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Encouraging the Positive Aspects of Church Fellowship

J. Albrecht

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If a poll were taken to determine the least popular teaching in the CLC, the consensus would likely indicate the doctrine of Church Fellowship. With few exceptions, the application of this scriptural principle yields a predictable harvest of situations that are occasionally volatile and usually unpalatable. From a purely fleshly perspective, the consequences always seem to be negative. If you refuse to pray with those outside of our fellowship, you suddenly become the target of their verbal jabs and glaring looks. When confronted with the awkward dilemma of turning back misinformed visitors from the Lord's Table, it is highly improbable that they will thank you after the service; instead, they are likely to label you as being loveless and judgmental. Besides, there are cases where it pains one personally to apply the principle, as, for example, when having to refuse to conduct a wedding or funeral.

It is entirely plausible that among the rank and file of our constituency there exists the unspoken sentiment that we should inch back from our stalwart position on fellowship. Frequently our members are taken to task on this issue. At times, they are accosted by other Christians who arm themselves with snippets of Scripture, such as, "Judge not and ye shall not be judged." They are told that their church is a single issue church, built upon isolated passages, such as, Romans 16:17. One wonders how often they hear that loaded question, "Wouldn't it be better to just dismiss our differences and to forge a unified front against the heathen world?" Suffice it to say that our members take a browbeating from those who do not care to understand the doctrine of fellowship . . . and, even our own people may hold it in silent contempt.

It also comes as no surprise that formerly confessional bodies have retreated from a fearless position on fellowship, hoping to shunt its unpopular consequences. The litmus test for communing together has been altered to include all who profess a faith in Christ and a belief in the Real Presence. The shibboleth of complete doctrinal unity has been adjusted by a few notches: from full agreement in faith and practice to near agreement, based upon logical assumptions. Synods which claim to uphold the doctrine of fellowship, have adopted what appears to be a dangerous, double standard: a shrewd distinction between levels of fellowship; a clever separation of doctrinal unity from a cooperation in externals.¹

And yet, despite all of the negative press it receives, the doctrine of fellowship is one of the precious gifts God has given to His Church. No matter how you examine it, you arrive at the singular conclusion that every aspect of this teaching is positive. The fact that it pervades the life of the church and the fact that it regularly surfaces in the lives of our members, should underscore the greatness of its blessing.

The positive aspects of fellowship might best be encouraged on three fronts:

- I. By reconsidering “fellowship” in its original, scriptural context.
- II. By recognizing the dangers that threaten our unity.
- III. By emphasizing the good in separating from false teachers.

I. Fellowship in Scripture

A proper understanding of the doctrine of fellowship presupposes a correct understanding of two other important Scriptural truths. First, we are reminded that there is a universal brotherhood of ALL believers, known as the Communion of Saints. This truth is established repeatedly in Scripture, which pictures the *Una Sancta* variously as “the household of faith, a royal priesthood, the temple of God,” etc. Spanning denominational lines is that special, hidden unity of all believers, known only to God. “There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all” (Eph. 4:4-6).

Because this fraternity is known only to God, a second truth must also be firmly held: the Bible forces us to distinguish between the Communion of Saints and the visible brotherhood established between like-minded Christians. Since faith is not visible, it cannot be the criterion for establishing earthly fellowship. Dr. Graebner writes, “To introduce the question of personal faith into the general question of fellowship is inadmissible.”²

John informs us that the test of faith is not to be based upon intuition or speculation, but upon one’s outward profession (in word and deed), “By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God” (1 John 4:2,3).

This eliminates the guesswork for determining our fellowship circle. The test of like-mindedness is the confession of faith that is made. Those who step forward and voice their agreement with us (and thereby their rejection of false doctrine), are to be extended the hand of Christian brotherhood.

When such a brotherhood is established, one should do all in his power to strengthen it. Here, it may be helpful to consider the concept of fellowship as it is used in Scripture.

By its very definition, the fellowship word, *KOINONIA*, carries a fully positive connotation: “to have or share in common.” The concept is often one of a close relationship, that “became a favorite expression for the marital relationship as the most intimate between human beings”³ (also used of a political alliance).⁴ Additional definitions include, “generosity, shared ownership, fellow-feeling, participation, sharing, having in common.” “Participation in something can reach such a degree that one claims a part in it for oneself.”⁵ A derivative of this term is used to describe the joint venture of Peter, James, and John as partners in the fishing business.⁶

The idea of a joint enterprise is further defined by the beautiful expressions of fellowship in Scripture:

Philippians 1:3-5: “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship (partnership) in the gospel from the first day until now.” Again in chapter 2:1-2: “Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit . . . fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

Hebrews 13:16: “But do not forget to do good and to share (fellowship), for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

Romans 15:5-6: “Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Recall the touching episode where the churches of Macedonia which, in spite of their own poverty, had a keen desire to express their brotherhood with the saints at Jerusalem, “Imploring us with much urgency that we would receive the gift and the fellowship of the ministering to the saints” (2 Cor. 8:4). When you consider that Paul did not establish the congregation at Rome and then read the introduction and conclusion in his epistle to them, you find an intimate sense of brotherhood expressed. Paul indicates, “Your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world” (Rom. 1:8), thereby reinforcing his message with encouragement from all the saints. He adds, “I long to see you.” And for what purpose? “That I may impart to you some spiritual gift, so that you may be established—that is, that I may be encouraged together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me” (Rom. 1:11,12). (The 16th chapter of this inspired letter contains brotherly salutations to some 25 individuals, including groups that met in their homes.) When the issue of ceremonial law surfaced as a point of controversy, the churches at Jerusalem and Antioch did not simply go their own way and make a unilateral decision. Because of the fellowship they enjoyed with all of the congregations, an open meeting was held, and a joint resolution was reached. Think of Paul’s evangelical appeal to Philemon, urging him to receive Onesimus again as a slave, and as a brother in Christ, “If you then count me as a partner, receive him as you would me” (Philemon 17).

The words of Paul in 1 Thess. 5:9ff. further enhance the fellowship picture, outlining its basis and describing how it functions. Its basis is the salvation we jointly share: “For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him.” Its function is

to build up one another in this faith: “Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing.” By using the analogy of the human body, Paul reminds us that each member of our brotherhood has an integral role to play. Abilities may differ and interests may vary, yet all work together and contribute toward the common goal we share.⁷

Ephesians 4:7ff. pictures a diversity of gifts brought into the service of our brotherhood. “But to each one of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ’s gift. . . . And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of the ministry (literally: “for the work of service”), till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God . . . that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine . . . but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.” Everyone has something to offer. Each individual has gifts and talents that can be used for the mutual edification of the whole. The blessed result is reciprocal: a pastor, attending to the needs of his brothers and sisters in Christ, often walks away thoroughly refreshed in his own faith.

The fellowship depicted in the early chapters of Acts reveals a group of Christians who shared not only a common belief in the risen Christ, but expressed the fruits of that faith by sharing their material possessions as well. This was a special time in the life of the church, as was characterized by a willing and cooperative spirit. Against a heathen world and in spite of a dangerous Sanhedrin, the Christian Church was united by a common cause, carrying about the same hope in their hearts. Factions would soon arise. The precious solidarity would soon be assaulted. Nevertheless, a wonderful, altruistic spirit prevailed.

II. Recognizing the Dangers

Before long, the fellowship of the early church was tested. The epistles bring a sobering reminder that this bond of faith could indeed be fractured, not only by the evil forces without, but especially by insidious attacks from within. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul enjoined the congregation: “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3). Their oneness in faith was a commodity to be highly prized. (The word, TEREIO, has as its most basic meaning: “to guard.”) They should not leave this gift to mere chance, but exert themselves in preserving it, as a miser would his gold. Paul issues this same encouragement in nearly all of his letters because Paul knew that, without exception, every congregation is comprised of people. And sinful people that we are, we should realize that our own sinful behavior can do structural damage to the unity that is ours.

To state the negative of Paul’s words might help to pinpoint those things which disturb Christian unity. Instead of being humble and gentle, be proud and insist upon your own rights and having things your way. Rather than being long-suffering and bearing with one another in love, simply follow your natural instincts of being rash and critical and condemnatory. If you are begrudging, are filled with selfish ambition, are forever stirring up trouble—versus being one who endeavors to keep the unity of the Spirit, your attitudes and actions will create fracture lines in the bond that unites us. (“Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit” is not, however, a license to evade issues or to shirk spiritual responsibilities.⁸)

One could cite further evidence from the epistles that illustrate how the bond of brotherhood is eroded by sinful behavior. Even in his glowing letter to the congregation at Philippi, Paul inserts the admonition: “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Phil. 2:3,4). Consider the words of Peter: “Above all things, have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins. Be hospitable to one another without grumbling” (1 Peter 4:8,9). From epistle to epistle, the same truth is articulated: outbursts of our sinful flesh do not strengthen our unity nor serve our purpose, but polarize us from one another.

As we swing the spotlight upon our fellowship in the CLC, we recognize that little has changed with the passing of nearly two millennia. The same hazards lurk in our midst and endanger our unity, today. The archenemy of the Church still exploits each opportunity to dismember Christian solidarity. Sins of the flesh represent only his most obvious offensives. Equally subversive are subtle changes in attitude: a dulled sense of purpose, a casual and comfortable existence, a failure to cherish the brotherhood God has established among us. Each presents its own dangers; each makes it imperative that we measure our posture, again and again, against the will of God, set forth so clearly in Scripture.

Those who founded the CLC, years ago, could easily recognize their solidarity as a precious creation of God. Upon an exodus from former church bodies, they had reason to rejoice in the unity that God had provided, bringing together pastors and laity of identical conviction. The hand of God had produced a blessed union, based upon Scripture, emerging under the name of the Church of the Lutheran Confession. The spirit was one of willingness and cooperation and

generosity. Congregations had a viable share in the experiences of each other, cheering their successes and lamenting their setbacks.

This, in fact, is true, scriptural brotherhood. Each member of our church body is linked to the other, first by our common faith in Christ, and secondly by our unified confession. Unlike secular fraternities, our KOINONIA is a gift of the Spirit, who has produced oneness of faith and purpose in our hearts. Our mission is singular; our hope is identical; our concern for each other is genuine. By the grace of God, the prevailing spirit which marked the origin of the CLC, lives on.

And how do we cultivate our brotherly solidarity? By acting upon the same advice that God gave the first Christian churches. This rightly begins with a cry of repentance for our personal failures in endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit. Each of us packs a deadly arsenal which consists of sinful pride, a potentially vicious tongue, and a thoroughly corrupted nature. How effortlessly the mortars are launched; how quickly the damage is done. But, thankfully, the Gospel heals these maladies, too: "If we say that we have fellowship with Him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:6,7).

Secondly, we ask that God empower us to beat back the whims and desires of our own flesh, to fortify one another in love, to humbly accept brotherly admonition in the spirit in which it is offered, and to treasure the partnership we enjoy!

Let it be our daily prayer to thank God for our unity in the CLC. May He grant us a renewed passion for His Word, with the proper spirit and the necessary spiritual gifts to rise above the petty concerns of our flesh, and to "walk worthy of the calling with which we were called."

III. By its very nature, the doctrine of fellowship also requires that we take a unified stand against false doctrine. This, too, is positive.

Most Christians would gladly rally behind a generic emphasis toward shoring up our solidarity. The ecumenical movement is fueled by an effort to network as many Christians as possible under the same brotherhood of faith. Unfortunately, that is not the purpose the doctrine of fellowship serves. It is not designed to bridge gaps of doctrinal difference, nor is it intended to merge us together with all professing Christians, according to human standards. The doctrine of fellowship serves to protect a visible church from false teaching, and thereby to defend our relationship with Christ and with each other, by preserving the Gospel.

This truth handily disarms many of the ill-conceived notions about our practice of separation from false doctrine. To the argument that "we are a one-issue church," we might well agree. That single issue to which we are committed is not "Church Fellowship," however, but the Scriptures which contain our only hope of forgiveness, life, and salvation. When one is wholly committed to the Scriptures, he realizes that church fellowship is God's way of protecting them. This fact is established, not by a few isolated passages, such as Romans 16:17, but by references throughout the Bible, where God sets the parameters of fellowship by instructing His people to identify false doctrine and to avoid it. A failure to practice the principle of separation invariably results in devastating consequences.

