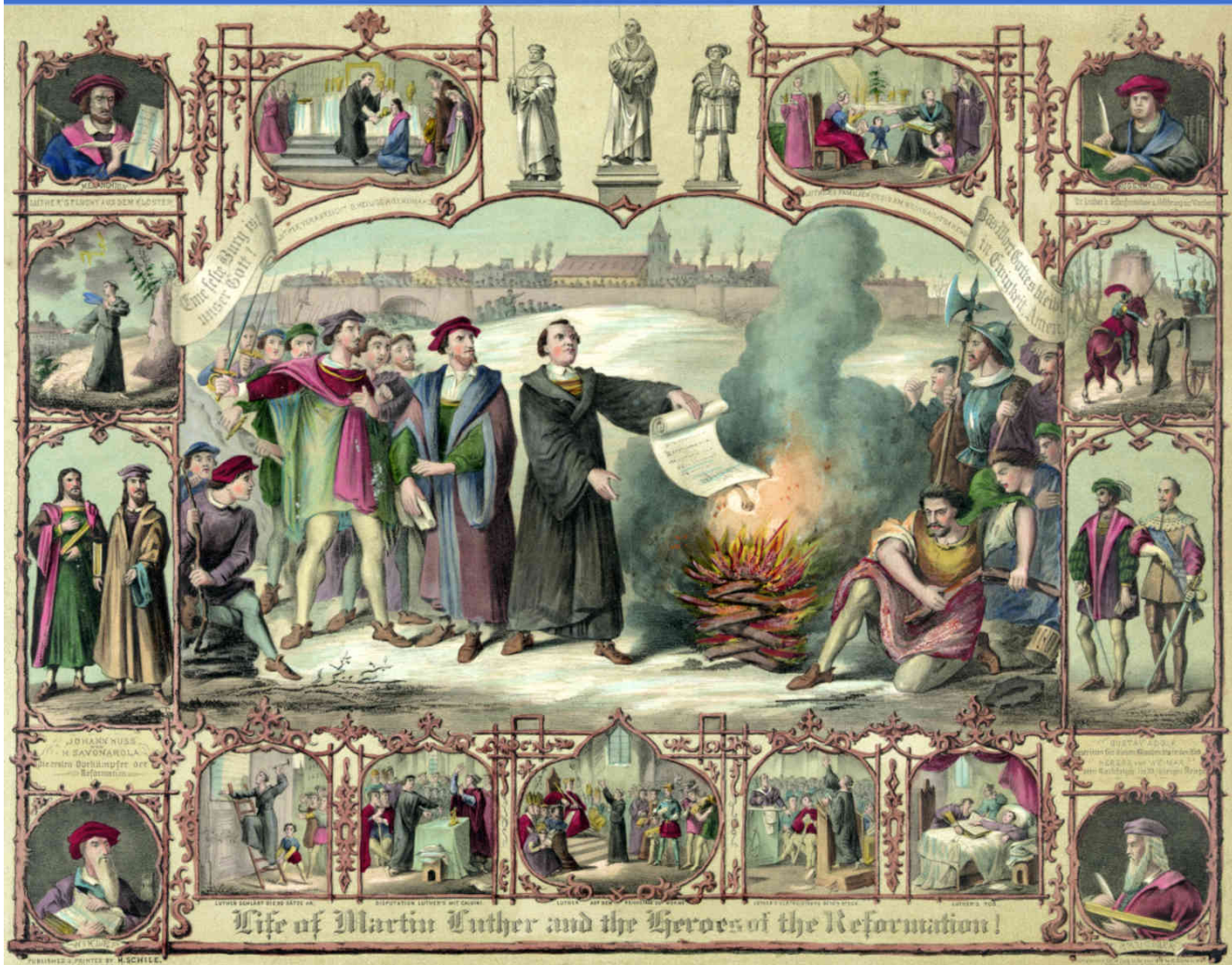


American Lutheran Pastors

The Reformation and the Lutheran Church



The Reformation and the Lutheran Church

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The Reformation and the Lutheran Church

Sermons and Addresses by American Lutheran Pastors

By Various Pastors

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Preface by Lutheran Librarian

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Our Lutheran Church And The Surrounding Denominations By Rev. Juergen Ludwig Neve, D.D., Atchison, Kansas.

“Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, the kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed it in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.” — Matthew 13:31-32.

THE SPECIAL THOUGHT that our Lord wants to emphasize in this parable is the wonderful growth and development of the church which he was about to establish. The Christian Church was indeed insignificant in its beginnings. Those twelve disciples, men of no standing in society, with but little learning, one of them unfaithful, others in need of reproof at frequent occasions, all leaving the Master when the enemy came — such were the beginnings! But soon this parable of the mustard seed began to be wonderfully fulfilled. At Pentecost these disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost, and a power from the most high took possession of them. They went forth as witnesses. Before them and the preaching of those who followed the false gods of the nations sank into the dust. Centuries of terrible persecutions failed to check the victory of the cross. And during the following ages until this hour all the powers of darkness have been at work to overthrow the Church. But in vain. She stands before us today as a tree, the birds of the air, that is the immortal souls, lodging in the branches thereof.

A large tree with many branches — this is the picture we want to hold before our eyes while we speak of “Our Lutheran Church and the surrounding denominations.”

I realize the fact that this is a rather delicate subject. But if there should be members of other churches present here, I wish to assure them that not a single word of this address is intended to hurt their feelings. I am speaking to the Luther League Associations in the State of Iowa. It is the special mission of these Luther League societies to cultivate a denominational spirit. The Lutheran Church being of the conviction that it stands for truths of fundamental importance has not only the good right, but the sacred duty to cultivate in its members a consciousness of the fact that their church differs in genius, doctrine and practice from the denominations surrounding them. We can speak of such differences with all due respect for the convictions of others, with acknowledgment of the divine hand in their history, and with an appreciation of the good they are doing.

In starting let us return to the simile in our parable: The Christian Church a large tree with many branches. You all have observed that sometimes a strong and healthy tree can have among its vigorous and well developed branches some that are exceedingly crooked and deformed. They are considered by the gardener so useless that he at once decides to cut them off and cast them aside. Let me mention a few associations — I purposely do not say denominations or churches — that may be likened to such crooked and deformed branches. The Mormons call themselves by the beautiful name: The Latter Day Saints, and us, with all the rest of Christians, they call gentiles. But we insist that an association such as this, with such fundamental errors, with a genius so demon-like, such a caricature of the communion of saints, be not counted among the Christian churches. So it is with the followers of Swedenborg. They adorn themselves with the beautiful name: The Church of the New Jerusalem. But there is hardly a doctrine of the Christian Church that under their mysterious interpretation by which they try to trace a correspondence between the visible and the invisible world does not appear in the most distorted features. Another very peculiar association are the people of “Christian Science.” We have all heard so much of that system that I need not describe it. I only say it is a queer science and a wild theology. As a rather odd branch on the tree of the Christian Church I mention the Seventh Day Adventists, an association that may be mentioned here because of its exceedingly proselyting spirit. The hobby of these people is the Saturday as the Sabbath. If they had the right conception of the Gospel they would not put so much weight in the observance of the day, a question so subordinate in the New Testament dispensation. All these

associations which I have mentioned ride their hobbies. Christ as the Saviour of sinners is pressed out of the center and their hobby takes his place. The way of salvation is obscured to such an extent that it becomes our duty to warn the souls not to fall into the snares of these sects.

Here a word about the Unitarians and kindred spirits. The Unitarians as a denomination are very weak in America, but Unitarianism is strong because of its many adherents in other churches. What is the attitude of our Lutheran Church to Unitarianism? Our Church papers say with pride that modern theology in its radical forms as higher criticism and denial of the fundamental truths of Christianity, has not yet received any recognition in the Lutheran Church. We can say, the genius of the Lutheran Church stands against all forms of Unitarianism. In America all Lutheran synods, no matter of what type their Lutheranism may be, and what language they may use, form a united front against Unitarian tendencies. If this can not be said of Germany and other countries, it is because the Lutheran Church there exists as State Church, linked together with other spirits who demand their part of the influence upon legislation. What is it that offends the Lutheran Church in Unitarianism? Here again Christ is pressed out of the center. In place of Him they have put a kind father, but one who exists only in the imagination. Harnack, the most prominent interpreter of Unitarianism in Germany, says with plain words in his "Essence of Christianity," that Jesus does not belong to the Gospel, only the Father belongs there. They speak of Him in words of highest praise, but he is not needed as Saviour any more. Atonement for sin is not necessary. There is no wrath of God against the sinner. God is a kind father and forgives without atonement. We must simply take courage, believe in His kindness and under all adversities trust in Him. In this Jesus can teach us. He was, of course, not God, but a most superior man, who has set us an example and showed us how we should trust and believe in God as our father. Do you see how they have robbed Him of His Godhead, of His place as a Mediator and Saviour, and then with empty compliments shown Him His place outside, near the door, where He may serve as teacher and example? Now what is our attitude towards Unitarianism? As Lutherans, with a system of doctrines that gives Christ the central place, that declares Him to be the source of all spiritual life; as Lutherans of the Augsburg Confession who believe in original sin and the wrath of God against the sinner, in the atonement through Christ and justification by faith, we are in our very existence a protest against Unitarianism. And guided by

the Bible which we regard as God's revelation, we say, if the Unitarian tendencies embody themselves, as they have done, in denominations with a negative creed, then such denominations do not belong to the churches that have a right to exist. They belong to the crooked and deformed branches on the tree of the Christian Church.

There has been, in the Lutheran Church of our country, a great deal of discussion on the fellowship question. How far can we go in holding common services with other churches without being disloyal to the truth for which our church stands? I am inclined to warn against, at least, an unqualified acceptance of the so-called Galesburg Rule as far as the denominations are concerned who believe with us in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Church. But I believe that we all agree to this: If we as Lutherans would hold church fellowship with religious societies of the kind such as I have enumerated, we would sin in a two-fold way. First, we would mislead our own people to believe that the differences were of no fundamental character. And second, thus acknowledging these societies as legitimate parts of the Christian Church we would strengthen them in a position by which they do incalculable harm to immortal souls. In either we would fail to do our duty as professing Christians.

Our attention shall soon be directed to a class of churches of which we shall be able to speak with more appreciation; I mean the more orthodox members of the Protestant Church family. But before I can begin with this class I must speak of our attitude to a church that has continued to maintain a singularly unique position, a church strong in numbers, magnificent in organization and self-sufficient in its attitude to the rest of churches. I mean the Roman Catholic Church. In the frame of this address I must be exceedingly brief. Let me say first, we have many things in common with the Catholic Church. It believes with us in the doctrine of the Trinity, in the Godhead of Christ, in the personality of the Holy Ghost, in the doctrine of the vicarious atonement, in the inspiration of the Scriptures. And far be it from me to convey to you the meaning that in this church souls could not be saved. Notwithstanding the many grave errors the Catholic Church has clung to up to this hour, it has produced saints, true saints whose lives we like to study for inspiration. Yet a soul enlightened by the plain Gospel as it shines to all of us from every page of the sacred book can not help but see that the errors are so many; that they so seriously obscure the truth; that they lessen the merits of Christ; that, among the masses, they produce a

mere formal religion devoid of soul and life. The central place in the Catholic system is held by the doctrine of the Church. The Church, but the Catholic Church only, is the visible body of Christ upon earth. Anyone who wants to be a member of the body of Christ must be a member of the Catholic Church. We Protestants distinguish between the invisible Church which is represented by the true believers in all denominations and the visible church as embodied in the different denominations that confess Christ to be the Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

The Roman Church then says: The visible body of Christ upon earth needs a visible head. That is the Pope in Rome, the vicar of Christ. Under this one head, the Catholics say, the whole church among all nations, of all languages must be one organization. We say, absolute unity of organization may not be practical and is not necessary though all parts of the church should strive to confess one Lord, one faith, one baptism. According to our Augsburg Confession the unity must consist in doctrine and need not to be in organization and usages. The Roman Church is a wonderful system of guarantees. To guarantee a correct interpretation of the Scriptures the Pope must be infallible and his declaration ends all discussion. And any problem that comes up is solved by an *ex cathedra dictum* of the Vicar of Christ in the Vatican. No one needs to investigate for himself in the Scriptures. In fact no one should put up his conviction against a finding and the statement of the hierarchy. Even for his salvation the individual must rely not upon the grace of God in Christ, but upon the church which as appointed administrator over the means of grace guarantees him his salvation. Adam Moehler, a celebrated writer of the Catholic Church and a pious man, once said that he always felt uneasy when coming in touch with an individual who claimed that he, by believing on Christ, had the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins. According to Rome the individual's relation to Christ is decided by his relation to the church. We Protestants reverse this sentence and say that his relation to the church is determined by his relation to Christ. So we see there is a wide breach between us and the Catholic Church. And the differences continue to be of such fundamental character that one can hardly discover a ray of hope for coming together and seeing eye to eye. Our God-sent Reformer is the constant target for

the most malicious attacks by men like Jansen and Denifle, and our great Luther scholars find themselves in a continuous warfare against Rome and the manifold forms of Ultramontanism. The possibility of two such radi-

cally opposed positions with churches that both confess Christ to be the Son of God and His blood to be shed for the remission of sins belongs to the problems of psychology which remind us that we live in a world the harmony of which is marred by many discords.

Nearer to us Lutherans stand the Reformed churches by which term we understand the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and also the Methodists and the different kinds of Baptists. They all have grown out of the Reformed church. These denominations must be counted among the stronger branches on the tree of Christianity. Here the common ground is more extensive. What we have in common with them is the great fundamental principles of the Reformation, namely, first: The Word of God is the only source of religious knowledge and the only judge in matters of salvation; and second: Justification before God by Christ through faith only. These two great fundamental principles are an unsurpassable wall against Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and Unitarianism on the other. This common ground with the denominations mentioned is something that we have reason to be thankful for. It is this common ground that enables us Lutherans to enjoy Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and the sermons of Spurgeon, although both men were Baptists.

Yet if we speak of such common ground, we know only too well that when we come to look at it more closely there are differences. These differences prevented Luther from uniting with Zwingli and Calvin. It was not mere stubbornness on the part of the leaders as some have liked to put it, but real difficulties that have kept us apart up to this day, and in the establishment of later-born churches (Methodists, Baptists) other differences have been added. We Lutherans stand upon the principle of the Augsburg Confession, in its seventh article, that unity in doctrine is the indispensable condition of union between churches. If there were no real differences — and I want to say differences of fundamental importance — we would not be justified in resisting a union with these churches. If there are no doctrinal differences of importance dividing us, then our further existence as a Lutheran Church is nothing but a sinful tearing apart the body of Christ. One man asked a Dunkard, which was the distinguishing feature between his church and the other class of Dunkards. The reply was. "We use hooks and eyes and they use buttons." "Is that all?" the man questioned. "No," said the other, "there is one difference more:" "We let our beards grow while

they permit shaving." If it is such things which divide the churches, then the divisions can not be justified before the Word of God.

To point out the differences between us and the Reformed churches, I can, for lack of time, not speak systematically of the distinguishing doctrines. You can easily look up a book on Symbolics for that. But I want to characterize very briefly the genius of these churches from the viewpoint of a Lutheran. Let me first speak of the Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Congregationalists, because they form a separate group as compared with the Methodists and Baptists. These denominations are in character Calvinistic. First, in the emphasis that they lay upon church government. The church government question has driven them apart through conflicts the history of which is written with blood. Here the spirit of the Lutheran Church has been altogether different. It has had serious controversies on doctrinal subjects, but the church government question which it values as an adiaphoron only has never been the cause of divisions. And second, these denominations follow Zwingli and Calvin in their inclination to a certain rationalistic conception of the doctrines on the person of Christ and the means of grace. They accept no mystery if they can possibly help it. The doctrines must be clearly perceived with the human mind. Baptismal regeneration can not be understood, neither can the real presence in the Lord's Supper, therefore the mysteries are explained away. It is true what Kurtz says, speaking of the Lord's Supper: "The Catholics want to see the mystery, the Reformed want to understand it, the Lutherans simply believe it. As rational beings we all feel the temptation to prefer a doctrine that we can understand, but we have always to keep in mind that in the doctrines of the Word of God there is much that we can not understand, that we will never understand, that God has intended to be a mystery for us. One fact has helped me in many a moment and confirmed my belief that our Lutheran view is the only correct one: Luther, in his doctrine of the Lord's Supper, strictly maintained the golden mean. He did away with the transubstantiation of the Roman Catholic Church: The elements of the bread and wine are not transformed into body and blood. But against Zwingli and Calvin he insisted that the bread and wine does not only signify the body and the blood of an absent Saviour who, at best, is present in a spiritual manner, but Christ, in the glorified condition of both of His natures, is present not in the sense of transubstantiation, but in a mysterious way: in, with and under the bread and wine. The golden mean which, as a rule, contains the truth, can not be better hit

than is the case in this doctrine. And third: the churches of which we speak are cultivating a spirit of legalism that, from the beginning, was characteristic to Calvinism. To Luther the relation between God and the soul was that of a father to the child. The believing sinner is justified for Christ's sake and now, prompted by gratitude, he wants to do God's will. And if he comes short no carnal force, but spiritual invitation is used. How different the spirit of Calvin at Geneva and of Knox at Edinburgh. Their ideals were so Old Testament like. God is the stern giver of the moral law, even the New Testament appears as a code of commandments given by Jesus, the king, and the church is to watch over the life of the believers with methods of rigid discipline. Under the reign of Calvin the people of Geneva were surrounded with all kinds of restrictions: fine dress was forbidden, a milliner received two days imprisonment, a girl that had mistreated her mother was burned at the stake. In four years fifty-eight sentences of death, seventy-six decrees of banishment were carried out. Heresy was to be extirpated with force. The Unitarian Michael Servet, while passing through Geneva, was caught by order of Calvin and burned. In England the Puritans were persecuted by the Episcopalians, and in America the Pilgrim Fathers again suppressed the Baptists and Quakers with the sword. How different the spirit of the Lutheran Church! Luther established the principle of the freedom of conscience. The only weapon to be used against heretics was persuasion with the Word of God. These are his words: "Heresy can never be restrained with force. It must be grasped in another way. This is not the sort of battle which can be settled with the sword. The weapon here is to be God's Word. If that does not decide the decision will not be effected by worldly force, though it should drench the whole earth with blood. Heresy is a thing of the soul; no steel can cut it, no fire can burn it out, no waters can drown it. God's Word alone can destroy it." We spoke of the legalistic spirit in the Reformed churches. True, in the course of the centuries they have changed remarkably. Today they do not persecute those of another conviction, and the rigoristic practices of the old Puritans have died out. Yet this legalistic spirit belongs to the very genius of these denominations. In their sermons the law overshadows the Gospel. They say much more of what man shall do to fulfill the moral law than of that what God through Christ has done to bring us into a relation to Him in which we as children of a beloved Father will want to do His holy will. A careful distinction between law and gospel is a peculiar trait of the Lutheran pulpit. The central doctrine in our system

is the doctrine of justification by faith and not the doctrine of God. The American pulpit of today leans to an over-emphasis of the ethical element in preaching. This is due to a number of causes. But the spirit of the Reformed churches has been favorable to it. Here the Lutheran Church has a mission among the protestant denominations of this country. Let us continue to emphasize the fourth article of our Augsburg Confession: Justification by Faith, and let us always remember that not before this article, but following it our Confession speaks of the "new obedience." The Reformed churches have in many ways put their stamp upon the religious life of our country. They have been the leaders in matters of reform. But is it not true that also here their legalistic spirit has asserted itself? Take, for instance, the temperance movement. In the land of Luther, abroad, there has been a widespread awakening to see the need of temperance work. But the church and the church circles over there, with one accord, regard it as the main thing to bring the drunkard together with the Saviour of sinners. They will welcome all helpful legislation and sign petitions asking the authorities for removing temptation, but as the main thing of their work they regard the evangelization part of it, to lead the drunkard to a thorough conversion where he will meet Jesus and, from now on, derive the strength to resist from a living contact with Him. It always seems to me, that in our country the temperance movement, necessary as it is, is too much conducted in the spirit of the law and the Gospel is neglected. And this again, I think, is due to the influences from these denominations.

The Methodists, Baptists, Christians have many traits in common with the group of churches of which we have been speaking. Yet in one respect they have a character of their own, namely, in their conception of conversion and the methods they employ to effect conversion, and therefore we must treat these denominations and our attitude to them separately. We will here leave the immersion question of the Baptist family out of consideration and confine ourselves to the peculiarities in which the Methodists are leading. I shall try briefly to point out the practical differences between us and these churches in three special points:

[1] Under the influence of Methodism every soul not converted is treated like a foreign missionary has to treat a heathen, namely, as an individual outside of the kingdom of God. Baptism is to these churches no real sacrament, not an act in which God imparts His grace making the recipient an heir of salvation. Baptismal regeneration is denied. The act of regeneration

is identified with conversion. So the individual is supposed to have received no grace before the process of conversion begins. This conception accounts for the peculiar character of the Methodist pulpit. The Lutheran Church also knows of conversion which is necessary for every one who, like the prodigal son, has left the father's house. But like this prodigal son knew of a time when he was yet a child in his father's house, so we Lutherans, in our sermons and in all our pastoral work, remind the souls of that relation once established in holy baptism. Under normal conditions this relation simply needed to be kept up by careful nursing with the Word of God. But, all things considered, conditions are not normal, and, therefore, in by far the majority of cases, conversion is necessary. But in working for this end we Lutherans are careful to recognize in the individual what there is left of influences and impressions from the means of grace.

[2] If we observe the methods used in most of the revival meetings we feel offended by the manner in which the preacher tries to accomplish his end. He storms the conscience. He preaches as if he could dictate to the Holy Ghost the time and even the moment of the soul's conversion. How different the spirit of our Lutheran Church which says, in the fifth article of the Augsburg Confession: "For through the instrumentality of the Word and sacrament the Holy Spirit is given, who, when and where it pleases God, works faith in those who hear the Gospel." We simply plow the ground and sow the Word and then leave it to God when and in what manner He will give the fruit. We look at it in the way Christ directs us, Mark 4:26-28: "So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." In contrast to this Methodism wants to harvest right after the sowing. It reminds us of hot-house work, and in so many cases the results are hot-house plants which do not endure when the sun of temptation rises to the test.

[3] The Lutheran Church is criticized by Methodism because of a lack of spirituality. But should it not be true that our Methodist friends frequently confound spirituality with emotionalism? A truly spiritual man may be emotional. It depends upon his disposition. He may be so emotional that his spirituality is unsound. He may show to the outward world little of emotion and yet be truly spiritual, fervent in prayer if you could listen to him when being in his chamber with God alone. We must not expect all Christians to

be after the same pattern. But is it true that the Lutheran Church as a church is lacking in spirituality? In answering this question let me call your attention to the character of our Lutheran hymnology. What a depth of religious feeling in the songs of Paul Gerhardt and in the hymns of that host of men who during and following the Reformation sang the Gospel truth into the hearts of the people! And where in all Christian literature can you find anything that in spiritual depth and true Biblical piety surpasses the writings of a Luther, of a Gerhardt, Arndt, and Scriver and Starck and Bogatzky and Hofacker and Harms? But it belongs to the genius of the Lutheran Church to be opposed to a religious enthusiasm that hangs in the air, that is lacking the foundation of Scripture truth. Emotionalism one might call a "*geistliche Kinderkrankheit*," a disease peculiar to the state of development where the Christian is yet a child in Christ: genuine Lutheran spirituality is the kind of religion that in the end can but satisfy the mature man in Christ.

One word in closing. The result of our investigation is that our Lutheran Church stands for the most perfect form of religion which has been revealed to us by history. But this church is only a fraction of Christendom and one denomination among the many of Protestantism. Is there any prospect that the truth proclaimed in our Augsburg Confession shall prevail and receive universal acknowledgment? Some time ago I read an article of the late Dr. C. P. Krauth, in which he spoke in the most assuring manner. Says he: "I believe that the faith of my church is the faith of God's Word, and as such will yet win its way to every Christian heart." He continues: "Her name may not be worn by Christendom; that she has not desired; for it was given her by her enemies... But there is not a question which now divides the church which will not in the course of time cease to divide. Every question settled makes the decision of the next easier." To these words of Dr. Krauth I will only add this: If we consider in how many things of doctrine and practice the Reformed churches have yielded to Lutheranism and are approaching the Lutheran Church all the time, then we are indeed justified in believing in the ultimate victory of the principles of our Augsburg Confession.

The Work Of The Reformation

By Rev. S. Schillinger, A. M., West Alexandria, Ohio

“Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things? And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.” — 2 Thess. 2:1-12.

Dear Brethren in Christ: —

On the 31st of October, three hundred and eighty-nine years ago, Martin Luther, an humble servant of God, struck the key-note of the Reformation by nailing his ninety-five theses upon the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg. These theses set forth salvation through the merits of Christ apprehended by faith, which is the kernel of all gospel preaching.

