



"Meditate  
upon these things;  
give thyself  
wholly to them;  
that thy profiting  
may appear unto all"

I Timothy 4:15

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## Exodus 20:6

### ---- LAW OR GOSPEL?

ARE THE WORDS OF EXODUS 20:6 TO BE RECEIVED AND TAUGHT AS LAW OR AS GOSPEL PROMISE?

The first issue of Volume 34 of the *QUARTALSCHRIFT* (1937. Theological Quarterly of the Wisconsin Synod) opens with these words of the sainted Prof. Aug. Pieper:

"We regard it as a gracious dispensation of God that in the previous issue of this periodical the doctrine of the distinction between the Law and the Gospel was once again brought into discussion. In the course of time, and especially during that period in which we were being troubled by notorious confusions (i. e., the Protestant Controversy —E.S.), we had treated this subject somewhat more extensively; but at that time no general unanimity in the matter was achieved among us. Even today unclarity in this subject persists in many quarters. This fact undoubtedly also gave occasion for the appearance of this recent article in the *QUARTALSCHRIFT*."

Having read this, it was natural that one should reach for the October 1936 issue of the quarterly; and there, on page 232, appears the title: "DO THE WORDS OF PRO-

MISE IN THE CONCLUSION TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS BELONG TO THE LAW OR TO THE GOSPEL? " The reference, of course, is to Exodus 20:6, which in the Decalogue forms a part of the development of the "First" Commandment but which in Luther's Small Catechism appears as a portion of the answer to the question: "What does God say of all these commandments? "

No one who is truly sensitive to the theological climate in our midst or, for that matter, to the state of his own heart will react to such statements, questions and topics with the feeling that we have left behind us all the weaknesses and imperfections that gave rise to them in the past. True theologians will rather regard it as "a gracious dispensation of God" if time and opportunity are found for us also in our day to revive and review the discussion of such profound and timely subjects.

The issue of a proper distinction between Law and Gospel goes back to the Garden of Eden and has been a vital concern to God's people through the ages. That the skill of thus rightly dividing the Word of Truth needs constant refurbishing is evident also among us. In our task of instructing old and young in the wisdom of the Word it is essential that we do not teach Gospel as Law or Law as Gospel. Yet even in the simple terms of the Catechism a pastor or professor may not always properly distinguish them. How, for example, do you, the reader, answer the question concerning Exodus 20:6 as formulated above? What thoughts have you communicated to pupils or students upon the basis of that promise? Has it been treated as a commitment of the Law or as a pledge of divine Grace associated with the Gospel?

Having formed the broad purpose of preparing for our theological Journal an occasional article dealing with some of the more difficult phases of catechetical instruction, the undersigned was preparing to begin by directing attention to this question when, in his study of the subject, the above-

mentioned Quartalschrift article came to light. This discovery might well of itself have cast doubt upon the need and wisdom of attempting a new and "original" treatment of the topic. But it was then already too late for doubt because the Quartalschrift essay turned out to be the somewhat shorter twin sister of an earlier document which had already been investigated. It had appeared in LEHRE UND WEHRE, the theological magazine of the Missouri Synod, Vol. 41 (July-October 1895) under the somewhat ponderous heading: "DOES THE PROMISE, ADDED TO THE LAW AT THE TIME OF THE LAW-GIVING, THAT GOD WOULD REWARD THOSE WHO LOVE HIM AND KEEP HIS COMMANDMENTS, UNTO THE THOUSANDTH GENERATION, BELONG UNTO THE LAW OR UNTO THE GOSPEL?"

To borrow a phrase: What need have we of further witnesses? This is the sorrow of epigones that much of what they might undertake to do others have done better before them. Nevertheless there is a service that we can render. Even the best material is ineffective if it is not available. Much of the fine work of the fathers is out of print and is not found in the libraries of all our pastors and teachers. Moreover, as in the case of these articles, much was written in German and in that form is inaccessible to many. To preserve the wealth of our theological inheritance our generation must re-discover it in translation.

Thus it is that the project above mentioned is initiated with the presentation of the LEHRE UND WEHRE article. Certain liberties have been taken. To achieve fluency, the translation will at times be rather free; and to conform to the modern taste for brevity the material will be condensed without the loss of and essential thoughts and without disruption of context. In this manner the scriptural witness both of LEHRE UND WEHRE and of the QUARTALSCHRIFT can be fully adduced in answer to the question as we have formulated it in the title.

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Before ever He issued a commandment, God spoke at Sinai saying: "*I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage*" (Ex. 20:2). After God had promulgated the first Commandment and added the warning that as a jealous God He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him, He continued with this promise: "And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

## I

THIS PROMISE MUST BE READ EITHER IN TERMS OF THE LAW OR IN TERMS OF THE GOSPEL.

The Scriptures allow no third possibility. For they contain neither an evangelical Law nor a legalistic Gospel. In a sense the two great doctrines of Scripture, Law and Gospel, do indeed complement each other; but they are never interchangeable. The Gospel does not become Law merely because it is found in association with the Law, nor does the Law become Gospel when the latter is attached to it.

God has confirmed His Law both with threats and with promises; but the promises of the Law are conditioned by a demand for full and perfect obedience. "This do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:28; Lev. 18:5). Such performance calls for people perfectly sanctified, loving God with all their hearts, souls, strength and mind, and their neighbor as themselves (Luke 10:27); and to them God pledges not merely temporal, but spiritual and eternal blessings as well. Transgression of a single commandment, however, merits all the condemnation of the Law. "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this Law, to do them"

(Deut. 27:26; Gal. 3:10). So the Law not only imposes upon all men all punishments of body and soul for time and eternity but deprives them of the true enjoyment of any and all temporal, spiritual and eternal blessings as surely as all men have transgressed the whole Law. Not even the Christian, therefore, can of the Law and through the Law attain to or expect either the greatest blessing of all which says: "I am the Lord thy God," or the other: "(I am) showing mercy."

Since it is certain, however, that God has already fulfilled this promise for many thousands, it is clear that the promise must flow from the Gospel and has come to the believers through the Gospel. Even the promise attached to the Fourth Commandment: "That it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth," cannot be dependent upon a keeping of the Law by the individual. For as he who keeps the whole Law, yet transgresses in one point, is guilty of all, so surely he who would receive any blessing of any single commandment must have kept the whole Law. Nor did God give to the world the promise: "While the earth remaineth, seed-time and harvest, and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease," because the world had kept the Law, but for the sake of the promise of the world's Savior. The many rewards of Grace accorded good works cannot be derived from the Christian's keeping of the Law, but must have their origin in the Gospel and bear its character.

The promise which introduces the divine Law has the following identifying characteristics:

A. The words: "I am the Lord thy God," involve a communion between God and man. Luther writes: "He saith not, 'I am the Lord you (plural) God, but: Thy God. Take careful note of the little word Thy; for it embodies vast power. So He says: I am the Lord thy God, as though He would declare: I will assume a very personal concern

for each one as though he were the only person on earth."

