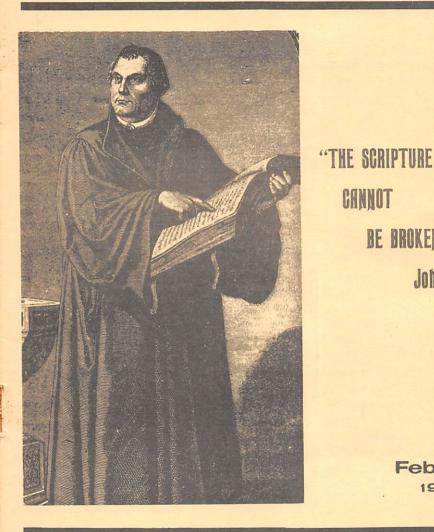
# SPOKESMAN



CANNOT BE BROKEN."

John 10, 35

**February** 1960

From Depths of Woe I Cry to Thee

No. 5 Vol. 2

# ". . . . Decently And In Order"

The group represented by THE LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN has been meeting and working for about two years. There has been no hurry to organize. It is not wisdom for rejected suitors quickly to band together and seek refuge in the security of a new 'party'. We have been betrothed, but not married, unorganized, but not disorganized.

Now it is becoming important to organize ourselves as a church body. There are several reasons. Some have chosen to interpret our lack of organization as a lack of unity. Though organization does not prove unity, it will be wise to remove this cause for offence. More vital is the fact that our joint mission and educational work is growing. A greater degree of organization is required to provide efficient operation. Finally, our numerical growth is a factor.

In the conference report in this issue you will read of the work of a constitution committee. Of special importance was the adoption of Article III, Confession. Our doctrinal position was here defined in four statements.

The first gives the basic statement on the verbally inspired Word as the infallible rule of doctrine and life. By this we confess that we are not a new Church; our doctrine is that of the Apostolic Church.

The second statement declares acceptance of the Book of Concord of 1580. By this we confess that we are in full agreement with the Lutheranism of the 16th century.

The third reads: "We subscribe to the Brief Statement of 1932." By this we confess that we adhere to the *historic* position of the Synodical Conference. For almost 75 years this body championed the principles of *Scripture alone*, *faith alone*, and *grace alone* in opposition to the pseudo-Lutheranism in other American church bodies.

The fourth refers to our new documents on Church Fellowship and Church and Ministry. By this we confess our adherence to these doctrines of Scripture and reject the false Lutheranism current in the Synodical Conference of our day. These documents are at present being prepared for publication.

Our readers are well acquainted with the confessional content of the material in the first three statements. But what are these new errors in the churches which require us to draw up particular statements for our confessional position? We mention a few treated in "Concerning Church Fellowship."

We affirm in this statement that Scripture does not tolerate differences in doctrine among us. Scripture further forbids church fellowship

with all who deviate in their teachings from the Word of God. Over against the Missouri Synod we stress that God forbids *all* fellowship, and reject Missouri's distinction between prayer fellowship and 'joint prayer'. Her abuse of the term "cooperation in externals" is also rejected.

The present position of the Wisconsin and Norwegian (ELS) Synods in these matters is rejected in the section entitled, "Suspension of Established Fellowships." We state here: "We further believe, teach, and confess that established fellowships are to be terminated when it has been ascertained that a person or group is causing divisions and offenses in the church." In the corresponding antithetical section it is stated: "We further reject the teaching that only when false teachers and churches no longer listen to admonition are they to be avoided." The place of brotherly admonition in the mutual relations of Christian brethren is fully discussed. But it is made clear that its place is certainly not in the principles governing separation from errorists.

"Lord, keep us steadfast in Thy Word!"

W.S.

### Interim Conference

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# Gems of Scripture

(Matthew 17:4)

# "Lord. It Is Good For Us To Be Here!"

This is another of the "Gems of Scripture." As its glistening light catches our spiritual eye, we pause to examine it more carefully and to admire its beauty.

These words were first spoken by Peter in ecstasy over what he, together with James and John, was permitted to see on a certain mountain not long before the death of Jesus. These three disciples had been chosen as special witnesses by Jesus to behold an incident in the life of Jesus here on earth which they should never forget, and which they should report and rehearse over and over again, but not until He would be risen again from the dead.