That is why the doctrine of church fellowship has been aptly termed, "the immune system of the church." When a doctor perceives the presence of one disease after another in his patient, he is likely to think about an immunodeficiency syndrome. Modern acronyms, such as, GRID or AIDS or the initials, HIV, rightly trigger fear among our population because we have learned that, with a dysfunctional immune system, the slightest virus or infection can eventually kill you. When a church body shows signs of one false doctrine after another, one must wonder, "Are they practicing the doctrine of church fellowship properly?" "Are they identifying error and avoiding it?" If not, the results are fully predictable.

Were a pathologist, for example, to examine the fragments of Jerusalem, searching for clues to the demise of the kingdom of Judah, he might plunge into his assignment with some pertinent questions in mind. "Was her downfall the result of a lack of religion? Had she lost the Scriptures that God had given her? Was there something that in her history she failed to do?" As he pieced together the puzzle, the truth would emerge that she practiced rank idolatry and persisted in stubborn impenitence. But if he continued his search, he would wind up far back in her history, only to find that the real cause was a failure to practice the tenet of separation, clearly mapped out in the fifth Book of the Law.

In his valediction, Moses charted the course for Israel's future success: "When the LORD your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you . . . you shall conquer them and utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them. Nor shall you make marriages with them...For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the LORD will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly. But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire. For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples

on the face of the earth. . . . And you shall destroy all the peoples whom the LORD your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that will be a snare to you” (Deut. 7:1ff.).

Consider also a portion of Joshua’s farewell speech: “Therefore be very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the Book of the Law of Moses, lest you turn aside from it to the right hand or to the left, and lest you go among these nations, these who remain among you. . . . you shall hold fast to the LORD your God, as you have done to this day. . . . Or else, if indeed you go back . . . and make marriages with them, and go in to them and they to you, know for certain that the LORD your God will no longer drive out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you, and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the LORD your God has given you” (Joshua 23:6ff.).

The measures to be taken by the Israelites were certainly much more draconian than we find in the New Testament, but the governing principle of identifying error and avoiding it is the same. A failure to mark and then to separate oneself from heterodoxy may seem to be a trivial matter at the time, but error inevitably grows, and can ultimately destroy the Gospel, and thereby, one’s relationship with God (as is evidenced by such spiritual catastrophes as the downfall of Israel).

By providing the nation of Israel with such clear directives, God was furnishing an immune system that would shield them from error. The same can be said of the doctrine of fellowship, today. By calling upon us to separate from false teachers, God does not put us in harm’s way. He does not say, “Stay among them to be contenders for the truth,” but, “Get out and close the door behind you.” That closed door is not only a safeguard for us, but becomes a powerful witness to the errorist; a dog that is very loudly not barking. A failure to practice separation, finally leaves a church body defenseless against the destructive leaven of false doctrine. Once again, the doctrine of fellowship shines as a very positive gift from the Lord.

Our CLC itself is one of the positive results of practicing the doctrine of Church Fellowship. We enjoy the rare union of like-minded Christians who, without apology, have taken a firm stand on the Holy Scriptures. From congregation to congregation, both here and abroad, are clusters of Christians who embrace the same hope, the same faith, and the same goals as we. A clarion confession on the basis of Scripture has been graciously produced by the Lord of the Church and should be prized by us all. The fact that we have regularly had to resist the intrusion of false doctrine is also a good and positive thing. By it, our brotherhood has been preserved, our witness has been sharpened, and our God-given immune system is functioning properly.

NOTES

1 “With great subtlety unionism of many kinds has infiltrated the Church under the guise of innocent phrases such as ‘cooperation in externals.’ Though we would not say that it is impossible (especially in days of confessional vigor and honesty) for churches to cooperate in certain secular activities even though they are divided in doctrine, yet when this expression is used to allow working together with heterodox bodies in religious matters, then we condemn the expression as a cloak for sinful disobedience to the Word of God, and a procedure which confuses and offends the simple Christian” (C.C.F., p. 37).

2 Theodore Graebner, “What Is Unionism?” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 2 (1931): 580. In this section the author distinguishes between excommunication and fellowship. The entire sentence reads, “In the case of the excommunicated the factor of personal faith is involved, while to introduce the question of personal faith into the general question of fellowship is inadmissible.”

3 Wm. Arndt and Wilbur Gringrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* 1952: 439.

4 R.T. Du Brau, “New Testament Fellowship: A Study in Semantics,” *Concordia Theological Monthly* 22 (1951): 334.

5 Arndt and Gringrich, 1952: 439.

6 KOINONIA may, at times, carry the idea of “profane” |from the concept of “common,” especially as it pertained to things considered “unclean.” Cf. a series of bulletin articles written by Pastor Paul F. Nolting.

7 Our CLC Constitution states:

“This church body is organized and dedicated to serve the following scriptural purposes:

A. to aid its members so that all things may be done decently and in order. (1 Corinthians 14:40)

B. to afford its membership additional opportunities for the proclamation of the Gospel and for the exercise of Christian stewardship in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ, in accordance with the commands and promises of His Word. (1 Peter 2:9; Mark 16:15-16; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Timothy 2:2; Deuteronomy 11:18-19)

C. to facilitate the exercise of true Christian fellowship and to help maintain the same through mutual strengthening and fraternal vigilance, in keeping with the will of God: (1 Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 4:1-3; Hebrews 10:23-24)

D. to protect this fellowship against the encroachment of error and unionism through united testimony and doctrinal discipline, as it is written: (2 Timothy 4:2-3a.; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)”

The mechanism for functioning as a brotherhood is already in place and is seen in such cooperative efforts as the General Fund, CEF, MDF, KINSHIP, special “needs” funds, etc.

8 Weak members must be properly admonished and encouraged; false teachers must be avoided. As Paul introduces his first letter to the Corinthians, he writes, “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” This set the stage for addressing problems which endangered the unity in their own congregation. Had the Corinthians stubbornly refused to act upon the apostle’s directives, their harmony with the other congregations would have been jeopardized and Paul would, no doubt, have dealt with them as he did with false teachers elsewhere.

One also finds the presence of weak brethren in the congregation at Galatia. As has been noted in a recent paper on Romans 16:17,18 (Professor C.M. Kuehne), the Galatian situation provides case histories of both weak brethren and false teachers. The difference in treatment is worth noting.

The Preaching Of The Gospel

Winfred Schaller, Sr.

Thesis III

Though it does not remove the law, it is entirely free of the same.

It is indeed the entirely unconditioned gospel; and that remains true, even though the very brief command to “preach the gospel” seems to suggest an upsetting of all custom and precedent. While it has become rather customary to speak of a preaching of “the law and the gospel,” and many pretty illustrations have become current to explain this, the great commission command is silent on this entire phase. For it certainly omits any reference to the preaching of the law as such; it is entirely silent on the question of indicting the world of its wrongs and sins; it entirely omits referring to the preaching and encouraging to sanctification in the hearers. Most definitely does it not speak of the necessary preparation to the preaching of the gospel: the preparation brought about by the law through a creation of a knowledge of one’s need of a Savior before one can appreciate and accept the gospel. It would almost seem incomplete enough to be branded as an antinomian definition and therefore to be rejected.

Now very naturally the Scriptures give no answer to this possible set of objections, because the Scriptures have no need or urge for proving and defending their statements. God simply makes claims and sets forth statements, which sinful man may gladly believe with all his heart. Thus it is not surprising that the first hearers make no mention of the fact that the law had been preached to them, but only the wonderful works of God. For Christ Himself does so pointedly omit in His Commission to His disciples any mention of the fact that they should preach the law, simply telling them to preach the gospel to every creature. He does not amplify and explain this statement in any way, taking it for granted that He will be fully understood by all His believing preachers.

In so important a matter as the commission to build His kingdom, a commission which was to be given only once and to last to the end of time, it is not fair to take this word and interpret it according to one’s conception of what Christ

must have, or may have, meant. This is never a proper treatment of the Word at any point, and certainly not then, when the most vital and far-reaching command of the Master to His church is involved. Here above all He must indeed be taken by His word.

Thus it would not do to assume here that, with the word *gospel*, in this case the whole word, the law and the gospel, are meant. Aside from the fact that this would be an arbitrary expansion of the word *gospel*, based on a preconceived supposed theological truth, it is also never even faintly suggested anywhere that the word might be used or understood in this manner. It is true that the word *law* is occasionally used by the Master to indicate the entire Old Testament, as it is also used to indicate the writings of Moses in their entirety. Thus the word *law* stood, for the Jew, for the entire Word as He possessed it. This can be well understood, as so much of the contents of the Old Testament consists of law, that it could easily acquire this name. But never is this true of the word *gospel*. In fact, the apostle Paul uses the word in such a manner, that it appears as the very antithesis, the direct opposite of the law. Certainly he does never at any point suggest that the word *gospel* could mean “the law and the gospel.”

Thus it would be incorrect and wrong exegesis to simply assume that the word *gospel* in the great commission of the Master must mean: The law and the gospel. It is, of course, equally wrong to state, on the other hand, that this command directs us not to preach the law. This is true for the very simple reason that the Master does not say so. The words are plain and unequivocal: Preach the gospel to every creature; they must not be added to, they must not be interpreted, they must not be detracted from in any way. Certainly the disciples took the Master at His word, in that they preached the wonderful works of God, an expression which is truly identical with the word *gospel*. The good news mentioned by the word is too often described as that which God has done for lost and condemned man in His unspeakable mercy, the great works He wrought to make His loving plan come to pass, the surpassingly great deeds He did to bring the news of this stupendous activity of God to the ears and hearts of sinners, to leave us for a moment in doubt, that the disciples understood correctly when they proclaimed His work.

But even as the Lord meant this to be the great task, or rather pleasure, of His church to preach the good news to every creature, so it is also quite clear that this preaching of the gospel was to be the all-sufficient source of life, of faith, of conversion, of transmission of salvation to all men. It is not necessary, nor is it called for, to inject at this point the question, whether the law did not have to do preliminary work, before the gospel could succeed. Much rather does God set the gospel into such a position, that He states: What the law could not do, that God hath done, these deeds of God constituting the gospel.

Thus a truly new thing, a piece of real news, had entered the world at large. The nature of it is “the wonderful works of God.” This work of God is to be told to all men, and in the telling the proclamation is made to men, to all men, to Jew and Gentile, to the high and low, the evil and the good, that God hath done what man with His gifts and with the law and with service to God could not do: He has blotted out the handwriting against man and redeemed Him unto life eternal. In the very preaching the information reaches man, yes, the results of the works of God are given to him. It is a free and gracious presentation of life eternal through forgiveness of sins, and the presentation is to all sinners wherever and whenever the gospel is preached to them.

But naturally, then, it is the very source and fountain of life, which directly and entirely, completely and unconditionally, gives life to all the wretched sinners in reach of the voices of those who so proclaim the gospel. Surely nothing else can be required to give this gospel sufficiency; nay, it would be a contradiction in terms to even hint at such a suggestion. For the very heart of this gospel is the dispensing of the full results of the wonderful works of God. We would like to use some mundane illustration here to demonstrate and compare this fulsome sufficiency of the gospel, but all comparison fails. Nowhere in all the knowledge of man has there been or can there be anything similar to this gospel of salvation. It is as complete and sufficient as God Himself is perfection.

And even as it is sufficient in itself, so it is also entirely efficacious in itself. Even to think that the word *gospel* must mean something more to make it practicable, is misunderstanding the very nature of the action of this gospel. The apostle calls it the power of God unto salvation in the very letter in which he shows so conclusively how everything in four thousand years of history before Christ failed in bringing man unto everlasting life. Neither the heathen with all the gifts of mind and body given him by this same gracious God, nor the Jew, hedged in and protected, led and guided by the law of God, reached the goal nor even approached it. Neither gifts of the mind nor the service in the law proved in any way efficacious for lost man.

