William Harley

Little Journeys with Martin Luther

A Real Book wherein are printed divers Sayings and Doings of Dr. Luther in these latter days when he applied for Synodical Membership in the United States.

Some said, "John, print it";
Others said, "Not so."
Some said, "It might do good";
Others said, "No."

—Bunyan.

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Little Journeys With Martin Luther

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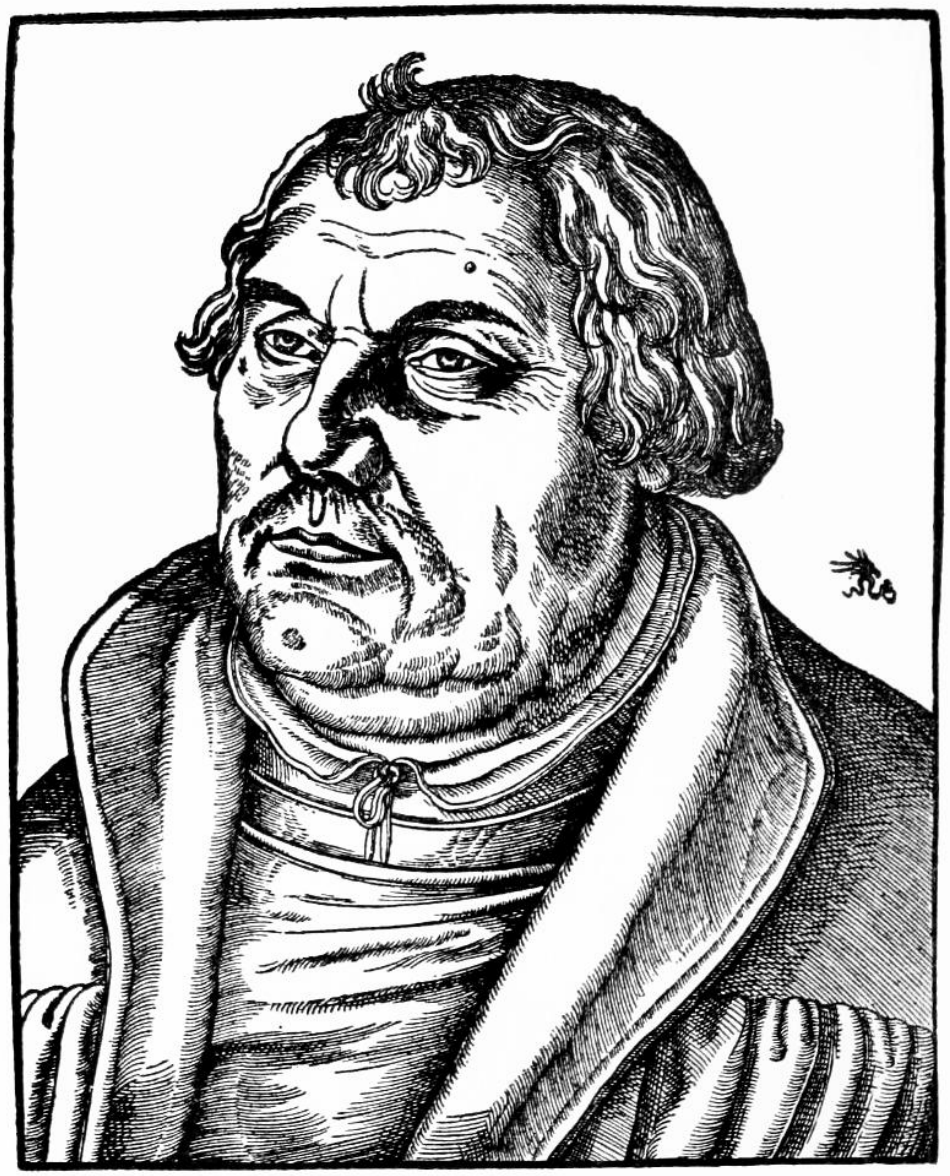

FOUR potentates ruled the mind of Europe in the Reformation: the Emperor, Erasmus, the Pope, and Luther. The Pope wanes, Erasmus is little, the Emperor is nothing, but Luther abides as a power for all time. His image casts itself upon the current of ages, as the mountain mirrors itself in the river that winds at its foot—the mighty fixing itself immutably upon the changing.—Krauth.

Martin Luther

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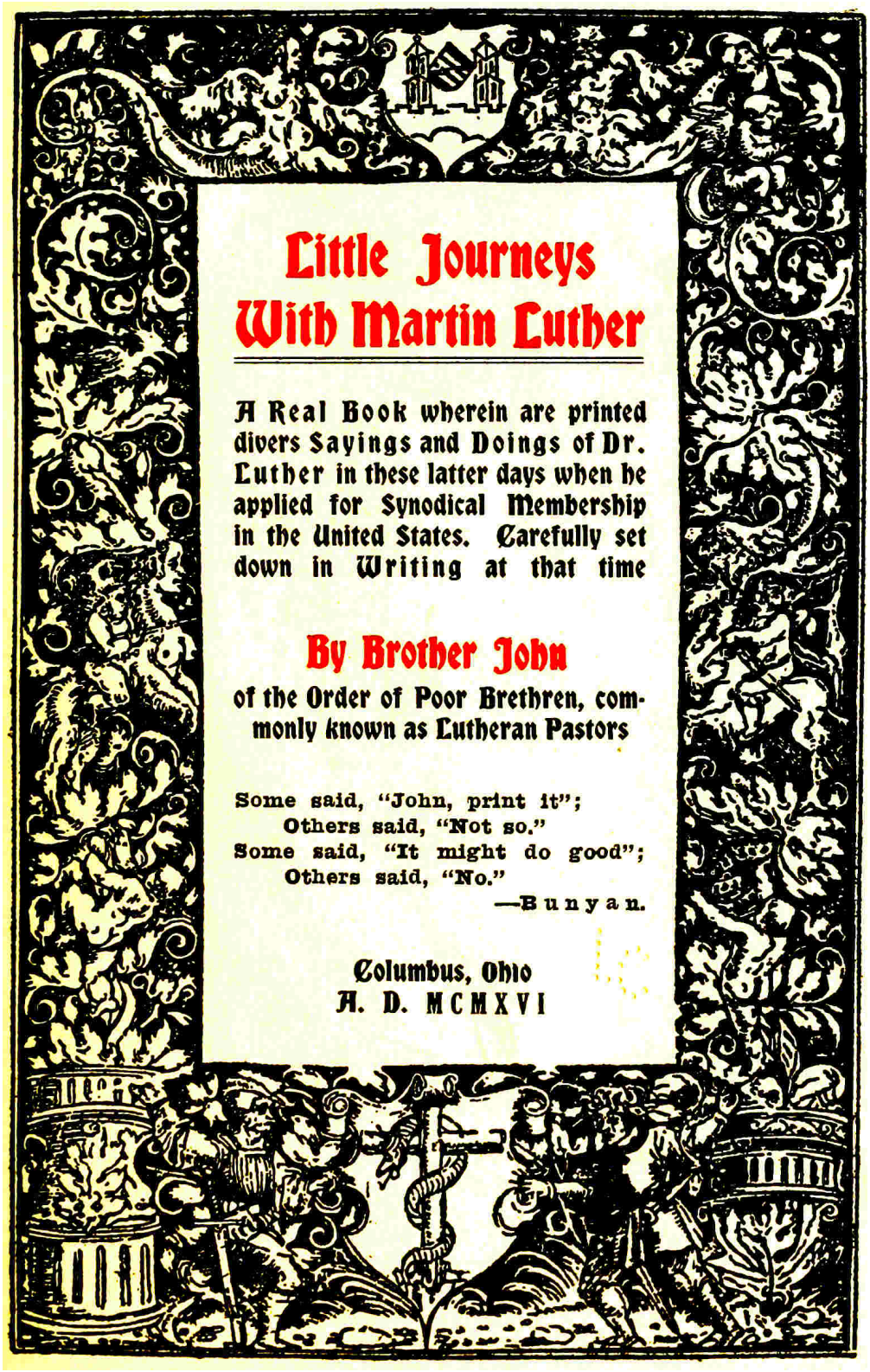
Little Journeys With Martin Luther

A real book wherein are printed divers sayings and doings of Dr. Luther in these latter days when he applied for synodical membership in the United States. Carefully set down in writing at that time by Brother John, of the order of poor brethren commonly known as Lutheran pastors

By William Nicholas Harley

Columbus, Ohio
HANS LUFFT

LutheranLibrary.org



Original Title Page

Dedication

Dedicated
to the pieces of the
Church of today for
the sake of the peace of the Church of tomorrow.

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Collect

O GOD, Who restorest to the right way them that do err, Who gatherest them that are scattered, and preservest them that are gathered: of Thy tender mercy, we beseech Thee, pour out upon Thy Christian people the grace of unity, that, all schism being healed, Thy flock, united to the true Shepherd of Thy Church, may worthily serve Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

By Way Of Explanation

I will smite this devil with a quill. — Luther.

THE WORK HERE PRESENTED to the public came into our possession with a large number of manuscripts as a legacy from the pen of a deceased clergyman — a legacy to one next in friendship if not next in kinship. Owing to the engrossing duties which attend the editing of a daily newspaper, several months elapsed before we were enabled to undertake the work involved in examining and classifying these papers. The larger number of the manuscripts proved to be sermons, which, for the most part, were incomplete — some lacking the peroration, others having one or the other part merely in outline, and most of them, good as they were, in no shape for print. The smaller number of manuscripts comprised attempts at different kinds of English composition — poems, proverbs, speeches, editorials, sketches, serials; in short, attempts at almost every species of writing, but, like the sermons, by far the larger portion was made up of unfinished efforts. Our friend must have belonged to that class of men who can use their pens effectively only when under the stress of excitement, like the artist who lays on telling and talking colors bright and sombre while his soul glows with the inspiration of an ideal, but tosses aside palette and brush the moment the vision begins to fade, or like those who try their hand at various things for the mere pleasure of the work.

While thus endeavoring to classify the papers left in our hands, and having almost arrived at the conclusion that our friend had not entertained the remotest thought of making us his literary executor, we came upon a somewhat bulky manuscript, which was securely wrapped and tied. On opening the package, we found a note which set forth the character of the work and expressed the author’s wishes with reference to it. A hasty examination showed that this manuscript was finished. Our curiosity was aroused by the title, and we started at once to read the work. No more classifying was done that night. So absorbing did the story grow that we

read on till broad daylight, stopping but once, and that was to readjust the gaslight. We forthwith resolved to execute the wish which the deceased author expressed in the note and "publish the work after the lapse of some years, just for the good it will do." Why he desired its publication delayed, we cannot say; but his directions in this respect have been scrupulously complied with, and the work is now given to the Church with the conviction not only that it will prove interesting and instructive, but also that it is timely and has a mission of no little moment.

Whether this production is what it purports to be or is an invention pure and simple, it is none the less a remarkable piece of work, if not an altogether unique one. The note found with the manuscript states that every phrase and sentence uttered by Luther in the course of this narrative is to be found in the Walch edition of his works; and since we have verified this in all the important passages, by means of the extensive index to that edition, we are convinced that the statement is absolutely true, and that in the entire volume there is not a single expression credited to Luther which cannot be found in any standard edition of his works. This is a remarkable coincidence and also a psychological phenomenon of some importance, if the work is what its author claims for it; and if it is not what the author claims for it, if the whole, including the claim as to its nature, is to be taken as an invention, it is a noteworthy production notwithstanding, exhibiting an extensive knowledge of Luther's writings or a prodigious amount of labor and patience.

While the work may wear the aspect of a polemic in the guise of a romance, it was no doubt intended to be an irenic, and is such in fact, if viewed in any other light than that of narrative. Its author was a man of singularly sweet disposition and of mystic turn of mind. He would rather nestle on the bosom of his Master than enter the lists of debate and strife; and yet, when the provocation was sufficient, he could be like his prototype — a veritable Son of Thunder; but it was never thunder for thunder's sake, nor for the sake of war, but it was to make peace more certain on the foundation of truth. If, therefore, he had in mind any other object than that of recounting a singular experience or relating an interesting story, it was only that which he tacitly avows at the close of the tale, where it is evident that he is under the impression that he has contributed his mite towards a real union of Lutheran forces by exhibiting, in a novel and striking manner, the folly, shame and sin of schism, discord and contention. If such was one

of his objects from the outset, he has not gone wide of his mark in the execution of the plan. The folly and sin of schism and withal the foibles of bodies ecclesiastic, have been set forth in a telling and ludicrous manner. No matter how he intended it, he has dealt the devil of schism an effective blow with his pen. And for that we say, God bless his memory.

There are, however, some things in the work which one might wish eliminated or amended. Among these is the odor of tobacco which clings to some of the descriptive passages. Yet the self-drawn portrait of the author would not be complete without his chubby little meerschaum, and the only wonder is that he did not succeed in putting a pipe into Luther's mouth before their travels came to an end; but, though he found pleasure and even a sort of inspiration in the habit, that will hardly lead anybody astray, for the best of men have habits which it is wise to shun. Among the portions which might be toned down those stand foremost in which foibles are dealt with. At times they seem to be caustic, but it is evident that the caricature is drawn only in the spirit of a love which aims to be helpful in removing the folly by sketching it in proportions so large that it must be seen, and presupposing in all the simplicity of charity that no good churchmen will take umbrage at one who points out the faults they have blindly fostered. And thus, knowing full well the loving kindness of the author's heart, and having a natural reverence for his posthumous work, we decided to make no alterations in the volume, but merely to superintend its passage through the press. It is therefore given to the Church just as it came to our hands, with all of its burrs and blossoms, sighs and smiles, and thought and prayer provoking matter.

To assert indifference to the success of this volume would be sheer dissimulation on our part. If it be no child of our brain, it is none the less a fond child of our affection and, parent-like, we believe it has a mission to perform — a word to say to Zion in its own way. As it leaves our sanctum we bid it godspeed. Go forth, thou little foster-child, upon thy mission: show them the shame, aye, and the sin, of divided and belligerent forces; spur men on to talk and work and pray more earnestly for a united Church; and, in thine own way, impress upon the Church's heart the Master's plaintive word, "That they may be one."

W. N. HARLEY.

Reformation Day, 1915.

For to me For far worse than any war or battle is the civil war of the Church of God; yes, far more painful than the wars that have raged without.

— Constantine the Great.

Though this be madness, yet there is method in it. — Shakespeare.

1. I Rub My Eyes

Whatever time or space may intervene,
I will not be a stranger in this scene.

— LONGFELLOW.

THE SERIES OF STRANGE EVENTS which I mean to record here, if so be God grant the needful time and strength, began in the city of Washington in the Year of Our Lord 1898. It was Lord's day evening and I was sauntering towards Thomas Circle, near which the Luther Memorial Church is located. As you no doubt know, a bronze statue of Martin Luther stands in front of this edifice. That statue has a deal to do with my story. But I must not anticipate: I will speak of that at the proper time and place.

As it was, a number of fashionably dressed people were wending their way to church, but not enough, after they had separated for their respective places of worship, to make more than the corporal's guard which fashion has made the common Sunday evening congregation for Washington during hot weather, cold weather and weather that is neither hot nor cold. The white statuary in the circle hard by, the beauty of indigenous and tropical plants — for we were over shoe-tops in June — and the gay attire of the pedestrians made an attractive scene in the evening twilight; but the train of thought it awakened was unpleasant, touching as it did on the indifference shown God's house, the vanity of dress and the tyranny of the fashion-plate, and ending in opening afresh a long-standing feud with that silly autocrat called fashion.

Musing thus, I came to Fourteenth Street and Vermont Avenue, where the Memorial Church is located, and paused, almost involuntarily, to look at the bronze Luther. Being, perhaps, somewhat petulant, the old question came up: Why should the contributions of Lutherans all over the land have placed this statue just here? Is it not just the pastor of this church who ridicules Luther's Catechism, disavows everything distinctively Lutheran,

and shows himself more afraid of a hogskin volume of sixteenth century theology than he is of the devil himself? But one can console himself. There is a bit of irony in it after all. The bronze Luther stands quite a distance from the church, and we all know — except, perhaps, this pastor and a coterie of like spirits — how well this portrays the actual condition of things. That evening, to my eye and taste at least, the figure of Luther clad in symmetrical robe presented a refreshing contrast to the men and women on the street. Modern attire is an abomination to artistic taste. Every good sculptor seems to feel himself driven to invest his male figures with drapery of some sort to help out appearances for fashion's hitching-post of a man. Our modern attire is neither decorous nor aesthetic, and I often wonder how, under these untoward circumstances, a white shirt and a closed mouth can go so far toward lending dignity to a man in trousers. Imagine Luther or Wesley in breeches, if you can, and not smile! The figure of Luther upon the pedestal was more comely than that of the men on the street; but I recalled how the toil of men had necessitated changes in apparel, so that with the generality of mankind our present mode of attire is entirely a matter of convenience in work, and that thought brought with it a better feeling. Time has been a tailor as well as some other things. Aye, what changes the centuries have wrought! Standing there in the gloaming with the dome of the National Capitol before me and the simple abode of primitive man in mind, I tried to review the world's progress in art, invention and science. What tottering steps, then what strides — what colossal strides! Would an ancient believe it? Descriptions of inventions comparatively recent, like the steam-engine, the telegraph, telephone, electric motor, would seem fabulous to him. What if Luther could revisit the earth? I queried. What would he think? What would he say?

I must have been lost in contemplation no little time, for when I came fully to myself I found that the long shadows had merged into the soft darkness of early candlelight. And here it is necessary to mention one of my oddities. I usually look intently on the floor and scrape nervously with one foot when I get into a brown study — an eccentricity for which my wife has chided me as often as for smoking. My eyes were fixed thus upon the pavement while the aforesaid cogitations were going on, but when I asked myself what Luther would say, should he return to the earth, I thought of the statue and straightway looked up. You may imagine my amazement when I saw that the statue was surrounded with a glow, much like the heat

which we sometimes observe rising from a stove, save that this had a golden hue, and beheld, instead of one, two Luthers on the pedestal, or more precisely speaking, at the pedestal, for the one figure seemed to stand a little below the other, and the whole appeared much like the double effect produced by pressing the eye while looking at an object.

For a moment I stood as if paralyzed. Then, recovering my composure and thinking the double an illusion, I removed my glasses, cleaned them with a bit of chamois, rubbed my eyes, readjusted my spectacles and looked again. I must confess that I was not yet prepared for what had taken place and what soon followed. The golden shimmer about the statue had vanished entirely, and but one figure, darkly outlined against the sky, stood on the granite block, while the other figure stood on the ground directly in front of the pedestal, and was, so far as I could see, the exact counterpart of the one on the pedestal, save that it was smaller. It evidently had slid or stepped from the pedestal while I was rubbing my glasses. To make sure that I was not mistaken in the identification on account of the defective light, I stepped a few paces forward. Then I saw the figure turn around, glance at the statue and start off toward the church. It was no mistake. Luther had returned. Let the reason be what it may, natural, preternatural, or supernatural, there went the great German in Augustinian gown, carrying an oldtime folio Bible under his arm. Each moment I expected the earth to tremble under the foot of this intellectual giant; but he stepped along much like any other mortal, his walk being distinguished only by a rather firm and decisive step. He soon reached the church, and, after pausing a few moments to read the name, passed through its portal.

I did what I am inclined to think any other mortal would have done, that is, I stood there as if rooted to the ground. It is, indeed, a strange feeling that comes over a man who is permitted to witness such unearthly proceedings. The reasoning faculty seems to be stupefied, but the power of perception remains active, leaving him able to see and to know, but unable to draw any rational conclusion. It makes you feel creepy and even leads you to doubt your sanity. However, the numbness that had crept over body and mind passed away, and, having regained full control of myself, I was not a little chagrined to think that this was the first Lutheran church which Luther should enter upon returning to the earth. Any more orthodox church would have suited me better, for I was anxious to have him get a good first impression of Lutherans in America. Then I wondered what would happen.

This Luther was a plainspoken man, and if things were much awry he might speak his mind with old-time emphasis in open meeting. In fact, I was possessed by the feeling that something unusual would happen, and I went over to the church to see how this matter would end. Luther had entered by the front door, and since the pulpit is in that end of the edifice, I reasoned he would be seated well to the front. Hence I went in by one of the rear entrances and took a seat from which I could overlook the sparse audience and observe all that occurred. And there did I bide to see those things which should come to pass.

2. Luther At Church

The hottest horse will oft be cool,
  The dullest will show fire;
The friar will often play the fool,
  The fool will play the friar.

— Old Song.

As stated, I keenly regretted the turn affairs had taken when Luther entered the building. That, to my mind, was not the place to get a good first impression of the Church in this land. Besides, I feared he might speak his mind with reference to what he saw and heard, if it did not suit him: not that I cared a whit for the verbal cudgeling the parson might receive, but I was apprehensive that it might create a scene and thus get into the morning papers, and I for one do not enjoy seeing little pieces of soiled ecclesiastical linen dangling from the line which the Associated Press has stretched across the land. Had he asked me, I would have directed him to Grace Church or to the Missouri meetinghouse. But good impression or bad, scene or no scene, I had nothing to do with the choice and did not see how it was to be altered; and so, reflecting that "what can't be cured must be endured," I settled down in my pew. After witnessing what occurred at the statue, I was, metaphorically speaking, all eyes and ears, and now kept both well open.

It so happened that the Rev. Mr. Maschkeh was in the pulpit, or, more properly speaking:, on the rostrum, for the interior is more like a lyceum than a church. We had both entered late, and I had scarcely taken my seat when the reading of announcements began — an almost interminable string of ecclesiastical and secular hybrids. Pulpit advertising is a veritable bane in this country. One often wonders how a preacher can have the heart to kick a big enough hole into a divine service to let this nondescript drove hoof through. But while the announcements were being read I had an excellent opportunity to make a mental portrait of the Luther before me. The light fell full upon him, and my seat, a little back and to one side, afforded me an

excellent place of vantage from which to make observations. The first thing that struck me was how far amiss my previous conceptions were of Luther's stature and appearance.

There before me, within easy earshot, he sat, a man of about average height, certainly not more, rather stout and well-knit. Here was neither giant nor demigod, but a mortal who looked every inch like a well-fed man of God. And this I liked, for I am afraid of that lean, hungry, Cassias look.

> "Let me have men about me that are fat;
> Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o' nights."

But the most notable difference between Luther's appearance and the many pictures of him I have seen, was in the shape of the forehead. In the larger number of portraits his forehead slopes rather much, but I saw this was not the case. On the contrary, the upper part of the forehead was rather prominent and so also the lower part over the eyes. This showed him to have the head of a thinker as well as of a seer. I think I observed this because I take some stock in physiognomy in the etymological sense of the word, and this discovery was water on my wheel. The evident reason for the receding forehead in the Cranach pictures is that the artist had the subject seated before him on a platform, and thus, by looking upward, the forehead would seem more sloping, an effect which the bulge over the nose and eyes would heighten. In my investigation of the matter since, I find that my observations, although contrary to the Cranach pictures, are verified by the mask of Luther's face made after his death. This discovery made a decided alteration in my mental portrait of the Reformer. From his amiable countenance and the telltale wrinkles at the corners of his eyes and mouth, I knew he was capable of a hearty laugh, and thought he looked like a man who could say God can enjoy a wholesome joke. Not that there was no firmness expressed in that sturdy form and strong face. That quality looked through very decidedly. But it was this blending of firmness and gentleness that pleased me so much. Such a man could lift gates of Gaza and stoop over a daisy to drink in its beauty; prod the Pope and caress a child. And pray, who else has the right to be a reformer? He must not hurl thunderbolts who cannot protect the weak and conserve the beautifuL This man's appearance showed that he could do these things.

While I was making these observations the announcements came to an end, but the reverend gentleman encroached further upon the time of worship by making some offhand remarks which seemed to me to be unwarranted censures of the conservative wing of the General Synod. Something was said also in condemnation of a movement to lead the Church back to the Lutheran theology of the sixteenth century. If talking picnics, lawn fêtes, leagues, societies, conventions, conclaves, excursions and entertainments was Sanskrit to Luther, here was something he could understand. This was like high treason against the Church, and I noticed from Luther's facial expression that it displeased him sorely. Moreover, a folder, which he glanced at from time to time, affected him in like manner. After the service I looked at this vexatious pamphlet, which he had left in the pew, and found that it was a pastoral letter of June 23, 1895, which evidently had been preserved in one of the hymn-books. It contained not a few stabs at Lutheran orthodoxy, and I did not wonder that, with the remarks made after the announcements, it caused the Reformer's eyes to flash and his jaws to set with the firmness which indicates an aroused spirit. These things I noted at the time, and my heart was filled with fear of those things which might come to pass, for it seemed to me like striking matches in a powder magazine.

After a little while the sermon came. My weak hope that it might redeem the situation and spare us the scene which I now felt sure would come at the close of the service was shattered at once. The sermon was keyed to the wail struck up after the announcements when the tendency of a part of the General Synod toward genuine Lutheran doctrine and practice was denounced. Much of what the preacher said is clean gone now, but I will not suffer myself to be censured for this slip of memory, if slip it be. I think after events will show that this sermon was not properly prepared. But I do remember the gist of a part of the discourse and the effect it produced on Luther. The preacher spoke a deal of what the fraternal relations of the different denominations ought to be, and said we were all on the way to the one heaven and hence it made no difference at all to what denomination a man belonged. That was fine stuff to pour into the ears of the hero of the colloquium at Marburg! I felt sore over this. It seemed as if everything must needs go wrong this day. But how could I prevent it? I thought the old Reformer's eyes flashed fire, and concluded that the preacher would get a shaking up after the service which would set him to thinking.

And sure enough, after the benediction, Luther elbowed his way through the group that gathered around the parson to shake hands and trade smiles. As a matter of course I also moved near, for I was bound that not one word of what Luther said should escape me. When Luther got quite near the parson he made as if he would speak, but just then a dapper little man, whose eyes sparkled almost as brightly as the diamond on his ring, grasped the hand of the minister and shook it right heartily. He started to speak at once. Luther stopped short and looked on.

"Doctor, I count myself fortunate indeed on being here tonight," said the dapper little man. "Let me congratulate you: that was an excellent discourse you gave us this evening — excellent, most excellent." And he pressed the parson's hand a little harder; but the demonstration seemed a trifle overdone, and, moreover, I thought I could see some mischief lurking in his eyes.

The parson took the compliment with that oily ease which showed that he had dealt largely in that kind of perfumery, and added that he was gratified to hear that the sermon was appreciated.

"Yes," said the little man, "I would not have missed this sermon for a great deal, for —"

"Ah, you are a very appreciative auditor," interjected the parson.

"For you see," said he, taking up the broken thread of his conversation, "I have been coming fourteen blocks down town to church right along under the impression that there was some difference between Lutherans and other denominations and that convictions were worth maintaining even at considerable inconvenience; but I am very thankful for the sermon, very. You know that struggling little Baptist mission just opposite my house? Well, doctor, since it makes no difference, as you said tonight in such elegant language, why I'll just quit coming down here and join that Baptist mission."

"Oh, that was not meant just that way," countered the parson in a voice much like one who is out of breath and is taken with a sudden cramp besides. "Let me explain: ah, hum, yes, no, well, ah —"

Luther laughed, turned on his heel and left the church. He evidently felt that the parson had been sufficiently punished. The fallacy of the preacher's position was so finely demonstrated and his look of discomfiture was so plainly visible that one could not help laughing at the folly of which he was guilty and the neat way in which he had been entrapped. There is something

radically wrong with a sermon when such a small quantity of it will make the preacher himself sick if forced to swallow it. Little wonder that Luther laughed.

Outside of the church I found the great Reformer in conversation with a member of the congregation, and the gist of the talk was that Luther wanted to enter the active ministry. When they parted, I heard this gentleman assure him with genuine Washington courtesy that he would bring him into touch with the officers of the General Synod and attend personally to all those little matters preliminary to a conference. So that was settled, and I was sorry for it, too. Well, everything, it seemed, was bound to go wrong that day — perversity was in the air.

I started for the home of the brother with whom I was lodging, my mind fully made up to attend the meeting at which the General Synod's representatives would examine Luther. When I related the incidents of the evening to my genial host, he acted very much as if he thought I were patching a story together for his entertainment. When I insisted upon the truth of every word of it, I could not make out whether he thought I had found a bottle or lost my mind. And I do not marvel over that now; but at the time, with the whole experience fresh in mind, I little thought what a strong draft this whole matter made on belief. Yet it is very irritating to have your truth looked upon as fiction, and so, feeling a deal piqued, I manufactured an excuse of the facts at hand — mark you, of the facts — and went upstairs to my couch.

But, as you would infer without the telling, I was in no condition for sleep. Thoughts rushed through my brain with lightning rapidity, and, with my ear against the pillow, I could hear the blood gurgling through my temples. After a while the bed seemed to be moving along in the air with the speed of a railway train in the direction towards which my feet were pointing — a sensation not at all unpleasant. Thought literally devoured the night. Presently I was alarmed by a bright glow that covered the sky, for I thought all Washington was on fire. On going to my window, which looked toward the east, I found that the night was spent and that the sun's early rays had gilded heaven's dome and dropped some of its liquid gold on roofs and windows below. So, after dressing, I said my prayers and sat down by the casement in a brown study. What will come of all this? I thought. If the General Synod rejects him, will he knock at the Council's door? or at

Missouri's door? Will they admit him if he does? This thing bids fair to make a pretty mess.

3. Getting Acquainted

Hast thou no friend to set thy mind abroach?
Good sense will stagnate. Thoughts shut up, want air,
And spoil, like bales unopen'd to the sun.

— YOUNG.

IT TOOK THIRTY DAYS SAVE ONE to bring about the conference between the General Synod and Martin Luther. The District President had some trouble in securing a committee. Had that not been the case, that worthy would certainly have felt out of place or out of office, and he would not have been sure that he was earning his postage. District Presidents always have troubles — inborn, inherited, inflicted, or incubated troubles. If there are any other kinds they have them, too. Of course the incubator is most prolific. If God were not omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent, He would be kept busy overruling the blunders of District Presidents, and would have no time left for the rest of us.

At first this brother, with the burden of all the churches upon him, tried to get a committee composed entirely of pastors; but the vacation season was close at hand and most of them declined to serve. He then turned to the professors. The schools were closed for the summer and these men were not at all averse to taking a jaunt into the mountain regions of Pennsylvania, where the colloquium was to be held. Thus it came that men typical of the different schools of thought in the General Synod were on this committee, and that there was fine prospect for "much throwing about of brains," as Shakespeare would phrase it.

Biding the time of meeting, I sojourned in Washington. It is a city of no mean reputation for instructive sightseeing. As for me, I am ready to set it down in black and white that Washington is a university in itself. But I paid a dear enough tuition fee for all I learned in those four weeks — paid for it with reputation. In other words, I came to be looked upon as a suspicious

character. But you must not infer that I came into collision with that species of the official class which wears brass buttons, winks at lawbreaking saloon-keepers and draws a salary, for I would have you understand, once for all, that I am a law-abiding man and withal no winebibber, strange as this narrative may seem. The trouble came from a different source. I am almost ashamed to say it, but in sooth it came from such of mine own brethren as are by some strange illusion self-appointed spiritual policemen on limitless beats. And a singular set they are. There are many peculiar classes of people in this big world, to be sure; but to me not the least strange are those over-pious zealots who will knock a man down for the sake of getting an opportunity to act the part of the good Samaritan, and then give him a kick or two in addition that there may be a place to pour oil and wine. Into such hands did I fall, for certain brethren abroad concluded that I could not be tarrying unemployed in that city for any good purpose; so, forsooth, it must be for a bad purpose, and with that suspicion they poisoned the minds of my kinsfolk and acquaintances. Even the kind-hearted brother with whom I was breaking bread was asked to keep a sharp watch on my going out and coming in. The wonder is that I did not boil over with righteous indignation, throw up the matter in hand and let go unrecorded the first utterances of Luther in the last four hundred years, as well as the most marvelous events which have occurred in church circles in many centuries. But wiser self-counsel prevailed. None the less, my heart smarts yet when I think of it, and it hurts all the more when I see that such sore criticism is part of the compensation of all who labor for general church bodies, be it on boards or in institutions, and that the faultfinding is all the worse the nearer the work, like mine, is done for nothing and the farther the detractors are stationed from the scene of action. This was a bitter ingredient to my cup of pleasure, and I was glad when the day dawned for the trip to the colloquium — not that I thought this would put a stopper into the mouths of these uncorked asafetida bottles, but because my mind would henceforth be occupied largely with other matters.

And now good fortune, or I should rather say Providence, for the sake of having these events recorded, brought things my way. While paying for a ticket and catching breath, the train caller sang out the name of my train in that soft, Washingtonian brogue which oils our English so as to keep the r's from grating. Hurrying through the crowd, I got aboard just as the train pulled out. The coaches were filled, and I went forward to the smoker —

where I would have landed anyway before the end of the journey. I like to smoke up a trip and have come to measure distances that way. For instance, Baltimore is just a good smoke from "Washington. To light your Havana in Washington and throw away the stump in Baltimore is a rather pleasant way of realizing that distance is about annihilated. In the smoker all the seats but one had two occupants, and, to my great surprise and gratification, that one was behind the seat occupied by Luther. It was a rare piece of good fortune: I did not think he would be on this train. But had I been one minute later I would have missed the train and with it the opportunity which any man might covet — a car ride with Luther.

With his clean-shaven face and clerical garb he looked every inch the priest. But I noticed he was not true to the type after all: he was off color, for he lacked that florid hue which comes from the mass fees that uncork wine-bottles and put surloins, thick-sliced and luscious, upon the gridiron for them who have taken the vow of poverty and chastity. Had the Irishman who sat in the seat with him known — but he did not, and so he was spared a spasm of holy horror, the trouble of crossing himself, muttering a curse, and repeating a string of Ave Marias and Pater Nosters against the “arch heretic.” As it was, he thought he was sitting in the hallowed presence of his reverence, a Romish parish priest. I took him to be an alderman, but whatever his vocation or avocation, he was a typical son of Erin with a face as round and genial as the full moon in harvest, a fringe of short sorrel whiskers all the way around under his jaw and a smile of remarkable elasticity. Pat, or if he be an alderman, Patrick, did what I had not the temerity to do — he set Luther to talking. Gathering up the sections of the paper over which he had been poring, he handed them to Luther, saying:

“An’ have ye sane the mohrnin’ papur, yer riverence? An’ a fine load it is. More ‘n Hennesy’s goat can ate fer breakfast at the end o’ Lent. The pranten press is one o’ the whunders ov the whurreld.”

“The art of printing is the last and greatest gift by means of which God promotes the cause of the Gospel,” said Luther as he took the paper.

Seeing that his reverence was as innocent as a babe in such matters and knew not what a bundle of lies and venom was wrapped up in the sheets of paper in his hand, Patrick volunteered a little enlightenment.

“But, yer riverence,” said he, “the auld devil himself has gone into the pranten’ business; an’ by St. Patrick, or if yez be a Dutchman, by the houly St. Boniface, a schlick wun the devil he is! The —”

“Where God builds a church there the devil would also build a chapel,” Luther commented. “The devil is always God’s ape.”

“An’ a schlick wun the devil he is,” continued Patrick, stroking his chin. “I’ve been a-wonderin’ why the kelleges that show the whurreld the nacessity of a kellege education by gavin’ degrees to men who become great without a kellege schoolin’ — I’ve been a-wonderin’ why those schmarrt Alecks don’t give the auld devil a doctor’s degree.”

“The devil indeed has not a doctor’s degree,” said Luther with a smile which faded like a patch of sunshine when a cloud flits by, “but he is highly educated and deeply experienced, and has, moreover, been practicing his art now nigh six thousand years.” Patrick crossed himself and Luther concluded: “No one but Christ prevails against him.”

Now that Patrick had raised the devil in conversation, he looked ill at ease and seemed overanxious to exorcise him by changing the subject.

“An’ what does yer riverence think uv the bluddy trusts?” he asked, tamping the tobacco which had burned low in his pipe. “I gave yez the papur for that rason. Bedad, they’ve schtarted anuther wun. It’s trust pants that I’m wearin’, an’ trust tobacco that I’m smokin’, an’ trust bacon that I ate, an’ it’s a trust coffin they ‘ll put me in when I’m dead, an’ when I get to purgatory —” But that was verging on forbidden ground. So Patrick called a halt on the humor which was beginning to assert itself and found a place for the interrogation mark by saying: “But what does yer riverence think uv the trust magnates — the bluddy trust magnates?”

“They are all unvarnished thieves, robbers and extortioners,” Luther declared without a moment’s hesitation.

“It’s right ye are, father!” exclaimed the Irishman, “it’s right ye are; but —”

“But they catch us coming and going,” interjected the traveler who occupied the seat with me." There’ll soon not be an independent dealer in the land."

“Thieves, robbers, extortioners,” Luther reiterated. “When some of them are not able to get a monopoly because others deal in the same wares and goods, they set out deliberately to sell their commodities so cheap that their competitors cannot meet their prices and thus force them to quit business or sell as low as they and so compass their own ruin. Thus they get a monopoly anyhow. These people —”

“That has been one of the methods of Standard Oil from the beginning,” interjected a traveling salesman who was standing in the aisle.

“These people are not worthy of being called men and living among human beings,” Luther continued as the salesman perched himself on the arm of the opposite seat. “In fact, they do not deserve instruction or admonition, for their greed is so palpable and shameless that they suffer loss for the sake of accomplishing the ruin of others.”

“The government should be forenenst thim,” said Patrick.

“The secular government would do right if it should confiscate all they have and drive them out of the country,” Luther affirmed.

We were soon in a free-for-all discussion in which the great Reformer showed a remarkable knowledge of trusts and combines. When I thought it had been brought to a close, the salesman renewed it by saying with a good bit of feeling:

“To my mind, the most damnable financiering of all is this cornering of the wheat market.”

“Yes,” said Luther slowly and sorrowfully, “yes. On the last day Christ will say: ‘I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.’”

“It’s little good it does them anyhow,” observed my companion. “A man can only enjoy so much.”

“All they have of their swollen fortune is that they must be its slaves and guards,” Luther added. “Of all goods you cannot use more than fills your paunch and covers your poor back. Hence, if God gives you wealth, use your portion of it as you use your share of water and let the rest pass on.”

“It’s right you are ag’in, father,” said Pat. “An’ it’s no rale pleasure they have. Bedad, it’s a bad conscience that’s a-botherin’ thim.”

“A bad conscience is hell itself, and a good conscience is paradise,” Luther commented. “Happiness is nowhere save in a good conscience. Whatever other pleasure there may be cannot be perfect: it may tickle a man’s hide, but it does not touch his heart.”

“There is another thing I have observed,” said the man in my seat: “they, or their children, usually come to a bad end.”

“Hardly ever misses,” added the salesman.

“Fortune makes fools of people,” said Luther, turning his head towards the window. “It takes strong legs to bear up under prosperity.”

There was silence for a minute or so. Then a man, who was standing in the aisle and had taken no part in the discussion, addressed Luther.

"All this sounds good to me," he declared, paving his way; "but men get into these things they hardly know how — at least some do." He was a large man and he was standing with his hands in his pockets. His fine appearance was mostly tailor-made. He looked like a man who had suddenly become rich, used his money as a passport to polite society and was doomed for the residue of his life to feel like a boy in trousers for the first time — proud, self-conscious and awkward. "What course of action would you advise for a man who is in a combine?"

"No man need ask how he can stay in such corporations and keep a good conscience," Luther replied. "There is no other advice than that he quit them, and there the matter ends. If these combines are to continue, justice and honesty must perish; if justice and honesty are to survive, these combines must be dissolved. As Isaiah says, the bed is too narrow, one of them must fall out; and the blanket is too skimp to cover both. Yet I hope it has attained such height and weight that it can no longer support itself and that they must finally allow it to collapse."

There was no dissent from this, and all settled down to their former employment. Luther gazed on the scenery along the way, the traveling salesman delved into the morning paper, the man in the seat with me relit his cigar, the little man in front of Luther was engrossed with his paper-backed book, and Patrick was beaming with smiles. And why should he not smile? Had he not been instrumental in showing these heretics what wisdom is stored in a parish priest's pate? After a bit he broke the silence by addressing the little man:

"Faith, an' I asks pardon of yez; but may I not ask pohtely-loike what pretty story it be that's a-holdin' ye spellbound?"

"An exposure of Spiritualism by the Fox sisters," he replied curtly, and poked his nose deeper into the book.

Patrick turned to Luther and spoke in an undertone.

"Yer riverence," he asked, "what do ye think of this spook religion anyhow?" There was a quaver of awe in his voice. "Bridget, me darlint, and the young ones have been hearin' a lot uv it from the neighbors. It's thim that sez the ghosts rap on tables and write on slates and papur."

The great German patiently explained this imposture to his Celtic companion, and concluded by saying that no one should give Spiritualists

any credence whatever, for there is strong Biblical ground against all of their claims.

"In the first place," he declared, "the Scriptures nowhere say anything at all about the souls of those not yet raised from the dead walking abroad among men, although everything else that is necessary for us to know has been revealed by Scripture. In the second place, it is plainly forbidden by Scripture (Deuteronomy eighteen, ten,) to enquire of the dead. And in the thirty-first verse of the sixteenth chapter of St. Luke it is plainly shown that God will not even let one rise from the dead to teach, because Moses and the prophets are at hand. I say this that we may be informed and not be misled by such tricks and lies as —"

I lost the concluding words of the sentence, for just then the salesman looked up from his paper and addressed the man at my side.

"I see the mayor down home is after the resorts," said he. "He's bent on segregating them."

This gave rise to a discussion of the social evil, and the man who was reading the Fox sisters' book took an active part in it. He denounced its toleration. Finally appeal was made to Luther.

"My clerical friend," said he of the book, "this question falls in your sphere."

"The Italians, and later some German canons also," Luther began, "asserted that fornication is no sin on the part of persons who are free and unfettered, but is a demand of nature which must be met. Clean minds will not take offense because I mention this, for I do not like to talk on these subjects; nevertheless we must see to it that impetuous youth, inclined to sin without this, be not misled and ruined by such rotten arguments. Where society talks and lives that way, daily accustomed to vice, there, as Seneca says, we are powerless either to help or to advise. But take St. Paul's declarations and judge according to them. He says: 'Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.' And again: 'Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.'"

"But there isn't a civilized government that doesn't wink at it," said the drummer.

"Not all things which governments permit are good," Luther countered. "From the beginning of the world a wise ruler has been a rare bird, and a

pious ruler a still rarer one." Then, resuming the subject, he said in part: "There is no need of devoting much argument to the houses of ill fame which are suffered to exist in large cities. It is plainly against God's law, and those who openly permit such shame should be regarded as heathens. That is a very lame reason which they advance when they say they are allowed for the purpose of minimizing adultery and licentiousness; for a young blade who has been in the company of lewd women and forfeited his honor and chastity will not forego any opportunity to associate with wives and virgins. Thus licentiousness is increased more than it is hindered, and those also fall into this sin who would likely have avoided it had it not been for the opportunities thus provided."

This was uttered in a somewhat authoritative tone and nobody had anything more to say.

Luther gazed out towards the mountains and tapped the metal arm of his seat as if keeping time for a procession of thoughts. "The world is an inverted decalogue," he mused. Patrick sat with his arms folded and his lower lip lapped over the top one, hugely pleased that the "houly father" had no manner of use for trusts and spooks. Over the mountains a rain-storm had swept like a bridal veil of misty white, and now the rain was pattering unheard against the windows and scattering silvery blessing over the valley.

"That is a beautiful storm," said Luther, breaking the silence. Then, looking upward, he said devoutly: "Thus Thou givest, unthankful and covetous though we be!"