There were several things that caused Peter to burst forth with these words, "Lord, it is good for us to be here." Let us consider some of them and try to re-live with these three disciples the amazing incident which here took place before their very eyes. One of them was that Jesus was transfigured before them. We are told in the following words to some extent what that means: "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." Although the three disciples could see that it was the same Jesus, whom they knew so well, vet He looked much different. A bright light suddenly beamed forth

from Him as though they were trying to look into the brightness of the sun. Not only His face shone with this brightness, but even His clothing appeared as though it had been transfused with a shining light.

At the same time they noticed something else very unusual. Two more people were suddenly present in their little group, men whom they had never seen before. Yet they needed no introduction, for they knew immediately who the two were. They were Moses and Elias, better known to us as Elijah, who both appeared here with glorified bodies. It was indeed strange that the three disciples could recognize them. That they did recognize them, however, is most certain: for Peter in his remarks presently called them by name. Moses and Elias had many centuries earlier come to the end of their earthly sojourn, yet they appeared here in glory with Jesus on this mountain, and the disciples knew who they were!

This was not a mere vision, for the disciples did not only *see* Moses and Elias and the brightly shining Jesus before them. The disciples could also *hear* them speak to one another. St. Luke records the subject of their conversation: "they spake of his decease which he should accomplish in Jerusalem." (9:31) All this was in perfect agreement with what Jesus had told His disciples a few days earlier that He must go up to Jerusalem and be crucified. The disciples could gather that this was a topic of such extreme importance that even Moses and Elias, who were already in glory, showed high interest in conversing about it with Jesus.

Another truth that must have made its deep impression upon the disciples is this: the Lord Jesus in His glory and greatness is in constant communion with also those believers in Him who have already departed this life and are in eternity. Moses and Elias were but representatives of many more, whose souls have already reached the realms of glory. And what more glorious subject with which to praise Jesus might there be, even for them than "His decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem"

Now we can the better understand the words of Peter as he burst forth: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" He was overcome with amazement. Trying to capture these glories of Jesus with his limited capacity, Peter foolishly suggested a way in which this experience might be made to endure: "If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." St. Luke adds the comment about this suggestion: "... not knowing what he said."

If the disciples were wondering

what it all signified, they had not long to wait for an explanation. St. Matthew's record continues: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ve him." With these words is summarized the significance of this whole incident. This Jesus, whom the disciples knew so well as man, is also true God, who was proclaimed here by the Father as God the Son. The disciples heard the very voice of God the Father say so. What the disciples here witnessed at the transfiguration of Jesus were further proofs and evidences, besides those already seen in His miracles, of His infinite greatness, called His "glory." His greatness is not limited to what they here saw. We might call these incidents only little excerpts of His glory as the great God.

One thing is emphasized by the special announcement from the Father: this glorious Son of God, great and mighty as they here beheld Him, has a message for all poor sinners, who were here represented by Peter, James, and John lying on the ground dreadfully frightened before the greatness and majesty of Jesus. This message is vital and cannot bear being slighted. This message is centered in "the decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem" for the atonement of the sins of all the world. This mes-

sage of the Son is so important that the Father on the mount of transfiguration warns: Hear ye Him! If the disciples were impressed by the transfiguration of Jesus, they should all the more take the Father's admonition to heart: Hear ye Him! This Jesus is your gracious God, who comes to bring to you the comforting message of eternal life.

The Father's words are meant not only for these three disciples, but for all sinners. They were meant also for us. The mount of transfiguration is for us the Word of the Gospel. It is in this Gospel where the Lord Jesus invites us to behold special revealed evidences of

His greatness and glory as our Savior-God, with which He shines in His heavenly brightness. It is in this Gospel where we see Him in close communion with all those who are His own, whether they are still in this life or have already departed into eternal glory, speaking about "His decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem." It is in this Gospel where the Father also speaks to us from heaven, and says: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." It is in this Gospel where we join Peter and all other true believers in saying: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!"