But the power of God, ah, that is a very different thing. It has stepped in where everything else has failed. It enters the arena of history and pushes aside the tools in use to bring man back to the lost Paradise. These tools have failed, and now the power of God asserts itself in the utterly efficacious gospel. It not only informs man, it not only presents to man the full grace, the full justification unto life, His historically established state of redemption, but it is also the completely efficacious power to give life in the heart, the life which wakens man from his wretched sleep of death in sins and makes him a conscious, living owner of the fruits of the wonderful works of God. In the very telling of the life eternal that God hath wrought, the life, the having, the possessing is created in the soul of the sinner.

But why should we marvel at it? True, this procedure of bringing the dead sinner to life is beyond all human understanding and beggars description. But that it should take place, and that the gospel in itself should be efficacious to do this in the hearer, that it is indeed the power of God unto salvation, it should not make us marvel. For the wonderful works of God have created in this world of sin and death the very life of heaven. In coming from the grave, the King of Heaven accomplished the new thing, the eternally great thing: a man had broken death's strong chain to grasp and hold life, the strong, pulsing life of heaven, and pour it forth over a death-bound world. How utterly new and how immeasurably efficacious must this pulsing life not be to establish life wherever it resounds.

In this miracle of life we rest our souls and are not troubled by our reason and our human knowledge which we often think to possess. It is our wretched inner darkness and blindness that so very often makes us seek a somewhat natural method by which this supreme and perfect salvation is to be transmitted to man. Or is it the instinctive knowledge of our innate inability to do justice to the proclaiming of this life-giving gospel that makes us turn to rationalizing thoughts? Surely it would suit the evil foe well, if we were to curtail and doubt the efficacy of this gospel of life. Thus it is occasionally assumed that this gospel requires *the assistance of the law* to make man a favorable recipient of this salvation offered him. The law must make him realize that he is in need of a Savior before he can accept him. The law must plow the ground before the seed of the gospel can find lodging there. Thus following the law, the gospel is efficacious.

How remarkably well does not the foe of life manage thus reasonably to lead us astray. We do not wish to detract from God's glory nor doubt His power nor argue with His life-giving strength. Yet it is in doubt and supreme human wisdom that such ideas are born. The assumption is, of course, that man must and does accept the gift of salvation by a reasonable process of his thinking mind. He arrives at his acceptance by seeing how lost and condemned he is, how hopeless is his case, how eternally doomed he is. Looking about for aid, he hears that God has saved him, and thus prepared by the law he decides: I will accept the salvation of God, as that is my only hope.

But then, the Master fortunately did not say: the law and the gospel are the power of God unto salvation, but, thank God, He mentions only the gospel. For the wretched case of man is far, far worse than the above mental process in the sinner assumes. He is not only lost and condemned, but he can not even know clearly that he is lost and condemned. Not for nothing does Paul call him "dead in trespasses and sins," and also not for nothing does he say "what the law could not do." The law is holy, just, and good, but man is a truly lost sinner, and even the law could not reach him.

Even the "By the law is the knowledge of sin" could and can not fully apply to him. Yes, the law of commandments and ordinances is something his brain can understand. He can even hear the condemnation of this law, the punishment threatened. Vaguely, perhaps, he can have a certain fear in his heart. But he is lost in sin, is entirely sin, knows only sin and its life, and *cannot understand anything else at all*. The clear knowledge that his acts and his life do not agree with this law, that they should agree, that he is condemned if they do not agree—alas, his being lost consists in this very thing that he can not know this. A really true knowledge of sin is not even possible to him.

So it must remain true to the glory of the Lord who has in grace set forth the gospel of salvation, that though it does not even think of setting aside the law, it remains entirely free of it. To think anything else would be monstrous ungratefulness and perversion of the truth, a perversion to which man is only all too prone. Even the evangelically minded heart has its lapses there, because we like to think, even if only subconsciously, that we, we preachers, are accomplishing something by the preaching, and of course such a thought can only live in the realm of the law, which definitely always speaks of the *doing* of man.

It is peculiar to the line of reasoning of the legalist that it continually harps back to the one Bible verse which seems to give it a hope of being justified: By the law is the knowledge of sin. And curiously enough this Word, which was spoken as a testimony against the very legalism which would detract from the glory of the efficacious gospel, becomes the comfort of the legalist. But then it is not really this verse that does it, but rather by far the unhappy step the mind so readily takes beyond the actual words of this text by adding the thought: By the law the knowledge of sin is *created*. From that point on, however, the steps into false understanding and rationalistic explanation is quite easy. But of course the verse does not say or imply anything of the kind. On the contrary, in both Romans and Galatians, where the word is used by the apostle, it is injected to show the inability of the law to create life and conversion in the sinner. Although it is true, the apostle is saying, that the law, showing God's holy will, also shows the deeds of man as being contrary to this will and therefore sin, this effect does in no wise change the heart of the sinner. It still left him lost and condemned, turned away from God, dead in trespasses and sins, hopelessly unconverted, not understanding any of the spiritual things of God | not any of them, not even a true understanding of his sins and their effect upon him. By the law is the knowledge of sin, nothing more.

Thus the law, which can never be set at naught nor set aside, being of the very essence of God, is however not a life-producing power, also not a sort of preliminary to the life-producing power, because God never sets it in such relation to the gospel. How grateful must we be that this is indeed not so, for as surely as the law enters in any manner the realm, in which the efficacious gospel alone holds sway, it automatically places the burden of effectiveness in man. For the law only says: Do this, and do not do that, and knows nothing else. If then the efficacy of the gospel were even in the smallest

measure dependent upon the activity of the law in man, this would automatically mean: First the law must make its demand upon man, and then, after man has done this or that, or not done this or that, then the gospel would become efficacious in him. How swiftly would we not then be in the Roman or Calvinistic camp, where the glory of the Lord is so shamelessly taken from Him.

Nor does it help to quote the other verse usually adduced at this point: "The law had been our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ," as the King James version so unhappily and incorrectly translates the verse. The original does not ascribe to the law such powers, as it only reads: "The law has been our schoolmaster unto Christ." A closer scrutiny of the original as also of the context brings the further revelation, that Luther, as so often, instinctively translates correctly with his "*auf Christum*," using the preposition in the temporal sense, as does also the Greek original. Thus alone does the succeeding verse and its connection with the preceding part of the chapter become clear: In the Old Testament time, before Christ, the law acted as a pedagogue, and it was this schoolmaster until the time of Christ. But now the new thing has come, because the law had failed in its purpose to hold the Jews as a whole nation to be the people of God. The pedagogue who was to lead them continually to and from the school of God, had failed in the task because of the sin of man; lo, the people in the vast majority had escaped his governing hand and worshipped in the heathen philosophy of the Greek. It was not the law's fault, of course, for it is of God and is holy, just, and good; but man was a lost and condemned sinner, so much so that he always thinks he can by his own deeds, deeds of the law, please God. And thus the schoolmaster failed. But now, now are we no more under the schoolmaster, for we are all the children of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. The pedagogue has lost his one time position forever; he dare or can not restrict the gospel in any manner, nor does he want to; for we are the children of God by the incomparable ransom of the Lamb without blemish and without spot.

And so, thank God, it is true: the gospel is entirely free of the law and all its works. The Lord in His grace commands us: Preach ye the gospel and be not ashamed of it. What the law could not do, God has done and does do. In His power the Lord opens the soul to hear the gospel and to receive its fulsome salvation in amazed trust and confidence because God hath said so. He turns away, turns from the lost and wretched state and happily trusts his sure hope and confidence: The Lord Jesus Christ.

It should, yes, it must be sufficient to us that we are to preach the gospel, the wonderful works of God. It is a blessed thing for all preachers, that the gospel, when preached by them, is the power of God and the wisdom of God. It must be sufficient for them to know this, without seeing the result of this power in every, or even in any case. It is a joyful thing to trust implicitly in the efficacy of it, thus never trying to add to it some supposed help, some crutch upon which it may walk. Whether that crutch be called the law, or whether it be called oratory, or whether it consists in illustrations of all kinds invented by the mind of the preacher, it is always a loss of assurance and comfort to him, if he put his trust in other things.

So while it is, at this point, not our business to answer the question: "Wherefore then serveth the law?" it is sufficient to reaffirm: The gospel must not in any wise, neither in the mind of the preacher, nor in his words, be conditioned by the law and its purpose and its activity. Neither the gross: If you have served the Lord according to his commandments, then you may expect His grace and mercy; not the finer: The condemnation of the law must have softened you to a sufficient degree, and then you may have the free grace of God, have any place in the glory of the New Testament ministry. This latter remains the amazing task of proclaiming an unconditional, unrestricted, free and full pardon, forgiveness, life, eternal safety and utter security for all sinners without exception, definitely dispensing the same to every one without condition and without price. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem."

(To be continued)

The Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians

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PART IV

Proof of the truth and the divine character of the doctrine which Paul proclaimed.

Paul has now refuted his opponents' charges with reference to the authenticity of his apostolic office. He has proved that he is not inferior to the twelve but of equal stature with them. He now proceeds to prove that his doctrine is as true and of as divine a character as his apostolate. After having proved to his readers that there was no reason for them to reject him as an apostle, he now proceeds to show that there is no reason for them to reject the doctrine which he preached. For it was grounded by the very nature of its message and was in complete harmony with the Old Testament Scriptures.

From ancient times there has been disagreement among interpreters as to whether or not a new section is introduced in verse 15 and whether Paul's message to Peter ends with verse 14 (in which case Paul is here again addressing the recipients of the letter), or if he continues to speak to Peter here and in the verses following. In support of the latter, one could refer to such early interpreters as the following: Chrysostom, Theodoret, and Jerome, later Luther, Bengel, Baumgartner, de Wette, Meyer, Philippi et al. As proofs the following points are advanced: (1) The readers of the epistle are initially addressed in 3:1; (2) If the words addressed to Peter are concluded in verse 14, then this admonition would be unusually short and would not respond to the great importance of the matter; (3) If the new section begins with verse 15, then the transition would be very abrupt, in which case Paul would enter *in medias res* without much preparation.

In the ancient church Theodoret of Mopsuestia, Oecumenius, et al., support the view that verse 15 initiates a new section. In later times this view is held by Wieseler, Matthias, V. Hofman, Besser, Bugge, et al. These men raise the following arguments: (1) That vv. 15ff. do not speak of Jew and Gentile relationships, but of faith and deeds, namely that which forms the subject matter in the epistle's further development; (2)

The remarkable change from the second person to the first person: the "we" and the "I" . . . ; (3) The difficulty which would otherwise ensue in determining where the address to Peter ends and the new section begins. This becomes clearly apparent thereby, as some insist, that the address is concluded in verse 21 (thus Meyer and Siefert), or with verse 17 (thus Neander), and again others with the *διου* as contained in verse 16 according to some manuscripts (thus Luther), and finally others with verse 15 (Calov). It cannot be denied that it would pose some difficulty if the address extends beyond verse 14, especially if one accepts the view that it extends all the way to verse 21. Furthermore, it may be stated that if Paul felt the need for such a didactic consideration of the relation between faith and works with reference to Peter, then Peter's error would have been a matter of doctrine. In such a case Peter would not be playing the part of a hypocrite by withdrawing himself. His behavior would then have been in full agreement with his doctrinal position, and there could have been no hypocrisy involved. The common objections carry no weight. That the admonition was brief is very true. But there is nevertheless no evidence that Paul expressed himself in so and so many words and no more. Furthermore, one cannot believe that Paul felt the need for a long-drawn-out admonition, since the matter did not involve a doctrinal difference. Though brief, the admonition was nevertheless surely weighty. It has been said that the approach was very abrupt. But this was not unusual for Paul. It is consistent with his style (cf. 1 Tim. 3:15, middle of the verse; 1 Cor. 9:1).

After all these considerations we come to the conclusion that the new section begins with verse 15. And just as Paul has provided a list of proofs for the authenticity of his apostolic office, he now does the same in regard to the divine source of his doctrine. The entire second part of the apologetic-dogmatic section moves forward from one proof to the other. The first proof points to the Christian's own experience. That one is justified by grace through faith alone without the deeds of the law as he has taught agrees very clearly -

I. WITH THE CHRISTIAN'S OWN EXPERIENCE. 2:15-3:5

a. The experience of the Jewish Christians. 2:15-21

The truth of Paul's gospel can be proved by the fact that he and other Jewish Christians had to give up the thought of gain-

ing righteousness by the law (which they as Jews possessed) and had to find righteousness, life, and salvation alone through faith in Jesus Christ. They had learned through bitter but saving experience that no flesh can be justified through the works of the law but alone through faith in Jesus. Thus they had gained righteousness. They were dead to the law that they might live unto God. The life that they now lived in the flesh, they lived by the faith of the Son of God who loved them and gave himself for them. If they sought righteousness by the law, they would be frustrating the grace of God, making the death of Jesus of no account.