A peal of thunder crashed over us and we heard this sharp report of heaven's artillery above the din of the moving train.

"That is a fruitful peal of thunder," was Luther's comment; "it has touched the earth and opened its treasure-house so that it emits a fragrant perfume just as the prayer of good Christians wafts up a sweet fragrance to God."

Pious lessons like these were always at the tip of his tongue. His big heart must have been brimful of ardor, for almost anything could evoke a bright comment or a sweet-scented prayer, and both as fresh as the fragrance of a clover-field after a rain. Thus, you perceive, he was not a bit like those clerical Dr. Jekylls and Mr. Hydes who know how to go to conference and leave the preacher at home, a fine trick, to be sure — for a

scamp! “God be praised,” exclaimed Luther, rising to his feet, “we are all here safe and sound.”

The train had stopped at our station and we left the coach in haste. Patrick raised the window, and, with a wave of the hand and a polite bow, said in his most unctious blarney:

“May God bless ivery schtep uv yer riverence: and may yer last schtep bring ye to the gate of good St. Peter himself, bedad!”

So be it, thought I; but just now we are going to the General Synod, and that is another thing.

4. The Doctors Disagree

Leave what you've done for what you have to do;
Don't be "consistent"; but be simply true.

— HOLMES.

THE MORNING OF THE COLLOQUIUM I rose late and reached the church an hour or more after the session had been opened. There were several reasons for this. As good fortune would have it, mine was a snug room on the second floor of a little hostelry which had much of the simplicity of bygone days. Oaken woodwork, scrubbed white as a bone where patches of paint had been worn off; muslin window curtains of snowy whiteness; furniture that had served wayfarers for a century or more; a small porcelain wall-clock with chains, and weights, and strokes like the cooing of a dove; an open fireplace, over it a mantel, high as a man's reach, on which there were brass candlesticks, a kerosene-lamp and a glass filled with paper lighters; at the window a rose-bush that had spread over the side of the house and now and then, at the impulse of the breeze, swung through the casement a bunch of roses like a censer in the hands of nature's priestess, filling the apartment with rich fragrance — such was my room, a fit place to study or dream in.

So I placed a chair in position for my feet, got just the right tilt for my rocker, lighted my pipe, and passed under a cloud of smoke through the depths of a good old tome while aU extraneous sounds were drowned in oblivion, like the clamorous Egyptians in the Red Sea. That is my way of doing these things.

The little clock looked on with horror while it struck twelve, and one, and two, and three, and was not heeded. But fie upon him who will heed the admonitions of a piece of mechanism when the wise spirits of the ages are communicative! Know ye not that the hours after midnight belong to the aristocracy of readers? That is when Shakespeare is most versatile; when Goethe shows his best knowledge of human nature; when Longfellow is

most delightful as a companion; when Hawthorne is at his best as romancer; ah, yes, it is after the midnight cockcrow that wine from the old literary casks has its finest sparkle and best flavor. And as for study, why even old Harless is lucid in his ethics after midnight, and the prophets, major and minor, cease their knottiness and become confiding friends. Men who fall asleep over a book — and I have it from trustworthy persons that there are such — may denounce these men of erratic hours; but as for me, I like the hound that will not give up the chase for the sake of his belly or kennel, and so, too, I like the man who, when he gets the scent of a new truth, will not give up the chase until he has that truth by the nape of the neck. However, since lazy dogs are in the majority in all professions, and people as a rule judge others by themselves, you had better, for the sake of your reputation, start your fox early enough in the morning to run him down before nightfall. But we seasoned inveterates will have to be left to our sweet folly and be forgiven if we miss a train occasionally or come late to conference.

But to open a colloquium at half-past seven in the morning is an outlandish proceeding. No wonder I was late. But the General Synod people are active. They do things. And to be frank, I like them for their activity, even if now and then it is nothing more than drawing empty buckets out of empty wells. That is more dignified, and not a whit less profitable, than sitting down and sucking your thumb.[1]

When I entered the basement where the brethren were in session, three committeemen with flushed faces were off to one side making gestures which looked as if they were trying to bridle wrath; three others, sitting on chairs which they had drawn together, were likewise discussing some question which had upset their tempers and set their tongues to teetering; and another, who proved to be the secretary, was sitting at a table complacently reading a *Lutheran Observer*. I had noticed a *Lutheran World* in the hand of one of the company to one side, and a copy of the *Lutheran Evangelist* on the knee of one of the group on the chairs. My instant conclusion, which proved to be correct, was that these men belonged to the three schools of General Synod thought which these papers respectively represent — radical, conservative, mediating — and that the members of the committee could not agree. Luther was in the rear end of the room walking to and fro as if nervous and overmuch vexed. The secretary laid his *Observer* aside and said:

"Why examine the brother in those abstruse dogmas on which we ourselves disagree? Why not take up those points on which our grand old synod differs from the other Lutheran bodies?"

Instantly the little man who had a copy of the *Lutheran World* wheeled around.

"Infant baptism is not a disputed doctrine among real Lutherans!" he exclaimed. "Neither is it one of your 'abstruse dogmas' unless a man have an obtuse head. But —"

"But the doctrine just stated in the applicant's reply is the veriest rot," put in a member of the radical party, speaking in an undertone. "It's hogskin theology, and sounds like a translation."[2]

"That's the brother's old trick," rejoined the other. "Hogskin serves him the same purpose that an empty hole served Beecher's dog."

"How so?" I whispered. I had gone over to shake hands with one of the conservatives.

"Oh," he began with a smile, "Beecher had a dog, not much of a dog, either; but he had a tail at one end and a bark at the other. Well, after an all-day's fruitless hunt, that cur ran a ground-squirrel into a hole and then stood there and barked till he couldn't bark any more. The next day he went out and barked at that hole again. And ever after that, when that measly cur didn't have anything else to do, he'd go out to the same old hole and bark. And that's how it is with these old scrappers: every time they've got nothing else to do, they go out and bark at the old empty hole. And this one knows how — he's been at it forty years."

Well, the General Synod men are always interesting. Something is happening on their side of the fence all the time. If there is nothing else, there is at least a cock-fight, and when there is a cock-fight, it is a good one.

What the point at issue was became clear to me when the secretary, upon request, read the question and the applicant's answer.

"The question," said the secretary, "was this: 'Tersely stated, what do you believe concerning Baptism?'"

"Yes, just so," interposed a radical. "That's how I put it. You are becoming expert at shorthand."

"And to this the brother answered: 'Baptism is not simply water, but it is the water comprehended in God's command and connected with God's word. It works forgiveness of sin, delivers from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to all who believe it, as the word and promises

of God declare, as St. Paul says, Titus, third chapter, According to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.'"

"And that's baptismal regeneration — infant baptism regeneration at that, I'll wager," snapped the radical who hated hogskin.

"And it's Scripture," rejoined the conservative.

"It strikes me," said the secretary in mollifying tone, while I wondered if there were another synod on God's green earth that would retain men who repudiate this doctrine, "it strikes me," he counseled, "that it would be the part of wisdom to drop this matter for the present and take up such questions as Sunday observance, fellowship, temperance and the like. These are distinctive principles among us, living issues, not mummies wrapped in the winding-sheet of centuries. If he does not agree with us on these points, what advantage is there in examining him on the others?"

This was acceded to, and Luther, who was still pacing back and forth in the rear end of the room, was called to the front by the chairman, who accosted him as Brother Martin. This was the first intimation I had that they did not know with whom they were dealing. And the same was true of all the people we met in all our journeys. I do not think Luther deliberately set out to deceive them, but probably gave them that name because it clung to him from the old country.

"Well, Brother Martin," began the chairman in soothing-syrup tones, "we have concluded to compare notes with you on the doctrine pertaining to the Sabbath day."

"In the New Testament," declared Luther with haste, apparently incensed at the theological garlic he smelt in the statement, "in the New Testament the Sabbath falls away according to its crass external form."

"What!" exclaimed several in one breath of horror.

"In the New Testament all days are holy days among Christians and all days are free. Therefore," he continued, appealing to the Scriptures, as was his wont, "therefore Christ says: 'The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath day.' Consequently Paul exhorts again and again that they should not allow themselves to be bound to any day. Galatians, chapter four, verses ten and eleven, he says: 'Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain.' Again, to the Colossians, chapter two, verses sixteen and seventeen, even

more cogently: 'Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come.'"

"But, sir, to observe the Sabbath is one of the demands of the decalogue," exclaimed a member of the committee.

I looked up. It was the stepbrother who had a copy of the *Lutheran Evangelist* in his pocket. Evidently he did not understand the difference between things ceremonial and things moral, despite the clear passages just cited. Hence Luther tried to show them that the particular day belonged to the passing ceremonial and not to the everlasting moral law. How else can the change from Saturday to Sunday be explained or defended? It was to this that Luther pointed.

"He who will make a necessary commandment of the Sabbath as a work demanded by God will have to keep Saturday and not Sunday," he said with considerable emphasis, "for it is Saturday that is demanded of the Jews and not Sunday. But up to this time the Christians have kept Sunday and not Saturday, because Christ rose from the dead on this day. Now this is a positive demonstration of the fact that the Sabbath concerns us no more, aye, nor Moses in toto; otherwise we should have to keep Saturday. This is pertinent and convincing evidence that the Sabbath is abrogated. Throughout the entire New Testament we do not find a single place where we Christians are commanded to keep the Sabbath."

"Are we not told it is a holy day?" asked the chairman.

"In itself one day is no better than another," Luther replied.

"Then why keep a fixed day at all?"

"In the first place, on account of the physical reasons and needs which nature teaches and demands for the common mass of people, men-servants and maid-servants, who toil and moil all the week long, so that they also may have a day set apart for rest and recreation —"

"Sabbath recreation! What sort of unholy anomaly is this?" cried one.

They all looked horrified. But was man made for the Sabbath, or the Sabbath for man? And furthermore, would not a man who is confined to the desk or counter all week commit a sin against his body if he were to sit in the house all day instead of going out into the fresh air, taking a walk or hunting flowers? But Luther did not seem to mind the interruption.

"And in the second place," he continued, "primarily for the purpose of enabling us to embrace time and opportunity on these Sabbath days, since

we cannot do it otherwise, to attend to divine service, so that we may assemble ourselves together to hear and expound the Word of God and then praise Him in song and prayer."

"Then you do not favor a strict observance of the Sabbath; in fact, not the sanctifying of it, for you even allow recreation to the amiable cooks, hostlers, and all their allied tribes," said a member of the committee, betraying considerable sarcasm. The General Synod people prate much of charity, but I notice they are pretty waspy over there none the less. "But I beg your pardon. You evidently do believe in some sort of a sanctifying of the day. How, then, is this sanctification accomplished?" he concluded with something like a sneer.

"How, then, is this sanctifying accomplished?" Luther repeated, showing his provocation slightly by employing the same tone and emphasis that his interlocutor had used. "Not by sitting behind the stove and performing no manual labor, nor by decorating the head with a wreath and dressing in the finest and best apparel, but, as I have said, by being engaged in the Word of God and exercising in it."

This was followed by a fine discourse, in charming flow and cadence, on the Word of God. I did not wonder that a man with a voice like that could hold a hostile emperor and angry prelates unwilling captives to his eloquence for two hours.

"The Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries," he said in conclusion, "aye, the only one we Christians know or have. Even if we had all of the saints' relics, or all the holy and consecrated clothes together in a pile, it would still benefit us nothing, for it is all a dead thing which can sanctify no one. But the Word of God is the treasure which makes all things holy and through which all the saints themselves were sanctified, not on account of the external performance, but on account of the Word of God which hallows us all. For this reason I always say that our life and work must be governed by the Word, if they are to be pleasing to God and called holy. Where this occurs, this commandment exerts its power and is fulfilled."

The impression made on the committee was unfavorable. They evidently had kept company with Puritan doctors and had, for all I know, stolen their blue hose. The committeeman with whom I was acquainted, a fine, big specimen of man, who usually had his hands in the pockets of his trousers and his thoughts at the end of his tongue, came over to me.

“We can’t use this man,” he said frankly, “he’d better try you folks or Missouri.”

“But he has advanced nothing but the doctrine of the Augsburg Confession,” I replied, “and your synod accepts the Augustana —”

“Not without reservation,” he answered blandly. “We are not inconsistent.” So saying, he drew from his pocket a copy of The Distinctive Doctrines and Usages of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States. “Look here,” he said, pointing to a paragraph on page thirty-nine. There I read:

“The doctrinal basis of the General Synod is given in its constitution and in a resolution adopted in connection with the declaration of its confessional requirement.” That resolution follows and says: “This General Synod… maintains the divine obligation of the Sabbath.”

So it must be admitted that the General Synod was consistent with itself in its attitude toward Luther; but is it at all right for them to say they have accepted the Augsburg Confession? In my humble opinion that is verbal juggling — conduct unworthy of ecclesiastics.[3]

The committee gathered round the table. There was a hurried private consultation. The upshot of it all was that they were of one mind with reference to Luther: he was heterodox.

“But we have the time,” said one, “let’s go ahead and examine him on fellowship.”

“He is an entertaining talker and it is interesting to look at things from his viewpoint,” added the secretary.

“Sooth, sirrah, an you like this nozzling around in theology’s charnel-house,” the man with the copy of the Evangelist counseled in mocking tone, “and now would fain enter in upon the fallow domain of reine Praxis, therefore, by all means, I pray you, have speech with him on the momentous question of orientation, for when that is settled we can all turn our backs on our congregations in real orthodox superiority.”

My big companion gave me a nudge with his elbow and whispered:

“If we could get that old codger to compile an unexpurgated dictionary of ecclesiastical terms[4] ’twould be a gem.”

“A gem, no doubt; but bear in mind,” said I, intending to twit him, “Michael durst not rail against the devil, and this man is your synodical brother, or, at least, stepbrother.”

“Oh my, no,” he rejoined hastily, “not a stepbrother, but a full bother in the Lord.”

This byplay now came to an end, for the chairman looked up and asked:

“Brother Martin, what is the Sacrament of the Altar?”

“It is the true body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the bread and wine, for us Christians to eat and to drink, instituted by Christ himself.”

“Put in that bald way it smells of hogskin,” exclaimed the brother who did the barking, and who, if not the prophet’s “dumb dog in Zion” — for he could whine — was at any rate not a knowing one.[5]

“Never mind that now: we need not enter upon that at all,” said the questioner. Then, turning to Luther, he continued: “What we have in mind is the question of altar-fellowship. In this land most denominations practice open communion. Do you look at that as a matter of serious moment?”

“This is no doubt true,” Luther replied, “that where preachers distribute nothing but bread and wine as the sacrament, it is of little moment to whom they give it.”

“But take the subject from our side — our communing with them, or their communing with us. What do you hold of that?”

“It is shocking to me to hear that in one and the same church, or at a common altar, both parties should seek and receive the same sacrament, and one party believe that it receives sheer bread and wine, and the other that it receives the true body and blood of Christ. And I often question if it is to be believed that a preacher or pastor can be so hardened and bad as to be silent in —”

“To bring the matter to a close,” broke in the examiner, “would you administer communion to a Calvinist or to any other person who does not accept the doctrine of the Real Presence? What do you say?”

Luther’s patience seemed to be clean gone.

“Whoever, I say, will not believe this,” he replied deliberately and emphatically, all the while shaking his index-finger, “whoever, I say, will not believe this should let me alone, and he need not expect any fellowship with me. Thus stands the sentence which is not to be altered.”

“This will suffice,” said the brother with the hogskin antipathy, turning to his fellow examiners, “The applicant has made his position plain, eh?”

They nodded assent.

Luther was then informed that he was at liberty to withdraw and that he would be apprised of the committee’s decision so soon as it was reached.

Our General Synod friends are politic: they let a man down easy—when they have good reason to be afraid of him.

Luther was scarcely out of the door when my frank friend began to upbraid the committee.

"Look here, I protest!" he vociferated. "That was only a half examination. In these days, when ministers are expected to do most of their work with their feet instead of their heads, it is nothing short of a sin to examine a candidate's head and not look at his feet. Why didn't you examine his feet and act up to the standard of your own requirements?"

This was evidently intended as a thrust at somebody who used more neat's-foot oil than brains in his ministry, but that somebody kept discreetly silent. However, to me it seems to be a very sensible suggestion, and I humbly commend it to the attention of theological faculties and examining boards. If one-half or more of the work is to be done with the feet, then I insist upon it that the feet should be examined. It is manifestly unfair, under present conditions, to palm off on an innocent, unsuspecting congregation a preacher who has flat feet or corns. The congregation may, in various ways, learn of his mental qualifications, of his age, of the size of his family and of the temper of his great-grandmother; but as things now stand it has no way of ascertaining whether he be sound of foot. Besides this, if a committee were to examine the feet of students before matriculation and again ere they leave the seminary, and if synods would then place this weighty matter into the hands of conscientious Visitators, it would also promote the laudable practice of foot-washing, please the Dunkards and promote the cause of those who, as Dr. Krauth would say, want to unite the Church to pieces. It is really a brilliant idea. But — is a hint to a theological faculty enough?

So far as the committee was concerned, it had already adjudged Luther to be heterodox. As they saw it, all they had yet to do was to agree on some courteous way of getting rid of him, and this they did. The secretary was instructed to inform him that there was at present no opening in the General Synod which would in any manner do for a man of his fine talents, but that he might find an opening in the General Council or in the Missouri Synod.

Thus ended Luther's first attempt to join a Lutheran synod in this country. Was I not right when I said this thing would make a pretty mess? And the end was not yet in sight.

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1. Alas and alack, gentle reader, I have forgotten — foot-notes! But, true as I tell you, this is my first theological book and a body can't get the theological knack all at once. However, hereafter I shall see to it that some statements in the text are sufficiently obscure to necessitate elucidation in learned foot-notes, that my book, when compared with other theological tomes, may not be found lacking in erudition and profundity!↩
2. This hue and cry against translations is a continuous performance. However, the trouble lies not in the thing itself, but in the way it is done. Poor Mother Church may well say with Denham:

   "Such is our pride, our folly, or our fate,
   That few, but such as cannot write, translate."↩
3. In 1913 the General Synod restated its doctrinal basis, expressing itself in a more conservative way. This, be it noted, is but fifteen years after the incidents recorded here. Verily, the General Synod is moving in the right direction. A century hence, it may be teaching the Synodical Conference Lutheran consistency. — Editor.↩
4. This hint is worthy of serious consideration. For the sake of our laymen and ministerial fledglings we should have a manual which would define terms plainly after the manner that here followeth:

   Bellyevolence — An exquisite barbarism denoting' church, suppers and the like.

   Bother — A corrupt form of brother. 1. A pestiferous spirit in the church. 2. A member of another synod.

   Brain-fag — A disease which bids fair to take the place of clergyman's sore throat in ministerial favor, because it is supposed to prove, 1. that a man has brains, and 2. that he uses them.

   Choir — A thing of discord employed to produce harmony.

   Giving — A means of grace among sects and a means of disgrace among Lutherans.

   Hogskin — 1. Leather formerly used in bookbinding. 2. Figuratively, sixteenth century theology. 3. Literally, a cause of colic to the heterodox.

   Stinkpot — Compounded of S t. and inkpot; hence, a saint given to defamatory polemics. A term much used by British Methodists of the eighteenth century.

Synoditis — An ecclesiastical hallucination which takes a part for the whole and never confesses a fault.↩

5. We question if any other section of the general body was as latitudinarian as the Pennsylvania synod in which this scene took place. However, characters like these held forth in other sections also. For instance, not more than ten years ago, a doctor of divinity, through the instrumentality of a church paper, advocated the use of warm water instead of wine in the Lord's Supper. — Editor.↩

5. Over The Mountains

> And this our life exempt from public haunt Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones and good in everything.
>
> — SHAKESPEARE.

THE NEXT COLLOQUIUM was to be held with the United Synod of the South at a place which was little more than a name away back in the mountains of Virginia. Why a Southern synod came next I know not, unless it was because the District Presidents in the North were so very slow in answering Luther's letters. That is a way these Northern lights have. They get it not so much from the dignity of the office with which they are vested as from the character of the bodies to which they belong. Conservatism is by far the best horse in the stable, but it is exceedingly hard to hitch up. But why that out-of-the-way corner of the earth was selected as the meeting-place is beyond my ken. It may have been some sort of concession or accommodation to the aged member of the Tennessee Synod who was on the examining committee and lived in Virginia; but, like the rest of us, he also had a long distance to travel. But be the reason what it may, it was down in Dixie and away back in the mountains that the next conference was to be held, and thither we wended our way.

We went to New Market, a pretty little town in the Shenandoah Valley. It still bears scars of the Civil War, and its people, like old soldiers, are proud of those scars. While in the printing office to see the wooden hand-press[1] on which the first English Book of Concord was printed, Luther made an observation which I have often recalled when everything seemed to be wrong end to and God's care a sorry enigma.

"God has touched me sorely, and I have been impatient," he said, referring to his chronic ailment, renal stones, I think; "but God knows better than we do what good purpose it serves." He was leaning over a newspaper form on the imposing-stone and was trying to read it. "Our Lord is like a

printer who sets up the letters backwards, and down here we are constrained to decipher them that way; but when we are struck off up yonder in the life to come, we shall read all clear and straightforward. In the meantime we must have patience."

The next morning, before the rising of the sun, we were well on our way to the mountains.

"I can beat you to you red oak," I bantered, for my horse was in fine fettle.

"Nay," he said laughingly, "a righteous man regardeth the life of his beast."

"Ah, let her go: she wants to."

"We Germans say," he countered, "you should not ride a willing horse too hard."

So, though Luther sat his horse well, we jogged along at an easy gait. But it was all he could do to hold his mare in when a dog ran barking at her heels. When we got by that plantation house, he said:

"The dog is the most faithful of all animals. He understands words, likes to be with man, guards him faithfully and—"

His mount shied at some pigs on the road.

"But a hog is an intractable brute, incapable of learning to know anything but filth. It will not stay in a clean, wholesome place: it revels in dirt."

That reminded me of the Chinese emperor who tried to train a hog to be nice and clean, but failed, and was then helped by a fairy who took out the heart of the hog and put the heart of a lamb in its place. Luther liked the story. I did not have to point the moral.

"Create in me a clean heart, God, and renew a right spirit within me," he quoted, and then added the gloss: "But it does not stand in our power to procure such a heart, for it is a work of God. That is why the Holy Ghost uses the word create here." Then he took up the subject of fables, saying that he liked AEsop passing well. What gave rise to the fable? "Not only children, but also great princes and lords are not easily induced to listen to the truth for their own profit," he said. "Yea, all the world dislikes the truth when it strikes home. That is why wise and noble people have invented fables and let one animal talk with another. It is as much as if they were to say: Well and good, since no one will hear and heed the truth and we can in no wise get along without it, we will garb the truth in the guise of the fable;

and so, since they will not accept the truth from the lips of men, they shall hear it out of the mouths of beasts." What about their authorship? "That they are accredited to AEsop," he said, "is in my opinion a fiction. Mayhap there never was such a man as AEsop. I hold they were produced by many wise people in the course of ages, piece by piece, and ultimately collected by some learned man." What of their worth? "This book of fables," he declared, "is valued highly by the learned of all the world, especially by those of old. And sooth to say, even at this day, I do not know many books, aside from the Bible, that excel this volume in matters pertaining to outward life."

Then he told me that he had tried his hand at turning AEsop into German. "I like to read the stories of the fox and wolf," he said. "It is fine when one scamp outwits another. That also is neat where a colt meets a wolf. The wolf asks the colt who it is and whither it is bent. It answers that it knows neither the one nor the other, but that its father has inscribed both on its hind hoof, if so be his wolf ship cares to read it, and straightway the wolf felt a kick on the forehead. Writhing in death the wolf said: 'It serves me right, for I should be a hunter and not scrivener.'"

Thus we rode on in the gray light swapping stories, and so we came to the subject of presumption, which Luther pointed thus:

"The first time Count Ernst of Mansfield heard A Mighty Fortress is Our God, he fumed: 'I will help to demolish that fortress or die!' Three days, and lo, he was dead. 'Be not deceived, God is not mocked.'"

And now the sun had thrown away the black canopy of night and stood tiptoe on the distant peak, his gold and carmine mantle trailing along the range.

"It is a great miracle!" exclaimed Luther. He pulled rein, gazed and listened.

"At the rising of the sun, birds sing, beasts move, men rise," said he. "It seems as if all the world were made new and all things reanimated when the sun flings his banner along the horizon. 'Tis for this reason that the cheering proclamation of the Gospel is in many places in the Scriptures compared with the rising of the sun."

"But it is only the habitual late riser who really enjoys a sunrise," I remarked. "Those greedy mortals who use up every bit of God's daylight, must lose this pleasure, just as a toper loses the fine flavor of old wine."

Luther did not gainsay me: he simply laughed.

"Verily," quoth he, "sleep is a precious gift of God which falls upon man like dew and refreshes the whole body." Then he gave me one of those knowing looks of his and said: "Good rules of health accomplish much. For example: I feel exhausted. If I observe my usual rule, retire at the ninth hour and get my rest, I am refreshed."

Aha, thought I, the cat is out of the bag. And I liked him all the more, for now I knew that he too stayed up late occasionally and that synodical sleepyheads certainly talked about him. But his mind was on the dayspring.

"'Tis a great miracle," he reiterated; "but it has become so much a matter of course that we think it could not be otherwise. For the same reason it is no marvel to us that wine and corn are produced each year. 'Twere meet that these and other wonders of God," he said with a wave of the hand towards the maize and wheat-fields along the road, "should arouse our faith; for that wheat and other produce should come out of the earth is as great a miracle as if God to this very day gave us manna from heaven; but it does not look that way, because that which is of regular occurrence grows common and is thus demeaned and little noted."

This led the conversation to farmers. "The husbandman's work is the happiest," said he, "and full of hope withal; for harvesting, plowing, sowing, planting, grafting, mowing, threshing, wood-cutting — all that hath great hope. And so Vergil writes: 'Ah, how happy the farmers would be if they recognized their blessings!' But they will not realize how well off they are." He seemed to be embittered. "The farmer has very thievish nails on his fingers and is no boor at all, but doctor enough, when it comes to looking out for himself." He was especially hard on the ingratitude of the tillers. "The farmers are not worthy of so much blessing and fruitage of the earth," he declared. "I thank God more for a tree or bush than the peasants do for all their broad acres." When I remonstrated mildly, he replied: "Where you find one pious Christian farmer who shows his poor neighbor or indigent pastor Christian charity by giving, loaning, counseling or assisting him in need, you will, on the other hand, find a thousand unchristian farmers who will not give a penny to pastor or neighbor though they suffer pangs of hunger."

"I think that's the place," said I, pointing to a house at the forks of the road; "hope our guide is there."

Luther's eyes dwelt wistfully on the cottage, which seemed as indigenous to the spot as the trees and bushes by which it was surrounded.

“If I were not in the service of God and in the bonds of matrimony,” he said pensively, “I would hie me away, and no one should know whither I had gone. The world cannot brook me and I cannot brook the world.”

I was right: it was the place. In a trice our lank guide mounted his lank horse and we jogged on. He was a typical mountaineer and carried a gun long and lank like himself. Soon the road grew rough and then, as we traveled up the gap, still rougher, and finally we had stretches of it that were like the stony bottom of a dry stream.

An idiotic-looking man and a yoke of oxen came lumbering along. They brought a load of logs and a text.

“Is it not an utter shame,” Luther commented, “that, according to the divine judgment, the ox and the ass are not compared with us but are actually placed before us because they do their duty towards their masters? And ought not we to be responsive to the directions of our God? Therefore we should uncover our heads in the presence of oxen and asses as we do in the presence of our teacher, since we see that God has placed them before us that we may learn from their example how to honor Him.”

He then spoke of the ox-driver. In his opinion, the number of defective mountaineers he had thus far seen indicated that these backwoodsmen were violating the laws of nature by intermarriage and by the mating of the unfit. He condemned this in scathing terms and spoke at length and with considerable warmth on the subject of eugenics.

“I have observed that a defective man begets defective children,” he concluded. “They desire to marry and will fill the country with beggars. They should be cured of this, for they afflict the land and have no other thought than —”

“That’s a pesky poor patch o’ corn,” interjected our guide, jerking his goatee;" ’spect the fool fellow planted in the wrong sign."

“To put faith in planets is idolatry,” Luther rejoined: “it is against the first commandment.”

“Waal, I reckon we’ll not argue that pint: I plant, an’ you brace o’ Yankees eat.”

“It is a rather common belief,” said I, for the sake of easing the situation. “Many people are governed by the phases of the moon in the work of gardening and farming.”

“Superstition,” Luther replied, “is a baneful king who has reigned in the world at all times, and his sway is gladly accepted.”

“Waal, I’ll give in to this much,” said our mountaineer, “no signs could help out much in a patch covered with stones like this ‘n is. But farmin’s gittin’ to be pro’g’ous unsartain everywhare. It’s nothin’ but fightin’ for yer belly ‘gainst bugs an’ weeds. I’m ’bout minded to quit all —”

“Farming,” said Luther quickly, turning to the guide, “is a divine employment which God has commanded, saying: ‘Replenish the earth and subdue it.’ Even though it bring forth thorns and thistles, be not dismayed, your portion shall grow none the less.”

“That corn-patch wasn’t no better ’n this here wheat-field,” declared our companion.

The field looked as if some paddy had scattered ballast over it, and yet, for all that, the stubble showed that some son of Adam had gathered from it a fair crop of wheat. Luther looked, and straightway had a text. After all, he declared, the wonder-working God is all the time turning stone into bread.

“That He gives us wheat from sand and stone is probably a greater miracle than that in the Gospel where He feeds the multitude with seven loaves,” he said. “For what else is dry sand than an ingredient of stone, or stone other than solidified sand and earth?” Just then the small stack of straw caught his eye. “It is claimed, and I am inclined to believe it, that not as many sheaves are produced as there are people in the world.” He paused, then added very significantly: “‘Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.’”

At our closer approach, a multitude of sparrows, gleaning Ruth-like in the field, took fright and rose like a cloud before us. They gave Luther a secondly for the homily just begun. And why not? They gave the Master an illustration.

“No one,” said Luther, “can compute the great expense to which God is put merely in feeding the birds. I am convinced that it annually costs Him more to maintain the sparrows only than the revenue of the French king amounts to. No man can compute how much it costs God to feed the world a single day. Now, then, how many days have there been since the beginning of the world? And still we do not want to trust Him!”

We soon entered a ravine, walled with beetling rocks and stunted shrubs, and followed the windings of a brook. It was a dank place, littered with mosscovered logs and stones, and rank with ferns. Luther touched on these things, but reverted to the fowls of the air. Perhaps it was the trilling of a

song-sparrow in the foliage overhead that led him back; perhaps just the preacher instinct.

"We should not forget this illustration of the birds," he said, his eyes sparkling. "We should not forget this illustration of the birds," he reiterated. "They are free of all worry and are chipper and gay. And why should they be solicitous? They have a rich steward whose name is Our Father in Heaven. He hath a kitchen as wide as the world. Therefore, fly whithersoever they will, they find the larder well stocked. This selfsame Heavenly Father, says Jesus, would fain be your steward and butler, if ye would but believe it or have it so. He also furnishes tangible proof of this and giveth you productive fields, and full cribs, cellars and barns — giveth you countless more than He giveth the birds. Then why do you not want to trust Him? Do as the birds do: learn to believe, sing and be of good cheer. Ye are in fact most unhappy with your cares when ye do not trust God."

"It is true," commented our mountaineer, "God is good," and slid from his horse.

"I think that is how we Germans came of yore to derive the name God from the little word good," said Luther to me. And he might have added, "you English, too."

"It's a right smart climb up the mountain," drawled our woodsman. "We'll set down here first by this here spring an' eat a snack." He looked for the sun. "I doan see it, but it is a quarter past twelve by my stomach."

Luther's comments, pious, pithy, plentiful, were much the better part of that lunch. When he stepped to the spring, he frightened a ground-sparrow from its nest.

"Ah, dear little bird," he exclaimed, "don't fly away! I wish you well with all my heart, if you would only believe me. Even so we refuse to trust in God, who, far from wishing us harm, has given His own Son for us."

He got down on his knees to look at the nest in a tuft of grass.

"Behold the fledgling," cried he, "and 'twas all held in the compass of an egg Had we never seen an egg, and one were brought us from Calcutta, we would all marvel at it. No savant or learned naturalist can tell with certainty how such things are created, but Moses does when he says: 'God said'; and again, 'God blessed them, saying: Be fruitful and multiply.' Out of this speaking and commanding all creatures come and multiply even to this day."

Then he filled the gourd dipper and, holding it aloft, exclaimed:

“Dear Lord, what a noble drink is Thy gift of water which excels all wines!”

I wished Thomas Hood,[2] the Irish humorist, and others of his kidney, could have heard that and similar remarks; but — Hood is dead, and Luther lives. That is significant.

We led our horses up the mountain. Luther carried a red flower which he had plucked near the spring. When we had ascended about three-fourths of the way, I noticed that he stopped short, removed his hat, and looked with solemn mien to a small farm hanging to a spur opposite us. They were carrying a dead man out. So, too, have I seen Englishmen raise their hats as they passed a house with crape on the door.

“When you are in the presence of a corpse or attend a funeral,” Luther remarked, as we sat down at the foot of a rock, “you have good reason to ponder the fact that you are a human being. What has overtaken your fellow man will also one of these days catch up with you.”

“See,” said I, “they are going to bury the corpse there at the edge of the orchard. I don’t like these private burial-places: a generation or two, and they are briar-patches.”

“Before the times of the martyrs,” Luther replied, “the Christians interred their dead in fields, gardens and buildings. After that more reverence was shown and special plots and the yards of churches were set apart as burial-places.”

They interred the body without any sort of funeral service. Our guide explained that a minister can rarely be had for a burial in the mountains. But Luther took it none the less amiss. They might at least have repeated the Lord’s Prayer.

“Among the heathen impressive ceremonies were rendered in connection with burial,” he affirmed. “Much more should this be the custom among Christians on account of the article of our faith on the resurrection of the body. It should not look as if we died and were lugged away like horses and asses.”

He then spoke of tombstones and said we Christians should chisel Scripture passages on them. “Such inscriptions,” he declared, “would adorn the cemeteries better than secular emblems — shield, helmet, and so on.”

“So that’s the end— six foot by three,” said our guide dolefully, his eyes fixed on the yellow mound, which looked like a wound on the breast of Mother Earth. " ’Taint much."

“The grave is to be regarded as nothing less than a downy couch,” Luther answered, “even as in very truth it is in the eyes of the Lord, who says: ‘Our friend Lazarus sleepeth’; and, ‘The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.’”

His eyes chanced to fall on the flower in his hand. It was wilted.

“This life is aptly compared to a flower,” said he sadly, as he tossed the blossom away. “It has charming color and delightful fragrance while it unfolds, but it loses both ere the sun goes down.”

Then he rose suddenly, and, with a piece of soft, red stone, wrote all over the face of the rock: Vivit! Vivit! Vivit! Asked what he meant, he answered:

“Jesus lives! If He did not, I would not care to live one hour. But because He lives we also shall live through Him, as He himself says: ‘Because I live, ye shall live also.’” He made one of those eloquent little breaks of his, and then exclaimed triumphantly: “Aye, we shall live again!”

We resumed our journey and reached the top without a break.

“Now we kin ride a stretch,” said our guide: it is tolerable level-like."

We did so. A little later, a she-wildcat, lean and ugly looking, came out of the bushes and slunk into the underwood on the opposite side of the road. Our man pulled rein. We did likewise.

“A mean critter that was,” said he. “But there aint no partic’lar danger. They doan tackle humans unless they haf to.” Then apologetically, “I didn’t see her in time to get a crack.”

“What is the most dangerous beast in this neck of the woods?” I queried.

“Waal, you doan want to git in a fight with them ’ere cats or with b’ars — you’ll likely git worsted.”

“When Diogenes was asked, ‘Which is the most dangerous beast?’” interjected Luther, “he replied: ‘Among wild animals the tyrant; among tame ones, the flatterer.’”

“Exactly,” said I; but our mountaineer said:

“We aint got none of them two kind o’ critters in these here mountains — leastwise I never see one and never see a man as had one o’ their pelts; but we’ve some b’ars left, an’ I killed a mess o’ them in my day and gineration.”

Touch upon hunting ever so remotely and your mountaineer is primed.

“I have the record hereabouts, even if I, as oughtn’t to, say it myself.” Then there was a story of prowess to follow, to be sure. “You see, me an’ Ebenezer Crow was huntin’ an’ it was tolerable cold-like. We got a buck,

an' when we come home, says I to Ebenezer, 'I reckon my feet is froze.' An' sure enough, both my little toes came off from that 'ere freeze. A man doan like to lose anything that is hisn, an' I toted them 'ere toe jints around in my pocket well-nigh a year, an' felt sort o' kind to 'em. Then, one afternoon when I was comin' in from a hunt, with three as nice turkeys as you ever sot eyes on, there was a b'ar jist makin' his supper on one o' my pigs in a lazy sort o' way. Ne'er a bullet was left. The last one was in that big gobbler. Then I chanced to feel o' the toe jints in my pocket. Quick as wink I poured a big charge into my old smoothbore, put one o' them 'ere jints on top an' let fly. Say, that old b'ar jined the Jews right thar on the pork-eatin' question." Then, with a significant wink, he concluded: "Reckon I have the world's record. No other man ever killed a strappin' big he-b'ar with his little toe."

"In all likelihood not," said I, "unless it was Muenchhausen. Say, are you a Lutheran?"

"Naw," he drawled. "I was, but I've been converted these thirty year an' more."

Luther smiled, but I kept my face straight.

"As fer shootin '-irons, I've got the best ones in these here parts, not leavin' out Ebenezer's." So saying, he took the gun from his back and eyed it fondly.

"Adam would have died of grief," said Luther, looking at the gun, "could he have foreseen the instruments his children have made."

"I be not sayin' that be not so," drawled our mighty hunter, "but I reckon a human's got no better friend in a pinch."

Simultaneously the gun went to his shoulder, whiz went a bullet, and a wildcat bit the dust before us.

Our horses reared. Luther stuck to his saddle like a seasoned cavalryman, but I fell, fortunately without any injury, save that which Luther did my feelings by laughing at me.

"Hereafter I shall know better," I said.

"We all pay tuition fees to sorry experience,"[3] he commented kindly.

We gathered around our quarry. She had scented the morsels of meat in our pack, followed us under cover of the bushes, then dared to come out for a mouthful and found — death, the one thing on earth's bill of fare that appeases hunger forever for cats and men. Luther touched her with his foot and thought of her Creator.

“God works at all trades in the best and most thorough way,” he reflected. “As a tailor He makes a coat for the deer which wears many years, and as a shoemaker he furnishes it with foot-gear which lasts longer than it does. Likewise He stands as a chef over the sun which is the fire that cooks all things and makes them palatable.”

Our guide, paying little attention to homilies, pulled the carcass to the edge of the road. ’ ‘A triflin’ critter, doan do nothin’ but harm, as I kin see," he grumbled.

Here was another feather for the arrow of our soldier of the cross.

“Though by reason of original sin, many wild animals injure humanity, as lions, wolves, bears, snakes, adders, and so forth,” said he, ’ ’yet the merciful God has so mitigated our richly deserved punishment that there are many more beasts that serve our profit than there are that do us harm."

We pushed on now, and soon came to the place of descent. A scene of rugged grandeur spread out before us as we stood there, halted by wonder, silenced by awe.

“Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations,” said Luther, breaking the silence. “Before the mountains were brought forth or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God.”

“Amen,” said our guide, and we replaced our hats.

We walked down, for the path zigzagged along the precipice and was so steep in places that it seemed as if it were making jumps to get to the bottom. We reached the foot without mishap. Luther looked back and then up through the foliage at heaven’s blue dome.

“He who erected such arches without pillars,” he declared, “is certainly a master-builder.”

We crossed the narrow valley, fertile and cultivated, and in the foothills there found our lodging place for the night, an old log house. Here our guide bade us farewell.

“That fellow is a fluent liar,” said I.

“’Tis a trade easily plied,” Luther answered.

“But he botches it, and tells crooked stories.”

“A lie is always crooked and wriggles like a snake, which is never straight till it is dead,” he replied curtly.

Our host was a veritable patriarch. The snow of eighty winters was on his head, the sunshine of eighty summers was in his face, the grace of God

of a lifetime was in his heart. As for the rest, it spelled poverty — pinching poverty. When I remarked that it looked as if God had run short of creature blessings before he reached this saint, Luther smiled and said:

"Though He is Lord of lords and King of kings, God often puts on a beggar's garb, as actors do in plays."

After eating a snack, which, being interpreted, was flitch, something like hardtack hot from the stove, and black coffee, our host sat down and told us of the days agone till the cock crowed. Then Luther said:

"I must go to bed and so follow the rules laid down for me by those holy fathers, the physicians, who complain that I do not obey them."

The old man lighted a piece of pitch-pine. "Come on," said he. We followed him up the ladder in the corner to the attic, where he showed us two nice, clean beds and withdrew.

"I like the happy spirit of this father in Israel," I remarked, "and I believe you are right: like father Jacob, God often gives His dearest child a coat of many colors."

"Great wealth does not cheer as much as a merry heart," he replied. "We see it all pivots on whether one is content and does not cling to temporal things.

"In fine, it—"

"In fine, he is a rich lord and emperor who has no care, trouble and heartaches."

Then the rain pattered a lullaby on the shingles.

In the morning we rose betimes and set out for the colloquium. He of the eighty summers and winters led, as spry in the saddle as a man of forty.

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1. This press, one of the most interesting Lutheran relics in the land, is in the printing establishment of the Henkel Brothers.↩
2. "My next thought settled upon Luther, to whom, perhaps, Wittenberg owed the jovial size of the very article I have been drinking from, a right Lutheran beer glass, at least a foot high, with a glass cover." — Up the Rhine.↩
3. This is (no, don't be alarmed, it will not bite), this is a prosopopoeia, that is, a metaphor in which things peculiar to man are attributed (a) to fictitious things, or (b) to those destitute of sense. Attention is called to

this, 1. because you could not suck it out of your thumb; 2. because you should know from the outset that this work contains everything that the learned in Europe and America put into a book; and 3. because it must be made plain to all that this volume is not to be criticized as non-theological works are. For instance, if in these pages I attribute sense to a brother who has none, that is not a vulgar lie, but it is a glorious prosopopoeia. (See (b) above.) Likewise, if an overabundance of words is used I am giving you a pleonasm; if the elegance of the sentence is not thereby impaired, 'tis a parelcon you get; and if a word or phrase is omitted, it's an ellipsis that hath been manufactured. Where you find that I have cleverly yoked contraries together, there open your eyes, for I am leading into the verbal cavalcade an oxymoron. Indeed you will find in this book all the varieties of these things even down to the anakephalaeosis. But wherever, by design or accident, I write English as if I had not been brought up among Germans or Scandinavians, that is, according to the best continental authority, an idiotismus. This latter, by the way, also explains why Lutheran books are usually so much harder to read than those of other denominations: our men keep out the idiot-ismus!↩

6. Unequally Yoked Together

> And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
> That one small head should carry all he knew.
>
> — GOLDSMITH.