G. BARTHELS

### THE REMNANT OF ISRAEL

(From the Chairman's Report, Mankato Conference, Jan. 19, 1960)

In trying to present a picture of the situation in which our Conference finds itself at this time, in reviewing the factors that have brought this situation about, in looking for the possibilities that lie ahead, but particularly in seeking counsel for our problems and guidance as to the way that we should go, let me draw your attention to a brief passage taken from a most striking chapter of Scripture, the Thirtieth of Isaiah.

It is a chapter of powerful contrasts. It speaks of a nation that sought its protection in an alliance with men, but not with God. It was a nation that said to the seers: "See not; and to the prophets, Prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits: Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us." (v. 10-11). It was a nation that dared to say No to the saving counsel of its God (v. 16), and so invited a judgement that had to come — and did come in due time.

And yet the same chapter speaks also in terms of strongest hope, of the help that would come "in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of His people, and healeth the stroke of their wound," (v. 26), a day when the Lord would cause His glorious voice to be heard, the voice that would bring destruction upon the foes that had oppressed them. And out of this maze of contrast comes the particular word to which I would draw your attention, a word spoken to the Remnant that would dwell in Zion at Jerusalem:

Thou shalt weep no more: He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it. He will answer thee.

And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers:

And thine ear shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. (Isaiah 30: 19-21)

What do these words mean to us, in our day?

They tell us, first of all, that whenever things have gone wrong in the Church of God, He has still always preserved a Remnant for Himself, a Remnant to which He is very gracious. It is supremely important to be part of this Remnant. But let us understand clearly that this is not a mere matter of numbers. To find ourselves in a minority does not automatically make us a part of the Remnant, as the Pro-

phet uses the term. Nor do we or any other group have a monopoly on the term. It describes those, and only those, but also all of those, wherever they may be, who hold fast to the Lord, who hear His voice, who cry unto Him.

They further tell us that they of the Remnant shall be comforted... Though their bread be the bread of adversity, and their water a water of affliction (and there are many among us who have learned at first hand, in one way or another, just what those words mean), they have experienced other blessings, precious blessings. Thine eyes shall see thy teachers. We have perhaps had them before, and taken them rather for granted. And then, under the stress of controversy and severe trials, we suddenly see them with new eyes. What they teach carries a deeper meaning, the Word that they bring becomes more and more precious. And then we recognize that what has been given us is more than merely a matter of "teachers," but that it is the Great Teacher Himself who has been dealing with us, that it is His Word that has been preserved for us so wonderfully. When we think of our Conference, which is surely no stranger to adversity and affliction, let us think of how wonderfully rich we are in the Word and in the teaching of that Word that we have in so great a measure.

Let us give particular attention to the final thing that this passage says

to us in our day - about the word that thine ears shall hear behind thee, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left. These words tell us that there is a way, a wonderful, God - appointed way, opened for us by that Blessed Savior who Himself is the Way, the way to life and salvation. They tell us of the Word that guides us on that Way. And they remind us that we shall still, as long as we are in this life, be tempted again and again to stray from that Way, turning either to the right hand, or to the left. That leads to a very practical consideration, or set of considerations.

At this conference, as for some time past, we shall be considering matters of confession. In expressing ourselves on the several issues that are before us we need to guard against two dangers, that of ignoring or being indifferent to issues that do exist, and the other of making issues of things that God has placed into the area of our Christian liberty. Both are of course wrong, and only the Word leads aright: "This is the way, walk ye in it." — Or it may be a matter of dealing

with a point on which a recognized difference exists, where our flesh may on the one hand tempt us to speak so vaguely and in such general terms that the difference is simply not settled, or on the other, to speak in terms that are so aggressive, so challenging and provocative, that the calm and careful study that is called for by the issue becomes impossible and the purpose of the entire discussion is defeated. Can there be any doubt as to the way which Scripture here points out?

We shall in these next days begin to consider the problems of organization. That organization of some kind is needed, we know. That organization can become a stifling thing, destructive of the God-given rights and freedom of congregations and individual Christians, that is something that experience and history have taught again and again. To use wisely the advantages of organization, to guard well against the abuses thereof, to keep our ears and hearts attuned to the Word which shows the way, that will be our task during these next days. May God grant us wisdom and understanding.

E. REIM

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# Redeeming the Times.