Verse 15. "We," *ημεις*. Since the singular is used in verse 18, one might be led to think that the apostle is here thinking only of himself. But there is nothing here to lead to such a conclusion. To protect the reader from such a misunderstanding, the term *ημεις* is used with emphasis. The meaning of the plural must here be insisted on. By "we" is understood Jewish Christians. Paul includes himself. Here is plainly understood *εσμεν φυσει Ιουδαιοι*, "Jews by nature" (Jews by birth, by descent). ". . . and not sinners . . ." Paul self-evidently is not here saying that he and remaining Jewish Christians had no sin. The following shows that they have need to be justified before God. But only he who is a sinner is in need of being justified. Neither is the thought here set forth, as some interpreters have held, that the sinfulness of the Jews was not simply of the specific character of the sinfulness of the Gentiles. Paul is here speaking purely from the Jewish standpoint. The Jewish view of the Gentiles is set forth in several places both in the Old and New Testament (cf. 1 Sam. 15:18; Wisdom 10:20; Tobit 13:10; Luke 18:32; 24:7; 1 Cor. 6:1). (Translator's note: The reference to apocryphal writings is certainly not intended to place them on the same level as the inspired Scripture.) According to the Jewish view the Gentiles were regarded as sinners and unrighteous, *דִּינָרִי*, *αμαρτολοι*, *αδικοι*. According to Luther, this expression indicates the admission that the Jews were theocratically God's people with the law, circumcision, and covenants; that they were objectively God's people, objectively sanctified not "without law or without God in the world" as were the Gentiles (cf. Rom. 2:12; 1 Cor. 9:21; Eph. 2:12). But this objective preference did not involve the subjective. The Jews were by nature children of wrath as well as the others (Eph. 2:3). Luther says: "This is great and glorious praise; but we are not for that reason righteous before God nor are we better

than the Gentiles," for although they (i.e., the Jews) had a preference outwardly, yet they would have to cast out any thought that they could on that account subsist before God. It would therefore be sheer foolishness to return to something that one had before considered useless. But if it would have been foolish for us who were Jews by nature, it would be doubly foolish for the Gentiles to grasp something which we (i.e., the Jews) had to cast aside.

Verse 16. This verse is separated from the preceding simply by a comma. The participle *ειδοτες* is grammatically dependent on *εσμεν*, which must be assumed in the preceding verse and serves as a proof for the following *και ημεις*, "even we." *δε*, "but," even though we are not sinners as are the Gentiles, yet we know that we are not justified by the works of the law. This is an assurance based on painful experience and not simply an intellectual matter. *ου δικαιουται*, "is not justified," that is, before God. The verb is placed first to give it emphasis. This is a matter which with emphasis is negated. *δικαιουν* is the Hebrew קִדְּוָה. The word indicates an *actus forensis*: "*justum declarare*," by a judicial decree and not as the papists teach—an infusion: "*justum facere*." Accordingly, justify means to become righteous through a declaration (cf. the synonymous expression by Paul, *λογιζεσθαι δικαιουσινην*, to be accounted righteous, Rom. 4:3-8), *εξ εργαων νομου*, "of works of the law." *εξ* and *δια* speak of mediation from two different viewpoints: that from which something proceeds, and that which mediates something; that which designates wherefrom, though not always of a meritorious nature, but an instrumental. Thus the particle must be taken to be in connection with faith. "Works of the law," *νομος* is used by Paul to designate the Mosaic law in its unity. The genitive is the objective genitive, not the subjective. So it is not a reference to works brought forth by its commands, threats and condemnations, but works with reference to the law, works by which the law's requirements are fulfilled. This stands in contrast to faith. Works are considered with reference to the law, and faith with reference to Christ and His grace. We see that Luther was right when he said that the works of the law means as much as "all that is not of grace." One cannot be justified by these works of the law, for he cannot perform them. He may be able outwardly to conform to the law, to show an external civic righteousness; but he is totally unable to render a spiritual keeping of the law. Man's basic instinct is one of selfishness.

εαν μη (cf. 1:19) The genitive, "the faith of Jesus Christ," is the objective genitive, the faith which has Jesus Christ as its content or its object. By it we are justified and when the deeds of the foregoing are excluded, then it occurs by faith alone, *sola fide*, that is, through Christ alone. He is the sole Savior of the poor sinner; the one who, as Bugge says, does not tolerate anything beside Himself as a supplement or assistance in His work of redemption. Either He is all or He is nothing. It should also be noted, as Philippi sets forth, that "faith, as a work of the law, does not enter into the article of justification, neither as an ethical quality in man, nor as a divinely approved trustworthy mood. Not for its own sake, but because of its content, i.e., for Christ's sake, it is that faith justifies. Otherwise faith, regardless of its object, would justify, but now we are justified alone by faith in Jesus Christ, *per fidem* not *propter fidem*. But now it is only *fides* as *organon leptikon*, not *causa meritoria salutis* [faith as the receiving organ, not the meritorious cause of salvation]. *Causa meritoria* - 'the meritorious cause' - is Jesus Christ alone. Therefore it is never said that we are justified *δια την πιστιν*, but only instrumentally *δια της πιστεως*."

και ημεις εις Χριστου Ιησου πιστευσαμεν. The aorist expresses the momentary; we grasped by faith, became believers. *ινα*, with the intention that; *οτι*, yes, that. Some manuscripts (instead of *οτι*) have *διοτι* = *δια τουτο οτι* (cf. Rom. 1:19) because it is true of all men that they are not justified by the works of the law. The negative *ου* modifies the verb and does not modify *πασα σαρξ*. The mode of expression is Hebraic. The negating predicate has reference to all men. In this way the negative is as strong as possible. The future *δικαιωθησεται* designates a general rule which negates present and future: that which can never occur (cf. Winer, 1 c.p. 200). *πασα σαρξ*, "all-flesh," that is, all men with their weakness and sinfulness, with the need for a righteousness before God unattainable by works. Luther: "Flesh designates the entire nature of man with his reason and all its powers."

Verse 17. The *δε*, "but," which appears at the beginning of this verse indicates a transition to another thought. This verse and the following verse pose some difficulties, and interpreters are disagreed as to their meaning. The thought seems to be the following: Paul has now spoken about the experiences which he and like-minded Jewish Christians have had regarding justification; they have had to give up any idea of attaining

righteousness by the law, they had had to cast aside any thought of prevailing by means of their own righteousness, and have had to seek righteousness outside of themselves, namely, from Christ. He now passes on to another thought, namely, to that which provides the necessary prerequisite for justification and sanctification, and here also deeds do not contribute. Also here the matter centers on a life of faith. This gives him occasion to give proof of his doctrine from the experience which he and other Jewish Christians had in connection with justification and sanctification. The antecedent in verse 17 contains something of real significance: subsequently a question is raised regarding a wrong conclusion which Judaists could easily draw. Baldwin had already interpreted the verse this way: "If we who have discarded every thought of being justified by works of the law, having accepted faith as the way to righteousness before God (seeking our righteousness in Christ), are found to be sinners as are others, sinners in and of ourselves, would this mean that Christ would be serving sin by accepting us and clothing us in His righteousness? Wouldn't He rather accept such as have first improved themselves?" This is exactly the objection raised by the Pharisees in their argument against justification by faith alone. But Paul says: God forbid! Christ does not thereby become a minister of sin. The fact that the justified commit sins must not be ascribed to Him nor be charged to Him. The proof for this is found in verse 18. Verse 17 reads thus: "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid." *εν Χριστω* is connected with *δικαιωθηναι* and does not here indicate a connection by association, but presents Christ as *causa meritoria*, on the basis of His obedience alone and not by our works (cf. 1 Cor. 6:11; 2 Cor. 5:21; Acts 13:39; Rom. 5:9). *ευρεθημεν*, aorist, places the action as having already taken place. The word indicates the unexpected. There could be some who supposed that those who seek righteousness in Christ do not sin, but suppose that they do sin, then what? *αρα* — Lachman and others write *αρα* as a concluding particle equal to *igitur, sonach*. Tischendorf writes *αρα* as a question mark equal to *num igitur, ergone, so ist also wohl*. *αρα* is a strengthened *αρα* (cf. Winer p. 510). At any rate the phrase is in the form of a question since *μη γενωτο* always presupposes a question (cf. Rom. 3:3,6,31; 6:2,15; 7:7,13; 9:14; 11:1,11; Gal. 3:21). But also in a question we may have both *αρα* and *αρα*. Bugge, as Meyer says, expresses it thus: *igitur, rebus sic se habentibus*.

The question mark (particle) does not appear in Paul's other writings, though it is found in several places in Paul's associate, Luke (cf. Luke 18:8; Acts 8:30). If indeed we have a question mark here, then we expect a negative answer which also follows in *μη γενολτο*. The connection indicates a strong negative.

Verse 18. This verse is misinterpreted by those who claim that Paul is here speaking of those who, by their very turning to Christ for righteousness, are moved by the wish to build again what they by their sin have destroyed. Such people do not understand wherein the proof resides, nor what *συνιστημι* means, namely, not just a general stepping forward with a confession, in which case the *εμαυτον* would lose its accented meaning. In this verse Paul desires to show that Christ cannot be called the servant of sin on the basis of what is said in verse 17. Paul is saying that he himself would be the transgressor if he should build again what he had destroyed. He does not need to mention the law here, for it is self-evident that there can be no sin if there had been no law (cf. Rom. 2:25,27; 4:15; James 2:9,11). *παραβατης* refers to a transgressor of a certain positive commandment. What is it that the apostle had destroyed, which if he built it up again he would be a transgressor? On the basis of what is said in verse 19 about the law some have taken it to mean the service of the law. Luther says that Paul by his preaching of Christ has destroyed the condemnation of the law. But with this interpretation it would be difficult to find the connection or to fit it into the individual parts of the verse. The first part of the verse corresponds to the first part of verse 17 even as the second part of verse 18 corresponds to the second part of verse 17. From this one would conclude that the apostle is saying that when the righteous person sins, this is a building up again of that which he destroyed by the power given him by God. Through faith the building of sin was destroyed. Through regeneration the power of sin was broken. Through justification by faith he received the gracious forgiveness of all his sins. Everything became new. It should not disturb us that the apostle says that we destroyed the building of sin. In many passages of Scripture it is stated that what God does in us and by us is spoken of as our deed: we turned; we accepted by faith, etc. Now when a justified person sins, then he is building again on a destroyed structure; each sin may be regarded as a stone laid into this building. But this does not make Christ responsible, but the transgressor is the guilty one and not Christ. Thus the *εμαυτον* comes into sharp contrast with

Christ. Paul likes to use the picture of a building. We think of such passages as Rom. 14:20; 15:20; 1 Cor. 8:1; 10:23; Eph. 2:20f.; 2 Cor. 5:1.