IN THE MOUNTAINS, south of the Mason and Dixon line, a term of court, a political meeting, or a religious debate will bring out the whole countryside. Hence it was no surprise to find a large crowd at the church. Perhaps some came merely to see what sort of a thing this colloquium would be. If so, I do not blame them; for, verily, a colloquium is not always the same: sometimes it goes on all fours, and sometimes it does not; sometimes it has a big heart, and sometimes it has not; sometimes it has lots of brains, and sometimes it has not; in short, it is always like the company it is in. In fact, if I were asked to define the word, I should say, a colloquium, comprised of ministers, is an ecclesiastical chameleon usually of a green hue, unless squabbling turns it black and blue. Those who try to kill words and bury them in the graveyard called a lexicon, might talk more about it, but it is doubtful if they would say as much.

I like these people of the mountains of the Southland. Their simplicity is refreshing, and the way they turn out to religious meetings is admirable. We not only found a large gathering at the church, but saw more coming down the road and issuing from the bridle-paths. All came on foot or on horseback, sometimes two or three on the back of a faithful, slow-plodding nag. The men were clad in Kentucky jeans, and the women wore clean calico dresses, gingham aprons, and kerchiefs folded in triangular shape over their shoulders. Until the meeting opened they stood in little groups, inquiring about the state of health in the settlements and passing the snuff-box with the gossip.

All this is primitive, of course, and your Northern people laugh at it. A man hates to dissect a laugh: it is apparently such a good-natured thing. But

in reality it is commonly a very selfish thing. Men usually laugh because they see others in a ludicrous position. The merry ring would cease if they saw themselves in the same position. Hence, the ordinary laugh takes its rise from a secret and, perhaps, unconscious comparison of self with another to the advantage of self. That tickles the Old Adam and — that is where the laugh comes in. That is true of most laughs, not of all. But I fail to see the advantage which allows even the expenditure of a smile, humor's fractional currency, at the expense of this simple-hearted mountain folk. In my opinion, clean calico is more becoming to saints of feminine gender than perfumed satin; and, for the life of me, I cannot see why a male saint in his Sunday jeans, carrying a pail of swill to his hogs, should not be said to be going on a more advantageous errand for the Lord than the one in the city who is carrying his dress trousers to the tailor to have them creased just so. From the viewpoint of angels, I think the saint with the slop-bucket does not look as foolish as the saint with the trousers to be creased. Sartorial smartness and saintliness do not constitute a match team, although, like a mule and a horse, they may be made to pull together. At any rate, my good old father Luther liked the appearance of these mountain matrons real well, and, comparing them with those saints of powder, feathers, fluff and ribbons, said:

"Gold and precious stones are magnificent in the eyes of the world, but a stench in the nostrils of God. She is well arrayed and beautifully adorned in God's sight who goes about in a quiet and meek spirit."

He was very severe on the devotees of fashion.

"When an honorable dame or a young woman dresses thus, what else does she do than ape the demi-monde?"

So much for the dress of our mountain folk. As for gossip, all the daughters of Eve nurse the imp, and all the sons of Adam pet it. The only difference is that some people do not keep its slobbering bib as clean as others do, and it smells nasty and sour. And besides all this, the talk of the mountaineers in the churchyard is never much out of keeping with the place and often gives room to the discussion of a theological problem whose handling evinces the tutorship of the Spirit.

In this connection I was pleased to note a change in Luther's opinions. When we started on this trip, he had a strong bias against farmers. But now, having come in touch with these poor farmers, who were hospitable and happy, he frankly acknowledged his mistake and added:

“This is the most exalted joy of all, that a heart has Christ, the Savior. That one rejoices in exceptional good fortune, money, goods, power, honor, and so on, is no doubt also to be called joy; but all this is still nothing more than childish and foolish delight.”

It was long past the hour of meeting and we were still waiting for the chairman. The rain of the previous night had flooded the streams. He might make a long detour, cross the one bridge in all that section, and then risk swimming his horse across several streams, or he might bide his time till the torrent had spent its force and cross the ford. What he would be likely to do was discussed by the men with as much solicitude as a premier’s next move in statecraft would get in the deliberations of a neighboring cabinet.

Directly he made his appearance, wet and mud-bespattered. He had chosen to risk his life in the mountain torrents, rather than leave unperformed the duty assigned him. All honor to these mountain pastors, who are in perils often and count all things dross for the sake of Him who redeemed them.

Ephraim Munggold, the self-appointed lackey to all preachers sound in the faith, helped him to dismount and tied the horse to a sapling, chuckling the while with satisfaction. Then, after taking a package from the saddle-bags, the minister went through the crowd, shaking hands, with a smile and kindly word for each. He was smooth-shaven, old and gray, and withal somewhat bent, like a shelf beneath its weight of books. He had a place in my heart at once. I think it was because one could see he had been on the mount and in the garden with the Savior.

On account of his late arrival, dinner was served under the trees at once, so the work of the colloquium might proceed uninterrupted the residue of the day. Then the old man entered the church and we followed. Luther took a seat in one of the pews to the side of the pulpit, where the elders sit on Sundays and — nod, provided they are sure the preacher is orthodox and does not need watching.

After a Scripture lesson, remarkable for brevity, and an extemporized prayer, noteworthy for length, the table used in lieu of an altar for communion purposes was moved out and the examining committee gathered around it. Besides the aged pastor mentioned there were three others on the committee: a spare young man, who wore his hair long like Wagner or Liszt, and two middle-aged men, one of whom was pastor of the parish. Two other ministers — one of whom, by the way, was very bald —

were also present; but they were mere spectators of other men's affairs and did not at all seem to be in sympathy with these United Synod men, for when the examination was in progress they often shook their heads in disapproval and smiled sarcastically.

The senior preacher had placed a Bookof Concord on the table, which led me to think he was of old Tennessee training, and, as they took their seats at the table, the others also deposited some volumes upon it with that air of learning and importance which is so palpable in most of the younger men in the South. The young man's contribution was a Greek New Testament. It spoke volumes for him until, alas and alack, I discovered it was an interlinear edition. But the assembly was evidently awed by the pile of learning on the table and expected great things from the scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, who, like a householder, are to bring forth out of their treasure things new and old.

The old man, in the capacity of chairman, stated the object of the meeting, and interlarded his remarks with many nice things about brotherhood, unity of the spirit, and bonds of peace. It was a trifle overdone and left an unpleasant taste, like sweet cakes scorched in the baking. Then he asked in that fatherly tone which some employ in catechizing timid children:

"Brother Martin, what is the Bible?"

"The Bible is God's Word," Luther replied.

"And do you accept every word of the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments as inspired?"

"Yes, for they are the words of the Holy Ghost," said Luther; and then, perhaps encouraged by the old man's voice and manner, went on in that easy, open way of his, saying: "Consequently they are too deep for any man, and new-born Christians have merely the first-fruits and not the tenth. I am satisfied that I have at least a faint conception of what God's Word is, and I guard myself against doubting or opposing it."

"Ah, that is right," chuckled the old sire, "we should revere the Book. And so you love it and read it diligently, eh?"

"In fact, for several years now, I have read the Bible through twice each twelvemonth," he answered. "The Bible is like a large orchard with all sorts of trees from which we may gather divers fruits, for we have in the Bible a wealth of comfort, doctrine, instruction, exhortation, warnings, promises

and threats. There is not a tree in this orchard at which I have not hammered and from which I have not shaken a couple of apples or pears at least."

"Now to the Confessions. Do you believe the truth as it is set forth in the Confessions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church?"

"I believe," Luther answered in a loud, clear voice, as if glad to confess his faith.

"Thank God!" the venerable questioner exclaimed. "In these last, perilous days, it is not always so: some quibble and are wise above what is written. But what have you to say of the first Confession, the Apostles' Creed?"

"We neither made nor invented this Creed," Luther replied, "neither did the former fathers; but as the bee gathers honey from many beautiful and fragrant flowers, so this symbol was gathered from the beloved prophets and apostles, that is, from the entire Sacred Scriptures, and set forth with exquisite terseness for children and common Christians. Thus it is legitimately called apostolic, for it is so phrased that one could not state it better and more neatly in a form so concise and perspicuous. And from of old it has ever been held in the Church that either the apostles themselves composed it, or that it was compiled from their writings and sermons by their most proficient disciples."

"And now. what say you of the second, the Nicene Creed, which magnifies the Lord who lived for us and died for us?"

"For us!" exclaimed Luther in a tone of delight, almost snatching the words from the old minister's lips, "For us! Conceived by the Holy Ghost for u s, born of the Virgin Mary for us, and so to the end. We should pay special attention to these little words 'for us.' The dear fathers did not forget that, but with much earnestness and care placed the little words us and our in the Nicene Symbol or Confession of Faith: 'Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.' In ancient times the Nicene Creed was chanted every Sunday in the churches and as the words 'was made man' were sung every man fell upon his knees. This was a fine, praiseworthy custom, and it should still be so observed that we thank God with the whole heart for the incarnation of Christ.' *

"Now what have you to say of the other oecumenical symbol?"

"The other, that of St. Athanasius," replied Luther, "is longer, and, on account of the Arians, more fully develops one article, namely, how Jesus Christ is God's only Son and our Lord in whom we believe with the selfsame faith with which we believe in the Father, as the text of the first symbol says: 'I believe in God' 'and in Jesus Christ.' For if He were not true God He should not be honored with the same faith as coequal with the Father. This St. Athanasius contends for and urges in his confession, and it is almost a credal defense of the first symbol. It is put in such form that I do not know whether anything more important or more glorious has been written in the Church of the New Testament since the times of the apostles."

The old minister now took the Small Catechism from the table, and, holding it aloft, asked: "Do you accept this Catechism also as God's truth?"

"No better word and no better doctrine will ever be brought forth than that which is summed up in the Catechism out of the Sacred Scriptures," he answered. "The Catechism is a real Lay Bible which comprises the whole sum of Christian doctrine which every man needs to know for his salvation. Just as the Canticles of Solomon are called the *Canticum Canticorum*, the song above all songs, so the Ten Commandments are the *Doctrina Doctrinarum*, the doctrine above all doctrines. From it is learned the will of God — what He demands and what we lack. In the second place, the Creed, or the confession of faith is the *Historia Historiarum*, the history above all histories, in which are set forth the wonderful works of the Divine Majesty from creation to eternity. In the third place, the Lord's Prayer, the *Oratio Dominica*, is the prayer above all prayers, the loftiest form of devotion. It was taught by our exalted Master, embraces all spiritual and bodily needs and is a most efficient comfort in temptation, tribulation and the last hour. In the fourth place, the holy Sacraments are the *Ceremoniae Ceremoniarum*, the most exalted ceremonies, instituted by God himself and sealing His grace to us. Therefore we should love and appreciate the Catechism and diligently teach it to the young. In it is summed up the right, old, true, pure, divine doctrine of the holy Christian Church. Whatever is against it is to be regarded as innovation, false doctrine, drivel, be it of as long standing or as plausible as it may. Be it old, or be it new, we should guard ourselves against it."

"You are right," said the examiner, "this little book is a marvel."

"So much could not be collected from the books of the fathers," said Luther, "as is now, by the grace of God, taught out of the Small Catechism."

“And the Augsburg Confession?” queried the chairman as, highly satisfied, he took a pinch of snuff.

“A glorious Confession!” Luther responded with animation. “I like it well. I have no changes or improvements to make. Neither would it become me to touch it.”

“Good, very good,” said the old man. “You have no affinity with the spiritual spawn of the Definite Platform[1] makers. Ah, those were perilous days. Then was the Church in Gethsemane, and certain men, under the cover of darkness, would betray her with a kiss into the hands of the sects. Now as to the Formula of Concord —”

“Just a word, please — a private word,” interrupted the young man, raising his finger as one having authority.

The committee held a consultation, and the upshot of it was that no question was asked concerning this confession. The Book of Concord has been gradually worked into the United Synod of the South, but it still gets dabs and stabs. Hence the United Synod is like a clock whose hands and gong are out of harmony: it points at twelve and strikes one. Other synods are more or less like this, except the Missouri Synod: it points at twelve and strikes — thirteen!

The old pastor evidently did not want to expose that which was dear to him to the unkind thrusts of the opposition, or, by pushing it forward, divide the committee, and therefore dropped his question; but when he did so the strange ministers smiled at his discomfiture. Turning to Luther, he continued with the inevitable awkwardness of a guileless man who tries to mend matters for himself:

“Formally, you and I are in concord. But you spoke of believing. What do you hold faith to be?”

“Faith is not man’s opinion or fancy, which some conceive to be faith,” Luther replied; “but faith is a divine work in us which changes and begets us anew of God. It mortifies the old Adam, transforms us into entirely different men in heart, mind, will, sense and powers, and brings with it the Holy Spirit.”

“But St. James says, ‘Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works.’ What of good works?” asked the pastor of the parish.

“Oh, this faith is a living, busy, active, efficacious thing, so that it is impossible for it not incessantly to do good works,” Luther replied in a

burst of eloquence. “It does not ask whether good works are to be done, but before the question has been asked, it has already done them, and is always doing them. But he who does not these good works is a faithless man who is always groping and looking for faith and works, and nevertheless knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he prate volubly about faith and good works.”

“We will come to the subject of good works after a while,” said the chairman. “Drop this now. Let us go on in an orderly way.” Then, as he pulled out his oaken snuff-box, he quoted the passage which is almost reduced to a condition of servitude by frequent use, to-wit: “Let everything be done decently and in order.” The snuff-box, which he had passed around the table, returned to him untouched, for some people tickle themselves with snuff, and some tickle themselves with self-adulation — merely a difference in the kind of snuff.

After several hearty sneezes, the old minister began again to question with the courtesy and deliberateness of the old-school gentleman of the Southland. He asked, “Who is God the Father?” and followed it up with questions on God’s attributes and works, leading over to the Work of Redemption by bringing out man’s fall; and then in a similar manner he covered the Work of Redemption and led over to the Dispensation of the Spirit. The venerable father was no great dogmatician, but he was far too wise to risk making a fool of himself by attempting to lead the applicant over ground unfamiliar to himself; so he simply took the three articles of the Apostles’ Creed and followed his well-blazed and oft-trodden path. It was a thorough piece of work and must have been highly edifying to the congregation. Luther’s replies constituted a brilliant exposition of the creed. But for all that the bald visitor showed very plainly that he considered the examiner’s course to be entirely too simple for a colloquium. Perhaps he was right. If so, he was more correct in judgment than courteous in demeanor. Yet it is not wise to sneer at that which is simple and doff the hat to that which is intricate, for depth is often an illusion and a snare. We can see to the bottom of a deep stream if the water is clear, but we cannot penetrate beyond the surface of a shallow stream if the water is muddy. Noticing this, some theologians get a reputation for depth by stirring up a little sand, or, if it be in polemics,[2] a lot of dirt.

The examination ran along smoothly till the old man got into the third article.

“What is the Church?” he asked, taking another pinch of snuff and pulling a red bandanna from a rear pocket.

“The communion of saints,” Luther replied. A sneeze was now due from the old minister, and he enjoyed it. The young man, he of the long hair and interlinear Greek Testament, took a mean advantage of that sneeze and put his foot into the examination.

“Do you mean to say the Church has its essence in the Lord’s Supper?” he asked with evident self-importance.

Luther looked at him with blank amazement.

“God be praised,” he said brusquely, “a child of seven years knows what the Church is, namely, the saints, holy believers and lambs, who heed the voice of their Shepherd. For thus the children confess, ‘I believe in the holy Christian Church.’”

“Then this member of the Creed, ‘communion of saints,’ expresses no new thought?” he queried.

“No,” answered Luther. “And for that reason this member, ‘the communion of saints,’ was not repeated in ancient times, as may be seen from the exposition of the Creed by Rufinus. But a marginal gloss was affixed which explained holy Christian Church by ‘communion of saints.’ In the course of time it was incorporated into the text, and we now repeat both.”

The young man looked nonplussed. To him communion here signified Lord’s Supper, and was his warrant for altar-fellowship. He reasoned thus: the Creed says, communion of saints; all who believe are saints; therefore, commune all who come. Finally he said:

“Do you, or don’t you, believe in the intercommunion of saints? What do you say of allowing others to commune at our altars?”

“Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the way of the Sacramentarians,” he replied, “nor sat in the seat of the Zwinglians, nor followed the counsels of the Zurichers.”

The young minister’s face flushed.

“If, as even you strict Lutherans say, the Sacrament does not depend upon the belief or the unbelief of the administrator, I can’t see that it makes any difference at what altar we commune, for we shall always receive the same thing.”

“Unless,” interjected Luther impatiently, “unless it were in consequence of their having first changed the word and institution of God and explained

them otherwise than they ought, as the present enemies of the Sacrament do. These doubtless have nothing but bread and wine in the Supper, because they have neither the word nor the instituted order of God, but have perverted and changed it according to their own conceits."

"Narrow, shameful, bigoted," the young minister whispered to his companions.

"No, he is perfectly right, perfectly right," rejoined the venerable father, who had just tucked his bandanna in the antipodes of his coat, drawn his finger across his nose and was free now to attend to business.

In a few moments he and the other members of the committee were in private consultation. It grew into a wrangle loud enough at times to be understood. It was three against one. And the three having the least argument did the loudest talking.

While this was in progress, Luther, with hands behind his back, paced the floor.

One of the strange ministers threaded his way through the crowd and came up to Luther. Though he spoke in a whisper, I heard him say: "I must start home. This is a loose synod — very weak in the knees. The Synodical Conference is the alone right-believing synod. Go to St. Louis. I will write her most honorable president about you."

While this private interview was taking place, the other ministerial intruder strained forward in his pew, keeping tight eye-grip on the twain. So soon as the bald man had withdrawn, he edged tiptoe to Luther and talked in a whispered purr.

"God's grace has not been bestowed on you in vain," I overheard. Then, after a bit, I caught: "God has opened a great and effectual door to us here in the South." Then piecemeal: "Tennessee… Ohio Synod… whole truth… this land… she only." And finally: "You will see this clearly if you read The Error of Modern Missouri."

So that is why these men were here: that is why they had come south of the Potomac! I liked it not. That is how the eagle watches the osprey, how the raven watches the sick sheep.

At the table the discussion waxed warmer. Most of what the young man was saying could be made out. Coming again to where I sat, Luther stooped over and said:

"The donkey has ventured on thin ice!"

That expressed it, for this unlicked cub theologue was prating sentiment sans sense.

Gray with emotion was the face of the venerable pastor. The other three were against him. His was a hopeless case: he could give them the arguments, but he could not give them the brains to understand the arguments. Finally he rose and exclaimed:

"I can no longer cooperate with you!"

Then he turned to the congregation. His eyes were aflame.

"I declare here before God and the Church," said he, holding up his right hand, "that I am opposed to pulpit-fellowship and altar-fellowship with those of different faith, and to secret societies of doubtful or deistic character. Brethren, I cannot cooperate with these men and shall withdraw. 'Try the spirits, whether they be of God.'" Turning to Luther he said: "Make thou a good confession."

Then he stalked out with a feeling of kinship to the confessors of old.

The people were taken aback. Not even Ephraim Munggold, who always acted as hostler, made a move. Ephraim's jaw hung low, as if he were trying to take in the situation through his mouth.

Luther's comment to me was terse.

"Two divines who are antagonistic cannot walk together." Then glancing at the remaining pastors, of whom he did not seem to think highly, he said: "The laity desire pure and firm teachers whom they can trust."

This incident illustrates pretty well the conditions which obtain in the United Synod of the South. The conservatives come to synod smiling and depart protesting, and the ensuing chapters begin and end in the same way. Meanwhile, the eagle watches the osprey and the raven watches the sheep.

The venerable father out of the way, the young man ran his fingers through his hair, assumed an air of importance and delivered himself of this:

"Animated by the spirit of love, the sundered bodies of Protestants are working for union, and you old-school Lutherans are standing in the way of it and the answer to the Master's prayer that His followers be one even as He and the Father are one, and I don't know what else you can say."

"My dear sirs, what shall we say?" Luther rejoined.

"Our lot is that of the sheep which went to the water with a wolf. The wolf entered the stream above, the sheep below. The wolf began to accuse the sheep of making the water muddy for him. The sheep answered: 'How can I make the water muddy for you, inasmuch as you are upstream and are

making it roily for me?' But, to be brief, the sheep had to bear the blame. So these sectaries, who have kindled the fire as they themselves lustily boast and call it a blessing, are now trying to put the blame for division on us. Who told Dr. Carlstadt to begin? Who told Zwingli and OEcolampadius to scribble? Have they not done so of their own volition? We would have gladly preserved concord and would still do so; but they would not. Now, forsooth, we are to blame!"

If the young man saw the force of this, he ignored it entirely and let loose in a rhapsody on brotherly love. Luther squelched him by raising his hand and saying:

"There is no rhetoric of sufficient force to hoodwink an honest conscience. Accursed be the love and peace purchased at the cost of God's Word"

"But you must admit," cut in the other member of the committee, "that your exclusiveness stands in the way of mending matters, just as they claim, and that there is some ground for what they print."

Luther's face colored with indignation.

"They ought to be ashamed in the presence of the people and not write such audacious lies," he exclaimed, rising to his feet. And now every sentence was a hammer-blow. "They say peace should be preserved and are constantly disturbing it, as everybody knows. They also take delight in seeing this evil spread. Again, they say the difference is a little matter, and yet there is nothing which they are so much concerned about as this very thing: no time is left for anything else. In this they pose as martyrs and saints, and whoever will not follow them in their vagaries is no Christian and knows nothing of Scripture or Spirit."

Truer words were never uttered of the audacity and rapacity of sectarianism.

By this time our young man eloquent had recovered sufficiently to essay a defense of the men who give our weak brethren the right hand of fellowship while they try to steal our sheep with the left.

"Upon acquaintance," quoth he meekly, "these men always prove to be humble. They evince a fine spirit in private intercourse."

"It is worse and more dangerous to fellowship schismatics and sectaries who assume humility and ingratiate themselves with the people," Luther explained. "That is what is meant by affiliating with the Canaanites, that is, with those who distort and yield God's Word."

"Well, sir," said the pastor of the parish in a mean tone, "all I've got to say is that such conduct as you prescribe would render us deservedly unpopular in any community."

"It is a dangerous and an offensive thing," Luther replied with warmth, "and veritable idolatry to strive in this manner for friendship, worldly favor, wealth and power. Man is so blinded thereby that he departs from the Word of God. Thus many in our time have fallen away from the Word."

This was a deserved rebuke. To barter truth for popularity is the act of a Judas. But these men were actually not sure of the doctrine they taught in the name of God. That was the amazing thing: that was the shameful thing. Turning uneasily on his chair, one of them said:

"What you assert is all very good, provided— provided we are right and all the other denominations are wrong; but they are just as likely to be right as we are."

Luther stepped closer to the table. His falcon eyes were flashing fire.

"Above all things," he exclaimed, "we must be sure that the doctrine we preach is God's Word. God be praised, I know positively that the doctrine which I preach is the Word of God. I have now banished from my heart all other doctrines of whatsoever name and have overcome those heavy cogitations and temptations which sometimes tormented me like this: Art thou the only man who has God's Word pure and clear, and all the rest have it not? In this way doth Satan, under the guise of God's Church, vex and torment us. Verily in this case we must not only be well armed with God's Word and well grounded therein, but we must also have the certainty of the doctrine, otherwise we shall not be able to stand in the combat. A man must be able to say courageously: I know with absolute certainty that what I teach is solely the Word of the High Majesty of God in Heaven, His final pronouncement, the eternal, unchangeable truth, and whatsoever does not agree with this doctrine is a fabrication spun by the devil, false and bad. For God cannot lie: I have His Word: that will not fail me."

Then he picked up a Bible. The committeemen looked up as if they were shrinking from him. Thus uncertainty cringes before conviction. Opening the book, and pointing to the passage, Luther said:

"Now St. Peter says here, 'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God.' This point is to be kept well in mind: No man is to preach anything unless he be certain that it is God's Word."

Well said, thought I. You are an upright man and would never risk lying and deceiving in the name of Almighty God, as do those preachers who confess that they do not know which denomination is right. As he laid down the Bible, he concluded:

"I ask no vision and desire no miracle; neither would I give credence to any angel that would teach me otherwise than God's Word teaches."

Then he began again to pace the floor, for the spirit was stirred up within him.

There was a short lull in which the committeemen gave each other woebegone looks. And when the silence seemed overlong and oppressive, the young man of the long hair rose and said in a respectful tone:

"If we were to concede that you are certain that your doctrine is God's, could you not let others teach as they please and not testify against them, but cooperate in common work and dwell in love and peace?"

"My dear sirs, no such love and peace for me," he answered, facing about sharply. "Were I to murder a man's wife and child and seek his life besides, and then say to him: 'My dear friend, let us have peace. We will love each other. It is not of such grave importance anyhow that we should fall out over it.' What would that man say? How very dear I should be to him! Such is the conduct of the sects."

The committee held a private consultation.

"Well, there's no use of continuing this," said one of them half aloud, "for he is a stubborn, hidebound prophet. This obstinate old man will never do for our United Synod."

Luther overheard the latter part of it and quickly rejoined:

"That I refuse to enter into this union, you must not ascribe to my obstinacy; but if you will deal at all justly you must attribute it to my righteous conscience and the necessity of my faith. The Lord Jesus enlighten us and make us perfectly one."

"What! It is we who refuse to accept you, and I'd have you understand that fully," the smart young man declared with rising choler. "With your unpopular notions and practices you couldn't stand in any parish I know of."

Luther retorted with all the emphasis of his soul:

"I would rather fall with Christ than stand with Caesar!"

"Let's adjourn," said one.

The words were scarcely uttered when another raised his hands and pronounced the benediction.

It was abrupt, but it was all over, and Martin Luther had been rejected by another Lutheran synod. It was too bad. I felt for him and said, as we mounted our horses:

"Well, this thing is deplorable. I suppose you will try the General Council next. It is hard to tell what will come to pass there. They are good fellows, but——"

"I do not know what will yet come to pass," he interrupted with a smile that was tinctured with sorrow, "but if I did, I should get no gray hair on that account."

Our companion came and we rode away in the lengthening shadows of the declining day.

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1. An anonymous pamphlet of 1855, having for its aim the displacement of the Augsburg Confession in the General Synod.↩
2. I have a curious manuscript by the author of this work. It is entitled *The Convocation at Bug House*, and, though not finished, contains not a little to the point here. In part, this story runs as follows:

   Some excerpts from the diary of an itinerant Ohio pioneer minister had been published in a church paper and were inadvertently come upon by a bold *cimex lectularius*, a thing which, in Philadelphia, Gettysburg, St. Louis, and, in fact, everywhere outside of Ohio is vulgarly called a bedbug. Now this *cimex lectularius* took mortal offense at what was printed, for whithersoever the itinerant had gone he had found a ranting kind of religionists and also the aforesaid kind of bugs, and in recording the fact he always coupled a denunciation with it. Whether the denunciation was meant for the sect or the insect is not clear, but his bugship took it as leveled wholly against his kind. Hence, to prevent himself from bursting with indignation, he called an "oecumenical council" of insects, carefully stipulating, however, that the meeting should not be opened with prayer, that no division or subdivision should be held responsible for anything done at the meeting, and that the moot question, Which kind of bugs are the buggiest bugs in all bugdom? should not be so much as mentioned.

And so, in due course of time, the convocation met at Bug House. But despite the liberal terms of the call, a rumpus was raised on the seating of a butterfly from Gettysburg. The protesters alleged it to be a turncoat, and pretended they did not know how to classify a thing that is a worm at one time and a fly at another. But when the insects realized how many of them this principle would affect, they settled the question post-haste in favor of the butterfly and got down to business.

Many subjects were discussed, but all that was said bore upon the general thesis that man had no reason to be proud and look to the extinction of all insects, for they, in their special spheres, were one and all superior to him and he was most assuredly beholden to them. The speakers proved to the satisfaction of all bugdom that the bee taught man political economy, the ant industry, the silkworm weaving, the hornet paper-making, the mosquito drilling, the firefly electric lighting, the caterpillar coffin-making, the cabbage-worm the manufacture of sauerkraut, the grasshopper how to spit tobacco-juice, and so on to the end of the chapter there was nothing at all which the wise bug had not taught fool man.

However, since the conduct of a preacher had given the occasion for the meeting, the cloth came in for most of the animadversions. Finally, when their bugships came to declare which bug had taught man defamatory polemics, they came near falling out among themselves and so giving a practical demonstration of the art and their respective ability to teach it.

The hornet had been first to speak and claimed all the credit, averring truthfully enough that his tribe had taught man both how to make paper and how to fill it with stingers. However, the *cimex lectularius* insisted that he was the first to teach writers how to draw blood, a statement which the mosquito contradicted, saying, “Your nocturnal worship may have taught the pugilist but not the polemicist, for here the scientific thing is to get in your work and then get gracefully out of the way, and that he learned from me.” “No, no,” vociferated the flea, “that is the point I taught him!” “But it was I,” said the jigger, “it was I that taught him how to make an opponent scratch and scratch and scratch without surcease.” “Bosh!” exclaimed the house-fly, “you are all taking too much credit to yourselves. ’Tis we who taught the defamatory polemicist how to get the material,

going as we do with equal facility from honey-pot to dunghill." "But polemics must needs be ignescent," said the firefly, "and we taught the scrappers how to strike fire." "So be it," gasped the moth, "so be it; yet you must all concede that it was my progenitors who showed him how to riddle the fabric of opposing argument with holes, which, after all, is the main thing." "Nay, that is not the main thing," countered a bumblebee from Philadelphia; "the main thing is to do the nasty thing in a nice way — wear a soft velvet dress and hide the stinger underneath — and that we bumblebees taught the polemicist."

There was a deal more of like talk from other insects till a ladybug from Iowa mounted a rose petal and said: "It is not seemly that we spend our time in wrangling when more weighty matters await our attention. I therefore offer a compromise declaration whereby the matter shall not be settled to the detriment of any, but each shall have the honor due him, to-wit: it shall be declared by us that the polemicist is the composite product of all bugdom, how much each kind of bug has contributed being left an open question for the present." And now what? Aye, on all sides there was chirping, and whizzing, and buzzing, and clatter of protest. Should all bugs share the honor achieved by one division of bugs? Nevermore!

Now at this very moment came there upon the scene a belated tumblebug that had pushed his sphere all the way from Missouri. When he asked what all this ado was about, the ladybug made bold to reply, saying: "Each and every bug here present avers that its kind taught the defamatory polemicist how to handle himself in the lists." Then the tumblebug straightened up and bellowed with exceeding great stomach: "Shut up, you little bugs and big bugs, you rich bugs and poor bugs, and hearken unto me! Hold your peace, I say; I'm from Missouri! It was not your tribes, but it was mine that instructed these dunderheads in this genteel art, for is it not plain that we taught them:

I. Where and how to gather the material;
II. How to round it out nicely, aye, even attractively;
III. How to make it at one and the same time offensive and defensive: (a) so it can be easily rolled to its destination, and (b) not be touched by gainsayers without odoriferous consequences; and
IV. How to place in each contribution the ovum and the potential heat to hatch another one, which is a very important thing in the

practice of this art. And now, if you do not accept what I say," he fairly roared, “I’m from Missouri, and I’ll show you!” Thereupon his worship got behind his big ball and rolled it straight towards the assembly, which, taking fright at the weight of this mode of argument, fled for dear life.

And so the origin of ecclesiastical defamation, stench and all, was settled without a dissenting voice in the convocation at Bug House; and, lo, even to this day, no big bug nor little bug has been able to prove any other origin for it. — Editor.↩

7. The King’s Business Requires Haste

No wild enthusiast ever yet could rest
Till half mankind were like himself possessed.

-COWPER.

IT WAS EARLY the next morning. At the garden gate our horses were pawing and whinnying, impatient to he off.

“If you are set on going,” said the miller, with whom we were lodging, “the nags are saddled; but I still wish you’d settle on biding a day with me.”

Luther said he had a manuscript to finish and was anxious to get back to the Shenandoah Valley.

“I reckon you’d better start immejiately, if not sooner,” drawled our old mountaineer, “for the way I’m goin’ to show you, to save climbing the mountain, is right smart farther, and you’ll not git back to the valley much afore nightfall nohow.”

Saying we should set out in a few minutes, Luther went to thank the housewife and bid her invalid son farewell. We all felt that the death angel was hovering near.

The mother pushed the door ajar, and Luther entered, hailing the young man with a cheerful good morning and a heartfelt" Grace and peace in Christ Jesus."

The boy, just verging on manhood, was lying in the last stage of consumption. A ray of light struggled through the morning-glories at the window, slanted across the white hand on the counterpane and fell on the Bible beside it, lighting its pages with a golden glow.

Luther picked up the sacred volume — it was open at the fourteenth chapter of St. John — read the second and third verses, said a few words by way of explanation and application, and then raised his eyes and offered a

terse, fervent prayer. That was his way, for he was wont to say, “Few words and much meaning is Christian: many words and little meaning is heathenish.”

Heaven seemed very near to us. Methinks when a Christian falls asleep angels gather around to sing a lullaby.

He then asked the youth what sort of a present he would take with him for the dear Father in heaven. The young man replied:

“Everything that is good, dear father— everything that is good.”

“But how can you bring Him everything that is good, seeing you are nothing but a poor sinner?” he asked in a tone of surprise.

“Dear father, I will take to my God in heaven a penitent, humble heart sprinkled with the blood of Christ.”

“Truly,” exclaimed Luther," this is everything good. Then go, dear son; you will be a welcome guest to God."

And he laid his hand upon his head and blessed him.

When we were out of the room, Luther turned to the mother. “Be of good courage,” he said. “Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. We Christians ought not to grieve: we know it must be thus. We have the absolute assurance of eternal life, for God, who has promised it to us through His Son, cannot lie. I sent a saint to heaven; yes, I sent two thither. If I could bring my daughter back, and she could fetch me a kingdom, I would not do it.”

Thus he tried to ease a wounded heart with the balm that had healed his own. For this fruitage of pain Paul blessed God, “who comforteth us in all tribulation, that” — and let me lay stress on it — “that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble.”

Now a whinny penetrated the hall and told us plainly that it was high time we were in our saddles.

We thanked the miller and set out in a lope, as the horses would have it. The road followed the stream, and projecting hills soon hid the white cottage that had so generously entertained the three of us and would probably ere set of sun receive another guest, grim, silent, unbidden.

Our steeds soon rued their impatience and settled down to a slower pace.

“Ah, what numerous kinds of death we human beings are subject to,” Luther remarked, still thinking of the scene in the cottage. “We feel and see almost nothing but disease: as many as there are members of the body, so many are the diseases.” Then, after a moment’s reflection, he added:

“Death, which is the penalty for sin, becomes for Christian men, through the tender mercy of God, an end of sin and a beginning of life and righteousness. This is the might of faith: it mediates between death and life, transmuting death into life and immortality.”

The ancient interposed some question pertaining to sects; but Luther did not hear him and concluded by saying:

“This life is life in embryo before our true birth to immortality.”

The old man repeated his question. Luther did not hear him. A field of daisies had caught his eye.

“Also the flowers of the field must needs be our doctors of divinity and our preceptors,” said he.

“For behold how they come forth so tastefully gowned in fascinating colors, and yet none of them worries or so much as gives a thought to how it shall grow or what color it shall have, but just lets God care for all that. And without any of its care or assistance God gives it such beautiful raiment that Christ declares King Solomon in all his splendor was not so beautiful as one of these. Now since He clothes so many flowers in divers colors so that each variety has its own distinctive garb and outshines all the world’s splendor, why can we not trust Him and believe that He will provide our raiment, too?”

Our mountaineer put his question again. Interrogations are the hooks with which men fish for information. When they do not make a catch the first time, they cast the line again. But Luther was still rapt in his subject.

“We say cledo instead of credo just as a little child says dole for roll,” he remarked. “Ah, our Lord knows full well that we are poor little children.”

“What I was askin’ about,” said the old man, “is a new sect as has come in from the Yankees and says there is no disease, and that it’s all imagination.” He scratched his head as if perplexed, and added: “But all these different meetin’ house quacks act so holy-like. That’s what gits me.”

“But doesn’t our Savior call these false teachers wolves in sheep’s clothing?” asked I.

“Yes, that be so,” he drawled, “and I should have taken the hint: wolves always turn their snouts towards heaven when they howl.”

“Dear Lord,” prayed Luther, “help that we remain pious sinners and do not become sanctimonious blasphemers!” Then, turning to the old man, he said: “No error so crass but it finds adherents.”

“But these be pesky critters. They say it be sin to take or give medicine — even catnip tea.”

“We certainly may use bodily remedies as good creatures of God,” Luther replied, “for commonly He operates only through means. Once upon a time our burgomaster asked me if it were against God to use medicine, for Carlstadt had taught publicly that he who is sick should take no medicine, but commend his case to God and pray that His will be done. Whereupon I put this counter question to him: Do you eat when you are hungry? He answered, yes. Then I said, So you may also use medicine, which is just as much a creature of God as meat and drink or aught else we use for the support of this life.”

“If them ‘ere Christian Scientists would jist quit eatin’ it sure would put an end to their tomfoolery,” our old sire chuckled. “They’d be like the Dunkards that put their kind under water to make baptism like the burying of Christ: if they’d keep ‘em under three days, there wouldn’t be any of them left to pester Lutherans. But that Papist, who lives in the hollow where you turn off to Lentz’s, says all these sects come out of Luther’s work, and especially out of translatin’ the Bible. Howsumever —”

“The Papists with their grand argument,” Luther cut in with warmth, ’ ‘are like a man who should say, Had God not created good angels, there would be no demons, for it was from among the good angels that they came. In the same way Adam blamed God for giving him the woman. Had God not created Adam and Eve, they would not have sinned. It would follow from this fine reasoning that God alone was the sinner and that Adam and his children were all pure, pious and holy. From Luther’s doctrine have arisen many troublesome and rebellious spirits; therefore, say they, Luther’s doctrine is of the devil. But St. John also says, ’They went out from us, but they were not of us.’ Judas was one of Christ’s disciples: then, according to this logic, Jesus Christ is a devil."

The energy of this reply seemed to please the mountaineer: he was listening intently.

“It was the same with the Bible under the Pope,” Luther continued, his horse taking advantage of the rider’s preoccupation and coming to a stop. “It was publicly denounced as an heretical book and charged with giving rise to the most damnable heresies. And now the cry is,”The Church, the Church, above and against the Bible!’ Emser, the wise Emser, hardly knew what to say about the translating of the Bible. Perhaps he had not yet

decided whether it was right that it should ever have been written." He prodded his horse. “Who goes there?” he asked.

Looking ahead, we saw three men on horseback. Two of them were clad in coats of odd style and wore wide-brimmed, black hats.

“Them be Dunkards,” our companion answered.

“They are odd fellows,” Luther remarked, no doubt alluding to their garbs.

“Yes,” the mountaineer replied, stroking his beard, “they be a peculiar people, zealous of kissin’ one another an’ of a partic’lar style of clothes. The men-folks won’t wear buttons on their coats, which, say they, be sin; and the wimen won’t wear hats, but slop-bonnets — which is their religion.”

“Are we to get into heaven with our clothes,” Luther exclaimed, “though we must stay out witb this flesh, skin and hair as it now is!”

In a short time we overtook them and found they were all three preachers — one a Campbellite, a thin, clean-shaven, leathern-faced man of about forty-five, and the other two, Dunkards. Upon invitation, we trotted along with them, forming a cavalcade of unusual size for that lonesome section. They were discussing temptation and Luther soon had a hand in the controversy. Is temptation sin? That was the subject which was bothering them.

“The devil tormented the Savior himself,” said Luther; “but provided he bear not off the soul all is well. You cannot prevent the birds from flying over your head, but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair.”

The larger of the Dunkard brethren stroked his beard, the corners of which, in obedience to Mosaic precept, had not been marred with ungodly shears; and he stroked it with that soft purr of unctious pietism, meanwhile closing his eyes. He always closed his eyes when he tried to think. Presently he opened them, and, turning towards Luther, said in a soft drawl:

“Albeit the onslaughts of Satan be no sin in us, the thing is how to get shut of the pesky adversary.”

“The best way to expel the devil, if he will not depart for texts of Holy Scripture, is to jeer and flout him,” Luther replied. “When the devil comes to me at night, I give him these and like answers: ‘Devil, I must sleep now, for it is God’s command and order to labor by day and to rest and sleep by night.’ Then, if he charges me with being a sinner, I say to spite him, ‘Holy Satan, pray for me!’ or else, ‘Physician, heal thyself!’ Today, when I awoke,

the devil said to me, 'Thou art a sinner!' I retorted, 'Tell me something new; I knew that long ago.'" Then he told how one must always stand firm upon Christ, otherwise the battle is lost; dwelt on the advantages that accrue to the Christian who overcomes temptation, and concluded by saying: "A preacher is made efficient through temptation."

That was a clue to his calling. Immediately the smaller brother of the unmarred beard smacked his lips and said:

"Be you the man the Lutherians had at their big meetin' yesterday?"

"Yes, I am the man," replied Luther somewhat absently, for he was admiring the scenery in the gap.

"Ah, yes," the spare Campbellite remarked, "your people are very strong and set in their ways — have a human name and a man-made creed."

A Campbellite, be it observed, is a man who tries to monopolize the Christian name, thinks he can confess Christ without a credo, an "I believe," and struts around with a chip on his shoulder, ever ready, as Butler's Hudibras would say, to prove his doctrine orthodox by Campbellistic blows and knocks.

Several orioles — like bits of sunshine incarnate and vocal — were darting in and out of the laurel bushes and stunted pines. Luther was watching them so intently that he did not hear the click of the Campbellite's polemical sword as he drew it from its scabbard.

"The parson wants to know if it be right for us to go by the name Lutheran," said the mountaineer. "You didn't hear him ask."

"Cease, my dear friends, to cling to these party names and distinctions — away with them all!" exclaimed Luther.

Humph, thought I, score one for the Campbellite.

"You are more liberal, of wider mental horizon, than your people generally are," the Campbellite responded in flattering tone. "They stick to a man made creed and act as if they believe in Luther for their salvation."

"They do not believe in Luther, but in Christ himself!" Luther promptly rejoined, not without righteous indignation. "The Word holds them and they hold the Word: Luther they let slide, be he scamp or saint. God can speak as readily through Balaam as through Isaiah, through Caiaphas as well as Peter; yes, through a donkey. With those I also hold. For I myself do not know Luther, and I don't want to know him either; neither do I preach anything of him, but of Christ. The devil may get him — if he can; but he shall let Christ alone in peace."

That was energetic. The Campbellite scratched his head: he had taken the wrong measure of his man.

"It is enough," said he, "to declare you are a Christian, not a Lutheran, Episcopalian, or what not, if you are asked."

"Verily, in such a case you must not use verbal reeds, but confess Christ freely, whether He has been preached by Luther, Claus or George," declared Luther most emphatically. "Let the person go, but you must confess the doctrine."

"O my dear sir," Alexander Campbell's disciple interrupted, "it's not necessary to confess doctrine after any man — simply confess the Gospel. I'd like to know where's your Bible for more?"

Turning around in his saddle, Luther instantly quoted from St. Paul to Timothy: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner." Then, holding the rein in his left hand and gesticulating with his right, he said: "If Timothy's confession of the Gospel had sufficed, Paul would not have commanded that he should not be ashamed of him; not that Paul alludes to himself as Paul, but that he refers to himself as one who is a prisoner for the sake of the Gospel. Now, if Timothy had said, I do not hold with Paul, nor with Peter, but with Christ, and nevertheless knew that Peter and Paul taught Christ, he thereby would indeed have denied Christ himself, for Christ says of those who preach Him: 'He that receiveth you, receiveth Me; he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.' Why? Because the treatment accorded His servants who carry His message is regarded as identically the same as if He himself were thus treated."

The Campbellite sat brooding. The brethren with the unmarred beards had been silent all the while. But the old mountaineer, a Lutheran in every fiber, turned and said:

"It'd be wrong, then, wouldn't it, for a body to be ashamed o' Luther, and kind o' shrink from bein' called a Lutheran?"