The natural inclination of man's heart to forsake this all-important doctrine, and to put in its stead his own works, underlies the apostle's admonition: “Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.” He would say, we beseech you in

the name of Christ and by all that He shall do at His second coming, to be steadfast in those doctrines which you must believe to escape the judgment of divine wrath. Do not suffer yourselves to be deceived when that falling away from the true evangelical doctrines shall begin, and that man of sin, the son of perdition shall introduce his errors, for he shall be revealed. To furnish ourselves with an example of such falling away from the truth, we heed only to consider how the Romish church, with the pope at her head, had buried the saving truth of Christ beneath the rubbish of human works and indulgences. As proof that the wickedness of this wicked one has been revealed we need only to consider the work of the Reformation, which dates its beginning from the 31st of October, 1517.

Nor was it accidental that Luther nailed his theses upon the church-door just on this day. There was an incentive thereto. The following day, viz: the first of November, the anniversary of the church's dedication was to be celebrated, in consequence of which multitudes of people usually assembled there to be supplied with indulgences by permission of his holiness the pope. An indulgence is a writing, which by way of illustration, may be compared with a receipt of the liquidation of a debt, given by permission of the pope to the people to certify that for certain sums of money their sins had been forgiven. Thus the Romish priests withheld from the people the merits of Christ, the true foundation of the forgiveness of sin, and establish the traffic in indulgences to accumulate wealth and to gratify the appetite of that man of sin. The pope, the pretended head of the church, had authorized one named Tetzel to carry on the sale of indulgences in and about Wittenberg, where Luther was faithfully performing the duties of his pastoral office. God, who in His wisdom even makes man's wickedness render Him glory, so arranged affairs, that when Luther admonished several gross sinners, though they acknowledged their guilt, they threw their indulgences before him, supposing them to be authority from the head of the church. Luther would not recognize their indulgences, and refused them absolution on account of their impenitence. The selling of indulgences and its evil influence upon the people put Luther's pen in motion, from which flowed the ninety-five theses that were firmly fixed upon the church door at Wittenberg, and greeted many a poor soul on the morn of the first of November. The world soon heard of this courageous act. In fourteen days the theses were spread throughout all Germany, and that day was fixed as the beginning of a period in church history. Our church, the church of the Reforma-

tion, has ever observed that day. It has ever been to her a day of joy, upon which her children open their hearts in gratitude to God for the blessed Gospel that through this glorious work, was placed upon the candle-stick and again permitted to shine before the world. May our hearts by the grace of God, be engaged this morning in the same service while we consider

The Work of the Reformation.

I. Its necessity. II. Its cause, and III. Its benefits.

I. Its Necessity

In considering the necessity of the Reformation we would naturally inquire about the previous condition of the church. Who can, with an unbiased mind, take a glance at the church's condition and not at once see the words of our text verified? The "falling away" had come; the man of sin occupied a lofty position; he showed himself to be God, thus robbing God of the honor due Him alone. The church with the pope at her head, and the priests with their godless walk, could not have become much more corrupt. That she needed a reformation in doctrine and practice was felt by many an honest soul, and will be admitted by every one who becomes acquainted with the dreadful condition into which she had fallen. The visible church is here meant, for the invisible church can never degenerate. The Romish was then the only generally acknowledged church, for she would not permit any other to exist. The church had in doctrine and morals fallen into the meshes of Satan through the leadership of that man of sin. Instead of acknowledging Christ as the head of the church, the pope, who showed himself to be God, was acknowledged as head and infallible rule over all. Instead of worshiping the living God the Virgin Mary was worshiped and adored as the only mediator between God and man. Instead of teaching and preaching the pure Word of God the pope and priests taught and still teach the doctrines and commandments of men. They falsified the doctrine of the forgiveness of sin, through the merits of Christ alone, and taught that justification before God must be accomplished by man's works, a natural sequence of the vanity of the man of sin. They forbade the universal reading of the Scriptures; taught that matrimony, confirmation, penance, extreme unction and

holy waters were sacraments; forbade certain food at certain times; taught that Christ died for original sin only; sacrificed Christ daily in the mass; mutilated the sacrament of the altar; worshiped images and the dead; placed the pope in the temple of God as the successor of the Apostle Peter; ascribed to him unlimited power over the Word of God; demanded on the part of the people blind obedience to his mandates; claimed that he possessed the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and that he could save whom he would, and whom he would he could damn. These were, and still are some of the false doctrines of the Romish church. She had also turned the temple of God into a den of thieves and in the midst thereof sat the pope, the man of sin, the true anti-christ, the son of perdition, opposing and exalting himself above all that is called God, and showing himself that he is God. But we do not wish to call the Romish church a den of thieves and robbers and murderers and not show you in what respect she was such. She stole that evangelical liberty and freedom from the people which Christ acquired for them through His innocent suffering and death. That liberty which was bestowed upon them freely, by a merciful God, through the blood of His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, she stole and hid beneath the vile authority of the pope's presumption. She robbed them, of the gospel truth which they ought to have known and which should make them free. In what respect did she rob the people of the truth? She took the sacred Scriptures away from them, and contrary to the express words of the Lord: "Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think" (know) "ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me," she forbade their use. Did she take the Scriptures away from the people? The fact that those poor and earnest souls, unto whom the sacred Scriptures were so dear, kept their Bibles concealed because they knew that if the authorities of the church discovered them they must suffer confiscation, exile, or even death, and the fact that Luther found the Bible chained in an antiquated library lest anyone except the priests should peep into it, are sufficient proof that she robbed the people of this sacred treasure. Why was that sacred volume chained like a rapacious beast? Was there any danger that it might tear some one into pieces? No! it was because the authorities feared some one might chance to glance into it, get his eyes opened, and expose the man of sin and his adjutants. Why was it that Luther so earnestly wished to own such a book like that? Was it because he knew the restrictions thrown around it. and the awful penalty if found in his possession at that stage of his career?

Is the Romish church a den of robbers in any other respect? Yes, she also robbed the laity of the blessed sacrament of the altar, administering it only in one kind, withholding the cup, whilst the Lord instituted it and administered it in both, and commanded that both should be administered. Again, she robbed every church member of the priestly rights, and the congregation of the holy office of the ministry. The congregation is stripped of that right to this day. Let this suffice to show you that the Romish church was a spiritual den of robbers, on which account she necessarily needed a Reformation. But in what respect was she a den of murderers? She punished, contrary to the Word of God, those whom she considered apostates, with death, and frequently the most cruel death. We forbear to rehearse the great number of most cruel tortures and murders she perpetrated. No mode was too cruel for her. To prove that she was a den of murderers, we refer you to the horrible tortures of the Romish Inquisition, the cruel persecution of the Waldenses, the night of St. Bartholomew in Paris, where thirty thousand fell martyrs at the hands of the Romish church, many being dragged through the streets with ropes hitched to horses. So enormous was that massacre that the streets flowed with blood. Truly she was “the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.” Rev. 17:6. She is guilty of the burning of John Huss, Jerome of Prague, Latimer and many others. More blood of Christians was spilled during the three centuries previous to the Reformation by anti-christian popes, than during the awful persecutions of the first three centuries by Pagan Rome. When we look at these deeds of cruelty, must we not say that the words of the apostle are truly fulfilled in the pope, who “sitteth in the temple of God,” assuming power unto himself, both over body and soul.

But we have said nothing yet about her deeds of fornication. If the walls could speak they would tell a tale of debauchery indescribable by the human tongue. We forbear here to make any further effort to describe her fornications, for they were so abominable that in the tenth century history calls her the papal kingdom of whoredom. Such was the horrible condition into which the church had morally sunk, and such is the pope who sits in the temple of God, the true anti-christ. Do we yet doubt the necessity of the Reformation? Were poor souls not tortured long enough? It was the time, the appointed time when God heard the cries and groans of His people, and as in the days of old He sent His servant Moses to lead Israel out of Egyp-

tian bondage. He sent His servant Luther to lead His people by the truth from beneath the papal yoke. But let us consider

II. The Cause of the Reformation.

The children of Israel, however, were not led out of the land of Egypt without a cause, and likewise God's people were not liberated from papal oppression without a cause. Concerning this, however, there are various opinions. Some claim that it was ambition on the part of Luther to become distinguished, saying "that he went out from the church simply to create a sensation, that he was a seeker of novelty, and the like." That Luther was not ambitious is evident from his many internal struggles, which he earnestly sought secretly to quiet; also from his own words, when he took his little son upon his knees and said: "I wish I had died when I was a child. I would be willing to give up all the honor I have, or ever will have in this world." This he said because he was confident that if his little Martin should die, he would be happy. If Luther had been an ambitious man, do you suppose he would have wished to have died when he was a child? It is simply one of Rome's slanders against this pious and God-fearing man.

That he sought to become popular and hence left the Romish church, again is not true, for at the time he nailed the ninety-five theses to the church door at Wittenberg he had not the least thought that the consequences would be what they were. He had not the least intention of doing anything in opposition to the Romish church. His intention was to do her a favor. He believed with all his heart that the pope would approve of his work. He could not believe that he would sanction the sale of indulgences and thus encourage such an abominable traffic. Luther was then not yet persuaded that the pope was the one that sitteth in God's temple giving himself out to be God. He could not believe that the pope was the anti-christ. Such a lofty opinion he had of the pope, that just a short time before the appearance of the ban against him, he wrote to Pope Leo X. and called him a lamb among the wolves, and a Daniel in the lion's den. But what happened? Scarcely had Luther thus written when he received the anathema from the pope into his own hands, in which all that he had done by the grace of God, himself and all his friends, were condemned and threatened with destruction of their goods, deprivation of their homes, banishment, and even death.

Now Luther's eyes were opened. He saw as clear as the sunlight that the pope really was the anti-christ. But he was far from being in the least frightened by the pope's bull; on the contrary, he wrote to Spalatine: "Now I am much easier, since I have learned to know for certain that the pope really is the antichrist, and his chair the throne of Satan."

That Luther went out from the Romish church is also false. When he nailed his theses to the church door he had not the least intention to leave the church. His intention was to remain in her, and by the grace of God and faithful application of His Word, do what he could to purify and reform her. That was his earnest purpose and intention. The Spirit of God had testified that the mystery of iniquity had been working long enough, and that the time had come when the inspired Word should be applied with all its power. He applied that Word which "is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," Heb. 4:12, and it was on account of the truth of God's Word that he was excommunicated. The Words of our Savior are here applicable: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you for my sake. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake."

Finally, that Luther was an innovator, and sought to set before the world new things, is also false. Where did he do anything that was new? When did he preach or teach anything different from the prophets and apostles of old? No, my dear hearers! What Luther did had been done centuries before. He preached the old, old gospel of Christ and Him crucified, which the prophets and apostles had preached before, and which for many years had been sadly neglected by the Romish church. He taught and preached, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and that Word was the cause of the Reformation. It was not so much the act of nailing the theses upon the church door, as that which they contained, that brought about this glorious work. It was that almighty truth, the everlasting Gospel which John in his dream saw the angel bearing through the heavens, the Lamb of which he writes in the 14th chapter and 6th. verse of Revelations: "I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them, that dwell on the earth, and to every nation and kindred and tongue

and people.” It was the everlasting Gospel, the kernel of the ninety-five theses, which spread in fourteen days throughout entire Germany, that breathed vitality into the work of the Reformation, and it must be admitted, too, that this great and glorious work has been instrumental in bringing the Gospel to many peoples, nations, tongues and kindreds. The Word of Almighty God was the cause of the Reformation, for human skill could not have spread it so rapidly and at the same time withstood the mighty enemy who had occupied the holy places of the Lord. But

III. What Are the Benefits of the Reformation?

The work of the Reformation has been productive also of glorious benefits. In speaking of these let us, however not imagine, as so many do, that we have liberties resulting therefrom which would be only a reproach to this glorious work. We must not leave out of sight its real benefits, and turn to results which are entirely foreign to its very nature, as so many have done. It has not e.g. secured for us, as is often falsely taught, unlimited freedom of reason, i.e., liberty to reject God’s Word, or to believe of it only what suits us; liberty to pry into the hidden mysteries of Holy Scriptures with our reason, and to believe that which we can comprehend and reject that which is incomprehensible. God has given us reason, but when reason over-rides that which God never intended for it to fathom it is getting out of its legitimate domain. The Reformation has not secured for us freedom to teach man’s opinions for God’s Word. This erratic principle Luther fought, with all the strength God gave him, in his dispute with Zwingli on the doctrine of the lord’s Supper. If such were the freedom the Reformation secured it would be deplorable freedom indeed. This is evident from the shattered condition of the followers of rationalism. The Reformation has secured for us, however, free use of the Word of God. It has placed the Bible into the hands of every man, woman and child. We have the liberty to read that precious book, and to comfort our souls with its saving doctrines. It has discarded the false worship of the Virgin Mary and departed saints, and restored the true worship of the living God. It has discarded the false doctrine of justification by human works, and restored the true doctrine of justification by faith in the merits of Jesus Christ alone. It has discarded the superstitious practice of worshipping in a language which the people could not understand, and re-

stored public worship in a living language. It has restored the preaching of the Gospel to its proper position in the congregation. It has restored the proper use of the sacrament of the altar. It has overthrown the anti-christ, as our text plainly intimates: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.” The spirit of the Lord’s mouth is his holy Word, which is sharper than any two-edged sword, and is able to sunder marrow and bone. This Word, which has been brought before the people through the work of the Reformation, was too mighty a power for the anti-christ. It caused his throne to tremble and fall, and although he is permitted to sit at Rome, that unlimited power which he possessed before the Reformation, to regulate religious and civil affairs, has been taken from him. The Reformation has made the enemies of Christ His footstool, and has restored the knowledge of Christ as the Supreme Ruler over everything visible and invisible.

These are some of the glorious benefits resulting from the work of the Reformation. Becoming conscious of these manifold blessings, is it a wonder that our church, the church of the Reformation, all over the land raises her voice in praises and thanksgiving unto God? Only then shall the Lutheran Church cease to rejoice and to celebrate the festival of the Reformation, when she shall cease to have any more life. Only then shall she have ceased to reverence Luther, that humble servant of God, when she shall have ceased to value his doctrine.

May God protect us from such unthankful sentiments of irreverence! May He enable us rightly to appreciate this great and glorious work, that the precious Gospel of Christ may be spread more and more, and His name forever glorified! Amen.

Luther Contending For The Faith By Rev. Oscar Kaiser, Bal- timore, Md.

“Beloved, I exhort you that ye should earnestly contend far the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.” — Jude 3.

In Christ Beloved Friends and Brethren: —

It was on the 31st day of October, in the year of our Lord 1517, that Martin Luther, a poor and humble monk, nailed 95 theses to a church-door at Wittenberg, Germany, — theses that awoke in a new and glorious era upon the earth, — theses that gave a clear and uncompromising ring, attacking the corruptions of the Church, and challenging each and every man for a disputation based upon the Word of God, — theses that shook the walls of the Vatican, put to night the clouds of ignorance and superstition, and revealed the bright light of the blessed Gospel, which had for centuries been hidden by the Roman popes. Those 95 theses were the signal for the great and mighty battle which followed, — and battle in which men fought not for earthly, temporal goods and possessions, but for heavenly, eternal, abiding treasures: for the Word of God and their souls’ salvation. Those 95 theses were the beginning of the Reformation, the lovely dawn of the breaking morn, the first rays of the rising sun that tinged the Church’s horizon with a glorious hue, and ushered in that sweet, that precious, that longed and looked for Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is in commemoration of that great event that we are gathered together here today, not in order to magnify and glorify Luther, the chosen vessel of God, the angel of the Reformation, but in order to laud and praise and thank God for* having given us Luther, by whom the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ was drawn forth from under the ruins and ashes of papacy and placed on a high candlestick, so that its cheering rays were felt far and near. Not

the creature, but the Creator do we magnify, and to Him shall our hymns of praise and thanksgiving ascend, for it was His work that Luther performed. His counsel that Luther carried out, His Word that Luther proclaimed. His truth that Luther fought for, and therefore it is Luther Contending for the Faith which is the subject of our discourse. Permit me to show you: (I.) What faith it was that Luther contended for, and (II.) Why he contended for this faith.

I. What Faith It Was That Luther Contended For

“Beloved, I exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.”

According to these words of our text Christians are not to contend for novelties, for the opinions or teachings of men, but for the Word of God, the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

Now, the faith that Luther contended for was not the faith or doctrine of man, not some grand system of philosophy, or some elaborate work of the schoolmen, but the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. Not a new faith did Luther proclaim, not a new doctrine did he set forth, not a new truth did he contend for, but the old, old faith which was once, and once for all, delivered unto the saints.

That faith, however, was, and is — as you all know — contained in this book, the Bible. The Bible, however, had been taken out of the people’s hands. They were not permitted to own a copy or to read a copy — such was the decree, the decree of a whole council, the Council of Toulouse. Even students of theology were advised to let the Bible alone, and to study the scholastic writings and the theological works of men. One of Luther’s monastic teachers once said to, him: “Why, brother Martin, what is the Bible? We should read the ancient teachers, who have drawn the substance of the truth from the Bible. The Bible is the instigator of all disturbance.” Luther, however, experienced in his heart that the Bible is “the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth;” that the Bible contains and imparts a peace and comfort and blessing which can be found nowhere else. Therefore he translated it into the language of the people and contended that

they be permitted, yea, exhorted to read it, according to Christ's command: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."

The Bible has been pronounced a "dangerous book" and a "dark book," and therefore not fit for people to read and study. Luther, however, contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, that the Bible is "a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path," and that therefore we should "take heed unto it as unto a light that shineth in a dark place."

The authority of the Bible had been set aside and supplanted by the decrees of popes and councils and the traditions of men. Luther, however, contended for the faith, once delivered unto the saints, that "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God," that "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost," that they spoke "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth," and that, since the Bible, the whole Bible, is the Word of God, it must have divine and supreme authority and be the touchstone by which all other writings are to be tried and judged. Rejecting, therefore, in matters of doctrine and practice, of faith and conscience, all traditions of men and writings of the learned, Luther's motto was: "The Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word."

The sum and substance of this Word, however, or the central doctrine of the whole Bible is the doctrine of justification by faith. This central doctrine of Holy Writ, the doctrine that a poor sinner is justified by faith in Christ and not by any works of his own, this *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*, the article with which the Church stands or falls, had been almost entirely obliterated and supplanted by the unscriptural doctrine of justification by works, which doctrine, however, afforded no peace and comfort to troubled souls, but rather plunged them into despair. Luther himself, thought having led a pious and godly life, and able to say with Paul, "Touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless," yet found no peace and rest for his soul in his pious life and good deeds, but was on the brink of despair, when a friend cried out to him, "There is a forgiveness of sin, a forgiveness for Christ's sake." The word, "The just shall live by faith," which had formerly thundered in his ears in terrible tones, now revived and refreshed his weary soul and became his daily spiritual food. Henceforth in the doctrine of justification by faith he lived and moved and had his being. He himself said: "In my heart this one article reigneth, even the faith of Christ; from

whom, by whom, and unto whom all my divine studies, day and night, have recourse to and fro continually.” And this doctrine, once delivered unto the saints, Luther contended for, crying out with St. Paul: “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law.” “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.” “Not by the works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy God saved us.” Therefore he confessed: “I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the Virgin Mary, is my Lord; who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death, and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver, but with His holy precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death; that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.” Therefore he sang, to use the words of an English poet:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand.
All other ground is sinking sand.

Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood avails for me.

Look unto Him, ye nations; own
Your God, ye fallen race;
Look, and be saved through faith alone.
Be justified by grace.

This doctrine, however, which had been delivered unto the saints, and which is the citadel and chief bulwark of the whole Christian religion, was attacked, yea, condemned and cursed by Rome, and therefore Luther earnestly contended for it, knowing and saying that if this doctrine remained pure, the Church would remain pure, but if this doctrine were corrupted, the Church would be corrupted.

The Church in those days was represented as a large ship, bearing the pope and cardinals and bishops and priests and monks and nuns to heaven, while the laymen were swimming in the water, clinging to ropes thrown out to them from the ship. And the doctrine concerning the Church was, and is, that outside of the visible Roman Catholic Church there is no salvation. Against this unscriptural doctrine Luther fought with might and main, and contended for the faith, delivered unto the saints, that “the kingdom of God Cometh not with observation,” that “men shall not say, Lo here! or, lo there!” but that “the kingdom of God is within the Christians;” that the Church is “the communion,” or congregation, “of saints,” that not we, but “the Lord knoweth them that are His,” and that, consequently, “the only saving Church” is invisible and composed of all true believers, and of such only, and yet that this invisible Church has visible marks or signs by which it can infallibly be recognized, namely, the pure preaching of the Word and the legitimate administration of the sacraments. Where these are found, the Church is found.

The sacraments, however, even as the Word, had been mutilated and corrupted in a horrible manner: the communicants were robbed of the cup, and even bells, altars, and the like were baptized. Moreover, it was taught that in the Lord’s Supper the bread was changed into the body of Christ, and the wine was changed into the blood of Christ; and that the mere reception of a sacrament would save, whether or not the recipient had faith. Luther, however, contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints, namely, that “nations,” living persons, should be baptized; that Baptism is “the washing of regeneration;” that “he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” in short, that Baptism “works forgiveness of sins, delivers from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare.” Again, he contended for the faith, delivered unto the saints, that in the Lord’s Supper “the cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break is the communion of the body of Christ;” that in, with, and

under the bread and wine we receive Christ's true body and blood, given and shed for the remission of our sins; that the Bible teaches neither transsubstantiation, nor consubstantiation, nor any other substantiation, but that it demands of us to believe these plain and simple words: "This is my body, this is my blood," and to take them just as they read.

Finally, Luther contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints concerning Antichrist, "the man of sin and son of perdition, who would oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" — which faith of the saints tallied to a jot with his unholiness the pope at Rome, whom therefore the Bible brands as the Antichrist, and whose mask of piety Luther tore from off his face.

See, this is the faith which was once delivered unto the saints and for which Luther earnestly contended. Lack of time prevents me to speak of other doctrines such as the universal priesthood of all the believers, the complete separation of Church and State, the Gospel doctrine of absolution, confession, good works, etc., for all of which Luther earnestly contended. Let us now, in the second place, briefly consider why Luther contended for this faith.

II. Why He Contended For This Faith

Luther did not contend for this faith because of earthly glory, honor, wealth, or renown, for such he did not get. On the contrary, he reaped almost nothing but slander, calumny, hatred, and persecution. The pope hurled the ban at him, and declared him to be an outlaw and an outcast, a fugitive and a vagabond, a menace to Church and State, a man not fit to live. Hence Luther could have no carnal motives for contending for the faith.

No; he contended for the faith because it was his sacred duty to do so. Contrary to his wish he had been made a Doctor of Divinity. Then he had been constrained to swear solemnly, faithfully to expound the Bible and purely to preach the same. And this his sacred vow he kept by contending for the faith which was delivered unto him.

It was "delivered," or entrusted, to him, not given him for his possession. He was but a steward of the mysteries of God, and as such had to give an account to God; could not do as he pleased, but had to follow his Master's

instructions. And his Master's command was: "Contend for the faith!" This plain command of our text God has given to every Christian, but especially to the ministers of the Word. Had Luther, therefore not contended for the faith which was delivered unto him, he would have been disobedient and unfaithful to God.

Again, he contended for the faith because it was the faith which had been delivered unto the saints, the only faith that saves. Error and falsehood can never make a man free or happy, but "the truth," says Christ, "shall make you free." Only in so far as the Word is pure can it generate faith and save. Hence the importance of retaining and contending for the pure faith, the pure doctrine. True, Luther well knew that his contending for the truth would be called "uncharitable" and "wrong" by the enemies of the truth, even as it is today; but he knew also that if he would not contend for the truth, he would deny Christ and become a traitor to Christ's Church. Where, my friends, would the Christian Church be today, if an Athanasius had not contended for the divinity of Christ, or an Augustine for conversion by grace alone, or a Luther for the Bible? In Egyptian darkness and heathenish idolatry. And to prevent this and to perpetuate the pure Gospel of Christ, Luther earnestly contended for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints and unto him.

Yet a few words, and I have done. This precious faith, the pure Gospel, for which Luther so earnestly contended, has been delivered to our dear old Lutheran Church, and handed down to us as our heritage. Let, oh! let us be on our guard, lest we be robbed of this precious heritage; let us avoid all errorists and perverters of God's Word, and follow those only who preach and practice God's whole Word and will not deviate one hair-breadth from its teachings though men mock and sneer and laugh and call these things old-fashioned and antiquated. Truth never changes, it always remains the same, and though our doctrines are as old as Luther, yea, as old as Christ and apostles, they are divine. Hence let us prize them highly and cherish them dearly and rather part with everything else on earth than with them; let us love our dear old Church, the Church of the Reformation, the Church of Christ and the apostles, and remain true to her in life and death saying:

I love my Church, my dear old Church,
My fathers' and my own,
On prophets and apostles built
And Christ, the Cornerstone!
All else besides, by storm or tide,
May yet be overthrown;
But not my Church — my dear old Church —
My fathers' and my own!

I love my Church, my dear old Church,
My glory and my pride!
Firm in the faith Immanuel taught,
She holds no faith beside.
Upon this Rock, 'gainst every shock,
Though gates of hell assail.
She stands secure, with promise sure,
"They never shall prevail."
Hallelujah. Amen.

The Great Reformation Idea By Rev. R. Neumann, Burlington, Iowa.

“Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” — Hebrews 13:8.