B. The promise is that God will show mercy; and it is given to "those who love" Him.

C. He makes His promise to those who "keep my Commandments," thus relating it directly to the obedience of faith of His Christians.

D. He excludes every possibility of merit by promising to "keep mercy with them that love Him and keep His Commandments to a thousand generations." (Deut. 7:9).

If we now compare Law-promises with the marks of this promise, the distinction is manifest.

A. God can say to no man by the Law: I am thy God, thy highest good, but must rather declare: I am thy Judge who must cast thee from Me into hell. The Grace in this, that God is our God, is derived from the Gospel.

B. That there are people who love God in a world which hates God is not an achievement of the Law but of the Gospel which generates Christians who alone can love God. "The Scripture" —that is, the Law graven in stone and expounded in the Bible—"hath concluded all under sin" (Gal. 3:22) —that is, all men and the thoughts and intents of their hearts.

C. The Law knows nothing of mercy. Through the Law God can exercise only His Righteousness which deals according to merit. Even Christians, who sincerely though inadequately love God and uprightly, if imperfectly, keep His Commandments, can be granted a bodily, spiritual or eternal blessing only by the mercy of God and never from God's innate, immutable Righteousness. All Mercy has its roots in the Gospel. When God promises Mercy to those

who keep His Commandments, He thereby makes it clear that He speaks, not of merit but of an unmerited display of His goodness and benevolence, according to the Gospel which is in Christ Jesus.

## II

### GOD HIMSELF DREW THIS PROMISE FROM HIS COVENANT OF GRACE.

The words: "I am the Lord thy God," are words of the covenant of grace which God established with Abraham and sealed by the rite of circumcision (Gen. 17:7-8). Its promise manifestly did not result from a keeping of the Law. God took the words from the terms of the covenant of grace and placed them as a heading over the Law.

In like manner, God Himself adduced the words: "I . . . am showing mercy," from the covenant of grace. For we read, Deut. 7:9: "Know therefore that the Lord thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." And after He has referred to the threats and called for the keeping of His commandments and statutes. He says: "Wherefore it shall come to pass, if ye hearken to these judgments, and keep, and do them, that the Lord thy God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he sware unto thy Fathers. . . ." (v. 12). Since God, then, had given an oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob pledging the mercy which blesses unto thousands of generations, by what right could we relate "the covenant and the mercy" to the covenant of the Law, which was consummated 430 years later and knows naught of mercy? (cf. Gal. 3:17-19). One must not overlook the fact that also in the promises made to the patriarchs (Gen. 18-19; 26:4-5) mention is made of a keeping of the statutes and ways of the Lord. Here, as in the words attached to the Law: ". . . them that love me and keep my commandments," God describes those persons who have been called



into the covenant of grace and who, as their life of obedience testifies, rely upon the sworn, unconditioned mercy of God.

### III

#### BY ITS PURPOSE AND BENEFIT THIS PROMISE IS REVEALED AS EVANGELICAL.

No essential difference can be discerned between these words of promise associated with the giving of the Law and all other promises in which God graciously offers rewards to the works of Christian faith. Communion with God by faith is presupposed in every case. God must first be our God before we can expect Him to fulfill in us the promise attached to the Law. Only Christians can be promised and can receive a reward of grace for their good works; and such reward is due only to works done according to the divine Law because no other works are good works. It is in every case an act of mercy when God rewards good works (Luke 17:10), and any divine promise to that effect is without reference to human merit.

When in His preface to the Law God identifies Himself as gracious and merciful by His promises and as the wrathful One by His threats, He would thereby clothe His Law with the proper prestige, thus promoting obedience. By His promise He coaxes His people to the keeping of the Law, by threatening He excites them to watchfulness against carnal security. Luther writes: "The temporal promises are the apples and nuts with which God coaxes His children." Thus God continues still to entice us by promises of temporal, spiritual and eternal blessings. Thereby He encourages us to deny the world with its lusts (Heb. 11:26; Matt. 19:26), to show mercy to the needy (Matt. 25:34-40), to make a firm confession of Christ (Matt. 10:32), to practice meekness, humility, peaceableness (Matt. 5:1-9), to show a forgiving spirit (Matt. 6:14), to trust God for the supply of our bodily needs (Matt. 6:32), etc. The Law itself certainly requires all such things of all men as acts of

willing obedience; but the Law can make no one willing or obedient. It can threaten and frighten transgressors with punishment, but thereby works only wrath (Rom. 4:15). Since the Law has suffered at the hands of all men and must therefore curse them all, it can never, by means of any promise, coax men to keep it. Since it demands a holiness possible only to the perfect, how might it lovingly invite obedience in sinners? It follows, then, that all those promises with which God encourages a keeping of His Law are evangelical in nature and can affect only Christians, who through Christ are reconciled with God and have been born again.

The divine promise is also a most glorious comfort whereby God strengthens the faith of His Christians in cross and tribulation. Holy men of God have been wont to use the promises of reward to good works as strengthening preachments for comfort. Daniel, prostrate in prayer before His God and relying solely upon the righteousness of Christ, nevertheless supports and confirms his faith with a reference to the fact that "the great and dreadful God" is also the One "keeping covenant and mercy to them that love Him" (Dan. 9:4). Moses, in peril of his soul at Pharaoh's court, looked at the reward (Heb. 11:26); and this moved him to choose the shame of God's people and leave the glory of this world behind. King Hezekiah in his mortal illness reminds the Lord of his uprightness of life, and the Lord acknowledges this as a prayer of faith (Isaiah 38). In his prayer David comforts himself thus with the certainty that God would hear him: "...thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name" (Ps. 61:5). How often do we not read that God's saints appeal to Him on the basis of their obedience of faith! (Ps. 7-10; Ps. 15; 1 John 3:7. 18-19; etc.)

How splendidly our Lord Jesus encourages His disciples through the macarisms and promises in the Sermon on the Mount! His expounding of the divine Law follows only

after He has prepared the disciples, by extolling the beauty of their newborn state and reminding them of the promises due it, to follow and serve Him faithfully through cross and tribulation.

How it must cheer believers and strengthen their confidence in God while they walk through the wilderness of self-denial and renunciation when God promises that He will bless them with temporal gifts (Lev. 26:1-8); Deut. 30:9; 28:3-14; Ps. 37:4-5). How greatly this must help our feeble faith which ever desires visible support when assailed by doubtful fears and despairings regarding our adoption, that God has promised us spiritual gifts which shall accrue to our obedience of faith and are thus designed by God to be witnesses and evidences of our faith. (Deut. 26:3.11-12; 2 Cor. 6:16; John 14:24; Matt. 6:14). The Apology says: "And yet Christ often connects the promise of the remission of sins to good works, not because He means that good works are a propitiation, for they follow reconciliation; but for two reasons. One is, because good fruits must necessarily follow. Therefore He reminds us that, if good fruits do not follow, the repentance is hypocritical and feigned. The other reason is, because we have need of external signs of so great a promise, because a conscience full of fear has need of manifold consolation." (Trig. p. 199).

