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Ein Prediger muss nicht allein *wei-*
den, also dass er die Schafe unter-
weise, wie sie rechte Christen sollen
sein, sondern auch daneben den Wo-
lfen *wehren*, dass sie die Schafe nicht
angreifen und mit falscher Lehre ver-
führen und Irrtum einführen.

Luther

Es ist kein Ding, das die Leute
mehr bei der Kirche behält denn
die gute Predigt. — *Apologie*, Art. 24

If the trumpet give an uncertain
sound, who shall prepare himself to
the battle? — 1 Cor. 14:3

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Through Justification unto Sanctification

(Essay read at the convention of the Ev. Luth. Synod of Missouri, Ohio, and Other States held at Fort Wayne, Ind., June 1941.)

I

"Will ye also go away?" Jesus said to His disciples, John 6:66. It called for decision. It was for many in Israel the parting of the ways. The people had hailed Him vociferously as the Great Prophet. The enthusiasm had reached its climax when Jesus fed the five thousand. Then Jesus said: "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." Jesus gave them a clear statement of the nature of His kingdom and of His office, of the purpose of His coming, and of the results. Then came the reaction; many said: "This is a hard saying," left Him, and walked no longer with Him. And Jesus turned to His disciples and asked them: "Will ye also go away?" Jesus evidently expected a negative answer; but He wants that answer. No conscription in Christ's kingdom; none but volunteers. At the same time, His words foretell isolation for them. You note what happened, He means to say; many have gone away; will you join the many or make up your mind to stay with Me and the few?

In many respects the time in which we are living is a period of transition. In politics, in economics, in international relationships, the old things seem to be passing away; a new world seems to be rising. Social institutions that have stood for a millennium seem to be shaking. In religion, too, there has for some time been evident a trend to shelve the old and to inaugurate a new alignment: To counteract the vast falling away from all religion, let religious people forget all differences of the past and present a common front against the foe.

The situation is aggravated by three things. The religious world is again teeming with millennial extravagances. If history ever repeats itself, it is in this, that after every great world catas-

trophe there is a revival of the old Jewish hopes of an earthly world-kingdom of Messiah, of a visible triumphant reign of Christ on earth, a realm in which you no longer have to worry for bread, but the multitude will be fed with five loaves and two fishes. — Then, in view of social and economic conditions in the world, the cry is raised on all sides: What is the Church good for? One third of the people are ill fed, ill kept and ill housed; what are you going to do about it? Quit looking through a telescope at the far-off eternity and consider the condition of your neighbor next door; there lies the Church's problem and opportunity. — And, finally, taking its cue from the growing demand for united action on the part of all religious people, the Papacy is again raising its head. This unity for which everybody is clamoring now — did not the world have it in the days before Luther caused all this division? And was not that the golden age of peace and general satisfaction, with the Church, an efficient mother, caring for all? So why not go back to that time under the leadership of those who have an experience of almost 2,000 years? They count on it that most people know little or no church history, and — they are usually right.

For us the present meeting may be looked upon as an occasion that calls for a decision: the first convention after our centennial. A century lies behind us; what is to be our policy for the second century, now beginning? And before this convention stands the Christ and says: "Many have gone away; will ye also go away?"

The reason why so many had turned away from Christ was this: He had assured them that they must be saved by His work or go forever unsaved. "If ye believe not that I am He" (the Son of God, the Savior of the world), "ye shall die in your sins." The purpose of His coming was to seek and to save that which was lost. The center of His teaching was salvation through His blood.

The purpose of all religion is to give an answer to that question, What must I do to be saved? Every man knows by nature that all is not well between him and his God; and the object he seeks to attain in his religious life is to get right with God. The answer which Christ and the Christian religion give to that question is: "There is no difference; they have all sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus." Justification by grace through faith in Christ, that has always since its foundation been the center of all teaching and confession in the Christian Church. On the other hand, that doctrine has always been the chief point of division. Those disciples left Jesus and walked no longer with Him because He taught that you must take your salvation from Him as a free gift, or go forever without. When in the course of

centuries the Church departed farther and farther from the doctrine once delivered unto the saints, the chief point of departure—chief because it was most important and most fatal, and chief because it led to all other errors—was in the doctrine of justification. When two centuries after the Reformation Rationalism conquered the Christian world so completely that our fathers saw no other way of rescue but to look for another world, the chief point of departure was again the doctrine of justification. So today the really fatal element in the false teaching in all erring churches is their denial of justification by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. And when the Lord today asks us, "Will ye also go away?" the real focus of the question is this: Are you in this second century going to hold staunchly to the old Christian, Lutheran, Missourian, doctrine of justification, or do you think you have found something better?

The man who, under God's guidance and by divine inspiration, has given us the plainest and most extensive instruction on this all-important doctrine is St. Paul. He could speak plainly to others because he spoke by experience. To the Philippians he wrote (chap. 3:4-9): "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcized the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the Law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the Church; touching the righteousness which is in the Law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them all but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Paul means to say, I've tried everything else. He was "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel and taught according to the perfect manner of the Law of the fathers and was zealous toward God," Acts 22:3. He knew the Law and tried to live up to it; and he was so successful that others regarded him as an example of zeal, so successful in his own eyes that he trusted in himself that he was righteous and despised others, that he thanked God that he was not as other men were, that he hated and persecuted those who taught another way of salvation than that by the Law. And then that Christ whom he persecuted opened his eyes; and now the righteous Pharisee saw that he had never known what true righteousness is, the righteousness that avails before God, because he had not known what the Law really demands and what sin is. The scales fell from his eyes, and he saw that sin was

inherent in him, so much a part of him that he could not escape it. And this law of sin in his members worked all kinds of actual sin, which he committed even against his will. And the result of all of this was death, inescapable; "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Rom. 7:24.

But he continues: "I thank God through Jesus Christ, our Lord." There is another way of salvation, a way open to all sinners. And that he now preached, in season and out of season, to all who would listen, to Jews and to Greeks. This way is not the way of works, of keeping the Law of God; "for as many as are of the works of the Law are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all the things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them," Gal. 3:10. It is ignorance to try that, Rom. 10:2, 3; more than that, foolishness, Gal. 3:1-3. That is the religion of the flesh, of natural man, Phil. 3:4, but disobedience to God, Rom. 10:3. No, "by the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight"; by the Law is only knowledge of sin, Rom. 3:20. This is the way of salvation, that God justifies the ungodly; the man who worketh not, Rom. 4:5; the man who has no righteousness of his own, which is of the Law, Phil. 3:9. How can the just God do that? So: He sent His Son to do for us what we should have done, putting Him under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law, Gal. 4:4, 5; by laying all our sins on Jesus, making "Him to be sin for us who knew no sin," 2 Cor. 5:21, so thoroughly accounting our sins to Him that He suffered the consequences, the punishment of our sins; He has redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us," Gal. 3:13. For the sake of this work of His Son, God now no longer imputes our trespasses to us, 2 Cor. 5:19; Rom. 4:8, but forgives them and covers them, Rom. 4:7; in the place of our sin He now imputes righteousness, Rom. 4:6. Thus we are now reconciled to God by the death of His Son, Rom. 5:10; 2 Cor. 5:18, 19.]