THE GREAT REFORMATION IDEA — What was it? Let me state right here that it was no new idea which caused that greatest spiritual awakening since the days of the apostles. It was no new idea, which, under the providence of God, armed Martin Luther with strength to oppose a whole world. It was an old, old idea, but it had been buried under outward pomp and splendor. It was the eternal idea of God, but hidden under the bushel of human invention — the idea of redemption and justification, conceived in the bosom of the Holy Trinity, before the foundation of the world was laid. This idea was declared unto man after his fall in the promise of the coming Deliverer. It was interwoven, like a scarlet thread in a costly handiwork, throughout the history of the Jewish nation in the days of Patriarchs and Prophets. In all the history of the chosen people of God we see it shining out again and again, here and there, until in the fulness of time the idea was realized, the promise fulfilled in Jesus Christ — the same yesterday and forever, “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

This and nothing else is the Great Reformation idea, which I wish to set forth today, and in enlarging upon it, I desire to bring before you the man who under the guidance of the Holy Spirit brought forth out of the debris of religion the old, old story; who from shrines of soulless saints carried forth the light of the Word, to set it, to reestablish it on the altar of the Church of Christ. The man, of the newly conceived reformation idea was Dr. Martin Luther, who in exchange for unavailing merits of sinful saints, declared anew the only availing merit of the sinless Son of God, who redeemed us lost and condemned creatures, secured and delivered us from all sin, from

death and the power of the devil, not with silver and gold, but with His holy and precious blood and His innocent sufferings and death. In our days the great idea of the Reformation and the blessed consequences of that great awakening are often lost sight of. The hearts of our Lutheran young people need warming up in these days of indifference towards church individuality. We must realize more what an inexhaustible treasure our Church harbors, how much even in our days we owe to the man, after whom we are proud to call ourselves.

The Roman Catholic Church is ever ready to deride us for making so much of the work of a sinful man, to whom is due no praise, but rather everlasting condemnation for disobeying the Church and leaving it. For centuries the Church of Christ has celebrated the deeds of St. John the Baptist, and has appointed a special day on which to remember the merits of the Forerunner and Herald of the Christ. At his cradle in the mountains of Judea the question was raised: "What manner of child shall this be?" and Zacharias, his father, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied, saying: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His way;" and the angel said, "many shall rejoice at His birth." The question concerning John, "What manner of child shall this be?" passed on into the pentecostal question, "What meaneth this?" And the answer resounds throughout all the lands: "The Dayspring from on high has visited us, Hallelujah!" Thus the question arose at Luther's cradle at Eisleben: "What manner of child shall this be?" And a century before, John Huss, while standing at the stake to die the death of a martyr, alluded to his own name, "Huss," which in the Bohemian language means "goose," prophesied of Luther: "Now you roast a Bohemian goose, but one hundred years hence a German swan will sing, and you will not be able to roast him." Now, four hundred and twenty-four years after the birth of Luther, we confess: Thou child of Eisleben, thou has become a prophet of the highest, thou hast followed in the footsteps of thy Lord, and many rejoice at thy birth! If Elisha's bones in the grave could re-awaken to life, then they surely moved over the cradle of Luther, and the breath of the Spirit went out into many bones; the Pentecostal question: "What meaneth this?" was raised anew, and the Reformation has answered: "The Dayspring from on High has visited us." The harp of Luther was tuned to the first evangelical hymn:

The summer is here.
Dread winter is past;
The flowers appear
On the desolate waste.
And He, who calls from first to last,
Will finish in his season!

In exalting Luther, it is not the sinful man we commemorate. We love the herald of Jesus Christ and praise him in all Christendom. The Great Reformation theme was Christ Jesus, and it was this Christ who lived in Luther, who testified out of him; the same Christ, who still testifies in Luther's words and work, who still conquers in Luther's song, when he says: "I will sing unto Christ, my Lord, as long as I shall live. Those who will not join me, may howl for themselves." We are ready to join him, I am sure, since we know that the Great Reformation idea is no other one than this, to give the honor due to the Son of God, and remove everything which would hinder this. Christ and His Word, yesterday the star and center of the Reformation, today the power of God for our evangelical faith, tomorrow and in all eternity the promise of the Church.

Luther's desire was to save his soul. To this end he went into the convent at Erfurt. There he fasted and chastised himself; but all the penances gave no peace to his soul. He wrestled for a pure heart, for acceptance with God — but all his wrestling proved in vain; But lo — in the dreariness of a sleepless night he hears the monotonous voice of the old fellow-monk in the neighboring cell, repeating the Creed: "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." Again he hears the voice of the prophet of old, and like as an echo from the New Testament, the voice of St. Paul in the Epistle to the Romans and Galatians: "The just shall live by faith," and finally the voice of Christ in His Word and Sacrament: "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." He falls down at the feet of his crucified and risen Lord, his spirit triumphs, his mouth sings praises: "Where there is forgiveness of sin, there are life and salvation also." "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." "And it fell from his eyes, as it had been scales." He saw the Christ in His glorified beauty. Whithersoever his eyes are directed he reads, and reads, and reads: For us, for me. His crown of thorns, His crown of glory. His transfixed hands. His world-scepter, His wounds, His cross, His blood. His life. His all — it has but this one inscription: For Mel The springtime of his life had come, the night was far spent,

the day was at hand and all the wonderful gifts and powers of his soul were awake. What Christ had told him in the ear, he proclaimed from the rooftops.

Against Tetzel he preached the indulgences of Christ; against the pope, the keys of heaven; before the rulers of earth he exclaimed: I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Before the children he confessed: I believe that Jesus Christ is my Lord. Whoever would dare touch his Christ, whoever would attempt to thrust himself between this Christ and his soul, him he beat back with his powerful fist. That popery and external unity of the Church were receiving their death blows, that the German empire and German unity went into the grave, it was neither his fault nor a cause of regret to him. Whatsoever could not stand with the Christ of the Scriptures he let fall. He preached the Gospel, and the sound of it went into all lands. He translated the Bible, and it went into the hands of the people; he taught the catechism and out of the mouth of babes a power was established; he sang his songs, he blew upon his trumpet, and at the sound the walls of mediaeval Jericho sank into dust. It was the firm faith with which he embraced Christ, it was the burning love to Him, who first loved him, that made Luther what he became by the Grace of God. "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever." this was star and center of the whole Reformation, for in the whole immense combat of the spirits the only question raised was the question concerning Christ.

He was opposed in this by the pope, who claimed to be the vicar of Christ on earth. To this day the pope assumes the name of king of all the kings of earth; for this reason he wears the three-fold crown. He claims to be the high priest of all priests on earth; hence the two keys in his coat of arms. He claims to be the prophet of all prophets, the teacher of all teachers; therefore he calls himself infallible. The pope has usurped the three-fold office of Christ and pretends that all power on earth is due him, the power to install rulers, to ordain priests, to send out teachers. He claims to be the Christ on earth and we claim that this is the language of the Anti-Christ, who places himself in the temple of God and pretends to be God. And this is the terrible part of the doctrine of infallibility, that since the year 1870 every Catholic must believe it for his soul's salvation, so that the possibility of any further reformation is utterly removed. For Rome has not only proclaimed once and forever: the Romish church, pope and council, did not err, when rejecting the reformation, but it even proclaims for all time to come:

The pope and the church never have erred, they never do err and they never will err. The Reformation was a call to, Christianity for repentance. The dogma of the infallibility is the final answer of Rome to the Reformation, it is the answer of impenitence: "We have no need to repent and we never will repent."

It is only out of this immense contrast the gigantic combat of Luther can be interpreted. As a lion he stood for his Lord in opposition to this crime against his heavenly crown. Here, in his faith in the one mediator lay the secret of the power of this Samson, who with the jawbone of an ass slew the Philistines, who lifted off of their hinges the gates of the prison-house, who demolished the pillars of the Roman temple. With audacious and powerful hand the mighty hero pushed aside whatever attempted to crowd in between Christ and souls, claiming mediatorship: Mary and all the Saints in Heaven, the pope and all the priesthood on earth. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by me" says our Lord Jesus Christ. "There is but one God and Mediator between God and man." "With one sacrifice Christ has accomplished salvation unto all eternity." "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to everyone that believeth." Here roots and culminates the great article of the justification of the sinner before God, by faith alone. As Luther says in the Schmalkald articles: "From this article we cannot cede or give a single jot, not if the heavens fall, nor earth nor any thing else. For, 'there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,' and 'by His stripes we are healed.'"

There is at Constantinople a beautiful building, called Agia Sophia, at one time the most magnificent of all Christian churches. On the pinnacle the cross, in the altar-niche an immense image of Christ on the throne of His glory. Now it is a muhammedan temple, adorned with the halfmoon of the false prophet, and the image of Christ within is covered over with a thick layer of pure gold. In the morning twilight, however, when the rays of the sun, entering through the window, fall on it the image of Christ shows through from under the muhammedan gold. Thus the pope in the mediaeval church had covered the image of Christ with gold and pomp, with human wisdom and work-righteousness, human statutes and sale of indulgences, so that, for all the saints and priests, there was almost nothing left of the Christ. But there dawned the morning twilight of the Reformation, and it tore down all the spangle and false pomp, so that the image of the crucified

and risen Xord shone forth again, in the preaching of the pure Gospel unto all who believe.

Today this Gospel is the power of God to our evangelical faith. They demanded of the Reformation that it show divine authority for its cause by miracles and gifts. All hail! the wondrous gift of the Reformation was Luther's faith, with which he removed mountains, with which he shook to its very depth the mediaeval church, with which he led it out of the Babylonian captivity of the pope into the glorious light and liberty of the Gospel. Luther, indeed, had spiritual gifts as no church father before him. When he preached, people said, it was as if he was sitting in their very hearts, and to this day Luther's wisdom is found on the streets in a thousand wise sayings of our people. No other nation on earth can show a man, in whom Christian and democratic character were interwoven so intimately as was the case in Dr. Martin Luther. But all this ability is forgotten in view of the world-winning power of his faith. He clung to him, whom he saw not, as if he saw him. Whenever his heart threatened to fail him, since he, the one man, was to stand up against all that had the signature of centuries gone by, against the pope and emperor, he seizes the chalk and writes on the wall: "*Christus vivit, vivit, vivit,*" i.e., Christ is living; and when standing at the window after a hard day's work, he saw the stars in the firmament without any visible support and yet neither falling nor wavering from their course — the lesson of nature under the providential hand of God, became a parable to his soul, that the Church of the pure Gospel, even if deprived of its earthly support, will not waver or fall, because it is upheld by the invisible and strong hand of the Almighty. This faith places him in the ranks of the heroes of God, whose deeds of faith are enumerated in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, under the caption: "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And we may say without fear of exaggeration, that since the days of the apostles there has been no one in the Church who went about more in the power of spirit, who preached the Word of faith more powerfully, who left behind more blessings for the centuries to come, than Dr. Martin Luther.

But faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. And Luther's faith truly did not spring from impressions of reason, nor from the inner light of visionaries or fanatics, but from the Word of God. He had not sought and found Christ in the blue Atmosphere, nor in his own feelings, but in the Word, in the Sacraments of Holy Baptism and the Altar. He well

knew that Christ had said, "If ye abide in my words, then indeed shall ye be my disciples." Therefore sang Luther: "The Word they still must let remain;" therefore in the Catechism he always asks, "Where is it so written?" Therefore of Zwingli and the reformed brethren he says: "They do not know it, nor do they feel it how difficult it is to stand before God without His Word. Here is the rock-foundation on which he stands." "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Here is the strength of evangelical faith: Christ alone, Christ in the Word, Christ in the Sacraments, Christ alone by faith.

In this faith also roots the strength of moral life. In Christ Luther had found his God, and in Him he found the whole world. No longer to him is the world but the abode of sin, the dwelling place of unclean spirits, so that the Christian must retreat from it as the scene of his life. To Luther the world now becomes the work-shop of the Holy Ghost, the field in which the Christian may prove his faith in every calling and vocation. How well did Luther comprehend all moral obligation in the table of duties in which he instructs every calling as to its duties, closing every one of those pointed sentences with the words: "*Ein jeder lerne sein Lektion, so wird es wohl im Hause stohn.* (Let each one attend well to his own task, so will it go well with the whole house.)

It was Luther who ennobled and consecrated earthly labor and the worldly calling of the Christian, as over against the pope, who would rather have turned the whole world into a convent. Indeed, it is faith in Christ and His forgiveness alone, which makes the heart of man to be glad and rejoice, which prepares man to every good work and word. This is what changes the heart, just as Paul's preaching of justification by faith has changed the old heathen world, and Luther's preaching has changed the mediaeval church. And above the fall of heathenism and the overthrow of the middle ages, we see these words written in glowing lustre: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever."

Therefore, take your harps and sing your songs. Here lies the strength of our evangelical faith. Gird on the sword and arm yourselves, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong; for here lies also our future.

For to all eternity this Gospel alone is the promise of the Church.

Our haughty enemies had predicted our death; they had prophesied the ruin of the Lutheran Church; false prophets are they found! In the beginning of the last century a Roman bishop wrote these words: "No heresy ever out-

lived the third century. Soon all will be over with the Lutheran heresy.” Nine more years and the restored Church of Christ will look back upon the history of four centuries, and never did our beloved Lutheran Church, especially in its now home land by adoption, America, promise greater things than at this time, marching as she does ahead of all other Christian denominations on the globe. The sun never sets on British possessions, we hear the proud Englishman declare. Who knows what may result for England from a great war of nations? But one thing requires no prophet to foretell in the histories of the nations: The sun will never set on those of the Lutheran household of faith in all lands, until the day when Christ the Lord and Judge will come and then the new day will dawn, which knows no more setting sun.

Luther Leaguers of America! the homeland of Luther now looks to America for a new era of Lutheran faith and practice. Will we meet that expectation? Let us strive to be and remain worthy representatives of the faith once for all delivered unto the Saints.

The hope of the Church rests on the Gospel, the Gospel alone. Jesus Christ the same forever.

Let us hold fast to this in childlike faith and trust. Let us not be carried about by strange doctrine; let our hearts be established in the faith, that no man take our crown. A Roman priest once said to a Lutheran peasant: With your Church it will soon be “*Matthaei am letzten*,” (i.e., Matth. the last chapter, i.e., a German slang expression denoting: Your Church will soon be on its death-bed). But our wide-awake peasant knew his Bible and had his answer ready. “Why, that’s splendid,” he exclaimed, “in Matthew the last chapter, last verse, our Saviour says: ‘Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’”

Let this be our consolation. On such assurance from our blessed Redeemer, we may confidently exclaim: Thou Church of Christ, what is there like thee! Happy are ye people of the Lord, saved by Him who is the shield of thy help and the sword of thy victory! Blessed be the great Reformation idea, the old, old story, which we have loved so long: Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever.

The Lutheran Reformation By John Telleen

By the Rev, John Telleen, D.D., Red Wing, Minnesota.

“The Morning Star of the Reformation” is the beautiful designation by which Wickliffe is known in history. Wickliffe was born in Hippswell, near Richmond, England, in 1324, and died in Lutterworth, Leicestershire, December 31st, 1384, closing with the New Year’s Eve a very eventful life.

“The Prophet of the Reformation” is Huss, born in Bohemia, 1370, and burned at the stake July 6th, 1415. John Huss said before he died, “Today you roast a goose (Huss), but one hundred years hence there will come a Swan (Luther, whose family insignia was a Swan), which you can neither broil nor roast.”

“The Martyr of the Reformation” was Jerome of Prague, a pupil of Huss, following closely the footsteps of his beloved teacher, like him undaunted, he walked into the very flames, where he too gave his life, a free-will offering for the cause of the Reformation, May 30th, 1416.

“The Paver of the Way for the Lutheran Reformation” is the proud designation pointing to Sizka, the blind, who yet saw more clearly than many who have eyes, yet see not. Sizka was the victorious general who won religious liberty for Bohemia.

“The Huguenots of France” date back to the reformatory movement led by Jacob Lepevre of Etaples, 1512. And what a wonderfully checkered history is not theirs?

“Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland” led the reformatory movement in his country, dating back to 1516. He gave his all in the way he thought duty called.

Each one of those noble men had a mission. Each one broke ground for future fields and harvests that were to be gathered by others. Each one laid a foundation for better building than that which existed. Their brave efforts were skirmishes before the great battle which was to be waged later under

Luther. They were all heroic men, and deserve to be crowned in the historic gallery.

“The Champion of the Reformation” is Martin Luther. He was born one hour before midnight, Nov. 10th, 1483, in Eisleben, Saxony, sixteen miles south of Halle. We cannot follow Luther as closely as we would like to do it during childhood and youth. One of his bosom friends, a young man, was struck by lightning, 1505. This made a deep and solemn impression on Luther, and caused him to enter the Augustinian cloister in Erfurt. Three years later we find him as a professor at the University in Wittenberg, an institution of learning, founded by Frederick the Wise. This school maintained its existence till 1817, when it was united with the University in Halle.

In 1510 Luther visited Rome, and learned to know this desperately wicked city. As he, on bended knees, ascended the stairs of St. Peter, hoping thereby to merit salvation, it thundered as a trumpet blast in his ears. “The just by faith shall live.” He rose, and ran down the stairs, asking God to forgive him, that he in unbelief and self-righteousness had sought salvation in his own merits, since God alone can forgive sin, and He alone can justify.

Three years later Luther was made Doctor of Divinity. He now felt constrained, as never before, to preach the truth as it is in Christ Jesus.

In 1517 Luther ran up against the sale of indulgences as carried on by Tetzel, who was sent by the pope, who needed money for the completion of St. Peter, this beautiful creation of Michael Angelo, who thus inadvertently called forth the Reformation.

Luther nailed ninety-five theses on the church-door in Wittenberg. This proved to be the beginning of the end of the dark “Middle Ages.” October 31st, 1517, marked an epoch in the world’s history, but Luther knew it not then. He only did his duty, obeying his God and his conscience, but this obedience brought about what is now known by friend and foe as, “The Lutheran Reformation.”

Up to this Reformation, heathenism had decoyed, Christianity had lost its first love, the light had been placed under a bushel and the salt had lost its savor. Papacy had enthroned itself, and barbaric tribes threatened the very gates of Rome. The popes claimed the supreme power not only in the Church but also in the State. Immorality went unblushing everywhere, not least in Rome. The true and pure doctrine was befogged by corrupt teachings of man’s wisdom substituted for God’s Word. Penance is extolled, and

indulgences are sold. Purgatory is created by man, and the Word of God is chained by man. Traditions are raised on high. God is forgotten and saints and relics are worshipped.

But the eyes of the people are being opened, and Roman fallacies are exposed. Here and there life is awakened, and the truth is sought for. The spirit of man would free itself from man-made shackles. The sciences are resurrected, and coming to worship at the foot of the cross. The witness of the truth cannot be silenced. A power from within makes itself felt. Great men are coming to the front, and structures of centuries are shaping and falling. The timid and despairing are receiving new courage. Great things are pending.

Now Luther appears on the scene of action. He comes to see and to conquer. Yet, not in his name, nor in his strength, but in the name of God, whose he was, and whose battles he fought, oft seemingly single-handed and alone, yet never alone, for God was with him. Emanuel, the mighty God, wherefore he could raise his Ebenezer again and again and so: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." He will help us in the future as He has in the past. And God did. He never puts those to shame who trust in Him.

Luther was born poor, raised rigidly, acquainted with privation and want. But he made rapid strides in learning. He was pious, yet soul-sick. And one day he finds the dear and precious Bible chained in the University library. It extends to him leaves of healing, restoring to him who is sick at heart, a new life. His heaving bosom is quieted, his spirit is quickened, he lives, and yet not he, for now Christ lives in him, the hope of glory.

And now, being led by the Spirit, with which he is baptized, he too must needs meet and face temptations and trials. These led to his establishing in the truth, and fitted him to be a Comforter, who could comfort others with the comfort wherewith God comforted him.

Luther is an indefatigable worker, a close student, who prays and fasts much, being oft in spiritual darkness, crying out in great distress. But this must needs be, for in the future he must endure yet greater tribulations. And he is to speak words of peace, and good cheer not only to individuals but to the whole body of the regenerated Church.

But never was the flickering light entirely extinguished. In the monasteries and nunneries were then, as always, here and there some truly pious persons. Such a person was Staupitz, a true friend of Luther, who yet lived and died a Catholic, though at heart a Lutheran, for as Bishop Johansson says in

his dogmatics, “All who go from earth to heaven, are Lutherans at heart, saved by grace alone, though they may have belonged to some other Church on earth.”

How often did not Luther and Staupitz converse on such subjects as, repentance, pardon full and free, the means of grace, God’s guidance, the Church of God, the Lord’s followers, etc.

The work of the Lutheran Reformation began at Wittenberg. Here a motor-power made itself felt in shaking the papal throne, and making the world tremble, by means of the power of the Word of God. Here at Wittenberg, the Word of God is preached with power and unction, in purity and perspicuity. The Word is preached and sung in Church and chapel, in home and school, in shop and field, in office and store, on highways and byways. Spiritual conversation is heard everywhere.

But Luther went to Rome, yearning to see that “Holy City.” He saw it. Yet, what did he not see, hear and learn? Not what he had expected. He found corruption within and without. Sin and vices without limit, too shocking to relate, were found here. Here immorality was found in its vilest stench. This all caused Luther the more diligently to search and ransack the Scriptures, that he might find the truth and hold it fast.

Thus was born the germinal truth of the Reformation: Salvation by grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ, without any of our own works, for to us is imputed the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and thus we become righteous in the sight of God, for our dear heavenly Father sees us in His well-beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased. He is therefore well pleased with us, for we are found in Him, Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption.

Early in the fray do we perceive Luther’s courage. Yet he was often depressed and downcast, for he, too, was human as we all.

In Luther we find true faith, burning love, holy zeal, firm hope, and an irrevocable clinging to God’s Word, come what may.

Luther’s life was spotless and pure, but many lies have been told about him, especially by the papists, besmirching his character. But of whom are not lies told?

Luther is the pious pastor and the true preacher. He refused to leave Wittenberg when the black plague carried away so many, but remained with his whole family, trusting to God’s protection and was not put to shame.

Luther was modest and did not think that God had called him to be a Reformer. He was indeed truly humble, and often full of fear and trembling. He said, "Because of my ignorance and stupidity I deserve to be forgotten in some corner of the world, known by no human being under the sun." But the mighty hand of God led him forth from his little obscure corner, and the Almighty God revealed him to the whole world.

The sale of indulgence having gone on for some time in Germany, sins being pardoned for money, Tetzl trafficking in salvation, and the deluded people receiving him as though he had been an angel of God, all came to a point when the proud monk declared, "Our Lord God no longer reigns on earth. He has committed all power to his vicegerent, the Pope."

This outrage called forth Luther. But Luther was not prepared. He had no plan of operation. This proves the Reformation to be a work of God, and not of man. God led, step by step.

Luther's ninety-five theses flew over and throughout the world. Their strength lay in their simple, plain truth. This appealed to any and all open to conviction.

While God led this little to something great, and still greater, yea very great, Luther must needs fight many battles with the adversary of our souls, and thus become purified in the fire of affliction, the dross of self removed. He was sifted, but as a kernel, did not all go through, only the chaff blew away.

Luther was an author. His books number 102. They are deservedly popular. Dr. J. N. Lenker is now engaged in the praiseworthy work of translating all of Luther's works into English. He deserves the assistance and encouragement of every Lutheran, especially every Lutheran pastor.

When Luther began to write books, the art of printing had just been invented. This served the Reformation a good turn. Endowed with great power, Luther's influence extended near and far. Many have ranked him next to St. Paul, among the faithful followers of Jesus Christ.

June 15th, 1520, the pope issued a bull against Luther. This bull Luther publicly burnt six months later, Dec. 20th.

At the Diet of Worms, April 17th, 1521, Luther bore witness to the truth with no uncertain sound, in no words to be mistaken, when asked to recant, saying, "I cannot recant, unless convinced from God's Word that I am in error. Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. God help me! Amen."

On his Patmos, in the Castle of Wartburg, near Eisenach, he translated the Bible into German. The following year, 1522, he returned to Wittenberg in order to quiet the popular feeling which had been over-wrought by some enthusiastic iconoclasts, who destroyed pictures and images.

We freely admit that the conditions of the times favored the Lutheran Reformation. The signs of the times were unmistakably pointing to a reformation, which was indeed very much needed, and responded to by high and low.

The spirit of the Lutheran Reformation did not at first seem to demand a rupture with Papacy. Luther did not at first wish it. He was unwilling to break loose from the Catholic Church. But Luther did not lead. It was a higher hand that led, even God's own hand. The Reformation made great strides. In 1521 it reached Denmark, and in 1523, Sweden.

Meanwhile Luther's faith was strengthened. He said, "The truth needs no help from us in order to conquer. God will take care of His own cause, and of us His children." He sang, and we sing with him, "A Mighty Fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon, He helps us free in every need. That hath us now o'ertaken."

The cleft between the Lutheran Reformation and Papacy widened more and more. Luther ever extolled the "free grace of God," as the true liberator. It is, "The Proclamation of Emancipation." So we may well assert, "Had it not been for Luther we would have had no Washington and no Lincoln," nor would history have recorded the Great Gustavus Adolphus.