Verse 19. The apostle proceeds to argue from his own experience. In an individualizing, living and striking form, he presents his own personal experience similar to that of like-minded Jewish Christians. In verse 18 he has pointed out that the Christian himself, not Christ, is to be blamed for his sins since he thereby builds again what he has destroyed. γαρ, "for," introduces the basis of his right to speak as he did in verse 18. As it is here pointed out, the basic thought consists in this fact that the building of sin is destroyed in the life of the justified and that this has been accomplished in order that he might live his life unto God and not in sin. I, who seek justification not in myself but in another, namely, in Christ, I am dead to the law and therefore also dead to sin; and so I live my life not by nature, but Christ lives in me (v. 20). That the building of sin is destroyed among the justified is shown first and most evidently from the fact that they are dead to the Mosaic law, since according to Scripture the dominion of law and the dominion of sin go hand in hand. Where the law rules there also sin rules. One is not free from the dominion of sin so long as he is under the law (cf. Rom. 6:14; 7:7ff.; 1 Cor. 15:56). To be "dead to the law" is an incident which is associated with other incidents, namely, to be crucified with Christ, that it is not I, but Christ who lives in me. The expression "dead to the law" finds its parallel in Rom. 7:4; 6:2 and in Rom. 6:11 (νεκρους τη αμαρτια). The dative τω νομω is the *dat. incommodi*, as in Rom. 7:4: to be dead to the law, which is ruled out as a way to salvation. δια νομου, "to the law." What is here meant by the word "law"? Following the example of Luther, Bengel, Philippi and others have referred it to the gospel, in which case "law" is considered in opposition to νομος εργαων, works of the law, as if Paul would be saying: "If we are to speak of law, then it is by the law of faith and not by the law of deeds that I am justified." But the context does not favor such an interpretation. It is inconceivable that Paul would use the word "law" in two such completely different meanings in one and the same place without clarification. What does Scripture teach about the law in this regard? We learn of this in Rom. 7:10,11; 2 Cor. 3:6; Jer. 23:29, and other passages. It kills and puts to death, as also the Smalcald Articles teach in the article on repentance (Part II. Art. II, ¶ 2) When I

become engaged with the law and cast myself in its path, then it robs me of all power and shows me how impossible it is to fulfill its demands by my own strength. The result will be that I must surrender and find my only hope in Christ. Thus it comes to pass that the law abdicates and becomes a schoolmaster unto Christ. Then my death to the law also becomes a death from the law. When I thus die to myself, then by the gracious creating power of Jesus life comes forth out of death. But this life comes forth out of death. But this life which is created by God is to be led for Him. *Θεω, dativus com.*, a life dedicated to Him, and this life unto God, it may be said, is the aim of the law - *υπα* in this sense that it kills the original egotistic life, directing me away from myself and thus serves as a schoolmaster unto Christ. Here it is, as Luther says, that Paul appears to the work-righteous Judaizers as the worst heretic. They said that one must live after the law if one wants to live unto God. Paul says that one must die to the law in order to live unto God.

Verse 20. This verse gives a further explanation of what it means to be "dead to the law." Christ must die by crucifixion. As our substitute, He must remove from us the curse of the law which by our sins we have brought upon ourselves. Therefore He must Himself become a curse. This took place through His crucifixion, for cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree. But through His crucifixion the law lost all right and power over Him. Since He had voluntarily placed Himself under the law, He now was free from the law to which He had previously submitted and obligated Himself to fulfill. But now I am crucified with Him. My old man was crucified with Him (cf. Rom. 6:6). That this applies in our text is shown from the following. Since my death was a death unto Christ's death, therefore it is associated with Him. Thereby the fruit of His suffering became mine. As He by death gained freedom from the law, so am I free from it. Through the perfect tense this crucifixion is designated as an accomplished act effective for all time, even for the present.

With *ζω δε ουκειτι*, "nevertheless I live," Paul begins to explain the last part of verse 19 in more detail: *υπα Θεω ζησω*, "that I might live unto God." I live after death as Christ came alive after death. But I live now in this way that my life is no more a life unto myself but a life unto Christ. Before I was dead to the law, I lived under the law. But this was my egotistic life, with its striving for selfish purpose. My new life has

another direction which unfolds itself in a loving application of self to Him who in love gave Himself for me - "Christ lives in me" - the exalted Christ. He is the new life principal living in the believer. Not only the Spirit but also Christ lives in the heart of the believer (*unio mystica*). Paul speaks of this in several places (cf. Eph. 3:17; Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:3,5; Col. 1:27). But John speaks of this continuing in-dwelling of Christ in the believer even more frequently than does Paul.

"But the life which I now live in the flesh," etc., explains the foregoing in more detail. *δε* is like the two preceding *δε*'s, explicative. *σαρξ*, "flesh," has the same meaning as in 2 Cor. 10:3, consequently not in the ethical sense, not equal to the old Adam. *εν σαρκι* is not *carnaliter*, but is *κατα σαρκα*, this present life which comes to an end with physical death (cf. Phil. 1:22; Heb. 5:7). Externally the Christian lives like other people: he eats, drinks, sleeps, needs clothing, etc., as they do. Yet he has a higher life which is very different from his life in sin. This difference is introduced by *νυν*, "now." This points back to a former time which certainly was different. Now that I am crucified with Christ, I have become a believer. The expression *ο δε νυν ζω* instead of *την ζωην ην ζω* is grammatically remarkable. *ο δε νυν ζω* is not the Latin *quod vero ad id attinet quod*. *ο*, as Meyer says, is the objective accusative with *ζω*, "the life which I live." *Vita, quam vivit*. My life is now a life in faith. *εν πιστει* expresses the element in which the new life moves. Faith is here spoken of as the new life's basic element. It is a life of faith and no longer a life under the law. This faith is a faith in God's Son, therefore a faith in Him who can help me. It is a faith in the Son of God who loved me and in love gave Himself for me, consequently a faith in one who also will help me. But if it is He who has loved me and in love did give Himself for me, my new life element, then it follows that the direction of my new life must lovingly be pointed to Him in service, indeed a life unto God (v. 19), a life essentially different from the egotistical life. Love calls for a life of service to God. This the law cannot produce. Only then will it be possible when man is liberated and comes to a life of faith. This service will come to pass but even then in weakness and lacking in perfection. In the *assensus specialis* - "I" - we have an example of the believer's expression. This shows how personal and individual is my faith.

Verse 21. Now the apostle has offered complete proof that Christ is not the servant of sin even though He accepts such as

are sinners (v. 17). He concludes this presentation by showing that, as believers, we do not annul it as do the opponents with their false teaching regarding work righteousness. For then grace is superfluous, for it is evident that if a person can be justified by works, Christ's death is vain, since then He took upon Himself pain and suffering without cause. The opponents became guilty of such blasphemy by their teaching of work righteousness. This was the case then and that is the case now. *αθετεω*, actually *θετον τι*, *quod ratum, statutum, institutum est tollo*; hence *vim et efficaciam alicujus impedio, irritum reddo, so sperno, repudio*. *δια νομου*, "by the law," is positioned as an emphatic expression in opposition to Christ and His grace. *δωρεαν* is LXX's rendition of the Hebrew *דָּנָן* of Ps. 35:19. It is our "in vain," *gratis*, as a gift, thus without a cause (John 15:25), *sine idonea causa*. So the opponents make out of Christ's death a superfluous act and thus despise His grace. With this indirect heavy accusation, this initial excerpt from his experience is concluded.

Chapter III

The truth of Paul's doctrine agrees with b. The experience of the Gentiles. vv.1-5

Paul now appeals to the Christian's own experience. He turns directly to the readers themselves whom he regards as Gentile Christians. After he had set forth the bad part, namely, that they, before whose very eyes Christ had been viewed, could fall into legalism and work-righteousness, he now calls upon them to look inward into their Christian conviction. They knew that they had received the Spirit with all spiritual benefits not through the law and works, but through the proclamation of faith and hence by grace.

Verse 1. *Ω ανοητοι Γαλαται*, "O foolish Galatians." This address is an effective outcry of a qualitative nature, reminiscent of the Savior's address to the Emmaus pilgrims (Luke 24:25). This outcry which implies a devout admonition, demonstrates the fact that the foolishness of the Galatians appeared before the soul of the apostle in such vivid colors. This is not to be understood as though Paul had spoken of it to Peter previously and now was turning to the readers of the epistle. *ανοητοι*, "foolish," does not refer to any mental deficiency among the people but to a foolishness with regard to spiritual and

heavenly matters. That they were foolish in this respect was clearly evidenced from the fact that they had shown themselves to be unclear regarding the matter now under consideration. They had permitted themselves to be led into an error which clearly militated against the truth that had been presented to them in living colors. They had regarded truth as error, and had accepted error as truth. This was foolishness, yes, plain blindness.

Paul addresses them simply as Galatians and not as brethren. We are reminded of Jesus' address to Peter at Tiberius, "Simon, Son of Jonas!" It was the Galatians old nature which came to the fore in the present instance. *τις υμας εβασκαυεν, quis vos fascinavit*, "who has bewitched you?" *βασκαινω* is a strengthened *βασκω* (= *βασω, garrio, jabber*) and means to speak evil, uncharitably of another, thus to speak lovelessly to one, therefore a damaging, evil communication, *mala lingua nocere*, to bewitch by word or glance. This had brought such a change in the Galatians which was for Paul so inconceivable that he was tempted to believe that they had been bewitched. They had been so strongly influenced that it had to be traced back to a supernatural influence. This was the real situation. The false teachers, by their deceptive speech, had indeed effected this apostasy among the readers. But they were merely instruments in his hands who stood back of all of it and with his devilish devices had been able to blur the inner eyes of the readers so that they did not detect the true sense of the deception. Textus Receptus has this addition: *τη αληθεια μη πειθεσθαι*, "that you should not obey the truth." These words are stricken by Greisbach and Tischendorf. But if they are not genuine, then someone consciously must have added them, but why? It is easier to suppose that they have been omitted.

οις κατ' - The relative clause contains the reason for the apostle's astonished complaint. He had expected something different from them. *γραφειν* among the Greeks is translated "to paint," and the *προ* with a local, not a temporal meaning = before, not formerly. Paul uses this figurative expression to show how in a most exacting and life-like manner, he had proclaimed Jesus among them. This is a good example for all true preachers. *κατ' οφθαλμους*, "before the eyes," such as *κατ' προσωπον*. Most faithfully he had, in his preaching, portrayed Christ for them; indelibly this picture should have impressed itself upon them. But now they did not want to hear of this Savior in His full grace and glory but rather turned to the deeds

of the Mosaic law as a way to salvation. *εν υμιν*, "among you," which is omitted by Tischendorf, does not belong to *προεγραφη*, as Meyer and others claim (they refer it to *κατ' οφθαλμους*) but to *εσταιρωμενος*. Paul was not trying to picture the manner of crucifixion, but he wanted to present the quality of Christ's crucifixion in their behalf and thus for emphasis *εσταιρωμενος* is placed at the end of the sentence. Paul in his preaching had laid emphasis on Christ crucified. The prevailing theme of his preaching among them had been the accomplished salvation through the death on the cross (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:2). This he had so carefully and vividly preached for them that it stood before them as a painting. Truly, he had good reason to be amazed over their apostasy that they should accept a teaching which debased the meaning of Christ's death and in principle had denied Him.

Verse 2. Paul now turns directly to their experience. They are to answer his question from their own personal experience. "This only" - if they will simply answer his question, then he would be satisfied. More than this he would not require, since this would be sufficient. Later he expands upon the argument, but this does not militate against his contention that the answer to the one question is decisive. *θελω* is an expression of his strong desire. This is a thing that he requires of them. *μαθειν* is inf. aor. of *μανθανειν*, constructed from the present stem *μαθω* or *μαθω cognoscere* (cf. Acts 23:27). *αφ' υμων*—the apostle speaks this way because he was absent and the answer could not be given by someone else. Now he tells them what he wants to know. *το πνευμα* is the Holy Spirit, not merely as a power from God, but as the personal Spirit. This is not a reference to the Spirit as a charismatic Spirit, but as the Spirit of the new life, as the person who has created the new life of faith in the readers. *εξ*, "by," designates causality, here thought of as the starting point. Did the thorough change in their life, their doing of the works which the law requires, emanate from this source? Paul takes it for granted that the Galatians had received the Holy Spirit and with Him, the new life. He takes it for granted that they would agree that this was so. If they would be truthful, they would have to admit that Paul had not forced upon them works of the law nor taught that through them they had received the Spirit. But then they would have to say that it took place through the preaching of faith. The expression, *εξ ακοης πιστεως*, can be taken grammatically either in a subjective sense: the hearing of faith, *auditio fidei* (thus Mathies and

others); or objectively, that which is heard, the proclamation, the preaching of faith. *ακοη* in the New Testament usage designates what is perceived by the ear, be it a report as in Matt. 4:24; 14:1 or a sermon as in Rom. 10:17; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:2. *ακοη* is a translation of the Hebrew *הַשְׁמָעָה* (cf. LXX with Isa. 53:1). Because the opposite, *εργα νομου*, "works of the law," is directed to the subjective, therefore some interpreters have taken the *ακοη* in a subjective sense, *auditio* (thus Bengel and others). The Vulgate has *ex auditione*. Though this may be admitted lexicographically, this cannot be the meaning here. The word in this verse must have the meaning: proclamation, sermon; for in the first part of the question the person's work is spoken of, the subjective, which is negated; in the second part the power of the gospel is set forth, the objective. The Judaizers would look to their own power for the victory which in fact would could be attained by the gospel. It is the preaching of the faith, the proclamation of the gospel that is here spoken of. But then *πιστις*, "faith," must here be taken as objective faith, *doctrina fidei*.