How greatly also the hope of Christians, so deep and constant a need, is strengthened by the fact that the Lord Himself has established a direct relation between our obedience of faith and the gifts of eternal life (Matt. 19:28-29; 16:19; Luke 12:33).

All this is solely an operation of the Gospel. For the Law, whether it be found in the Old or in the New Testament, performs the office of death. It never lifts up, never strengthens faith and hope under the cross of life, never comforts the poor heart with incomplete sanctification as a witness to our state of grace. We therefore must con-

clude that these promises are evangelical in origin and in nature. Thereby we certainly do not wish to say that they are Gospel in essence; for the Gospel in its essence is the proclamation of the forgiveness of sins to the lost. But these promises flow from the Gospel and thus belong to it.

#### IV

#### CERTAIN OBJECTIONS WHICH MIGHT BE RAISED AGAINST OUR CONCLUSIONS.

It will serve to confirm the correctness of our findings if we allow space for the examination of objections which might seem to some to be valid.

A. The argument may be advanced that there is but one Gospel, which has nothing whatever to do with our works or with the Law. This Gospel is "the divine doctrine of the gracious forgiveness of sins through faith in Christ Jesus unto eternal life." This it is in essence and character, nature and effect.

We answer: Be it granted that there is but one Gospel, and that this is totally independent of our works. It is NOT true, however, that it has nothing to do with our works or with the Law. We believe, not only that the Holy Ghost "has enlightened me with the Gospel," but that through the same Gospel He "sanctifies" me; and a sanctification without law and without works is non-existent. Through the Gospel God not only forgives us our sins but delivers us from them. Not only does Christ thereby comfort fearful consciences but in the process also persuades the comforted to walk the way of His Commandments. (Ps. 119:32). As true as it is that the Gospel never depends upon our works, it cannot be denied that our works depend upon the Gospel, in the sense that the Holy Spirit performs each good work in us through the Gospel. We must therefore carefully distinguish between what the Gospel brings about in the justification of the sinner before God and what it brings about in the ones who are justified.

B. Someone might further say: The evangelical promises are free promises of grace, while the law-promises are given subject to satisfactory conduct. Any promise which is conditioned by a demand that one love God and keep His Commandments is a promise of the Law. Therefore the one under discussion must be a law-promise.

We answer: Most certainly a promise associated with the condition that the Law be kept is a law-promise. But the evangelical promise is unconditioned not only in justification, but also in the area of sanctification, since there is no merit of reward in the faith-obedience of Christians and God is not moved by the earnings of their obedience but desires and promises good solely out of mercy. As little as the promise of the Gospel is conditioned by faith, so little also is the obedience of faith, which has been wrought by Grace, a condition of the promise. As a kindling of the first longing of the human heart for the Grace of God in Christ, so likewise is the slightest longing to serve God in love and gratitude a divine work of grace in every respect. Grace does not become conditional merely because a command or even an act of man is involved, but only when human work or activity is substituted for Grace or is made a contributing cause of the conferring of Grace. For when God commands: Baptize! or: Eat and drink of the bread and wine in the Sacrament! —that also is an act, an essential activity without which there could be no Sacrament; and yet this is the sweetest Gospel in the form of a command, because God has connected His Grace with the external signs. But He has not thereby replaced Grace with human action or made this action a cause of Grace. Martin Chemnitz speaks thus of Ex. 20:6: "The subject here is that mercy, Deut. 7:9,12, which God confers upon the pious in order to show that this promise does not have its origin in human merit but in divine Grace."

C. It might further be pointed out that in His giving of the Law God placed promise and threat in juxtaposition.

Now since the threat certainly does not belong to the Gospel, the promise must be taken as corresponding to the threat. He who does evil will be punished; he who does good will be rewarded. Human reason must draw this conclusion, and for that very reason is so incapable of reconciling itself to the bearing of a Christian's cross.

We answer: The fact that God utters this promise while giving His Law by no means makes the promise one of the Law. When our Lord sent His disciples into the world to preach the Gospel He sounded the threat: "He that believeth not shall be damned." But certainly the promise: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," did not thereby become a promise of the Law. In recording the words of institution of the Holy Supper St. Paul adds the warning: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord;" yet the promise: "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins," is not thereby made a law-promise. There is here no correspondence between threat and promise; rather, the two stand in opposition to one another. In the human heart the truth is written that evil must be punished and the good rewarded; but in no unregenerate is it written that God desires to reward obedience to a thousand generations, for it is not a promise of the Law.

D. It could be pointed out that the true content of the Gospel is Christ and His merit, and that the promise of which we speak cannot be evangelically oriented because it makes no mention of Christ and His merit.

We of course reply: Only through Christ can God say to a people or a person: I am thy God! Only for Christ's sake and because of His merit can God show mercy to any man and bless him (Ephesians 1:3); only through Christ is it possible for us to love God and keep His Commandments, for without Him we can do nothing; only in Christ can God

bless the descendants of a Christian unto the thousandth generation, for in Him all nations of the earth already are blest; only because of Christ's merits can God reward good works because only in Christ is the righteous God pleased with the person who performs the works and whose weaknesses and imperfections are covered through Christ's perfect obedience. The true content of the Gospel is Christ and His merit. This promise also, though the name of Jesus is not expressly mentioned therein, has Christ as its foundation, source, means and ultimate object. Hence it must be a Gospel promise.

G.A.M. —E.S.

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“. . . an Establishment of Religion. .  
the Free Exercise Thereof. . . ”

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EDITOR'S NOTE: *The above is the title of a study carried out by our contributing editor in connection with a course in American Political Thought at Mankato State College. The following is a condensation consisting mainly of excerpts which are offered as in the original. Editorial interpolations are identified by the use of italics. The footnotes are numbered as in the original, which accounts for the occasional gaps in their sequence. We expect that these pages will furnish a background for further articles by the author on specific problems of Church and State relations.*

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T-E-N-S-I-O-N!

That single word, with all the friction and conflict that it brings to the mind, characterizes the struggle to prohibit an establishment and grant free exercise of religion in the United States, as it also does the entire history of church-state relations, past and present. For as long as government remains necessary for the welfare of society and religion remains necessary for the spiritual welfare of the individual, the twain shall ever exist in an atmosphere of tension.

The principle of definite and restricted areas of activity for both state and church was, as far as this writer knows, first enunciated by Jesus Christ in the oft quoted and oftener violated words, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."<sup>1</sup>) In the interest of the truth, when He was falsely accused of "perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is

1) Matthew 22:21



Christ a King,"<sup>2)</sup> Jesus defended Himself before the Roman governor, Pilate, by elaborating upon that principle, saying, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."<sup>3)</sup> But that defense failed to prevail, for it was nullified by political pressures brought to bear upon Pilate by the Jews. The incident resulted in the tyranny of the state exercised by political murder of One who had been a defender of the sovereignty of the state under God in its prescribed area of activity.