Paul pictures it all as a judicial act in the court of God. The Judge is God, Rom. 8:33: "It is God that justifieth." The criminal is man, all men, Rom. 3:23: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." The accuser is the Law, Gal. 3:10. There is a witness that testifies to our guilt, our conscience, Rom. 2:15; but also an Advocate who pleads for the sinner and intercedes for him, Rom. 8:34. And the sentence is that the criminals standing in that court, all of them and every single one of them, are justified. Rom. 5:18, 19: "By the righteousness of One the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One shall many be made righteous." The world, all men and every

one of them, is reconciled with God, 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them."

This fact that all the world is reconciled with God because Christ has earned for all of them the righteousness that avails before God, this fact is now revealed in the Gospel, Rom. 1:17; 3:21, 22. And in the preaching of the Gospel, God now offers this righteousness to each and every one of us and pleads with us: "Be ye reconciled to God," 2 Cor. 5:20. He who believes this accepts for his own person the righteousness of Christ; God imputes the righteousness of Christ to him, Phil. 3:9; Rom. 4:6, 24. So it is that we are justified by faith, Rom. 3:26, 28; 4:5; 5:1; Gal. 2:16, and many other passages.

So this man, who had been most zealous in the most rigid form of work-righteousness, had by the grace of God come to the conviction that in the matter of his salvation he must discard his own works entirely and must be justified freely, by the grace of God, for the sake of the merits of Jesus Christ, given to him through faith. And he whom even his proudest works had never brought anything but despair, he now found in his trust in the Savior a deep, sincere peace of heart, and an assurance of his salvation which moved him to triumphant rejoicing: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life," Rom. 5:10. But "if God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? . . . I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor principalities nor powers nor things present nor things to come nor height nor depth nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord," Rom. 8:31-39.

There is a striking similarity between the experience of Paul and that of the Augustinian monk who, 1500 years later, sat in his cell in the monastery in Erfurt worrying over that book bound in red leather which the monks had put into his hands when he entered their cloister. Again the Church, the bearer of God's revelation to the sinner, had allowed the revealed way of salvation to be obstructed, well-nigh buried under a load of Pharisaic teaching. The Church taught that the sinner must work out his own justification

before God. It is true, they still used the same terms by which St. Paul and other men of God describe justification. They still said, Man is justified by grace; but the grace of God was, so they taught, that gift of God by which He enlightened the understanding and so changed the will of man that he now was able to do the will of God and work out his own salvation. They still said, Man must be saved through the merits of Christ; but what they taught was this: Christ has earned for us that grace of God which now enables us to earn our own salvation by our works. They still said, Man must be saved by faith; but faith to them meant merely the knowledge that men must be saved by the deeds of love, which by virtue of the infused grace of God man himself can do. That was the teaching of the Church: You must do the best you can towards fulfilling the will of God; if you do that, then God will for Christ's sake grant you His grace to help you earn your salvation.

That teaching of the Church drove Luther into the monastery. Not a misunderstanding of Catholic teaching, as some would have you believe; that was what they taught: God is righteous, and the sinner, to appease Him, must make satisfaction with his good works; true, God gives grace for these works, but faith and grace presuppose that the sinner does sufficient good works to make God gracious to him. To Luther, as indeed to every sincere Christian, the supreme concern of life was the soul's salvation; and ever since he learned to understand the teaching of the Church, the question that troubled him was: "*Wie kriege ich einen gnaedigen Gott?*" What can I do to merit the grace and favor of God? He tried the traditional Catholic way of works, and the longer and the more conscientiously he tried it, the more was he convinced that he failed. With many others he entered the monastery; there, away from the wicked world with its temptations, in the altogether spiritual life of the monk, there he hoped to be able to lead the life that would move God to be gracious to him; there he would find the solution to his troubles.

He did not find it. He almost found death; he fasted and scourged himself; he practised all the ordinary forms of maceration and invented new ones; all to no purpose. "For when an awakened soul starts to find rest in work-righteousness, it stands on a foundation of loose sand, which it feels running and traveling beneath it, and it must go from one good work to another and to another and so on without end." He was told that he must find relief in penance. So he wearied his superiors by his continual use of this sacrament. The slightest breach of the most trifling conventional regulation he looked upon as a sin and ran to confess it at once and receive absolution, until the perplexed lad was ordered to cease confession until he had committed a sin worth

confessing. He gained the reputation of being a miracle of piety; for himself he lived a life of mental anguish, whispering to himself that he was ripe for the gallows.

They tell us that Luther was abnormal, that he committed the error of trying works too exclusively; he should have followed that "amazingly delicate adjustment between faith and good works" at which the medieval Church had arrived and in which some of the more serious minds found comfort: In hours of doubt and affliction you must forget your own deficiencies and rest on the comforting promises of the Gospel, when these hours are over, you must again figure with your own works and merits. — Well, Luther may have been abnormal as a Catholic, but he was a normal thinker. The truth is, he had come to a thorough knowledge of his own sinfulness and his total inability to do anything good, which seems to be lacking in most Catholics; and so he concluded: If my works are to suffice in good days, they should also suffice in evil; and if they fail to give comfort in evil days, they are not yet sufficiently good to avail in good days. Over and above all he wanted certainty; he felt crushed by an agony of doubt touching his future fate.

Temporary help was offered by his associates, chiefly by Staupitz. He told him: It is a mistaken principle that you must attain the love of God by penitential works; you must love God, and then true penitence will follow. But that failed when Luther came with his "grosse Knoten," the sins against the first table of the Law. The fact was he did not love God; he was often tempted to hate God; he did not try to do good because he wanted to, gladly, but because he feared hell-fire. And he could not change his heart. — Staupitz said: "Has not God commanded us to hope? Do we not confess: I believe in the forgiveness of sins?" That helped for a while; then he thought: But you must earn that forgiveness by your works! and he was back again where he started; had he any right to apply God's gracious promises to himself?

And then the last step: Since he could not change his heart to make it love what God loved, since all the sacraments gave him no help to make him holy, was not that a sure sign that God had rejected him and so made the sacraments ineffective? — And he felt like a dead man.

And then God Himself helped him. He led him to see the true meaning of Rom. 1:17: "In the Gospel is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, as it is written: The just shall live by faith." To us the passage is so plain that every child in school understands it; the apostle speaks of the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to us by faith, a righteousness which avails

before God. We know that; we have been taught — by Luther. He had been taught otherwise. He was taught that this righteousness was the active righteousness of God, by which He Himself is perfectly just and demands perfect righteousness of the sinner and punishes him if he does not come up to His demands. As long as he had this retributive conception of God's righteousness, the thought had to torture his conscience; how could he love a God who will punish sinners in spite of all they can do? He chafed at that phrase, so oft repeated, "the righteousness of God." And the thought that not only in the Law but even in the Gospel the punitive righteousness of God was manifested, threw him into bitter indignation; he thought that was adding insult to injury: "Then I raged and my conscience was agitated by furious storms. I beat importunately at the passage in Paul, thirsting with a most ardent desire to know what the apostle meant." So he said in 1545.

