTHERAN adopted a Report on Church Union which reveals how much confusion has been sown even among those who a few years ago stood squarely on the Word of God. We wish to quote the key paragraph of the above mentioned report:

"The District nevertheless voiced a protest against the continued practice of fellowship with the Missouri Synod once again. It adopted a report which in essence stated the conviction that the Synod should have broken fellowship with the Missouri Synod last year in New Ulm, and that the present discussions should be carried on according to the principle of II Thessalonians 3:14, 15, viz., as a final stage of brotherly admonition, during which the normal practice of fellowship with the offender is suspended. **It was made clear, however, that the District does not mean this protest as a charge of sin or doctrinal error against the Synod,**

but only as the statement of our convictions as to which Scriptural principle should be guiding our Synod at the present time.' (Emphasis mine—Ed.)

Such statements can only leave the Christian saddened that such unclarity has been placed upon the Word of our God. That one can protest a church practice, that one can state a **conviction** that a body should have taken certain action in church fellowship, and then state that this is not a charge of sin or doctrinal error is utterly confusing. Whether in the Garden of Eden or in the present state of decadence of the church, any disobedience to a directive contained in God's revealed Word is **both** a sin and an error.

* * *

As we write this our newspapers, radio, and television are filled with the death of Pope Pius XII and the election of his successor. By the time you read this, no doubt the election will have been completed, and once again we will have viewed in the election and coronation, the many marks of him "who as God sitteth in the temple of God showing himself that he is God." We may probably expect also a new blast of anathemas against the doctrines of Scripture all the way from Justification by Faith alone to the certainty of our salvation in the blood of Christ.

* * *

Under date of September 1st we have a letter from Professor W. Schaller, Sr., of Winnebago Lutheran

Academy, Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. Two paragraphs from this fine letter will be revealing and strengthening to us all:

"I have terminated fellowship with the Wisconsin Synod. The result of this was that fellowship and call at the Winnebago Lutheran Academy had to be terminated also as the Board and Faculty were not of the same mind.

"As the brethren who have left the Synod before this already are earnestly striving to set up a confession on the differences, especially on Fellowship, and as there is great harmony among them, there would, under God, seem some hope for a future true visible church organization. We naturally hope to work with them."

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A document has reached the desks of many of our pastors entitled "A Report to the Protest Committee" by Professor Carl Lawrenz of the Wisconsin Synod Church Union Committee. This will perhaps prove to be a monumental document, not so much because it states anything new, but because it brings together in one place and clearly many of the errors into which the Wisconsin Synod has fallen in the past five years. Since Pastor E. Reim has made his exhaustive evaluation available to all, we will here state only one observation. That this should have been written by one

calling himself a Lutheran is unthinkable: John Calvin could not have done a better job of placing human reason in a judicial position over the Word of God; the Pope could not have done a better job of sophistry.

Not many years ago it was a foregone conclusion among us that the Christian **never** places his human reason in the position of final judgment, but relies solely on the clear Word of God. That is why it is so shocking to find statements like the following in the aforementioned document: "Termination of church fellowship is called for when you have reached the conviction that admonition is of no further avail . . ." and many similar statements. This whole concept of making our human reasoning the final determining factor is patently unscriptural.

Equally as unLutheran is the sophistical attempt to explain away the clear indictment which the Wisconsin Synod issued against the Missouri Synod in 1955 and before, by attempts to now **interpret** that indictment in such a way as to make it express the thought that Missouri **does** not belong under the indictment of Romans 16:17-18, or to make it unclear whether she does or not. We can only pray that the Lord would keep us in this and all other things ever mindful, not of what is reasonable or unreasonable to us, but only this, "Speak, Lord, thy servant heareth."

N.R.C.

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