Verse 3. Here is the same punishing word as was used in verse 1. But here the chastisement is stronger since the apostle now describes the nature of the foolishness which he censures. V. Hofmann characterizes the following sentences as censures, but at any rate verse 3 fits better into this category. *ουτως* points to the following expression (cf. Heb. 12:21). *εναρξαμενοι*, as aorist participle, points to a time in advance of the principle verb, "will you who began in the Spirit." Several interpreters have taken the dative *πνευματι* to be instrumental: "by the Spirit." But it is better with Philippi and others to take it as *dativus modi*: "with" or "in the Spirit." But what then is meant by the "Spirit"? V. Hofmann, Meyer, and others say that it is the Holy Spirit. It would be natural to take it this way when you look back to verse 2. The thought would then be: "will you who began with the Spirit, which you received by the proclamation of faith, now be made perfect by the flesh?" But the position of the word "spirit" as contrasted with the flesh favors the conclusion that the word refers to the new spiritual life, the new-in-the-Spirit-reborn man (cf. 5:17). Luther says: "Spirit refers to what the Holy Spirit has created in us: but flesh refers to all which we do for ourselves by natural powers without the Spirit." *πνευματι* has a close resemblance to *πνευματικοι* (Rom. 8:4). In this new spiritual life they had begun the race toward the goal. For a time they ran well, he

says later on (5:7). *σαρξ*, "flesh," describes in an ethical sense the condition of being separated from the Spirit, from God, and turned to sin and the attractive nature of man. The characterization is accentuated by the omission of the article. It therefore resembles the term *σαρκικοί. επιτελεισθε* is taken to be in the passive voice by some interpreters, who support this judgment by the observation that it does not anywhere else appear in the middle voice in the New Testament. The thought thus expressed would be this, that the false teachers wanted to bring the Galatians to perfection. In an ironic manner Paul describes this as a perfection through the flesh. Now while it may be true that the word does not appear in the middle voice elsewhere in the New Testament, yet it is often found in the profane Greek. Furthermore one cannot draw a firm conclusion from a word that appears only eleven times in the New Testament. Here we must say that the word cannot be taken as being in the passive voice. The context forbids it. We have here a double contrast. On the one hand we have the contrast between "spirit" and "flesh" and on the other hand a contrast between *εναρξάμενοι* and *επιτελεισθε*. Thus it is shown that the voice of *επιτελεισθε* cannot be passive. Not then: "let yourself be brought to perfection," but rather: "bring yourself to perfection." The tense is not the Attic future, but the present. It points to the present activity of the Galatians. They were now sinking back to the old nature under the bondage of the law and were closing down the pursuit of the Christian race. This was taking place in the present time, *νυν*, "now," when they should more and more be putting off the flesh, tearing themselves loose from it. Would they be ready to call this an attractive and worthy outcome?

It would be well to consider what Philippi points out, namely, that the flesh always seeks out its salvation in the works of the law. The flesh wants nothing to do with the regeneration of the Spirit, which involves laying aside work-righteousness. The flesh wants nothing to do with grace alone. It can be well understood therefore that the doctrine of salvation by grace alone can be maintained and kept pure only by combat. Satan and the flesh are allies.

Verse 4. Some have here referred the sufferings to those which the Galatians had endured because of their Christian faith, whether at the hands of Gentiles and Jews, or because of the chicanery of the false apostles. But neither here nor in the following is the reference to sufferings which the Galatians had to endure. There is no indication of such sufferings. Neither in

Acts nor in any other place in this letter is there any mention made concerning any special tribulations suffered by the Galatians. In this section reference is made to benefits which they had enjoyed (cf. v. 2 and 5). In this sense the present passage must be understood. *πασχειν* is used in a good sense and a bad sense in profane Greek literature as well as in Josephus. It is *vox media* which we experience. We find both the usage *κακως πασχειν* and *ευ* or *αγαθου πασχειν*. In the New Testament the word is commonly referred to the experiencing of evil, suffering; but here the context requires that the other meaning be preferred: to experience good. This responds to the *εικη* which indicates that the good fruits became of no avail. *εικη* is the Latin *frustra, sine successu vel effectu*. *τοσαυτα* is *tam multa*, "so much." By this is meant the previously mentioned gifts of the Spirit and the accompanying spiritual proofs of grace. The sentence may best be considered as an earnest outcry and not as a question which would not respond to *ει γε και εικη*. Inasmuch as these rich experiences had not held the Galatians loyal to the truth that faith and, therefore, grace is the only way to salvation, I wonder if they had been in vain. *ει γε* is the Latin *sequidem, quando - quidem* - "if indeed." *ει γε* can set forth something certain or something doubtful, unsettled. According to the first meaning Paul would be saying that he believes it was completely in vain (thus Grimm). According to the other meaning he would consider it unsettled, leaving the possibility to be left open. But in the latter case there would be a question whether it expresses a fear for something worse or a hope for something better; whether there is a fear that they have not only lost the divine works, but also called down upon themselves God's wrath (thus Philippi and Zoeckler), or if there is a possibility that things have not come to this pass that there is no hope that they will examine themselves and pursue something better. Thus it has been interpreted by Luther and others, which position is most consistent with the compassionate love which hopes for the best as long as this is possible.

Verse 5. Verse 3 is closely related to verse 2 and verse 4 to verse 3, but in verse 5 the apostle reverts to his primary question to which he wants an answer. *ουν*, "therefore," is here used in the analeptic sense. In verse 2 Paul asked the Galatians by what means they had received the Spirit when they received him (aor.), namely, in the first and basic communication of the Spirit. Here he asks them by what means they received the continued gifts of the Spirit which they had experienced. The

basic question in both instances is the same: by what means does God give the Spirit. ο, "he that," is God. *επιχορηγων* is the present and not the imperfect, for we would have had the aorists *επιχορηγησας* and *ενεργησας* here if the reference had been to the communication mentioned in verse 2. The corresponding finite verbs *επιχορηγει* and *ενεργει* must here be supplied with the participle. Paul considers this as continuing. God still continued to give them the Spirit, working in them, even though, with Philippi, we must consider the activity restricted to a narrower community and no doubt of a lesser energy than before. According to the apostle's judgment God had not completely deserted them. There was still hope. *επιχορηγειν* is derived from *επι* and *χορηγειν*, which in turn is derived from *χορος*, which by *transpositio literarum* stands for *ορχος* from *ορχεσμαι*, to dance, hop, leap, to perform a solo ballet. *επιχορηγειν* means, essentially, to lead a choir, then to pay its expenses as director, and therefore, in general, to equip, to give, to minister (cf. 2 Cor. 9:10; 1 Pet. 4:11 where it is used in simplex.) *δυναμεις* can mean wonderful works as in Matt. 7:22; 11:20 ff.; 13:58; 2 Cor. 12:12 and other passages. It can also mean works of wonder (miracles) as in Matt. 14:2; Mark 6:14; 1 Cor. 12:10,28,29. In the first instance *εν υμιν* must be interpreted as "among you" and in the second instance as "in you," in your inner being. The latter meaning suits best here. And the *εν* in *ενεργειν* usually has this meaning. *δυναμεις* points to the equipment of the new life with powers which transcend the ability of the natural life. The plural is used to designate various manifestations in acknowledgments, in speech and in dealings. Thus Paul strongly demonstrates the truth of the Gospel he proclaimed by calling attention to their own personal experience, which testified to the fact that the way to salvation is by the hearing of faith and not by the works of the law.

If the Galatians would examine themselves, they would find that the doctrine which Paul had preached was in full agreement with the experience they had had as Christians and, furthermore, they would find that it was in full agreement -

II. WITH THE HISTORY OF ABRAHAM.

The Judaizers were quick to appeal to Abraham. They would pit his history against Paul. With this approach they

had been successful in leading more than one person astray as they proclaimed circumcision as a requisite for salvation. But now Paul proves that Abraham's history, far from standing in opposition to his preaching, rather is the clearest proof for the truth of his message, since the history of the Israelites' ancestor presented a full evidence -

a. that faith alone justifies and communicates blessings (vv. 6-9), while the law can only condemn (vv. 10-12);

b. that Abraham's blessing is tied alone to faith. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by His death for the very purpose that this salvation might be realized and that the blessing might extend to all people (vv. 13,14). With other words, vv. 6-9 show the inner relationship between the promise to Abraham and the gospel; vv. 10-12 show that the Mosaic law cannot bring the promised blessing of salvation, but the very opposite, namely, condemnation because it makes everything dependent upon works; vv. 13,14 point out what Christ has done for us to save us from the curse of the law and verifies the blessing of Abraham.

Verse 6. *καθως*, "even as," does not introduce an antecedent expression; for verse 7 does not formulate a thought subsequent to verse 6. It refers to the foregoing section and is not simply a comparing *καθως* but a reasoning *καθως* as in the formula *καθως γεγραπται*. If the Galatians had experienced the truth that faith and not works had brought them spiritual gifts of grace, then they had not experienced anything different than what the history of Abraham clearly teaches. Also in the case of Abraham it was faith and not works that had bestowed upon him the spiritual gifts. Among the Galatians, the regeneration through the Spirit had been chiefly set forth; with Abraham it had been justification; but the one as well as the other was a gift of grace, and the one as well as the other was attained by faith. The emphasis in the verse is placed on *επιστευσεν*, "believed." This refers to Gen. 15:6, the same passage as is cited in Rom. 4:3 and Jas. 2:23. *בְּזֶה־רָאָה הָאֱמִן* - *הָאֱמִן* is the Hiphil of *אָמַן* and expresses, as Delitzsch says, the certainty of the object of one's belief and complete trust. The word is construed more frequently with *ל* than with *ב*. Faith is not only *assensus* but also *fiducia*. Abraham depended upon the one who made the promise and believed that he would fulfill his promise. But the content of the promise was not merely that Abraham would have a natural son and numerous descendants but, as Luther says, it pointed to the seed *κατ' εὐαγγελιον*, namely,

Christ. Therefore it could be said that his faith in God who made the promise "was accounted to him for righteousness." This was not faith as a deed, of ethical quality, nor was it faith in God as almighty, but faith in the one who was to come, "the Lord our righteousness." *επιστευσεν τω Θεω* answers to Paul's presentation of *πιστις Χριστου* in the New Testament. Therefore *ελογισθη αυτω εις δικαιοσυνην* answers to *δικαιουσθαι εκ πιστεως* (cf. Rom. 4:23,24). Both parts are a judicial act of God; it is an imputed righteousness, not a person's deed, neither a *mystica sanctitatis infusio*, as the Catholic Church teaches (cf. notes on 2:16).

Verse 7 draws from verse 6, the teaching upon which this verse is based. *γινωσκετε* can be in the indicative, and it is thus understood by some interpreters; but it can also, according to the form, be taken as the imperative which agrees better with the living, powerful presentation of this passage. *οι εκ πιστεως*, "those of faith," are those who, so to speak, have their origin from faith; who are, as one might say, born of faith, ordained of God according to the spirit, since the conception of *εκ* describes a relationship which the context indicates. Compare with the expression *οι εκ νομου* (Rom. 4:14), *οι εκ εριθειας* (Rom. 2:8). These of God, believers, are the true children of Abraham. *ουτοι* emphasizes that these are the true children of Abraham and not those who are of the law, which is implied as the very opposite. But if they are Abraham's children, then their relationship to God will be the same as his; they will be accounted righteous as he was. The fact that the believers are Abraham's children is a conclusion which rests simply on the supposition that the children must stand in spiritual relationship to the Father (cf. John 8:39). But as children they are the heirs of the Father. They are participants of Abraham's treasure—here, of course, justification. The experience of the Galatians agrees with that of Abraham. They, as well as Abraham, have experienced that faith, and faith alone gives access to the treasures of God. And the opponents should remember that simple descent from Abraham does not assure one of being a true child of Abraham.