The light came when he saw the connection between the two clauses of that verse: "the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel" and "the just shall live by faith." The second clause it evidently an explanation of the first; but if that is so, then St. Paul is not speaking of the punitive righteousness of God at all, but of that righteousness which He mercifully gives or imputes to the sinner and which the sinner receives in faith and is thereby justified in God's sight. "Therefore," he says, "just as I had previously hated the phrase 'righteousness of God,' so now I extolled it with equal love as the sweetest of words, and so to me that passage in Paul was the true gate of Paradise." In the light of this new understanding he now examined all those passages, and one precious Gospel promise after the other was opened to him. Oh, it makes all the difference in the world whether you read these passages with Sinai in the background or Calvary! Is it surprising that this now became the dominant theme of his lecturing and his preaching: For Christ's sake, who has borne our sin and suffered our punishment, God has declared the sinner just and righteous; and this righteousness of Christ is now imputed to the sinner by faith.

Like a golden thread it runs through all his writings. In his introduction to Dr. Brenz's commentary on the prophet Amos (XIV, 168) he commends the author because he stresses above all this doctrine of the righteousness of faith; for it is the head and corner-stone, it alone establishes, feeds, builds, preserves, and defends the Church of God, and without it the Church of God cannot exist for one hour. For no one can teach correctly in the Church nor successfully withstand an opponent who does not hold to this article, or, as St. Paul names it (Titus 2:1), this sound doctrine. — He expresses his surprise that Jerome and Origen have

passed for great teachers in the Church though you can scarcely find three lines in their books which speak of the righteousness of faith; so much are they lost in spiritual interpretations of Bible-stories that with all the two have written no one can become a Christian; and Augustine would not have been any better if the Pelagians had not tormented and driven him to defend this doctrine. But by his experience in that battle he became a true teacher of the Church, almost the only one after the apostles and the early Fathers. Which is a warning for us, he holds; they who do this not are tossed to and fro by the winds of uncertain doctrine, of opinions infinitely multiplied, flung up and down, always learning and never coming to the knowledge of the truth. That has been our own experience, he testifies, until the grace of God has led us into the safe haven and built us on the solid Rock. Again, in his *Commentary on Genesis*, chap. 21:17 (St. Louis edition, I:1441): "This is the highest article of our faith. If this is taken away, as the Jews do, or corrupted, as the Papists do, then the Church cannot exist, nor God receive His honor, namely, that He is gracious and merciful and would forgive us our sins and save us for His Son's sake." And on Gal. 2:11 (IX:148): "For what is Peter? What is Paul? What is an angel from heaven? What are all creatures in comparison with the article of justification? Which if we know, then are we in clear light; but if we be ignorant thereof, then are we in most miserable darkness. Wherefore, if you see this article impugned or defaced, fear not to resist either Peter or an angel from heaven, following the example of Paul, who, seeing the majesty of this article to be in danger for the dignity of Peter, had no regard of his dignity and estimation, that he might keep the same pure and uncorrupt." (Middleton's translation.)

Luther points out (*Commentary on John*, chap. 16:3—VIII: 627 f.) that all depends on this article; whoever has this has everything. Hence Christians must ever be ready to fight for this article. For even Christ and the apostles stress this article most. They teach other articles, too, e. g., that Mary, a pure virgin, became the mother of Christ; but so little does St. Paul emphasize this that he does not even call her mother, but simply a woman (Gal. 4:4). But on this he insists to the utmost, that we are saved not by works and Law, but obtain grace and salvation through this Mediator, Christ, alone.—To be sure, this article has been persecuted most by the devil and the world. Others have been attacked, too; none other has caused so much bloodshed and made so many martyrs.—All history teaches that every heresy and error began where this doctrine fell. When Christians grew secure and thought they knew it well, then they began to dispute on other points;

but all of them, however many they were, also failed in this doctrine. For all depends on this; whoever errs in other doctrines will not have this one right either; and even though he holds all others and not this one, it is all vain. — On the other hand, this article has that grace, that, if we hold it in all diligence and faithfulness, we shall not fall into heresy nor run against Christ and His Christianity. For it carries the Holy Spirit, who thereby enlightens the heart. — Where this knowledge of Christ is lost, there the sun has lost his brilliance, and there is nothing but darkness, so that nothing is rightly understood, and there is no defense against error and false doctrine of the devil. And even though the right words of faith and Christ are retained (as was done under the Pope), yet there is no foundation in the heart for any article; there remains nothing but foam.

“We must learn, therefore, diligently the article of justification, as I often admonish you. For all the other articles of our faith are comprehended in it; and if that remain sound, then are all the rest sound” (On Gal. 3:13 — IX:376 — Middleton.) “If we lose this article, we shall not be able to resist any heresy, any false doctrine, no matter how ridiculous and vain it may be, as it happened under the Pope, where we believed things of which we are now ashamed and which we regret.” (On Is. 42:21 — VI:521.) “Therefore we do so earnestly set forth, and so often repeat this doctrine of faith or Christian righteousness, that by this means it may be kept in continued exercise and may be plainly discerned from the active righteousness of the Law. Otherwise we shall never be able to hold the true divinity (for by this only doctrine the Church is built, and in this it consisteth).” (Introduction to Galatians, IX:25 — Middleton.)

Luther, who knew by bitter experience how a terrified sinner feels who does not understand this article, but who also by the grace of God had learned to know what a heaven of comfort and peace lies in its true understanding, Luther went to school with the Holy Ghost every day of his life, to learn ever more thoroughly this central doctrine of Holy Writ. In his long exposition of the short 117th Psalm he explains why he so persistently drums on the doctrine that we must be saved without our merit, solely by God's grace given to us in Christ; he knows and daily experiences how the devil in many ways tries to destroy this truth. And if certain saints grow tired of this and think it unnecessary because they think they know it well, yet he knows how much they lack in their pride, because they do not realize how much depends on this doctrine. “For where this is retained pure, Christianity, too, remains pure and united, without sects, for this, and this alone, makes and keeps Christians. With all other doctrines false Chris-

tians and hypocrites may glitter; where this is not retained, it is impossible to keep away error and sects." And in the Introduction to his *Commentary to Galatians* we find this gem: "For in my heart this one article reigneth, even the faith of Christ, from whom, by whom, and unto whom, all my divine studies, day and night, have recourse to and fro continually." (IX:8 — Middleton.)