"If you deem Luther's doctrine evangelical and that of the Pope unevangelical," he replied, putting the case in the concrete, "you must not heedlessly throw Luther aside; otherwise you also cast aside his doctrine which you acknowledge to be Christ's. But you must speak thus: Be Luther knave or saint, that does not concern me; his doctrine is not his own, but the teaching of Christ himself."

"And I reckon you also hold to a creed like the rest of the Lutherans," the Campbellite asserted with petulance, jerking his bridle viciously.

“At Augsburg in the year 1530,” Luther replied calmly and impressively, bringing his horse neck to neck with the Campbellite ’s, “we presented to his majesty, the Emperor, a Confession upon which, as it reads in its original sense and is understood and accepted by our churches, we still mean to stand by the grace of God.”

The face of Alexander Campbell’s disciple turned red. A word for a creed is to a Campbellite what a prod for the Pope is to a Romanist: it is a challenge. But before he could say aught, one of the Dunkards looked wise, smacked his lips, opened his mouth and spoke to the Campbellite, saying:

“My dear brother in the Lord, there is a measly worm on your sleeve.”

Using middle finger and thumb as a catapult, he sent the caterpillar a distance which nothing but his theological ire would have made possible.

“’Tis a type of the devil in its crawling locomotion, and bears his colors in its changing hue,” Luther remarked.

I thought this observation would give the conversation a new trend; but the Campbellite was more concerned about fighting creeds than fighting the devil So he wheeled around sharply and said:

“And you tie up the Church and all future generations in your creed as tightly as Lazarus was wound in his grave-clothes!”

“We,” Luther replied, ignoring his opponent’s sneer, “do not at all doubt that this, the doctrine of our Church, is certainly the eternal, identical, harmonious doctrine of the true Catholic Church of God, given through the prophets, Christ and the apostles, and that it accords with the Apostolic and Nicene Symbols, the ancient holy Councils, and the understanding of the pure primitive Church. And hence,” he spoke deliberately and shook his forefinger impressively, ’ ’and hence we regard it also as necessary for the honor of God, right worship, the salvation of many people and for the planting and strengthening of true faith in our successors that the contents of these very doctrines which we set forth and teach in our churches, Confessions and Catechism be preached and held in concord in all our churches."

“That be jist the way of it,” our mountaineer declared, “jist the way.”

It must have been trying on this veteran to keep his sword in its scabbard and only nod approval occasionally.

The Campbellite was angry. With flushed face he rejoined: “I, sir, hold that it is and always will be wrong to set up creeds and make their subscription a condition of church-membership. They divide the Church.

Further, I hold that the Bible is the all-sufficient basis for the union of all sections of the Church. Creeds? Creeds are useless, and worse— they are sinful. 'One faith, one Lord, one baptism,' that is, believers' baptism. The Bible, the Bible only, and no creeds!"

"That is not enough!" Luther replied promptly. And the man himself had just demonstrated that it was not enough when he added his explanation of baptism to the Scripture passage he quoted. As logicians, some people twist ropes for their own hanging and whistle in blissful ignorance of the consequence. "That is not enough," Luther continued. "Muenzer went trembling to his death, took the Bible and said he believed all that the Book contains. But that is not enough, one must baptize the babe."

"It is enough!" Alexander Campbell's disciple exclaimed, waxing more waspy. "I'd like to know what right you have to hold anybody to anything but Scripture."

"It is indeed true," said Luther calmly, "that in divine matters we should teach nothing aside from the Scriptures, as St. Hilary writes. That means no more than that we should teach nothing else. But that one should not employ more words, or use other phrases, than those employed in Scripture, cannot be observed, and especially not in controversy. And when heretics recklessly essayed to falsify things and distort the word of Scripture, it was imperatively necessary to comprehend in a brief summary the sense of Scripture as established by so many passages."

It is doubtful if Alexander Campbell's disciple saw the point.

"A creed's unwarranted, it's an outrage!" cried he. "My church's got none, I've got none, and may God ever keep us from framing one!"

"Oh, pshaw, Mister Parson," said the aged mountaineer, ere Luther could utter a word, "talk be cheap; but it ain't so cheap in these here mountains as it is among the Yankees." So saying, he stroked his long, white beard slowly.

We had entered a little valley — an emerald gem it was, with sunlit fields and shaded cabins — and the old sire was now riding at the side of the Campbellite. Still stroking his beard reflectively, he said:

"Say, mister, you-all have got a creed, an' I kin prove it. What ails you is that you be too dumb to know it, or else too sneakin' to let on."

The Campbellite went off at a tangent.

"Oh, jist keep your coat and wammus on. I reckon I kin prove what I say. I'm a Lutheran as isn't ashamed of the old father what licked the Pope

to a frazzle. Look here, Mister Preacher, do you believe in God the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth?"

"Of course I do," he answered in anger that, no doubt, blinded his perception. "Why ask such a silly question?"

"And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord?" the old man asked, looking him in the eye.

"To be sure."

"Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary?"

The Campbellite saw the drift of things. He hesitated.

"You don't believe that, don't you?" the old man queried in taunting tone. "You don't believe Christ is God's Son and Mary's Son, eh? Well, if you don't, you 're no Christian, that's all!"

The taunt was too much. "I am a Christian. I do believe it," he answered.

"Oh, all right then," our ancient said, "you believe that. So we be quits on that pint. Now, do you believe He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried?"

There was no reply. With flushed face and compressed lips our Campbellite gazed stolidly at the pommel of his saddle. Amazed that a minister would hesitate to confess Christ, Luther looked at him with pitying eye and said:

"Christ saith, 'Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My Father which is in heaven.'"

"Sir," said he, without looking up, "I believe as firmly as this old codger ever did that Jesus Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried."

"Why, of course you believe it, but why didn't you say so right away?" the mountaineer said calmly. "Now, do you believe He descended into hell?"

"No, not a bit of it!" he exclaimed with the animation of new hope.

"You don't, don't you? Well, we'll see," quoth our examiner, stroking his beard. "St. Peter says, Christ was 'put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, by which also He went and preached unto the spirits in prison,' that be, them as was disobedient in the days of Noah. Do you believe that?"

"Yes," he answered faintly, with eyes riveted on the pommel.

“Well, that’s all the same,” our venerable father commented, “all the same. Now, do you believe that the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead?”

“Brethren,” exclaimed Alexander Campbell’s disciple, “I forgot to stop at Sister Mary Ann Pratt’s. I must do what the Good Book says, ‘Visit the widows in their affliction.’” So saying, he wheeled his horse around.

“Naw, ye don’t,” cried our father, clutching the bridle of his opponent’s horse.

“The King’s business requires haste,” protested the recusant.

“Naw, ye don’t back-track jist yet. I calkerlate you’ll answer me that question fust.”

We gathered around the principals. The brethren of the unmarred beards looked on with sheepish faces, for, though they sympathized with their traveling companion, they remembered discussions of their own with this Lutheran patriarch and discreetly kept silence. My good father Luther was quite disgusted.

“Is this to act the part of a faithful theologian?” he asked. “Can you feel a serious interest in your cause and thus leave your auditors in suspense, and your arguments in a state that confuses and exasperates them, while you, nevertheless, wish to appear as having given honest satisfaction and open explanation?”

It was in vain that the discomfited disciple of Campbell struggled to get out of the mountaineer’s clutches. He kept his hold on the bridle and his tongue on the matter in hand.

“If you don’t believe it, you ’re no Christian,” he declared defiantly. “Now, do you, or don’t you? Yes or no?”

Finally our mountaineer’s taunting insistence turned hesitation into painful suspense and the Campbellite mumbled most shamefacedly that he did believe it.

Thereupon the old man, still holding the horse by the bridle and looking the minister in the eye, said curtly: “Do you believe in the Holy Ghost?” The battle was lost to the Campbellite, as it was, and he said yes, for it was to his advantage to put an end to the suspense, especially since it required nothing but honesty and promptness from him. The old man put each successive clause of the sentence and received the same affirmative reply. When the last answer was given, he exclaimed triumphantly:

"There now, that was the Apostles' Creed, and you confessed every word of it! Didn't I tell you that you-all had a creed, but that you are too dumb to know it or too deceivin' to come out with it? Now you may go!"

And Alexander Campbell's disciple did go; in fact, he went with unseemly haste to visit Sister Mary Ann Pratt in her afflictions. As he rode away, he had the effrontery to turn and say to us:

"I shall pray for you in your bondage. May the good Lord bring you to the knowledge of the truth."

Well, the aged mountaineer had handled his point nicely and deserved the compliment he got from Luther. He was a warrior who knew how to draw the Sword of the Spirit. A little later, he left us, and we were loath to see him go. We had our last glimpse of him when the strains of a hymn drew our attention to the mountain. He was jogging along a bit of level road singing at the top of his voice:

> "My Church! my Church! my dear old Church!
> My fathers' and my own,"

and swaying his body to the rhythm of the tune.

Now that the patriarch of the mountains was out of the way, the Dunkards talked some — in fact, a deal; but they did not say much. The reader will understand what bright theologians they were when it is stated that one of them, to prove it sinful for women to wear their hair in knots on top of their heads, cited these words from the seventeenth verse of the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew: "top not come down!" However, they also soon left us to visit a widow in her affliction. Luther characterized them quite well when he said to me:

"I would give all my fingers, save three to write with, could I find divinity so light and easy as they take it to be."

Left thus to travel alone, we made better progress; but it was late, long after the appearance of the stars, when we arrived at the old manse at the edge of the Shenandoah Valley. It was a spacious, one-story frame building with large porches, supported by huge columns, a relic, no doubt, of colonial days. The family was hospitable, and the goodwife's maiden sister, an elderly dame, much given to much snuff, was one of the kindest women I ever met. She never permitted the domestics to scatter anything but snuff

to kill moths, “for,” said she, “if the poor things must be killed, let them die in a paroxysm of joy by exploding of a good sneeze!”

We spent some very pleasant days at this home. Luther devoted his forenoons to writing a treatise on The Antichrist, and I scoured fields and dells when not acting as his amanuensis. He usually worked at a fever-heat, and very often, it seemed, with the enemies of the cause in his mind’s eye. Once, when I alluded to this, he said:

“When roused to anger, I become firmer and keener witted. All my temptations and enemies are put to flight. I never write or speak better than when excited.”

This sojourn was pleasant and profitable. I was sorry the evening Luther handed me a letter and said:

“I think that tomorrow or the day after, we shall break up and go.”

The letter was from the president of one of the synods in Pennsylvania which belong to the General Council.

8. Brethren Bland And Otherwise

> Oftentimes excusing of a fault
> Doth make the fault the worse by the excuse;
> As patches, set upon a little breach,
> Discredit more, in hiding of the fault,
> Than did the fault before it was so patched.
>
> — SHAKESPEARE.

THREE DAYS LATER we were sitting in the office of a hotel in Southeastern Pennsylvania, waiting for the opening hour of the colloquium. Luther was leafing through a magazine and I was trying to recall what I had read concerning the origin of the General Council.

"Aside from bare annals," said I, turning from the window to Luther, "I doubt if there is anything at all like trustworthy history. Anyhow, the more readable, the less reliable."

"Who could write history and tell the truth without engendering enmity?" he asked, not divining my bent of thought. "It calls for a gifted man with a lion heart to write the truth unafraid."

"Evidently," said I. "And the partisan lacks the first requisite of the historian simply because he is a partisan. But I have been brooding over the histories of our synods. If you read one, certain men, motives and movements were all right; if you read another, the same men, motives and movements were all wrong.[1] And these warped and perverted things are labeled 'History.' Bah!"

"Verily, they should be written with the greatest care, faithfulness and accuracy," Luther replied, seeing that my choler was rising. "But, methinks, that will nevermore be unless the method which obtained among the Jews is re-established." Then he threw the magazine on the table and bit his lip a moment. "In the meantime," he added with a smile, looking me in the eye,

“in the meantime we shall have to take our histories as they are and now and then make observations for ourselves and judge whether or not the author veers from his course on account of bias and praises and censures too much or too little according to his feelings towards people and things, just as under this loose government the teamsters adulterate the wine in its transit over land and water, and make it impossible to procure the pure juice of the vine, and we have to put up with it and be glad none the less that we get the most of the wine or — some of it.”

“Glad? Nay, not a bit of it,” I rejoined. “I wish the whole tribe had writers’ cramp instead of writers’ itch. Then they would quit scratching. Anyhow, what good is there in these graveyard polemics? I’m sick and tired of it all. What difference does it make what the men of a certain synod were twenty-five years ago, fifty years ago, seventyfive years ago, a hundred years ago? The question is, What are the men of that synod right now? That is the only question worth while. Am I to refuse my hand to a fine, clean young man because he has not acknowledged the fact that his grandsire was a chicken thief? Must a man declare in sackcloth and ashes that he has the bellyache because his synodical great-grandfathers ate green apples?”

Luther leaned back in his chair and laughed, and the more he laughed the more was I nettled.

“Well, you may make merry if you will,” said I curtly; “but I have come to the place where I can no longer stand this sort of thing with equanimity. Why don’t they tell some of the good, and beautiful, and noble things; why —”

“They are veritable hogs,” intercepted Luther, “who care nothing for the roses and violets in the garden, but are wholly bent on poking their snouts into the muck.”

The clock struck the half -hour. We dropped the subject and walked down to the church. It stood back from the street and about a score of sleek, well-fed men of God were grouped in front of it.

All these dominies, save one, wore either clerical vests or dickies. That lone exception must have felt as if he did not have all his clothes on. But I like not this gear inasmuch as the weightiest reason for wearing it smells of soiled linen. Worn to save launderer’s bills, clerical vests are passable; to advertise the preacher, questionable; for style, abominable.

But these, I would have you understand, were all congenial and magnetic men. They were swapping experiences, and Luther was soon the

soul of the company. No matter where he sat, that was the head of the table.

"Sermons at conferences and synods are, as a rule, poor efforts," the elderly man with side-whiskers was saying. "It is almost impossible to feel free while preaching to ministers."

"I do not like to see Pommer, Jonas, or Philip at my services," said Luther, "for they know it all better than I do."

"But what do you do then?" queried a young pastor.

"I hold the cross before me and say: 'Avaunt, Philip!' Then I take courage and make-believe I am the first orator of the day. Nor do I preach to them, but to my Lena, John, Elsie — these I keep in mind."

"Many a time after preaching," remarked the elderly minister, "I have felt like kicking myself."

Luther smiled, yet there was something sympathetic in his countenance.

"Sometimes," quoth he, "on coming down from the pulpit, I spit on my preacher's gown and say: 'Pooh! how you did preach! You surely made a pretty mess of it, not so much as sticking to the outline you prepared." Then the smile faded away, and a sober look came in its stead. "And yet," he added, 1 'just that sermon was praised by the people as being better and finer than any I had delivered in many a day. I hold that this matter of preaching is vastly different from what we think it is."

So Luther's heart, with its fears and its trials, was like every other good preacher's, save that it was bigger. And it is just this open-heartedness of his which goes so far in explaining the universal admiration which he receives. This hero is not a demigod, but a brother, and men love him.

"The best preacher," he continued, "is one of whom we can say after hearing him: This is what he said. On the other hand, he is a poor stick of whom it may be truthfully said: I do not know what he said."

"Still the matter of polish should not be neglected," observed a bantam who had not yet moulted his seminary feathers. "The Sword of the Spirit is worthy of the best hilt we can give it."

This youngster parted his hair in the middle and wore a monocle. I liked it not.

"A heavenly mind
May be indifferent to her house of clay,
And slight the hovel as beneath her care;
But how a body so fantastic, trim,
And quaint in its deportment and attire,
Can lodge a heavenly mind — demands a doubt."

Source.[2]

"Albert Duerer, the famous painter of Nuremberg," replied Luther patiently, "used to say that he took no pleasure in paintings surcharged with colors, but in those of a less ambitious kind. I say the same of sermons."

"But we must pay some attention to the aesthetic tastes of the people," asserted the young man, adjusting his monocle. "The sermon must be popular."

"Endeavor to preach God our Savior and reck not what the world may jabber about you," was the tart rejoinder. "What care I if people say I know not how to preach? My only fear before God is that I may not have spoken of His majesty and marvelous works as I ought to have done."

"Yes, but it's the world we must con —"

"The world is like a drunken farmer," said Luther impatiently. "Help him into the saddle on one side and he falls out on the other. Do what you will, it is not satisfactory." Then, counting them off on his fingers, he said: "As the world would now have him, a preacher must possess six qualifications: first, he must be learned; second, he must have a fine delivery; third, he must be suave; fourth, he must be a handsome body whom matrons and maidens can admire; fifth, he must not take money, but he must give it; and sixth, he must preach such things as people like to hear."

The senior pastor looked at his watch.

"It is time for the colloquy," said he. "Let us go into the church and begin."

It was a neat interior and churchly withal, but it bore a close resemblance to an Anglican chapel.

"An admirable sanctuary," whispered a young pastor who sat behind us, "expresses the Lutheran idea and meets the requirements of our cultus."

Luther looked mystified, but said nothing.

The session was opened by using a part of the Common Service. It was well rendered. However, it was scarcely ended when our new acquaintance, who had evidently made a special study of liturgies, church architecture,

paramentics[3] and kindred subjects, leaned over and began to extol this form of worship.

"We will ultimately get this service into every English-speaking congregation in the land," said he in concluding his rhapsody. "We want uniformity. And besides, this is altogether the best form. It is the consensus of pure Lutheran liturgies. In its newest parts it is as old as the time of the Reformation; in its order and in the great body of its contents it represents the pure service of the Christian Church of the West from the earliest times; and it embraces all the essentials of worship from the establishment of the Christian Church on earth.[4] It will also prove a potent factor in producing church liness. For instance, you observe that this congregation has altar-vestments of the proper canonical colors[5] for each season of the Church year; and —"

"Yet, if I could control the whole situation with a single wish," Luther replied, "I would prefer that in these matters you abide by your own customs in your land; for when we begin to make all things in all localities uniform they become articles of faith and fetters, as happened, in Popedom. However, if they remain diverse, that will be an excellent preventive of this eviL Necessity itself demands diversity of ceremonies."

This was like wormwood and gall to our liturgical enthusiast. He made a wry face and might have retorted, but just then the chairman, our elderly friend, announced that the committee was ready to begin the colloquy.

I wondered what our good father would have said had he been asked for his opinion on some questions that perplex members of the Council brotherhood, as, for instance: Are certain choir vestments Lutheran? or what he would have answered had he been consulted on the proper material, dimensions and ornamentation for corporal, pall and purificators?[6] As it was, now that he was rising to go up to the examiners, he said bluntly:

> "I am impatient even of necessary ceremonies, but hostile to those which are not necessary; for it is easy for ceremonies to grow into canons, and, once established as laws, they soon become snares for the conscience."

Luther took a front pew. The committee occupied chairs at a small table. Besides our elderly friend, there was a little man like Zacchaeus of the sycamore-tree, and a lank individual, long-coupled between ribs and hips — one of the kind that it must be very discouraging to cook for a whole

lifetime. These two were past fifty. All three were bland in manners and clerical in appearance — in short, men of pious magnetism.

I was morally certain that this committee would accept Luther. And why not? The General Council accepts all the Confessions of the Church. Then, too, they make the impression of being more politic than other Lutherans. If a Lutheran doctrine or custom strikes a convert unfavorably, the Joint Synod man will hold it before him as it is, and hammer away; the Missouri man will, if possible, make it appear crass, and hammer away; but the Council man will turn the thing around, or, failing in that, lead the man around it. As for hammering away, that is to be thought of only when one's ingenuity is plumb gone. So far as real Lutherans go, your Council man is the nearest approach to a Yankee in a Lutheran gown — virile, versatile, vivacious. It is true, he will not stand by all the deductions from the Confessions; in fact, deductions are unsavory to him; but he says they are the other fellow's deductions, and the other fellow is fallible. In major matters, others must concede that Council men stand right; in minor matters, Council men must admit that they diverge from others and differ among themselves. Dr. Krauth set the hour-hand very accurately, but died before he succeeded in regulating the minute-hand.

Ruminating thus, I settled down in my pew. We had evidently reached the end of our tramp.

The chairman who, by the way, had a pleasant voice, now started a rapid fire of questions on the Holy Scriptures and then took up the Confessions in the same quick and thorough way. It was like an examination by a lawyer.

By this time, I think, he had formed a pretty correct estimate of Luther: this thing was to be no child's play. Rising to his feet, he said:

"In conducting this colloquy we shall follow a definite course, taking Dr. Jacobs's recent book as our basis. Brethren who desire to ask questions will please keep the outline in mind. The subject is Redemption, and the parts, briefly stated, are: first, its Prerequisites; second, its Preparation; third, its Application; fourth, its Effect; fifth, its Administration."

The examination glided along smoothly. I heard the town-clock strike eleven, and it was still gliding along smoothly; but — but then it struck a snag.

The chairman glanced at his watch and also at the faces of his fellow committeemen.

Paradoxically enough, the altercation was threatened by Glorification, the last division under the Effect of Redemption.

“According to my timepiece,” said the chairman in his bland way, "it is almost the time for adjournment and, I opine, it is somewhat after the hour according to your appetites. Lunch hath charms to soothe the ruffled breast. As you know —

> ‘All human history attests
> That happiness for man — the hungry sinner —
> Since Eve ate apples, much depends on dinner!’

‘Now good digestion wait on appetite, and health on both.’ We stand adjourned to—"

“We still have twenty minutes!” exclaimed an auditor. The speaker was standing in the aisle — a big man with a close-cropped gray mustache. “Brother Martin, what, in your opinion, are the doctrines which teach two resurrections[7] and a reign of Christ upon earth for one thousand years?” he asked.

“Deceptive dreams of Jews and Chiliasts,” he answered curtly.

One of the men at the table turned red. The chairman, who was still standing, quickly turned towards the altar; but in vain, for down over the back of his bald head slid the telltale blush.

“You must certainly concede,” said the flushed man at the table, “that an unbiased reader would get nothing else out of the passages which mention this, than just such a doctrine of the millennium.”[8]

“But here, right at the beginning,” said Luther, rising, for he was tired of sitting, “here, right at the beginning, we must advise the Christian reader to use the utmost caution and guard himself against the false dreams of Jews and Chiliasts who apply such spiritual promises of God to a material and earthly kingdom and thus fall into a twofold flagrant error; for thus they lose and know not Christ the Lord, whose government is spiritual, and thus they wait in vain for Christ to establish a corporeal kingdom upon earth.”

The elderly man turned around sharply.

“A modified form of Millenarianism has been found at all times here and there among the prominent teachers of our Church,” said he in his soft tone. “It is entirely compatible with orthodoxy — only looks for a time of ease, tranquility and prosperity for the Church.”

Luther stopped short, wheeled around and said:

"It is not to be expected that the world will grow better, especially not now since it is approaching its end and is on the verge of the pit. Psalm One Hundred and Ten, verse one: 'Sit Thou at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.' This text states plainly and emphatically, that there will always be foes so long as our Christ reigns upon earth."

"But what do you make of those thousand years in Revelation during which Satan is chained?" asked a voice from the audience.

"The thousand years must begin when this book was written, for the Turk did not arise till after the lapse of ten centuries. Meanwhile the Christians lived and reigned, sans the devil's —"

"Brethren, let us relegate this subject to the rear," counseled the chairman. "We have our decided convictions, but find no fault with men who stand on either side."

Luther looked dumbfounded. For a moment his words stuck in his throat. Then he asked:

"Is this the part of a faithful theologian?"

"That is hitting him pretty hard," the man sitting beside me whispered.

"Yes," I replied in an undertone. "But, honestly now, doesn't it look as if you of the Council were rather indifferent to a lot of things, and, among them, big things, too? For instance, here is the Predestination controversy, which has been waged fiercely, decade after decade, from one end of the land to the other, and the General Council hasn't so much as said where it stands."

"True; but you must bear in mind that —"

"Is this the part of a faithful theologian?" Luther thundered again.

Now popped up another man in the rear of the church.

"Brother Martin, how about this newfangled purgatory?" he asked.

The committee looked vexed. It was evident that these interrogations were being put solely for the purpose of embarrassing some of the brotherhood. Little wonder that cheeks mantled. It does seem that every time preachers get together in conference, at least one of them must needs drop a fly into the ointment.[9]

"How about this purgatory?" piped another voice with the ring of persistency.

"In His Word God has laid down two ways," replied Luther, "one of which by faith leads to salvation, and the other by unbelief to damnation.

As for purgatory, no passage in Scripture mentions it, nor dare we in any way tolerate it, for it obscures and depreciates the grace of God, the benefits and merits of our blessed Savior, Christ Jesus —"

"No, not that," thrust in the pastor who had raised the question. "I mean that newfangled Protestant purgatory for the heathen. In short, do you believe that individuals who do not have the opportunity to hear the Gospel in this world will have a chance to hear it elsewhere after death?"

"That cannot be proved," Luther replied emphatically. "We read that—"

"Just a moment, please," interposed the chairman. "We lack the time now to take up this question."

"And we see no reason for introducing it here," said the little member with a flash in his eye and a tremor in his voice. "None of our men teach that."

"We haven't yet said they did," the man who put the question retorted. "We simply want to know if this applicant holds such opinions. A little of that doctrine is like a pinch of asafetida — more than enough!" The committee entered into consultation, and Luther, who had been standing in the aisle waiting for an opportunity to speak, continued:

"I am well aware that some fifteen years ago many were of the opinion that every man would be saved according to his own belief. But what else is that than making a church of all the enemies of Christ? From this it would soon follow that the Word was given to no purpose and the Son of God sent in vain."

"But this purgatory," piped the persistent piper.

"But to come to the point," said Luther: "'It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.'"

"Just a moment, please," interjected the lank member, raising his hand. "This matter is immaterial to us at —"

"Brother Martin," broke in another, "what do you think of those men who wear little aprons and pour oil and wine on cornerstones?"

"They are odd fellows," replied Luther.

"No, I didn't mean the Odd Fellows, but it's all the same. Where do you stand on the lodge question?"

Luther looked mystified, and the committee looked horrified.

"This question does not belong here," said the lank examiner, rising to his feet.

“We are more concerned for the thing itself than we are about the proper place for it,” the pastor with the close-cropped mustache replied; “and, besides, it may have more to do with glorification than you are ready to concede. Brother Martin,” said he in a kind tone, turning to Luther, “a lodge is a secret society. This land teems with them. As a rule they are oath-bound, are made up —”

“He who makes an unnecessary oath,” cut in Luther, “commits sin.”

“Are made up of believers and unbelievers, and have a form of worship. What say —”

“Have a care,” exclaimed Luther, “have a care that you do not give this tomfoolery and pretense the glorious name of divine service!”

“What say you to this?” the large man concluded.

“They worship a god of their own invention.”

“That is a hard saying,” snapped the tiny examiner. “Some noble men belong to these organizations, and they have done some fine things.”

“Everything that is outside of Christ, be it as fine and great as it may,” replied Luther, “is nothing but idolatry.”

“Now,” queried the pastor who had raised the question, “what would you say if a preacher were a member of —”

“Irrelevant now, entirely irrelevant,” piped my little Zacchaeus.

“Out of place here,” said the lank examiner.

“Not germane,” declared the chairman.

“What kind of theology is this?” Luther asked in a tone of indignation. “What kind of theology is this that will make no difference between the Word and no Word, between light and darkness?”

“Irrelevant here, entirely irrelevant here,” the little man piped again.

“Let’s close with prayer,” said the chairman with unseemly haste.

Luther looked chagrined.

“This is not the time for such maneuvering!” he protested.

The chairman did not hear, or hearing, did not heed, and a prayer took the place of the rule of closure.

This exasperated the Reformer. To him the conduct of the committee was evidence of doctrinal indifference. No matter what I said during the noon recess to excuse its actions, he would only shake his head and say, “Slippery!” So he came to the afternoon session in a wary and testy mood.

On the way to the church we passed several ministers who were smoking. This would not be worthy of notice had they not looked so

sheepish. It was those vests![10]

Our elderly friend opened the session by making a statement in which he ignored the differences of the forenoon.

"It is with a feeling of regret that I find our pleasant task is almost done," said he quite pensively. "We have but one part of our subject left, namely, the Administration of Redemption. Two things claim our attention here, to-wit: the Church and the Ministry."

"Slippery," whispered Luther.

"Sooth," quoth I, "it does look like pussy-footed sidestepping."

"Now, Brother Martin," said the chairman in conclusion, "let us compare notes on the doctrine of the Church."

All went well until one of the examiners laid a great deal of stress on the doctrine of the Representative Church. This was drawing a line of cleavage between laymen and preachers which Luther did not like. Moreover, he had grown suspicious.

The controversy waxed warm.

"Let us pass over this point," said the elderly man in that soft tone which was beginning to irritate. "Good Lutherans have differed on the amount of emphasis to be given it."

"This is that part of the discussion where matters come to a turning point," Luther rejoined in a very decided tone.

"Well," the leanest of the examiners replied, "this question may be elucidated when we discuss the Call, Office of the Keys, and similar things."

"Christ gave the keys to the whole congregation," declared Luther, who would not budge.

Henceforth there was a marked difference on almost every point.

For a time the controversy centered on the ninth verse of the second chapter of the First Epistle of St. Peter: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood… that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." Luther had quoted it to show that all were priests and that all had equal rights and similar duties.

It was the lean committeeman who grew waspy. That seems to lie in the nature of these thin creatures. Your fat man says: "I will take mine ease"; your lean chap says: "I will take the other fellow's." And he usually does.

"This passage does not prove that all members of the brotherhood have equal rights," his leanness asserted. "Women belong to the priesthood of

believers; but women are excluded from the office by specific command. 'Let your women keep silence in the churches,' says St. Paul, 'for it is not permitted unto them to speak.' Consequently, all have not the same rights. That much is plain."

"I reply," said Luther, "we do not allow the dumb, or those otherwise unable or unqualified, to preach either. Though everyone has power to preach, yet we should not choose anybody for this purpose, nor should anyone presume to do it, unless he has special qualifications. Paul forbids women to speak in the church, where there are men capable of doing it, that all may be done decently and orderly. It is much more proper and becoming for men, and they are also better qualified."

"That interpretation," was the rejoinder, "is necessary to bolster up the transference theory of the office; but it is wrong — dead wrong. But to come back to the passage: if all believers are priests with the right to administer the means of grace, because they are here called priests, then they are also kings with the right to perform kingly functions, because they are here spoken of as royal and are elsewhere called kings."

Now Luther grew eloquent and spoke long. The spiritual is real, very real, he insisted. The spiritual priest is a priest, the spiritual king is a king, that or nothing.

"But they are not such crazy kings as those of this world," he declared. "Compared with believers, these are but counters and painted kings, for they rule merely temporarily and externally. But believers are real kings; not that they wear a golden crown and bear a golden scepter, or deck themselves with silk and velvet, purple and gold; but are that which is far more glorious — lords over death and the devil, hell and evil."

While Luther was speaking, another minister came in and took a seat in front of me. You simply had to look at this man. He had a head shaped like Shakespeare's and a beard cut like Shakespeare's. The one he got from nature; the other from the barber. The newcomer, who held a petty office in a district synod, listened a few minutes and then whispered to his neighbor:

"Your applicant talks like a member of the Joint Synod of Ohio."

"A haughty and pig-headed set they are," whispered the other.

"Yes; if the Joint Synod of Ohio were perfectly at one with us in doctrine, I would never agree to a union between them and us, unless they should first show a different spirit."

I leaned over to give him a piece of my mind; but — I remembered that a prominent member of my own synod had said the same thing of another body,[11] and I was ashamed.

In the meantime the committee had bumped their pates together. The presiding officer now announced the result:

"Even if we should, for argument's sake, grant all you have set forth, it would not, so far as we can see, prove that the duties of the spiritual priesthood are the same as those of the ministry. Clearly, laymen are one thing and ministers are another."

Straightway Luther was on his feet.

"No one can deny," said he, "that every Christian has God's Word, is taught of God and anointed as priest, as Christ says in the forty-fifth verse of the sixth chapter of St. John: 'They shall be all taught of God'; and as the Forty-fifth Psalm says in verse seven: 'God hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.' These 'fellows' are the Christians, Christ's brethren, who are consecrated with Him as priests, as St. Peter also says: 'Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood… that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.' But if it be true that they have God's Word and are anointed by Him, they are also under obligation to teach and propagate it, as St. Paul says: 'We have the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed and therefore have I spoken: we also believe and therefore speak.' And in Psalm Fifty-one, verse thirteen, the prophet says for all Christians: 'I will teach transgressors Thy ways and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.' Thus here it is again obvious that a Christian not only has the right and power to teach God's Word, but that he is bound to do so if he would save his soul and retain divine grace."

"I humbly crave your pardon, sir," said the lank examiner ironically; "but all that is merely your own interpretation. It is without ancient example. The early Church did not act thus."

"Thus did St. Stephen[12] to whom the apostles had not commended the office of preaching, and yet he preached and did great wonders and miracles among the people," Luther replied. "Thus did Philip, the deacon, upon whom again the office of preaching was not conferred.[13] Thus also did Apollos."[14]

"You make bishops, priests, pastors of all laymen, and that without a call," retorted the lank examiner.

"Thou sayest falsely that I make bishops, priests and pastors of all laymen, and teach that they may officiate without a call," he replied; "and, pious as thou art, concealest the fact that I write also that no one should presume to administer the office without being called, except in extreme necessity."

"The brethren are laboring under a misapprehension," said the pastor who reminded me of the Bard of Avon. "The applicant holds what is known as the *Uebertragungslehre*: the many in the congregation delegate their rights to one for the sake of order, and he thus becomes pastor; but this doctrine is —"

"Just as if ten brothers, sons of a king," Luther interrupted, "and all alike heirs, elected one to administer the estate. They would all be kings and equal in power, and still the administration would be in the hands of one."

"To say the congregation makes the minister by its call, is degrading the office," said the elderly member.

"The call to the ministry must be given by the Church," declared the lean member.

"And the Church is not laymen without ministers, nor ministers without laymen; but ministers and laymen," explained the little member.

"To make it plainer," said Luther: "if a number of pious lay members were taken captive and placed in a wilderness without a priest consecrated by a bishop, and they should agree among themselves to elect one of their number, and would commit to him the office of baptizing, administering the Eucharist, absolving and preaching, he would unquestionably be a priest just as much as if all the bishops and all the popes had ordained him. Hence it is that anyone may baptize and absolve in case of necessity, which would not be permissible if all were not priests."

The chairman and the lank member were in consultation. That the call from a congregation should make a man a minister seemed to be a thorn in their flesh. After all, it may be that a good bit of the priest gets on the inside before a clerical vest gets on the outside. But now the chairman looked up and said:

"Brother Martin, if all have equal rights, what need of ministers at all?"

"There must needs be ministers," Luther replied, a broad smile lighting his countenance, "for if the whole congregation would rush upon the babe to baptize it, they would probably drown it, as a thousand hands would be employed. This would never do."

“I should say not,” snapped the lean man. “But since all have the right, according to you, anyone of them might go and do it. There is no warrant for depriving anyone of his rights.”

“Since Christians have all things in common, as we have pointed out and proved,” replied Luther, “it could not be right for one to push himself forward and arrogate to himself what belongs to us all. Let him maintain this right and exercise it where there is no other person who has also received it. But the rights of the community demand that one, or as many as the congregation chooses, shall be elected and accepted to administer the office publicly and in the name and place of all those who have precisely the same rights.”

He spoke at some length in the same strain^ and concluded thus:

“It is true that all Christians are priests, but they are not all pastors; for besides being a Christian and a priest, he must also have an office and a parish entrusted to him. The call and command make a pastor and preacher.”

“Brethren, you might as well close this colloquy,” said my neighbor of the Shakespeare physiognomy. “This brother does not at all agree with us in the doctrine of the Ministerial Office. Besides, it is high time to adjourn.”

In fact, it was high time: the janitor was lighting the gas.

“The committee is of quite the same opinion,” the lean member remarked. “However,” he added, turning to Luther, “you averred that the call and command make a pastor and preacher. What has ordination, the act of the Representative Church, to do with it?”

“He who is called is ordained and should preach to those who called him,” said he. “This is our Lord’s consecration and true chrism.”

“Why, then, the laying on of hands?” asked the little member.

“The imposition of hands gives the benediction and confirms and bears testimony to this,” answered Luther, “as a notary or witness testifies to a temporal matter.”

“Then,” said the lank examiner, “you see no real necessity for action on the part of the Representative Church, and, so far as the divine realism of ordination is concerned, you do not —”

“Beg pardon,” said the little man; “but I think it is too late to begin the discussion of a new phase of this subject. We understand the applicant’s position: it is the transference theory carried out with more or less consistency.”

"With less," exclaimed a man in the audience. "Consistency would demand that they have ordination executed by lay members in the congregation.[15] They don't do it, and they don't dare do it!"

"And, my brother," said the chairman, ignoring the last remark and bestowing a smile on the committee's lean spokesman, "remember that we as committee just agreed to close the colloquy."

He then rose, nodded to Luther and to the audience, and said in a kind and deliberate manner:

"Brethren, we have canvassed the whole field of theology and it has been pleasant and edifying withal. There have been some differences — there always are on such occasions — and we will give them due consideration before we frame our decision, which, I think, we shall be able to give the applicant tomorrow morning. So far as the so-called transference theory of the Office of the Ministry is concerned, it is but fair to say that it was held by our theologians in the days of the Reformation, and since then, in Europe, by Schleiermacher, Hoefling, Harless, Thomasius, Palmer, Achelis, Luthardt and others, and, in this country, by Dr. Loy and the Ohio Synod, and Dr. Walther and the Missouri Synod. Hence, no matter whether a man holds the one view of this or the other, I regard him as a good Lutheran." Then, looking with a smile at Luther, he gave us a broad hint of the result: "I say this, Brother Martin, that you may lose no sleep over these differences. Now, brethren, let us close."

The audience rose and the kind-hearted sire raised his hand to pronounce the benediction.

Luther stepped to the front and raised his hand as if to stay the proceedings.

A tremor of excitement ran through the audience. Feet moved and necks craned. The chairman dropped the hand raised to bless.

"Is that nothing to you?" asked Luther emphatically. "Is that nothing to you?" he repeated in a louder tone. "'If they affirm, I affirm; if they deny, I deny'; — this, I say, is what your declarations amount to. You take the most diligent care on every occasion to be slippery and pliant of speech. Is that to act the part of a faithful theologian? My resolution is taken!"

He started towards the door. There was whispering, moving of feet, excitement. The chairman raised his hand and called after him:

"Stop! Let us explain."

But Luther did not stop. A click of the door announced that he was gone.

"Serves you right," said the big man with the close-cropped mustache.

"What's the difference!" exclaimed the little examiner.

"Nothing lost," declared the lank member. "We couldn't have consistently received him, anyhow. He's got heretical views on the Office of the Ministry. Saves us an unpleasant task. That's all."

Then the elderly man closed the meeting.

With a different examining committee the result might have been different. The more is the pity.

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1. The recent history of a district synod in connection with the Council is a distressing case in point. If it is not a fifty-year-old grudge, it is very unfortunate in method and language. However, it is less insidious and baneful than some others, for, since it brings dishonor upon those who published it, it cannot harm those whom it belabors. — Editor.↩
2. Cowper's Poems, Book II. of The Task. The preacher will profit by reading the entire poem.↩
3. The science of hangings, not for executioners, but for churches.↩
4. These are fine words and true. The Common Service is undoubtedly the finest and best form of worship in the English language. But — remember the Anglicans!↩
5. It has been rumored that the Liturgical Association is about to petition the General Council to have its hymn-books bound in the canonical colors, so each worshiper's book will match the altar-cloth for the season; but this is, I think, to be taken *cum grano salis*.↩
6. Linens used in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper.↩
7. On this point Dr. J. A. Seiss says: "The placing of it as the first in a category of two resurrections, the second of which is specifically stated to be the literal rising again of such as were not raised in the first, fixes the sense to be a literal resurrection." — Editor.↩
8. That is, a doctrine which asserts (a) that the binding of Satan for a thousand years still lies in the future, and (b) that Christ will govern the world for the same period before the consummation. Prominent members of the General Council have taught thus. For instance:

   Dr. Weidner says: "Most commentators, since the time of Augustine, suppose that this binding of Satan for a thousand years

began when Christ gained the victory over Satan by His death on the cross, or that it began at some definite period in the past. But such an interpretation is inconsistent with the whole teaching of the Apocalypse, with the history of the Church in the past, and with Christian experience."

Dr. Seiss says: "Then comes the great Millennial Period, the thousand years during which Satan is bound… Its special marks are: the absence of Satan's deceits and machinations, the supplanting of all human governments by the direct heavenly rule and dominion of Christ and His glorified saints, and that new order called the shepardizing of the nations with a rod of iron, or the irresistible enforcement of the principle of righteousness in all things, by which the whole living world shall then be reduced to order and obedience to truth and right."

This is the kind of doctrine Luther is combating in the text.— Editor↩

9. That is an old observation. Gregory Nazienzen (A. D. 328-389) blurts out: "I never yet saw a council of bishops come to a good end. I salute them afar off, since I know how troublesome they are. I nevermore will sit in those assemblies of cranes and geese." — Editor.↩
10. For those who like to be known and noticed everywhere as ministers, this dress is the thing. But such pastors must be specially on their guard against unministerial deportment. — Dr. Gerberding, The Lutheran Pastor, p. 152. Available from LutheranLibrary.org↩
11. These statements are significant. Let alone, officialdom will always find some sort of justification for separation, and some sort of reason against union; for, be it observed, if we ever get a united Church, certain synodical lights will henceforth and forever be satellites. — Editor.↩
12. Acts 6:8.↩
13. Acts 8:5.↩
14. Acts 18:25.↩
15. Excellent dissertations on these subjects by representative General Council men are to be found in The Lutheran Pastor, p. 38 ff.; The First General Council of Lutherans, p. 232 ff .; and in The Lutheran Doctrine of the Ministry, a pamphlet, by the Rev. Dr. H. E. Jacobs. — Editor.↩

9. At The Barber's

Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow,
The rest is all but leather and prunello.

— POPE.

"NEXT!" said the barber, and Luther took the chair.

The colloquy had given me a feeling of tousled uncleanness and I hied me to the barber's. Luther must have felt dirtier, for he was there first.

"Heavy beard," said the barber, deeming it wise to rub in a little flattery with the lather, "needs a good soaking."

"Well lathered is half shaved," Luther replied, and, glancing at me, added, "and well prayed is half studied."

Then he ran his hand over his stubbled cheek.

"We take it off today and have a smooth face," he remarked. "By tomorrow it is grown again, and it will not cease growing while we live. Just so is original sin. It cannot be extirpated; but crops out so long as we live. Nevertheless we should resist it with all our might and cut it off without delay."

I had to smile: Luther could gather a harvest of morals even from the stubbles of a beard.

The barber was a talkative little man, but he was as careful with his tongue as he was with his razor. If he cut a customer with either one, it was a slip. After a moment's lull he said:

"Lots of rain we've had of late."

A man can always prime conversation's pump with the weather, especially if it is wet.

"It usually rains where it was wet enough before," Luther replied.

"Paper predicts rain for tomorrow," said a young lounger who wore loud clothes. "Guess I'll not go to the city now. Wish I had the running of the weather for a spell. Bet I'd be onto my job."

Luther measured him with his eye. A rebuke must fit as nicely as a suit. Otherwise it is a reflection on the maker.

"When prosperity is ours, and all goes as our hearts desire, we grow very indolent and spoil, for good fortune makes fools of people," he began, turned his head to one side and eyed the company.