Verse 8. Meyer correctly sets forth the connection of this verse with the preceding. Thus: "After Paul has pointed out that no one but the believers are Abraham's children, he now shows from Scripture that no one else has a part in Abraham's blessing." *δε* indicates the passage to those who share the bless-ing with Abraham. Paul refers to a new passage from the Old

Testament, namely, Gen. 12:3. This passage throws light on the inner relationship between the promise to Abraham and the gospel, inasmuch as it was already proclaimed to Abraham that his blessing should spread out over the Gentile world. That the door was open also for the Gentiles to the Messianic kingdom or to the promise to Abraham was not disputed by Judaizing readers, but they insisted that this would be accomplished by works of the law and through the means of circumcision. Therefore Paul seeks immediately to prove that they would receive this blessing alone through faith and emphasizes in this participial phrase in the original text that there was no thought that the Gentiles might receive it in some other way. *ἐκ πίστεως* is placed in the first part to give it emphasis. The blessing is indicated as resting in Abraham and his seed. This shows that the source rests outside of us and must be mediated through another. It is thereby indicated that the blessing is one that we cannot earn ourselves but must be earned by another on the outside. With other words: Since the blessing is something which I cannot effect but another must effect it for me, therefore there is no question but that it can be received by faith and faith alone. Since the blessing is of this nature, therefore it is, so to speak, a faith-blessing which the apostle finds set forth in the promise made to Abraham. When we consider verse 8a in the light of verse 8b and verse 9, we would expect to find *εὐλογεῖ* instead of *δικαιοῖ*, but the situation is this that these two are inseparably united. They can be distinguished from each other as conceptions, but in reality they are inseparably connected. It is one and the same grace of God which both justifies and blesses. And when it is said that a person is justified by faith, then it can also be said that he is blessed by faith.

The Scripture foresaw and the Scripture promised in advance. Scripture is here personified. It is, of course, God who foresaw and it is He who promised in advance. But this is attributed to Scripture, because this is contained in Scripture. So completely, Besser says correctly, is Scripture God's Word and has the Holy Ghost as its author (cf. Heb. 9:8; 10:15ff.), that Paul can speak of it in terms of a person, and in a certain sense associates the Holy Ghost with it. Because Scripture promised it in advance, the apostle desires to point out that it can be said with certainty that the promise applies to all times and is not restricted to Abraham. What is contained in Scripture is not intended for just one person. Scripture has been written for us (Rom. 15:4). The promise in this matter is a

testimony pertinent for all time.

But what is the content of the other personification connected with the foreknowledge of Scripture? Here is shown how Scripture as a living organism will remain for all time as an expression of God's testimony of Himself for the benefit of mankind. By revealing far in advance in Scripture how He will deal out His blessing, the very Scripture predicts how it will be realized in the individual person in times to come. *προ* in *προιδουσα* and *προευηγγελισατο* stand in contrast to the present time of Christianity. *δικαιοι* is the present and points to a continual action, since Paul is thinking and writing from the standpoint of the present time of Christianity. *οτι* is the recitative *οτι*, similar to our quotation mark. The passage is quoted from the LXX, with this difference that the LXX's *πασαι αι φυλαι της γης* is repeated with *πατα τα εθην* after Gen. 18:18. The meaning is the same. Paul is writing for the Gentile Christians, whom some wanted to subject to the law, and in order to make it more clear to them, he exchanges an expression of Gen. 12:3 with one in Gen. 18:18, but maintaining the meaning of the first; for in the Hebrew text reference is to the remaining people in contrast to Abraham's descendants, namely, all the Gentiles. *εν σοι* is not "on account of you," not "through you," not "in conjunction with you," nor *per posteritatem tuam*, which is Christ; for that would require *εν τω σπερματι σου*; but "in you," in you, Abraham, a believer; that is to say thereby that you are blessed, so also the Gentiles (so Siefert). The blessing thus rests in him and so outside of them. It rests for them simply to accept, to believe this grace coming to them from the outside.

Verse 9. *ωστε*, "so then," logically connected with verse 8, not vv. 6-8 as deWette has it. The blessing is assured in the believing Abraham, therefore, *ωστε . . . συν*, "with." In the case of Abraham the blessing was thus mediated in this way that it was grasped in faith. In this way it was that he partook of the blessing. Those who are blessed are blessed with him, that is, in the same manner as he was blessed. They are to believe as Abraham believed; then they will be blessed as he was and in fellowship with him. Paul wants to express the similarity by the use of *συν* with reference to *οι εκ πιστεως*, "they which be of faith" (cf. v. 7). Here we have *ευλογει* instead of *δικαιοι* in v. 8.

Verses 10-12 deal with the law. Concerning faith it is said that it justifies (vv. 6-7); it brings a blessing (vv. 8-9). Concerning the law, on the contrary, it is said that it condemns

(v. 10); it does not justify (vv. 11-12). Here we have a contrast: Faith (a) justifies, (b) blesses; the law (a) does not bless, (b) does not justify. Vv. 6-7 correspond as the opposite of vv. 11-12, and vv. 8-9 as the opposite of v. 10, which is introduced by γαρ. Paul proves the εκ πιστεως of verse 9 with the impossibility of being justified by the law. σοοι, "for as many as." σοος is the Latin *quantus* (as much as); σοοι, *quot* (as many as), *omnes qui*, all without exception. ες εργα νομου (cf. οι εκ πιστεως), they are of the works of the law, they hold themselves to them, insist on them as the determining factor in their relations to God. Concerning all of these, this truth prevails that they are under a judgment lying upon them as a burden which in the end, if not removed, will drag them down into the eternal abyss. It is written of them: "cursed is everyone that . . ." But no one can fulfill the law. καταρα is often the LXX's translation of the Hebrew יללך . καταρα is the compound of κατα and αρα - imprecation. καταρα corresponds to the German *Verwunschung*. It is the definite opposite of ευλογια. The curse is not simply a divine threatening (deWette), nor simply God's wrath (Meyer), but God's wrath revealed in punishment in its deepest form, namely, eternal death. What the requirements of the law embrace is shown on the one side by εμμενει, which is the Latin *immanere, perseverare in aliqua re* (Acts 14:22; 2 Tim. 3:14), *constanter temere s. servare*, our "continues." If we should keep the whole law all the days of our life with the exception of one moment, then that moment's disobedience would bring condemnation down upon us. On the other side, the content of the law's requirement is expressed by πας. If we should keep all the commandments with the exception of one, even the seemingly most insignificant one, then all would be lost. But now some have called attention to the fact that the πασιν preceding τοις γεγραμμενοις is found only in the LXX and that is true. Nevertheless the LXX has not here falsified the original text. The intention is to stress the complete exceptionality. The insertion of πασιν then is a faithful transmission of the thought. The passage quoted is Deut. 27:26, cited freely from the LXX. The proof derived from the passage points to the fact that no one continues in all things written in the book of the law to do them. του ποιησαι indicates the intention. These are written that we might do them. επικαταρατος, namely, εστε. But if it be so that we are under the curse of the law, then it is hopeless to be justified by it. This is something that all should be able to understand.

Verses 11,12. In verse 11 Paul passes on to speak of the fact that no one is justified before God by the law. Even as he has proved from two Bible passages that justification comes through faith (vv. 6,7) and that it is the believer who is blessed (vv. 8,9), he now proves from two Bible passages that the law condemns (v. 10) and does not justify (vv. 11,12). *δε* in verse 11 is adversative. The first *οτι* is declarative, the other is causative. *εν* is instrumental = by the law, by means of the law. *παρα τω Θεω*, "before God," in His judgment, *Deo judica = ενωπιου του Θεου* (Rom. 3:20). The passage now cited is Hab. 2:4. It is also quoted in Rom. 1:17; Heb. 10:38. It is cited here without the usual formula for a quotation and without the quotation mark *οτι*, since it is well known to the readers who would apply its content. This then is no new doctrine which Paul is introducing when he teaches that justification is by faith alone without the deeds of the law. He is not presenting a new way to salvation. This was the way to salvation also taught in the Old Testament. We understand how certain Paul was concerning the agreement of the Old and New Testament regarding the way to salvation.

It is difficult both according to the Greek and Hebrew texts to decide whether the prepositional expression *εκ πιστεως* modifies the subject or the predicate. Griesbach, Knapp and other publishers connect it with the subject *δικαιος*. Thus also exegetes of the ancient church, Chrysostom and later Bengel, Baumgartner, Winer, Hoelemann, Siefert and others. Thus also our translations. Rambach and Starcke connect *εκ πιστεως* to both the subject and the predicate: The just by his faith shall live by his faith. This is linguistically unacceptable. Delitzsch, Philippi and others connect the prepositional expression to the predicate: the just shall live by faith. Thus also the English version (The just shall live by faith), the German (*der Gerechte wird seines Glaubens leben*), the French (*le juste vivra par la foi*) the Swedish (*den rettfærdige skall of tro lefva*) the new Norwegian (*den rettfærduege, ved tro skal han leve*). The following *αυτα ζησεται* (v. 12) strongly favors this method. The Old Testament text likewise, and this makes the best sense. If one connects *εκ πιστεως* to the subject, then the contrast would be: the just shall live by faith but the just shall die by deeds. But in verse 12 Paul says that he who does the things which the law commands shall live, and in Rom. 10:5 he cites Moses as witness to the fact that the man who does these things shall live by them. But can this passage stand as proof

for justification by faith if one connects faith to the predicate? Yes, this is true. If a sinner shall live by faith, then it is plainly so because he has been justified by faith; since the life here spoken of is life eternal, *ζωη αιωνιος*, which has its beginnings here in the spiritual life; but this life is so closely connected with faith that, as Philippi says, where *δικαιοσυνη παρα τω Θεω* is, there also this life is communicated; and conversely, where life eternal is communicated, there *δικαιοσυνη*, justification, must be present, and both will therefore be "*aus derselben Ursache (εκ πιστεως) erteilt.*" This is, of course, also true that they alone are just those who truly live, freed from death and wrath, awakened to life in fellowship with God; and the one as well as the other being attained alone by faith. Thus Paul may use this passage and the one in Romans as proof for his doctrine concerning justification without falsifying the text, as some have accused him of doing. But indeed it is another question whether the prophet has the same goal in mind as Paul has in his word. Some have said that the prophet is speaking of one thing and Paul of quite another. It might seem so. The passage appears in that part of Habakkuk where the Lord gives answer to the prophet's earlier complaint in which he asks if Israel will be completely destroyed by the enemy. The Lord answers by saying that the Chaldeans shall be destroyed because of their pride, while the just shall live by their faith. This is certainly a promise from God that the just shall be saved from physical distress and furthermore retain possession of Canaan, the promised land. But this promise of God is not restricted to the temporal. The temporal is here, as so often is the case, merely a picture of the spiritual, which is the real purpose of the prophesy. We think, for example, of the promise made in the 4th commandment. How could the promise be made in such a form if it had only a temporal purpose? It is the spiritual, the real content of the promise that Paul has brought forth into the New Testament light of day. It is a promise telling upon whom God's mercy rests, namely, upon those who reject salvation by works of the law and hold fast to faith alone as the way of life. The object of this faith which justifies and makes us acceptable to God is Christ, both according to Old and New Testament Scriptures.