II

The doctrine of justification by faith alone has become inextricably linked with the history of our Church. Luther brought back the pure doctrine of justification; that, above all, made him the Reformer of the Church, not only because this doctrine is the essential doctrine for every individual soul but because thereby he undermined the power of the Pope and insured the success and permanency of the Reformation. Every previous attempt at a reformation was blocked and hindered by the Pope's interdict. This is the way it worked. People were taught, and the great mass of them believed, that they must be saved in this way: Through the sacraments—seven of them—God gave grace to a person so that he could work out his own salvation; in no other way could any man be saved. But these sacraments could only be administered by a validly ordained priest, that is, one whose ordination was sanctioned by the Pope; rites administered by any one else were no sacraments and carried no grace. If, therefore, a man was excommunicated, that is, excluded from the use of the sacraments, heaven was closed to him; and when the Pope laid the interdict on a land, that is, commanded his priests no longer to administer the sacraments in that land, then heaven was closed to that land. For hundreds of years before the Reformation every opposition to the Pope and his hierarchy, every attempt at reform, was quashed by the interdict. Usually the bulk of the people backed reform; every one knew it was so greatly needed. They would even brave the interdict—for a while; then the bitter worry of poor ill-informed consciences would drive them back to what they had been taught was the only way of salvation. Luther taught Christian people that your salvation is a personal matter between you and your God; you need no priest as mediator; you yourself have free access to God. If you by faith in the Savior accept the justification earned by Christ for the whole world, then you are justified before God, and no priest, no Pope, no interdict, can keep you out of heaven. And that broke the power of the Pope; people no longer feared his ban.

Our Lutheran Church has therefore always considered this the chief doctrine of Christian faith. Knowledge and acceptance of this doctrine makes a man a Christian; though he knew every-

thing else, but did not believe this, he could not be saved. This doctrine forms the very center of our Confessions. On the nature of justification the Apology says (*Trigl.*, 205:185): "In this passage [Rom. 5:1] *to justify* signifies, according to forensic usage, to acquit a guilty one and declare him righteous, but on account of the righteousness of another, namely, of Christ, which righteousness of another is communicated to us by faith." And the Formula of Concord (793:5): "We believe, teach, and confess that according to the usage of Holy Scripture the word 'justify' means in this article, to absolve, that is, to declare free from sins. Prov. 17:15. Rom. 8:33."

The terms "objective" and "subjective justification," which we use today, are not used in Scripture nor in the Confessions; but the distinction is made in Scripture when St. Paul says, on the one hand, 2 Cor. 5:19: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them"; Rom. 5:18. "By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life," and on the other hand, Rom. 3:26: "That He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," and Rom. 1:17: "The just shall live by faith." And the Formula of Concord says (919): "Concerning the righteousness of faith before God we believe, teach, and confess unanimously, in accordance with the comprehensive summary of our faith and confession presented above, that poor sinful man is justified before God, that is, absolved and declared free and exempt from all his sins and from the sentence of well-deserved condemnation, and adopted into sonship and heirship of eternal life, without any merit or worth of our own, also without any preceding, present, or any subsequent works, out of pure grace, because of the sole merit, complete obedience, bitter suffering, death, and resurrection of our Lord Christ alone, whose obedience is reckoned to us for righteousness. These treasures are offered us by the Holy Ghost in the promise of the holy Gospel; and faith alone is the only means by which we lay hold upon, accept, and apply, and appropriate them to ourselves. . . . For faith justifies not for this cause and reason that it is so good a work and so fair a virtue but because it lays hold of, and accepts, the merits of Christ in the promise of the holy Gospel; for this must be applied and appropriated to us by faith if we are to be justified thereby. Therefore the righteousness which is imputed to faith or to the believer out of pure grace is the obedience, suffering, and resurrection of Christ, since He had made satisfaction for us to the Law and paid for [expiated] our sins." 921: "Accordingly, the word 'justify' here means to declare righteous and free from sins and

to absolve one from eternal punishment for the sake of Christ's righteousness, which is imputed by God to faith, Phil. 3:9."

This is the clear teaching of our Lutheran Church: By the life, suffering, and death of Christ all men are already justified before God. This absolution of all sinners is already past. It is universal, for all sinners, not only for believers. It is perfect, leaving nothing for man to complete it. Without this justification before faith there could be no justification through faith. But this justification the sinner must now accept by faith, and so through faith the sinner is personally justified; not so that man accepts the forgiveness offered in the Word and then God pronounces him just; no, in the moment a man believes in Christ he is just.

Justification, so our Confessions declare (Apol., IV:2 — p. 121), is "the chief topic of Christian doctrine . . . which, understood aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ, which is of especial service for the clear, correct understanding of the entire Holy Scriptures, and alone shows the way to the unspeakable treasure and right knowledge of Christ, and alone opens the door to the entire Bible, and brings necessary and most abundant consolation to devout consciences." And the Formula of Concord (917): "This article concerning justification by faith (as the Apology says) is the chief article in the entire Christian doctrine, without which no poor conscience can have any firm consolation or can truly know the riches of the grace of Christ, as Dr. Luther also has written: 'If this only article remains pure on the battle-field, the Christian Church also remains pure and in goodly harmony and without any sects; but if it does not remain pure, it is not possible that any error or fanatical spirit can be resisted.' And concerning this article especially Paul says that 'a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.'"

Melanchthon becomes really emphatic when in the Apology (339) he writes against that article of the Catholic Confutation of the Augsburg Confession in which "they reject and condemn our statement that men do not merit the remission of sins by good works." He says: "Mark this well! They clearly declare that they reject and condemn this article. What is to be said on a subject so manifest? Here the framers of the Confutation openly show by what spirit they are led. For what in the Church is more certain than that the remission of sins occurs freely for Christ's sake? . . . Here we could cite infinite testimonies from Scripture and from the Fathers that this article is certainly divine and true, and this is the sacred and divine truth. For there is hardly a syllable, hardly a leaf, in the Bible, in the principal books of the Holy Scriptures, where this is not clearly stated." — Most

other doctrines of the Bible are connected with this. This doctrine is the key to the rest of Scripture, and the Bible is a sealed book to every one who does not understand this doctrine, as Luther found in his day. This doctrine is the touchstone of doctrines; whoever teaches this will have others right, too; but wrong in this, wrong in others, too. Again, whoever is wrong in other doctrines will invariably also violate this; every false doctrine touches this center. If this article had been maintained pure, neither the Papacy with the Mass, indulgences, and purgatory, nor Zwingli and Calvin with their false doctrine of the means of grace could have arisen. And whoever today maintains this doctrine pure cannot be deceived by Papists, rationalists, and enthusiasts.

This, therefore, is the article with which the Church stands or falls; as the Apology declares (223): "If there is to be and abide a Christian Church, the pure teaching concerning Christ, concerning the righteousness of faith, must surely be preserved." And Luther in the Smalcald Articles (461): "Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered [nor can anything be granted or permitted contrary to the same] even though heaven and earth, or whatever will not abide, should sink to ruin. 'For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,' says Peter, Acts 4:12. 'And with His stripes we are healed,' Is. 53:5. And upon this article all things depend which we teach and practice in opposition to the Pope, the devil, and the whole world. Therefore, we must be sure concerning this doctrine, and not doubt; for otherwise all is lost, and the Pope and devil and all things gain the victory and suit over us."