The Roman Empire used polytheistic paganism as an arm of the state with the emperor in his role as Pontifex Maximus serving as a unifying force. At the beginning of the Christian era general religious liberty was the policy of the empire with non-interference in sectarian matters being the official policy of the empire towards nascent Christianity. The forcible dismissal of the Jewish charges against Paul in Corinth,<sup>4)</sup> the intervention of the city chancellor in behalf of the cause of Paul during the riot at Ephesus,<sup>5)</sup> the rescue of Paul by the responsible Roman official from the Jewish mob at Jerusalem<sup>6)</sup> and his subsequent protection and trial by the Roman authorities reveal a proper attitude of the government towards one of the smaller sects — that of granting police protection without attempting to judge in purely sectarian matters.

Following the burning of Rome by Nero policy changed, for in making the Christians the scapegoat for his own folly, Nero changed the status of Christianity from a religio licita to a religio illicita. There followed ten major persecutions

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2) Luke 23:2

3) John 18:36

4) Acts 18:12-17

5) Acts 19:23-41

6) Acts 21:30ff.

covering two and a half centuries during which the Roman Empire exercised totalitarian tyranny over Christianity which no longer existed under the benevolent aegis of the government.

This period came to a close when Constantine, before his battle with Maxentius for the control of the empire, allegedly saw a vision of the cross with the directive, "In hoc signo vinces." Following his victory Constantine replaced paganism with Christianity as the state religion, marking "the beginning of caesaro-papism—the rule of the State over the Church."<sup>7)</sup>

Christianity and state were now commingled. The question of which would dominate was battled with claim and counter-claim, intrigue and sword down through the centuries. The claim of absolute sovereignty of the Church over all things spiritual and temporal was enunciated by Pope Gregory VII at the end of the eleventh century and eloquently proclaimed by Pope Boniface VIII at the beginning of the fourteenth century in the bull Unam Sanctam.

*(This bull sets forth the Papal doctrine that the church has been given two swords, one of spiritual authority to be wielded by the various rulers, but for the church and under the authority of the church, which is to establish the earthly power and judge it if it be not good. <sup>9)</sup>*

This claim is still publicly and dramatically proclaimed by the Triregnum of the Pope, which symbolizes the Roman

7) J. Marcellus Kik, CHURCH AND STATE, The Story of Two Kingdoms (London NEW YORK Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1963), p. 39.

9) "Under political pressure the second successor of Boniface, Clement V, had to rescind this Bull; but centuries later Leo X, in 1516, in his Bull Pastor Aeternus, reinstated it --and it stands today as the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church;" -Theo. Hoyer, "Church and State," The Abiding Word (St. Louis, Concordia Pub. House, 1947), p. 582.

pontiff's spiritual supremacy, his temporal dominion, and his claim of sovereignty over all rulers.<sup>10)</sup>

Three forces combined to check the claims of the Church: the Renaissance, the Reformation, and Nationalism. The Renaissance began to re-assert the dignity of the individual and his natural rights.<sup>11)</sup> The Reformation broke the spiritual tyranny of the Pope over the consciences of Christians, as exercised politically through the ban and interdict.<sup>12)</sup> The rising tide of Nationalism replaced the international Church of Rome with the national state churches. The principle of cuius regio, eius religio.<sup>13)</sup> became the accepted modus vivendi in the nation states of Western Europe.

#### I. European Roots Transplanted. . .

The implementation of the cuius regio, eius religio principle in England came about through the conflict between the Pope and Henry VIII over the latter's marital problems. As a result the Church of England came into being as the established church, both enjoying official favor and suffering from official, unspiritual interference. One church was

- 10) Pope Paul in a dramatic gesture recently donated his Triregnum, created for and worn at his coronation last year, to the poor of the world. Minneapolis Tribune, November 14, 1964.
- 11) Cf. Dante, "De Monarchia," 1321.
- 12) Example: Luther's burning of the Pope's bull of excommunication, "Exsurge Domine," December, 1520.
- 13) The principle, *cuius regio, eius religio*, was adopted at the Diet of Nuernberg, 1522; repeated at the second Diet of Nuernberg, 1524; was made temporary law in Germany ("until a council") by the first Diet of Speier, 1526; rescinded by the second Diet of Speier, 1529; actually made law in the Empire after the fiasco of the Smalcaldic War, in the Religious Peace of Augsburg, 1555; re-enacted in the Peace of Westphalia, 1648, here with the inclusion of the Calvinists, who had not been mentioned in the Peace of Augsburg. The Peace of Westphalia was condemned by Pope Innocent X in a special bull of Nov. 10, 1648. Cf. Theo. Hoyer, "Church and State," pp. 588-589.

established, not two or more. Other churches existed, at times illegally and so exposed to persecution, at times tolerated but not officially recognized or favored. This development in various ways and at various times of state churches in Europe since the Reformation, which generally remain to this day, forms the general experience of Western culture with the term, "an establishment of religion."

In all fairness to the Founding Fathers it must be kept in mind that their previous experience in the Old World was solely with the single establishment that had little desire for toleration of others and that they had no experience with a free church separated from the state and with the free exercise of religion. This was the heritage that they brought with them. So it cannot be expected that either those who fled the mother countries to find a place to worship according to the dictates of their own consciences or those who transplanted themselves to the New World for other reasons came with the desire to establish either freedom from establishment or freedom to worship. Such experiments in freedom had not been tried in the mother country. There was in the beginning no thought of any such radical experimentation in the New World. The plan of the Puritans was to establish a branch of the Church of England in the New World that would be free from the alleged corruptions and false practices which were so deplored in the mother country and which had provided motivation for starting anew in the New World.

The Puritan establishment of the church in the New World was due to more than just mechanical transplanting of Old World experiences in the New. It was rather a reaffirmation of a theological heritage created by John Calvin. Despite Calvin's manifest hostility to the Roman Church which had sought to lord it over the bodies and souls of men, as well as all things temporal and spiritual, and despite Calvin's determination to make the church free and inde-

pendent of the state, he could not resist employing the machinery of the state to implement the Christian society he hoped to establish. This position is explicitly stated in Calvin's basic theological work of 1536 entitled the Institutes of the Christian Religion.

Thus Calvin sought to use the state as an executive arm of the church, while at the same time insisting upon a free church that should not be dominated by the state.

But in Puritan America the church, established by the state, used the state to help create the Christian society. And yet, the theoretical separation of the respective spheres of activity was confessed from time to time.

But nevertheless in seventeenth century America single establishment with no free exercise of religion was theory and practice, especially in Virginia and New England.

## II. From Single to Multiple to No Establishment. . .

*Against this majority position a minority heritage was also transplanted from the Old World. The first advocates of "separatism," i.e. the separation of church and state (no establishment of any religion) were Anabaptists like Roger Williams. Subsequently Lutherans brought their doctrinal heritage as it was expressed in the Augsburg Confession, Art. XXVIII, OF ECCLESIASTICAL POWER ("Therefore the power of the Church and the civil power must not be confounded"). The steady influx of immigrants of different national and religious backgrounds soon created a change in the policies of one colony after another, first in the direction of multiple establishment, as in the 1778 Constitution of South Carolina ("that all denominations of Christian Protestants in this State. . . shall enjoy equal religious and civil privileges").*

This multiple establishment was the first step in the direction of "free exercise." The next step that took shape in the adoption of the First Amendment was disestablishment or no establishment of any religion. It was down in Virginia

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that Jefferson and Madison pioneered in this new way of freedom, along which they were later to lead the nation.