In November 1959, representatives of the National Lutheran Council and the Lutheran Church -Missouri Synod met to lay plans for exploratory talks on the theological implications of present and future cooperative activities in American Lutheranism. A threeday meeting is planned for early July of 1960. The agenda will consist of several subjects devoted to the doctrinal basis of cooperation among the church bodies. At the present time the Missouri Synod cooperates with the bodies of the National Lutheran Council in operating service centers for members of the armed forces, in the Lutheran Service, and Lutheran Refugee World Relief. All major Lutheran bodies in America outside of the Synodical Conference are members of the National Lutheran Council.

A permanent Lutheran Immigration Service was inaugurated on January 1, 1960 as a joint agency of the National Lutheran Council and the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod. The latter will contribute 30% of the annual budget of the agency.

The Board for Missions in North and South America of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, announced that it has applied for membership in the Division of Home Missions of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. (This is a joint agency for most protestant groups.) The NLC News Bureau reports with this announcement that "The Missouri Synod has insisted in the past upon 'doctrinal agreement'" before participating . . . in the conduct of jointly controlled mission projects.

The Lutheran Standard reports that Dr. Hillmer, executive secretary of the Missouri Synod Board for Missions, denies that this is a reversal of policy. It seems that Richard Sutcliffe, in his weekly newscast "Church World News" said, "The action brought a pleased smile to the face of American Protestantism . . and perhaps a raised eyebrow or two."

Missouri is perplexed that it is misunderstood by such actions. Its principle of cooperation in externals is clear enough, they feel. But it is only clear to themselves, I am afraid. The more liberal Lutherans and the Protestants interpret these cooperative ventures as cracks in the wall of isolationism. The more conservative forces in Lutheranism are convinced of this. The sociologists and educators have known for a long time that the merging of diverse elements follows a definite pattern. First there is hostility. This must give way to a tolerant attitude.

Next, there must follow an attempt to understand the other person's position. Then comes the key step. cooperation. Merger and federation may or may not follow, but that is not too important. For cooperation signals an end to doctrinal battling. and grants the principle of "relativity" in matters of truth. The other churches know that each additional venture makes it more incongruous and almost impossible for Missouri to insist they alone have the true doctrine and other churches are adherents of false doctrine. Missouri has two opposing desires. She wishes to be associated in the goals of world Lutheranism, a part of Protestantism, and she wishes to be as orthodox as her fathers were.

The new name chosen for the merging of the United Lutheran, Augustana Lutheran Church, Suomi Synod, and the American Evangelical Lutheran Church is "Lutheran Evangelical Lutheran Church in America". The other large merger of the ALC and the ELC and the UELC will be named "The American Lutheran Church."

The name of the first group is indicative of its liberal attitude. The committee placed *Lutheran* as a modification of the *Evangelical Church*, wishing to be considered a Lutheran part of the evangelical churches. More and more we question the current value of the word *evangelical* in church names.

In the Lutheran Standard of October 31, 1959, a writer raises the question: "Who is to be their (Scripture) true and dependable interpreter? Rome says: the church that alone claims to go back to Peter. Anyone outside that church has no claim to salvation. But Protestantism says: the Christian conscience, enlightened by reason. free before men, but bound to the Word of God and guided by the Holy Spirit." This, the writer said. is the basic difference as first expressed by Luther at Worms. It is bad enough that this be presented as a Lutheran principle. But what is worse, I fear, is that this is perhaps accepted by most Lutherans. It is Calvinism rather than Lutheranism. For Lutherans do not interpret Scripture according to their conscience in any sense of the Word. The Word is clear and needs no interpretation.

In this same Reformation message of the Lutheran Standard (for which they called upon Herbert Gezork, Baptist president of the Congregationalist controlled Andover Newton Theological School) we read that we should "pray for a closer fellowship with our Roman Catholic Brethren." At first we thought the Standard was only lenient in allowing a guest writer too much freedom until we read in the Thanksgiving issue of that paper a comment by an editor, "Roman Catholics and Lutherans are both members of the body of Christ."

And again, referring to Protestants, Jews, and Catholics, Dr. Pelikan is reported in the Lutheran (Nov. 25, 1959): "The three faiths should be able to face one another "fraternally and frankly." (Emphasis mine, Ed.) Little wonder that most Lutherans cannot understand confessionalism anymore, and that they are shocked by our actions. They now have the omniscience to know their brethren in the Church whether these be cloaked in the scarlet robes of false teachings or in the white mantles of a pure confession!