Catholics were not slow in recognizing that the doctrine of justification by faith alone was not only the chief point of difference between them and the Church of the Reformation, but that it was also the very heart and life of the Reformation. This doctrine therefore became the focus of their attacks. And from the very beginning another doctrine, naturally and inevitably, was drawn into the discussion, the doctrine of sanctification. Dr. Eck already at the Diet of Augsburg, 1530, offered to subscribe to the teaching of Lutherans if they would drop that "by faith alone" and change it to "justification by grace and faith." They, of course, did not accept the offer, for Eck meant grace in the Catholic sense, that is, a good quality in man, the good works done by man with the help of God's grace. When he said, Man is justified by grace and faith, he meant, Man is justified by works and faith. In other words, he wanted sanctification drawn into the deal of a sinner's justification before God. In the Edict of Worms, 1521, pronouncing the ban of the empire on Luther, it was stated that Luther taught

a free, self-pleasing life, excluded from all laws and altogether bestial (XV:2274, 2281). And Eck heads the long list of slanderers of the Lutheran doctrine of justification extending from that time down to the present. Eck said to Luther, "You teach that *sola fide* so that you might conveniently sin." And the average Catholic history of the Reformation to this day repeats that threadbare insinuation: Luther invented the doctrine of justification by faith alone to give room for sinning. To this day the Roman Church poses as the great protector of sanctification and a godly life. Cardinal Gibbons, in his *Faith of Our Fathers* (chap. III): "The Catholic Church is a society founded by our Lord Jesus Christ for the sanctification of its members. . . . The Church places His [Christ's] image over our altars, admonishing us to look and do according to the pattern shown on the Mount. . . . The Moral Law which the Catholic Church inculcates on her children is the highest and holiest standard of perfection ever presented to any people, and furnishes the strongest incentives to virtue." And not only Catholics, but many others, even some who call themselves Lutherans, chime in: This doctrine of justification, excluding sanctification, is a hindrance to good works; it puts a premium on wickedness, gives a soft pillow to the lazy; it makes people carnally secure, so that they remain unconverted; the Lutheran Church knows only how to teach one doctrine, that of justification by faith; all other doctrines, particularly that of sanctification, are slighted and neglected; of godliness they know little or nothing. So it is that in the Lutheran Church—and today chiefly in the Missouri Synod—a dead orthodoxy reigns; if it were not for such periodic revivals as that of Pietism, there would be no trace of spiritual life.

Yes, we must carry this attack on the doctrine of justification by faith even farther back than the Reformation. It is evident from St. Paul's epistles that, when he preached justification by faith alone, such an attack on this doctrine in the guise of a defense of sanctification was made. Take, e. g., Rom. 6:1: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Or, Gal. 2:17: "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." It is true, Paul himself here proposes these objections; but when we read that here and there he was followed by Judaistic teachers who decried the doctrine of free justification which he was preaching and claimed that Christians must again submit to the Mosaic Law, is it going too far afield when we conclude that Paul did not invent these objections but that this is exactly what those Judaists said: In teaching justification without works, you teach men to say, God's grace forgives all sin; He par-

dons all our mishaps; well, then we can go right on sinning, or at least we need not be so careful in our life, for God's grace will readily supply what we lack; yea, the more we sin, the more do we give opportunity to the grace of God to abound; and so we promote the honor of God. Paul answers, That's the logic of Old Adam. And so only blasphemous lips can draw the conclusion, Since Christ loves the sinners and forgives sin, therefore He loves sin, and Christians may sin gladly and without any scruples, simply casting all their sins on Christ. And St. Paul then enters on a discussion of Christian sanctification. So must we, to obviate any such objections on the part of others or of our own heart, have a clear conception of the Bible doctrine of sanctification and of the true relation between justification and sanctification. We must know, and we must show, that our Church does indeed insist on godliness, that it testifies to the necessity of a new, holy life as much as any other denomination, with the vast and powerful difference from some of them that we not only emphasize the necessity of sanctification but also teach clearly what true sanctification is and how a man can attain it.

Briefly, then, we must consider what the Bible, and accordingly our Lutheran Church, teaches and confesses of sanctification. We note, in the first place, that the term sanctification has a twofold meaning in Scriptures, in our Confessions, and in our theological literature. It is used in a wider meaning, which embraces every part of the divine work in and on man whereby he is led to salvation, the call of the Gospel, regeneration, illumination, conversion, justification, renewing, the final salvation. So Jesus prays for His disciples: "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth," John 17:17. To Paul, Jesus says that he shall be a witness to the Gentiles, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts 26:18. So St. Paul writes to the Ephesians (5:25-27): "Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it that He might sanctify and cleanse it . . . that it should be holy and without blemish." And Heb. 10:17: "By one offering Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." Whenever the Scriptures speak of Christians as saints, as holy people, the reference is to sanctification in the wider sense, to the holiness of faith, of forgiveness of sins.

Our Confessions so use the word. The Third Article of the Apostles' Creed carries the title "Of Sanctification"; that means the entire work of the Holy Spirit. The Formula of Concord (793:8) states that the words "regeneration" and "vivification" are

used in the sense of justification; but "by these terms, in other places, the renewal of man is understood and distinguished from justification by faith."

There is a practical side to this. We read that St. Paul calls Christians perfect, 1 Cor. 2:6; Phil. 3:15; complete, Col. 2:10; we read that Luther writes: "We Christians are all saints, and cursed is he who does not call himself a saint and boast of it." (XII:1384.) If we forget that all these terms are used in the wider sense, we are apt to conclude, God's grace and the peace of Christ are promised only to saints; but I know that I am a sinner and not perfect; so that lets me out; there is no hope for me. There we must know that these titles refer to the holiness of faith, as St. Paul clearly shows, Phil. 3:12-15, when he calls Christians perfect, yet calls on them to be so minded as he had described himself: "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect." And Luther says, "A Christian *must* claim that he is holy, i. e., righteous in Christ. It may seem that this is pride, that true humility would say, I do not know whether I am holy. But that is only apparent humility; for whoever does not glory in his holiness in Christ denies His baptism, His Gospel, aye, Christ Himself, who is come to make us holy."

Here, however, in distinction from justification, we speak of sanctification in the narrower sense, of sanctification of life. What is it? It would be difficult to find a better definition than that offered in our *Doctrinal Theology* (A. L. Graebner): "Renovation, or sanctification, is the restitution of the divine image in the regenerate" (p. 226). Only too often we think of sanctification as a synonym for good works. It is vastly more; it is a total transformation of man in which gradually the divine image lost in the Fall is restored. "If any man be in Christ," says St. Paul, 2 Cor. 5:17, "he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." It is not merely an outward change, keeping the outside of the vessel clean, giving the old furniture a new coat of paint and varnish; good works are only a part of sanctification, only the visible evidence of sanctification. Essentially, the Formula of Concord states (795:19), Sanctification, or renewal, "consists in love to God and one's neighbor." It is a change of heart; and beginning in the heart, it is a total transformation, Rom. 12:2; 1 Thess. 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The new man gradually reassumes the image of Him that created him, Col. 3:10; all those divine traits begin to reappear which adorned the first human beings after the Creator had breathed into them the breath of life; more and more their life again

assumes the form of life in Paradise, until their transformation on earth ends in their conformation in heaven to the likeness of their Father in heaven.