It comprised the idler just mentioned, a moral scavenger known as an attorney, an effeminate dry goods clerk, and the 'Squire. The latter was a rotund old man, who sat with his legs far apart and his hands over a red handkerchief on the head of his cane, wore a boiled shirt to support the dignity of his office, and spoke with the deliberation which befits judicial ermine even if it be thin and spotted with tobacco juice.

"If it should lie in our power to have things go according to our own sweet wills, nothing would come of it, anyhow," Luther continued. "We would fare like a certain farmer who would be wiser than the Lord. No matter what kind of weather God made, it did not please him. So he besought God to let him regulate the weather for the nonce according to his own judgment. And God granted his petition. So the farmer began and did as he listed. As he willed it, so the rain fell and the sun shone. That was weather as fine as one could desire. The crops stood so well that he expected a year the like of which no man had seen. But at last, when he gathered in the harvest, he found nothing but empty ears and straw. Then it dawned upon him that he had forgotten — the wind!"

The 'Squire chuckled and took a pinch of snuff.

"It served him right," declared he; "no mortal can improve on God's way."

"Nature's way, 'Squire, nature's," said the barrister by way of correction and for the sake of provocation.

The argument which the infidel desired was soon on in full force. His sophistry and ridicule were at times too much for the dignified old 'Squire. I noticed that Luther grew more and more restless under the razor.

"He imagines that he alone is wise and erudite," said he in an undertone to the barber: "mocks us as if we were geese."

The attorney cast an aspersion upon the divinity of Christ. Instantly Luther sat up in the chair.

"For very shame, brazen reason!" he exclaimed and ejected the lather from his lips. "How dare we wretched, beggarly mortals jabber about the character of God's essence, without God's Word, depending entirely upon

our own heads, when we do not even know how our own speech, laughter, or sleep is effected? Is it not blindness personified that a man who cannot explain even the most insignificant activity which he daily perceives in his own body, nevertheless insists that he understands that which is above and beyond all reason and of which God alone can speak, and dares insolently to blurt out, 'Jesus is not God!'"

He had fired a broadside. In a few minutes the attorney found a reason for leaving. Nobody had anything to say. The room was so quiet that we could hear the buzzing of a belated bee which found itself imprisoned there.

"Look out, it will sting you!" said the barber as the bee lit on Luther's finger.

He observed it with evident interest as it crawled over his hand.

"The bee is such a furious and impetuous little creature when it is angry," he remarked, "that it thrusts its stinger into its foe and leaves it there regardless of the fact that it will therefore lose its life or ever thereafter be unable to make honey. And so, on account of its wrath, it hath shamefully lost its sweet trade. Thus also are the enemies of Christ. So vengeful and hot-tempered are they that they would rather suffer ruin than not inflict injury."

Again silence fell upon the company, and it grew oppressive. It seemed as if the evening's pleasure had been killed by the thunderbolt intended to purify the atmosphere, and as if no more fitting person could have appeared on the scene than the undertaker who had just entered.

"Well," said he, as he seated himself opposite the 'Squire, "we buried Big Mike McCarty this afternoon."

"I'm sorry he's gone," said the 'Squire pensively.

"He was a true son of the Emerald Isle, bulls and all."

Then his honor grew reminiscent.

"Once Big Mike was standing on the edge of a railroad fill, bossing the job," said he. "A green Irishman came along pushing a car of dirt and struck Mike. Down over the embankment he went — clean down to the bottom. The frightened workman shouted down through his hands: 'Ahoy, me boss, is ye hurrt? is ye hurrt bad?' There was nothing but a groan for answer. 'Is ye hurrt? is ye hurrt bad?"Shet up, you blasted fool,' yelled Mike; 'it's killed dead and a corpse that I am.' "

The little company, including Luther, laughed and the sombre spell was broken.

“I know a better one on Big Mike than that,” said the barber, soaking his sponge. “Say, Jack, suppose you start the phonograph for the reverend. Put in a song.”

When it began to talk and sing, Luther looked amazed.

“What is now taking place in the world seems most marvelous to me,” said he, shaking his head." Either I never yet saw the world, or a new world comes into being while I sleep." Then he wished St. Paul had preached into a thing like that.

“As I was about to say,” began the barber, resuming his work, “Big Mike —”

“I appeal to the reverend,” a voice interrupted: “aren’t gamblers thieves?”

The clerk had put the question. He and the fast young man were having a verbal bout.

“And now it is asked,” said our good father, “whether gamblers are thieves? It is obvious that gamesters who play for stakes commit sin. They covet the possessions of others, and are thus thieves in the eyes of God. No one —”

“That’s plain,” nodded the ’Squire, “very plain.”

“No one plays with another for the purpose of giving him property, for he could convey it without gaming. Again, he does not play because he wants to lose, or because he seeks the welfare of another as he seeks his own. Thus gambling is always against love and always grows out of greed, for a gambler seeks his own profit at another’s expense.”

“Well, as I was going to say,” the barber began again, “when Big Mike was paving Washington Street, green hands made him a lot of trouble. He came upon one who was making a big mess of things. He gazed at him a moment and shook his head in despair. ‘Yon bloomin’ idiot,’ said Mike in a tone of utter disgust, ‘I’ve larned ye everything I know, an’ still ye don’t know anything!’”

Luther laughed till he held his sides.[1]

“It also pleases God when you address a brother with a smile,” said he, “or now and then crack a decent and witty joke. God is a foe of all gloominess.”

“I’ll wager Big Mike’s widow will marry before a year rolls round,” said the undertaker. “Never saw it miss: women who wail so when they put one man in the hearse soon find another for the house.”

“Perfectly natural, perfectly natural, and easily explained on psychological grounds,” asserted the ’Squire with an air of learning.

“Bosh!” interjected the young man in the loud clothes, tossing a Police Gazette on the stand and moving towards the door. “‘Frailty, thy name is woman!’”

Instantly the clerk got into a wrangle with him on the subject of women. The others talked town topics. Luther heard snatches of the wrangle, and his frank countenance, like the face of a barometer, announced the storm that was brewing. But when he stepped from the chair the lecherous fellow was gone, and Luther said:

“The man who sets light by preachers and women will never come to a good end. To despise them is to despise God and man.”

He glanced at his hands and started for the washstand.

“Therefore, when you see a hog poking its snout in filth, think of such a swinish blackguard. Let them know that they are after all but despisers of the sex.”

He began to lave his hands, but was so much aroused that he kept on talking.

“Even though wives and maids have flaws and faults, yet one should not publicly decry them with tongue or pen. A pious woman is to be honored and loved, first, because she is God’s gift, and then because God has bestowed upon woman glorious virtues which greatly outweigh trivial shortcomings. My, how dirty the water becomes from washing with it! Sooth, I forgot that skin and flesh are taken out of the ground, as the Scriptures say. Thou art dust and ashes: why so proud, O man!”

Drying his hands, he returned to the former subject.

“A wife is the best treasure, for she is given by God, has many virtues and keeps troth. No one will ever have to repent rising early and marrying young. When Eve was brought to Adam he was filled with the Holy Ghost and gave her the most beautiful and glorious of names, calling her Eva, that is, mother of all living. This is woman’s glory and her most precious ornament. She is *fons omnium viventium*, the source of all human life, a brief phrase, but such as neither Demosthenes nor Cicero could have coined.” As he seated himself, he added: “My hostess at Eisenach said well, when I was a student there, ‘There is no sweeter pleasure on earth than to be loved by a good woman.’”

“Yes,” said the ’Squire, nodding approval, “a good, woman is a precious pearl, and an obedient woman is beyond price.”

The barber smiled.

“Isn’t it Solomon,” he queried, “who asks where such a woman can be found?”

“Were I to make love again,” said Luther, “I’d have me an obedient wife carved out of stone.” Then he laughed and added: “I would despair of getting one in any other way.”

He picked up the evening paper, for he had promised to wait for me. I could see his face in the mirror. It was a study, as his eyes ran from one account to another of crime, war and bloodshed. He cast the paper aside shortly with the remark:

“The world is the devil’s tavern. Hence, whithersoever one goes, he finds the host at home.”

He got up, and, with hands behind his back, started to pace the floor. He was a nervous body and could never sit long unemployed.

“We are wretched children of Adam,” he observed, “for though death trudges at our heels every moment on land, we seek it also on water.”

Our fleet was still in Cuban waters and the papers were still sounding the praises of Dewey and Hobson.

“The Spaniards deserved this trouncing,” said the undertaker: “they are the most inhuman butchers among civilized nations.”

“The French are wanton,” said Luther, taking up the cudgel, “but the Spaniards are altogether unmanageable, and exceed the Italians and French in all wickedness. No nation can tolerate them. They are more cruel than the Turks.”

Now the ’Squire, the clerk, the undertaker, the barber, all talked war, and it was evident they took pleasure in it. Luther dissented.

“War is one of the greatest plagues that can afflict humanity,” he declared; “it destroys religion, it destroys states, it destroys families. In comparison with it famine and pestilence become as nothing.”

“There’s been great improvement in guns,” said the ’Squire, “since I was at the front in sixty-three. There will be no more long wars.”

“Cannon and firearms are cruel and destructive machines,” countered Luther. “I believe them to have been the direct suggestion of the devil. Against the flying ball no valor avails: the soldier is dead ere he sees the means of his destruction.”

The old soldier in the 'Squire attempted a defense, but it was halfhearted at most.

"I believe this war will be a good thing for our country after all," the barber declared.

"Yes," said the undertaker, "if our government decides to hold the Philippine Islands, the Far East will open to our commerce."

"War is like a net woven of gold," said Luther sententiously: "if you catch fish with it, you are nothing ahead."

But he agreed with them when they discussed the soldier's belief in the righteousness of his cause and its relation to victory.

"It does not depend on having a large army and expensive weapons," said he, "but on a good cause. The cause of a war robs a soldier of valor, or gives him heart and courage. But —"

"This Spanish- American war," interpolated the 'Squire, "has demonstrated that once more."

"But do let us be instant in our prayer against war," said Luther in conclusion.

It was but a step from the discussion of the barbarity of Spanish rule to the discussion of the illiteracy of her island subjects, and but another to the general subject of education. I was surprised at Luther's advanced modern ideas.

"If the government can compel such citizens as are fit for military service to bear spear and musket, to mount ramparts and perform other martial duties in time of war," said he, "how much more has it the right to compel the people to send their children to school, because in this case we are warring with the devil, whose object it is secretly to exhaust our cities and principalities of their strong men — to destroy the kernel and leave a shell of helpless and ignorant people."

I was ready to go. But ere we stepped out, Luther turned and said:

"I maintain that the civil authorities are under obligation to compel the people to send their children to school."

As we walked down the street, I informed him that public education is entirely secular and that our high schools and universities are rationalistic and worse. He looked amazed.

"Where the Holy Scriptures are not the rule, I advise no man to send his child," said he. "Everything must perish where God's Word is not taught unceasingly. So we see what manner of men there are in the universities."

He then spoke of the Iowa Synod, to which he meant to apply next. But little was said, for, in crossing the street, we ran into two men who happened to know us. They were the Dunkard preachers we had met in Virginia. As they were going three-quarters of a mile beyond the farmhouse where we were staying, we fared on together.

Since our former clash they had time to think and were now primed.

"It seems to us," began the larger brother, "that you Lutherians don't obey the Lord where He says, Book of Matthew, chapter ten, verse eight: 'Freely ye have received, freely give.' You people take lucre for your services."

"We are commanded to teach, comfort and absolve all who will accept and believe," Luther replied, "and they all receive from us such treasures free, according to the passage, Matthew ten, eight. But as Christians enjoy the office of the ministry without pay, so they, on the other hand, should also entertain, support and protect the ministers without pay, as St. Paul says in Galatians six, six, and in First Timothy, five, eighteen. And Christ himself says in the tenth verse of the tenth chapter of St. Matthew: 'The workman is worthy of his meat.'"

"But the servants of the Lord Jesus," said the smaller Dunkard, "must not take pay for the divine treasures."

"Who could pay for these?" replied Luther, scrutinizing the man in the moonlight. "What are a hundred or a thousand guilders in comparison with the immeasurable gift of the forgiveness of sins? But inasmuch as such great gift cannot be dispensed but by human beings, who must have sustenance, they as a matter of course must be sustained and supported. But that is no payment for the gift, but is for their trouble and work."

Then the larger brother of the unmarred beard abruptly changed the subject.

"Your communion baptizes little babies," said he in his unctious drawl. "Our brethren baptize believers only, even as Holy Writ says: 'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' They baptize believers and nobody else."

"How and when are they ever going" to be certain of that?" Luther asked. "Are they now become gods that they can look into people's hearts and see whether they believe or not?"

"But they confess their faith, and so we —"

“Yes, you say they confess they believe, and so forth,” he rejoined. “My dear sir, that is neither here nor there. The text does not say, he that confesseth, but he that believeth. To be sure, you have his confession; and yet for all that you have no certainty of his faith; and so, according to your own interpretation of this passage, you cannot meet its demands.”

“Howsumever, the brethren teach that babies cannot believe,” said the Dunkard, “the which is very plain, for they can’t talk, neither kin they know.”

“Where is the Scripture with which they prove it?” Luther asked. “They imagine it so, because the infants do not talk and reason; but their conclusion is unstable, yea, altogether false. But we have the Scriptures for it that babes can and do believe, though they have neither speech nor reason. Thus the Scriptures say, Psalm One Hundred and Six, verses thirty-seven and thirty-eight, that the Jews sacrificed their sons and daughters to idols, and so ‘shed innocent blood.’ If it was innocent blood, as the text says, they were certainly pure and holy children, which they could not be without the Spirit and faith. Likewise, the innocent children who were slain at Herod’s behest were not over two years old, and, as a matter of course, were without speech and reason, and yet they are holy and saved. And in the fourteenth verse of the nineteenth chapter of St. Matthew, Christ says the kingdom of heaven is the children’s. St. John was a babe, and I should think he could believe.”

“The case of John the Baptist was out of the common run,” the smaller Dunkard retorted. “That’s far from proving that all the little young ones kin believe.”

“Just be patient and contain yourself a bit,” answered Luther as he came to a standstill. “I have not yet come to the point where I prove the faith of children; but only so far as to show that your Anabaptist reasons are false and untenable and cannot prove, that faith cannot be in children. For, since faith was in John without speech and reason, you cannot maintain your ground when you say children cannot believe. Now it is not against Scripture to say an infant can believe, as the example of St. John shows. Now if this, that children can believe, be not against Scripture, but in harmony with it, then your assertion that children cannot believe must be against Scripture. That is what I wanted to say first.”

“It is a beautiful night,” said the big Dunkard.

“The Lord is good,” added the smaller one, “and His mercy endureth forever.”

“Night unto night uttereth speech and the heavens declare His —”

“Now who made you so certain that baptized children do not believe, although I here prove that they can believe?” asked Luther, refusing to be turned from the subject. “But if you are not certain, then why are you so precipitous in nullifying the first baptism, when you do not know, and cannot know, that it is void? What if all children could not only believe at baptism, but believe just as John did from his mother’s womb? For we cannot deny that the same Christ who came to John before his birth is with and in baptism. Since He himself is present and speaks and baptizes, why should not faith and the Spirit come to the child through His speaking and baptizing, as well as it came there to John? And that especially since He says through Isaiah that His Word shall not return to Him void. Furthermore, He commands us to bring the little children to Him, Matthew nineteen, fondles and kisses them, and says the kingdom of God is theirs. Now cite a single Scripture passage which proves a baptized child cannot believe, since I have adduced so many which show that they can believe and that it is but right to hold that they do, although it is unknown to us how they believe. Nor is that of much importance.”

“Howsumever,” said the smaller Dunkard, “your communion teaches that unbaptized babies —”

“No one,” broke in the other, “who was sprinkled as a baby knows for certain that he was baptized. He has somebody’s word for it; but we are not to believe man, but God. Therefore it is right to baptize them over.”

Luther laughed outright.

“That strikes me as a shaky and rotten foundation,” said he; “for should I reject all which I myself have not seen or heard, I would certainly not retain much either of faith or love, of things spiritual or earthly. So I might say: My dear friend, how do I know this man is my father and this woman my mother? You dare not believe men, but must be certain of your parentage yourself. With that all children would forever be free and would no longer need to obey God’s command when He says: ‘Honor thy father and thy mother,’ for I would forthwith say: How do I know who my father and mother are? I do not believe men. Likewise I would not acknowledge brother, sister, uncle, nor a single relative, but would constantly aver that I do not know they are related to me because I am uncertain of my parentage.

But were I ruler of the land, I would serve a spirit like that in the same way and forbid that he receive any inheritance from his parents, neither house nor home, nor even a single penny, and thus play against him his own ‘belief until his ’spirit’ again became flesh.”

“And so,” said I, “like a blind Samson, you might pull down the whole structure.”

“Yes,” he replied, “I would also say, the Scriptures are naught, Christ is naught, apostles never preached; for all that was neither seen nor felt by me, but I heard it from human beings. Consequently I would not believe it unless it were all done anew before my eyes. Then should I be a real free fellow indeed — free also from all of God’s commandments. ‘Aha! that’s the place I should like to reach,’ chuckles the devil, ‘if only I could!’ That means laying a foundation for rebaptizing which leaves nothing firm in heaven or on earth.”

Ignoring the argument, the younger Dunkard now said what he had kept in mind all this time.

“Howsumever,” he drawled, “your communion teaches that unbaptized young ones are lost.”

“God has not revealed to us how He will deal with babes who have not been baptized,” Luther replied, “but has kept that under the covert of His mercy, and commanded us to insist urgently in public on the use of Word and Sacraments. And we should let it rest at that: He is not unjust.”

We crossed the road. It was muddy, and we walked single file.

“There is a work devil among them,” said Luther in an undertone to me, “who speaks of faith and still means work, and under the guise of faith leads the poor masses to trust in works.”

This observation probably touches the very heart of this controversy. To our opponents, baptism is not so much an act which God performs, as a work which the person baptized does.

But no sooner had we crossed the highway, than the elder Dunkard broached another subject. I wish he had stuck to baptism.

“It is one of the glories of our church,” said he, “that we wash feet. You Lutherians don’t. Herein our brethren, in the midst of this wicked and perverse generation, mind the words of the Lord Jesus and in true humility —”

“Why, my dear fellow,” said Luther, “tell me what kind of humility it is if you seek applause and the reputation of saintliness by this act? or what

doth it avail your brother if you wash his feet to make a display and gain glory in the eyes of the world? The Pope, his monks and priests, also kings and princes, now and then observe the custom of washing the feet of some paupers; but there is no sign of humility discernable in the performance of this ceremony. There are many among them, and that, too, the more honest ones, who wash the feet of their brothers of the order, or of their subjects, with so little of the spirit of humility that they afterwards seek forgiveness in the confessional for the pride which dwelt in their hearts during the execution of this work. It is evident that by His action in the Gospel our Lord did not intend to teach us the outward washing of feet, which is done by means of water; for then it would be obligatory to wash the feet of all, or rather, which certainly would be more serviceable, to prepare for the people a regular bath in which they could wash their whole body. This, of course, cannot be the meaning of Christ's command in this connection. By His example He simply gave us a striking lesson in humility."

"But the ordinance of foot washing must always be observed before the Lord's Supper is celebrated," said our recusant, "for that is the way the Lord Jesus did it."

Luther's patience was clean gone.

"If this is to hold," he replied, "that we are to follow the actions of Christ in that mechanical way, and not the Word, the consequence will be that we dare only celebrate the Lord's Supper in a plastered upper chamber in Jerusalem. For if the outward circumstances must be observed so minutely, the externalities of person and place must also be observed strictly, and it would come to this that this sacrament was only to be celebrated by the disciples to whom He then gave it. And then what St. Paul says in the eleventh chapter of First Corinthians will become Simon-pure folly. Likewise, because we do not know, and the text does not say, whether it was red or white wine, whether it was wheat or barley bread, we, enveloped in this darkness, shall have to leave the Lord's Supper uncelebrated until we arrive at such certainty that we vary not a hairbreadth from Christ's manner in any external thing. For if we miss it in this, the fanatic is at hand and brays that we hang, murder and crucify Christ. Such an excellent thing is here, and so completely is salvation entrenched here — much more than in Christ's wounds, blood, Word or Spirit!"

We had reached the gate of the farm where Luther was staying. Perhaps it was well, for Luther was aroused, and it is doubtful if these sectaries were

capable of learning aught. After the evening's rain, the air came fresh and fragrant over the expanse of meadow, and the foliage glistened in the mellow light of the full orbed moon, which stood on the distant mountain peak.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," said Luther, as a parting word, "and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

"Faith, ah yes, it is power," drawled the larger Dunkard. "Do you know, I have faith so I could remove that there mountain?"

"Then, why don't you move it?" said I.

"Because I wouldn't know where to put it." We laughed, and the brethren went their way.

"Oh, what wise people," sighed Luther; "they should be set to hatching goose eggs!"

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1. This anecdote is especially commended to those professors who find fault with preachers. They "larned" us everything they know, and still we don't know anything!↩

10. The Pope Gets A Pelting

'Tis some relief that points not clearly known
Without much hazard may be let alone.

— DRYDEN.

LUTHER INSISTED on walking from the Iowa farmhouse to the town, and to this day I have reason to rue that I yielded to him. It was a frosty autumnal morning. As we strode along, I ventured to say it would have been better to ride, and so conform somewhat to his physician's advice.

"Sooth," said he, "to live according to doctors' rules would be a sorry sort of life indeed. As for me, I eat what I relish and— suffer what I must."

"But the medical profession has made great progress along the line of prevention," said I. "For instance, we know to a certainty that flies carry diseases and are veritable pests."

"I detest flies and am at war with them," said he, "for they are the image of devils and heretics."

Then he launched out against the odoriferous Papacy, whither the flies naturally led.

"Yea, the superstition eventually grew so strong," said he, coming back to the subject, "that some would not kill even lice and fleas. I saw a priest who thought he did God a service by protecting these pests. He never cleaned his clothes; and, to tell truth, he put the lice which fell from him back into his cowl. The reason he assigned for being so filthy was that he knew his parents were also being devoured by maggots in their graves.[1] But God has not commanded us to destroy the body, but wills that we respect it, although it must be curbed and kept under control."

He returned to physicians and kindred topics. Many of his comments struck me as pithy and pointed. For instance, this against Christian Scientists: "God hath compounded medicines of the earth and no sensible man despises them." Yet he held the mind has a decided influence over the

body. “When the mind is tortured and burdened,” said he, “physical illness follows.” And again: “Much depends upon the confidence the patient reposes in the physician.” He praised the profession. “A learned and prudent physician is a great gift of God; but,” he added with a twinkle, “a young leech must needs have a new graveyard.”

We were overtaken by a country justice of the peace, who looked like the traditional Uncle Sam. His weakness was poetry, and he seemed to know almost everything that is quoteworthy. We met him again a few days later, and learned to know him better. But now the spirit was upon him and he hailed us thus:

> “What miracle of weird transforming
> Is this wild work of frost and light,
> This glimpse of glory infinite!”

But in the next breath he was going on all fours, talking of paunch and purse.

“Twill be an uncommon cold winter,” he declared. “The hornets’ nests are built low and the corn-husks are right smart thicker than common. I look for a powerful hard winter according to the signs.”

“So be it,” responded Luther. “Let it snow and freeze hard as it will, summer will come again, for God will not let it snow and freeze forever.”

He gazed at the frost-covered field, and that faraway look came to his eyes.

“Winter and frost are hard to stand, but —” said he, throwing in one of those little, effective breaks of his, “but that you may see how you can bear it and not perish, God hath placed symbols in this selfsame snow, frost and ice to give you heart, for they teach something far different from what they threaten. For, behold, does not the snow look like fleece? Thus God would as much as say: the snow shall not kill thee. Nay, it suggests wool to you, and wool and warmth you shall have. Neither shall the frost slay thee. Nay, it reminds you of ashes and awakens thoughts of the hearth fire, that you may remember there is fuel to withstand the Frost King. Neither shall the hailstones fell thee. Behold, they suggest crumbs, by which you may be reminded that, though nothing grows during the winter, you shall nevertheless not starve.” He paused for a moment, and then repeated the word of the Psalm he had in mind: “He giveth snow like wool: He

scattereth the hoarfrost like ashes. He casteth forth His ice like morsels." "Verily," he commented, "he speaketh right comfortably, and would teach us to know the cold season aright, that we may love and thank God even for winter itself."

For a while we were silent, like pious and well-behaved people who have heard a sermon and are leaving the sanctuary, that is to say, like pious and well-behaved people who died before the era of jabbering in the holy place began.[2]

Some young chaps were hauling in corn. Across the fields came their peals of laughter and snatches of merry song".

"'Tis a very seemly and wholesome happiness," Luther remarked, "when we rejoice that the fields have yielded good and plentiful returns, for then we are happy because God has given us so much. Our Lord God is gladly willing that we eat, drink, be merry and make use of all His creatures, for that is why He created them."

"But the pleasure has well-nigh all seeped out o' farming," said the 'Squire, back on all fours. "The farmers git so little for their stuff."

"The more we have, the more we want," said Luther curtly.

"But 'taint the farmers that git it."

"If farmers appreciated their blessings they would be in paradise," Luther declared, misunderstanding or ignoring the 'Squire's statement. "No one is content with his lot. 'The ox envies the horse, the horse the ox.'"

"But it's the jobbers and the cold storage men that hold stuff and git the high prices," he explained.

"Yes, and the poor have to suffer for it," said I. "I know not how these so-called Christians can face the judgment day."

"On that day Christ will say: 'I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat,'" Luther replied. "A man who has given himself to the riches and honors of this world, and thereby forgotten his soul and his God, is like a little child that clasps in its hand an apple of fine shape and color under the impression that it has something good, though the apple is rotten within and teeming with worms." "You are right, perfectly right," interjected the 'Squire. "It is so:

> 'Extol not riches, then, the toil of fools,
> The wise man's cumbrance, if not snare; more apt
> To slacken virtue, and abate her edge,
> Than prompt her to do aught may merit praise.'"

“We should use the possessions God has given us,” concluded Luther, “as a shoemaker uses his needle, awl and wax-end to work with, and then lays them aside; or, as a guest uses an inn only for temporary purposes.”

We trudged on for a time in silence. Then Luther adverted again to husbandmen.

“The pastor at Holsdorf,” said he, “would not admit his farmers to the Lord’s Supper. The farmers lodged complaint with the Visitors. The pastor said in defense: ‘My dear sirs, I concede I did not allow them to come to the Lord’s Table because they do not pray.’ Thereupon one of the farmers jumped up and said: ‘We don’t have to pray. That’s why we keep you and pay you wages!’”

“In the eyes of parsons,” said the ’Squire with a smile, "clodhoppers are a coarse set, sure.

‘Oh why were farmers made so coarse,
Or clergy made so fine?
A kick that scarce would move a horse,
May kill a sound divine.’"

“That,” said Luther, half in jest, half in earnest, “is wise, and it is fitly spoken.”

Our companion turned into his neighbor’s lane, and we went the rest of the way alone.

Just as we entered the town, I stepped sidewise on a pebble and wrenched my right knee — an accident, by the way, which often befalls me. After assisting me to the hotel and calling a physician, Luther went to the church.

My feelings were hurt quite as much as my limb. We might just as well have gone to town in a carriage; but Luther must needs have his own way, always have his own way, and now I must miss the Iowa Synod colloquy, which I had set my heart on hearing; for I was very anxious to hear the subject of Open Questions discussed. So I lay on the couch and chaffed till he returned at noon, when, so soon as his nose was through the door, I asked:

“How did things go? What of the doctrine of Church and Office? What of—”

“They do not want to admit that they have erred in a single syllable,” he answered rather petulantly, sat down at the table and began to write.

“But,” said I somewhat later, “it looks to me as if a lot of these differences between synods are nothing more than a different way of saying the same thing.”

“I know we should not fall out on account of words and phrases, if definition and conviction are not at loggerheads,” said he, somewhat impatiently and without looking up. “Every bird pipes just as its throat is fashioned and every language has its own way of saying these things.”

It was plain: things had not glided along smoothly. But I wanted to know more, and, after biding my time, ventured further:

“How about the matter of Open Questions? Did you get to —”

“Everything stands open,” he interjected; “but — it dare not come to this that you touch the sore.”

So they had come to this subject, for it is only in this sphere that “everything” stands open in the Iowa Synod. Now, as a matter of course, there are open questions. Everything is not settled.[3] In this respect a man’s orthodoxy depends upon what he relegates to this domain and — on who sits in judgment on him!

“Nevertheless,” said I, “they are shrewd theologians and know how to defend their position.”

“It’s more like the quarreling of women and children,” he retorted quickly. “It is so! It is not so! Yea, nay! Nay, yea! And still they are such shrewd theologians in this!”

This outburst of sarcasm did not surprise me. Where men agree that certain questions are open, there is not only diversity of opinion on those questions, but contradictory beliefs are expressed and defended. Thus the greatest discord dwells in sweetest concord or utter indifference — just as you are minded to phrase it. The whole thing makes the impression of slipperiness so soon as it touches a matter of real moment, and its defenders then look like men bent on maintaining loopholes. You can easily imagine how it affected Luther when it was applied to such matters as the doctrines of the Antichrist and the Millennium, for that is what he meant by “the sore.” For now he rose, scanned what he had written, smiled as if well pleased with it, then folded the sheet and tossed it to me, saying:

“Those who were not under the Papacy think teaching and warning against the Antichrist to be quite unnecessary; but those who were stuck fast in the mire of Papacy are the ones who deem it necessary that the youth be diligently reminded of it.”

Then, expressing himself as pleased with the condition of my limb, he was off, saying, as he closed the door:

"Farewell, and pray for me."

I unfolded the sheet. It proved to be a curious and an interesting document, reading as follows:

THE BOOK OF THE GENERATION OF THE ABOMINATION OF DESOLATION, THE ANTICHRIST, THE SON OF HYPOCRISY, THE SON OF THE DEVIL.

THE DEVIL begat Darkness;

Darkness begat Ignorance;

Ignorance begat Error and his brethren;

Error begat Free 'Will and Presumption out of self-conceit;

Free Will begat Merit;

Merit begat Forgetfulness of Grace;

Forgetfulness begat Transgression;

Transgression begat Unbelief;

Unbelief begat Satisfaction

Satisfaction begat Mass-offering;

Mass-offering begat Priests out of the smear or chrism;

The Priest out of chrism begat Superstition and Bigotry;

Bigotry begat Hypocrisy, the king;

Hypocrisy begat Traffic in sacrifice;

Traffic and Profit begat Purgatory;

Purgatory begat the founding of yearly Solemn Vigils;

Vigils begat Church-livings;

Church-livings begat Mammon;

Mammon begat Swelling Superfluity;

Swelling Superfluity begat Fullness;

Fullness begat Madness;

Madness begat Willfulness;

Willfulness begat Rule and Dominion;

Rule and Dominion begat Pomp;

Pomp begat Ambition;

Ambition begat Simony;

Simony begat the Pope and his brethren, the Cardinals, about the time of the Babylonian Captivity;

After the Babylonian Captivity, the Pope begat the Mystery of Iniquity;

The Mystery of Iniquity begat Sophistical Theology;

Sophistical Theology begat Rejection of the Scriptures;

Rejection of the Scriptures begat Tyranny.

Tyranny begat Slaughter of Saints;

Slaughter of Saints begat Disdain of God;

Disdain of God begat Dispensation;

Dispensation begat Willful Sin;

Willful Sin begat Abomination;

Abomination begat Desolation;

Desolation begat Anguish;

Anguish begat Questioning;

Questioning begat Searching out the Ground of Truth by which is revealed the Destroyer of the Pope, who is called the Antichrist.

It was evident that Luther was wrought up. I itched to hear him, and ere long hobbled over to the church.

"I deplore that I am unfortunately much too hasty," a voice was saying as I approached the steps." But I wish I could utter nothing but thunderbolts against the Papacy." It was Luther's voice.

What the others said was not distinguishable above the din, but I heard Luther reply:

"I will endeavor to speak with more propriety."

On entering, I found three ministers at a table in front, Luther pacing back and forth, and eighteen or twenty men occupying pews. The examiners proved to be mild-eyed, mild-voiced, and mild-mannered men.

"What is up now?" I asked a youthful divine at my elbow.

"Second Thessalonians, two, one to twelve," he whispered. "Ach, I am afraid he is an out and out Missourianer."

"Now we say the Pope is not the Antichrist," said the smallest man at the table, stroking his muttonchops, "and —"

"I say," thundered Luther, "he is the adversary of the Lord and the apostle of the devil."

"But you agree, don't you," asked the little man kindly, "that the apostle here speaks of the Antichrist?"

“Yes,” replied Luther, “Paul exposes the knave thoroughly, fore and aft, that we may see through his lies and —”

“But the apostle says here clearly that the exposure of the Antichrist is a sign of Christ’s second advent. Hence the Papacy cannot be the Antichrist, for it is a long time since the character of the Papacy was revealed and yet the day of the parusie has not been ushered in. How do you harmonize this?”

“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years,” he replied, “and a thousand years as one day.”

“Didn’t I tell you?” said my young neighbor. “Ach, it is sad that so fine a mentality is warped by the errors of Missouri.”

He said it in that mild tone they all were employing. I made no reply. The thing was getting on my nerves, and I wondered if this matter of Open Questions did not have something to do with their quality of voice, for the everlasting defense of the Open Question proposition involves an everlasting apology. And an apology is meekness itself.

The members of the examining committee were evidently of the same mind as my neighbor, for, after putting their heads together, the elderly brother said:

“Brother Martin, in their controversy with the sainted Schieferdecker, the Missourians insisted that the judgment day might come at any time, averring that all the signs, except the very immediate ones, had come to pass. And to make matters worse, they were bent on inflating this to the proportions of an article of faith. Surely, Brother Martin, you are not of that opinion, are you?”

“I assuredly hold,” replied Luther, “that the day of the Lord is near, and that either we or our descendants will live to see it. All the great signs have now come to pass: the Antichrist is revealed and the world runs wild. And ’twill be no better in the world ere doomsday comes.”

“But it cannot come at any time,” urged the examiner, “for ere the end, the conversion of all Israel must take place.”

Luther replied at some length to this.

“Not that no Jew will evermore come to faith,” said he in conclusion, “for some fragments will remain and some individuals will be converted; but that race which we call the Jewish people will not be converted.”

“Ach, it is all too bad,” whispered my clerical fledgling. “We cannot use him: he is at one with Missouri, and Missouri is so autocratic.”

“But be all that as it may,” blandly continued the elderly man, “still the Pope, or the Papacy, does not bear the marks of Second Thessalonians, two, one to twelve, and therefore cannot be the Antichrist. The Antichrist is here called the ‘man of sin, the son of perdition.’ That means that he is one who is wholly given to sin. You would not say —”

“Who else is ‘the man of sin, the son of perdition,’” asked Luther, wheeling around, “than he who multiplies sin in the Church and increases the loss of souls by means of his false doctrine and shameful statutes and still sits in the Church as a god?”

He paused for a reply, and, getting none, continued:

“That is what papal tyranny has done and overdone these many years, for it extinguished faith, obscured the Sacraments, suppressed the Gospel, and multiplied without end commandments of its own which are not only wicked and unspiritual, but also barbarous and —”

“Come, come, Brother Martin, be not so fast, nor yet so harsh,” said the old man in his soft-tongued way; “even the angel Michael durst not bring a railing accusation against the devil. Now see, if we say the Pope is the son of perdition, it must mean that he descends from the father of perdition, who is the devil. Now that is —”

“Whence hails the Papacy?” broke in Luther, his eyes flashing fire. “I say now, as I said before, it comes from the devil, for it does not come from the Church governed by Christ through the Holy Spirit. I will prove this so incontrovertibly that even the gates of hell shall be powerless against it.”

“But one cannot so interpret,” declared the young. est examiner, Greek Testament in hand.

As a rule, the younger your preacher, the more learned he is — in his own conceit.

“One cannot so interpret,” he repeated slowly. “This theory goes on the assumption that the Antichristos is an institution or a party continuing through centuries. But according to reliable exegetes, this contention will not hold. Just as C hr i st o s here in First John, two, twenty-two, is an individual, so also His chief adversary on earth, Antichrist os, must in this same passage mean an individual.”

“We should not give credence to those who understand this and similar passages as applying to one person only, not knowing the custom of the prophets, who commonly indicate an entire kingdom by means of a single individual,” Luther replied. “Similarly, they apply the term antichrist to a

single individual, whom St. Paul calls the man of sin and the son of perdition, although St. Paul would have it understood that the entire body, the whole gang of ungodly people, and all their successors are that same Antichrist."

"But, see here," said the other examiner, ignoring the trend the discussion had taken, "it is true that the Pope gives out that he is the vicegerent of Christ, but it has not come to this that he 'opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped,' as our beloved St. Paul says here."

"I do not understand this in any other way," replied Luther, "than that the word of an ungodly man shall be preferred to the word of God, and the man who puts himself in God's place be revered and feared above God."

"Mean you that this applies to the Pope?" asked the midde-aged examiner.

"Look at his decretals and canons," he answered, "and you will find that infractions of the Pope's statutes are punished more severely than violations of the divine commandments. Yes, he tramples and defames Christ, the Lord, who alone is to be worshiped and obeyed; but he wants his own doctrine to be accepted and honored, wants to be feared, and demands that credence and confidence be given whatsoever he teaches. That, I think, surely means to seat one's self above the revealed God. From the Sacrament —"

"But, Brother Martin," exclaimed his interlocutor, "let us hold to—"

"From the Sacrament of the Altar," said he, oblivious to the interruption, "from the Sacrament of the Altar he has not only taken the cup, robbing the Church of it against all right, but he altered the Testament of Christ, turned it into a sacrifice, and made a commodity of it which coined money. In short, he buried Christ altogether, and attributed righteousness to his man-made commandments and false worship, which he invented and introduced without God's Word and against it. That means, I trow, to exalt one's self above all that is called God. Hear for yourself what St. Paul—"

"But," interposed the young examiner, "one may also understand that to mean —"

"I will not let you give Scripture more than one meaning," Luther rejoined with emphasis. "It matters not at all how often you try it, or how long you exclaim, one may also say, one may also understand, one may also

answer. Do put away the words, one may also. These are false arguments, one and all, and they are nothing but loopholes."

"But listen, Brother Martin," said the elderly man, "our beloved St. Paul here says of the Antichrist: 'He as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.' Now, who ever heard of such a claim on the part of the Papacy? The Pope does claim to be the vicar of Christ, but that he —"

"Yes," Luther exclaimed, firing up, "he insists upon it that we shall in no wise doubt his voice to be the voice of Christ, to which we may not say, Why so? albeit we cite six hundred apostles against it."

Then he took up the claims which the Papists make for the Pope and inveighed against one Sylvester. Finally he grew indignant.

"They carried it so far, these arrant mouthpieces of the devil, that they did not employ veiled language, but boasted freely and openly that the Pope and his church were over the Holy Scriptures, and that he had the power to alter, repeal, prohibit and interpret as he wished. And his was the handicraft to mold the Scriptures as a potter turns clay, forming a crock or a jug, and howsoever he turned it, 'twas an article of faith. Thus they do to this day with the words and institution of Christ concerning both kinds in the Sacrament. For they call him an earthly god, not a mere man, but a compound of God and man, and no doubt would like to say that he is, like Christ, true God and man. But thanks be to God, at such horrible blasphemy the sun began to darken, the veil in the temple is being rent in twain, the earth quakes, the graves of the dead are opening, and the rocks are rent. It will be different, and that right soon. By this (namely how the Pope holds himself against and over the Gospel) one can readily see the abomination in the holy place, and distinguish with ease between the Gospel and his doctrine, or, as I was about to say, his blasphemy."

"What authority have you," asked the middle aged examiner, "for attributing such an awful claim to a church which is still counted a part of Christendom? It is preposterous."

"In the books of the Pope and his lickspittles it is openly stated what the Pope is, to-wit: not only a human being, but also god; that is, the Pope is an earthly god — a human being blended with divinity," Luther replied. "Yes, a real earthly god like the devil, who has nothing heavenly."

"We do not deny that there is much about the Papacy that is antichristian," said the young examiner; "but we do not think the Papacy, at

this stage of its development, is the Antichristos. We must concede that the Pope still confesses Christ. Hence we cannot say, in the face of First John, four, three, that the Pope is the Antichrist. 'Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God,' says John, 'and this is that spirit of Antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come.'"

"The Pope," said Luther, "does indeed confess this word: 'Christ is come in the flesh'; but he denies its fruit. That is as much as to say, Christ did not come in the flesh. For Christ's incarnation did not take place for His own sake, but for the purpose of saving us. This the Pope denies. To be sure he retains the words; but as for the rest, he denies the efficacy of this incarnation, that is, that our heart is to put its trust entirely in the righteousness of Christ and become righteous through it. This article the Pope condemns in his bulls. But Paul controverts that with plain words: 'Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.' And our St. John says: 'The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.' Therefore St. Peter condemns those who deny 'the Lord that bought them.' They acknowledge the Lord, but that He bought them — ah, that they deny. Hence we conclude from this text that the Pope's spirit is of the devil."

The examiners were not listening. They had their heads together, and I was wondering if, after all this mildness, the colloquy would not end in a manner that would constrain us to say the voice was Jacob's, but the hand was Esau's. Luther stared at the committee a moment, then turned to the audience and continued:

"The Pope takes away Christ, the kernel, and leaves the empty words. No one has possessed the marks of the Antichrist so exactly as the Pope." He picked up the Bible, saying: "Hear for yourselves what St. Paul says, Second Thessalonians, chapter two, verse four. The Antichrist 'sitteth in the temple of God.' Now, if the Pope is the real Antichrist, and I believe nothing else, he is not to sit or rule in the devil's stable, but in the temple of God. Nay, he will not sit where there are nothing but demons and unbelievers, or where there is no Christ or Christendom, for he is the Antichrist and consequently must be among Christians. And inasmuch as he sits there and rules, he must have Christians under him. The temple of God, in which he is to rule, certainly does not mean a pile of stone, but holy Christendom." He then quoted something from Sylvester, which I did not catch, and added this drastic comment: "Now this Satan asserts that

Scripture takes its honor and authority from a mortal man. What and who is the Antichrist if such a Pope is not the Antichrist? Satan, Satan, how long will you abuse the great patience of your Creator!"

"The Papists are not as bad as they were!" exclaimed the young man at my side.[4]

I am sure he had not meant to say it aloud. The committeemen looked up simultaneously. Luther took the young man's measure at a glance.

"Verily," said he in a kindly tone, "we should not thus give way to the Papists, but expose them again by portraying them in their true colors, for they would now pose as having been so clean that they never dirtied water. Thus young people are easily deceived and misled, for they know nothing of their abominations and idolatries. We should put them to shame with their own examples, deeds and doctrines in whatever way we can. The Papists are not to be trusted though they declare peace, write it and seal it."

The spokesman rose, put on a look of benignant gravity, stroked his burnsides and said with soft tongue:

"We deem it unnecessary to proceed further. You have stated your convictions in clear and forceful language and with candor — admirable candor, indeed. We differ on some points, it is true, and it is possible, perhaps even probable, that you might feel more at home in a body like the Missouri Synod." That looked to me like Esau's hand. However, he continued: "But our beloved Iowa Synod rejects the opinion that an agreement also in such doctrines of Scripture as are no doctrines of faith must be *conditio sine qua non* of church-fellowship, and that church-fellowship must be denied on their account. Therefore we will gladly welcome you to our household of faith, if you are willing to grant us the same charity and toleration which we —"

"Avaunt!" cried Luther, cutting the speech short and reaching for his hat. "And this ought to be said for me after my death: I have always been opposed to such compromises."