In the weeks and months before the signing of the Declaration of Independence the Virginia House of Burgesses was struggling with the article on religious liberty for its Bill of Rights. Just three weeks before the political independence of the colony, together with its sister colonies, was declared the Virginia legislature wrote freedom of religion and conscience into law.

But the Church of England still remained as the officially favored, or established, religion of the colony. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison promptly began a ten-year campaign for the equality of all faith in Virginia. Finally in 1779 the Virginia legislature abolished the establishment of the Anglican Church by the adoption of a Statute of Religious Liberty, written by Thomas Jefferson:

Be it enacted by the General Assembly that no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship. . . but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinion in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge or affect their civil capacities.<sup>25)</sup>

Ten years later the battle fought in Virginia was re-fought in the halls of Congress. In his opening speech proposing his thoughts regarding amendments to the Constitution Madison presented two basic proposals with respect to religion: (1) the federal government must not establish religion and must not infringe the equal rights of conscience or the free exercise of religion and (2) the states must also be prohibited from infringing the rights of conscience. After almost three months of debate the House approved the whole

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25) Church, State and the Public Schools, Institute of Human Relations Press, p. 13-14.

set of amendments, incorporating Madison's two proposals regarding religion. The Senate began debate. Effort after effort was made to limit the broad version of the House by forbidding the single establishment of a national, while permitting multiple establishment—general aid to religion with no sect receiving preferential treatment. The Senate finally did adopt a version that granted the free exercise of worship, but would also have allowed financial support to one or more churches, provided the government gave no legal sanction to any one kind of belief or worship in preference to others. A joint committee, consisting of three members of the House: James Madison, Roger Sherman of Connecticut, and John Vining of Delaware and three members of the Senate: Oliver Ellsworth of Connecticut, Charles Carroll of Maryland, and William Patterson of New Jersey worked out a compromise wording that was finally adopted:

Congress shall make no LAW RESPECTING AN ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof.

*PAUL F. NOLTING*

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# PREACHING THE WORD

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## SERMON FOR GRADUATION

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN COLLEGE

June 4, 1965

Gilbert Sydow, Pastor, Ellensburg, Washington

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*Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.*

II Corinthians 10:5

Man always has been interested in learning, in seeking greater knowledge, a better understanding of the world in which he lives. In our day, especially in our country, this is increasingly true. So much so, that we have arrived at a situation unique in history. In times past the learned, the educated, the intellectual were a minority, a small, select few, set apart from the rest of society. Now education and formal learning has become quite general, an attainment possible for all the people. Indeed, it has become almost a necessity that one have some education, some formal learning, in order to earn a living.

This is perhaps all to the good, but as learning increases so does man's "pride of life." As he gains in knowledge of the world in which he lives he becomes "wise in his own conceit." In the days of Paul the learned but mocking Athenian could still be described as "very religious." Today the learned are inclined to rule out all that indicates a power beyond that of man. Thus the Bible and Christianity are set aside as no longer relevant or needed.



In all this, what disturbs the most is that churchmen are hastening to agree and adjust. The bulk of the Protestant world, including Lutheran, feels the need of adapting its beliefs to the prevailing thinking of men. Even the staid old Roman Catholic Church has been affected, and has given some attention to updating its teaching, as evidenced by the recent Vatican Councils. New concepts, new dimensions of learning, they say, call for a change in everything religious, new theologies, new spiritual values, a new morality, an entire new concept of God.

In the face of all this, we are a people who "stay put" in our spiritual and ethical beliefs. We refuse to change, we fight against it. What does this make us? Are we against learning, are we opposed to developing the mind, the use of the thinking process? Are we reactionary, stubbornly clinging to the past and blind to the new? Are we giving proof to the Marxist dictum that "religion is the opiate of the masses"? Are we dull in learning, intellectually asleep?

Quickly and correctly we reject these implications. But let us be aware that there are elements in our customs and tradition that may mislead us. We have long heard the psalmist say that the Lord "holds in derision" the things of man. We know the prophet Jeremiah warns, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom." Jesus derides the men of learning of His day, the scribes, because they loved "to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi." In church history much is said of rationalism. It is a bad word in our usage. In all this there is the possibility that we develop a mistaken idea about learning.

What is rationalism? Is it the setting aside of reasoning, of use of the mind? Surely we understand that this could not be so. In the very beginning God spoke to Adam in terms of "subduing" the earth and "having dominion" over it. He speaks to one created with the power to reason and

tells him to use his mind in relationship to the world in which he lives. Solomon encourages, "get wisdom, with all thy getting get understanding." Scripture enjoins us to "examine yourselves," "prove all things," "try the spirits," "meditate on these things." These are thinking, reasoning processes. They call for logical deductions. Without the use of the mind we could not make use of Scripture.

In our catechism we acknowledge that God has made us and given us our "body and soul," but also our "reason and all our faculties," our senses. When we speak in terms of gift then we must also speak in terms of stewardship. We hear much today of physical fitness, which in scriptural language would be the stewardship of the body. We might do well to speak also of mental fitness, the stewardship of the mind. Some time ago we had the pleasure of hearing a college student in a state university answer the question, "Why are you in college?" in this way, "As a Christian, I am taking this opportunity to fulfill my stewardship of the gift that has been given me." This is one way of putting it, a rather fine way. We can think of our college here in just this way, one of the means, more formal and perhaps efficient than others, whereby we carry out our God-imposed stewardship of the mind.

That, of course, says something quite serious to the student. He is never without motivation and purpose as he goes about his studies. Not a purpose imposed by society, or parents, or faculty, but by His Lord and God. Even in the calling of student it still is true that "whatsoever we do in word or deed must be done to the glory of God," "not with eye-service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart."

Scripture never censures the use of the mind. Rather Scripture calls for it. Scripture can't be used without it. What is denounced and rejected is that use of the mind which sets itself against God, stands arrogant and puffed

up before Him. Scripture calls for what our text says, a "casting down of imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

In talking to the men about us concerning the affairs of the day it doesn't take long (world conditions being what they are) before we are led into a discussion of morality, behavior, ethics. These are things concerning which a Christian indeed has something to say, but often he quickly experiences distress and a helplessness. He isn't reaching the man. There is no meeting of minds. The man isn't getting the full picture. If this is to be attained something else has to be done.

Paul in 2 Cor. 4:4 speaks of "the god of this world blinding the minds of them which believe not." And since even believers are still burdened with their flesh, sin has also affected our thinking. It no longer is as God intended it to be. But Paul also speaks of "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ," . . . that "shines out of darkness and into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This was brought about in the redemptive work of Christ. He came to restore that which was lost, which included the proper knowledge of God and the things of God.