This transformation has two terminal points. The Scriptures speak of these two terminals as putting off the old man and putting on the new man, Col. 3:9, 10. This is clarified by other passages: 1 Pet. 2:1: "Laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies and envies and all evil speakings." Rom. 13:12: "Cast off the works of darkness." Titus 2:12: "Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts." Gal. 5:24: "Crucify the flesh, with the affections and lusts." On the other hand, Rom. 13:12: "Put on the armor of light." Titus 2:12: "Live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." In short, Eph. 4:22-24: "That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." And the Apology (263) says that renewal designates two parts, mortification and quickening: "Of these two parts Paul speaks plainly Rom. 6:2, 4, 11, that we are dead to sin, which takes place by contrition and its terrors, and that we should rise again with Christ, which takes place when by faith we again obtain consolation and life. . . . One is putting off the body of sins; the other is the rising again through faith. Neither ought these words: mortification, quickening, putting off the body of sins, rising again, to be understood in a Platonic way, concerning a feigned change; but mortification signifies true terrors, such as those of the dying, which nature could not sustain unless it were supported by faith. . . . And quickening ought not be understood as a Platonic fancy, but as consolation which truly sustains life that is escaping in contrition."

To bring about this change is, of course, impossible for man himself. We are dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1. Of ourselves, we are not sufficient even to think anything as of ourselves, 2 Cor. 3:5. It is God who must change us from dead corpses to living beings; He does this through regeneration and conversion. It is, therefore, self-evident that sanctification can be found only in those in whom God has awakened this new life; all others are still dead. And while, after this awakening, man can himself do good, he can do so only by the powers which God gives and as God sets these powers in operation. How dependent even the regenerate are on God's help becomes more evident when we look at sanctification in the light of the terms Scripture uses in describing it. "Putting off the old man"; that means fight, bitter, unrelenting fight. "Putting on the new man"; that means work, hard, unceasing work. It is true, with the help of God, offered

in the means of grace, a Christian is sure of ultimate victory. How hard the battle will be, however, we may judge when Scriptures tell us that the old man must be drowned, must be crucified. At times it is necessary to cut off hand or foot, to tear out an eye, because it is better to enter the kingdom of God crippled or lame or blind than to miss it altogether.

Nor is this fight ever finished or this work ever done in this life; in other words, sanctification is never perfect, the divine image never completely restored, this side of eternity. Says the Formula of Concord (907:68): "For since we receive in this life only the first-fruits of the Spirit, and the new birth is not complete but only begun in us, the combat and struggle of the flesh against the spirit remains even in the elect and truly regenerate men; for there is a great difference perceptible among Christians not only in this, that one is weak and another strong in the spirit, but each Christian, moreover, experiences in himself that at one time he is joyful in spirit and at another fearful and alarmed; at one time ardent in love, strong in faith and hope, and at another cold and weak." Hence the many admonitions in Scripture addressed to Christians to increase in sanctification, Eph. 4:15; 2 Cor. 9:8; Col. 1:11; 1 Thess. 3:12; Phil. 1:10; 1 Thess. 4:1; etc.

The question is asked by all perfectionists, from Papists to Methodists: If God must give grace unto sanctification, why cannot He give sufficient grace unto perfection? It is an idle and useless question; it must suffice us that God does not do so; and real perfectionism denies Christian faith, for that rests on forgiveness of sin. Again people who have nothing better to do have asked, Which is the greater sin, perfectionism or neglect of sanctification? Dr. Pieper (*Christl. Dog.*, III, p. 41) points out that it is idle to speculate on the relative greatness of sins; Scripture says to the "Christian worldling": "For this ye know, that no whoremonger nor unclean person nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them," Eph. 5:5-7. And to the perfectionist Scripture says: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him [God] a liar, and His Word is not in us," 1 John 1:8, 10. In other words, unless they repent, they will both be damned. And at that we leave it.

Luther sums up what the Scriptures say of sanctification when, in his *Commentary on Galatians*, he says on Gal. 6:15: "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (London translation, p. 543):

"Now, a new creature, whereby the image of God is renewed, is not made by any color or counterfeiting of good works, but by Christ, by whom it was created after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness. When works are done, they bring indeed a new show and outward appearance, wherewith the world and the flesh are delighted, but not a new creature; for the heart remaineth wicked as it was before, full of the contempt of God and infidelity. Therefore a new creature is the work of the Holy Ghost, which cleanseth our heart by faith (Acts 15:9) and worketh the fear of God, love, chastity, and other Christian virtues and giveth power to bridle the flesh and to reject the righteousness and wisdom of the world. Here is no coloring or new outward show but a thing done indeed. Here is created another sense and another judgment, that is to say, altogether spiritual, which abhorreth those things that before it greatly esteemed. The monkish life and order did so bewitch us in time past that we thought there was no other way to salvation. But now we judge of it far otherwise. We are now ashamed of those things which we adored as most heavenly and holy, before we were regenerated into this new creature. Wherefore the changing of garments and other outward things is not a new creature, as the monks dream, but it is the renewing of the mind by the Holy Ghost, after the which followeth a change of the members and senses of the whole body. For when the heart hath conceived a new light, a new judgment, and new motions through the Gospel, it cometh to pass that the inward senses are also renewed, for the ears desire to hear the Word of God and not the traditions and dreams of men. The mouth and tongue do not vaunt of their own works, righteousness, and rules; but they set forth the mercy of God only, offered to us in Christ. These changes consist not in words but are effectual and bring a new spirit, a new will, new senses, and new operations of the flesh, so that the eyes, ears, mouth, and tongue do not only see, hear, and speak otherwise than they did before, but the mind also approveth, loveth, and followeth another thing than it did before. For before, being blinded with papish errors and darkness, it imagined God to be a merchant who would sell unto us His grace for our works and merits. But now, in the light of the Gospel, it assureth us that we are counted righteous by faith only in Christ. Therefore it now rejecteth all will-works and accomplisheth the works of charity and of our vocation commended by God. It praiseth and magnifieth God; it rejoiceth and glorieth in the only trust and confidence of God's mercy through Jesus Christ. If it must suffer any trouble or affliction, it endureth the same cheerfully and gladly, although the flesh repine and grudge thereat. This Paul calleth a new creature."

III

The chief objection against the doctrine of justification without works, purely by grace, through faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, is this, that thereby sanctification is set aside, that thereby Christians are permitted, perhaps even encouraged, to lead an impious, ungodly life. In leading over to the special topic of this discussion, the true relation between justification and sanctification, I want to ask and answer a question: Who are they that raise these objections to the doctrine of justification as it is taught by the Lutheran Church in accordance with the Word of God? Let us see.