Luther never tired of proclaiming the Word of God as the only true and infallible guide for mankind in faith, in life, in death. Everywhere we meet with his faithful adherence to the unimpeachable Word of God. This led to faithfulness to his own conscience. He was wont to say, "It is not advisable to do anything against the Word of God and the conscience." Hence he was steadfast in the confession of the truth as it is revealed in Christ Jesus.

Luther never tired of extolling Christ for us, all our righteousness, and Christ in us, all our holiness. "Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." "Christ all in all," and we in Him. Hence Luther could use the bold expression, "I am Christ, for when my heavenly Father beholds me, He sees me in His well-beloved Son."

Luther proved clearly from God's Word, that faith is the source of all good works, and whatever proceeds not from faith is sin. Dr. Seiss says, "We are saved by grace, through faith alone, and yet faith is never alone, for

as Luther says, ‘Before you command that good works be done, faith is up and does them.’”

Luther never tired or grew weary of calling attention to the beautiful doctrines and teaching of God’s Word, that all true Christians are priests and priestesses in the eyes of the Lord, and that they should everywhere lift up holy hands without fear and trembling.

Luther was philanthropic, tender-hearted and kind. A poor student called on him one day, and Luther offered him a silver bowl, the only thing he had to give, a present to him by the Markgrave. The student refused to accept the beautiful cup, whereupon Luther took it, pressed it out of shape and said, “It is now no good to me. Take it to the goldsmith and sell it for what ever it will bring.” On another occasion he sent away the family dinner to a poor home, but God sent them a dinner from a royal home. At another time, his wife being sick, he gave away the only piece of money in the house, saying, “Go, my dollar, and serve God and humanity.”

Like other holy men, Luther spent much time with God in the study of God’s Word, and in prayer. He would say, “Today I have so much to do that I shall not get through unless I can spend three hours with God in the study of His Word and in prayer.”

Was it a wonder that such a man gained one victory after another? And all he is ever joined more and more closely to Jesus Christ. Luther wrote to the chief executive of his nation, “The Lord is my witness, that the German nation, the Catholic Church, and Christendom, yea, God Himself, whose matter this whole work of the Reformation is, least of all is my individual case. I do not preach this doctrine because of conceit, nor for selfish purposes. The Lord knoweth. I only obey the Lord, my conscience, and my oath as the Lord’s preacher of righteousness. I have in all sought the glory of God, the welfare of the Church, and the salvation of souls, yea, of the wide world. I wish to uproot the weeds, stay the wrongs and preach true righteousness in the land.” Thus we see the motives that impelled him, the power that sustained him, and that God, not man, called forth this work of the Reformation.

This work sought in all to return to God, the Fountain of all life and light, and thus establish the kingdom of God on earth. Inwardly the Church is made manifest by faith, love and hope, and outwardly by charity in faithfulness, and in a hope that putteth not to shame. This clear and pure doctrine became so dear to Luther that he said, “I would rather die than lose

this most precious teaching.” His steadfastness is that of a hero. And this the people loved, and thus they loved him. They would die if need be, for the little monk, as they sometimes called him. And gladly would they die for the truth, and the newborn hope Their feet were placed on the Rock of Ages. They embraced the cross. The waves of affliction beat in upon them, but they were in safe keeping, even kept by the omnipotent power of God. Luther was ever an inspiration by his magnetic presence, his attitude, his words, his firmness, which all combined made a deep impression.

Thus the council of God developed continually. When God wills it, it is done. When the hour that God has set arrives, then that will happen which is God’s fixed purpose. Truth is ever strengthened in its claims on humanity, and ever victorious in its combat against error in teaching and practice, and will surely win the day.

In 1524 Luther was no longer a monk. The following year, 1525, he married Catherina von Bora, a lady of rank, who had been a nun. And we need not say that his domestic relations were happy in the extreme. Look at the picture of his home-life. Stand at the death-bed of his beloved Magdalene. Read the letter to his son Hans. See him play the guitar and hear the singing, and listen to his “Table-talk.”

April 19th, 1529, the Second Diet of Speier convened, and here the word and name of PROTESTANTS was used for the first time. And who were these protestants? Many of these were rulers of nations. Listen! John of Saxony, George of Brandenburg, Ernst and Frank of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, Wolfgang of Anhalt; and the cities were, Strassburg, Ulm, Nuremberg, Constanz, Reutlingen, Windsheim, Meiningen, Linden, Kampten, Heilbron, Weissenburg and Nordlingen.

June 25th, 1530, was the GREAT DAY OF THE REFORMATION. At Augsburg are to be enacted momentous things for God and man, for earth and heaven, for time and eternity. Here and now is to be written one of the finest pages in the history of the world. It is the day of the Augsburg Confession. Note this Confession! See and comprehend its truth in developing the doctrine of salvation, it is what all need.

Salvation, full and free. Never since the days of Paul has this doctrine been presented in such resplendent light, such depth, such compass, such beauty. Luther was as happy as a child, and said, “I am overjoyed to think that I am permitted to live at a time when Christ is confessed by such a

body as is gathered here today. Ever have I wished it, but never since the days of the apostles has there been a greater and a grander work.”

The Pope was wrathful, the Emperor threatened, but the Mighty ones of Earth had accomplished their own defeat, by combating the Rock of Ages. Luther said, “If our enemies and opponents had round about them, and with them, not only the Roman Emperor, Charles the Great, but also the Sultan of Turkey, and Mahomet, they could not intimidate me. But I will make them fearful and overcome them. They shall fall, and I shall stand fast and secure. In my life and in my death I shall be more than victorious, through Christ, who loved me and gave himself for me. God hardens their hearts, as he did the heart of Pharaoh, who was overwhelmed in the Red Sea. May they then all perish, who fight against God, and His truth! They indeed do - choose death rather than life. God is with us, and we are with Him. None can part us. None can harm us. The Lord liveth and shall live forever.”

Twenty-five years later, 1555, in the same city of Augsburg, the articles of peace were signed. That was the victory of the sword, as the victory of 1530 was that of the Word. We believe in the Word, not in the sword. The victories of the Word alone are true and lasting.

The Lutheran Reformation restored to us the primitive Church, the Apostolic Church, the true Church, the Church of the first centuries of the Christian era. This Church of God’s own planting had for many centuries been obscured. Now it is again revealed in its pristine splendor. And by the grace of God it shall continue on, the Church of God’s own planting. True faith has won the day. Neither storms of earth, nor assaults of hell shall overcome the Church of the living God.

Ein Feste Burg Ist Unser Gott!

By Rev. F. H. Knubel, New York City.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.
— Psalm 46:1 and 2.

WE LOVE, and rightly love, Luther's great battle-hymn of the Reformation. It voices the Christian soul's deepest conviction. It stimulates lagging trust. It enthuses waning loyalty to the Lord. It comforts and strengthens amid distress and weakness. It compels assurance of ultimate victory. People of many tongues are singing it, and there are scores of translations into English. The vigor and truth of its thought compel it to be a great hymn after any translation into any language, but nowhere is there an equal to the mighty original — mighty with the ruggedness, trust, and majestic strength of Luther's character. "There is something in it," says Carlyle, "like the sound of Alpine avalanches or the first murmur of earthquakes."

The history of its use and the incidents associated with it have often been told. They are voluminous. To Luther himself the hymn was precious. Often when troubles and dangers were thick, he would turn to Melancthon and say: "Come, Philip, let us sing the 46th Psalm" — and they would sing it in this "characteristic version." It became, in the death of helpless victims to oppressive tyranny, a defiant assertion of eternal strength. Thus John Yungling, the aged schoolmaster of Bovenau, when compelled to play upon the church organ by some of Tilly's vilest soldiers in the Thirty Years War, used it. He had formerly been an inmate of Luther's house at Wittenberg. In affectionate memory of his former instructor, he struck up, "A mighty fortress is our God," when his persecutors tore him from, the organ-bench, dragged him by the hair through the church, and killed him before the altar.

The romantic, pitiful story of oppressed Salzburgers, Bohemians, Moravians, and Huguenots is rich in pathetic reference to the hymn, and wonderfully testifies to its power to steady, strengthen, and inspire all wavering, fearing, doubting hearts. Impressive are the records of how “Ein Feste Burg” has been used as a battle-song, giving confidence to the singers and striking dismay into the hearts of opponents. Thus was it heard on the mornings of the battles of Leipzig and Luetzen, when sung by the armies under Gustavus Adolphus. Of the latter occasion it is told that when the armies of Gustavus and Wallenstein were drawn up, waiting till the morning mist dispersed to commence the attack, the king commanded this hymn to be sung, accompanied by the drums and trumpets of the whole army. Immediately afterwards, the mist broke, and the sunshine burst on the two armies. For a moment Gustavus knelt beside his horse, in face of his soldiers, and repeated his usual battle prayer: “Oh Lord Jesus Christ! bless our arms, and this day’s battle, for the glory of Thy holy Name!” Then passing along the lines, with a few brief words of encouragement, he gave the battle cry, “God with us!” and entered the fray. What singing of a hymn must that have been; think of the resounding voices of thousands upon thousands of warriors, with the clarion trumpets pealing, and with the drums beating and rolling the measured, heavy tread of that music. Can we wonder that those soldiers went on to victory that day, though their leader died?

If holy memories can make a thing dear to us, if the blood of martyrs shed for Truth can make us more highly resolved to live and die for that Truth, then, Lutherans, Protestants, this hymn of the Reformation and its Truth are worth all the love you have to give, all the life you have to offer.

Reference was made a moment ago to the power of our hymn when sung by thousands. None have rightly heard it until they have heard it sung thus. It needs the full volume of many voices uniting to sing its melody in unison and it needs many hearts, filled with its truth and giving those voices their utterance, — it needs all of these before proper expression can be given to the indwelling volume of power, before that power can be recognized. Let it, therefore, be noted, that to write a hymn thus, a hymn which can be heard best and properly only thus, which demands the power of the whole human voice and of thousands of voices — to compose such a hymn demands a great heart, a heart that can feel the beating pulses of thousands of men at once and give voice to their combined emotion in word and measure, a heart that has received some large measure of the wideness of Christ’s love.

Such must Luther's heart have been, else he could not have composed "Ein Feste Burg."

As to the direct occasion when Luther composed it and what circumstances originated it, there is complete uncertainty. The prevailing opinion would fix the date and cause in connection with the troublous times of the Diet of Spire; certainly it was not later in his Reformation activity. Yet those questions need not concern us. All the thought originated from the 46th Psalm, in the truths which that Psalm expresses — truths which the experiences of Luther's life enabled him to grasp firmly, to hold fixedly, to treasure jealously, to express fully. The heart of the Psalm, lived into the heart of the hymn's author — this is the origin: Luther's life's need, and the supply for that need from the Word of God. Mendelssohn has well conceived the origin in his Reformation Symphony. "The first part of that symphony is broken and confused, but intermixed with strains from the hymn. Then follows a pretty pastoral. Then the din begins again, louder and harsher than ever, but the listener feels that the notes of the great choral are gaining strength and unity. At length, in the climax of the composition, all the instruments sweep together into the notes of the hymn, and the piece ends with one of the most majestic movements that Mendelssohn ever conceived." That is the story of Luther's life and of the hymn; the course of the symphony is the course of his development. There was for him also at first confusion, unrest, and struggle of life, but the notes of faith can be heard throughout that early struggle; it issued in the beautiful pastoral peace of his heart, when first he realized aright the forgiveness of all his sin freely through faith in Christ alone — when justification by faith alone, the great Reformation doctrine, was clear to him; then, however, just as in the symphony, struggle came again for him, harsher and worse than before — struggle, because he boldly proclaimed this old yet new truth of the Gospel which he had seen, because he followed what that truth made necessary in all his faith and in his opposition to the powers about him, powers of earth and hell; in this new struggle of his we also hear the growing unity and strength of his heart's life-song; then comes the mighty climax, the triumph of his faith, when out of the struggle he sang this hymn, a cry of assured victory for God, for Christ, for the Word, for the kingdom of Heaven, for all the Saints. That is the real origin of the hymn, whatever the immediate occasion of its writing may have been.

What now is the meaning of “Ein Feste Burg”? This is the most important part of our study, and at the same time the most interesting part thereof. Certainly it is one prolonged song of victorious faith, and seems to defy at first glance any possibility of finding a development of thought within its succeeding stanzas; it seems to be a single, exultant outbreak of the Christian heart in even, full power, without progress as the hymn advances. Certainly also its full meaning can only be known by one who has lived into that meaning, just as the meaning came out of what Luther had lived. Certainly, furthermore, we cannot undertake an analysis of its every statement; such a course would exhaust hours and unearth a large part of all Christian truth; such literary and theological surgery would also ruin the poetry and music, and would be a wrong in the eyes of the hymnologist.

I am convinced, however, that we Lutherans and Protestants, with all our devotion to and study of the hymn, have failed to notice an interesting and helpful fact in the meaning of the hymn. There is a distinct advance in thought clearly manifest in its movement. There is beautiful and evident progress from stanza to stanza. The hymn is a panorama of pictures, each stanza presenting a new picture; the series are linked together in true succession, dramatically following one upon the other, each one distinct and vivid yet preparatory to that which is to come. New suggestiveness comes to the song when these have been noticed. It seems evident that they must to some extent at least have been in Luther’s mind. Let us take the first stanza:

“A mighty fortress is our God, A trusty shield and weapon;
He helps us free from every need
That hath us now o’ertaken.
The old bitter foe
Means us deadly woe;
Deep guile and great might
Are his dread arms in fight,
On earth is not his equal.”

The picture might be named, “Before the Battle,” and stands out clearly. We behold on the canvas in the foreground a towered fortress set upon a hill, a stronghold, like so many of Luther’s day, like the Wartburg — high on its eminence, seemingly inaccessible, thoroughly fortified, beautiful in its grim, firm, forbidding strength. Prominent though it be, this is not all of the picture. A plain stretches before the hill, and all about are other hills in irregular scattering, with valleys between all thickly wooded. The defenders

of the fortress have withdrawn within its protection, rejoicing in its shielding, helping strength. Their old foe is seen approaching, sly, cruel, determined, and mighty, inspiring fear and trembling — the old foe, who is to them what the Edomites were constantly to Israel of old, forever stationed upon their borders, watchful with eagle eye, bitter with constant hatred, ready for a quick invasion. Read the stanza once more, and see if this is not its presentation. It is a comparatively quiet picture, yet one pregnant with coming activity — like the hush before a breaking storm. There are simply the fortress, shielding the trembling though confident ones, and the enemy, slyly planning and preparing assault. Now the second:

“In our own strength can naught be done,
Our loss were soon effected;
But for us fights the Proper One,
Whom God Himself elected.
Ask ye, Who is this?
Jesus Christ it is,
Of Sabaoth Lord,
There is no other God,
He’ll hold the field of battle.”

That is “The Two Champions.” We know how frequently in the bygone two armies stood waiting and watching, while single combat was made between two chosen leaders. Thus it was that David slew Goliath, while all the armies of the Israelites and the Philistines stood in anxiety. Thus it was that the Prophet of Israel once saw a single one (Isaiah 63:1-3), the champion of the people of God, coming from Edom (the enemy), with dyed garments, red in his apparel, having trodden the winepress alone, mighty to save, whose own arm without help brought salvation. Thus it was, in fulfillment of the prophecy, that Jesus Christ fought singly as our champion for us in the days of His life — fighting with Satan in the temptation of the wilderness, fighting all the long day of life, fighting in the night-darkness of Calvary’s cross, yet holding and winning the field of battle, securing our salvation. Thus in this stanza of the hymn does Luther picture Christ, out alone on the plain, the Lord of Hosts, fighting for us, as the One selected by God Himself. None helped or can help in that conflict; the victory of our salvation was won by Him alone. Now comes:

“Though devils all the world should fill,
All watching to devour us,
We tremble not,
we fear no ill.
They cannot overpower us.
The world’s prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will.
He can harm us none,
He’s judged, the deed is done,
One little word o’erthrows him.”

This picture is “The Struggle of the Hosts.” The single combat between the two champions is over. Now the great bodies of the two armies rush together, the one bitterly angry in the defeat of their leader and hoping yet to overcome, the other filled with assurance because of the victory of their Captain and already tasting their final triumph. Thus was it also that the hosts of Israel rushed upon the Philistines, after the single combat between David and Goliath had ended; with triumphant shouts they followed up David’s deed on their behalf. Thus also must the hosts of Christ through all ages, the great Church militant, follow up His victory for them. He defeated Satan alone. We must, however, with Him struggle to the end, so that His victory may be rendered effectual for us. For the hosts of hell are mad in the defeat of their leader, and are filling the world with their striving. We must work out the salvation He has gained; not that we can help in our salvation, for we are saved alone by our confidence in Him — by placing our whole case in His hands; but being saved, freed from the guiltiness and from the power of sin, Christ would remove from the field of our life every trace of the enemy’s presence — He works in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. In this we are working with Him. This is the struggle which causes the Christian’s whole life to be a fight, a war that ends only in that last battle — death. We have no cause for fear, however; we need not fear our foe. We fight a beaten enemy, whose power over us Christ has already removed. Each Christian has a weapon of tried and full strength, irresistible by Satan — the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God. Such is the picture Luther portrays in the third stanza of the hymn. Now comes the conclusion:

“The Word they still must let remain,
And not a thank have for it,
He’s by our side upon the plain,
With His good gifts and spirit.
Take they then our life,
Goods, fame, child, and wife;
When their worst is done.
They yet have nothing won;
The Kingdom ours remaineth.”

That is “After the Battle.” Again the scene is still. The enemy has disappeared. He has done sore hurt; much, much has been lost. But the victorious hosts hold their swords, the Word is theirs. The grim old fortress, which is God, stands firm forever, unshaken upon eternal foundations. So it is for us. The Christian in his life-long fight loses many a treasure — for a while. How many a Christian gives life itself on the field, and adds his name to those who have sacrificed all for Christ’s sake or to those who have literally been martyrs of the cross. But no enemy can rob him of the abiding Word — its strength and comfort. No power can take from him the Kingdom. Nobody can pluck him out of the hand of God and the hand of Christ.

There are some things earth and hell cannot touch — they are the best things, the eternal things.

That is the story Luther tells us in his hymn. That is the panorama he passes before our eyes. First the quiet, though awesome view before the battle; then the scene of two champions in decisive duel; then a turmoil of warring armies, lasting through the Christian ages; then quiet again, after the battle, with a reckoning of what is lost, what is held. It is true that each stanza gives some suggestions in its thought of the one that is to follow, and that each new picture looks back in part to the one that has preceded. That forms the connecting links through the hymn. The special scene and thought of each stanza is, however, distinct. Out of his own life of turmoil and struggle the Reformer sang this song of conscious, assured victory. How truly does it express the word of our text, taken from the Psalm upon which Luther based the hymn: “God is our Refuge and Strength, ...therefore will not we fear.” How truly the song breathes the whole thought and spirit of that Psalm, although a casual reading of both scarcely shows their relation, excepting in the opening words. Study the Psalm, and note that there are the selfsame vivid conceptions of a powerful enemy, antagonistic to God, causing fearful struggle and confusion, compelling fear and light

for the people of God; of God's help to His cause, His early help; of our confidence amid all trembling and turmoil; of the power that overcomes, God's uttered voice, His Word; of His enduring kingdom, His sure exaltation in the earth. All the essentially great truths of the Psalm are the essentially great truths of the hymn. There is no mistaking the unity of spirit in both. The hymn is but a version of the 46th Psalm. Comparison has well been made between Luther's song and that of Newman, "Lead, Kindly Light." One:»s the song of a Christian coming out of the semi-darkness of Roman Catholicism into the light of the Gospel, as Protestantism knows it; the other is the song of one who, though in name a Protestant, had never known the "light that shineth in a dark place," and who was groping after the dim light of the Church of Rome, How great is the contrast between the two hymns! They are indeed both songs of faith, but how almost doubtfully the one pleads, while the other is mighty in its perfect assurance — assurance begotten of complete confidence in the Savior, what He has done and is doing. The one hymn says barely more than, "I hope"; the other says, "I know." Luther's hymn is distinctly that of Protestantism, the hymn of great faith.

Now, Christians, as we come down from the mountainous height of Luther's faith, as he has sung it, what shall we say of ourselves? What are our lives? What is their confidence, their vivid conceptions of the facts of life? Was he too bold in his rugged convictions, or are we too weak and timid in our failure to trust through all Christ's constant victory? Is his assurance too rash, or are we guilty of half-heartedness in our devotion to the truth and power of the Word of God? No answer is needed. It is a fearful descent to come from his hymn down into our own selfish, calculating, faithless lives. How cheap, how small we seem!

Let us remember that we are living in the third stanza of the hymn, we who have by our faith in the Savior appropriated to ourselves His victory for us. The Christian life is a constant battle in Christ's name; the military note that rings through all of Paul's life and letters is a true one for us all; the seemingly quiet life of our Master was after all, to the observing watcher of His words, a constant struggle until He had overcome the world and the prince of this world. His enemy is our enemy — and he is a living, vigorous, guileful, and mighty enemy. But let us remember again that we fight a beaten enemy; that the same assurance which Luther had may be ours; that the same trusty weapon is in our hand, the Word of God — "the

Scripture cannot be broken”; the same victories are still to be won for faith. Let us learn to pray from the heart those words in the Collect of our evening service that we may be “defended from the fear of our enemies.” “God is our Refuge and Strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.”

Luther's Coat-Of-Arms By Rev. C. J. Soedergren, Burling- ton, Iowa.

IN LATER MEDIAEVAL TIMES, beginning with the Crusades, it became the practice of the knight, especially, to wear armorial insignia on his shield or cloak to distinguish him and make him conspicuous in battle. The design was usually suggested by his name, his previous occupation or position, the province of his home, the object of his ambition, or some extraordinary event in the history of his family. The arms of Luther's father consisted of a cross-bow with a rose on each side. The origin and meaning of this design are unknown; but it had been handed down through many generations, which would suggest the possibility, even the probability, of Luther being a lineal descendant of one of the old knights, who took upon himself the sign of the cross and fought the "battles of the Lord" as a Crusader against "the terrible Turk" in the Holy Land. It was at least preeminently fitting that Luther should have a coat-of-arms as his very name means, "one renowned in battle"; and he certainly did fight "the battles of the Lord" as a valiant knight in a far greater and truer Crusade than those of the preceding centuries.

As early as 1517 Luther changed the design of the paternal escutcheon [shield] to a cross in the center of a red heart — embedded in the bosom of a single white rose — resting in a field of azure — and surrounded by a ring of gold. In 1530 these arms were engraved on a ring and presented to Luther by friends, while he was sojourning at Coburg. The circumstances were the following:

During the great Diet at Augsburg, 1530, Luther was constrained to remain at a fortress overlooking the little town of Coburg. He himself did not see the necessity of this arrangement, but because he was as practically outlawed as though a price had been set on his head, and because his life was

necessary to the cause of the Reformation, he was urged by his friends to submit. About the 30th of June, the great day of the Diet, Jonas announced to Luther that the Duke John Frederick had ordered the arms of the reformer to be cut in stone for a signet ring. The ring was not ready, however, until in September. But on the 14th of that month Luther received a visit from the Duke, and Count Albert of Mansfield. The former brought him the ring, which proved to be too large even for his thumb. They had apparently taken for granted that his physical proportions corresponded to his physical greatness, Luther thanked them, remarking that lead had been more fitting for him than gold. In the meantime his friend Spengler of Nuremberg had requested Luther to explain the meaning of the arms, and he replied in a letter translated in part as follows:

Coburg, July 8, 1538.

Grace and Peace in Christ! My dear kind and courteous friend and sir:

As you request to know if my arms are properly hit upon, I take pleasure in communicating to you my first ideas, which I desired to epitomize in my signet as a badge of my theology. The first is a black cross on a heart in its natural color, to remind myself that faith in the Crucified is our salvation. For if we believe from the heart, we become righteous. But although it is a black cross that mortifies and causes pain, it still leaves to the heart its own color and does not destroy our nature, — that is, it does not kill, but rather keeps the heart alive. For the righteous shall live by faith, but — by faith in the Crucified. But this heart should be placed in a white rose to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. Therefore the rose should be white and not red, because white is the color of the spirits and the angels. This rose should be set in an azure field, because this joy in the spirit and faith is a beginning of the coming and heavenly joy, indeed already contained in it and anticipated in hope, but not as yet revealed. And around this field a golden ring, because this heavenly happiness is eternal and everlasting, and as much more precious than all other joy and riches as gold is the foremost and most precious metal.

“Christ, our dear Lord, be with your spirit unto that life. Amen.”

Our address at this occasion will be an amplification and application of the contents of this letter. The central object of the Lutheran faith is the cross of Jesus Christ, To borrow the words of Paul: the Lutheran Church has “determined to know nothing among the denominations save Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” That is our life, our light, our strength, our joy, and our one sufficient hope. Christ crucified is our redemption from sin, death, hell and the devil. Christ crucified is our full and complete atonement with God. Christ crucified is our salvation from the power of darkness to the glorious liberty of the sons of God. We have been “made right with God,” not because we are “trying to do the right thing,” not because we are “good enough,” not because we “do not smoke or drink or swear,” not even because we have “gotten religion,” but by His perfect obedience unto death, oven the death of the cross." “Because we thus judge, that one died for all, therefore all died.” “We are crucified with Christ.” The whole died for the part. I died on the cross in Him, when He died in my stead, and my guilt is taken away. Jehovah “laid on Him the iniquity of us all,” and the sin of the race of Adam was atoned for by the death of that only Mediator on the cross of Calvary. Once for all He entered the great sanctuary of the universe and obtained an eternal redemption. “Finished,” was the cry of “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.” Therefore we sing in the joyful assurance of faith:

“In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o’er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.”