When we talk of that which was regained in Christ we usually think of it in terms of Ephesians 4:24, as "putting on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This is first and foremost, the cleansing which comes with the forgiveness of sins and brings the hope of everlasting life. But something else comes with it. In Colossians 3:10 this is also said, "put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." There is a restoration of thinking as it was before sin, thinking as God originally wanted man to think.

It is just here that our difficulty in talking to the men of this world arises. As Christians we think differently. It cannot be otherwise. Our thinking cannot be put into compartments, so that at times we speak on sociology or psychology more or less as the world speaks of it, but when we come to religion and theology shift our line of thought to the familiar scriptural approach. We have a completely new approach and attitude for every subject and situation. If it isn't so we had better look to ourselves whether we be in the faith.

In I Corinthians Paul concludes chapter two with the words, "But we have the mind of Christ." This appears to be a little sentence simply tacked on to round out the paragraph, and so we hurry on to the next chapter. But here we ought rather to pause. This is a devotion in itself, worthy of long meditation. We are confronted with one of those beautiful paradoxes of Scripture. When we think of such words as "captivity" and "obedience" we see something that hampers, restricts, ties us down, holds us back in our thinking. But in this instance, quite the contrary. It opens up our minds to the mind of God, the breadth and the depth and the richness of His thinking. Now our vision is expanded to see things from eternity to eternity. We have the big picture. This is being broadminded in reality.

Only with this background and understanding can we handle the things God lays down for this life. Only within the biblical concepts of creation and the fall into sin does the Gospel of salvation in Christ have any meaning. Only when man sees himself as responsible to God his Creator does morality and ethics have serious application. This is our witness to the world.

But in dealing with the world let us not constantly be put on the defensive and trapped into debating issues on the commonly accepted terms. There is no need that we be bound to such categories of thought as new or old, modern

or old-fashioned, contemporary or traditional, liberal or conservative, broad or narrow, negative or positive. Since our day is so much interested in the intellectual we suggest basing discussion on the point of "What makes sense, what is intellectually better?" Here let us not think that as Bible-bound believers we are at a disadvantage when speaking with the world. Quite the contrary. Having Scripture and the mind of Christ gives us a decided superiority.

Let us consider an example or two. Confronting us today are the concepts of materialism, evolution, socialism and atheism. Although these things are usually considered separately, they are actually related, and not just remotely. The culprit in the line-up is evolution. It is the overall proposition by which man ties together the various facets of his research and learning, even as we bring things together under the concept of divine creation. Let us not be misled into thinking that recent discoveries are making our position less tenable. Not so long ago it was thought that a single cell was a very simple organism. Now it has been learned that within a single cell there can be any number of  $4 \times 70^{87}$  possible nucleic acids. This is a fantastic number. In addition it is now also known that cell operation depends on various types of genes: functional, operator, regulator, plus the enzymes to go with them. Put all this together and the complexity is compounded. The possibility that everything needful to make a fundamental change should by itself come together at the right time, in the right proportion under the right conditions is unbelievable. Even evolutionists admit the impossibility. And yet they hold to their theory. They set up two idols, Time and Chance, and depend upon a miracle by their idols to make their theory work. In turn they call a Christian a fool because he believes in an almighty God with Whom nothing is impossible. Does this make sense? Behind it lies intellectual dishonesty. So sure are they of human powers and ability that they claim not to accept anything unless it can be proven by reason and research, and

yet they believe that which is unproven and in fact impossible. Who is the greater fool?

In the field of morality and behavior we have heard it said by educators that we must have a new morality to go with the the new knowledge that has been acquired. Right here we could pause and remind the man that he is not speaking sensibly. That we know more of the material world in which we live does not establish that we need a new morality. This does not follow. Historically it never was so. In the past there were discoveries and developments, the use of electricity, the automobile, which changed our way of life considerably, and yet a new morality was never needed. What is more, we have to ask, what is wrong with respect for parents, elders and superiors, what is wrong with respect for our bodies and that of our neighbors that we avoid hurting or harming them, and seek to keep them chaste and clean and pure; what is wrong with having respect for other people's property; what is wrong with telling the truth? Are these things to be faulted? Yet they must be faulted if they are to be set aside. And there is the further question, What is to be put in their place? Here we find something amazing. We would be the last to belittle recent scientific developments. Brilliant things have been done. We are fascinated by what man has learned and what he can do with the new things he has discovered. But isn't it strange that amid all this learning nothing new has been set forth in the matter of behavior and morality, even when it has been called for and sought after. There is a reason for this. No matter how much man contemplates, how many questions he asks, how many workshops and seminars he holds, whatever of value he produces will be in essence a repetition of the natural law of God. There is only this one workable morality. To tamper with it engenders a curse. Here too the Christian with his mind of Christ is far ahead of the world. The holy will of God makes sense.

As graduates some of you will become pastors, some of you teachers, some of you Christian laymen. As a pas-

tor the Lord expects you to feed his flock. We preach the Gospel —not just any way, but the better way, the best way. We make use of the reborn mind of Christ to study our times and preach to the needs of our people, the people of this day. How this is done we learn from the discourses of Jesus and the sermons of Paul. It doesn't mean popularizing our sermons, or becoming trivial or superficial, or changing one jot or tittle of God's holy Word. It does mean an interest not only in Scripture and theology but also in the current affairs which affect our people so that by speaking to their spiritual needs they may have the peace of mind which God wants them to have. As teachers you will have the rare privilege of working with young minds and ever holding before them the wonder and greatness of being found in Christ. You can make "obedience to Christ" and "having the mind of Christ" the great things that they really are—not something backward and joyless, but the key to understanding and happiness.

As laymen you will be under the greatest pressure and temptation to turn away from the mind of Christ. Working day by day with those of this world tends to make us loosen the bonds that hold fleshly thoughts in captivity so that we begin to think as the world thinks. But it doesn't have to be that way. In these circumstances you also will have the greatest opportunity to give witness to what you are and how you think. You can demonstrate that obedience to Christ is true freedom and the mind of Christ is superior learning.

This applies to all of us. In this arrogant, boastful world where Christianity is looked upon as something backward and as detrimental to the progress of man we can go forth unashamed and give evidence that it is truly the abundant life, not only providing knowledge and joy for eternity, but for this present life also.

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# PAIDEIA

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## *For the School Sermon*

This is the time of year we turn our thoughts to the opening of school. The Christian Church should now pay special attention to its privileges and duties in bringing up the young in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. This is one of the assigned tasks of the Church: that it bring up its youth in a manner that is conducive to a life of faith, and of faithfulness to the Savior and His Word.