"We meant no offense," faltered the one.

"Believe us, dear brother," added the other.

"You misunderstand," declared the third.

"What shall I, poor man, still say?" he asked, turning around. "It is like the wrangling of women and children: 'It is so! it is not so! Yes, no! No, yes!'"

And with that he withdrew, the mild brethren with mild smiles bidding him a mild farewell.

And so it ended just as I think they wanted it to end: they had made a toboggan-slide of smiles and smirks, and — were rid of him. As we met outside, Luther said:

"Where shall I go?"

"To Missouri," I replied.

"Not by a long shot!— leastwise not right away," said an old Dane, clapping his hand on Luther's shoulder. "You're my kind of a man: you've got a clear crow an' you're not afeard to crow it. Lutherans that trim their words for Papists is like Plymouthrocks as has white feathers: 'taint a good breed. Anyhow, I'm afeard of those chaps as always act as if they was layin' with their heads on their Master's bosom, fer they gen'rally have their feet where they kin give a brother a good, stout kickkinder on the sly. But — you two are going with me out home, where Mother Petersen puts the finishing touches on what God gives us to eat. You've just got to accept the invitation." And we did.

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1. So the unlettered priest. But such filthiness really had a different ground. When monks were laying out the body of Archbishop Thomas a Becket, afterwards called St. Thomas of Canterbury, they found his haircloth undergarments literally alive with vermin — boiling over with them, as one ancient account describes it, like water in a simmering cauldron. Seeing this, the monks proceeded no further with the work, declaring that a corpse, as holy as they perceived this one to be, needed no washing. This is a fair sample of genuine, old-time papal piety. — Editor.↩
2. I much fear the talk at country church doors is like that mentioned by Cowper in his Tithing-Time in Essex:

   "One talks of mildew and of frost,
   And one of storms and hail,
   And one of pigs that he has lost
   By maggots at the tail."

   And the talk at city church doors is probably not a whit better. Brothers (and sisters), these things ought not so to be.↩

3. For example, Did Adam have a navel? But — hands off, lest, after we have settled everything else, this thing become *firchentrennend*.↩
4. For an article on the Antichrist by a member of the Iowa Synod, see Vol. XXV, No. 4, of the Kirchliche Zeitschrift, Chicago, Ill.— - Editor.↩

11. A Tale Of Mine Host And The Sequel

Honor to women! to them it is given
To garden the earth with the roses of heaven.

— SCHILLER.

WE WERE SITTING on the porch of the farm manse: the goodman of the house, a neighbor and myself. Beyond the level stretch of arable land, and behind a copse of stunted trees and tangled underwood, the sun had sunk to rest, _ and the fleecy clouds that o'erhung the horizon shone in the radiance of a mellow afterglow. The day was dead — had stolen away like some beloved saint and left its halo behind. In the sear weeds that fringed the roadway, the cricket chirped ominously, for the year was old, and here and there a maple in fiery glow stood like a funeral torch to light the year to its grave.

It was a fit time for solemn thought, to be sure, for autumn is the first paragraph on eschatology in Nature's volume of theology. But though little had been said, the spirit of our environment had not affected us as it might have. Man is a thing perverse. So is woman. There is a message in the tolling of a church belL A man casts it off without a second thought. A woman also gets rid of it, but by easy gradations, mayhap wondering at first how her shroud will become her, and ending by dwelling on the latest dress pattern. In either case, the monitor is banished. So I had shaken off the spell of the hour and was thinking of the colloquy with the Iowa Synod.

Mine host, who had appeared in his Sunday clothes without vouchsafing an explanation, was wreathed in smiles and looked as if he had something important and pleasant to say; and the neighbor, who was deacon in the Methodist Church on Sundays and 'Squire "in and for said township" on week-days, looked as if he were anxious to hear what our host had to say.

So the cricket chirped, and the stars twinkled, and time wore on, punctured now and then by a commonplace remark. Our hoary host evidently did not know where to begin, and the 'Squire apparently did not want to place an obstacle in the way. A child happened to prime conversation.

"Come, Mabel," the farmer called to the towhead who peeped around the corner, "come an' git gran'pap his long pipe — the one as has the Bismarck bowl — an' a couple o' matches, like a good girl. Now jist wait a bit, you little fox. Tell Gretchen to bring up a jug of cider from that bar'l in the fur end of the cellar, where the garlic's hangin', an' then a parcel of apples an' some milk, fer this parson won't drink no hard cider. Now, skedaddle! an' when you come back, I'll give you a kiss."

Though chary of words thus far, the Dane was really in excellent humor, and wanted to make us feel just as good. He was a magnetic man, with a clean-shaven face, round and ruddy; a body that you would probably call stocky, and a profusion of gray locks which he frequently threw back from his brow by tossing his head in a sort of firm, defiant manner. There was a lot of the man's character in that toss. Then, too, he was rather original and energetic in speech. "Curses," said he, "is matter what festers in hell and pollutes the earth; aye, it's devil's puke as some fellers suck in an' spit out." Then again: "There be fellers as says there is no God, an' every blamed one of 'em knows a man can't be happy alone. 'Taint no use o' talkin', nobody but God would fix it so that happiness must be born twins if it's goin' to live." You couldn't help liking him. Standing on the porch, with hands in the pockets of his broad-fall trousers and eyes roaming over his broad fields, he was the personification of good feeling and homely wisdom. As the child tripped away, he turned to the neighbor.

"You see, 'Squire, I had you tote over because I have some little law business to do, but we'll be sociable-like a spell first, fer I have a story to tell mighty near as strange as one o' Hans Andersen's." Then, tilting his chair and raising his hand, he began:

"You know, 'Squire, it's nigh onto three years now that — Why, I'm uncommon glad to see you!" he said, addressing Luther, who had just stepped on the porch and through the conversation. "Lookin' fresh as a cowcumber after a rain."

"I have been quite well," Luther replied, pulling his fingers, which were stiff from writing, "and I have felt no ringing in my head. Hence I am disposed to study, for heretofore this ringing has greatly tormented me."

“Well, it’s glad I am you left that writin’ o’ yourn long enough to come down fer a chat. It’s uncommon good company the ’Squire is, I’ll warrant,” said he, pushing a chair toward father Luther. “The ‘Squire he knows more of poets than I do o’ pork, an’ that’s sayin’ a heap — ’pon my word, a heap.”

The strings of his tongue were being loosed and he spoke plainly and pungently. And the ’Squire — well, he felt it incumbent to prove the assertion aforesaid. “It is,” said he, "Alexander Smith, who deposes and says:

‘Poetry is
The grandest chariot wherein king-thoughts ride; —
One who shall fervent grasp the sword of song
As a stern swordsman grasps his keenest blade,
To find the quickest passage to the heart.’"

“Oh, shet up!” interjected our host in a tone in which jest and earnest were yokefellows. But Luther said rather wistfully:

“I regret not having had more time to devote to the study of the poets and rhetoricians. I had bought a Homer in order to become a Greek.” Then he said something about a volume of sacred song he had examined, and added: “There is a spirit in poets which comes from heaven.”

“No denyin’ that’s where it comes from,” said the old man, tossing his mane back. “It’s like money: it’s all the Lord’s; but it’s standing out in blamed poor hands. He don’t even git all o’ the interest, an* the devil gits a deal o’ the principal.” That was a home thrust. Luther appreciated it. “But as fer these here poets, the most of ‘em is nothin’ but fiddlers, sich as sets words to dancin’, an’ it’s with words like it is with people — there’s gen ’rally lust in ’em when they dance.”

“Nay, neighbor,” replied the ’Squire, "it all depends upon the spirit in which things are done.

‘A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and the action fine.’"

“God may be served everywhere,” commented Luther. “A maid servant might be of cheerful heart and say: I cook, make the beds, sweep the house. Who has told me to do so? My master and mistress, ’tis true. But who has given them the authority? God himself. Then it certainly must be true that I am serving not merely my earthly employer, but also my heavenly Master, and that God must be pleased with my employment. What more blessed occupation could I desire? ’Tis the same as if I were cooking for God in heaven.”

These were noble words. But our good father always hit the nail — and the Pope — on the head.

“If we took this view of our work,” he declared, “we would have reason to be cheerful and happy all the time, notwithstanding our cares and troubles, which would never become too hard to bear.”

“And it is as much one man’s work to use a pen as it is another’s to use a pick,” commented the ’Squire. “’Tis just as natural for poets to sing as it is for birds.”

“So be it,” rejoined the old Dane; “I’ve nothin’ agin ‘em when they are decent. Besides, I have no call to argue, nohow. Argyin’ is like blowin’ the coals of a wood fire: you git some o’ the ashes in your eyes. But set down. I’m uncommon gjad that the priest Martin gave the man Martin enough time to come down-stairs.”

“I am overloaded with writing, speaking and other business,” he explained, “just as if I had never written, spoken or done anything in my life.”

“And it’s lean thanks you git fer it, with a pack of faultfinders a-follerin’ an’ splatterin’ ink all over you,” our host rejoined. “These — ah, what do you call ’em?”

“Critics,” said he of the law, "critics:

> ‘There are some critics so with spleen diseased,
> They scarcely come inclining to be pleased:
> And sure he must have more than mortal skill,
> Who pleases one against his will.’ "

“These critics[1] be the wasps of humankind, with pens fer stingers: make no honey theirselves an’ find fault with all that is made.”

“Their highest art is to extract the splinter from another person’s eye and remain oblivious to the beam in their own,” said Luther, who knew the tribe

real well. “To such splinter experts and beam luggers the Lord is inimical. They are an offensive and a bellicose tribe, which regards its own work as precious and exalted; but what others produce — ah, that must be malodorous! In fine, the faultfinder is what we Germans call a *Hanswurst*, who is pleased only with himself.”

But Luther was always level-headed, always conservative. The fact that he was unjustly criticized, even venomously assailed, did not serve him as a reason for throwing his quill aside and doing nothing, like some of our modern churchmen. Balking is an unseemly thing even in a mule, to say nothing of a saint. Besides, it is only a poor mule that balks. To quote our host on another occasion: “If a body wants to be a mule, let him be a good one.” But Luther was level-headed and added, as he rose:

“But if our Lord will use me, I will gladly follow and do what I can to the glory of God and the welfare of my neighbor.”

Then he began to pace the floor and to speak of his opponents. That was a different matter: doctrine, not diction; Scripture, not style.

“Now let the scurrilous books come and rain and snow defamation!” he exclaimed. “Let our adversaries fume and rage. God has not opposed a wall of stone or a mountain of brass to the waves of the sea: a bank of sand has been enough. ‘Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you.’ We are to rejoice over it as the sure token that we are the blessed — the true Church. To speak for myself, I am greatly pleased that books of this character are written against me.”

There was a momentary lull. Then the ’Squire turned around.

“Reverend,” said he, “our host has a story to tell.”

“So?” queried Luther with patent interest.

“Yes,” answered the venerable Dane. “As I was sayin’, three years come Advent, me an’ mother went to the borough to church in the mornin’, an’ Gretchen, our hired girl, stayed here to kinder keep an eye on things. A woman an’ a dog kin watch a house, that is to say, ordinarily: the woman has the brains an’ the dog has the bark an’ the bite. It was one of ‘em mornin’s when it feels sort o’ good to sniffle the frost in the air. An’ bein’ tolerable coldlike when we got there, I hitched, an’ me an’ mother we went into the sacristy to thaw out a little, an’ announce our —”

“Sacristy — what’s that?” the ’Squire interjected.

“Oh, that’s a place fer the preacher to go in all alone an’ kick hisself after preachin’ a poor sermon. You orter build one to that church o’ yourn.”

Luther smiled.

"Church kept in purty long, fer it was Communion day, an' then me an' mother went to Sophy's fer dinner. (Sophy is my daughter as got the sheriff.) Then his father came, an' we sot a-talkin' an' the wimenfolks a-jabberin' till long after dark, never dreamin' that somethin' might happen at home.— There, I'll be cow-kicked," he exclaimed abruptly, "if that shoat ain't in the garden rootin' out them covered cabbages! I must git the dog." As he walked off, he muttered: "Some pigs is human enough to be hogs."

The old sire was hardly off the porch, when the magistrate began a discussion of the Lord's Supper. Luther listened and explained very patiently until patience ceased to be a virtue.

"Some of the greatest teachers of Protestantism," said he of the law, "teach more in accordance with reason, namely, that the bread and wine merely represent Christ's body and blood."

"Smart teachers they who measure divine works with reason and the ocean with a spoon!" Luther retorted.

"But Zwingli—"

"What a fellow that Zwingli is with his rank ignorance of grammar and dialectics, not to mention other sciences!"

"Now I meant no offense," said the 'Squire, "and mean none now; but the Lutherian doctrine seems to me to be very hard to believe."

"It is an easy matter for me to believe that Christ's body is under the bread," said Luther, "but hard to believe that so many superb bodies in heaven and on earth should have come out of nothing. I cannot comprehend that — it is impossible for me. Much less can I comprehend how the Son of God was born of the Virgin, and that the other two persons of the Godhead did not become incarnate. Do they mean to take offense at this article? If they do not want to learn the A B C's, how will they learn the grammar? The article of creation is such a transcendent thing that no man can comprehend it. If I had or could have a thorough knowledge of all creatures, and should set it forth in words, you would see in it just as great, aye, even greater wonders than are in this Sacrament. Take the soul, which is a single creature and is nevertheless in the whole body at the same time, even in the least organ, so that when I touch the smallest part I reach the whole soul. Now, if one soul can be in all members at the same time, and I not understand how this is effected, should not Christ be able to bring it to pass that He be in the Sacrament at all places at the same time?"

When the goodman of the house returned, Luther dropped the subject, saying with a smile:

"All these things you will learn sufficiently, if you come out and hear good sermons."

"Yes," said our host, mounting the top step, "come out an' hear good sermons; but jist now we'll git in out o' the cold."

At the hall door we met the child with the pipe and matches.

"O grandpap," she exclaimed, quite out of breath, "you ought to see Gretchen! She can't come downstairs and get cider. She has a purty white dress on, and is fixin' with, oh, the nicest ribbons. Mayn't I go and help?"

"Them wimen," said the old man, lighting a match for his pipe, "no man kin understand one! The man as gits one has a riddle as will last the rest of his nat'ral life," he reflected, as he watched the spirals of smoke from his pipe. "Well, after all, a man don't take much interest in a thing as he knows all about — that's a fact. So I'm a-thinkin' the good Lord fixed it so as we can't find out all about a woman because He wants us always to have an interest in her an' always to have a kind o' hankerin' in our hearts after a seein' her ways."

"Nothing on earth is more desirable," remarked Luther, "than the love of woman, to him who may have it."

"As Nat Willis deposes and says," added the 'Squire:

'The world well tried — the sweetest thing in life
Is the unclouded welcome of a wife!' "

We entered the "front room," a stuffy apartment with enough bric-a-brac to stock a curiosity shop. There was so much straw under the carpet that it crunched under our feet. A beggar might have slept on it and dreamed of heaven. But as for the housewife herself, never were apron strings tied around a bigger heart, or pots and kettles put on stove by better cook. I see her benign face now in the little black cap, edged with white lace. She showed us the photographs — it was the third time for me — and, as she held up his picture, bemoaned afresh the tragic career of a young minister.

"Poor man," sighed she, "if only Jane Petersen and the rest hadn't tried to make matches for him, and had allowed me to marry him off to Oleson's Marguerite, it would never —"

“Now, Mother,” interjected the old gentleman, “folks ain’t got no call to regalate a priest’s courtin’. Anyhow, when the old wimen of a congregation take to makin’ matches fer a single preacher, the devil gen ’rally furnishes the brimstone.”

The words were sour as a lemon, but there was so much sweetness in the tone that the remark was as palatable as lemonade.

“But it must be admitted,” said the ’Squire, “that he was the most sociable and commonest man your communion ever had here.”

The old gentleman seemed to be nettled.

“I ain’t got no use for this here familiarity business on the part of preachers,” he rejoined. “If a man wears his heart on his sleeve, ’tain’t nice if he wipes his nose on it.”

“But it wouldn’t have happened,” persisted the old lady, with a woman’s pity for a masculine wreck. “And he was so pious-like, and now they won’t let him preach any more.”

“That’s right,” said the old Dane with emphasis. “Let ’im squat in a pew, not stomp in a pulpit. Give sich a man the pastor’s key to other men’s homes? Nay — I say, nay! A minister has got to be tame and clean, hasn’t he?”

“He should be a man,” Luther answered, “tried and true, of whom blasphemers would be ashamed to speak evil. He should be praised and held in honor even by unbelievers, otherwise he is a laughing-stock to them, inasmuch as he is unable to answer if anything dishonorable is laid at his door, which would be a disgrace to the congregation and an offense to outsiders.”

The situation was becoming awkward, but the ’Squire proved strategist by saying:

“The story, neighbor, the story!”

“Yes,” said he, “the story,” and the housewife withdrew, brushing away some tears for the whilom preacher. “Well, as I was savin’, we stayed late in the borough, an’ comin’ home me and mother was talkin’ o’ the days when we was courtin’ an’ drivin* over these roads o’ nights. Then the old feelin’ came back, an’ I jist let the old mare jog along slow, like I used to when mother an’ me was keepin’ company. An’ so it was past midnight when we got home. Then I minded how I used to be afeard the dog would bark and wake the folks. Somehow, I didn’t want Carlo to bark that night. It was agin my feelin ‘s. I wanted to slip in like I used to. No need of sich thoughts,

’Squire, fer when we come to the porch — I ’U never forgit that — there was Carlo layin’ in blood on the steps, his teeth a-showin’ in the moonlight. I kinder felt choky. ‘Mother,’ says I, ‘something’s gone wrong!’ An’ when we made a light in the livin’-room, there was drills, an’ jimmies, an’ a piece o’ candle on the sofa.”

“Burglars!” said the magistrate. Luther showed tense interest.

“There was goose-flesh every inch o’ me, an* you know, neighbor, I ain’t no coward, either. But I says, ‘Mother, we must first look fer that girl o’ ourn.’ We found her out in the kitchen, an’ a young feller as looked like a beggar a-gittin’ away with a meal. ‘O Master,’ says she, ‘there was robbers here, an’ they shot the dog, an’ I fainted, an’ this man came fer somethin’ to eat — seem’ a light — an’ he scared the robbers away an’ put water on my face, an’ I got him supper.’”

“A filthy tramp!” commented the ’Squire. “This thing of you folks feeding these vagabonds is dead wrong.”

And strange, passing strange, Luther, whom I had seen giving a silver cup to a mendicant, added:

“Though I were able, yet would I not give to those idle beggars; for the more one gives them, the oftener they come. I will not cut my bread away from my wife and children and hand it to such as these; but to one who is worthy, I will give with all my heart according to my ability.”

“But I was mighty glad to let him stay all night,” said our host, taking up the broken thread of his narrative, “an’ in the mornin’, when he asked fer work, I hired ‘im, seein’ he was strong an’ a small feeder, bein’ short-coupled between ribs an’ hips.” The last words were a dab at the ’Squire, who was stingy.

The old Dane stopped and puffed his pipe.

“Well?” queried the ’Squire.

"Well, he made a likely hand. But when Holy Week came, the girl comes to me a-cryin’ an’ says: ‘I want to go to Communion. I want to confess. I lied to you once, an’ I’ve had to lie ever since.’

“A lie is like a snowball,” Luther commented, “the longer you roll it, the bigger it grows.”

“‘Out with it!’ says I, ‘make free!’ An’ she says: ‘That night when the robber came, I waited late on you to git back. Then I went into the closet to hunt up Monday’s washin’, an’ the door blowed shet an’ locked me in. Then the robber came. When he shot the dog, I screamed and fainted. An’

when I came to, he was kneeling beside me with the wash-basin. He was so nice and kind. Then he told me why he came, an' the tears was in his eyes, an' he said he would never steal any more, if I wouldn't tell. So I pitied him and lied to you. I didn't mean anything bad. Oh, forgive."Forgive?' says I, 'I'll kick that feller out o' the county!' "

"Why didn't you drive over and swear out a warrant under statute in such case made and provided?" asked the 'Squire.

'"Cause there's two wimenfolks here," he answered significantly. "An', besides, 'tain't smart to advertise you've got money in the house. But when I was fer kickin' the chap right off the place, the girl started to beller, an' there was mother with the apron to her eyes, an' she says mighty strong-like: 'You won't do no sich a thing! He's been a good boy, an' he's jist as old as our boy as is dead, an' we'll keep 'im."Twasn't no use fussin'. God is partial to petticoats. A man is born with no weapons at all as I kin see. He's got to git a club, or a stone, or a gun. But a woman is born with two of 'em — a tongue an' tears. A feller kin hold out fornenst a tongue, but the tears — the tears is what fixes a man. I jist melted, an' blubbered over, an' knuckled under. I Ve had 'im with me ever since."

"What?" asked the magistrate, amazed. "Not Nick Bauer?"

"The same; best hand in three counties," he answered with evident gratification. "An' I don't know but he's the best boy I've raised. If I wasn't dead sartin there is no angels in pants, I'd think I took in an angel unawares, like the Scriptures say. But it wasn't me: it was them two wimen an' their mercy."

"Let us pray our dear Father in heaven," said Luther, "to enable us all to become thorough disciples of Christ and have a heart in which there is an inexhaustible fountain of love."

Our host sat silent, smoking and staring at the ceiling.

"Well?" said the 'Squire, who was denting the carpet with his foot.

"Well, this here story has a —"

"Moral?" the 'Squire anticipated.

"Naw, a sequel."

"What may it be?" queried the 'Squire. Simultaneously there was a beating of pans, a ringing of bells, and a thumping of boxes in the yard.

"There," said the old Dane, "that's the sequel."

The clock struck eight. The minister and the bridal party entered. Luther whispered to our host: “God delights in preparing surprises for both me and the world.” And that pleased the Dane. He had insisted that Luther give the bride away, and he had consented, saying: “I will honor your little wedding as much as I can.” So he took his place, and, at the proper time, said:

“Sir, and dear friend, I give you this young maid as God in His goodness gave her to me. I confide her to your hands. May God bless you, sanctify your union, and make it happy.”

And right hearty also were his congratulations after the ceremony. To the bride he said: “I invoke God’s richest blessing. The greatest favor God can bestow is to have a good and pious husband.” And to the groom: “Esteem her more highly than the kingdom of France and the principality of Venice. For this is God’s greatest gift and favor — a virtuous, God-fearing wife, with whom thou canst live in peace, and to whom thou mayest safely entrust all thou hast.”

When the company was admiring the presents, Luther said he had been taken by surprise, and so could buy no gift, but would nevertheless give them one of precious value. Then he picked up the Bible, which mother had presented the groom, and wrote on the front flyleaf:

“Dear Father in heaven, who hast condescended to bestow upon me Thy paternal name and office, grant me grace and blessing to guide and govern my wife and household in Thy fear. Give me wisdom and strength, and them a willing heart and mind, to walk in Thy statutes, through Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Handing it to the groom, he said: “In this little present you will at least recognize my ardent good will. Prayer is the Christian’s best occupation.”

“Now, ‘Squire, as the folks is gone an’ we’re alone, I want you to make out them papers. Me an’ mother is goin’ to sign over that house an’ quarter-section in Kansas to this scamp as come to steal our gold, an’ goes with stealin’ our girl.” Tears welled to the old man’s eyes. “Consarn that thief, anyhow! I believe he’s got a piece o’ my old heart, too.”

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1. “Pausanias is of the opinion,” says Dean Swift, “that the perfection of writing correct was entirely owing to the institution of critics… which he hides under the following allegory: ‘The Nauplians in Argos learned the art of pruning their vines by observing that where an Ass had browsed upon one of them, it thrived the better and bore fairer fruit.’” Had the sardonic dean pursued the investigation into the ecclesiastical realm, he would have come upon the following additional facts: The Asses in the temple enclosure, waxing very bold, took to chewing the vines to the ground. Then the Nauplians began to wail, and quit cultivating vines in the temple precincts. Thereupon the Asses fell to hee-hawing most piteously, especially those that edited church periodicals; but the Nauplians, nothing moved, answered and said: “What, shall we keep Asses and do the braying ourselves!”↩

12. Everything Is Lovely

He could distinguish and divide
A hair 'twixt north and northwest side.

— HUDIBRAS.

IT WAS ONE of the first days of winter when I arrived at St. Louis to attend the Missouri colloquium. The sun shone bright, but it was like the glow of the sun seen in a painting— a thing without warmth; or like sunshine in a morgue — a thing without cheer. Chilled to the marrow, I felt these tokens to be an augury of coming events. The Missouri pastors whom I met were all courteous, but somehow the impression was left that it was meant to be the kindness of superior creatures to an inferior strain of the same breed— conduct that always chills in exact proportion to its warmth and profuseness.

Luther, who had arrived the day before, had received the most assiduous attention on account of his learning, which, be it said to Missouri's credit, the St. Louis men were not slow to perceive and appreciate. He was taken to the theological seminary, accompanied to several recitations, and, in short, all the treasures of Missouri were presented to his gaze, including those ever-to-be-revered relics, the desk of Dr. Walther and the long German tobacco-pipes, with which he made the atmosphere blue and redolent when he wrote sermons or composed those matchless specimens of polite literature, the essays on predestination.[1] I am told Luther looked at the relics with disapproving mien; but when he learned the real status of the case, namely, that Walther, though sainted, is not canonized,[2] he smiled, and, assuming the air of one who had seen much of the world and held the present exhibition to be mere child's play and hardly worthy of notice, said:

"When I was in Rome, they showed me, for a precious and holy relic, the halter with which Judas hanged himself!"

This was irritating and did much, I dare say, to prejudice his examiners when they heard of it. But a little incident which occurred the next morning came very near spoiling the whole thing. With his abnormal Teutonic frankness, Luther was all the time putting his foot into things and then looking so charmingly innocent and wondering what all the fuss was about. Once, when I hinted it would be a good idea to be a little more politic, he merely laughed and said, "If I do not use the just ceremonial of a court, pardon me, for I am not familiar with its usage." And so, day after day, he continued to speak and act with his characteristic candor which, like an April day with its sunshine and showers, pleased and provoked at intervals.

At the time of which I speak, he was on his way to the colloquium with a Missouri pastor and teacher. The pastor was a large, austere-looking German, who carried a gold-headed cane, wore a silk hat, and strode along with an air that said, "der Herr Pastor!" at every other step, and at every intervening footfall, "Ich bin, Ich bin!" He was so overanxious to walk erect that he leaned backward — an attitude which all the Missouri clergymen assume in the realm of doctrine, for these good people make such a gigantic effort to be strictly orthodox that most of them lean the wrong way. But for all that, I thought I liked the man. We all like innocent self-importance: it makes us smile. But to the matter in hand. At a beck from Luther, I crossed the street and walked with them towards the church. He was wearing a white rose in a buttonhole and had a dark red one in his hand. I think I have not mentioned this before, but it was his custom to appear with a flower of some sort, when it was to be had in garden or hothouse, just as he went to the debate with Cajetan with a flower pinned to his robe. He graciously handed me the red rose and I thanked him, remarking that it was a beautiful specimen of God's handiwork.

"Yes," said Luther, "if a man were able to make one rose, he would be worthy of an empire. I —"

"Here go we in," broke in our teacher, in English, probably out of deference to me and my beggarly German; "here go we in und take us one beer und pretzel. Dese be fine peoples: go by us in de church."

I looked up and blushed. It was a saloon of the common stripe, windows fly-specked, doors open, emitting a sour smell and presenting to view pictures of prize fighters and daughters of Eve immodestly attired. It is a fixed principle with me not to enter a place of that character. I want my influence to count on the other side, and, besides, the association of ideas is

painful. The devil has crushed many a heart there. There, too, he performs feats in the black art: drowns a man in a wine-glass, submerges a farm in a beer-mug, and transmutes a father into a fiend. But I did not want to wound the feelings of the man who proposed this treat, for he did not see things as I do and meant only to be kind. So I said rather meekly:

"No, thank you. A sip of beer gives me a headache."

Then I felt as if my moral character had shrunk like flannel in hot water, for I should have been truthful enough with myself to have said more; but Luther blurted out an emphatic refusal, and added with his usual candor:

"The devil has spoiled all the beer with his pitch!"

Our Missouri brother had rebuked the teacher for suggesting anything of that sort; but now he was horrified, not at the trick which it was asserted the devil had played, but at us. Had he fallen in unawares with men infected with the fanaticism of the sects? Was it to be regarded as contagious, like the smallpox or the black death? He threw his shoulders back, as if to get as far away as possible, and eyed us from aloof with suspicion.

"Vat!" said he, assuming the voice of a hussar and looking daggers at Luther, for it was he who had given the greater provocation, "vat! be you beide temperenzlers vat make us blame for der saloon? Vat say we Germans sauf beer?"

"We Germans," replied Luther, placing his hand on the brother's shoulder, "should certainly better ourselves in this respect, since God in His great goodness has so richly given us the light of the Gospel in these last days." Then, after a moment's pause, he said slowly, with a quaver of sadness in his voice, "The man who first brewed beer was a pest to Germany."

"What!" exclaimed the brother, lapsing into a fine High German, where his verbal weapons had a finer edge and were better suited to his hand, "do you hold with the fanatics?"

"We, for our part, never did," Luther replied; "but booze continues to be a mighty idol among us Germans."

Our brother's face turned ashen. As he saw the situation, our common German honor was at stake. Germania was receiving a blow in the face, and a blow from a son at that. Ah me, poor brother! Wrath had him by the throat and was choking him. But finally he stammered out:

"Shame, shame. Just like all these Americans. That's what this herd of Irish, Scotch, English is always flinging in our teeth."

“And if nothing else will help, surely the shame that comes upon us in other lands should move us,” said Luther, not at all ruffled by the aspersion cast upon him. “For in this particular other nations, especially Italy, have a proud advantage over us and tauntingly call us the full Dutch.”

“It’s a mean slander!” the brother retorted; but Luther proceeded in his calm, impressive way, altogether unmindful of the interruption.

“Every land must needs have its own devil,” said he: “Italy hers, France hers. Our German devil is doubtless a right big wineskin, and must be called swill, for he is so thirsty and hot that he cannot be slaked with all this guzzling of wine and beer. And such abiding thirst and plague of Germany will, I fear, remain to the judgment day. Ministers have opposed it with God’s Word, rulers with enactments, and some of the nobility with pledges among themselves. Great and horrible ruin— dishonor, murder, all the evil it wreaks on body and soul before our eyes — has cried out against it, and still cries out against it. This should certainly frighten us away from it. But booze continues to be a mighty idol among us Germans and acts like the sea and dropsy: the sea is not sated with all the water that flows into it, and the dropsy grows all the more thirsty and worse from drinking.”

Our brother winced under this, and, cold-water advocate that I have always been, I must admit that my blood began to boil at this arraignment of mine own people, though I knew not what to say in defense. Verily, blood is thicker than water. Yet Luther seemed not a whit less a German for it all. ’Twas like the scathing rebukes of the Hebrew prophets and came with dignity and authority. But when our brother essayed to bolster things up a little by an appeal to history and present conditions, for the purpose of showing that the Germans, though a beer-drinking people, were the best national examples of true temperance, he did not mend matters, for Luther, with a twinkle in his eye, related several incidents which were quite as good as any refutation he might have attempted.

“At the princely wedding celebrated lately at Torgau,” said he, “they drank a whole bottle of wine at one draught, which they called a good swallow. Cornelius Tacitus wrote that it was not thought by the ancient Germans to be a shame to drink and swill for four-and-twenty hours at a stretch. A gentleman at court asked how long agone it was that Cornelius wrote concerning drinking. ‘Twas answered, about fifteen hundred years. Whereupon he said: ’0 my lords, forasmuch as swilling is of such long and glorious descent, let us not render it extinct!’”

Our clergyman smiled and then laughed outright at this fellow's conceit, and with it the heat of his anger was gone, for wrath can survive a genuine laugh as little as ice can withstand the glow of summer's sun. And so it came that a better spirit was injected into the discussion.

Our brother, now in a sweeter frame of mind, took up the discussion of the use of distilled and fermented liquors, irrespective of their abuse and the common character of the places where they are vended. Thus, by a twist of the tongue, the question was shifted from the concrete to the abstract. And, by the way, nothing is more harmless, innocent and genteel than the saloon in the abstract. The only trouble is that it cannot be kept there. In dialectics you can, by a twist of your tongue, turn a hog into a gentleman, but for all practical purposes it stays in the sty. However, as stated, they now entered the domain of the abstract. Here there was agreement in all essentials, Luther not being in the least inclined to make a sin of that which God has not made a sin; but when it came to the question of exercising one's personal liberty, he made several statements that struck me as forceful. For instance, in dealing with the subject in a general way and speaking of the weak who might be made to stumble, he said:

"These have to be spared. We must, to avoid giving them offense, observe fastings and other things which they consider to be essential matters, for this is required by true charity, which harms none and serves all."

And when asked by his opponent, "Who says so?" he replied:

"The apostle, First Corinthians, eighth chapter: 'If my meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth.'"

Presently they got into Caesar's domain. In these days we usually do in discussing this question. When asked if he thought the government ought to interfere and enact restrictive measures, he answered emphatically and without a moment's hesitation:

"Here princes and lords ought to interfere."

It was evident from the frown that crept over the features of our churchman that he dissented and that a new issue was born. But just then a newsboy came upon the scene and a man came to the door of the saloon, and thus attention was diverted from the matter in hand. Luther was attracted by the lad and the Missouri pastor's eye was riveted on the individual at the door.

The newsboy's voice sounded out loud and clear in a few melodious notes, like the matin song of some bird. "Paper, mister?" he asked, sidling up and pleading eloquently with his eyes. Luther, who was always interested in children, took a copy, placed a quarter in his palm and started a conversation with the lad, who was a bright, clean little fellow from one of the parochial schools. "My dear little son," said he in conclusion, "I am glad to hear that thou learnest well and prayest diligently. To pray well is the better half of study. God bless thee." And the little codger scampered off, cheered by the kind words and looking bright as a pansy washed by the dew and kissed by the sun. What alchemy in the touch of love? "Morning papers!" rang out again, loud, and clear, and sweet, and the little fellow turned the corner and vanished from sight. Turning to me, Luther said kindly and impressively:

"I would not have the poor students spurned who try to earn their bread by singing before your door, asking food for the love of God. I have done the same."

Then there was that far-away look in his eyes and they grew misty.

In the meantime our German pastor had called to him the man who had appeared at the saloon door. He was a member of his congregation, wore the garb of an artisan, and showed his love for the bottle by his florid face and red nose, though at this time he was to all appearances sober.

"Don't you ever let me see you coming out of a saloon again. Shame on you, Hans, fie for shame!" said the pastor.

"Why, 'every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if—'"

"Enough, hush," said the preacher. "No drunkard shall inherit the kingdom of God. You're on the way of the drunkard. You swill yourself guzzle full."

Hans's ire rose. "Who told you I get drunk?" he asked with quivering lip.

"A good authority. A man you must believe."

"Trot him out!" exclaimed Hans defiantly. "Show me the man, if you dare."

"Come, I will show him to you," answered the preacher; "you shall meet him face to face." And he took Hans by the sleeve, led him into the saloon, and marched him straight up to the mirror. "There, there now," said he, pointing at the reflection of red-nosed Hans. "There, do you see him? That's the man who told me."

And poor Hans slunk away completely abashed, and, let us hope, bettered.

After all, the German pastor was as much opposed to the vice of drunkenness as any of us. Yet I am of the opinion that no minister should have aught to do with the saloon. It takes the edge from his testimony, for laymen are apt to think, as my good old Cowper puts it, —

> "Strike up the fiddle, let us all be gay!
> Laymen have leave to dance, if parsons play."

When the pastor returned, we resumed our way to the church. Luther's only comment on the scene just witnessed was: "Whence can we take the sermon that would be powerful enough to overcome this disgraceful hog life and drink devil among us?" The question elicited no reply. In fact, very little, if anything, was said until we reached the church. Each was busy with his own thoughts.

We had come together, you remember, at the seat of Missouri's Vatican, and her great men and chivalrous were there, her Don Quixote and her Samson, men who deserve honorable mention in Missouri's annals for their many mighty deeds in the wars against the Philistines — the Ohioans, the Swedes, and the unwashed throng who will not say: "Great is Missouri: Walther is her prophet: there, are no other Lutherans!" The former doughty notable has knocked over multitudes of synergists, albeit he first made them of straw and set them up to be knocked down; and the latter valiant man of fame has repeatedly slain the "Philistines," hip and thigh, with the jaw-bone of an ass, albeit the jaw-bone was his own, and the naughty "Philistines" never found out they were slain. Nevertheless, these are big men in their own camp, for they tower head and shoulders above their companions. Besides these men of renown, others less renowned were present at the sessions, but they were not members of the examining committee.

When the colloquium was about to be opened, I got into a little trouble on my own account — the first encountered since I had entered on this Boswellian enterprise. My presence was obnoxious. A committee of one was sent to investigate. When I told him I was a reporter, he answered that they would do their own reporting if they had anything to report. Then I scratched my head where it is growing bald and tried to recall some shibboleth. To say, I am a Lutheran, would be both bootless and risky.

Would not the very next question be, "To what part of the honorable Synodical Conference do you belong?" That would not do. Only a numbskull would twist a rope for his own neck. So I switched the conversation on a side-track as soon as possible, waxed eloquent and voluble on general church matters and wove into my sentences as many of Missouri's pet expressions as I possibly could. Oh, how I made "Synergist" trot! and "*gottseliges Geheimnis*" — what a fog I conjured up with that! But the result, ah, it was magical. Stay? Why certainly I might, and more than that, I was entirely welcome. As for the report, well, it would be altogether in keeping with the honor which one should give his superiors, and especially the obedience which one should yield those who have the rule over us, if I would submit it to the president of the committee before publishing it. Then he withdrew, leaving behind the frown he had brought and taking with him a complacent smile, and I sharpened my pencil, wondering if Missouri had learned a trick or two from Rome or simply sucked them out of her thumb. If the latter, it must be a very accommodating thumb out of which one can get such nice, liberal theories and such domineering practice.

After reading the ninth chapter of Romans and offering a short prayer, the chairman declared the session open. The questioning began at once. This proved to be by all odds the finest colloquy of the entire series. In fact, I never attended a better one. There was order and depth to it. It was a real pleasure to sit and listen. The entire ground of dogmatics was gone over in a thoroughly systematic manner. It was admirable. Luther had found men in some measure worthy of his steel. He seemed to enjoy it. He answered with animation and sometimes at considerable length, setting forth the mysteries of God in clear and beautiful language. The examiners soon realized they had a master before them, and in a short time it looked to me as if they were lost in admiration and were asking a question now and then only to keep up the glow of Luther's discourse, as one would occasionally stir a fire to keep the flame ablaze and see the sparks shoot. Ultimately, the bearing and the learning of this master divine cast a spell over the little assembly. The doctrine of the Last Things was finally reached and finished, and the dogmatical examination was closed with perfect agreement from beginning to end. The doctrine of Predestination had been touched upon very lightly by the chairman, for some good and sufficient reason which was not patent, and none of the others appeared to be inclined to ask any questions on this

subject. To me the thing was passing strange, and I concluded that some Missourians are loath to touch that subject for the same reason that a burned child shuns the fire.

A few minutes were yet left till the time for the noon adjournment. These were consumed by the spectators in asking ethical questions. The subject of usury was presented, and Luther agreed with them in denouncing the taking of interest on loans under ordinary circumstances. Another asked him if he held it to be right for a man to marry his deceased wife's sister, and he answered that he thought it was not right. This also was Missouri's position. In fine, so far there was nothing but agreement.

As we went to lunch, Luther was in fine spirits; and little wonder, for the morning's work had been exhilarating, and in all our itinerary he had not been so near his goal.

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1. It is said that when one of the younger Missourians has the dogma of predestination to defend, he stealthily steals to the Walther Museum and takes a few whiffs from one of the old pipes. But this is doubtless an invention worthy to be classed with the "pious frauds" of yore. It is more likely that the orthodox practice in this respect is limited to using the same brand of smoking-tobacco.↩
2. Thus far nothing more has been done than to place his name before St. Andrew's in the synodical calendar. Should the canonization be undertaken, I understand the editor of *The Error of Modern Missouri* is to be the *advocatus diaboli*.↩

13. A Fly In The Ointment

For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant saints, whom all men grant
To be the true church militant.

— HUDIBRAS.

THE BROTHER with whom we had gone to the colloquium in the morning must have conferred with the committee during the recess, for when we convened again it was only too evident that a change had come over their hitherto serene spirits. The good brother had no doubt related to them the discussion we had on the way in the morning, and now — now there was a fly in the ointment and their hearts were sore troubled.

This condition of affairs gave rise to the most ludicrous thing that happened in our entire round of synods. The great Reformer, the most German German of all the Germans of all the centuries, was actually suspected of being a Yankee — nativistic in sentiment and chock full of Puritan notions. Just think of it! Well, so wags the world, and so wag some churchmen who would not be wags for all the world. Verily, men of high degree and men of low degree are never more like donkeys than when they allow suspicion to pull them around by the ears, for then they not only have long ears, but they usually bray and kick also. But men, like boys and apes, will cut capers, and little seems to be the use of wasting energy by rapping them over the fingers with the end of a pen. It is pleasanter to laugh, and it likely does more good.

Their suspicion was not expressed in so many words, but it was very plain in the questions put. Just as soon as the afternoon session was opened, the chairman started in on the temperance question. He said a deal on the fanaticism of the sects, and was especially verbose on the subject of the total abstinence propaganda. All this was preliminary to the question:

"Do you think it would enrage God if you were to take a sup of beer?"

Luther laughed such a merry peal as I had not yet heard from him, and then said, "God could stand it if I took a good swallow," shook his head slowly, as if to say, this sort of questioning beats all, and then laughed again.

The colloquists put their heads together over the table. Luther's laughing provoked them. As a rule, nobody likes to be compelled to pay for another man's laugh. What they thought of his reply I do not know, but they continued to talk in an undertone of this answer, or of the next question, for quite a while.

Luther grasped the situation at once, and now seemed bent on driving them a merry canter at their own pace. We had not been ecclesiastical tramps to no purpose. Tilting his chair and putting his feet on the rostrum, he began to sharpen his pencil, acting for all the world like a typical whittling Yankee. And all the while there was a twinkle in his eye. He enjoyed a little fun hugely.

Then the chairman opened his mouth again, and the Sunday question hopped out. Now, as in the previous instance, cautious steps were taken to lead up to the question to be put. After the fanaticism of the sects had been laid bare with unsparing tongue, the question was asked:

"And now, what do you hold with reference to Sunday observance?"

Brushing the pencil chips from his lap, Luther replied:

"To sanctify the Sabbath day signifies to keep it holy. What, then, is implied by keeping it holy? Nothing else than to be employed in holy words and actions."

Over the table went the heads once more in consultation long drawn out. This answer might be pure doctrine, and it might not be. Sabbath day! — a nose properly trained could scent heresy in the term itself. One of the audience, either an ex-editor of The Lutheran Witness or a man who resembled him very much, grew impatient and accosted the committee, saying, "Ach, pshaw, why waste time? That answer stands in the Large Catechism." The committee was not inclined to question the language of the Catechism, and so, this being dropped, the coast was clear for the next question.