But — this cross must be found in the heart, not outside of the heart. The mere fact that Jesus died — the historical event of His crucifixion 1900 years ago — is not my personal salvation. I am redeemed, indeed, and the gates of the prison-house have been carried away forever. But only by faith do I enter into the light of day; only by faith do I realize my freedom; only by faith do I share in that redemption. By faith “from the heart” we receive the life, the righteousness, and the peace of God through Jesus Christ. By faith we actually possess as our own all that Christ has gained and become. By faith in Him Christ takes up His abode in our hearts; and this possession and presence of the perfected and glorified Saviour in our hearts is our salvation. “God gave unto us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that

hath the Son hath the life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life.” “The righteous shall live by faith, or the just by faith shall live.” “Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but has eternal life.” “Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notice here in passing, that the common expression “for Jesus’ sake” is not a strictly Lutheran phrase, because it is not a Scriptural phrase, not occurring a single time in the Scriptures. It can, of course, be properly used and understood, but it should not give the impression that Christ is at one angle of a triangle, so to speak, that God looks at Him and then, turning His attention to us, deals with us in a certain manner on Christ’s account. For the Father dwells in the Son (John 14:10), and “Christ in us” is “the hope of glory.” We are accounted righteous because we have the righteous Christ in our hearts by faith. Therefore we read in our Church Prayers: “Through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord — *Durch Jesum Christum, Deinen Sohn, unsern Herrn* — *genom Jesus Kristus, din Son, var Herre.*”

For this reason also Christ crucified is the central truth of the Bible, — Old and New Testaments alike. Such was Luther’s Bible; such is our Bible. To the Lutheran the Bible is not a mere Reader, History, source of information, or a bundle of lesson-leaves. It is a very means of living, divine truth and grace. It is divinely inspired because its truths contain the living Christ. It is His Spirit which breathes life and sheds light into the heart of the reading and praying believer. In the Bible we touch the hem of the garment of Christ. It is human as Jesus was human, but “within dwells the fulness of the Godhead.” It is not a dead diamond; it is a grain containing life — food for the hungry soul. “My words are spirit and are life.” Of the Scriptures we may say in truth as an American poet has said of his own writings: “Camerado, this is no book; who touches this touches a man.” Faithless criticism may part its garments and crucify its Christ afresh in our day; but it shall rise again to the discomforture of its enemies and to the joy of its sorrowing friends. The Christ in the Bible shall be resurrected out of the sealed tomb, and the Church that has been crying “They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him” shall once more hear the voice of the risen Lord and worship at His feet. “The Word they still shall let remain, and not a thank have for it!”

Christ the crucified is also the central reality and essence of our Sacraments. With us they are not mere empty symbols. Baptism is the arms of the Saviour, into which He takes up the little ones, lays His own hands upon

them and blesses them. It is the seal of forgiveness acquired by Christ, the genesis of a new life — His life, — the gift of His Spirit, the entrance into His kingdom. In the Holy Supper we receive the glorified body and blood of Christ, not — 'microbes." We receive the divine Truth and Grace which is the form and substance of the risen Saviour. Not finite and sin-clouded reason settles the matter with us, but the "*das ist*" of the Word of God— as it did with Luther at Marburg. We cannot conceive of a Sacrament of the Altar with Christ left out. No, it is the personal spirit-communion of the Bride of the Lamb and the heavenly Bridegroom.

And the Church! What is it? Not a colossal machine, not a gigantic trust, and not a mere society; but the body of believers of which the same Christ is the head and the heart, in which He dwells with His "soul," or Spirit, and in which He prepares His members for membership in the Church Triumphant. And the Lutheran church-building is not a camping-ground, and our services are not a ceremony, a social, a dress-parade, or the occasion of flippant levity. The church is our spiritual home on earth, and the spirit of our assembling together is attention, reverence, and deep devotion, because we realize the immediate presence of Christ in the Word and the Sacraments.

How about our pastors and their sermons? The Lutheran pastor is not a mediator between a pope and a craven congregation — not a prelate lording it over the flock. Neither is he an essayist, a newspaper-reporter, a pulpit orator at a set price, delivering semi-smart preachments for the intellectual entertainment of a hard-to-please audience, not a peripatetic emotionalist or ambitious hypnotist, not a bobbin in the shuttle of a local busy-body congregation. He is the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Church, a "*Seelsorger*," "*sjalatorjare*," i.e. a carer of souls, a shepherd under the Great Shepherd, a preacher of the Bible, of the Word of God. He does not say: "I believe —", Paul says —, "but I think —", but: "Thus saith the Lord." He proclaims the law of God unto repentance and the Gospel of Jesus Christ unto faith, "not in wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made void" — that "word of the cross which to them that perish is foolishness, but unto them that are saved the power of God." And this is what the age wants and needs — "the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

But according to Luther's own interpretation of his coat-of-arms the symbol of the cross also stands for the cross of the Christian. The true Lutheran is also a cross-bearer. He follows his Saviour in that path of obedi-

ence which “crosses” his own natural will, diverges from the way of the world, and invites the assaults of the enemy — visible and invisible. This cross “mortifies the flesh,” but it does not “destroy nature, — rather keeps the heart alive.” That is, it is the means of putting off the old man of sin, but at the same time of putting on the new man, the image of God and thus preserving the new life. It is the necessary condition or environment of our sanctification. But the secret and power of our new obedience is the love which flows from the heart of the Saviour — the love received by the trust and confidence of a self-surrendering faith in His grace. It must be evolved from within — the stream must flow from the fountain. Compare for illustration the principle and the policy of Calvin and Savonarola, clapping on the “lid” of the law, that of Luther, insisting first on the regeneration of the heart and the creation of a new will, and the different spiritual results — past and present. “*Habe caritatem,*” said Augustine, “*et fac quod vis,*” (have the love of Christ in your heart, and then you may do as you please, for you will always do right)! “Law is not to be superimposed from without as a heavy yoke, but to be identified with the new will. Therefore we speak of the”obedience of faith,” the faith “which worketh by love,” that love which “is the fulfillment of the law.” And “red” is the color of that love.

This faith and love is “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” and is symbolized by the “white rose, to show,” says Luther, “that faith gives joy, comfort and peace. Therefore the rose should be white, because white is the color of the spirits and the angels.” It is the color of righteousness — the robes of the saints, — of purity, of truth, and of the sweet serenity of a good conscience, a mind at peace with God. the lovely beauty and rare fragrance of such a rose, sweeter by far to Luther than the bunch of flowers held in his hand during his disputation with Eck or the roses with which he was wont to adorn the writing desk of his study, more fair and glorious to every true Lutheran than all the redolent gardens of the East!

This rose rests in a field of blue to suggest the heavenly hope of it all — that hope of the Christian, which shall not be put to shame, and which rises on steady wing high and free above all the vicissitudes of time, ever singing of the joys to come, “anticipated but not as yet revealed.”

All is encircled in the ring of gold, — the gold indicating its preciousness and the circle its eternity. We may indeed call it the wedding-ring, or perhaps the engagement-ring, of the betrothed of the Lord. The Christian

hope is boundless as the blue heavens of God; the pure white truth, faith, and righteousness of the believer shall endure; the red glowing love of a heart embracing the cross of Christ shall have no end; and Jesus Himself, the Lord and Saviour — “I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore!” This is the meaning of the endless ring of gold.

Young fellow-Lutherans! Have you noticed that our colors are also the colors of our country — the national colors: red, white and blue? These are the colors of love, faith and hope; that love which is love to God and our fellowmen, that faith which is truth and righteousness in the inner parts, that hope which waits to see the will of God and the desire of the nations of the earth realized. the awful sublimity of the very thought! But this can be fulfilled only on one condition: that the cross of Jesus Christ becomes the central truth and power of our nation. If Christ, the Redeemer, becomes the object of our love, the contents of our faith, the soul of our hope, then, but then only, will God be our Father and we be His children, then He will be loved above all things and we shall love our neighbor as ourselves, then truth and righteousness shall prevail in the land, and hope shall find its consummation in the Kingdom of God. Then shall God’s will be done on earth as it is in heaven, our country shall be “God’s country” in deed, and this “government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.” Our colors shall be surrounded by the golden circle of preciousness that “shall through all time abide.”

Brethren in the Lutheran faith! Do you not see the golden opportunity and imperative mission of our church in America? Do you see why our President said that “it is destined to be one of the two or three greatest churches and most important national churches in the United States”? God has certainly given us an open door that none can shut. That we are entering, the latest statistics will show. In percentage of growth the Lutheran Church is first; and it now comprises one-half of the Protestant population of the world. We may be pitied, derided, or ignored by those who do not understand. The outsider may continue to “denominate” us: “Lutherians.” We hear instead God’s call to serve our age and country to the utmost of our ability, trusting humbly in the promised help and blessing of our Lord and Master. Do not prove false to your colors! Make sure that your button, pin, or banner is a true emblem of your personal faith — of your individual experience! Be such Lutherans as have actually lived through the great Reformation in your own private lives! Then under this coat-of-arms fight the

battles of the Lord in that Crusade, which shall prove to be the dawn of the coming age," the morning of "the day of the Lord," the sunrise of a new eternity! Therefore "Go up and possess the land!"

The Lutheran Church Sur- rounded By False Prophets By Rev. S. Schillinger, A.M., West Alexandria, Ohio.

“Beware of false prophets, which come unto you in sheep’s clothing, hut inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits: Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bHng forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits shall ye know them.” — Matt. 7:15-20.

BELOVED BRETHREN: — Like sheep among wolves is the Lutheran Church not only in the United States, but in the whole world. The words of Jesus: “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves,” are applicable not only when He spoke them, but in every age from the beginning down to the present day. Though the name “Lutheran Church” was not known until the sixteenth century, the church for which she stands today, existed from the days of Adam, and she was always molested by false prophets, who are bent upon her destruction. The church which stands for the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, will always have these men to fight. That church today is the Lutheran Church, which is loyal and stands unreservedly to her time-honored Confessions. Let these remarks suggest for our consideration, The Lutheran Church Surrounded by False Prophets: I. How shall she know them, and II. What is their judgment?

I. How Shall She Know Them?

False prophets have been molesting the church all along the lapse of time, because they are unwilling to subject their reason to faith. They are the offshoots of proud reason. The clear and simple Word of God they will not endure, because in their opinion it belittles reason.

The wicked Cain thought it was unreasonable for God to know everything, and therefore when God asked him: "Where is thy brother?" he replied: "I know not, am I my brother's keeper?" By his conduct he taught a doctrine conflicting with the omniscience of God. Ham, the son of Noah, and Ishmael, the son of Abraham, teach by their examples, principles in conflict with the divine precept, "honor thy father and thy mother," etc. And alas! the wickedness of Absalom, who taught the people before his father's gate, that if only he were made judge in the land, he would mete out to them justice, as though they were not receiving justice at the hands of his father.

In the history and prophecies of the Old Testament we read of false prophets who were not sent, and yet they ran and taught the people perverse doctrines and led many away from the true service of the living God. In the days of Israel in the wilderness there were Korah, Dothan and Abiram, who contrary to the spirit of God taught the people to rebel against Moses and Aaron. (Num. 16.) In the day of Elijah, the Tishbite, there were 450 false prophets of Baal who manifested great zeal and earnestness, cutting themselves with knives and lancets until the blood ran down. (1 Kings 18). The prophet Jeremiah speaks of a very busy set of false prophets whom the Lord did not send, and yet they ran, whom He had not spoken to, and yet they prophesied, but they did not stand in the Lord's counsel, and misled His people. (Jer. 23:21-22).

In the New Testament such false prophets followed upon the very footsteps of Jesus. There were the Pharisees, Judas, Hymeneus and Alexander. (1 Tim. 1:20), and many others teaching contrary to the sacred writings of Holy Scriptures. Nor has their number diminished since revelation has ceased, but much more augmented. Following the train of church history, we find that their number has been legion, and their work a never-ceasing molestation of Zion's peace. They are men who never grow weary from bearing lies upon their tongues. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit, the poison of asps is under their lips." Satan's desire to be exalted above God has deeply rooted itself in the hearts of men, and has produced in every decade despisers of the Gospel of Christ. In the effort to bring forth something that will suit men's insidious notions,

false prophets and teachers had multiplied, and God's Word had been distorted until at one time the people seemed to have nothing but the soul-destroying doctrines and commandments of men.

This was the sad condition of affairs previous to the great Reformation. The Bible had been locked up and fastened in chains, and the people were taught that it was a dangerous book. Luther found it chained in the library of Erfurt as though it were a rapacious beast, ready to devour whoever might chance to come near. Such is the effect of false teachers. Step by step they lead the people into error and false principles, until they are no more delighted in the sweet doctrines of the Gospel. The more they can persuade people to look with indifference upon God's Word the greater their success.

In the days of Christ these false teachers occupied the highest seats in the synagogues, and infected myriads with their poisonous doctrine, and many of them did their work so craftily that the people were unable to distinguish them from true teachers, and hence the Lord's warning: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." They are skilled in making their false doctrines appear as though they were the truth of God's Word. They are as shrewd as foxes.

But think not, dear hearers, that the false prophets are all dead, and that henceforth our church will enjoy peace! Especially in the freedom and superficial charity of our America do men abuse their liberty and teach for doctrines of God the commandments of men. Through false doctrines sects have multiplied, and flooded our land, until today each sect thinks its special calling is to make inroads upon its neighbor, and particularly upon our beloved Lutheran Church. Attention is given not so much to heathen and outsiders as to each other. The work of proselyting they consider more profitable. The church that submits to the pure doctrine of God's Word, and abhors everything contrary to Holy Scriptures, is the one upon which they spend their greatest force.

For the year 1894 the Methodist Church appropriated for heathen Africa \$5,700, and for Germany and Scandinavia, christianized to a greater extent than most other countries, and largely Lutheran, the sum of \$73,075. Look at these sums! and you will see with what a keen appetite false teachers watch for those who are already Christians, and how little they exert themselves for those groping in heathen darkness. Interfering with the boundaries of others is no longer considered a sin by them, and the Word of God forbidding it: "Yea, so have I striven to preach the Gospel, not where Christ

was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation," is met with a sneer. As long as God's Word is so shamefully abused and despised, false prophets are at work, and divisions must take place. Paul says: "Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." (Rom. 16:17). Here the apostle designates the reason why divisions occur, viz: because doctrines are taught contrary to those inculcated by the Word of God. A doctrine which conflicts with the Word of God is necessarily false, and he who advances it, is in so far a false prophet. The Saviour says: "Beware of false prophets." Paul says: "Mark them... and avoid them;" and John says: "Receive him not into your house, neither bid him Godspeak. For he that bideth him Godspeak is partaker of his evil deeds."

But notwithstanding these clear and strong passages cautioning us against false prophets and teachers, and telling us how to deal with them, many people think we ought to receive them into our pulpits and let them, without any restriction, disseminate their false doctrines. Do you think that your souls cannot be exposed to danger any more? Do you think false teaching and preaching can no more produce detrimental results upon the souls of the hearers? Do you think the Holy Spirit did not understand the words He was uttering in the above warnings, or do you think He was setting up straw men, and shooting at them? Alas! false prophets are not straw men, but stern realities that bid defiance to the work of the true church, and if we would not be ensnared by them, we must heed the words of warning.

[2] Should we, however, not rather say, there were, instead of there are false prophets? No! your attention is directed not simply to the prophets of the Old Testament, who lied about future events, but more especially to those who in these last times act in the capacity of false teachers. There, are none of the former kind at the present time, but of the latter only too many. Would to God that their number would diminish as rapidly as possible until they became entirely extinct! And would to God that true prophets took their places as rapidly as possible until the pure Gospel of Christ had unrestrained sway in the whole world. That there are such men as false prophets at the present day cannot be disputed, and the Scriptures sufficiently indicate also what they do. Our Saviour says: "Which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravaging wolves." In the geography we studied when a school boy there was the picture of a hunter, with a rifle under his arm, crouched beneath a stuffed ostrich, and the wild birds approaching

at a distance. The hunter's disguise enabled him to get near enough to the wild bird easily to capture it. Just so the false teacher disguises himself under the appearance of God's Word until he has come near enough to capture his prey, when his ravenous disposition first becomes manifest. But alas! it is then already too late. It is a beautiful figure the Lord uses in this passage. The people, whom He was addressing (for this passage still belongs to His sermon on the mount), He considers sheep, a name frequently applied to the hearers, or congregations of whom He is the true Shepherd, because He laid down His life for His sheep (Jno. 10:15), sooner than suffer them to be destroyed by the wolves. Christ knew full well, that when He should ascend to heaven, and His disciples should begin to perform the duty of shepherds by leading His sheep into the green pastures of His Gospel and beside the still waters of His grace, false prophets, as teachers, would come, and that, too, under the appearance of real and true shepherds and teachers.

If they would come openly the people would soon discover their ears and other wolfish features, and flee, or take measures to protect themselves against them. Many secret societies use the Bible as a sheep's clothing in their meetings where their members listen to a portion of Scripture read by their chaplains, and to Christless prayers tainted with a smattering of religion, offered with hands folded over the sacred book, but at the same time make themselves guilty of the most diabolical deeds.

It is frequently said by the unwary: "Why, the lodge is a pious and Christian institution. The Bible is read there, and they pray, and sing religious hymns, therefore there can be nothing wrong about the lodge." The ravenous wolf is crouched beneath his sheep's clothing that he may accomplish his nefarious object undiscovered. Behold, these pious wolves standing in righteous awe, listening to a portion of Scripture, praying and singing, and then immediately contriving how to abduct Cap. Morgan, stealthily seizing him and transferring him from place to place until they dumped him into the Niagara river; and all under the garb of justice, because he revealed their secrets! Do not let yourselves be deceived by a formal use of the Bible, prayer and hymns. They are used as sheep's clothing.

Again, the groundless argument is frequently used, that all denominations have the same Bible, all the ministers read from this Bible before their altars and in their pulpits before they begin to preach, and therefore all must be right. A very illogical conclusion. It might as well be said: "No matter what kind of a teacher comes, only so that he has the sheep's clothing, then

he is all right." Many of our so-called ministers who are not willing to bring their proud reason into subjection to the ministries of God's Word, know full well that if they would lay the Bible to one side and openly preach their rationalism, many an honest soul would forsake them.

With them the Bible is simply a disguise. Its use is a mere formality. Virtually they have cast it overboard. That men use the Bible is no conclusive proof that they believe it. Bob Ingersoll used it also; and no doubt more diligently than many so-called evangelical ministers. But did he believe it? The Sadducees and Pharisees used it. Judas used it, and so did Alexander and Hymeneus. But how did they use it? That they might discover and be guided by its simple truth? No, but that they might cover up their wolfish nature. False teachers, under the disguise of the Gospel ministry, using the Bible according to their notions and whims, rejecting the doctrines of which proud reason cannot approve, have filled the world with confusion, and have done more to inculcate infidelity than a thousand Ingersolls.

In their efforts to fright the enemy, they have, by their rationalistic ideas, lost their strength to wield the mighty sword of the Word, turned the enemy's weapons against themselves and fallen vanquished before the foe. The Unitarian minister and the Universalist use the Bible as a sheep's clothing. The one denies the doctrine of the Holy Trinity because it does not agree with his reason, the other the doctrine of eternal punishment because he says it is not reasonable to believe that the wicked must suffer eternally for a short life of wickedness in this world, and both pretend to find their contrary teachings in the Word of God. Is it there? Indeed not. But where is the trouble then? Why in their own minds. The one says it is unreasonable to believe that in one God there should be three distinct persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, the other says it is unreasonable to believe that the wicked should be punished eternally, but neither has the honesty or uprightness to get upon his pulpit and openly and honestly say to his people, "Away with this Bible for its doctrines are unreasonable. They know that many people have a sacred awe for the Bible, and if they would reject it, they would soon have no hearers. They prefer, therefore, to use the Bible formally as a disguise, and yet preach their damnable doctrines. It is their sheep's clothing. The same must be said of any other teacher who advocates a doctrine in conflict with the Word of God. The Lutheran Church alone stands for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

[3] “But inwardly they are ravening wolves.” We must not forget this part of the passage. We have learned that these false prophets come, and how they come, and we must not forget that when they come they are not harmless fellows, but they rave. A ravening beast is one that devours and that, too, with a greedy appetite. A wolf is that kind of an animal. Imagine one leaping into the midst of a flock of sheep, seizing one and beginning his ravening work. The rest will no doubt all run away, and thus only one will be lost. That is true. But suppose he comes sneaking in day after day, under the disguise of a sheep, taking one by one the others not noticing him until all are devoured? That is the effect of false teaching. The people are gradually drawn away from the truth and swallowed up by the error.

When reason begins her work at the stupendous mysteries of God’s Word, mysteries which we must believe if we would be saved, she is beginning a soul-destroying work; nor will she stop with the mystery of the Lord’s Supper and of Baptism, but the mystery of the Holy Trinity, the incarnation, the redemption must be trampled beneath her feet.

Beware, therefore, of such men who come to you and tell you it is not reasonable to believe this or that doctrine as it is clearly taught in God’s Word! The Savior says beware! “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.” (Matth. 16:6). In the 12th verse it is explained what is meant by the “leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees,” viz: their doctrine.

Again, Paul says: “Know ye not, that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? (I. Cor. 5:6). That is, a little false doctrine is dangerous for it is liable to run through the entire system of doctrines. At first it may not be considered of much consequence, though the minister does say, “you don’t need to believe everything the Bible teaches.” Even if a soul occasionally takes offense, becomes indifferent and falls away from the church on account of such preaching; it is said: “Our minister is a fine and clever fellow, he is so agreeable and fascinating. He lets people who do not agree with him alone, never says anything against false doctrine and errorists, and though he may not preach strictly in conformity with the Gospel of Jesus, and now and then a soul may be lost, his ways are so winning, many others will come in their place and we will have a large and nice congregation.”

If you are concerned simply about the external organization of your congregation, and rejoice because your minister has succeeded so well by abandoning the Gospel of Christ and substituting his own or some other man’s word, you show thereby that you are already in the wolf’s grasp and that he

is bringing his jaws tight together, and only too soon you will be devoured because of his ravenous appetite. Do not think, therefore, that a false prophet is not a dangerous person, and that you need not be so particular in regard to Biblical doctrines! That is just why there are so many sects and schisms in our age, because people are not particular enough. That is why false prophets have easy work of it, and with scarcely any opposition make their inroads and do their devouring. Those who raise a voice of warning are decried as exclusive, narrow-hearted and bigoted, and opposed more than the false prophets themselves. Would to God that teachers were so careful and particular about doctrine as they were in the first centuries of the Christian era!

St. John so earnestly opposed false doctrine, teachers and prophets that he would have nothing to do with them, and was even afraid to be about them lest some accident might happen to himself and them.

The following story related by Polycarp, who was a pupil of St. John, will show how the apostle was disposed towards false teachers. John went with his friend to take a bath. On entering the bath-house he was told that Crinthus, who taught a false doctrine concerning the person of Christ, was there. He quickly said to his friend: "Dear brother, let us escape from this house. Cerinthus, the heretic, is here. The roof might fall in and bury us together with him." But

II. What is Their Judgment?

[1] Here many make a sad mistake by laying down principles by which to judge, which are entirely unbiblical. Human opinions, or natural inclinations will not suffice as rules by which to judge. If we judge according to our natural way of thinking our judgment in spiritual matters will always be wrong. We are dealing here with those things which pertain to our immortal souls, and in this relation the Bible says the "natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14). It becomes necessary for the natural man, therefore, to be born anew, of water and the Spirit (John 3:5), before he is able to judge in the least matter pertaining to spiritual things. He must have the grace of God in his heart before he can think of heeding the Lord's injunction, "beware of false prophets."

But some professed Christians judge in matters of doctrine because some great man has so judged, whether his judgment be Biblical or not, and others are inclined to follow the judgment of the majority. It is frequently said, "I will not go to your church, only a few people go there. I am going to belong to another church where there is a bigger crowd." This, however, is not the right standard; individual persons are not to be set up as a rule by which to judge in matters of doctrine, for all men are fallible beings and liable to err. Neither are great crowds to be regarded as correct standards. If that were the case, then we would have to accept the judgment of the world against the church; then would the Jews and Pharisees have been right and Jesus in the wrong; then the entire Romish church would have been right and Luther wrong. The truth is, that if the majority must be regarded as in the right, then we must travel the broad road to hell: "For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matt. 7:13)

The Scriptures and experience teach us that the minority, as a general thing, is the correct judge. How was it with Daniel, who was cast into the lion's den, — and the three men who were cast into the fiery furnace? The power of God proved that they alone, over against the hosts of Nebuchadnezzar, were right. They alone are judging rightly, be they a majority or minority, who use the standard God has placed into their hands, and from that standard make compatible decisions. By this God-given standard all men, all teachings, all works shall be judged, and this standard is none other than God's infallible Word.