In St. Paul's day there were those who protested that he made void the Law of God through faith, Rom. 3:31, that he taught a Christian might continue in sin, so that the grace of God might abound, Rom. 6:1. Who were they? Men from Judea, certain of the sect of the Pharisees, who believed, who said, that Christians must be circumcised and commanded to keep the Law of Moses, otherwise they could not be saved, Acts 15. Since the Reformation the most persistent people in raising that objection have been the Roman Catholics; and they teach, in the words of their own confession (Trent, Sess. 6, Cans. 9, 11, 24): "If any one saith that by faith alone the impious is justified in such wise as to mean that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of justification, and that it is not in any way necessary that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will: let him be anathema.—If any one saith that men are justified either by the sole imputation of the justice of Christ or by the sole remission of sins, to the exclusion of the grace and the charity which is poured forth in their hearts by the Holy Ghost and is inherent in them; or even that the grace whereby we are justified is only the favor of God: let him be anathema.—If any one saith that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works, but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of justification obtained but not a cause of the increase thereof: let him be anathema." The people who are so greatly concerned about the sanctification of Christians are the same people who claim that man must do good before he can be justified. Suspicious! And now you can go down the line of the modern critics of the Lutheran doctrine of justification, and you will usually find them false teachers who are trying to bring works into the deal of justification—from the crass paganism of Unitarians, through the Pelagianism, Semi-Pelagianism, and synergism of the sects, down to those who claim that faith justifies as a God-pleasing work. Their camouflage is concern about the life of Christians lest they fall into hypocrisy; their contention

is, Christians will not do good works unless they get credit for them in justification.

Practically the same accusation was made against teaching and preaching in the Lutheran Church by the Pietists of the late seventeenth century. Conditions in the Church at about 1675 were bad, much merely external and formal Christianity that did not affect heart and life of church-members. Pietists said, The preaching in the Church is to blame: too much dead orthodoxy, too much stress on purity of doctrine and not enough personal application to life; that again meant: Too much justification and not enough sanctification. As a matter of historical fact, this was a very faulty conclusion; but they drew that conclusion and, as a result, grew very careless and neglectful of doctrinal preaching and teaching in their efforts to cultivate a godly life; and when Rationalism came to Germany from England and France, they had no weapon to fight it, and in a short time the University of Halle, headquarters of Pietism, had become the seat of Rationalism.

We see more clearly today. We shall not try to deny that there were preachers who were guilty of dead orthodoxy, just as there were some synergists and some Crypto-Calvinists. Some people have one-track minds. And when we remember the hard and long-continued battle Lutherans had to wage to retain the pure doctrine of justification, newly restored in the Reformation, extending to and beyond the adoption of the Formula of Concord, then we shall also understand how some fell into the habit of a one-sided stressing of pure doctrine. But we maintain that the real reason for deplorable conditions in the Church lay in the faulty church organization, the State Church organization, which precluded Christian church discipline and filled the church-governing consistories with politicians. Yet the cry has continued: In the Lutheran Church justification is overstressed; therefore conditions are not as they ought to be among their people. The accusation has been leveled chiefly at our Synod; and I have heard it said in our own circles when mention is made of evils and weaknesses: What we need is a little more Pietism. They don't know what Pietism was. What they mean is: We must stress sanctification more and justification less. Now, we cannot stress sanctification too much, and we cannot stress justification too much; but it is possible to neglect one or the other in our preaching; and above all, we can mistake and misrepresent the right relation between the two.

There is, according to Scripture, an inevitable and invariable connection between justification and sanctification. Inevitable; that is, one cannot be without the other; and where the one is, there the other will be, too. Invariable; that is, justification always

precedes sanctification, and sanctification always follows justification. Let it be said here, once for all, when we speak of justification preceding and sanctification following, we do not separate them chronologically; we only indicate the order, the logical relation between the two. I cannot do better here than to cite the classic word of the Formula of Concord (929, 41): "For good works do not precede faith, neither does sanctification precede justification. But first faith is kindled in us in conversion by the Holy Ghost from the hearing of the Gospel. This lays hold of God's grace in Christ, by which the person is justified. Then, when the person is justified, he is also renewed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, from which renewal and sanctification the fruits of good works then follow. . . . This should not be understood as though justification and renewal were sundered from one another in such a manner that a genuine faith sometimes could exist and continue for a time together with a wicked intention, but hereby only the order (of causes and effects, of antecedents and consequents) is indicated, how one precedes or succeeds the other. For what Luther has correctly said remains true nevertheless: 'Faith and good works well agree and fit together (are inseparably connected); but it is faith alone, without works, which lays hold of the blessing; and yet it is never and at no time alone.'"

Let us consider this a little more in detail and see that it is Scripture doctrine. Let us recall what we heard before, that sanctification does not merely consist in this, that a man quits all kinds of vices externally,—that a drinker, a blasphemer, an adulterer, quits the gross sin,—but in this, that a man becomes a new creature. There is no better description of this than that given by St. Paul in Eph. 2. We are by nature "dead in trespasses and sins." Note, not dead in every respect; in this condition of death we could and did indeed "walk according to the course of this world; we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind." But we were absolutely dead to all that is good and God-pleasing, "children of wrath, even as others." "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved,) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." The Holy Spirit comes to us in the Gospel and quickens us, awakens life in us who are dead, by kindling faith in the Savior in our hearts. That is regeneration, the new birth. Now we are no longer dead but alive to all that is good, a new creature. Now we are no longer children of wrath; Christ's righteousness has been imputed to

us, and we are justified before God; we are inwardly changed, dead to sin, Rom. 6:2, but alive to all good things.

In various ways Scripture pictures this process time and again. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," says Jesus, John 3:6, "and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Before a man can move, think, speak, or act, he must be born; and before he can think, speak, or do anything spiritually good, he must be spiritually born. That is regeneration. St. Paul says, Eph. 2:10: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." Before the world, the sun, and the moon, air, earth, and water could serve man, they had to be created and invested with the necessary qualities. So spiritually; God must create us spiritually before we can live a spiritual life; and that is regeneration. The corrupt tree must be changed into a good tree before it can bring forth good fruit, Matt. 7:16.

There was a time when man did not need the new birth. Before the Fall all that Adam and Eve did pleased God, because they were good and perfect, created in the image of God. By the Fall that was changed; now man is bad, and all that he does is bad. "When man does what is in him," Luther says, "he sins." "All our works are nothing but (with permission) lice in an old dirty fur, of which nothing clean can be made, in which, in brief, neither hide nor hair is good." Man must be entirely changed, become a new creature; that is done by regeneration. This new creature, this new-born man, now pleases God because the perfect righteousness of Christ is imputed to him; he is justified before God. And now all that he does pleases God. Not as though his works are intrinsically perfect. Before the Law of God even the works of the regenerate are not good; yet they please God. Why? There must be another reason for that than the perfection of what they do. The reason is found in justification. When man is regenerated his relation to God changes; he is pardoned, justified; he has become a child of God. And now all that he does is pleasing to God. Luther: "When you see or hear something brave and honest in the world, then say, Is Christ there, well and good; is Christ not there, then the devil surely is, though there be cap, cord, hair shirt, virtue, respectability, etc. In the eyes of the world it may be piety, holiness, etc., but in God's eyes it's all an abomination if Christ is not there."