This was the question to determine the matter of Americanism — a hideous something like unto a nightmare, save that it does not rest by day, and so disturbs the equanimity of some otherwise very sane church people all the time. The spokesman rose, both to his feet and to the occasion. He

waxed eloquent, and sarcastic, and caustic, and winsome, and forceful, and foolish in setting forth the advantages of German and the shortcomings of English. The vast treasure of orthodox lore in the German language and the beggarly number of Lutheran works in English was used to the utmost. Nor did he forget to say, and say repeatedly with slight variations, that "all English-speaking bodies have more or less heretical ideas under their hats." As for himself, he questioned if the true Lutheran doctrine could ever be adequately expressed in English. "In fine," he concluded, "English is one of the greatest present-day perils of the Lutheran Church." Then, removing his eye-glasses and balancing them on the forefinger of his left hand, he straightened up εις[1] his full height, and shaking his right hand with index-finger extended, asked:

"Now, what do you hold of the English?"

"I hold England is a piece of Germany," Luther replied, "for they use the Saxon language as used in Westphalia and the Netherlands, although it is much corrupted. The Danish and the English languages are Saxon, which is the genuine German. The Highland German is not the real German. It fills the mouth full and wide, and sounds —"

"No, no, not that," broke in the examiner, throwing his arms up and striking an attitude of repulsion. "We mean, what do you hold of the language question in the Church? Shall we educate our preachers in English also, or do you agree with those whose prudence dictates that the Church shall be kept German?"

"I do not agree with those who apply themselves to one language and despise all the others," said Luther. "I would rather educate such young men and such a people as could also be useful in foreign countries and be able to converse with the people, so that it should not happen to us as it does to the Waldensians and the Bohemians, who have their faith so closely tied up in their own tongue that they are unable to talk correctly and intelligently with anyone not acquainted with their language."

"But do you not see the danger to our doctrine and spirit in the transition from one language to the other? In pouring the good old wine into the new, and, let me add, inferior[2] cask, some is spilled, and the rest takes an unsavory tang from the cask. The wisest policy is to keep the Church German so long as possible, is it not?[3] That is our policy."

"In the beginning the Holy Ghost did not operate in that manner," Luther replied in a tone that carried rebuke; "but He gave manifold tongues for the

office of the ministry so that the apostles could preach wherever they might be. I would rather follow their example."

Again the heads went over the table with quick, common impulse, and great wonder it was they did not bump together. The man behind me said of Luther in an undertone: "On him hops and malt are lost." The man whom I took to be an ex-editor of the Witness exclaimed: "He is right: 'the faith of the fathers in the language of the children!' that's the only sensible slogan." There was considerable stir and hubbub all through the chamber. In a few minutes the noise subsided. Give them time, and men will always come to their senses — if they have any. The Missouri Synod in this land of ours has some use for the Yankee: like the Sunday-school, he is to her a necessary evil, for English, like the itch, is catching and it must be looked after. Eventually the committee was ready to move on.

Then came the great question to test Lutheran orthodoxy — when Missouri does the testing. It was nothing less than predestination. Of course each synod in the land has a monopoly of orthodoxy, but the Missouri brotherhood overtops them all, because it has a monopoly of orthodoxy and a monopoly of predestinarianism, to boot. If, like the kine in the dream, lean predestinarianism swallows Missouri's orthodoxy and grows none the fatter, no one need wonder. Missouri had no business to try to domesticate the thing which Calvinism has been trying to starve for, lo, these many years. This is the one thing in which Missouri and her Synodical Conference differ from all other Lutheran bodies. And a very troublesome thing it has proved to be. Ordinarily little is now said about it. The common people do not understand it, anyhow, and so the rule is to preach the good old doctrine of salvation by faith. But, dearly beloved, a colloquium is a very different thing,[4] and a preacher must be proved in the distinctive doctrines.

The question was led up to in a very guarded and cautious manner. It seemed as if the aim was to leave no avenue of escape open, and thus make the applicant accept Missouri's position or be a self-branded heretic. It was a shrewd manipulation of the situation. It was Missouri, and Missouri only, that gave God the glory for man's salvation: all the rest gave the glory to man, or divided it between God and man. They were synergists; and to the speaker Synergist was a sibilant word: he could make it hiss like a serpent and sizz like hell-fire. Luther was an intent listener all the while. The smile had faded from his lips. He had risen to his feet, and now stood behind his

chair, clutching the back firmly with both hands. This was earnest business, not at all like the quibbling of a few moments ago.

The speaker talked on, and on, and eventually came to the point in the whole controversy. He put the case into the concrete: "Did God elect me, as the synergistic Ohioans say, because God foresaw I would believe and remain constant, or was I brought to faith because I was elected, as we orthodox Missourians say? That which God has —"

"Avoid and flee such thoughts as a temptation of Satan, and instead look upon Christ. God protect you," Luther interjected. From his tone and bearing it was evident that this was a delicate subject to him.

"This is a point now in controversy," said the chairman. "The cause of our conversion lies in the election, not —"

"Begin below at Christ," Luther interrupted. He was growing testy. "Reason always begins to build at the roof and not at the bottom."

"But it is a matter of present-day controversy. Doesn't our conversion lie in God's election?"

"Begin below at Christ," Luther almost thundered. Then in milder tone: "It is sufficient for us to learn Christ in His humanity in which the Father has revealed himself. But we, like fools, will gabble and search after God's secrets: therefore, such as thereupon plunge themselves into despair are rightly served."

"For," began the chairman, with affected dignity, straightening himself up to his full height, "for —"

"For," said Luther, taking the drawled word from his lips and giving it impetus, "for if one should torment himself forever with predestination, he would reap nothing but dread. I have been well and thoroughly plagued and tormented with cogitations of predestination; but at last, God be praised, I clean left them. I took hold again of God's revealed Word. Higher I was not able to bring it."

"But," persisted the chairman, whose patience was almost gone, "the question is, Whether God elected us to faith, or in view of faith?"

"Begin below at Christ," Luther rejoined again, "then we both hear and find the Father. All those who began at the top have broken their necks." And as often as election was broached, he would reiterate: "Begin below at Christ!" Nothing could budge him from this position. And the great theologian was right: the man who begins with Christ crucified for us will not sink in the inky ocean of predestinarianism, that ocean on whose cliffs

Calvin stood and gasped, “Horrible!” “Avoid and flee such thoughts as temptations of Satan,” Luther said in conclusion.

The chairman was nettled. He said: “We are not going beyond the safety line. Did not our father Luther write a book against Erasmus in which he dealt altogether with matters pertaining to this very subject? and did not our venerable and erudite Doctor Walther emulate him? and are we not doing likewise?”

Now, thought I, the secret is out: Luther will have to disclose his identity. Instead, he was so much provoked that he began to denounce servile imitation as a dangerous thing, especially when the imitator does not measure as much around the head as the person imitated. He then told this to illustrate his point:

“An ape watched a farmer splitting a large log. Itching to imitate him, he seated himself upon a log and split it, but forgot to put in a wedge. He pulled out the ax, but his extremities were caught in the split and mashed so that he was a cripple all his life. Thus,” said he, applying the moral, “it is with all imitators who have not the ability to follow the example they would copy, or undertake measures beyond their power to accomplish.”

Then, as if satisfied that this was enough on this point — and surely it was enough in quality and quantity — he recurred to the question of predestination, and said:

“But, my dear sir, do not devote yourself to such questions. Deal thou with the humanity of Christ. There you are certain that God sent His Son into the flesh.”

By this time, to use a phrase of the street, the chairman was warm under the collar, and the rest felt just as he did. Nor do I much blame them. This was rough handling. The chairman gave vent to his wrath:

“You, sir, came here to be examined after applying for admission to our synod in due and legal form, and we came here to examine you. Now you act the part of a dictator. Instead of recognizing our office and answering our questions with becoming modesty, you absurdly intrude lengthy instructions and belittling illustrations. We are not here to be instructed by you. We want to elicit your —”

“I do not think it will be an absurd intrusion, if I forget for a moment your greatness,[5] while I perform an office of charity,” Luther cut in with biting irony. Then he continued, little caring for the displeasure which now showed itself on all sides: “Do not pry into things too high for you. He who

is wise will stick to the track here staked off. God has given us His Son Jesus Christ: of Him we should think daily, and in Him we should see ourselves mirrored: there predestination will solve itself most beautifully. For aside from Christ, all is sheer danger, death and devil; but in Him all is unalloyed felicity. For if one should martyr himself forever with predestination he would have no reward but dread."

There were signs of impatience and there was irksome shuffling of feet, but Luther kept on as if he were going to put in a hard day's work on what he had just called an office of charity:

"Thus am I wont to quiet those who question me and want to know much about predestination: don't begin too high, else you will make a suicidal leap and break your neck; but go first to Bethlehem and seek the Christ-child in the manger, see how the mother of Christ fondles the Babe, how He died for you, how He suffered for you, and what He did for your sakes. On these things express yourselves and give account whosoever you may be, then will I reply to the question of predestination."

Then one of the audience spoke up and asked: "Why is it that one man is converted and another is not, where both hear identically the same Word? Is it not simply because God did not elect the one? for as certainly as God is God, the man, if elected, would have had to believe and be converted; or do you hold with those who teach that God elected in view of faith?"

"The reason why God elected this or that one should not be laid to the account of our Lord God, but to man," Luther answered. "He is to be given the blame, not God, for the promises are universal, given and certified to all men, be they who they may, without distinction. Now it is the will of God that all men be saved; hence it is not the fault of the Lord God, who promises it and who will certainly and faithfully do what He has promised, but our own, who do not want to believe it." Then, after a moment's pause, he supplemented: "In matters pertaining to foreordination, it is most profitable and best to begin below at Christ."

There was something very satisfactory in this reply, unpalatable as it was. It at least entered upon the subject which the committee was bent on probing. The chairman, alert for every opportunity, was quick to perceive the trend which a few timely words might give the discussion.

"It does not enter our minds to blame God for man's fall into sin, nor for his remaining in sin," he remarked, opening the sluice-gate to a flood of muddy theology; "but that some of these poor, lost souls are now saved

depends upon the good and gracious will of God in electing them unto salvation. All is embraced in election. If God elects one, that one must come to faith as certainly as God is God. On the other hand, if God has not elected him, he cannot be saved. 'Many are called, but few are chosen —'"

He got no further. Luther raised his hand, and while his eyes flashed, he said in an emphatic tone that made the chills creep down one's back:

"That is an especially wicked interpretation!"

It froze the words on the chairman's lips. He stood silenced and appalled. Luther went on, speaking rapidly and with much feeling:

"For if one holds and believes naught else of the Deity, how can it be possible that he should not be angry at God, whose will alone is to be blamed foi it that we are not all saved? But place these thoughts beside those which obtain when we first learn to know Christ the Lord, and we see that they are nothing but diabolical blasphemies. Consequently this passage, 'Many are called, but few are chosen,' has a far different meaning. The preaching of the Gospel is universal and public, — whosoever will may accept it; and God, therefore, also has it proclaimed so universally and publicly that every man should hear, believe, appropriate it and be saved. But what is the sequence? That which follows in the Gospel: 'Few are chosen'; that is, few so conduct themselves toward the Gospel that God can be well pleased with them. For some hear it, and do not heed it; some hear it, and do not hold it fast, nor will they yield or sacrifice aught for it; some hear it, but care more for money, and goods, and worldly pleasure. But that does not please God and He does not want such people. That is what Christ calls not being chosen, that is, not conducting themselves so that God may be pleased with them."

The faces of the auditors were white with excitement. The silence was intense, almost painful, like the lull before a storm. That little speech showed plainly enough that Luther did not stand with Missouri on the dogma of predestination; but the chair man had another question, evidently for the purpose of eliciting whether the applicant stood with Missouri's opponents.

"Now tell us," said he, "without any ifs, ands or buts, whether you hold that God from all eternity elected a certain man to salvation because He foresaw that this man would believe and persevere in faith?"

All the brethren craned their necks and pricked their ears.

“The reason why God elected this or that one should not be charged to the account of God, but to man,” began Luther.

“That’s not to the point now,” broke in one.

“Nay,” piped another, “stick to this matter of God’s foreknowledge in its relation to predestination. Take the case of those who fall away and ex —”

“Because it was foreknown that they would fall,” Luther hastened to reply, “they were not predestinated. But they would have been predestinated had they returned and persevered in holiness and truth.”

Confusion reigned for a few moments. Epithets were heard on all sides. Synergist, Pelagian, Ohioan and other verbal pets of Missouri buzzed about our ears.

Straightway the chairman announced the result of the colloquy: “Say we not right, thou art an Ohioan? We want none such. Thou art a heretic!”

In the midst of the din Luther had got his hat, and now stood near the door. Without a word in reply, he went out, evidently disgusted with the whole thing. When I joined him he said curtly, but with a strain of sorrow in his voice:

“They are proud and haughty spirits!”

We walked down the street, neither of us saying a word. There was so much to think of, and it was nearly all unpleasant. Luther finally broke the silence. He had been reflecting on his experience with the synods in this country.

“It happens to me as it did to the old man and his son with the mule,” said he. “Do what I may, it will not answer. It is always Mr. Wiseacre who comes and bridles the horse at the rump.”

But the humor of the situation soon asserted itself and Luther grew merry. What struck him as especially ludicrous was the fact that the Missouri Synod, which prates so much about its Luther loyalty, had unwittingly declared him to be a heretic. And his humor on this point was to the king’s taste. As I bade him goodbyee, he said with a twinkle in his eye:

“Wnen you get home, tell the people that you have shaken hands with Doctor Luther, the greatest heretic.”

As his streetcar moved away, I stood on the corner wondering what would be the result of the colloquy with the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States, which was next on the list.

A few days later I joined him at the farmhouse where we were to spend the holidays with some college folk.

1. Greek εις, Hebrew דע, Latin ad, German zu, English to. And now, believe me, gentle reader, it did hurt me sore to set that foreign type in the foregoing English text; but I had to do it for the sake of the learned. How otherwise would they know that this is a book? I do you to-wit: in the world, a book's a book, though there's nothing in it; but in the Church, a book is not a book unless there's Greek and Latin in it.↩
2. Inferior, eh? Sprachiviwiffenfchaftseinheit, for instance, as a sample of superiority. Bosh! No considerate mortal of temperate habits would go to such lengths. — Editor.↩
3. Fern fei es daher von uns, daf wir uns anftrengen fulltne, englisch zu werden, oder danadj ftreben fullten, unfere Gemeinden und Gemeindefdjulen in engliche zu verwandeln… Belche Sdjabfammern der redjtgläubigen Kirche würden mir unfern Kindern veridjlieben. – Evang. Luth. Schulblatt.↩
4. As Luther in one of his merry moods said of the learned preachers' conferences: "We make it so curled and finical that God himself wondereth at us."↩
5. Erasmus suggested "that an army of schoolmen be sent against the Turks, not in the hope that the Turks might be converted by them so much as that Christendom might be relieved by their absence." But who is this Erasmus that we should listen to him? Why, bless you, he is the man who made this sensible remark.↩

14. The Mending Of A Bachelor

Heap on more wood! the wind is chill;
But let it whistle as it will,
We'll keep our Christmas merry still.

— SCOTT.

O ROXIE, he's just the nicest nice bachelor!" exclaimed Mame to her college chum. "There, tuck the blanket under the seat this way: the sled'll soon start. He's a second cousin of ours. Don't you remember, I was telling you about him the night Xantippe caught us up after the retiring-bell had been rung and Nan crawled under the bed?"

"Oh, yes," Roxie replied with a merry laugh. "That was the night Xantippe spoiled an oyster supper and a couple of embryo matches, and just looked as if she took a fiendish delight in it all. Say, the horrid thing could devour a dozen of the sweetest love affairs, couldn't she, and then look just as sour as a professor of mathematics when a body hasn't got out the Trig stint. Ugh! Say, Mame, did a mathematical prof ever give you the ague?"

"But, Roxie, that bachelor cousin of mine is just fine. Say, he's a better catch than that chum brother has brought home this vacation; and he's got money — loads of it."

"Just as if a body couldn't see how your brother's big chum admires you. Why a little boy sucking his thumb and gawking into a window full of Christmas toys isn't a bit more transparent. Bet — No, Xantippe says that's vulgar. Guess — Pshaw! rhetoric teacher says that isn't precise. Well, I'm just sure he begged Frank to bring him up here. Oh, you sly thing, maybe you are putting up a lightning-rod for protection against me. But you needn't: I don't like red hair and big feet — they're just horrid!"

"Maybe brother Frank wasn't anxious about your coming, and maybe I can't see anything at all," Mame retorted. "But, Roxie, cousin Van's not more than thirty-five, and he's an Apollo, and a Chesterfield, and I don't

know what all, done up in one bundle, and neatly done up, too, for he looks like those pictures of the masculine genus you see on fashion-plates — just so. Oh, it gives me a pain. To tell truth, I do think that's what ails him, for where is the girl that can love a chap that seems made just to look at, not even to touch a wee bit with the end of your finger? Like a wax figure — might soil it, don't you know. Poor fellow! Say, Roxie, if he's home when we get there, and he promised sure, I want you to break in on his reserve, and — just make him surrender. And then, if you don't want the prisoner, or aren't captured by the said prisoner, why the way's open for some other nice girl. See?"

"Sure. Why, Mame Kraemer, do you think I don't know it's a reflection on the sex to have one man in the world whom some woman can't catch and domesticate?"

"But he's a lion, or a tiger, or a something horrible! Mother says he's incorrigible."

"In-cor-ri-gi-ble!" exclaimed Roxie, imitating the seminary matron, "that's what Xantippe says when she spies us waving a hand at a senior from a dorm window — just as if a body could help it! But I'm dreadfully interested. If he's there, if the train isn't snow-bound, or if it isn't wrecked, or if he hasn't been waylaid, or if he hasn't backed out, Why I'll —"

"What plotting is this?" cried Frank, throwing a buffalo robe into the sled. "Been hunting you high and low."

"Your cheeks ought to burn with shame for sneaking away," added Frank's big chum, as he rubbed Mame's face with snow.

"Jack Williams, you are nothing but a big bear," she protested.

"A cinnamon-bear," Roxie added. "Some Italian ought to lead you around by a —" An application of snow ended the sentence.

Then there was a lot of mock scolding from both girls till the older members of the company, including Luther, came with the little folks, and then, in a trice, the bob-sled glided over the road to the jingling of bells, bearing one of the merriest parties that left the church that Christmas eve.

The college folk kept up an animated conversation of hashed sense and nonsense, and Mr. Kraemer and Luther, who was sitting on the front seat with him, talked of religious matters. The service, with its old-time carols, had been a delight to Luther; and the church, with its high altar, statues and pictures, was a very homelike place to him. He spoke in praise of the church and was amazed when his companion informed him that there was

considerable objection to church decorations of this character. He at once called attention to the illustrated books and Bibles which these people use.

"So we kindly ask them," he said, "graciously to concede us the privilege of doing what they themselves do, that we may paint these pictures upon walls for the sake of commemoration and instruction, inasmuch as they do as little harm upon walls as in books. It is better that we portray upon walls how God created the world, Noah built the ark, and what other good histories there are, than that we limn there any sort of worldly or shameful thing. Yes, would to God, I could persuade the lords and the rich to have the whole Bible painted on the inside and outside of houses before the eyes of all men. That would be a Christian work."

The conversation on the front seat was punctured by peals of laughter from the rear. Roxie was casting a horoscope for Mame and had traced it to the point where fate with wings and a dart, guided by a brilliant star, would throw Mame into the arms of a cinnamon-bear. It was the cinnamon-bear's ingenious comment that threw the company into convulsions of laughter. "Joy and peace are also fine and noble gifts of God," Luther remarked, and then continued his argument.

"Thus I know also with certitude that God wants us to hear and read of His works — especially the suffering of Christ. But if I am to hear it or recall it, it is impossible for me not to form a picture of it in my heart. For whether I will it or not, when Christ is mentioned an image is cast in my heart in the form of a man hanging upon a cross, just as my face is naturally mirrored in water when I gaze into it. Now if it be not sinful, but good, that I have Christ's likeness in my heart, why should it be a sin when I have it before my eyes, inasmuch as heart is accounted more than eyes? But I must stop forthwith, else I might give the iconoclasts occasion to read the Bible — nevermore!"

In the rear, the astrological jest had grown into earnest discussion and the coquettish Roxie, who had almost as much antipathy to being dead in earnest as to being dead in a coffin, began to quote Byron in winsome tone and manner for the sake of putting an end to it all:

"Ye stars! which are the poetry of Heaven,
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires, — 'tis to be forgiven
That, in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state,
And claim a kindred with you; for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life,
Have named themselves a star."

But Mr. Williams, who had the study of law in view and was born with a lawyer's instincts, was not to be baffled thus. He appealed to Father Martin as the court of last resort. Luther laughed, and said:

"At times one must let learned pates have their nonsense and pastime. So, if the abuse and superstition were left off, it would not especially provoke me if an individual were to employ himself with such horoscopes for the sake of entertainment. But concerning the matter per se, I will never allow myself to be persuaded that we should classify astrology with the liberal arts, and that for this reason: it has no good proof."

"Beg pardon," broke in Miss Kraemer with considerable earnestness, "but astrological predictions have been fulfilled."

"That they cite testimony," Luther replied, "presents no difficulty to me, because these astrological verifications are nothing but isolated instances; and those who were versed in the art have noted and recorded only those which did not fail. But the others — those in which the stellar influences did not operate as they said they would — they have not recorded. As Aristotle holds that one swallow does not make a summer, so I also maintain that one cannot base a real and complete art on such isolated observations."

"But," interrupted Frank, "the moon has an influence on the ebb and flow of the tide and also on the insane. Then why should moon and planets not have an influence upon all men — govern character, and thus have much to do with the course of life?"

"I hold nothing of it," said Luther, "concede it nothing at all. But I should like them to meet this argument: Esau and Jacob were born of the same father and mother at the same time and under like planetary aspect and were nevertheless of opposite character, nature and disposition."

No one attempted a solution. A moment later, one of the young ladies started a Christmas hymn, and the others soon took part.

"Music is one of the noblest arts," Luther remarked to his companion. "The two exercises and pastimes which I like best are music and gymnastics. The former dispels all care and melancholy thoughts, while the latter produces physical agility and preserves health."

A moment later he was participating in the hymn. The horses started a faster gait, and songs to the Infant Redeemer floated out on the chill night air above the clamor of the sleigh-bells, till the lane which led to the farmhouse was reached.

"O Mame, can he dance?" Roxie asked. She was thinking of Vanmeter. The monstrosity was shortly to be confronted.

"Oh, do hold your tongue — bite it," whispered Mame. "Preacher to the right of us, preacher to the left of us: think of the fate of the loyal six hundred."

But it was too late. A word out of the mouth is like a bird out of the cage. Frank was two years in his theological course, which made him feel that this manifestation of the flesh ought to be rebuked, and two weeks in love with Roxie, which made him feel as if he could not administer the rebuke. But love makes even a theologue crafty. He kept his equilibrium between conscience and policy by blurting out:

"A homily on dancing is in order. These girls can't keep their toes still. Let's —" His mother put her hand on his mouth. But Luther forthwith picked up the cudgel.

"These enumerated manifestations," he had mentioned evidences of impurity, "never occur with greater frequency or grossness than at public dances. It cannot be told how many sins are committed there and how great they are, what eye and ear imbibe, what lecherous touch and twittering bring. In short, world is world."

"Why," said Roxie in the arch way she had, "why even the innocent little children dance for joy."

And Luther, not to be outdone, responded with the air of a courtier: "Do that, too; become a little child, and dancing will not harm you." Diplomacy, be it remembered, is the art that administers wormwood as if it were honey.

"It's all fun," said the little mother. "The girls haven't learned dancing at school."

She did not know that college students learn some things that are not in the curriculum.

The sled had hardly stopped when the little folks began to scamper out. Luther seemed to regret that the children's service was over and that the little church lay so far behind, for, as he rose from his seat, he said:

"The whole world has nothing better, nothing more precious, nothing finer, than the dear church in which we hear God's Word and where He is honored with real worship."

A moment later our spry old father was helping the ladies out of the sled — a new role, thought I, for the hero of Worms. But if ever a domestic heart beat under a man's coat, it was Luther's, as I should shortly see.

Blankets were hastily thrown over the horses and the whole company, big and little, rushed into the house, redolent with pine and pastry — especially pungent with ginger cookies of generous size, in the form of roosters, rabbits and horses, such as my own mother used to bake. No Christmas has the right odor for me without them. This family had an old-fashioned German Christmas. There were plates of good things and presents for all in the sitting-room. And you may be sure that the little mother was the last to leave the house for the church. Who brought it all? *Christkindchen*. And, among other things, he brought Luther a lathe and tools for woodturning, no doubt because Luther had incidentally expressed a fondness for that sort of work. It was a pleasure to see his gratitude and glee.

The children huddled around Luther and he must needs pat Lena's doll on the head, show Martin how to shoot with the crossbow, and toot Hans's horn again and again. Then Hans got his ABC book and Luther took him on his knee and began to teach him his letters. Placing him on the floor and patting him on the head, he said to him and his little sister, who had come to show how well she could read:

"Have a care to continue diligently as you have begun. Thus you are doing something that not only pleases your father, who loves you, but which will also benefit you greatly. For God, who has commanded that children should heed their parents, has also promised blessing to obedient children."

A few minutes later he was actually romping with the little ones, and he a runaway monk with gray in his hair! Ah, it was a scene to scandalize the Pope and please angels!

“Since we are preaching to children, we must also prattle with them,” he said, and it was a word of gold. “When Christ wished to teach men he became a man. If we are to teach children, we must become children. Would to God, we had more of this child’s play.”

In the Christmas cheer and excitement everybody had forgotten Vanmeter — everybody but Roxie, and in a whisper she asked:

“Mame, where’s the lion?”

“Where is he?” asked Mame aloud, addressing the farm-hand.

“In the kitchen,” he replied mechanically.

Arm in arm they hurried to the kitchen. At the door Roxie stepped back.

“Oh, you mean thing!” she exclaimed, giving Mame a push. “Your Croesus has a coat as piebald as Joseph’s, and your Apollo has a bald pate and a gray beard. Set my cap for him? Ugh!”

The hired man was called to account.

“He’s an old clock-mender,” he explained, “and wants to stay overnight”

There was a hurried consultation. The house was full, but the little mother insisted on lodging the wayfarer. When there is room in the heart, there is room in the house. And then the old man must take part in the festivities. As he entered the room, it was noticed that his cheeks were tear stained. Sad memories must have touched the wanderer’s heart. He sat with folded hands, staring at the ancient grandfather’s clock in the opposite corner.

Luther had Hans on his lap and the other little ones around his knees, and had been telling them about, oh, such a beautiful garden, in which he had seen ever so many children in golden coats and with fine little horses with golden bridles and silver saddles. And the little tot, who had been named Hans Luther after one of the Reformer’s children, was greatly delighted. Luther now finished the interrupted story:

“And I asked the man, ‘Whose children are they?’ He replied, ‘These are the children who like to pray and learn and are pious.’ Then I said, ‘My good man, I have a son; his name is Hans Luther; may not he also come to this garden to eat such nice apples and pears, and ride such fine little horses, and play with these children?’ and the man said, ‘If he likes to pray and learn and is pious, he shall come to this garden.’ Therefore, fear God and obey your parents.”

The wanderer had not taken his eyes from the old timepiece.

“Madam, think you not ’tis a fine piece of the clockmaker’s art you have there?” he asked.

“Yes, we think so,” answered the little mother modestly.

“And whence did it come?”

“From Germany.”

“Your father sent it you in 1860?”

“Yes.”

“It has been in the family since before the Thirty Years’ War, has it not?”

“Yes,” she answered amazed.

“And there is a writing— an inscription— on the pendulum: Johann Jacob Lichtenberg, eh, not so?”

“Yes,” faltered the little woman, fear-stricken, like one in the presence of a wizard or a spirit.

“May I look?”

And suiting the action to the word, he opened the case.

“Gretchen, my dear daughter!” he exclaimed.

The little mother flew to his arms and clung to his neck, and there was much joy mingled with tears.

The old widower had come hither in 1861, enlisted in the war, and was reported killed in battle; later the Kraemers moved West, and now the panic had overtaken him. That is the tale, in thirty words or thirty chapters — just as you will. His appearance at this time made the happiest Christmas the little mother had ever known. Luther withdrew. Mr. Williams and the hired man helped him into the kitchen with his lathe. The rest, save the little folks, hilarious over their new grandpa, went into another room.

A half-hour later, at the shrill whistle of a locomotive, Mame jumped to her feet. “That’s Van: the train’s late!” she exclaimed.

“Let’s go to meet him,” Frank proposed, for the same reason that prompted him to coax Mame to have Roxie spend her Christmas vacation under their parental rooftree.

“Oh, no,” said Roxie, “it’s only a step from the junction; and, besides, Mame and I have set a trap for him. No advances: our victory must be complete.”

Had Frank been able to analyze his feelings, he would have discovered that his pang at that moment was the first touch of jealousy.

Later, both damsels ran to answer the door-bell; both stood aghast and blocked the way when Mame had opened the door.

“For the land’s sake!” cried Roxie.

“Where did you get it?” asked Mame, lifting one corner of the shawl in a gingerly manner from the top end of the bundle.

“And it’s got red hair,” blurted Roxie.

“Blame it, let me in,” said the disgusted man.

Vanmeter was a fine specimen of humanity, six feet one in his stockings, well built, raven-black hair, and finely featured withal; but at this moment, as he stood on the threshold, beslobbered and bedraggled, with a baby screaming at high pressure, he was one of the most humiliated mortals that ever begged entrance to a shelter.

Indoors his reception was not much better. After the first moments of surprise, the young folks kept up incessant volleys of raillery. To add to the merriment, the baby ceased crying when it got a glimpse of Vanmeter’ s face, and called him papa, pitifully, almost frantically, again and again. This seemed to be the only word it knew. But it would not keep quiet in any other person’s arms. There was nothing left the poor fellow, who had run over to Kraemer’s for an evening’s pleasure, but to walk the floor with his charge and take the jibes of a hilarious company. And he did it with all of the discomfort and awkwardness of a confirmed bachelor.

Frank asserted that Vanmeter was a good-looking pater familias; Mame suggested that he croon a lullaby; and Roxie said it looked enough like the cinnamon-bear to be his nephew.

“Great Scott, no!” protested the coming attorney. “But this is a likely story of Vanmeter’s. Let us see, gentlemen of the jury. The defendant got this baby at the junction: a woman gave it to him to hold while she went back to the train to get her luggage. Then the train pulled out with the woman on board, of course. Why didn’t the gentleman use ordinary politeness and get said luggage? Humph, a likely story indeed. Furthermore, the child aforesaid claims filial relationship, the defendant at the bar denies it: that is innocence against the secretary of a trust. Then he alleges the woman was a young widow. Of course she was young; but how does he know she was a widow?”Wore crape and black clothes. Whew! couldn’t have borrowed them for the occasion? At best, gentlemen of the jury, the defendant has been buncoed, and we — "

“Anyhow,” interrupted Roxie, “he’s got a gold brick.”

“What is fun for the cat is death for the mouse,” said Luther, who had been attracted to the sitting room by all this hubbub.

He gazed fondly on the babe, which was evidently a waif.

"Thou dear child," he said, chucking it under the chin. "My heart already beats with love towards thee who hast not yet done anything to call it forth. Now I can understand how God's love towards us poor creatures precedes our love. He does not wait till we come to Him with our love, but He comes to us."

Then he turned to the company and remarked:

"There is great sacredness about little children. Of them the Scriptures say, 'Their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.' I would give all the honor I have had and shall have had I died at the age of this babe. A child's life is the happiest: it has no temporal cares, knows nothing of the disturbers of the Church, has no fear of death or hell, and has nothing but pure and happy fancies."

He seemed to sympathize with Vanmeter the moment his eyes rested upon him, and was not minded even to let the young people twit him on his bachelordom.

"Who would coerce into matrimony one who does not need it?" he asked. "He who is so endued that he can receive this word (St. Matthew nineteen, twelve), let him stay out of the married state and rejoice in the Lord. Just as those who are not called to govern, remain subjects, and those not called to teach in the Church remain laymen, so it also is in this matter. Those who are not constrained by the weakness of nature, but are such as can get along without matrimony, do right by staying out of it and not loading themselves with burdens which they may readily avoid."

That was kind, to be sure; but it was unlike Luther. More like him was it to say, when the little mother brought water to clean the blushing Vanmeter's coat:

"Oh, how much more must the Lord endure from us than a mother from her child!"

At the table — f or our happy hostess had insisted that we all dine again with Vanmeter and her father in honor of the latter's home-coming — Hans and the baby cut high pranks. Hans soon conquered and was permitted to sit beside the "preacher-man." The baby in Mrs. Kraemer's arms screamed and kept on screaming.

"Scream lustily and defend yourself," said Luther: "the Pope also had me bound, but I am again free from his toils. When babies cry good and

loud, they grow nicely, for by means of their crying veins and muscles are developed. They have no other exercise."

Like Hans, the infant finally conquered and was placed in a high chair at the side of "Papa" Vanmeter, as Mr. Williams persisted in dubbing him.

Conversation hopped with agility from one thing to another. Table-talk, like gossip, is one of the fleas of conversation. Among other things, Luther related some papistic anecdotes. The fact that he had just disclosed Roman Catholic antecedents gave rise to the request. One I remember. It was about an indolent lout of a priest:

"A lazy priest, instead of reciting his breviary, used to run over the alphabet, and then say: '0 my God, take this alphabet and put it together as you list!'"

That fit nicely into the Roman doctrine of human merit. The beggar gave the good Lord, whose are the cattle on a thousand hills, a blank check, already signed, to draw what he would!

The theologue spoke of the deceptions practiced by the monks aforetime.

"It was a wicked and horrible delusion," said Luther. "It was believed that if one put on a monk's cowl he would be redeemed from sin and death. Thus they compared — aye, preferred the lousy monk's cowl to the precious blood of Christ There were colossal superstitions and idolatries in Popedom of which the young people now know nothing, and in ten years no one will believe that people made arrangements to be buried in cowls. As long as three hundred years agone, a president of the provincial court of Thuringia provided for being laid out in a cowl; and when he was placed in his coffin, the servants came, ere it was closed, to view the remains, and said: 'See how pious our lord is now, and how nicely he keeps the vow of silence!' But he had been a rake all his life. Pooh, you miserable devil!"

Mr. Williams noted a similarity between the Greeks and their gods and the Romanists and their saints. He thought the Papists were "up to the tick of the clock with their spiritual specialists." Luther laughed and said:

"As his assignment, St. Vitus has the abominable dancing and hopping. Likewise St. Erasmus is the patron of misers, but only in case they give him prayers and candles when he bestows wealth in abundance. For what else would the idle man have to do? St. Louis, he of the barefoot order, once made bad beer good, and now, that he is dead and blessed, he must be our brewer — this and nothing else is he allowed to do. St. Wendelin was an

excellent herdman, and now he is more valuable against wolves than all the dogs are. While he lived, he watched his own cattle, but now that he is dead, he must be every man's cowboy. Saint —"

"Pray, have they no women saints worth mentioning?" Roxie interposed, and then went on, one-third in jest and two-thirds in earnest, to berate men for being selfish.

Luther's eyes sparkled as he retorted:

"I heartily wish the day were here when women would pray before they begin to preach." Roxie joined in the laugh at her expense.

"Now we shall also add a few holy women," he said. "St. Scholastica, it is held, has command over thunder. St. Apollonia is revered without ceasing for the toothache and for nothing else. Thirdly, St. Julia and St. Atilia are eye-doctors, for nobody worships them save those who have bad eyes. But enough. Let us talk about other things."

The young men were soon bandying political questions back and forth and happened to touch on communism.

"Communism is not according to the law of nature," Luther observed. "It is not something that is commanded, but something that is allowed. And even though it were a law, it could not be kept up on account of ruined nature, for there would be more to consume goods than to gather them, and so embarrassment would result."

The spicy and rather personal remarks of the young ladies on the vocations of men, gave little Hans occasion to say:

"When I get big, I'm going to be a preacher-man."

"No, my child," the father replied, "one preacher in the family is enough. My little Hans will be a farmer, and drive old Nell, and take big red strawberries to town and bring back big silver dollars."

The little codger began to cry.

This incident gave rise to some talk on child training.

"If you have a child capable of learning," Luther observed in a general way, "you are not free to bring him up as you please, or deal with him according to your caprice, but you must bear in mind that you are under obligations to God to promote both spiritual and secular government and to serve Him in this way. God needs pastors, preachers and teachers in His spiritual kingdom, and you can furnish them. If you do not, you rob, not a poor man of his coat, but the kingdom of God of many souls."

“Some parents,” the father interposed, “are too poor to educate their sons for the holy ministry.”

“If the father is poor,” Luther rejoined, “let the youth be aided with the means of the Church. The rich should make bequests to such objects, as some have done by founding scholarships. That is giving money to the Church in a right way.”

But Hans was still disturbing the peace with protests and wailings, as the children of well-regulated families are prone to do when a bachelor is being entertained, and his mother was threatening to whip him into subjection, just as mothers are wont to do on such occasions.

“What must be forced with rods and blows will have no good result,” Luther told the mother in an aside. Then he assured Hans that if the good Lord wanted him to be a preacher He would provide ways and means. “Such providential care is witnessed every day,” he said. “Of a penniless pupil who is industrious and pious God often makes a great doctor.”

But the child, satisfied in the main, now pestered Luther with questions as to how God would assist him. Would He send the money in a bag, or in a pocketbook, or how?

Vanmeter had taken no part in the conversation. He had to watch his plate. The bit of red-haired humanity would reach into his food and persist in laying its sloppy hands on his sleeve. In short, Vanmeter was very meek; in fact, a fine specimen of overripe meekness. Now and then, with shamefacedness, he helped the baby to food; and once, much to the amusement of Mr. Williams and Frank, he had even given it a drink from his cup. After supper, Vanmeter took his ward to the sitting-room and Luther returned to the kitchen.

“Well, old chap, you’ve been buncoed sure,” said Frank.

Vanmeter made no reply. The baby said papa, and he pressed its head against his cheek, and it laughed.

“Well, it’s not so bad after all,” counseled Mr. Kraemer in his philosophical tone, which he kept, like his Sunday clothes, for extra occasions. “If the woman doesn’t turn up tomorrow, we can send the young one over to the county home.”

“Not by a long shot!” exclaimed Vanmeter in a tone that betokened offense.

“Never mind, Van, we’ll keep it,” the little mother said assuringly.

"No, you will not!" he exclaimed with warmth. "I'm going to keep him myself. Yes, I know mother is old and it would be a shame to ask her to raise another child. But I can get a nurse — a dozen of them. Auntie, let me confess: I like babies, and — I — I like this one. Auburn hair is pretty. Never looked into the window of a drygoods store and saw the tiny woolen shirts and the wee little socks, but I wished I had a little fellow like this to fill them out And many a time at night, sitting all alone by the fire and smoking, with the wind whistling around the chimney and the tobacco smoke curling up over my head, I looked through its clouds and circles and saw my little chap crawl over the floor; saw him at school, the prettiest and smartest one there; saw him sick, and the little white coffin in the undertaker's window made my heart ache; saw him graduated from college and take an honorable part in the affairs of men; and — auntie, you don't know how far a fellow can see through smoke — I've seen him win battles, write immortal books, paint undying canvases, sway multitudes, and go down to an honored grave; and fifty years later — ah, a fellow can see far through a good havana — I've seen the blackberry brambles crawl over his turf -covered bed and hide the inscription; and then, when the vision was gone, there was a lump in my throat and a longing in my heart for that boy. No, auntie, you are real kind; but I'm going to keep this baby: he just fits into my heart — makes it sort o' snug."

That ended the jesting. Unwittingly he had made a halo for himself.

"O Mame, he's no monster at all," whispered Roxie. "I just adore him."

The days of Vanmeter's hachelordom were numbered.

Luther came in from the kitchen with a lot of toys he had turned for the children, and great was their glee. He played with the baby, and it seemed to be satisfied now with its surroundings and finally allowed him to take it into his arms. Then he walked the floor with it, singing a cradle-song which he had composed for his own children:

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head."

The little mother suggested that we go into the parlor and light the tree.

"Gretchen, I'm going to fix the clock first," said the old man.

"Not on this holy eve, father?"

“Ah, yes; so I promised for supper and bed, and so I would have it for old-time’s sake. Know you not how grandfather used to do this night? When this old clock struck twelve, and Christ and the apostles came out of that little door at the top, and the rooster flapped his wings and crowed, he would say: ‘Now, one half -hour yet; when the rooster crows again, all must hie to bed!’ Then the chimes in our old church tower would play — how their melody clings to one’s heart — and when the tin wings rattled again, you all scampered off to bed. Besides, it may only mean a few minutes’ work.”

The baby had fallen asleep and Luther laid it on the bed in the adjoining room. Vanmeter stole in to look at it. Perhaps the little white coffin came into his vision.

As the aged sire lifted one of the clock’s weights it slipped from his hand and crashed through the bottom of the case.

“Eh, what’s this!” he exclaimed, pulling a time stained document from the hole and holding it up to the light. “A paper from the time of the Thirty Years’ War! Well, well! Children,” said he, as his eyes ran over the document, “a fortune is hid in the sand under that false bottom. ’Twas put there by one of our forebears — willed to his lawful heirs. A curse, a thousand times multiplied, upon him who finds it and withholds it from them!”

Trembling hands took a pile of gold coin from the clock and placed it on the table.

“A Christmas gift for grandfather,” said the little mother delighted.

“And now,” declared grandfather, “little Hanschen can go to the university and be a preacher-man.”

“God provides,” Luther added sententiously, laying his hand on the boy’s head. “God provides.” The doorbell rang.

“What, so late?” queried our hostess. It was baby’s mother, a pretty, little auburn haired woman, who proved to be well-bred, a graduate of Vassar, and the widow of Senator Hardy, the principal stockholder in the steel mill at Roseurban.

When Mrs. Kraemer took her into the bedchamber to see the child, Vanmeter examined an oil-painting. He did not want the company to see his tears. And when Mrs. Hardy told the little mother that the man was the exact counterpart of her departed husband, she did not know what pathos that revealed to Mrs. Kraemer in baby’s conduct nor why her eyes should

fill with tears. When they returned, Mrs. Hardy was carrying the baby, and the little mother said:

“Now we must go into the parlor and light the tree. It is the happiest Christmas eve that any of us has seen.”

Vanmeter was sure it was not. And Roxie was in doubt about it.

The tree was lighted, hymns were sung, and Luther told the Bethlehem evangel as only he could do it, and then there were carols, duets and quartets. Suddenly grandpa arose. He had heard the flapping of the tin chanticleer’s wings.

“Now, off to bed,” said he in the tone of his father.

"No, father, please don’t make us go yet — no, not till we all sing —

‘Now thank we all our God,
With hearts, and hands, and voices,’"

pleaded the little mother much, I imagined, as she was wont to do as a child. And, with Mame at the piano, we made the old hymn ring till the very rafters tingled with human gratitude to God.

A year and a half later, I pulled rein at a country parsonage in Wisconsin. It was Frank Kraemer’s.

“What has become of Vanmeter?” I asked,

“He’s living at Roseurban: married the little widow.”

“And where is Roxie, the girl with the sparkling eyes?”

“You must excuse her. This is Monday, and she’s hanging up the washing.”

15. Where I Stop And You Begin

Hard is the task to point in civil phrase
One's own dear people's foolish works and ways.

— HOLMES.