But how shall we be able in every case to discover which are false prophets and teachers? If they profess and teach the sentiments of their hearts publicly we can discover whether they be true or false teachers. We need only rightly to apply the true standard, the Word of God. We must be diligent in searching the Scriptures with an humble heart, that we may arrive at their real truth, and be prepared to use it over against all that is false. "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." If we are able to give a reason for the hope that is in us, pertaining to our soul's salvation, from the Word of God, then we have a right to hold to such hope, and set it up as a rule by which to judge everything false. But this does not seem to have any influence upon false teachers. They hold with tenacity to their opinions, whether they can give a reason for so doing or not. If it be proven

from the Word of God as clear as sunlight, that their opinions are wrong, they will still cling to them, and what does not agree with their notions they will condemn, though it be founded upon the clear Word of God. When men come, therefore, and explaining Scripture, tell you this or that is their opinion about certain passages, then beware lest they be false prophets! Tell them you don't want their opinions, you want God's Word; tell them you have opinions of your own, but you cannot be satisfied with them because they are unsafe. When men preach they dare not preach opinions to the people if they would not be false prophets, but God's Word. Preach Christ and Him crucified. When we explain the Scriptures we dare not put our meaning into them, or we will be sure to get it wrong, but let the Scriptures explain themselves. They are their own best interpreters. That is the Lutheran criterion of interpretation; to this we will adhere in the midst of the sects, who, like wolves, cry and howl, calling us "back numbers," and other ugly names, but let them howl if we are entrenched behind this mighty fortress, they can howl themselves impotent and never be able to scale the heights of our powerful strength. God does not need us to explain His Word. If we only compare diligently passage with passage we cannot help but see how beautifully they explain themselves. It is therefore our duty diligently to study the Bible, that we may arrive at its true sense. Only that which we can obtain by comparing passage with passage, or passages with undeniable truths drawn out of Scriptures, or that which passages plainly declare, dare we set up as a standard or rule by which to judge and condemn false prophets.

How diligently we should search the Scriptures, and make their sense and meaning our inner life, that we may be able to distinguish truth from error! How can we discover whether a man is bringing us the truth if we have failed to learn that truth from God's Word? We read in the New Testament that the Bereans were lauded, and said to have been more noble than the Thessalonians, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily to learn whether Paul and Silas were preaching them the truth. The Bereans considered the Word of God the only standard and rule by which to judge the preaching and teaching of those who came to them; and the apostles did not make fun of them because they diligently searched the Scriptures, telling them "that book is an old fable, and only silly people read it." No; but they praised them and called them

noble. They would say, “that is the right book to search that you may learn how to judge our teachings.”

[2] Paul says: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before so say we now again. If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received let him be accursed.” (Gal. 1:8-9). Such a condemnation is just, and merited by every one who preaches anything conflicting with divine truth, and will not revoke the same after having been reprov'd. In the first petition we confess, “Hallowed be Thy name. How is this done? When the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity, and we as children of God also lead an holy life according to it. This grant us dear Father in heaven. But he that teaches and lives otherwise than God’s Word teaches, profanes the name of God among us. From this preserve us heavenly Father.” Not only because it is dangerous unto immortal souls, but because it profanes the name of a righteous God, therefore false preaching and teaching, and false teachers and preachers must be condemned. We must exercise great caution, however, that we do not condemn too hastily. We must be certain that we have diligently searched the Scriptures, that we have attained to the truth before we proceed to condemn the teachings of others. To condemn upon the spur of the moment and that, too, which can be established by the Word of God, is very wrong. Weigh what men say in the balance of God’s truth before you undertake to condemn, lest you be found treading God’s Word under your feet. “Ye shall know them by their fruits,” are the words of Christ. That is, if they do not preach in accordance with the Word of God, then they are false prophets. Their false teachings are their fruits. “Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.” The natural man is always a corrupt tree, and in his natural state can bring forth nothing but evil fruit. He must be grafted from the sound and good tree and bring forth good fruit. This is done when he is baptized into Christ and receives and believes God’s Word. Then he has been grafted from the true stem, has a sound heart, receives nutrition from the true source, and grows and bears fruit in abundance to the glory of his Creator. Such a tree cannot bear evil fruit.

But how are we going to discover whether the fruit is good or evil? We must compare it with the fruit of the tree from which it has been grafted. That tree is Christ and His Gospel. If the fruit be such that is commended

by Christ and His Gospel, we receive it as good fruit, if not we condemn it as evil fruit. If a man were to deny the existence of the living God, reject the Lord Jesus and His Word, it would not be difficult to discover that his teachings were evil fruits, and hence the tree also, i.e., the man is evil. He is a false prophet. "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit; neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Unless a man have faith in Jesus Christ and be a true believer he can do nothing good, for the Scriptures say: "For whatsoever is not of faith is sin." (Rom. 14:23). An unregenerate man therefore can do nothing pleasing in the sight of God. He may perform works which seem to us to be very good, but to God they are an abomination, for the proper motive is wanting. A Christian and a worldly man may perform the same work, the one will be pleasing while the other will be an abomination to God, because they are performed from different motives, and God looks at the motive. The Christian does it from the motive of love to God, but the unbeliever cannot do it from the same motive, because a man who does not believe in God cannot love God. How can you love a being that you do not believe exists?

It is possible for us to be deceived, for we are not always able to discover their rascality. That is the reason, however, why we should be all the more careful. Of course it is easy enough to discover that a man is a false teacher when he publicly declares that there is no God, the Bible is a failure, and Christ is a deception. But that is not the way false prophets generally come, and such are not they whom Christ has in view chiefly in the above words. Some have very sleek tongues, and at times preach truths also. They have, therefore, the appearance of true prophets, but are false notwithstanding. The devil sometimes appears in the form of an angel. The hunter fixes upon himself the hide and feathers of an ostrich, and thus he is enabled deceivingly to approach quite near until he captures the wild bird. So these men come to us covered with the robe of truth, but beneath it sits the deadly foe, ready to pierce us with the fiery darts of Satan, feeding our souls upon the devil's doctrines. Such are those who use the Bible formally in their houses and in their pulpits, but preach after all what is compatible with reason only.

God's Word must be our weapon, and with it we must always meet the enemy, let him come publicly or privately. Let us not trust a man simply because he is a good speaker. False prophets often are gifted, and use their gifts to win our confidence. When men are so very anxious to preach for

you, and before you ask them they offer themselves, and before you call them they come, then beware lest they be false prophets! True prophets are not so ready to offer themselves to congregations. They are willing to wait until the Lord calls them, or sends them. When men come to you and make fair promises, ask them: “Who are you? Where do you hail from? Who sent you? Where do you belong? What do you believe? What do you profess?” etc. Be not too ready to receive men without investigation, for the Lord says: “For there shall arise false christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders, insomuch that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the desert; go not forth; behold he is in the secret chambers, believe not.” (Matt. 24:24-26).

[3] Finally, these men shall receive their reward. Cain was cursed. Korah, Dothan and Abiram were swallowed up by the earth. The four hundred and fifty false prophets of Baal were slain, and for no other reason than their false doctrine. No good fruits came from their teaching, and “every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.” That is the place for all who dishonor God, and will not repent of their awful sin.

The Apostle John says: “Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, he hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.” This is the judgment we must pass upon false prophets. He that abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God, i.e., he is no Christian. A severe judgment indeed, but none too severe. It is one they justly deserve, and will admit of no modifications or alleviations. According to these words we are to expel and condemn from our houses all who come in the capacity of teachers but persist in their false teaching. Let us hear the instructions of Paul to Timothy pertaining to false teachers: “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strives of words, whereof Cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of truth, supposing that sin is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.” (1 Tim. 6:3-5).

But wasn't Paul a bigot, though, for giving young Timothy such selfish advice? Wasn't it a harsh and uncharitable judgment for Paul to call such men "proud, knowing' nothing, but doting," etc., who teach otherwise and consent not to... the words of the Lord Jesus Christ?" And oh! how unloving for him to say to Timothy, "from such withdraw thyself," i.e., have no dealings with them in a spiritual relation. These goody-goody people of our age, who are not very particular about doctrine and practice, no doubt, consider Paul very selfish and unloving for indulging in such harsh expressions. They would say: Look here, Paul! you will never succeed in building up any congregations at that rate, and if Timothy is going to start out upon such advice as you have been giving him he might as well lay down the sword and the trowel." It's a pity these people did not live in Paul's age!

But let us hear what the Apostle has to say elsewhere about the judgment of false teachers: "Cast out the bondwoman and her son; for the son of the bond-woman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman." (Gal. 4:30). Do you know whom the son of the bondwoman typifies? All those who believe and teach that they must receive forgiveness of sins, life and salvation through the deeds of the law, instead of through faith in the merits of Christ. That this is what this passage means is evident from the 24th and 25th verses of the same chapter. There we read: "The one from Mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. For this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." And what is to be done with such people? They must be cast out. Why? Because they have refused to believe in the promises of the Gospel, and therefore refused to become children of the free-woman; of the Jerusalem which is above... which is the mother of us all." Now then, if these people who refuse to believe in the promises of the Gospel come to us and by their self-righteous instructions would pervert our soul, shall we receive them and listen to them? Or, shall we not much more, in accordance with the words of the apostle, cast them out? It is inconsistent with many plain declarations of Scripture to permit such men to enter our pulpits. But it is said, "we ought to receive them and only condemn their doctrines." True, we are to condemn their false teachings at all times, and for them we should pray that God might have mercy upon their souls. But we dare not receive them as instructors even though we pity them ever so much, and even though the judgment may seem ever so harsh; for as long as they do not revoke their errors we cannot separate them, and they are dangerous

persons. If we receive their errors and endanger our souls, we receive an enemy into our camp ready to smite us with the sword of his false faith. We receive and soothe a serpent in our bosoms ready to inflict us with its poisonous fangs. Therefore we must heed the apostle's warning and avoid them. The Lord says: "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name; and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wondrous works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that work iniquity."

False prophets and teachers claim also to prophesy in the name of the Lord, and teach in the name of the Lord, but their claims by no means prove it, nor will their claims prevail before God. The Lord will judge them by His Word. He will say to them: "I have given you my Word, why did you not abide by it, and why did you not preach and teach it? As you have rejected my Word, so will I now reject you. You have, by preaching your opinions instead of my Word, led many souls into hell; now I must say unto you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." Such shall be the final doom of false prophets, and such shall be our doom also, if we permit them to lead us astray by their false doctrines.

May God protect us against the awful danger of false prophets, and keep us faithful to the truth as it is found in His word. Amen.

The Glory Of The Lutheran Church By Rev. Neumann, Burlington, Iowa.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are:

That no flesh should glory in His presence.

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. — 1 Cor. 1:26-31.

BLESSED BE THE LORD, blessed be His glorious Name, let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen!

“He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” St. Paul with this word refers in an abbreviated form to the warning admonition of Jeremiah, the prophet: “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, who exerciseth lovingkindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.” “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” We will make it the watchword of that worship to which

the grace of God has brought us together. We will find in it the glory of our Lutheran Church. Our glory is not in the man Luther, as our enemies have asserted. That which we have, as the largest and most influential Protestant denomination, the heritage of Christ and His apostles, is ours by the grace of God alone. I pray God that this present occasion may be fraught with an abundance of lasting blessing to many hearts. The reformation of the church by Luther, the return to the old biblical doctrines, “the faith once delivered to the saints,” has been called the most important historical event since the days of the apostles. IT IS MORE, infinitely more: it can be called nothing less than a great, wonderful, glorious deed of God. Therefore: Glory to God alone! The glory of our church is the Lord, who has redeemed us, who of God is made unto us, (I.) wisdom, (II.) righteousness, (III.) sanctification.

I. Wisdom

Christ is made unto us WISDOM. “Where is the Wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness. But unto them which are called, both Jews, and Greeks. Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” Thus St. Paul at the founding of the Church of Christ at Corinth, contrasts human wisdom and the divine foolishness of the cross of Christ, and goes on to state how both are changed: “When they deemed themselves wise, they became fools;” the foolishness of preaching, however, has proven itself divine power and divine wisdom. And after that, in the course of centuries, the church by its own fault had lost this wisdom and power, when the light itself had become darkness, when God in His mercy regarded His children and once more looking upon the darkness, pronounced His “Let there be light,” the word of Paul was fulfilled in its entirety:

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

"And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, the things which are not, to bring to naught things that are:

“That no flesh should glory in His presence.”

For lo, to a poor miner of the least village of Moehra, a son is born at Eisleben, whither the parents had gone to market, and on the day following the name Martinus was given him in holy baptism. An eventful century, the fifteenth, was nearing its end; was it the evening red of the old, or the morning light of a new time, that made it resplendent? A century marked by mighty conquests, important inventions, far-reaching discoveries. Who could foresee that the birth of that boy was the most important, the gravest in its consequences among ALL those events, that a world-revolutionizing greatness was to result from so weak a beginning! For behold, thirty-four years later, and an unknown monk nails a series of theses “Concerning divers doctrines and abuses in the church,” to the door of the castle-church at Wittenberg. Who could foresee that a few years thereafter he would wage war against pope and church, emperor and empire, — the first knight of modern times, leading the army of the kingdom of Christ, after the last knight of the middle ages had sunk into the grave? Who could foresee that after four hundred years, in our favored age, that army would be swelled to a membership of seventy millions, praising the cross of Christ as the ONLY banner of salvation, rejoicing in the spoil of a most phenomenal spiritual warfare? Are we not tempted to ask with Paul: Where are the wise? where are the scribes? where are the disputers of this world? — The wise? Indeed they were not wanting in the church of Christ. They have set on the see of Peter, they have known well their time, they have known how to profit by it; but their wisdom too often brought corruption upon the church, and then proved insufficient to stay it, to heal it. The scribes? They were famous in Luther’s days; but neither John Reuchlin, the expounder of the Old, nor Desiderius Erasmus, the interpreter of the New Testament; no, nor even Philip Melanchthon, the teacher of Germany, were able to be, or called to be reformers. The disputers of this world? Ah, the wisdom of the world was at its best that VERY MOMENT IN HISTORY; from Greece, which had

fallen a prey of the Turks, it has emigrated into the holy Roman empire. We find it represented on the see of Peter in the person of Leo X., the cultured, learned Medicean, at whose court the Greeks sought after wisdom. It was represented near the see of Peter in the person of the famous and skilled Cardinal Bembo, who warned scholars not to read Paul's epistles in the original text, lest it spoil their classical Greek. Yet the church could not be reformed by such haughty wisdom as that uttered by the "smiling pope," in the scornful words, "We know how much the legend of Christ has helped our people," — a wisdom, which regarded Luther's contention against Rome as a quarrel among the monks, and ridiculed his plain letter to the "vicar of Christ." The mighty and noble after the flesh were not wanting in the church: yet neither Sickingen nor Hutten, as brave as they may have been, were chosen vessels in the hand of the Lord: fire and sword could but deform, never reform the church. Many a characteristic of Luther's age may have concurred to further, cleanse and crown with success the work of the Reformation: the horizon of man, widened by the discovery of the new and the renaissance of the old world; the dissemination of newly discovered yet ancient truth, and the inauguration of the power of public opinion BY THE PRESS; the careless and ever smiling pope, the shameful indulgences, the undecided, wavering emperor: all these conditions may have furthered and made possible the Reformation, but never would have accomplished it. WHAT HAS DONE IT? "Give me a point where I may stand, and I will move the earth"; — Luther had found the point, which Archimedes, the sage of old, in vain desired. What was that point? On what did he stand, when at Worms he exclaimed: "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise, God help me"? On the holy and precious Word of God he had taken his stand; on personal communion with the Saviour of the world; on the wisdom which had been made flesh, which in this Word is made manifest, — that wisdom, in which Paul glories: "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified"; that wisdom, concerning which the learned Dr. Eck even had to confess: "I can confute Luther from the church fathers, but not from the Scriptures;" that wisdom concerning which Luther himself confesses: "I did not receive it from men, but from heaven through our Lord Jesus Christ;" that wisdom for which on his deathbed he gives thanks, "that God had revealed to him His beloved Son, whom he had preached, confessed, loved and praised." This is the wisdom in the face of which human inventions were scattered, as night and fog at the rising of the

sun, the wisdom which is the foundation of the redemption of the world, and the corner stone of the church of the pure Gospel, and therefore also of the re-establishment of the church on that one foundation. To the Reformation it is due that this wisdom was again brought to light. What about this knowledge and the confession of this wisdom in our days? If Luther were to go through our churches, what would he find? He would, indeed, rejoice over a few things, the churches, the old hymns, the true devotion found in many places. But what would he say of those millions of so-called Christians, who are ashamed of the Gospel of Christ? What would he say of those thousands of men, who deem themselves wise in their own conceits, who scorn the cross as foolishness and leave religion to the women and children? What would he say as to those who glory in personal liberty, calling Luther the benefactor of man, the father of the free thought, but who have lost sight of the motives of his reformation? This must we remember, and with the publican beat our breasts, when glorying in the Lord our Redeemer, who of God is made unto us WISDOM, and Righteousness.

II. Righteousness

The Scriptures alone! This is the one chief pillar of the church of Christ, which He himself has pointed out saying: "Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Only in that measure and degree in which Peter with his good confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," SEIZED THIS PILLAR, does the word apply to him, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But as soon as the church for the foolish preaching, the only effectual kind, substituted glaring human wisdom; as soon as man's word, in the traditions, vaunted itself to a place beside, yea above the Word of God; as soon as instead of the plain doctrine of divine wisdom there stepped in the sagacities of a falsely famous scholasticism, so soon did the foundations of the church begin to waver; for this wisdom in ever sharper features manifested the HEATHENISH TRAIT, mentioned by the apostles in our text: "The Greeks seek after wisdom." The simple preaching of the cross became foolishness in its eyes, and was haughtily despised, or considered merely good enough to be dispensed to the poor ignorant people, and manifoldly adulterated at that, — a

stone in place of bread; and often enough it came to be in the church even as in the heathen world in the days of Christ, when over their sacrifices and ceremonies the priests would laugh in one another's faces. But even the OTHER unevangelical feature characterized by Paul, to this day is evident, to a certain degree, in the Church of Rome: "The Jews require a sign." I mean the trait of alienation unto things visible, earthly, fleshly; the trait in which pride and that which is sensual in human nature desire to assert their right. The trait which makes the cross of Christ a stumbling block, which does not despise it in a trivial manner, but objects to it for selfish reasons. It is the disposition which takes offence at the Crucified One, the despised and rejected one, the man of sorrows, humbled to the form of a malefactor; and which therefore sets up beside the king of the Jews, crowned with thorns, the virgin crowned in radiance, the queen of heaven, and the glittering company of all the saints. And so obdurately, and to such an extent has this been done, that now the image of the One, in all His lowliness, yet the most beautiful among men, has grown pale, until the image of the true Savior, who has pity on the poor, is lost, and only the image of the Judge on the latter day is left, and for him but little to judge. It is the disposition which deems Christ's kingdom too much of an INWARD AFFAIR, too faint, too lowly, and which therefore desires to see it supplied with earthly power and earthly splendor, in spite of Christ's own testimony: "My kingdom is not of this world;" making the church a queen rather than a handmaiden. Rome could not endure it that the heavenly treasure should be offered in earthen and frail vessels, and thus all power and glory be given to the Lord. Accordingly it has devised the doctrine of the priesthood, which by special, inalienable gifts of consecration, by disengagement from things human in home, family and public life, by its mediator ship, between the Invisible One and the visible, assumed to itself exclusively, appears highly elevated above the masses. The desire for externalism has matured their mode of worship, imposing undeniably in many respects, yet preponderatingly sensual, and freed from all necessity of referring believers to the word, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." The deepest secret of the Christian religion, THE APPROPRIATION OF THE REDEMPTION BY JESUS CHRIST, THE JUSTIFICATION OF THE SINNER IN THE SIGHT OF GOD, as purely an INWARD, personal occurrence in the human heart, under these circumstances naturally became a STONE OF OFFENCE. It gave rise to that apparatus, which in all sorts of

external operations strives to visualize and represent the depth of religion, and ultimately makes participation in the treasures of the kingdom of Christ DEPENDENT on the SOUL'S EXTERNAL RELATION TO THE VISIBLE CHURCH, the administratrix and dispenser of the heavenly gifts, while the inner relation of the soul to the OWNER of these treasures, the matter of personal communion with the Lord and Savior, IS STRICKEN FROM THE PLAN OF SALVATION. Such a system could not help but hasten the degeneration to the indulgence-traffic, by which godliness was lowered to a common trade. Against this provision of the Gospel, the inspired Reformer reasserted the old and long-forgotten truth: "The just shall live by faith," — the other pillar of the church of Christ, the church of the pure Gospel: by faith alone!

We know how Luther came to find that jewel, hidden in the ground, covered over by the accumulations of errors of centuries past. Not in the way of an inquiring mind, so often a misleading way, but in the painful, yet blessed experience of his heart and life, he found righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In the light of DIVINE WISDOM, which the Christ of the Bible, the true, personal, living Saviour of sinners, had become to him, he recognized his sin, as well as the righteousness which God is and which He demands. This righteousness he endeavored to obtain, by toil and labor of mind and spirit, and finally, despairing of all the mediators and means of his church, found it "SOLA FIDE," i.e., by faith alone, in the confident surrender of his heart to the Savior, of Whom he willingly and humbly accepted what he could not EARN by any merits of his own. For his vain penances and his own righteousness he now substitutes the full grace of God in Christ Jesus; for the tyranny of a priesthood, now broken, he claims the liberty of the general priesthood of believers; instead of the base indulgence-money, he trusts the precious ransom of the blood of the Lamb. What if Luther were to pass through our congregations? Would he find them firmly resting upon the only foundation of salvation, justification by faith alone? Would he find the holy earnestness, which manifests itself in severity towards sin and zeal for righteousness? Would he find a sentiment that was not satisfied with mere church-membership, a disposition not only to boast of the rights of the priesthood of all believers, but also humbly to submit to its holy obligations? Let us remember this in this hour, and let us beat our breasts, as the publican in the temple, when finding our glory in this, that Christ was made unto us wisdom, righteousness and in Sanctification.

III. Sanctification

Rome has asked time and again, whether it was our intention to set up a new Saint. We could easily give a sharp answer to this: WE do not set up Saints, since we are not in need of any, because we know only ONE Holy One, and nothing beside him but poor sinners. That to us even the “St.,” the prefix of the names of the apostles, means nothing more than the resplendence of the glory of the only Holy and Righteous One, mirrored on the heads and in the lives of the foolish, the weak, the base whom He had chosen, in order that by Him they should be made wise and mighty and noble. We know, and no one knew better than he himself, that LUTHER was NO’ SAINT, not even in the sense in which the Roman Church applies this term, although he could have had the “ST.” added to his name with no less a right than numerous of the Romish Saints. Yet we also know that it is written: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification,” and that Christ is made unto us not only wisdom and righteousness, but SANCTIFICATION also. Luther fully appreciated this. It is not Luther’s fault, if with an appearance of right, but appearance only, the reproach can be charged against our church THAT FOR ALL ITS PREACHING OF JUSTIFICATION IT HAD GROWN FORGETFUL OF SANCTIFICATION. Such is not the faith which Luther believed, confessed and taught, a faith which would justify without sanctifying; a faith which becomes merely a pillow for the safe and sluggish heart and conscience. Luther did not preach and testify against dead works in order to establish the doctrine of a dead faith, which indeed could help as much to salvation as dead works, i.e., NOTHING. Hear his own words on this point: “Faith is a live, busy, active, powerful thing; it cannot but work good all the time. Faith does not inquire, *Are there any good works to be done?*’ *Before the asking, it has done them, and is always up and doing. If righteousness by faith is truly the jewel of the Evangelical Church — well and good! Let her show forth some of the glory of this jewel. If inner life is the essence and glory of genuine evangelical Lutheranism — well and good, the outside world has a right to ask for the evidence of the living penetration of religion and morality in our church; it has a right to demand: Thou sayest: I believe’; show me thy faith by thy works. Indeed, the world has a full right to hold up to us, over against our claim regarding the Searcher of hearts, ”The LORD looketh on the heart.” — the just require-*

ment: For the very reason that God looketh on the heart, see to it that we may have the evidence of your appreciation of this fact IN A LIFE OF SANCTIFICATION. Indeed, we must give the proof that our faith not only justifies and saves, but that it also sanctifies us, sanctifies us not in the eyes of men, according to human opinion only, but in the eyes of Him whose eyes are as flames of fire, the judge with the holy scale. Let it be seen to be the glory of the Lutheran Church, that Christ is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification.

For almost four hundred years the sun of evangelical truth and liberty has shed its lustre upon us. What has become of our church in the light of this glorious sun, and in the tempests, which at times have hidden it? Are we entitled to songs of praise, or are we obliged to mourn: "Lord, have mercy upon us!" Indeed they must both be heard, the humble and subdued chant over our shortcomings and indifference, and also the song of praise to God that we may still in unlimited measure enjoy in the Church of the Reformation His free grace. "The Word, they still must let remain." By grace are we saved through faith, the blessed gift of God. CHRIST, our only Mediator, is made unto us wisdom, righteousness and sanctification. Let us "hold fast to that which we have." We do not boast of human acquisitions, we do not find our glory in the works of a man: "He that glorieth, let him forever glory in the Lord."