Ephesians 6:4 tells us that Christian parents are responsible for the atmosphere in which their children are taught, for the general influence under which they are brought up. God's Word to Israel of old said it also: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deut. 6:5-7. That passage from Moses, even as the passage from Ephesians, places upon us the duty of providing for the children of the Church

### CHRISTIAN ATMOSPHERE.

There is an interesting prohibition that precedes God's positive counsel in this passage: "Parents, don't make your children angry." They are limited, they are smaller than you, they have not developed self-control, they are frustrated many more times in a day than you are. So do not demand



so much that you push them beyond the threshold of what they can stand, be it in work, in manners, in patience, or in waiting for meals. Don't be like the farmer who began to batter with a club the heads of the hogs piled up at the feed trough, screaming at them that they should act like human beings! "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child," said St. Paul. I Cor. 13:11. Endless patience is required in bringing up a child, coaxing him along rough paths, teasing him to try his talents. This is the divine way. Don't crowd and push a child, nagging him with his failures, until he is so provoked as to wish for nothing so much as the day he is old enough to leave home.

Even the simplest exposition of our passage shows us the circumstances in which Christian children are to be brought up: "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." That little word, in, denotes the regulative element in which the training is to take place. Sometimes we say that a student is taking a course in medicine. In that event all his courses, all his study, much of his reading, most of his efforts, and pretty much his whole attention are concentrated on the one task of making him expert in the art of healing, preventing illness, and relieving pain. Would any parent try to make a physician out of his son by sending him to study architecture, astronomy, or engineering? He must be put in an environment where all is conducive toward making him a physician. Could you make a civil engineer out of one who lives and studies in the sphere of classical languages? Or will he become an architect who studies forestry? There is a valid specialism in the broad fields of generality.

Apply the same to the moral and religious convictions of children and youth. Do they become Hindus who grow up among the Mohammedans? Will he become a Buddhist who is brought up among the Brahmans? Or consider this lesson of history, where a little reading will show that many who

would have been the Master Race among men have come to be that way through ages of educational atmosphere designed for those ends. From war-time prison camps we often heard that it was the youngest, who had been given the intensest training, that were most wholeheartedly given to the delusion that they alone were fit to rule the world. These instances evidence the universality of the truth: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." Prov. 22:6. The fact that the indoctrination works also when the doctrine is faulty in no way detracts from the power of the principle. As the twig is bent, the tree is inclined. And we know surely that when we put out plantings of the Lord we will have trees of righteousness. Psalm 1 proclaims it: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." Environment is influential, for good as well as evil.

Christian education, however, is not as it were one field of endeavor on the same basis as medicine, law, language, forestry, farming, or fishing. It is not to be classed in the category of religions as on a level with the Hindu, the Mohammedan, the Brahman, or the Buddhist. Nor is it a mere social and moral uplift program, an economic methodology, or a political panacea. Christianity and Christian education is a matter so high above these as is God in heaven above the earth: it is capable of cutting across and cutting through all these things in such a manner that if we apply it in bringing up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, it, and it alone, will produce physicians, lawyers, professors, foresters and farmers and fishermen who get their religion right as children of God—who perform their special tasks as best they can, and at the

same time live justly and decently among men, citizens of eternal life. "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." 1 Tim. 4:8. Christian atmosphere prepares both for time and for eternity. It teaches both doctrine and life, faith and practise, even as one of the finest recommendations God gave Abraham was for his success in this very aim: "He will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment." Gen. 18:19. The yielding of all such fruit is Christian education's reward; at least it should be—the inroads of the mystery of iniquity are as hard to explain as too often they are painfully present. Even God had to defend Himself against wayward Israel: "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" Isaiah 5:4..

"Life and religion are one thing, or neither is anything," someone has said. If we separate the two we are sinning against the important word in our text, in. If we can say before God that the manner in which we are bringing up our children is one in which the Lord is exercising the training and the reproof, then our conscience is clear and we will save our soul.

You may be a parent who finds it "impossible" to send your child to a Christian school. The atmosphere of a Christian school is, however, the one which God demands that you provide for your child even though no such school may be available. On your shoulders rests the responsibility of so living and speaking in your home, of so teaching the Catechism and the Word of God, that your child grows up, not to put earthly and worldly things first, but God, obedience to the truth, a good conscience, and desire for the way of the Lord.

Can you say that your child is growing up to walk with God? If he goes away, will he seek a church home? Will he take his Bible along without your telling to do so? Will he

mention the church or spiritual things when he writes home, and will he find his friends among those who seek the Kingdom of God? Such things you can confidently expect if you have brought him up in the nurture of the Lord. He should do these things, we must say again. More than that is not our responsibility.

Now that school has become to a large extent a parent-substitute, should we not expect this substitute agency to do what parents should do? We often must settle for something less in a substitute, but we do expect it to perform the essentials. The difficulty is that the world cannot provide an adequate replacement for the Christian home's parental atmosphere.

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover, head of the FBI, once wrote, "If I had a son, I'd probably be frightened. I've never feared criminals, but if I were a husband and a father I might be afraid. So much would depend on me. If I had a son, I'd do one thing. I'd tell him the truth. . . . I'd have my son go to church. What's more, I'd go with him."

We could wish that Christians were forbidden to sleep until they resolved to give their children a Christian atmosphere: a home in which Jesus and His Spirit are not strangers; a church in which children are present among the worshipers; a school in which the wisdom of God interprets the facts of geography, history, and science.

May God fire us with His Spirit that we be obedient before it is too late—and the clock of God's time may be running later than we think. Let us work the work of God while it is day. The world seems quite convinced that night is coming soon, and that by man's own hand. When God's hour strikes it will not matter that we have made ourselves a comfortable living, provided ourselves homes, and established ourselves in professions, businesses, or farms. Those things will be swept away by one fell swoop on the

final day; but if we have brought up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, they will stand among all the saints and angels of God when the eternal peace of Christ's victory shall settle down upon the new Jerusalem.

"The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee. O thou afflicted (says our God to the Church), tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established. Thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee. . . No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." Isaiah 54:10ff.

Martin Galstad

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## ===== PANORAMA =====

MISSOURI:                    So much has been written about  
 A CASE HISTORY            Missouri's June convention in  
    Detroit, particularly its decision to  
 enter the newly formed Lutheran Council in the United  
 States of America (LCUSA) that it seems presumptuous to  
 add anything. LUTHERAN NEWS has written in great de-  
 tail. The CONFSSIONAL LUTHERAN will undoubtedly be  
 covering the same ground. Even TIME magazine has made  
 its caustic comment ("Turning in the 'Never' Button"). And  
 the LUTHERAN SPOKESMAN, July issue, provides a keen  
 analysis of this convention in its larger context, one that  
 reads almost like a pathologist's post mortem report on an  
 autopsy. Lest this comment be misunderstood let me add  
 that just as post mortems are a valuable contribution to  
 medical science, so we consider this SPOKESMAN article  
 recommended reading for all concerned. And we should  
 be concerned. (Non-subscribers may get single copies  
 from the CLC Book House, Box 145, New Ulm, Minnesota  
 56073).

But if we may continue the medical terminology a bit  
 longer, that profession has more than just post-mortems  
 for study. It also has its case histories filled with data  
 concerning the illness and its course. In some instances  
 this may be even more enlightening than the post mortem.