IT WAS a bleak February morning on which I arrived in Columbus to attend the colloquy of the Joint Synod of Ohio and Other States. The trees stood bare against a leaden sky, and the wind swept in granulated snow swirls over fields and commons, like some white-veiled ghost giving the sear leaves a merry chase. The ground was still bare, save here and there where a tuft of grass had caught the windghost by the gown as it passed by and held a patch of it in firm grasp. Days like this make one feel grateful to the man who first domesticated fire; and no little service was that which captured the destructive giant and made him do man's bidding by sitting on a hearth, cooking, baking, and blowing his warm breath against his master's chill hands, or, in these last degenerate days, lighting cigarettes and pipes for young men and curling-irons for girls — service which any giant might rightfully disdain. No wonder that now, when heartlessly imprisoned in an iron cage, he sometimes, out of pure spite, burns a matron's fingers, or breaks loose and devours a house at a gulp. But the man who first led this giant into the primitive hut and bade him sit down on the hearth, or put a stick into his hand and commanded him to push the darkness out of a small circle of the night, deserves the ardent gratitude of mankind, and especially on such days as this. If Luther, with that supreme carelessness of his, did not put on his greatcoat, this day taught him a lesson which I was not able to impress.

With overcoat buttoned up to my chin and collar turned up over my ears, I stepped from the shelter of the Union Station to brave the storm, A blast of icy air from the north struck me in the face and as much as said: "There, now, take that! You may adore the Fire King in your heart, if you will; but I,

the Frost King, reign today. Bow obeisance!" Instinctively I turned to the south. There I saw, a few paces ahead of me, a man hastening down the viaduct walk, taking long strides such as one learns to take on the soft roads of the country.

At once I concluded the stranger was a preacher, a little later I had reason to set him down as a Lutheran preacher, and finally as a pastor of the Joint Synod of Ohio. I am no Sherlock Holmes, and, above all, no ecclesiastical Sherlock Holmes, though there is such a kindred or tribe; but this was a case so plain that almost any churchman could have drawn the proper conclusions. You see it was like this: I could readily tell he was a preacher, for, if a man is at all sincere, a few years in the ministry leave unmistakable signs in his countenance and bearing; I knew he was a Lutheran minister because he wore a large cross on his watch-chain: Episcopalians are wont to do the same, but they wear a clerical vest and collar, or a dickey, which he did not; and that he was no General Synod man, and, in all probability, not a General Council man, I concluded from the fact that his clothes were not of recent cut and were withal a little shabby; and yet I was not absolutely certain that he did not belong to the General Council, and, moreover, he might have been a Missourian. For the time being, that was not easy to settle. His synodical connection remained uncertain till I saw him stop at one restaurant after the other near the station, read the sign on the pavement and, rather shamefacedly, peep through the window. He was hunting for the cheapest clean and respectable place where he could get his breakfast. That settled it: he was a member of the Joint Synod of Ohio, and no mistake about it at alL These men get salaries which justify the loss of half an hour in hunting an eating house which saves them a nickel on a breakfast. Thus this man showed plainly what sort of people he was serving. Ministers always do.

But one of the most conspicuous things about this pastor almost slipped my pen here, and that is the big satchel he lugged. These big satchels often go to synod and conference. When they do, they usually contain a nightshirt and brains. The nightshirt belongs to the preacher, the brains to the church fathers. Of all contrivances, the satchel is the most useful in realms ecclesiastic, for it enables a person to carry in his hand what he should have in his head, and, besides, it throws a halo of bookishness around the man who may have been in love during all his seminary course and pushing a babybuggy ever since. Verily, great is the satchel![1]

But that word throw reminds me of a needful caution if you are a minister. When you get into a discussion, beware of the man with a satchel He has something to throw at you, he brought it along on purpose, and more than likely it will find the soft spot on your head or the hole in your armor.

When the good man found a restaurant which comported with his purse, put the brains under the table and set to eating (fortunate for his pocketbook and stomach was it that the church fathers he had brought along were dead), I took a car for Trinity Church. None of the committee had put in an appearance there, but an obliging janitor told me a number of brethren, both lay and clerical, were at the Lutheran Book Concern and would come over at nine o'clock, the time set for the meeting.

Now, the Book Concern is a common meeting place. When ministers come to town they usually drop in there to make debts or to pay debts, or to speak their mind, which is another way of denominating faultfinding. In this respect a book concern is an excellent thing, much better than the adiaphora, and for that reason I think every synod whose doctrinal basis is settled should have one, for it makes an excellent thing to fuss over; and when somebody, belligerently inclined, pounces upon it, he does the brotherhood no particular harm: it is like striking a punching-bag.

On entering the Book Concern, I was taken aback. Such grotesque figures were never paraded before the eyes of mortal man. Who was clergyman and who was layman, I could not tell. There was one man, the most conspicuous, who had a long nose like the proboscis of an elephant, and he could reach about with it in much the same way; there was another who had feet fully thirty-six inches long; the third had more mouth than body; the fourth had a huge hump on his back; the fifth had two tumor-like growths, about as long as a man's forearm, protruding from his eye-sockets, and his eyes were on the ends of these growths; and so on to the last man each had something abnormal.

To keep from staring at them, I began to examine the secondhand library behind the door. My hands were soon soiled from handling the collection of controversial pamphlets — a meet penalty for dabbling in polemics — and I went to the rear office to lave my hands, glad for the excuse to get away. But a smudge from a printed page is hard to remove: I wish this fact were better known. You that quarantine measles and chicken-pox, beware of books that bring contagion to the soul!

In the rear office, where I was alone, I was suddenly confronted by a form which seemed to materialize from the air, coming gradually into shape. It had the appearance of a maiden robed in glistening white, and was beautiful beyond comparison. I stepped back.

"Fear not!" said the apparition.

"What means this?" I quavered.

"I am come to tell thee of the men thou didst see and make known their usefulness, lest thou judge and condemn them wrongfully."

"Pray, who are they?— who is that man with the long nose?"

"Mr. Nebintoeverything."

"And of what use is he, save to make trouble?"

"He promotes circumspect action."

"And that man with the elephant ears?"

"That is Mr. Hearall. He is serviceable as a scavenger."

"But that man with the colossal feet — what a monstrosity!"

"That is but a one-sided development: he uses his feet more than his head and is very useful in parishes where foot-work is appreciated above head-work."

"But that dwarf with mouth from ear to ear and loud, metallic voice?"

"That is Prohibition, always small in your church."

"And that solemn little man with the big hump on his back?"

"He loads himself with the imaginary care of all the churches. He is Mr. Atlas."

In like manner, each one of the relatively large number was named and explained. This being ended, I said:

"And such are the members of this synod! I have almost made the round of synods and in none were such oddities to be seen."

"Thou art mistaken. Such people there are in every synod and in every denomination. Thine eyes were holden, but now is it given thee to see."

There was silence. The drapery which hung about the shoulders of the apparition and trailed on the carpet quivered, from under it two wings spread forth, the form rose several feet and, hovering thus, grew faint and fainter, until the last shimmer faded from sight.

The apparition gone, I stepped to the wash-bowl: it is always but a step from an exalted experience to a common duty. In turning around I beheld my reflection in the mirror. Horror seized me, for nearly all my face was occupied by two monster eyes, and the fountain pen in my vest pocket had

attained the circumference of an ax-handle. I did not like to see this reflection, and could not stay in the room without occasionally looking at it; I dreaded going to the street or up to the composing room; and so there was nothing left me but to go into the salesroom and keep company with my kind.

As I entered, a discussion of Luther, or Brother Martin, as they called him, was interrupted by a scuffle on one of the counters. Brother Nebintoeverything had stretched his nose over and stirred among some books lying there, when instantly legs and arms protruded from them, and, rising to their feet, they began to pommel each other. The same thing happened when he poked his nose among the exchanges, save that it was a free-for-all fight and not at all according to science. This diversion over, the discussion was resumed.

"As I was saying," Brother Atlas began, "this man's character and antecedents certainly need looking into. Why, I hear he has actually applied to all the Eastern synods and has been rejected by every last one of them."

"Nor is that the worst," Brother Hearall added. "I have it from a reliable source that he gave his consent to a man's marrying a second woman while his first wife was still alive."

"I feared just such breaks," declared Brother Nebintoeverything, "for I understand he came over from Romanism, and you know how they grant special dispensations, and what they teach about the end justifying the means. The proverb is right: it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks."

"Yes; and then there is another thing to think of: his wife is a runaway nun," declared Brother Hearall, who, while the others were talking, held his head to one side and stretched his big elephant ear out to arm's length. "Just think of it, a nun for a wife, a nun for a wife," he iterated.

"Yes, and he didn't get her, I understand, till he was fortytwo," Brother Gallant commented. "Nice annotation that on his estimate of the gentle sex, the last and finest specimen of God's handiwork. What does a minister amount to around whom the women will not rally?"

"Very little, very little," Brother Atlas answered and — sighed.

"This man must be boorish, Brother Gallant," said Hearall. "No use mentioning names, but it comes from reliable persons that he said in just so many words: 'I would hew me an obedient wife out of stone, aside from that I —'"

"Shame, shame!" interjected Gallant.

“Nobody made his bed for him for a whole year before he was married,” Hearall declared.

“And no doubt he cares for his clothes accordingly,” said Brother Uptodate, curling his mustache. “He’s too careless, too angular, for the times.”

“That matter of a wife is really more important than some pastors seem to have thought,” Brother Croaker commented. “We laymen have opportunity to see and know. Don’t take him if his wife isn’t savin’-like and humble and not willing to keep members over night during fair week. It’ll only make trouble.”

“Say, I jist heared he has four young ones. That’s too many for any parish to keep,” thrust in Brother Pinchpenny, with both hands in his pockets.

“He must be past fifty. Could a body ask a congregation to call such an old man?” asked Brother Uptodate, who was evidently a layman.

“We should think of matters akin to that,” Brother Bigfoot declared, ignoring the last remarks and amplifying the hint which Croaker had given. “What shall we do with the man if we accept him? Where will he fit with that wife of his? Is he a good mixer? In this day the social factor is a very important one. It counts for — say, two-thirds.”

“I fear he is no mixer, no mixer at all,” Brother Atlas said and — heaved a great sigh. Then he said it again and — heaved another great sigh.

“Mixer, nothing,” said Hearall. “Why, I have it on good authority — I am not at liberty to mention names, but I have it from a trustworthy source — that he once refused to shake hands with a sectarian preacher. Why, that was not even civil, to say nothing of sociable.”

“That is right,” Brother Politic remarked, “a minister should not only be civil, but he should also be winsome in his ways, and especially should he be choice in his use of words. Now I understand this man is exceptionally rough in his language, and —”

“And polemical, too, for these are usually hitched like two oxen under one yoke,” broke in Brother Goeasy. ’“Twill never do, never do,” he added, shaking his head ruefully. “Polemics will do as a condiment, but never as a diet.”

“I don’t like that remark,” rejoined the finest looking man among them, the man whose only deviation from things normal was that his suit was made of hogskin and that his fists were somewhat large and calloused. “I

don't like that remark," he repeated by way of emphasis. "There is not enough contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, and too much politic silence, which is compromise, nothing but compromise. There never was a good Lutheran who would not contend for the faith."

"Right!" said I, no longer able to restrain myself. "And, besides, you men are not to select a man for a given parish. He comes as an applicant for admission to synod, and the duty of your committee is merely to inquire into the soundness of his faith."

"And just there is where the rub will come in," replied the man with the long projecting eyes, Brother Faultfinder, or Magnifier — I have forgotten the name. "I am told," he added in explanation, "that he is the author of a book on The Bondage of the Will which is Missourish, and, from all accounts, it must be rank."

"A fine Missourian he is, indeed, whom the Missouri Synod has rejected!" I retorted.

"That doesn't say anything: Missouri is a pious mystery," Brother Atlas said, and — sighed.

"Well, we don't want to take Missouri's refuse," Grumbler asserted in a very decided tone. "Our synod is no dumping-ground."

"We've had enough such from Europe years ago," said Atlas with a sigh.

"But you have overlooked a very important thing," said the dwarf. "Barring my convictions, it must be conceded that it is an offense to the people of almost every community if a minister uses fermented, brewed or distilled liquors. Now, I am convinced that it is true that this man might take a glass of beer, and I should not at all be surprised if he also smokes. We want no more ministers of that stripe."

Nobody paid any attention to this, according to the rule, least said, soonest mended.

What a flimsy thing is reputation: "Oft got without merit, oft lost without desert," and never in the owner's keeping. The man these men described was not the man I had learned to know and love. Such representations of our fellow men are like the specters of the ghost show that used to harrow my youthful soul. The real man of flesh and bone and throbbing heart is elsewhere while his reflection is made to strut the stage by trick of light, mirror and glass, and the character of the likeness, whether true or distorted, depends upon the quality of the instruments. Whether he be standing on feet or head, depends not upon him, but on the position of

the reflectors. So it often comes that one cannot recognize his best friend in another man's mouth. But to these men, who knew not what they were doing, and to all those who purposely malign him, I say: Clean your fingers, before you point at Luther's spots!

"Well, brethren, it is time to go over to the church," the man who wore the hogskin suit said, as he snapped the lid of his old silver watch. "The chairman is no doubt there and we ought to begin promptly."

I thought, you may go, but I shall not venture on the street in this condition nor with such a gang. In spite of what the apparition had said, I was not sure people would not stare at us. Besides, nothing was said of me, save that I had been given the power to see things as they are, and that might imply a permanent change. When they were gone, I opened the door a little and looked at them through the crack. To my surprise, everything abnormal about them had vanished. Running my hand over my face and eyes, I found, to my great relief, that they, too, were normal. Then I went to the church. Pshaw! what cravens we are: a man would not be brave enough to go down street if he were transparent.

A large number of men, mostly pastors, were present. It must have been noised about that there was an important personage to examine and that there was likely to be some fine theological disputation. Your Saxon always likes to see a fight: the kind, whether fisticuff or argument, depends wholly upon his breeding and intelligence.

Luther was sitting in a side pew, well to the front, scanning the assemblage as if trying to determine its caliber. He had grown quite haggard since the evening I first saw him at the statue in Washington. What pain in heartaches at the hands of the Church! I felt for him, and thought of his remark when he told me that his application to the Ohio Synod was the last one he would make. "I am tired of the world, and the world is tired of me," he had then said, "so we can easily part, just as a traveler leaves an inn. When I shall have settled this affair, I will return home, lay me in my coffin and give my body to the worms." Now, with that attenuated body before me, these words seemed like a prophecy in course of fulfillment.

The colloquium was opened in the usual way, and then the committee placed the table near a register, Luther took a pew close to it, and the rest of us moved nearer. When all was in readiness, the chairman, who was a small man with an unusually strong voice, put his first question in most emphatic tone:

"Brother Martin, do you hold membership in any secret society?"

It was so loud that it startled me. My body gave an involuntary lurch, and —

A robin, perched on a bough of an old apple-tree, whose branches swayed over the sill of the window, was warbling a sweet song to its mate, and the fragrance of apple blossoms filled the chamber. Could this be drear February? No, it was cheery May. And the place? No church was this. The little wall-clock that just struck six had tones like mine. The books, ranged on three sides of the room, were of familiar garb and mien. That mountain scene, for which the window-casement formed a frame, was the same I had gazed upon a thousand times. Slowly I came to a realization of the situation. In the cool of the evening I was sitting in my own armchair in my own study, and these scenes which I had witnessed, these scenes striking and pathetic, scenes which made one's heart swell and his cheeks burn, were but a dream or vision of the day, but a vision fraught with solemn lessons and an evident purpose. I cannot think it was meant solely for me, and have faithfully set it all down in writing for other eyes, and heads, and hearts, — other eyes that can see, heads that can understand, and hearts that can feel the sin and the shame of schism. If anyone blushes for the situation which these events portray in crass and graphic lines and color, well and good; may that spurt of hot blood stir his heart to pray, and speak, and work more earnestly than ever for the unity of our Lutheran Zion. May the day soon dawn — O heart of mine, is this aspiration too strong? nay, nay, it cannot be — may the day soon dawn when the Lutheran soldiers of the cross, in their onslaughts on the principalities of darkness, keep step, believing the same thing, confessing the same thing, desiring the same thing.

And now the writer has come to the end and will lay the pen aside, and the reader has come to the end and will lay the narrative aside, but ere we part let us unite in one short prayer for our divided brotherhood: "Sanctify them, Lord, through Thy truth, Thy Word is truth." And let all who pray for the peace of Jerusalem say, Amen.

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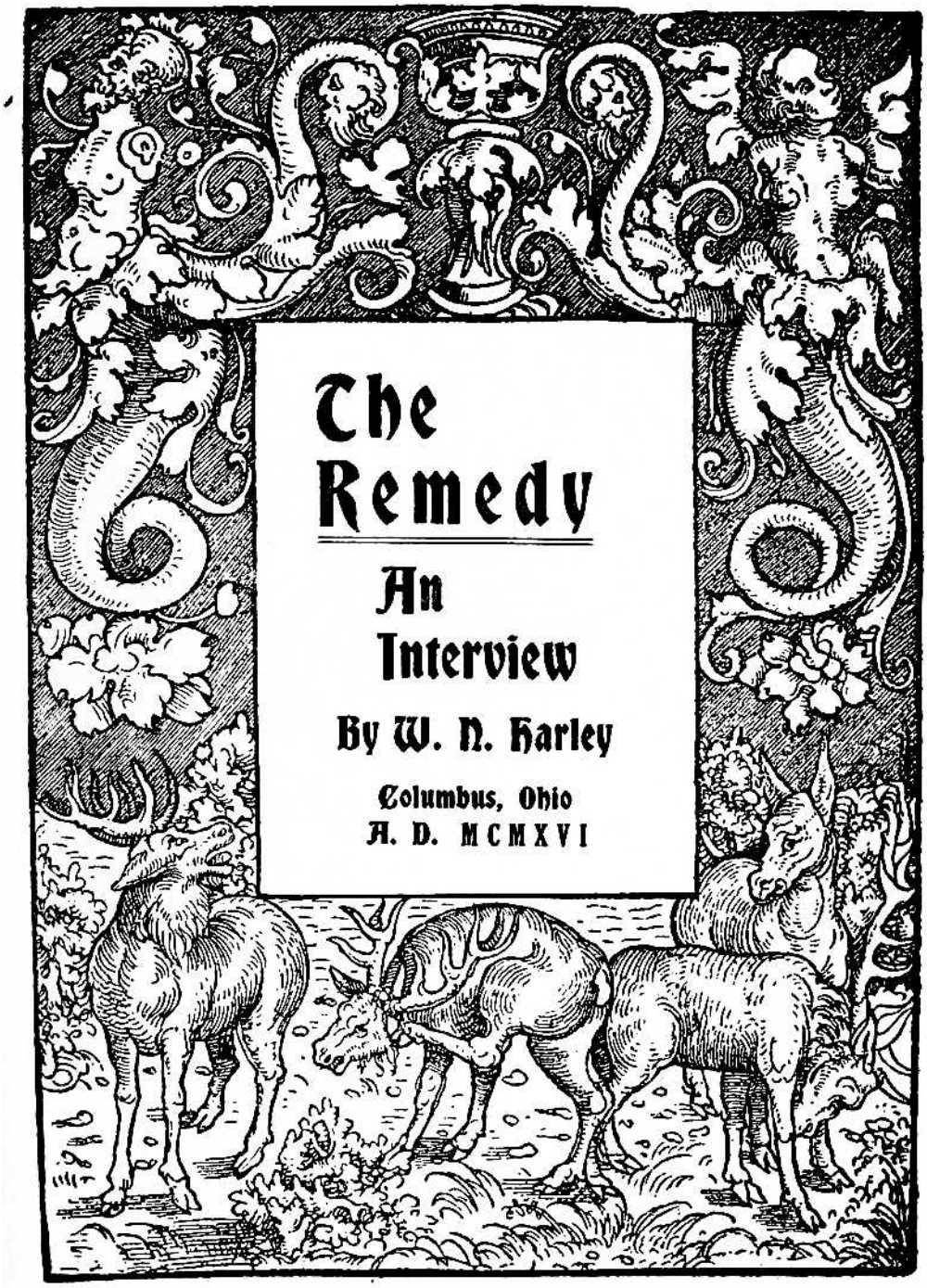
1. Sine dubio quisque studiosus historiae ecclesiastic ae meminit joci patrum nostrorum, papam quotidie primo mane misisse Spiritum Sanctum in bulga ad Concilium Tridentinum. Verily, great is the satchel!↩

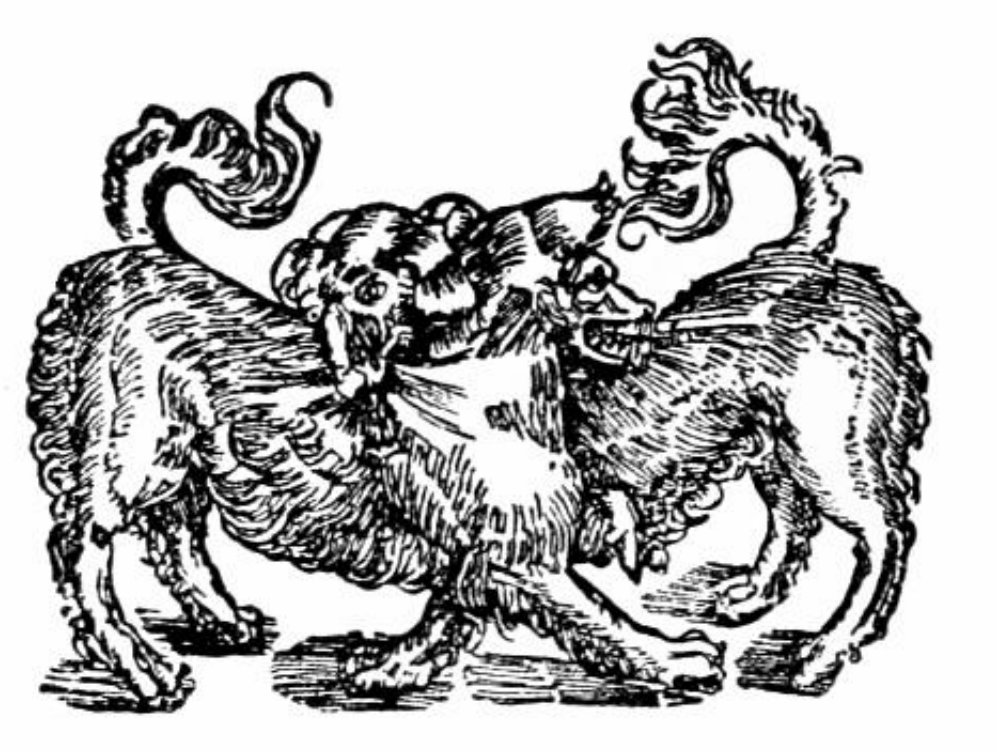
Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. – 1 Cor. 1:10.

Men must be taught as if you taught them not, and things unknown proposed as things forgot.

— POPE.


The
Remedy
An
Interview
By W. N. Harley
Columbus, Ohio
A. D. MCMXVI

The Remedy



Devour

But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. — Gal. 5:15.

The Remedy: An Interview

But conversation, choose what theme we may,
And chiefly when religion leads the way,
Should flow, like waters after showers,
Not as if raised by mere mechanic powers.

— COWPER.

The manuscript of the preceding narrative has been criticized np and down, back and forth, and in every other way that a work of this kind can be criticized. As the folk tongue would say, it got its dose good and proper. Not that anyone of the tribe ferocious condemned the whole work; nay, on the contrary, each critic praised the book as such, urged that it be printed, and bespoke a copy; only each one had little changes to suggest and fairly large eliminations to request so far as his own synod figures in the narrative. As you can readily see, had all these requests been granted, little would remain of those parts of the book which record the colloquies; but on the other hand, as you will also quickly perceive, what anyone of them had pronounced bad or questionable all the others had actually endorsed as good. So there was no way of satisfying them, even had I been so inclined, for each one had all the rest against him. But at last there came a right sensible man — right sensible, I say, because he did not hint, suggest, request, or demand that anything be omitted, but, conversely, was of the decided opinion that the manuscript should receive additions. So I took this right sensible clergyman into the back office, gave him a chair — the wicker chair with the easy back — seated myself on the table and got ready to draw him out.

"As I said," he began so soon as seated, "every last one of the reviewers will pass the same adverse criticism on this book; it simply points out an evil, but it does not so much as hint at a remedy. There is not a constructive element in it."

“Frankly,” I replied, taking eye-measure of my caller, a man of about seventy years of age, somewhat stoop-shouldered and of decidedly Jewish cast of countenance, “frankly, we of the newspaper offices have little fear and less reverence for reviewers.”

“But,” he persisted, “this criticism would be just: there is nothing constructive in this manuscript. Couldn’t you amplify some parts of —”

“Nay, I will not lay hands on a dead man’s work,” I replied in a tone that probably betrayed indignation. “That is too much like vandalism.”

“But you are publishing it. You could at least add a treatise of your own.”

“That is a horse of a different color. What, in your opinion, is the remedy?”

“Have a stogy?”

“No, thank you; I don’t smoke.”

He eyed me suspiciously, then smiled.

“I doubt if you are koscher,” said he, cutting the end off the stogy. “As a rule, the man who doesn’t smoke has a kink in his orthodoxy. But, since you are a creature that wears trousers, tell me what you do that is off color?”

“Well, just now I’m putting to press a book that’s going to get me into hot water.”

“Unfortunately, that prediction is likely to be verified,” he declared, the smile vanishing. “A man cannot touch this question of Lutheran unity ever so remotely without —”

“Without being suspected, misunderstood, denounced,” I cut in.

“Just so. Yet that should not deter a man from doing his duty as God gives him to see it. What else is to be expected of schismatics? Schism’s halo is the Church’s shame. Which of the prophets was not stoned?”

“But that feature of the situation is neither here nor there,” I replied. “I will publish this book: that is settled. Hammering can do me no harm, for I cherish no synodical ambitions. I’m like the punching-bag our author mentions. And to let the cat out of the bag, I think I’d enjoy a round or two with hidebound partisans. Yet, with the numerous distinctive features of the different synods staring one in the face, it does seem a difficult proposition to offer a practical plan for church unity.”

“No, that is where you are mistaken,” he said with haste. “The whole thing is simple, my son— very, very simple.”

“What, the remedy simple!”

“Yes,” said he very deliberately, tipping the ashes from his stogy. “All they need do — and, mark you, I say it with reverence — all they need do is give God a chance.”

The remark did not sound reverent for all his protestation, and I eyed him quizzically. Now I noticed that his hair, close-cropped to arrest oncreeping baldness, was burned a reddish hue, no doubt from an overdose of overstrong hair invigorator. This pride of hair did not strike me as jibing with the clerical vest, and— I actually caught myself smiling.

“I mean exactly what I said,” he protested, misconstruing that ill-bred smile. “Let them give God a chance. In God’s pharmacy there is a remedy for all of Mother Church’s ills, and this matter of schism is no —”

“Isn’t schism rather too strong a word here?”

“No, sir; I think not. If my memory serves me right, Dr. Walther’s definition of the pesky thing is this: ‘Schisms, that is, divisions, are separations on account of ceremonies, practices and respect of persons engendered among such as are otherwise agreed in the articles of faith.’ So if one says, I am of Walther, or of Loy, or of Fritschel, or of Seiss, or of Krauth, he’s got the mark. And it’s the same with synods. But don’t bother about the word: we know what we mean by it. It is what St. Paul means when he says: ‘Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you.’”

“By ‘giving God a chance,’ I judge you mean that the scrappers let up a bit on some things.”

“Well, yes,” he said hesitatingly; “that and something more. But here you must not press my words beyond what I mean. However, I do sincerely wish that some of them would stop long enough to put their hands back of their ears and listen. Maybe they would hear this from High Heaven: ‘Be still, and know that I am God!’ Some of these things are in plain violation of God’s law.”

“What, for instance?”

“Why, this everlasting suspicion— this thing of putting the worst construction on everything that happens in another synod. It is not charitable: it is not just Were I to treat my neighbor that way, men would rightly regard me as an uncharitable monster. Now by what sort of ecclesiastical legerdemain can that be made to appear right for a synod

which is wrong for an individual? If you treat a solitary mortal uncharitably, that is bad; but if you treat uncharitably five hundred of them in the shape of a synod, that, forsooth, is good, schism puts a halo around your head for it, and henceforth you stand with the defenders of the faith. So it is. I am an old man: again and again have I seen men climb to 'honor' on the rungs of shame. But the worst part of it is that the editors of church papers are usually the worst offenders in this respect."

"I agree with you in toto; but to return to —"

"But the thing is not only uncharitable, it is also illogical," he went on, cutting off my remark. "Isolated cases of wrong practice do not prove an entire synod guilty. Practices, like children, are of two kinds: legitimate and illegitimate. And, so far as I can see, all synods have 'weak sisters' enough and to spare. But everlastingly you hear the other synod's faults. Just a few nights ago I was sitting on a porch with a big man who belongs to a little synod. The conversation took this very turn. (You know little synods, like little men and little dogs, make most noise.) Said I: 'Now you mention, one after the other, every case of inconsistent practice you know of in Blank Synod, and I will trot one out of your own synod to offset each one you present."

"What did he say?"

"He said, 'Good night,' took his chair and went into the house. The next time we chanced to meet we discussed the high cost of living with perfect unanimity. No, young man, it is not fine for one synod to say to another: 'Let me pull the mote out of thine eye,' ere it has pulled the beam out of its own. Neither is it safe. And, furthermore, the synod that does not see its faults has a beam in its eye."

The talk was becoming intensely interesting to me. But the stogy had gone out and I had to nurse my impatience till my Lady Nicotine was cared for. "Well?" said I finally.

"Well," he gasped, the stogy yielding reluctant obedience, "well, there are some more things to which the brethren should put a stop for the sake of Christ and His Church. One of them is the opposition altar. It is one of the most shameful and harmful things in intersynodical polity: a cause of grief to our own people, a stumblingblock to the nearly persuaded, ammunition in the hands of sectarian opponents, and the delight of the very old devil himself." He paused for a moment, as if his breath were quite spent, and

then said in a sad tone: “Yes, my son, it was the devil who put the syn into synod.”

“In speaking of this so-called rivalry, I have heard leading men declare that it actually promotes church extension by keeping ministers alert and active,” said I. A few years at reporting had taught me where to apply the match, and you see I was applying it very deliberately. “They allege that God overrules it for —”

“Enough, enough; more than enough!” exclaimed my old friend, throwing up his hand. “If God has to overrule it, that is proof positive that it is bad; and if preachers will do more for their synod than for their Savior, it is a shame— a heaven-crying shame. Such arguments only show how hard put to men are to find a defense for the dirty conduct that grows out of the conditions which they are perpetuating. To talk of the blessings of schism is preposterous, yet this is the sum total of this defense which they set up. Then look at the speciousness of the practical side of it. If rivalry be needed as a spur, does not the presence of sectarianism provide enough of it? Furthermore, if we had a united Church, is there aught in such a federation of synods to prevent them from provoking one another to good works? Nay, not that I can see. But it wrings my heart to talk about these things. I wish our laymen would rise up in their might and protest against spending their means for the perpetuation of meanness. And, furthermore, on account of the heartaches it has caused, the feelings it has engendered, and the opinions of the opposing synod’s practices which it seems to justify on the part of the pastors who suffer from it, the opposition altar is one of the greatest obstacles to any movement looking toward unification. This is a big land: why can’t the synods have enough Christian manhood to say: ‘Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we are brethren’? At all events, this preying on one another, instead of praying for one another, is one of the offensive and hurtful things that must be put away. While men are continually made to smart under —”

“Don’t you think polemics should be included in this list?”

“Well, ah — yes, or — or no,” he faltered in evident embarrassment. I suspect the good old man himself had had a hand in pretty caustic controversy once upon a time. “It depends upon what you mean,” he explained. “You see we must ‘earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,’ and besides, all discussion need not be

disgusting. But if you mean defamatory and vengeful polemics, you are right. 'Speaking the truth in love,' is the rule which should obtain here. Love is a physician who sugar-coats his pills. But I agree with you: a saint should not act like a savage, stick a quill behind his ears and let out a war-whoop! There is not much of that any more, and there ought to be less. Noteworthy is the fact that recent irenics have come from heads turning white as the almond — aye, and among them heads that once engaged in keen polemics. Is it that the experience of years clarifies the vision? Is it that hearts grow mellow as the feet verge nearer the grave? I know not. But the fact remains: pungent as the untimely persimmon was the product of middle age; palatable as fruit that is ripe is the product of life's later harvest. The young warrior, as he runs his finger along the keen edge of his sword, should think of this, lest he have much to rue when the shadows lengthen towards the grave and he sits in the mellow light of the declining sun chewing the cud of bittersweet remembrance."

Then he paused a few moments, and I said nothing to break the spell of reverie.

"Ah, there is much to forget and much to forgive on all sides!" he exclaimed. "Let him that is without sin cast the first stone. Aye, and in this land of divers races, there is much that we have loved and cherished that shall have to go into the meltingpot at last. America does not want the German church sans the German language, nor the Scandinavian church sans its language; but it does want the Lutheran Church intact in doctrine and adapted to environment in nonessentials. Race peculiarities and preferences all may contribute and all must be ready to yield."

He mopped his brow with his red bandanna, and fumbled in his pocket for a match for the refractory stogy. This break gave me an opportunity to lead the conversation back to the matter in hand, or at least I thought it did.

"I am afraid we are doing just what you charge against our author — pointing out the ills without suggesting a remedy," I remarked. "A little while ago you said the remedy is very simple, that God has a medicament in His pharmacy for every one of Mother Church's ills."

"Yes, to be sure," he replied. "As every Lutheran well knows, there is but one remedy for spiritual ills, and that remedy is the Word of God. All the rest is claptrap. Now all that is needed is the application of God's Word — Law and GospeL That will do the work."

“Yes, ‘the application of it,’ that is, I think, well and discreetly said. To be real frank (and I trust you will not take umbrage), it reminds me of the mouse’s proposition to bell the cat. The rub comes so soon as —”

“Not so fast,” he protested. “This is a case in which bells may very easily be put on the cats. It is a thing on which the rank and file may have something to say— in fact, have the right to say something, and ought to say it. Besides, we are really dealing with servants. ‘He that is greatest among you shall be your servant.’ Young man, do you thoroughly understand that? What is a preacher? The servant of a congregation. What is the president of a synod? The servant of that body. What is a theological professor? A servant of synod, also. Now what is the congregation? what is the synod? Why you and I, Paul and Peter, Phcebe and Gretchen are congregation and synod.”

“But what of all that?”

“Why, just this: a person has the right to talk to his servants — to lay down their duty and to hold them to it. Now, then, that is what we of the different synods should do. I think the laymen, who foot schism’s bill and feel some of its heartaches, should get up and say something real loud. The preachers who feel the shame, and the smart, and the sin of schism, and know the remedy, ought to get up and do something real telling. Sometimes keeping your mouth shut and your ink-bottle corked is sin. Yes, and you may take this as a proverb: the man who is satisfied with schism is satisfied with sin.”

“But still the question is, what can be done?”

“Never mind,” he answered testily, “I will come to that in due time. The other day a synodical dignitary asked me this same provoking question: ‘Well, what can be done?’ I replied: ‘Something more than grow callous by sitting around and sucking our thumbs.’ What? Did you ask me if he liked it? No, none of them who say they are in favor of unity and never do anything to promote it, like to hear that. Of course, every man says he is in favor of unity. Here is Christ’s prayer for oneness. Here are the apostolic warnings against divisions. So of course they all say they are in favor of unity, and perhaps honestly think they are. But tell me, how can you find it out unless you ask them? And then you have only their unsupported word for it.”

“They are like the father of the little boy who was in here the other day,” said I. " ‘To what church do your people belong?’ " I asked the urchin. "

‘Ma’s a Baptist," he replied, ’and dad he’s a Methodist, only he doesn’t work at it.’ "

“Yes, that is how it is with these men and the cause of unity,” he commented. “But I have no patience with that sort of thing. God says: ‘Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.’ It is high time a lot of fine fellows quit deceiving their own selves. They don’t deceive God, they don’t deceive the devil, they don’t even deceive us.”

“But they do deceive themselves and the Church of God suffers for it.”

“Yes. But what I am trying to get at is this: these divisions will go on till doomsday unless something is done to put a stop to them; and nothing is going to be done unless we who actually want unity do it. Officialdom sees its duties elsewhere. If we do not do something ours individually is the guilt. We can’t hide behind a synod with our sins of omission or commission. Schism is sin, sin is personal. That’s all there is to it.”

Again Lady Nicotine monopolized his attention. “Yes,” said he, hunting for the broken thread of his talk, “yes, let a man squirm as much as he will, the truth remains: schism is sin, sin is personal. No man can jouk that. Now let us try to get our bearings: first, schism or division is sin; second, the Word of God is the only remedy for division; third, division continues on its rampage because our leaders cannot, or at least do not, apply the Word effectually to themselves; fourth, these leaders are our servants, yours and mine, Paul’s and Peter’s, Phoebe’s and Gretchen’s. Consequently, the thing for us to do is to fix it so the Word of God, both Law and Gospel, will be applied to our servants, and that specifically to the sore spots. Don’t you see, it is nothing more than a common-sense proposition: just fix it so the error will be rubbed out and the truth rubbed in.”

“But how?”

“Well, didn’t I tell you they are our servants?”

“Yes, I understand that full well.”

“Well, then, all we need to do is to get to work and fix it that way. In the first place, let all the synods unite in establishing a permanent conference comprised wholly of theological professors and make it obligatory upon every theological professor to attend it. This body should meet at least once every year. Aside from its permanent character and obligatory attendance, this should be a free conference to all intents and purposes. The object should be the discussion of doctrine and practice on the basis of God’s Word. That will accomplish something, for God’s Word is a power and He

has promised that it shall not return unto Him void. Besides, when you touch the theological seminaries, you touch the future."

"And that done, what more?"

"Why, in the second place, a similar obligatory conference for all the presidents of all the synods. Only in this case it might be well to broaden the object and increase the representation. Besides discussing doctrine and practice, it might consider intersynodical questions, publications and movements in which we might be able to cooperate, and report to the respective synods; and besides the president, it might be well to have each synod elect a ministerial delegate at each convention."

"And then what?"

"Well, in the third place, I would have as many free conferences as possible started to meet regularly, say semiannually. It should be the duty of the district synods to see that this is done. I think that this would do the work: a conference of theological professors at it all the time, a conference of presidents and leading men at it all the time, and conferences of preachers, from Dan to Beersheba, at it all the time. All we want is God's truth and church polity consistent with that truth. I'm not concerned about organic unity."

"It strikes me," I interposed, "that we should keep organic union in mind. I agree with Dr. Loy when he says: 'It is the will of the Lord that the one body of believers should outwardly manifest itself in one body.'"

"Yes, yes, that's all nice and good. Walther, Fritschel, Krauth and all the rest of them say that, too. But why do you not understand me? I am not concerned about union, because that will take care of itself once we get unity."

"But suppose our good professors and presidents should deem the plan futile and refuse to attend those conferences?"

"What!" he fairly snapped. "Didn't I tell you they are our servants? Well, then, 'raus mit 'em! send them to Prester John's country, and get servants who will do it. Of servants it is required that they be found faithful. Now, has not the apostle said, 'Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake'? And will that not apply to synod as well as to state? But is such a refusal conceivable when the Scriptures say, 'As every man has received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold gifts of God?' Would it not be ungrateful, uncharitable, haughty, faithless, or cowardly to refuse?"

"Yet, for all that, I can conceive how an entire synod might refuse to take part in such work."

"Then that synod would stamp itself with the brand of sectarianism. Dr. Fritschel was right when he said: 'To keep in one's eye one's own little communion above all, though the Kingdom of God suffer thereby, is the real hall-mark of sectarianism.' I think Paul's words apply here: 'As we therefore have opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them that are of the household of faith.' Here the question is not which synod is right or which is wrong in confession or practice. Each must believe it is right. But the question is whether the synod that is right is doing its full duty towards synods that are wrong. If a synod has gone down from Jerusalem on the Jericho road, fallen among thieves and been left half dead, isn't it high time that the others quit walking by on the other side, like haughty priest and callous Levite, and stop to pour oil and wine into the wounds? Right here a little Samaritanism would not come amiss. Orthodoxy without charity is a heartless religion— a monstrosity." Then he paused a moment, and, as he pulled out his bandanna, added: "But that reminds me of something — something important."

The old minister was perspiring. He had been in dead earnest and eloquent withal. In his younger days, I imagine, he was one of the kind that break all the rules that were ever made for preaching, and obey them all, just as suits their purpose. But I opine he always made his point, and that the common people heard him gladly. Now that he had wiped his face, he adjusted his spectacles, and continued:

"This is really a very important point, and yet it almost slipped me. 'Tis a trick age plays a man. What I have in mind is charity in these proposed conferences. The dominant desire must not be to obtain victory, but to get at the truth. Luther had the right idea. I think I can quote him verbatim. 'We must forget the strifes and stings of the past/ he says, 'and s tr i v e for unity with patience, meekness and kindly colloquies, but most of all with prayer to God the Father, who is the author of all concord and love.' But I have no fear of the result. God can bless us beyond our expectations. Now I am sure that if all the synods establish a joint conference for theological professors, another for their presidents and leading theologians, and provide free conferences for all the pastors, why — or is there anything else in this connection that you can think of?"

"Yes, I think one theological magazine to a language would be a big help."

"Really, that is a capital idea," he ejaculated. "Such a magazine would be an open forum. We would get the views of representative men of all synods."

"Yes, and it would be a live wire, too. You wouldn't have to make preachers take it: it would take the preachers."

"An intersynodical magazine of that character would do much for the cause of unity. And, further, I think the editors would welcome such a consolidation. As it is, they each have a few readers, and they consist of men who agree with them in tot o. They never reach the rest. And so far as responsibility goes, each synod need only be responsible for its own contributions. 'Twould be like an intersynodical conference. This thing appeals to me strongly. But—"

The stogy was out again. I can readily pardon an old man for smoking, for he has tailed over from a day when that was a common practice; but it is hard to forgive an old man for smoking stogies when he has run so far on life's way that his breath is quite spent. He should smoke cigars: they stay lighted better and look more dignified.

"But," he gasped, the ignition performed, "you must not grow faint-hearted or uncharitable if opposed. Schism has Samsons who cannot understand how a man can attempt to promote the concord and prosperity of the Lutheran Church as a whole without being disloyal to that part to which he belongs. 'Tis the logic of their position without the charity of their profession. That is why schism's halo is the Church's shame. I am an old man standing on the verge of the grave, but ere I go hence I want to say this to the coming generation: He serves his synod best who serves the Church best."

The clock struck nine. He rose and picked up his hat and cane.

"I hope you will see your way clear," said he, "to add to your book a treatise on the remedy for schism."

"I will consider it seriously and prayerfully, I assure you. I appreciate your kindness."

"If our men will only get down to it in dead earnest," he said on parting, "establish these conferences for theological professors, presidents of synods, and for pastors, launch an intersynodical magazine in each

language, and then just keep at it all the time, I am sure that in a little while, say a hundred years, our Lutheran hosts in this land will be practically one."

I think the old minister was about right. What do you think?

The End

Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you. — 2 Cor. 13:11.


M L
Diszeichen sey zeuge / das solche bucher durch
meine hand gangen sind / deñ des falschē druckēs
vnd bucher verderbens / vleyssigen sich ytzt viel

Luther Seal

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Image on imprint page is *Still Life With Bible* by Vincent Van Gogh.

215 – v5

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How Can You Find Peace With God?

The most important thing to grasp is that no one is made right with God by the good things he or she might do. Justification is by faith only, and that faith resting on what Jesus Christ did. It is by believing and trusting in His one-time *substitutionary* death for your sins.

Read your Bible steadily. God works His power in human beings through His Word. Where the Word is, God the Holy Spirit is always present.

Suggested Reading: New Testament Conversions by Pastor George Gerberding

Benediction

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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