The Growth Of God's Kingdom

By G. H. Trabert, D.D., Minneapolis, Minn.

“Whereunto shall we liken the Kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: But when it is sown it groweth up and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.” — Mark 4:30-32.

IN THE LORD, beloved: Before Christ ascended into heaven He gave the commission: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” Again He said: “All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” This proclamation but reflected the teaching of Christ throughout His whole ministry. In the parable of the sower. He declared: “The field is the world,” hence the seed of heavenly truth is to be sown everywhere, for wherever there are hearts to receive the truth there is hope for a harvest. Isaiah had written: “Come near, ye nations, and hear; and hearken ye people: let the earth hear, and all that is therein; the world, and all things that come forth of it.” God’s love comprehends the world, and the redemption of Christ embraces all nations.

Isaiah again says: “The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” Again, “Behold thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He hath glorified thee.” Looking down the avenues of time he sees the darkness of heathenism gradually fading before the light of the Sun of Righteousness. He exclaims: “Arise, shine; for

thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.” These prophesies have been going into fulfillment ever since the Holy Ghost was poured out on Pentecost.

We live in an age in which the church is moving forward triumphantly, conquering nation after nation, not with sword and battle cry and the thundering of artillery, but with the sword of the Spirit, the Gospel of peace which is more potent than all the machinery of human warfare. There is scarcely a nation in the world today to which the Gospel of salvation has not to a greater or less extent come and where there are no trophies of victory in converts to Christ.

While the kingdoms of the world have not yet become the kingdoms of the Lord, nevertheless the kingdom of Christ is on earth exerting a mighty influence and will eventually conquer all nations, for it is a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. In this kingdom God’s servants have been called to labor, and we as professing followers of Christ have a great responsibility resting upon us. We as individuals or as a congregation may seem to have but little strength for the great work which is to be done before the world is brought under the gracious influence of the Gospel, but Jesus declares, “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” We belong to the Church of God; the church which confesses and holds fast to the true faith; the church which Christ established, for which martyrs bled and died and which when steeped in corruption Luther restored to its primitive purity. It is the church which speaks all languages, adapts itself to all conditions, and which is the conservator of the true faith and of “pure and undefiled religion” upon earth. God has given to us a mission in the extension of His kingdom. Hitherto He has blessed His work, and we can look forward to more abundant blessings if we remain true to the principles of the faith and labor earnestly and fearlessly for the upbuilding of God’s kingdom. Let us then in the light of our text consider

The Growth of God’s Kingdom.

I. Its Significant Beginning.

It was indeed like the mustard which is a tiny seed that sends up a delicate shoot, so that an infant's foot might crush it but which grows in eastern countries to the height of seven or eight feet, with spreading branches among which birds can find shelter. The Church in its infancy could well provoke the derision of the world. In a little spot on this earth's surface it took its rise, unnoticed by the surrounding world. The first congregation was not only small, but composed of people who had little or no influence on the surrounding world. One well-directed blow by the authorities might have wiped it off the face of the earth, had it not been protected by a higher power. Its founder was a despised Nazarene, whose humble bearing and divine power provoked the jealousy as well as the contempt of the leaders of the Jews. Its first advocates were obscure men to whom the commission was given to go and evangelize the nations. Looked at from a human standpoint this commission was at once something so preposterous and visionary as to arouse the contempt and derision of the world. Compared with the surrounding world the Church was for centuries a "feeble folk," and is still today largely in the minority. It has been well said:¹ "It is constituted but of a feeble minority of the human family. Its prophets were shepherds and herdsmen. Its apostles were fishermen and tent-makers. Its sublimest Lord and stay was a poor Galilean carpenter. Its congregations are little, unpretending assemblies. Its sacraments are a few unostentatious rites. Its ministers are without lordly rule, and are mostly poor men, of whom the world seldom thinks, and for whom it seldom cares. Few of its members are found in the houses of kings, and among the renowned of the world."

The spread of the Gospel is the marvel of the ages. When we consider the humility of Jesus, how He disappointed the Jews who looked for a Messiah who would establish an earthly kingdom and restore their independence, it is amazing to see how the Gospel took root and found even among those who rejected the Christ some of its noblest defenders. St. Paul says that Christ is "to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness." To the heathen nations the idea of reverence for one who was regarded an outcast from society, or of faith in one who died as a criminal, was something so preposterous as to arouse the derision of intelligent men. Nevertheless that which was the object of the world's ridicule has conquered the world. It is the only religion which could satisfy the wants of the soul. People groped after a certain something with which to allay the pangs of an accusing conscience; they sought it in the manifold religions of heathenism,

but the darkness only became more dense and the future foreboded nothing but hopeless despair. It was found that the Gospel of Christ alone could satisfy the needs of the heart. That the man of Galilee, the one who was crucified, dying as a criminal, was the conqueror of death who, as a living Saviour, could give peace and hope and life. Slowly, but surely, the religion of Christ undermined the bulwarks of heathenism. Planted as a little seed in Antioch it took root and soon spread to Cyprus, to Tarsus and other points of Asia Minor. It reached Ephesus which became another center from which it soon spread throughout all the surrounding regions. It crossed the Hellespont and took root in Philippi and spread throughout Greece so that even the Areopagus at Athens resounded with the message of salvation alone through the crucified and risen Redeemer. It took root in Rome and spread all over Europe, and today people of every country and climate and race can find shelter under its protecting shade. Christianity has conquered the world. It did this not with sword and battle cry, but with the sword of the Spirit, the everlasting Gospel.

The spreading of the Church can be compared to the Banyan tree of India. As it grows and its branches extend they send down shoots which take root and give greater vigor to the tree, and it spreads more and more in all directions, sending down fresh shoots from year to year until it covers a vast area. So the Church continues to take root among different nations until it has covered the whole earth. The insignificant beginning of the Church; under most unfavorable auspices, show its divine character and should encourage us in every undertaking for Christ, never to despise the day of small things. Let it once be understood that it is the Lord's work, there is nothing to fear, whatever difficulties may lie in the way, as long as we are faithful and press forward in Jesus' name.

II. The Growth of the Church in Spite of Opposition and Danger.

How many dangers beset a growing plant! Often it is beaten down by wind and dashing rain, but when the sun again shines and it is kissed by its rays it again raises itself, its roots strike deeper and the genial light and warmth cause it to grow more vigorously so that it is able to resist fiercer storms. The Church has withstood the storms and assaults of over eighteen cen-

turies, and it has come out stronger after every trial. The storms of opposition, of hate and of ridicule have time and again beat upon her, but it only caused her to be rooted deeper in the faith which she possessed, and the rays of the Sun of Righteousness, warming and illuminating her branches, enable her to grow stronger and to spread her influence farther from generation to generation. The fires of persecution raged about her, but they could only scorch the bark of this tree of God's planting. The heart remained sound and the very fires caused her to assume greater vitality. The drought of indifference sometimes threatened to blast and shrivel her branches and stunt her growth, but the refreshing showers of divine grace again revived her by awakening spiritual life causing her to once more bloom and blossom as the rose. Infidelity, rationalism and so-called higher criticism have dug about the roots of the Church and endeavored to substitute the sand of human speculations for the deep soil of divine inspiration and so destroy her real character as the Church of God, but she stands today as green and beautiful as ever, bearing testimony to the fact that she is God's planting which can not be destroyed.

The Church is a living organism in which pulsates the life of God. To endeavor to destroy the Church is to endeavor to dethrone Christ. It is God's kingdom which can never be overthrown. When Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, was obliged to leave the city on account of increasing persecutions, he went with one of his disciples to a place near the city. In the evening Polycarp was walking in the shade of the trees in front of his country home when he found his disciple sitting under an oak tree with his face in his hands, weeping. The old man asked, "why dost thou weep?" The disciple replied, "Shall I not weep when I think how tempests are gathering around the kingdom of truth and will destroy it?" Then Polycarp smiled and answered, "My son, the kingdom of divine truth is like a tree which a man reared in his garden. He set the seed secretly and quietly in the ground and left it. The seed put forth leaves, and the young tree grew up among weeds and thorns. Soon the tree reared itself above them and the weeds died, because the shadow of the branches overcame them. The tree grew and the wind blew on it and shook it. but its roots clung firmer and firmer to the ground, taking hold of the rocks downward, and its branches reached unto heaven. Thus the tempest served to increase the firmness and strength of the tree. When it grew higher, and its shadow spread farther, than the thorns and

weeds again grew around the tree, but it heeded them not in its loftiness. There it stood in calm and lofty grandeur.”

The Church is eternal and therefore invincible. There are often discouragements and we experience them today. Sometimes we are inclined to become impatient and restless under the discouragements, because of the apathy of individuals, because of the encroachments of worldliness, because of the lack of means to carry forward the work as the necessity seems to demand. While we often have cause for our sadness there is nothing to fear for God’s kingdom as a whole. It has been well said:² “We are not confronted by discouragements half so formidable as those which have been overcome in the past. Moses was opposed by the might of a great nation concentrated in the hand of a single man. Noah toiled patiently at a seemingly useless task, amid the jeers of the world. From beginning to end of their history the children of Israel were always confronted by great odds. The early Christian Church was as a sheep in the midst of wolves. It was pursued by the active hostility of the greatest power of the world. Humanly speaking it was impossible to save it from destruction. Yet the men of God and the Church triumphed, and the empires decayed.”

Arnobius, a heathen philosopher converted to Christianity, about the close of the third century, speaking of the progress of Christianity and its power over the minds of men, says: “Who would not believe it, when he sees in how short a time it has conquered so great knowledge? Orators, grammarians, rhetoricians, lawyers, physicians, and philosophers have thrown up those opinions which but a little before they held, and have embraced the doctrine of the Gospel!” As early as the close of the second century the Church father Tertullian said to the leading heathen: “Though but of yesterday, yet have we filled your cities, islands, castles, corporations, councils, your armies themselves, your tribes, companies, the palace, the senate and courts of justice; only your temples have we left you free.” It is indeed marvelous how the mustard seed of the Gospel grew and spread, gathering strength from century to century, defying the powers of darkness, and at the end of every violent assault upon it being more firmly rooted than before. The opposition with which the work of the Reformation met helped to give it a permanent character, because it made the Word of God all the more precious and caused it to be studied all the more eagerly.

The dangers which surround the Church are often among its greatest blessings, as they incite to watchfulness and prayer by which the faith of

God's people is strengthened. The Church's greatest enemies today are riot outward. She has little to fear from open assault by the professed opponents of our holy religion. The most formidable attacks upon, the bulwarks of Christianity are made from within. There are those who claim to be leaders in the Church of Christ, teachers of those who are expected to become ministers of the Gospel, men of learning and of authority in their respective denominations, who boast that they no more believe in the Garden of Eden, the temptation of Satan and the fall of man; that the story of Noah and the flood is a myth, and that God did not write the ten commandments on two tables of stone. They deny that Elijah ascended into heaven, ridicule the story of Jonah, although Christ gives it His unqualified endorsement, and they cast aside all miracles. They look upon Christ as a noble man but not as the incarnate Son of God and hence the sacraments are not means of grace, but mere ceremonies which are not of vital importance to the soul. But in spite of this skepticism and false teaching the Church still lives. It is the kingdom of God, and though enemies may surround it and try to take it by assault, or false friends may betray it and so threaten its overthrow, it stands immovable, a kingdom which can not be destroyed. The Church is built on Christ and

Upon this Rock, 'gainst every shock,
Though gates of hell assail,
She stand secure, with promise sure.
They never shall prevail.

The Church today still grows in spite of dangers. Its growth is not dependent upon race, or nationality, or upon political influence or human wealth and power. Let no one think that the preservation and extension of God's kingdom depends upon the strength of any nation or the political success of any people. Like the mustard tree which grows in sunshine and storm, so God's kingdom can flourish under Russian despotism as well as under the genial sunshine of religious liberty. It is God's kingdom which is more potent than all the powers of this world, for whose onward progress rulers have often been compelled to stand aghast, finding themselves powerless in the presence of the ambassadors of the King of Kings whose message caused them to tremble as Felix at the preaching of the Apostle Paul. It establishes itself among the most benighted nations, puts to shame the wisdom of the most intelligent heathenism and conquers those who plot its

overthrow. By it even tyrants have been subdued and become submissive to the power of the Gospel. While it can brave every character of danger which may threaten, it brings comfort and hope to the downtrodden and oppressed.

Whatever efforts have been made, or are being made to hinder the onward march of the Church, they always have been and always will be futile. There may be a momentary check, as when an obstruction is placed in a stream, the waters continue to flow and will break through the obstruction or force it aside, or will cut for themselves a new channel and so continue to water and bless the land. Infidelity, superstition, false philosophy and perverted science have assailed it in every century and have disturbed its peace, and these forces are at work today with the same malignity, but often with more subtle shrewdness, in the effort to overthrow God's kingdom and dethrone its triumphant King, but all in vain.

In this age of change and of unrest, and of increasing conformity to the world, where many, who profess to belong to God's people, live in ungodliness and bring reproach upon the Church of Christ, God's saints may sometimes well be discouraged with respect to the future of His kingdom, but there is really nothing to fear, for He who planted His Church will continue to further its growth in spite of all the agencies of Satan to hinder its progress.

III. The Blessings which Result from the Continued Growth of God's Kingdom.

They are general and individual. The more rapidly the work of Christ is extended the more individuals come under its blessed influence. With the growth of God's kingdom the blessings of liberty are offered to an ever increasing number of humanity. Despotism enlarges their borders by means of force, and the peoples they conquer often lose, not only their national character, but their liberty. They chafe under tyrannical rule, and hate the government which claims them as citizens. God's kingdom is not extended by force of arms, but by the gentle spirit of love. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." The religion of Christ is not the religion of the sword of steel, but of "the sword of the Spirit." While along its pathway there is a trail of blood, it is not blood shed by the true

Church of God in the effort to conquer the world, but it is the blood of her martyrs, the blood of saints shed in defense of the Gospel of truth, her most precious heritage. The conquests of God's kingdom are not made by the serried hosts of armies in martial array, but by the messages of peace, coming often singly, but always in the name of the Lord Jesus and through the power of the Holy Ghost. Those who are conquered are made free men. Rescued from the slavery of sin they have become the citizens of God's kingdom and they love to be in the service of their gracious king. While they remain citizens of the earthly government to which they belong, they now have a higher national character, for they belong to God's people. They willingly follow their heavenly leader because He provides for them the richest blessings for time and for eternity. The nation where Christian influences are paramount is blessed of God and every individual Christian rejoices in his high prerogative as a servant of the most high God and an heir to the kingdom of glory.

The kingdom of God is a shelter and protection against the storms of evil of whatever character, for the Christian, as well as against the scorching days of adversity which often weary and oppress God's faithful servants. There is a fairy tale which speaks of a magic tent, no bigger than a walnut shell, whose powers were very wonderful. Placed in the king's audience chamber, it expanded into a gorgeous canopy over his throne. Placed in the court yard it became a spacious tent, which provided accommodation for the royal household. Placed without the gates, it widened its borders until the plain was covered by a glistening encampment, beneath whose shelter a great army might find ample room. And so it was capable of infinite expansion according to the requirements of its owner. That magic tent may serve as an emblem of the Church. At first it was only a little one and sheltered and protected but a few. But with every year it has expanded, and widened its borders, extending its sheltering influence, giving protection to an ever increasing multitude until it has practically filled the earth, and a vast multitude from every nation has sought its shelter. As the birds find shelter amid the branches of the mustard tree, so God's people find shelter and protection in the Church.

Here is the testimony of Christ with respect to His Church. His words have been fulfilled in the centuries past, and they are being fulfilled today. From year to year the work of extending God's kingdom is going forward. The progress often seems slow because of the many obstacles in the way to

hinder its growth, but God can overcome every obstacle and His cause will be advanced in spite of every effort on the part of Satan to prevent it.

When we look back and consider the growth of the Church we see there has been steady advancement. While sometimes there seems to have been little or no progress and apparently a going backward, every decade finds the Church in advance of the one preceding. It is the Lord's work, and He watches over it with jealous eye, always rewarding faithfulness in doctrine and duty, and fulfilling His Word with respect to the extension of His kingdom upon earth.

This tree of God's planting stands before us in all its grandeur today, but it is for the Church, for every congregation, yea for every individual member, to be up and doing so that its growth be in no wise impeded by lack of watchfulness and earnest effort. God alone can bless and prosper His cause, but as it was necessary for Paul to plant and Apollos to water at Corinth so that God might give the increase, so it is still as necessary today for God's servants to work with unremitting zeal that the kingdom of Christ be extended. The Pauls must still plant and all the faithful servants of Christ must assist in the watering. While we look with satisfaction upon the past, let us aim at greater achievements. No Christian should rest satisfied with what has been done as long as there remains so much to be done to bring the world to Christ. When we consider the thousands and tens of thousands in our own land who are out of the fold of Christ, and then look out over the world and see the millions groveling in heathen darkness, it should touch the heart of every true believer, impel to more earnest prayer and more self-denying effort to bring them the Gospel. Let us then not rest satisfied with what has been done, but with God's help press forward and endeavor to occupy the waste places by bringing the Word of life to the unchurched and unsaved. What if there are difficulties to be met! We know that the devil is ever busy to prevent the growth of God's kingdom, and he often employs those who think they are doing God's service to hinder the extending of the Church and the salvation of souls. But God's promises are sure that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church. Let us therefore be "steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

1. Seiss. *Plain Words*. p. 54.↩
2. *Lutheran World* for May 5, 1904.↩

Address for a Children's Service at the Festival of the Reformation. By the Rev. F. Kuegele, Crimora, Va.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.” — 2 Peter 1:19.

WITH OUR ANNUAL WORSHIP in commemoration of the Reformation we today connect a children's service. Something eminently appropriate. A worship in which the children and the young are accorded a special part is peculiarly adapted to make the rising generation better acquainted with the great facts of the Lutheran Church Reformation, and to teach them to appreciate the benefits which we so richly enjoy.

That which man possesses for a long time is very apt to become stale to him, something old, and he loses the true sense of its value. History teaches that, whenever the Gospel is set on a candlestick to shine brightly in a land or a community, people greatly rejoice over it for a generation or two, but if the grandchildren despise what their forefathers loved the light is lost to that people and it becomes night again.

By the grace of our God we have the Gospel, and we have it abundantly. We also love the Gospel and we desire that our children should love it as we do, and more so. We know that we have the true light from heaven, and we want our children to walk in this same light, and not to look around for another when there is no other. Therefore we spare neither labor nor cost to teach our children the love of Christ and His Word that they may know and appreciate the light, and may walk in it. Those in whose hearts the true Light shines can not otherwise than desire that it should likewise shine in

the hearts of their children and their children's children. For this reason we establish Christian week-day and Sunday schools for our children and want them to take part in public worship that they may early learn to love the house of God and the doctrine which is according to godliness that, when they become old, they may continue to walk in the way which they were taught from a child. Hence let me speak in a simple manner of

Luther, the Restorer of that Divine Light, the Gospel.

I. Luther the restorer of the old Bible; II. The blessed fruits of his work; III. The duty devolving on us.

I. Luther The Restorer Of The Old Bible

In this text the Apostle Peter speaks in high terms of the holy Scriptures; for he says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place." He pronounces the Scriptures a light and he praises those in possession of them blessed, because of possessing a great treasure. This light had been lost to Christendom in the times before the Reformation. True, the Christian religion had not become altogether extinct; distorted fragments of the apostolic doctrine still remained, but the Gospel was obscured by the traditions of men, the light was hid under the rubbish of human ordinances and the Bible was a forbidden book.

But at the time of the greatest darkness God awakened a man to deliver His church. On November 10th, 1483, a son was born to Hans and Margaret Luther at Eisleben in Saxony. The following day the child was carried to the church and in baptism it received the name Martin, because it was St. Martin's day, a reputed saint who is said to have lived under the Emperor Julian the Apostate. Now at that time when a child was named after a saint the idea was that that saint should be the child's patron throughout life, and this was counted more valuable than baptism itself. When little Martin began to grow up he was taught the legend of St. Martin, but nothing consolatory of his baptism. When he went to school he was trained to call on the saints, to revere the priests and monks, what to eat on Friday and the like, but he was not taught that Jesus Christ is the Savior of sinners. At the college and the

university he was a most pious student, going to early mass every morning, but there he could not find the way to heaven. He was not led to Christ, and he knew no other way than that he must reconcile God to himself by his own works of piety. When he was twenty years old he had never yet seen a Bible, but about that time he discovered a Latin Bible in the university library at Erfurt, and he was greatly surprised to find it so large a book, but it was then a sealed book to him, because his mind was prejudiced by the training which he had had. To find peace with God he became a monk and he conformed so strictly to the rules of his order that he soon became renowned as a most pious monk, but with all his rigorous life he could find no peace with God. In the monastery young Luther obtained permission to read the Bible and he searched in it daily with the growing desire to understand it fully. While passing through many internal struggles the truth of the Gospel gradually began to dawn on his mind, and he finally found peace in the faith that in Jesus Christ he had that righteousness which avails before God. Now the Bible became to him the most precious of all treasures, and when he was called to a professorship at Wittenberg and was made a doctor of divinity he cheerfully made oath to teach and to defend the Bible. This became his life's work, teaching the Bible and defending its doctrines against the gainsayers. Luther did not only contend that the reading of the Bible must be free to all, he also translated it into the language of the people, so that every one could read it and could examine for himself as to what it teaches. That we have an open Bible and are free to read it is owing to the work of Martin Luther.

Luther did not make a new Bible, he only restored the old Bible. Neither did he teach new doctrines, he only restored the old doctrine which was taught in the days of the apostles. When the reproach is cast on our Lutheran doctrine that it is old we can not deny it. Luther's doctrine is something old. It is as old as the Bible. Luther is not to be credited with the inventing of new things, he was only a restorer of old things. Just this is the reason why we Lutherans annually celebrate a festival of rejoicing in commemoration of the Reformation, because by Luther's work the old Gospel was brought to light again.

II. The Blessed Fruits Of His Work

What is the benefit of a restored Bible? What has the world gained by the Reformation? To this day the Catholics claim that the Reformation was the greatest calamity which ever befell Christendom, and the pope and his clergy must certainly count it a misfortune, because it broke their power and to a large extent stopped the flow of money by which they were enriched. But in fact and reality the restoration of the Bible was the greatest blessing which happened to the world in a thousand years. Two things are mentioned in this text by which this is illustrated. The Bible is a light which shines in a dark place, and by it the daystar arises in the hearts of men.

What Peter here says of the Old Testament is equally true of the New. The Bible is a light shining in a dark place. Without the Bible it is dark in this world of ours, night in the hearts of men. Without the natural light you can not see the way where you go. Without the Bible man can not see the way to heaven, he must walk in darkness, without hope for the soul. The heathen, even in his most cultured condition, is a proof for it. The ancient Greeks had their schools in which worldly arts and sciences were taught, but they ascribed the most abominable vices to their gods and their temples were seats of vice instead of virtue. The Bible dispelled the darkness of heathenism, and for centuries it shone as a bright light in the countries bordering on the Mediterranean sea. But when popery arose the reading of the Bible was discouraged, and later on it was forbidden the common people, and so in the course of time it came to be an almost entirely forgotten book, and now the people were in the power of the prelates. They had to believe what the priests and monks told them. The people knew no better and, deprived of the Bible, they had not the means of knowing any better.

It is therefore no wonder that superstitions of all kinds spread like weeds. Let me illustrate this to you by a few specimens. Everybody believed that saying the rosary would help the soul to heaven. The rosary was a string of beads which were separated into two divisions by a portable button, so that by each time placing a bead on the other side of the buttons one could easily count how often the Lord's prayer or the Hail Mary had been repeated in a day. Praying through such a string of beads was counted a great help to heaven. A specially pious man would rise early and would attend mass in the church before eating his breakfast. In the vestibule of the church he would consecrate himself with holy water making the sign of the cross. Inside the door he would fall on his knees repeating the sign of the cross, and bowing his knees every few steps he would go to his pew. There

he sat listening to the Latin words of the priest of which he understood nothing. Leaving the church he again put several drops of holy water on his forehead and breast. By performing these ceremonies in a mechanical manner the pious Catholic thought the day sanctified and himself secured against the evil influence of witches. Yes, witches! Everybody was afraid of witches. Diseases and a variety of misfortunes and evils were ascribed to the power of witchcraft, and the most trivial things might cause a person to be suspected of practicing sorcery. Shaggy eyebrows approaching close together were counted a sign of having a compact with the devil, and the very suspicions once awakened against a person would easily lead to that person being arrested, tortured and burned at the stake.

I mention these things to show what fruits will follow when the Bible is taken away from the people. Take the Bible away from our country but for a hundred years, and where would religion be? But popery stood for nearly a thousand years before the Reformation, and considering this we need not wonder that the Christian nations had sunk well nigh to a level with the heathen.