It strikes us as remarkable that in the million words already dedicated to the birth control issue no one has managed to say anything. Lutherans, Protestants, Roman Catholics, Jews all agree that God is unable to support and to feed and care for the children which God creates. The Romans of course continue to blunder in their clumsy theology of confusing man's sinfulness with man's nature. They got that from the Greeks who taught men that the mind was better than the body, and the body must be kept in control by the mind. Rome likes to blend that Greek dualism with the Pauline thought of spirit and flesh. Calvinism never was divorced from this concept and they have even made Lutherans feel self-conscious in their correct natural attitude toward God's gifts, as taught by Luther. May the Christian be reminded that the sins do not lie in marriage and its exercises, but in the motives people may have for avoiding children. Why take ye thought for food and raiment? Is not the body more than raiment, and the life more than meat?

W.S.

# A Note Concerning Subscriptions

SPOKESMAN policy has been that all subscriptions expire in June. Persons subscribing in the latter half of a calendar year were supplied with back issues. Those subscribing in the first half were carried over to the following June. This policy will end in June 1960. After June, all new subscriptions will expire one year after they are begun.

New subscriptions taken out between now and this June will still expire in June 1961. Since the SPOKESMAN will become monthly in June the subscription price is raised to \$2.00 per year. Since subscriptions taken out at this time also give the subscriber all 12 issues of volume three, the new price is now in effect.

### The January Conference

This conference was an important conference, well-attended, and hard working. It was a conference with a crowded agenda, extended sessions, and shortened recesses. Progress was made, but not hastily. The matters deliberated and decided were too far-reaching and important to allow that.

All sessions were held at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Mankato, Minnesota, January 19-21. The Rev. Gordon Radtke is pastor at Immanuel congregation.

The editing committee on the conference confession Concerning Church Fellowship, reported the completion of its work. Concerning Church Fellowship will now be made available in printed form. Each previous conference had expressed its doctrinal agreement. This conference did likewise.

Pastor Leonard Bernthal completed his essay on the Church: His paper, together with six propositions which grew out of the Interim Seminar on the doctrine of the Church, held at Mankato early last year, were turned over to an editing committee. When the statement on the doctrine of the Church is in its final form, it too will be printed. The conference reaffirmed its agreement as to doctrinal content, also here.

At the August Red Wing conference a constitution committee was named to prepare the articles that pertain to confession of faith and those which define the functions and responsibilities of the officers. The proposed articles were presented by Pastor Chr. Albrecht, committee chairman, and after discussion and some changes, these were adopted.

Pastor George Barthels presented a re-study of the Brief Statement of 1932, and related it to our own confession of faith. Professor M. Galstad gave an evaluation of the Wisconsin Synod Union Committee Theses on Church Fellowship.

The conference Service with Holy Communion was held on Wednesday evening. Pastor Chr. Albrecht of Watertown, South Dakota, based his sermon, *There is no Difference*, on Romans 3:22b-25.

Pastor C. M. Gullerud, Mission Committee chairman, reported that the committee is disbursing its funds as follows: one third to Immanuel College, and the remaining twothirds to domestic missions and the mission in Japan. The committee asks that only undesignated mission monies be sent to it: ear-marked contributions should be sent directly to the mission or institution designated, whenever possible. Meetings of the Mission Committee are held quarterly. Requests for assistance should be in the hands of the chairman (see address, page 3) on February 20. The committee is also willing to render assistance, whenever possible, to those families or groups of families in need of pastoral service. Such requests should also

be directed to the committee in care of the chairman. The committee is looking forward to the time when mission funds will be available, so that all pastors and missionaries can devote their full time to their ministry, and no longer need seek secular employment.

### CHURCH NEWS 50th Anniversary

The railroad was coming; a new area was being opened for settlement. It was the year 1907 and a town known as Lemmon was in the making. (Lemmon is near the North Dakota border, in the western third of South Dakota.)

Among the new settlers were several Lutheran families. At first, services were held in various homes wherever it was convenient. Then in 1909 St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church was organized and a building erected in 1910.