Verse 12. The law is not of faith. This means that the law, as a means of communication and as an expression of a person's conduct before God, does not provide the decisive conduct from faith, but from works. The man that doeth them

shall live in them. The law determines a person's attitude to God according to works. The law has an entirely different principle for a person's justification and faith. When the attainment of justification before God is considered, then the law knows nothing of faith as decisive for a person's conduct. In this sense it can be said, with Winer, that *fides nihil pertinet ad legem*. In another sense we know that the law has something to do with faith. Paul lets the law speak for itself. The passage is taken from Lev. 18:5. Also here it is taken for granted that it is well known, therefore the citation formula is missing (cf. Rom. 10:5). "Shall live in them," that is to say, shall partake of the good things which God gives, fellowship with Him, a fellowship which is completed in life eternal. *εν αυτοις* is here instrumental, thus "by them," by keeping them. *αυτα* and *αυτοις* in Lev. 18:5 refer to God's *προταγματα* and *κριματα*. This must also be true of the apostle's presentation. The plural refers to the individual commands in the law which require a perfect fulfillment as a condition for life. "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." Thus Jesus, in harmony with Moses, said to the man who asked what good thing he should do to inherit eternal life (Matt. 19:17). The law can well come with its requirements but cannot give the ability to fulfill any of them. Therefore one is under the curse so long as he is tied to the law.

Verse 13 brings the opposite to the negative syllogism of verses 11 and 12. For the sake of emphasis this is connected to the preceding asyndetically. The law brings a curse. Christ has redeemed us from the curse. The apostle now proceeds to discuss this redemption. With special emphasis Christ is named at the very beginning. Faith accomplishes what the law could not, because Christ has redeemed us. And it was by His accursed death on the cross that Christ freed us from the curse of the Mosaic law and thereby served as mediator in order that the promise to Abraham might be extended to all, also to the Gentiles. *εξαγοραζω* is the Latin *redimo, solutio pretia ex alicujus potestate recipio* (4:5; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Eph. 1:7; 2 Pet. 2:1; Matt. 20:28; Rev. 5:9). All of this had a price. This is shown by the fact that sin is regarded as a debt. Through the payment of this debt Christ has reconciled us to God so that he looks upon us in grace. The price of our redemption was nothing less than Christ's death and blood. This was *λυτρον* and *αντιλυτρον* (cf. Mark 10:45; Matt. 20:28; Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7; 1 Tim. 2:6; Rev. 5:9). But "death and blood" is a pregnant

expression for Christ's *satisfactio vicaria*, His active and passive obedience. The price was paid to God and not to the devil. We owe him nothing; he had seized us from God. If we should define it more closely, we may say that the price of redemption was made to God's justice and not to His love. *υμας* refers to us of Israel. The direct reference is here to Israel's redemption; for here the reference is to those who were under the curse of the Mosaic law, consequently Israel in contrast to *τα εθνη*, verse 14. But indirectly it was certainly also the redemption of the Gentiles. Philippi says: "Blieb der *νομος* mit seiner *καταρα* auf Israel lasten, so konnte unter Israel keine Gemeinde der Glaubigen, der Gerechtfertigen, der Gesegneten entstehen, in deren Gemeinschaft als der wahren Abrahamskinder auch Heiden aufgenommen wuerden. Was also Christus durch Fluchaufhebung unmittelbar fuer Israel gethan, hat er mittelbar zugleich fuer die Heidenwelt gethan." ("If the *νομος* [law], with its curse remained as a burden on Israel, then there could be in Israel no congregation of believers, the justified, the blessed, into whose communion also Gentiles might be accepted as true children of Abraham. Hence what Christ accomplished for Israel directly by removing their curse, He has accomplished also indirectly [mediately] for the Gentile world.") Or looked at from another side: If Israel had not been redeemed, then the Gentiles would also have to come under the law if they wanted to enter into fellowship with God. Through Israel, then, Christ has abolished the curse of the law for all of humanity. The curse of the law is the curse that the law pronounces over transgressors. The law is here personified. It is looked upon as a lord who keeps the prisoners in curse's prison until a full ransom has been paid. In *γενομενος υπερ ημων καταρα* the method is stated. He became a curse. This is not just an *abstractum pro concreto*; but much more. It cannot be described by saying He was cursed. We can find a parallel in 2 Cor. 5:21: *αμαρτια εποιησεν*. He was made to be sin. So also it is said of the curse: as He was burdened with foreign sin, so here with a foreign curse. "For us" - this bears the emphasis, says Luther. *υπερ* expresses the substitution, the substituting satisfaction. He became a curse not simply for our benefit, but in our stead. Anything less than that could not save us. *οτι γεγραπται*. The proof passage shows clearly how Christ was made a curse. The passage is Deut. 21:23, quoted freely from the LXX. There we read: *κεκατηραμενος υπο Θεου πας κρεμαμενος επι ξυλου*. In the original text *πας* is missing as well as *υπο Θεου*, since this is taken for granted.

Deuteronomy points out that when the punishment was to be by stoning, then it was the custom in certain grievous instances that the body was tied to a stake so that it would not only be a spectacle, but also the object of all manner of molestation (cf. Num. 25:4; Josh. 10:26; 2 Sam. 4:12; 21:6,9). By this type of crucifixion the idea is conveyed that this is a cursed thing, which Roman custom Paul properly applies to the crucifixion of Christ. The tree is the cross (cf. Acts 5:30; 10:39; 1 Pet. 2:24).

(To be continued)

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The Tragic Importance of an Omission . . .

In an issue of *Christian News* otherwise notable for the editor's boasting about the physical shape he is in as well as his prowess in bicycling, running, and swimming (November 29, 1993), a great amount of space is taken up by a sermon Herman Otten delivered last August. Under the title, "A Chosen People' - The Work of a Great Living Church," the message is loosely based upon 1 Peter 2:9. One must say "loosely," because while the entire sermon takes over 150 inches of 3-inch columns of the small print customarily used in *Christian News*, only 1L inches (half of it in a quotation from C.F.W. Walther) actually deal with the correct application of the text to the universal priesthood of believers.

After a lengthy introduction, Otten gets to the major thrust of his sermon: "This morning I want to outline why I think that the LCMS still has more to offer our nation and the world than any other church body. . . . Few pastors in the LCMS have probably been invited to speak to more non-Lutheran groups or have as many friends who are non-Lutherans. I do not claim to be an expert or to speak as the official representative of any organization. Time will not permit me to dwell at length on any point. Here is what the LCMS has to offer today: . . ." Otten then proceeds to list 30 attributes he ascribes to the LCMS, with explanations of varying length attached to each. In a second sermon printed in this same issue, Otten once again lists "what the LCMS has to offer today," including the same 30 points, this time without explanations.

At this time I am not disposed to debate the 30 points that Otten includes as the strong points of the LCMS, although some of them are debatable. For example, No. 5 ("The truth about creation"): If memory serves, *Christian News* has repeatedly complained about the teaching of evolution at the LCMS-supported Valparaiso University; or No. 15 ("A refusal to mix church and state . . . [LCMS] does not meddle in government affairs"): Again, I seem to recall reading in *Christian News* about Missouri's lobbying office in Washington, DC. Far more important, however, is Otten's tragic omission! He omits (because he cannot include) a God-pleasing practice in regard to fellowship and unionism.

Since 1938, the LCMS has held an unscriptural position in these two matters. In its St. Louis convention of that year the LCMS agreed that, in spite of the fact that differences still existed between it and the ALC (American Lutheran Church) in matters such as the lodge, fellowship, and unionism, among other 'non-fundamental' doctrines, nevertheless no more discussion on doctrine was necessary to establish fellowship! Eventually, in 1950, this developed into the so-called "Common Confession" of the LCMS and the ALC; "so-called," because it failed to settle the points of disagreement and was, nevertheless, adopted by both church bodies. Two sister synods of the Synodical Conference, WELS and ELS, protested the adoption of the Common Confession, declaring: ". . . we also hold that the adoption of the Common Confession by the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod involves an untruth and creates a basically untruthful situation, since this action has been officially interpreted as a settlement of past differences which are in fact not settled." The LCMS was not budged from its unscriptural position by this plea.

From about the same time on, the LCMS has held to an unscriptural distinction between prayer fellowship or joint prayer as an exercise of church fellowship, on the one hand; and prayer fellowship or joint prayer in our dealings with individual fellow Christians in our private, personal lives, on the other hand. The LCMS conventions of 1944 and 1947 resolved to follow an unscriptural course, which had correctly been held to be wrong before. Today, of course, this false distinction has degenerated still further to the LCMS "levels of fellowship" debacle!"

In the 1927 edition of the *Concordia Cyclopedia*, the judgment of the LCMS in regard to the issue of Scouting was clearly expressed:

Considering that the Boy Scout movement seeks to develop character and virtues and love to God, the organization not only has a religious character, but seeks to do on the basis of natural religion what can only be done by means of the Gospel. Such effort is in line with the attempt made by many churches today to develop character without a thorough regeneration of the heart and without considering it necessary to be guided in spiritual matters only by the inspired Word of God.

Also, in its 1938 convention, the LCMS spoke of ". . . the naturalistic and unionistic tendencies still prevalent in the Boy Scout movement," and resolved that its congregations be provided "with an educational and recreational program that will attract the interest of our youth and thus counteract the inclination to affiliate with the Boy Scout organization." Then, in 1944, the LCMS convention made a sudden switch, adopting the resolution that "the matter of Scouting should be left to the individual congregation to decide and that under the circumstances Synod may consider her interests sufficiently protected." In 1944 the LCMS was strangely silent about "the naturalistic and unionistic tendencies still prevalent in the Boy Scout movement"! Does anyone in the LCMS still worry about those tendencies today? Does anyone in the LCMS still worry about unionism at all?

A fourth instance of persistent adherence to unionistic practices on the part of the LCMS has been its position on the military chaplaincy, which it has held since the 1930s, maintained during Synodical Conference debates of the 1940s,

and holds in honor to this day. The two main arguments against this practice of the LCMS are to be found in resolutions adopted by the WELS in its 1941 convention: “The commissioning of Army and Navy chaplains by our synod would conflict with Scriptural principles and established Lutheran practice because . . . the application for, and appointment to, chaplaincy conflicts with our doctrinal stand on the divinity of the pastoral call. Also, the Training Manual of the War Department, entitled *The Chaplain*, specifies duties to the chaplain which are in direct violation of the divine call of a Lutheran pastor. . . . The spirit of doctrinal indifferentism pervades the regulations of the War Department pertaining to the office of chaplaincy and fosters unionism.” (For example, there is the requirement that the chaplain provide spiritual services for the serviceman based on his [i.e., the serviceman’s] religion, not the chaplain’s!) Notwithstanding, the LCMS considers such unionistic activity to be “an important MISSION of the church,” according to a caption in the December 20, 1993, *Christian News*, honoring the former Military Chaplaincy Director of the LCMS, who is cited as saying that “while of course there are problems and will be problems [of unionism? -JL], it was a great joy to work with the many orthodox, confessional, hard-wording [sic] Lutheran chaplains in the LCMS military chaplaincy program.” Otten adds his “salute” to the former director “and all other military chaplains for their faithful, underrecognized work in Christ’s mission.” | So much for Otten’s opposition to unionism!

One issue that apparently troubles the LCMS at present is the practice of open communion. Many pages of recent issues of *Christian News* have been filled with discussions of the problem. This, however, like the other unionistic practices of the LCMS, is not new. In the 1940s the LCMS adopted a Communion Agreement with the National Lutheran Council which provided for a unionistic practice: “In exceptional cases, where a member of one group earnestly seeks admission to the Lord’s Supper conducted by a representative of the other group, the individual case in each instance will be considered by the pastor concerned. It is agreed that in such cases particular synodical membership of a Lutheran in the Armed Forces shall not be a required condition for admission to the Lord’s Supper.” This agreement says that a violation of God’s Word is permitted if the circumstance is unusual or exceptional. The LCMS ought, rather, to have adhered to the annotated remark of Edward W.A. Koehler: “For at whose altar you worship, his religion you confess. Altar fellowship presupposes unity in doctrine.”

How tragic it is that Otten did not (and could not) include a God-pleasing practice regarding fellowship and unionism in listing attributes of the present-day LCMS! May God speed the day when by His grace the LCMS may return to true orthodoxy in doctrine and practice, once again professing its long-forsaken doctrine as expressed by Franz Pieper: “It is important to point out again and again that in all Scripture there is not a single text permitting a teacher to deviate from the Word of God or granting a child of God license to fraternize with a teacher who deviates from the Word of God. God is against the prophets who proclaim their own dreams (Jer. 23:31f.). And all Christians without exception are commanded to avoid such (Rom. 16:17; 1 Tim. 6:3ff.)” (*Christian Dogmatics*, Vol. III, p. 422).

– John Lau