Since the Bible has been restored the people can no more be so blindfolded. Now every one can read for himself, and if he does not want to be need not suffer himself to be carried away by blind or designing guides. Now people have the means of knowing better. Indeed, a twelve year old child which has been taught the catechism and Bible history in a Lutheran school knows more of the Christian doctrine than many a professor or doctor of theology did before Luther came. Verily, the restoration of the Bible is a blessing for which we owe thanks every day.

And not only does the Bible deliver from superstition and falsehood, it makes that Light to shine in the heart which causes the soul to rejoice and fills it with the assurance of eternal life. The holy Scriptures cause the "daystar" to rise in the hearts of those who give heed unto them. This daystar is Jesus Christ whom Zacharias called "the day-spring from on high," and who says in the last chapter of Revelation: "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Jesus Christ is that daystar of whom the last chapter of the Old Testament said: "Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in his wings." This Daystar arises in the heart when a man begins to see and to believe that in Jesus Christ there is righteousness and life, that in Him he has the grace of the Father and the cleansing from sin. Certainly, where this

faith that Jesus Christ is the way which in truth leads unto eternal life, that in Him sinners are saved without their own merit or worthiness, where this faith begins to shine in the heart, there the trust in such foolish works as kissing the pope's toe or walking with pebbles in the shoes must vanish away. All the works of priests and monks can give no peace to the heart, but where Jesus Christ dwells there is peace, because in Him sin is put away and the soul can look up to God as to a reconciled Father. Though a Catholic live ever so strictly and appropriate many thousand dollars to read mass for the repose of his soul, all this can give him no peace, neither can it save his soul. But the soul which hangs to Jesus Christ will not fail to experience the truth of His words when He says: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John 8:12.)

III. The Duty Devolving On Us

Great benefactions impose great duties. "TFe have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." Upon us, the children of the Reformation, devolves the duty to take heed unto the Gospel which has come to us without our labor. Our fathers fought and bled for it and they have bequeathed to us the fruit of their labors, and should we not give heed to the word of truth? Herein we have no other choice than either to do well or to do evil. If we give heed to the Bible we do well; if we do not give heed to it we do evil. Those do evil who have the Word of God and do not take heed unto it, and doing evil they must abide the consequences. In regard to Israel the prophet Hosea in his ninth chapter recorded the remarkable word: "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations." The Jews did not take heed to the voice of the prophets and therefore they did not accept the Gospel of Christ, and they are wanderers among the nations and walk in blindness. Many places where Luther's doctrine once shone brightly have lost it again, because the people ceased to heed it.

Let us learn a lesson from the Jews and from our own forefathers, and let us never grow weary of giving heed to the Word of our God.

We have certainly great reason to be wide awake and watchful, if we would preserve the inheritance of the Lutheran Church Reformation. Strong

are the delusions and temptations of these latter days, and you children and youthful Christians will doubtless see still more perilous times for the Church of Jesus Christ before you have grown old. If in the previous century men began to pick the old Bible to pieces, they will in the new century want a restated gospel. I charge you to remember that it is the old Gospel which saves and it alone. However far men may yet progress in earthly knowledge, they can never invent a new gospel which could save the soul of a single sinner. When the popes deprived the world of the Bible it fell into superstition, and if the nations will no more heed the old Bible they must again become steeped in pernicious error and wickedness; for the Bible alone is the true and effectual safeguard against superstition and error. It is the light which God has given us to guide our feet in the way of truth and right. Heed this light and it will enlighten you unto eternal life through Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Message Of The Reformation To Our Times by C. Armand Miller, D.D., Charleston, S. C.

THE REFORMATION is an epoch in the world's history. It stands as the most noteworthy, important and influential event since Apostolic times.

Men may seek to underestimate, and even ridicule its importance, as the Romanists, and their apes, the Anglicans do, but no man nor set of men can change the face of the earth, make the Protestant nations weak, and the Papal nations strong, blot out the literature and science of the last three centuries, annihilate liberty, and shackle men with the old chains of Roman domination. What the governments of the world would have been without the emancipation of mind and will wrought by the Reformation may be seen in Spain and Mexico today. What science would have been needs not the trite illustration of Galileo's experience, but finds exemplification in the case of the reverent Romish scientist, St. George Mivart, whose effort to show that true scientific research may consist without loyalty to the Church, led, a few years ago, to the condemnation by the Roman Church of his works. And freedom would have been, what it always was under that grim rule — a name!

There are pages of history which hold within themselves a light of unfading glory. To look upon them is to feel the quickening impulse of high deeds; to remember them is to be taught the beauty of true heroism. Patriotism glows anew at each recollection of the sacrifices and the achievements of the days of Washington. Manila and Santiago are names that bring with their utterance the thought of a reunited country, of heroes of the South side by side with brave men of the North, under the one flag, of a predominant valor in our race, as widely spread, as readily evoked, as ever in the past. It is good simply to recall such historic incidents as these.

Not less are the important epochs of the religious history of the world, and especially, to us, of our own Church, adapted, by their simple presentation, to inspire enthusiasm, and to stimulate love and zeal. Such a period, preeminently, is that of the Great Reformation. It appeals in a peculiar way, to the imagination, as one sees the ignorance and degradation of the masses of the people, the prostitution of the Church and the cultured skepticism, or careless indifference of the religious leaders, and it appeals to the spirit of gratitude, as we behold the heroic conflict of the faithful few who cared for truth and for freedom, and realize what we owe now to the battle they fought for us.

But there is far more than this for us in the study of the Reformation history. There is practical instruction for the men who today are giving their lives in the same cause of truth divine. There is valuable information to be gained in the light of the experience of those able Captains, for the “far-flung battle-line” of today. There are to be found weapons of proof, and plans of campaign, and there is to be gained strength and assurance of victory, from investigation of the thrilling story of the days of Luther.

And it is to this theme, the message for our own time from the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century, that we turn with the earnest hope that our consideration of the subject may have a real and helpful influence on the conduct of our work for Christ and the Church.

The Message of the Reformation to Our Times is a Rebuke to Unbelief.

Ours is an age of materialism. Men measure and test, and examine, and believe only what answers to their crude experiments. They make the earthquake write its history with their instruments, require the cannon ball to tell its speed at the mouth of the great gun, and ask the mysterious electric current to impart to them the measure of its power! And when God makes no response to the methods of their questioning they assume that he is not. But He is, and He is to be found if we will look for Him in the history of the world, and in the realm of human life; in the secret records of human hearts. The message of the Reformation is a proof of God’s governance.

Men grow weary of waiting for the time that God has set for his mighty works! But all time is God’s, and He neither is impatient, nor forgetful.

When Martin Luther was born it seemed as if God had lost sight of His world. They who stood as His representatives laughed at Him and at His Gospel. They did not indeed reject it and seek its overthrow, for they drew from it the means of pleasure and of power. It was eminently worthwhile to foster the “superstitions” at which they laughed, when thereby the forgiveness of sins could be sold and the Pope enabled to continue his luxurious living. In the meanwhile the people were filled with superstition, contumaciously secure in their fancied righteousness, or if earnest and sincere, were left to struggle ignorantly in the Slough of Despond. Effort after effort at reform had been made by earnest men, but had failed, save in so far as they had kept alive some thought of better things, and had prepared the way for the work in the fulness of time. There seemed no hope, no resources, no leader, no might to cope with the corrupt and corrupting leaders of the Church, when the weak monk nailed his theses to the door of the Castle at Wittenberg, and “the man at last, had come!” (Dr. Flick). And from that day it became evident increasingly, that God had not forgotten! From the beginning He had chosen and trained this man for his work. His poverty had made him ready to endure hardship, capable of understanding the masses of the people, and never to be removed from their fellowship and sympathy. His spiritual struggles had taught him the meaning of sin, the awfulness of the condition of the aroused soul, not knowing the way of salvation, the powerlessness of the teachings of the Roman Church to give peace of heart, the supreme importance of the truth of the Gospel, and this made his work full of spiritual force, and saved him from the error of Zwingli, whose reformation was predominantly political. His monastic experience, gave him the very deepest experience of the best and holiest that the corrupt Church could offer in the way of work righteousness, and also the most intimate knowledge of the inner condition of that church. The journey to Rome opened his eyes to the actual condition of the Church at the very core, and revealed to him as no report could have done, how the mighty were fallen. The Doctorate of Theology, which he was forced to receive, deepened his sense of personal responsibility for the teaching of God’s pure word, and made it necessary, on his conscience, to protest against the perversions of that truth, and the violations, in the name of Christ, of His recorded will. His thorough education fitted him for leadership. A University graduate, master of the highest culture of his time, able to translate from the Greek, and even from the Hebrew, rare accomplishments for that day, standing thus

equal to the most learned of his opponents, in full possession of his mind and all its faculties, he was fully equipped intellectually for the task before him.

God had given him certain natural gifts which were wonderfully helpful in his great work. His earnest, joyous, German nature was a tower of strength, and a means of influence upon the people and upon the system which he outlined. Calvin nor Zwingli could have done the work that Luther did, if for no other reason, for lack of his personal qualities. His love for music and poetry, while characteristic of the large, genial spirit of the man, were also powerful instruments in the accomplishment of his mission. We rejoice in these gifts of his, and the early history of the Reformation testifies to the power of them, as manifested in the stirring words, and the mighty sweep of the measures of the grand Battle Hymn of the Reformation!

The originality of the man was a special gift of God. He had a great mind. He was a genius. His thought swept on with the impetuosity and energy of a mountain torrent, making its own channel, and bursting the banks of conventional and commonplace methods of expression.

He was filled with intense earnestness. He could not trifle. To such a soul as his, the questions upon which the Reformation hinged were more than safety and life, and the bribes which the Roman Church so freely offered him, were not capable of winning from him a serious glance. His life was one unceasing consecration. He shrunk from conflict, but God put the sword into his hand, and bade him fight. Day by day he laid down his own will that he might do God's will. And happiness, ease, reputation, life and all that was dearest he laid and left upon God's altar. Surely the Holy Spirit had room freely to work in him! Oh, that in this also, a double portion of his spirit might rest on us!

The Message, again, is a testimony to the might of the unseen, and a call to faith in the unseen. It was unseen Power that had spoken to the soul of Luther, that had burdened his heart with a sense of sin; that had pointed him to the light, and brought him peace. He had tried all the visible and tangible means that the Church had to offer him. Penances, scourgings, fastings, pilgrimages, and the whole machinery of monkery, he had found them all "vanity of vanities." Then he met the sinner's Savior and trusted Him, and being justified by faith he had peace with God. Henceforth he stood upon the Rock!

It was this spiritual education which made him the man of faith he was. The seen, and tangible was all against him. The immense power of the Papacy, the might of the empire, the strength of tradition, were all on the one side, and on the other, an unknown monk, a Book, a pen. Yet the result is the common knowledge of the world. Let the rationalist, with his fundamental axiom of science that every effect must have an adequate cause, account for the victory of the feeble over the world powers! There was an Unseen Champion who stood beside the defenseless leader of what all earthly judgment must have pronounced a “forlorn hope” — the same Power that had called, equipped, trained and commissioned him, and since God was for him, who could be against him? No cause could sufficiently account for the Reformation, but the presence and power of the Living God! The explanation is, can be none other than God.

And Luther and his fellow workers knew God. This is the secret of their indomitable fearlessness. When the Italian legate asked him where, if the Pope turned against him, he would take refuge, he answered unfalteringly, “Under the canopy of Heaven, beneath the hand of God.” On his way to Worms, unterrified at the reports he heard, he was determined to press on though there were as many devils in his path as tiles upon the roofs of the houses. At the Wartburg, when he heard of the disturbances, at Wittenberg and knew his presence needed there, he plunged, undefended, into the midst of the danger, a proscribed man, a man upon whose head a price was set — and wrote to his alarmed patron, the Elector, a letter full of marvelous faith and fearlessness.

The Church today needs that same fearlessness. Not the stress of persecution, but the spirit of levity, and carelessness makes it hard to stand for the simplicity of the truth and of the life of Christ. The curling lip, the mocking smile, the uttered sneer — these are the weapons with which the world meets, and alas! often vanquishes the soul that would live godly in Christ Jesus, in our time. The skeptic, and his kinsman, the negative critic, laugh at the simplicity of any who hold the Old Bible to be the Word of God, who have the old faith concerning Christ as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world. The courage that comes from a deep-rooted faith in the Living God, and in His everlasting Word, is rooted in a faith that is justified by the Reformation history, and that is demanded as the sorest need of our day. Oh! that the recollection of the hero faith of the time which we cel-

eborate may bring an inspiration and a strengthening of trust and fearlessness to us.

The Message of the Reformation to Our Times is a Call to Action.

We live in a day of great opposition to the truth of God. Where the opposition is not active it exists with all the tremendous inertia of indifference. The worldliness, luxury, avarice of the opening years of the 20th century constitute an appalling obstacle to the work to which we are pledged. The man of today is with rare exception the man with the muck-rake. Even if you could get him to look up from his dung-heap, the crown the angel holds would hardly allure him. It is not an earthly crown and has no market value. He has within him nothing that responds to the appeal from higher things.

There is corruption today among the churches. Not such as that of Luther's day, when immorality and sensuality unspeakable were common among the leaders of the churches, but corruption of the truth, which is only the more dangerous because taught by men of blameless life, and of commanding influence, a corruption rivaling the theological error of the sixteenth century. There is a retrogression on the part of a very large element in the various denominations, to the pre-reformation schemes of salvation. "Advanced" theologians have "progressed" so far as to reach the very position against which the Reformation was a protest, and we hear today, in different phrase, the same old soul-destroying errors, concerning work-righteousness, and salvation by character, which the Church of Rome taught undisputed ere the Saxon monk, the new David, went out against the mediæval Goliath, armed with his sling and his smooth stones from the brook.

The "advance" has gone farther to the rear than this; as far back as the first century, for in many pulpits today the very divinity of Christ is not taught, even where it is not rejected, and men prominent in the ranks of the Unitarians, congratulate themselves that though their numbers and power as an organization do not increase, they are reaching their goal, in the large proportion of men found in nominally evangelical denominations who are at heart, and whose tendency and influence are Unitarian.

There is need today of a new herald, a man to arise and call the multitudes to the banks of some new Jordan while he preaches to them the neces-

sity of repentance, and of the doing of the first works! Need of a new Luther to arouse and electrify the nations with his voice of power, and of prevalent truth.

Certainly, as we look at that time of sinful obscuring of the divine word and work, that time of luxury and sloth and hypocrisy, that time of shamelessness in high places, that time of teaching for doctrines the commandments of men, and realize how from that falsehood of life and dogma, the great multitude was led back to truth in faith and practice, we cannot stand idle, careless or neglectful when we see so much in the circumstances of our own day that appeals to us as the wretched ignorance and delusion that his confessional brought to Luther's notice, appealed to him, to offer at least an earnest call and presentation of the saving grace of God in the Gospel to the perishing around him. Such a task is worth our life's devotion.

The life of Luther and the progress of the Reformation constantly remind us of that word of Paul: "This one thing I do." The Church of today needs to relearn that lesson. For Luther there was but one thing to live for. His days were occupied in the preaching of the Word, the lectures in the University, expounding the Scriptures, the writing of books for the instruction and devotional uplifting of the people and for the defense of the truth against its opponents, the translation of the Word of God, the consultation with individual souls, and with the theologians and the leaders of the Church in various sections of the land, concerning the reorganization of the evangelical work, and the conduct of its worship, and church polity. Such tasks as these were his life. In this one cause, he labored, testified, suffered, denied himself, waged battle, prayed and lived.

And there was a similar devotedness of heart to the one thing, among the adherents of the evangelical cause. Men read the words of Luther, flocked to hear him in his sermons, lectures, and disputations, talked of the questions at issue, became messengers of the pure Gospel as soon as they had embraced it. The ninety-five Theses were prepared for a small circle, and the extent of their influence was utterly unanticipated by their author. But "in fourteen days they flew over all Germany" (Luther), and "in four weeks they were diffused throughout all Christendom as though the angels were the postmen." (Myconius.) The people began to govern their lives by the new principles; they applied them to family life, to the questions of home, marriage, vocation, the doing of good works, the distinctions between the sacred and the secular, until a social reformation resulted from their earnest

application of gospel principles to actual conditions. Their enthusiasm was so great that more than once opponents of Luther preaching against his doctrines were answered by the voluntary singing by the congregation of a Reformation hymn. The knights were ready to unsheathe their swords in the cause. It became the one great interest of masses of the people.

This intensity of interest, this placing of Christ, His cause and His Church first, in life and labors, this devotedness above all things to the Gospel, its pure preaching and its extension, is the chief need of pastors and people in the conflicts of today. Instead of singleness of heart in the work of Christ, how often we are confronted by what seems whole-hearted devotion to the world and its interests on the part of those who name His Name, and on whom, humanly speaking, the further progress of the Church depends! Instead of intense interest in all that concerns our cause, how often do we find blank indifference! If we look for enthusiasm in carrying out the plans for larger effort in congregations and in the general work of the Church at home and abroad, how often are we chilled, disappointed, and only saved from utter discouragement by the faith which we have in God and His promises! Oh, for the fervor of those days of reformation zeal, for the earnest desire to conform the life with the rule of God's Word, for the simple application to the questions of every day, of the answers which the authoritative norm of faith and practice so abundantly provides. Is there not a call to us, the leaders of the congregations, to make "this one thing" more evidently and thoroughly our life pursuit, and is there not a call to the multitudes, among whom the Reformation found its strength in those older days, to realize that nothing in life is to be compared for importance and worth, to the carrying out of the Word of God in our lives, and to the carrying of that same Word to all the perishing ones of earth?

Yes, the call is plain. Earnest, consecrated, single-hearted effort for the one thing worthy of our best powers, is incumbent upon us. Make the kingdom first. Arouse! fight! Extend the truth, that its power may be manifest far and near! Oh, for another time of true revival, when, as on the wings of the wind the message of salvation shall speed and shall constrain and bring men captive! Let the truth permeate the masses of the people. Make it press upon the attention of men in the various denominations, and claim their attention and their allegiance! We have no right to hold it as our own to hoard and hide! It is no miser's treasure, and to seek to keep it so is to lose it! It is

ours as a sacred trust. As we dispense it we keep it increasingly! Only let us be in earnest in the cause. There can be no louder call than comes to us!

The Message of the Reformation is a Testimony to the Power of the Word of God.

The Kingdom for whose establishment Luther fought is not a kingdom of this world. If it had been, he would not have refused, as his Master before him did, to use the sword of steel. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." (2 Cor. 10:4). When the true weapons were used, as in the Reformation, what wonderful progress was made! When, as in the days of Constantine, and through the succeeding ages of the development of the temporal power of the Church, the weapons of carnal might were employed, how great the failure! Luther's sword was the sword of the Spirit. He trusted in, and used no other. From the beginning of his work, in that most dramatic moment when he, like Athanasius, alone against the world, save for the unseen defense of God, gave his ultimatum to the Diet of Worms, and said, "Unless I be convinced by clear and indisputable proofs, from the Holy Scriptures, I neither can nor will retract anything. Here I stand. I can do naught else! God help me. Amen!" down through the varying phases of the combat, he never failed to use and trust the Word of God. On the Wartburg he was forging the armor of truth, and in his silence and seclusion doing mighty service, as he slowly and painfully, yet with divine teaching and marvelous success, made the Apostles and Evangelists speak German! The multifarious products of his never weary pen were but the precipitations of his own soul, saturated with the Holy Scriptures. These were his daily study, his constant subject of discourse, his unfailing comfort, his invincible artillery. Our glorious confession is the Bible condensed and recast into the form of sound words which the believers of that day found best adapted to bear witness to the unchanging truth of the pure Gospel, and in which we of this day find no need of omission or amendment.

And the Word, which is not and cannot be void of power, the Word, through which the Holy Spirit comes to us, proved sufficient for the needs of Luther's own great heart; sufficient for the guidance and guardianship of the movement for evangelical truth; sufficient for the defense of the reborn

church against its perils from without and from within; sufficient for its up-building and progress down to this hour. No wonder the Church of the Reformation honors the Word. No wonder we let it speak its own meaning to us, and take it for what it says! The wonder is, that after the manifestation of its power in the Reformation any could be found to doubt the fulness of its divine inspiration! The wonder is that we should ever shut it out from our hearts or refuse to make it actually, in our daily lives, the infallible rule of our faith and practice.

An equally striking illustration of Luther's trust in the Word is to be found in the manifestation of his loyalty to it, in the progress of his apprehension and teaching of the full and pure Gospel. The almost irresistible tendency of the man who turns from old views to accept new and radically different tenets is to rush to the extreme position on the other side. The impetuosity of Luther's temperament would seem to make the tendency the more marked in his case. Indeed, there is evidence that he felt the impulse to get as far away from Rome in his teaching, and in his practice as possible. Luther once said that he would give a great deal to any man who would convince him that in the Holy Supper there was no real presence of the body and blood of the Lord. But the Scriptures testified otherwise, and such was his loyalty that he was, always and consistently, what at the Diet of Worms he declared himself to be, "a prisoner to the Word of God." As you examine the system of truth which bears his name today, you discover that he went as far, in the teaching of every doctrine, as God's Word took him, and no further! Where it stopped, he stopped. Because the Romish doctrine of trans-substantiation is untrue he did not therefore hasten to assume that there is no real presence of the body and blood of the Lord in the Sacrament of the Altar. Because the Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum* is false and destructive, he did not therefore rashly conclude that baptism is mere water, and that there are no real means of grace. Because the shows and ceremonies of the Roman mass are puerile, and sensual, he did not assume that God hates dignity and decency and order. Because many things had grown up in the Church in the course of the barren years, which were hurtful, and contrary to the letter and spirit of God's Word, he did not draw the conclusion that all that had been introduced since the days of the Apostles was to be overthrown, and that in all those centuries the Holy Ghost had broken His promise and deserted the Church of Christ. And because of these things we have a right to claim to represent the Conservative Reformation. Calvin

and Zwingli did make, in practice, the assumptions which Luther did not make, and therefore the Reformed Churches are justly described as radical, and destructive in their reformation. And it is not because the Lutheran Church has a genuinely Scriptural, mediating theology, that she today numbers as many as all Protestant Churches together in her fold; and does not her sure, safe middle ground, the ground of God's Word, make her the best hope of the ultimate reunion of Christendom? The Word was the power and the safeguard of the Reformation, and it is still the only hope of those who will heed the message of Luther's life and times to us of today. The great Reformer who succeeded where so many had already failed, used the Word. With voice and pen, in pulpit and professor's chair, he did this one thing, he used and trusted in the Word. Note the influence of Luther as theological professor in the University at Wittenberg. It can scarcely be doubted, that of all his deeds, save only the translation of the Scriptures, his most important and influential work was that of training young men to go out and preach the Gospel over all the lands. Trace the progress of the evangelical movement, and you hear one unvarying history, how men who had been students at Wittenberg went back to their homes, in the different countries of Europe, and soon there are churches and multitudes of believers and a mighty onswearing of the tide of truth. For the impressions on the then living men nothing was so powerful as the theological school. Luther's voice could not sound over all Germany and Scandinavia. Luther's writings, and even his translation of the Scriptures could not take the place of the living voice of the preacher, interpreting through his own life experience the life-giving Word of Christ. God's Word, through human lips, and out of human hearts, is God's plan. It pleased God through the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

Here is involved another indispensable thing, the careful instruction and indoctrination of the youth in the congregations. Luther's Catechism, and catechetical method was a master-stroke of his spiritual genius! To be a wholehearted Lutheran it is necessary to know what a Lutheran is, and to understand wherein we have so much to gladden and sanctify us than any less pure form of the faith can give. Teach the children of the Church, not only to know with their minds, but to apprehend in their hearts the precious Gospel in its fulness, and you will bind them to the Church of their Fathers with cords of loving loyalty which no mere courtesies and cajoleries, no

considerations of association or of social recognition, no argument of convenience or of profit can dissever!

There is a future for our Church in this great land. Already men in other communions are awaking to a realization of our history, our potency, and our progress. Already men are asking why in this age of unsettling of creeds, and of abandonment of time-honored convictions, in this age of sensationalism, and of pulpits which have no messages except those of political and sociological interest, the old Church of the Reformation stands where she has ever stood, seeking no revision of her creeds, still further from that subtle dishonesty which keeps the old forms but utterly denies their contents, troubled by no heresy trials, nor by any necessity for them, giving no place in her influential councils, in her theological professorships, nor in her humblest pulpits, to the Jehudi's with their pen-knives who, in other communions, without exception, are busy cutting out and burning up pages and whole books from the inspired volume. Oh, my brethren, have we, perhaps come to the kingdom for such a time as this? Is it possible that the humble hearts in the simplicity of faith who still may be found widely scattered through the denominations around us, will find before very long that the one place for all who love the Perfect Christ, who trust in His atoning blood, and who desire neither to burn strange fire on Jehovah's altars nor to feed on husks, is in this pure Church, with the faith of the Reformation, and where the message of the Reformation is still heeded? Is it possible that to us will come all who long for the preservation of the faith once for all committed to the saints? Even this may be in God's unrolled scroll of the coming days, and then perhaps with new meaning shall we appreciate the eloquent words of Dr. Krauth "Luther abides for all time. His image casts itself upon the current of ages, as the mountain mirrors itself in the river that winds at its foot — the mighty fixing itself immutably upon the changing."

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Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. (Jude 1:24-25)

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