This event and the following fifty years of God's grace were celebrated on November 1, 1959. Pastor H. E. Rutz of Jamestown, North Dakota, who had served St. Luke's congregation 1939-1946, was the guest speaker at the two anniversary services.

At its organization, St. Luke's Lutheran Church became a member of the Minnesota Synod (which is now a part of the Wisconsin Synod). This relationship, however, was terminated in March, 1959, because of the synod's failure to act in accordance with Romans 16:17,

particularly as this Word of God applies to the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.

In commemorating the past, the future was not forgotten. On the anniversary Sunday \$2,500.00 were added to the building fund, which had previously been established. It is the hope of the congregation to have a new church building in the not too distant future; and as a special memorial, to mark God's wondrous dealing during the past fifty years, the congregation has decided upon the purchase of a new organ.

The anniversary booklet lists the membership as follows: Communicants, 114; Baptized Souls, 230; Voting Members, 38; and Sunday School, 70. The present pastor is the Rev. V. Greve.

#### WATERTOWN, SOUTH DAKOTA -

Man proposes but God disposes! When the item concerning Watertown, South Dakota was written for the December issue, the members of Trinity congregation fully expected to be able to worship in the basement of their new church by the end of November. Then snow and cold weather set in, delaying progress so much that this happy event had to be postponed until Christmas Eve. Consequently, the Mission Festival, installation their pastor, and Cornerstone Laving had to be postponed. Trinity hopes that by the time this appears in The Lutheran Spokesman, the threefold festival will be history.

Church News Headlines

Saginaw, Michigan- Former members of St. Paul's organized Gethsemane Lutheran Church, O. I. Eckert, pastor. Coloma, Michigan-Faith Lutheran recently purchased nine acres for a future church home in the heavily populated Paw Paw Lake area. The pastor is Ralph E. Schaller. Phoenix, Arizona- Holy Cross Lutheran and former members at Resurrection Lutheran have merged as Holy Cross Ev. Lutheran Church, Rev. Wm. H. Wiedenmeyer is pastor. Bowdle, South Dakota-St. John's Lutheran retains property following court action, Paul Albrecht, pastor. Stoddard, Wisconsin-St. Luke's Ev. Lutheran Church is the name of the new congregation at Stoddard, Jonathan Schaller, pastor. Ellensburg, Washington- St. Paul's Lutheran, Gilbert Sydow, pastor, is now renting quarters in a downtown office building. Trinity and St. James of Spokane came to its assistance with an organ and church furniture. Campus News-Students at Immanuel Lutheran College are publishing their own school paper; The Immanuel Beacon, bi-monthly. Subscriptions are \$1.00. Write to Miss Karolyn Klammer, 615 Park Lane, Mankato, Minnesota, for yours. . . . Ronald Roehl is the new part-time instructor at Immanuel Lutheran High School . . . coaching, math, and physics. He taught at Fox Valley Lutheran High before leaving the Wisconsin Synod. . . .

At its annual Voters' Meeting, January 11, Immanuel Lutheran Church of Mankato voted a grant of \$1000 from its Memorial Fund for the establishing of a library at our new school, *Immanuel Lutheran College*. The library will be designed to meet the needs of the several divisions of the school. Primarily, it will serve the theological seminary department. This grant will make it possible to secure some vital reference works as well as other important theological material.

The library will be called the G. W. Fischer Memorial Library, in memory of the sainted former Pastor of Immanuel congregation. We find this very appropriate, since Pastor Fischer was also a moving spirit in the early days of our conference.

D.

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## The Bread of Life

We began a few weeks ago to read from John's Gospel. This book has ever been loved by Christians in a special sense. Luther classed it among the "most important" books of the Bible with Genesis, Romans, and Galatians. It is precious both because it emphasizes again and again that Jesus is true God and because it was written by one of the three disciples who enjoyed the greatest intimacy with our Lord. What could be greater than a book about Jesus inspired by the Holy Ghost and written by a man who was "leaning on Jesus' bosom." God bless our devotions as we stand with John beneath the cross and run with him to the empty tomb! May the eagle (symbol of John in early Christian art) raise us to the heights where he would show us the glory of the Lord!

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