From the reports of the reliable David Runge, staff  
 writer on church affairs for the MILWAUKEE JOURNAL,  
 we glean the following concerning Missouri's joining this  
 new cooperative agency, LCUSA:

—that "The Rev. Oliver R. Harms, synod president,  
 endorsed the proposal as a key point in his program to  
 bring the synod out of isolation and closer to other Chris-  
 tian groups."

—that in a press conference before the resolution was presented Dr. Harms "pointed out that the synod's commission on theology and church relations had approved the new agency. He added that he could see no objection to joining it, saying that there were adequate safeguards to protect the synod's doctrinal position."

—that Dr. Harm's also "denied that the synod tolerated false doctrinal teachings in its seminaries and related institutions of higher learning, as repeatedly charged by a vocal minority at the convention."

— that he "expressed confidence that the synod would continue on a middle path between extreme right and left positions on theological issues."

There was more to the same effect, delivered in the same soothing manner and reinforced by similar assurances by past-President Behnken. All of which is neither good or bad in itself. To quiet the unfounded fears of a body which is on the verge of a panic for which there is no real cause—that would be sound leadership. And when the danger is real and great, it is leadership of the highest order when someone prevents panic and by an orderly evacuation leads his people to safety, whether it be from fire or flood—and particularly if the flood be one of false doctrine. But when the danger is near and real and the reassuring statements and reports still tend to minimize it or even deny its existence, when called leaders say "Peace, peace," when there is no peace, — that is leadership unworthy of the name, leadership which is in imminent danger of judgment. This is the responsibility, the awful responsibility of leadership as it is described in detail in Ezekiel 3:17-21. For especially the second half of this passage applies most forcefully to a body which once had such a splendid doctrinal heritage, but which is in the process of trading it away for the mess of pottage of membership in the LCUSA, all for the sake of "ending its isolation."

But what of the "middle path," which is, of course, also neither good nor bad in itself? It is good if—and only if—it faithfully follows the guidance of the Word. There are extremes to be avoided on either hand. But when it deviates from this standard, no matter how much the path may be praised for being "middle," it is the path that leads to destruction. It is this tragic fact which points to another kind of responsibility, the responsibility of those who are led. For there is no obligation to follow the leader (though that is how children like to play the game). There is no stigma in rejecting him, if it be for valid cause. Leadership needs to be weighed and reweighed ever again. This is the responsibility of those who are led. And as for the path that is so reassuringly described as the middle path, let everyone therefore ask himself:

Just how "middle," how right is that path?

E. Reim

THE SECOND LUTHERAN  
FREE CONFERENCE

The first of this series of Free Conferences took place in Waterloo,

Iowa, in July of last year. Our February issue (1964) on pages 33-40 states our misgivings about the soundness of the plan as it was outlined in the Prospectus. As we see it, this first conference proved that our concern was not unfounded. Finding themselves in agreement on the doctrine of the verbal inspiration of Scripture (to which each participant had committed himself in advance by the stipulated condition of his registration), a feeling of togetherness was created, strong enough to defeat the Arrangement Committee's recommendation that the topic for 1965 be the doctrine of the Church (too dangerous!) in favor of the "safer" topic of justification.



Now the Second Conference has been held. Speaking as an observer the undersigned can testify that the euphoria of the previous year soon disappeared when it became apparent that in this key doctrine, where there is indeed a large area of agreement, there nevertheless were specific differences, strongly held and frankly stated—differences which made it clear that the issues over which Stellhorn and Schmidt opposed Walther, and Lenski opposes Pieper and Stoeckhardt, are by no means dead issues. Statements of a CLC essayist (Pastor Norbert Reim, Seattle) that forgiveness for all men is an objective reality accomplished by the death and resurrection of Christ; that if this forgiveness is rejected in unbelief, this does not change the fact that the sins were forgiven; that man's unbelief cannot nullify that which God has Himself pronounced—such and similar statements made by other essayists and panelists did produce clear and unmistakable dissent, not by many, but by men whose importance in these discussions can not be ignored.

This is why the following resume of the presentation and discussion which at first was called a "Preliminary Statement" was after considerable discussion changed to "Summary of the Discussion on Justification." The sense of this change was that while this "Summary" is accurate as a report on the trend and substance of the discussion, the impression should not be given that it is in any way a statement of agreement. It was in this sense that the majority of the conference members then declared themselves in substantial agreement with the report.

Another indication of the sober realism that had by this time taken the place of the wishful thinking and eager optimism of the First Conference is the topic for next year's meeting: "The Holy Christian Church and True Ecumenicity," offered with the assurance by a member of the Arrangements Committee that this is to include the question of Christian fellowship.

E. Reim

The Summary follows.

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## SUMMARY OF THE DISCUSSION ON JUSTIFICATION

by

THE LUTHERAN FREE CONFERENCE

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

July 15, 1965

1. To a world fearful of a holocaust to come and hastening blindly toward the final judgment, God still speaks His saving Word that we are justified by grace for Christ's sake.
2. Justification is a court-room term and is God's declaration that the sinner is "not guilty." This act of acquittal is relevant to contemporary man because, though the manifestations of his sinfulness varies from era to era, all these sins are in essence an arrogant rebellion against the inflexible law of the holy God, for which he stands in desperate need of divine forgiveness (Rom. 8:7). Man hates God, and God's wrath rests upon man, the sinner, universally and without distinction. Man stands condemned as guilty before his God for the guilt of Adam, the depravity he has inherited, and his own personal transgressions.
3. But because of the perfect substitutionary work of Christ, to whom our sins were imputed and whose perfect fulfillment of all the requirements of God's law is credited to us, God's verdict of "not guilty" has been pronounced over the whole world of sinners and is valid and true whether men believe it or not (Roma. 5:12-19).
4. This verdict, which God has pronounced through the resurrection of His Son (Rom. 4:25), is revealed in the Gospel, the "word of reconciliation," which has been committed to the church and which the church is commanded to proclaim to all men, by announcing to all sin-

ners that for Jesus' sake all their sins have been forgiven (2 Cor. 5:15-21).

5. The verdict is accepted by faith, by which man appropriates to himself the benefits of Christ's atoning work (Rom. 3:28; Eph. 2:8. 9). Justifying faith relies solely upon Christ and confidently embraces the declaration of the Gospel revealed to us in the prophetic and apostolic Scriptures (Rom. 16:26). Neither contrition nor faith, however, are conditions upon which justification depends. The sinner is declared righteous solely for Christ's sake by the grace and mercy of God. Man's acceptance of God's declarative act is the result of the work of the Holy Spirit and is not meritorious. Faith does not trust faith; it trusts Christ.
  
  6. From the acceptance of God's forgiveness flows a life of consecrated service. While all men are God's property, a man is willing to acknowledge this and act accordingly only when he has been justified by faith and renewed by the Holy Ghost. God expects fruit of His children. Only those who abide in Christ are able to produce fruit. The bearing of fruit (sanctification) is a continuous process which remains imperfect and incomplete in this life. Because of the joy which the penitent and believing sinner finds in his "forgiveness" before God, he seeks day by day to bring forth the fruit of a holy life.
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