There can be no sanctification without justification. On the other hand, sanctification inevitably follows justification. Inevitably, because according to Scripture justifying faith is always productive of good works. Scripture knows of no other faith than that which moves the mouth to confess, 2 Cor. 4:13; which moves the Christian to overcome the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the

eyes and the pride of life, 1 John 5:4; 2:16; which purifies the heart, Acts 15:9, and shines forth in good works, Matt. 5:16. This is what St. Paul so clearly states, Gal. 5:6: "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but faith which worketh by love." "That is to say," Luther explains, "faith which is not feigned or hypocritical but true and lively. This is that faith which exerciseth and requireth good works through love. It is as much as to say, He that will be a true Christian indeed, or one of Christ's kingdom, must be a true believer. Now, he believeth not truly if works of charity follow not his faith. So on both hands, as well on the right hand as on the left, he shutteth hypocrites out of Christ's kingdom. On the left hand he shutteth out the Jews and all such as will work their own salvation, saying: 'In Christ neither circumcision, etc.'; that is to say, no works, no service, no worshiping, no kind of life in the world, but faith, without any trust in works or merits, availeth before God. On the right hand he shutteth out all slothful and idle persons, who say, If faith justify without works, then let us work nothing, but let us only believe and do what we list. Not so, ye enemies of grace. Paul saith otherwise. And although it be true that only faith justifieth, yet he speaketh here of faith in another respect; that is to say that, after it hath justified, it is not idle, but occupied and exercised in working through love. Paul therefore in this place setteth forth the whole life of a Christian man, namely, that inwardly it consisteth in faith towards God, and outwardly in charity and good works towards our neighbor." (*Commentary on Galatians*, London, 447.)

This, too, is sufficient answer to those, Catholics and sects, who abuse this text to bring good works into justification. Faith justifies, so they say, because it worketh by love; so says St. Paul. But St. Paul never dreamt of saying that; that *because* is not in the text. What St. Paul does say is this: Faith alone justifies; of course, it must be true faith, not a sham faith; and this true faith you can tell by the fact that it worketh by love. That's the only kind of faith there is; all other so-called faith is sham and hence does not justify.

That is one of the reasons why we say, Sanctification is necessary; Christians *must* do good works. Objections have been raised against the use of these terms: "necessary" and "must." They have been abused and so misunderstood and used for false teaching. But they are Scriptural, and so we use them. Of course, good works are not necessary for salvation; that has been sufficiently shown in the first part of this paper; in the matter of justification all works, whether done before or after conversion, are entirely excluded. Included in this is that good works are not necessary

for the preservation of faith. While it is true that a wicked, unchristian life will destroy faith, to say that good works preserve faith is turning things upside down; good works neither produce nor preserve faith, but faith produces good works. Again, when we say a Christian *must* do good works, this does not imply any constraint, or coercion, on the part of God nor any unwillingness on the part of the Christian, not that sanctification is a heavy and burdensome yoke, laid on us by God, as though our good works were produced by dire threats of wrath and condemnation. The meaning is, in the first place, that sanctification is the inevitable result of the new life implanted by justifying faith. Again, I cannot improve Luther's exposition (XI:936 — Lenker, XII:187): "Now, since there is no other means for taking away sins than Christ, you might ask: How is it, then, that we are nevertheless required to do good works; if, as you say, all depends upon faith? I reply: Where faith is genuine, it cannot exist without good works. Just as, on the other hand, where there is unbelief, there can be no good work. Hence, if you believe, there must necessarily follow from your faith naught but good works. For, as faith brings you salvation and eternal life, so it also brings you good works; they cannot be restrained. Just as a living person cannot refrain from moving about, eating and drinking and laboring, it being impossible that such activities should cease while he lives, no one need command and drive him to do such works, but, spare his life, and he'll do them; just as all this is true in the physical life, so nothing more is required, in order that good works may be done, than faith. Only believe, and you will do all of your own accord."

In the second place, sanctification is necessary, and Christians must do good works because that is the will of God. Sanctification, or doing good works, is not an adiaphoron, something neither commanded nor forbidden by God and therefore left to man's free choice; it is enjoined on us by God's Word. It is impossible here even to mention all the Bible-passages; a few must suffice. 1 Thess. 4:3: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." That is not an error of the Perfectionists, Methodists, and the like, that God wants us to be holy. 1 Pet. 2:21, 22: "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps; who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." Christ has delivered us from the guilt and punishment of sin; but that does not give us a license to live in sin; we should now live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness. Moreover, the Lord warns us specifically that no man must presume upon the grace of God in Christ. Heb. 12:14: "Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." No; sanctification is not a cause of

salvation; but the Lord warns us: Sanctification is not a mere appendix, a side issue in Christian life; on the contrary, it is so inseparably combined with Christianity that no one can be a Christian and saved who despises sanctification and serves sin. The God who in times gone by sent the Deluge and destroyed Sodom and Gomorrha with fire has not changed in New Testament times. Let no one imagine: Since Christ has atoned for our sins, God has become a careless, negligent father; hence we need no longer fear Him; no need to walk so carefully. That is a terrible delusion. God's wrath against sin has not ceased; the death of Christ has not changed that in the least. Gal. 5:19-21 the apostle names the sins of the flesh, and then adds: "of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Finally — and so we close the grand circle of God's great plan of salvation — the end and final object of our justification is our perfect sanctification. Said Dr. Walther in an essay presented in 1875: "Holy Scripture teaches most clearly that the final purpose of the work of redemption is sanctification. Pardon, atonement, and justification is not the final goal, but only the means and way whereby sanctification is made possible. God forgives our sin in order that we may be rid of sin" (dass wir aus der Suende kommen sollen). "Christ is our Redeemer because He has freed us not only from guilt and punishment but altogether from sin. Perfectly this is accomplished only in the life to come. . . . Christ has earned forgiveness of sin for us in order to make new men of us. In heaven we shall need no forgiveness, for we shall be like God. Not so do we become holy, as the enthusiasts say, that here we strip off all sin, but we teach, as St. John teaches: 'We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. . . . By our knowledge of God our sanctification is accomplished. As far as a man knows God, he is holy. Here we know Him only in part; therefore our sanctification is imperfect. In eternity our knowledge of God will be perfect, and there we shall be altogether holy. But our sanctification must begin here; otherwise we do not attain it in all eternity. He who dies without God is without God eternally. He who dies without grace is without grace eternally. He who dies without sanctification is full of sin eternally.'"

That is Scripture doctrine. Luke 1:74, 75: "That we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." That is the purpose for which Christ has delivered us from our enemies, sin, death, devil, hell, and the wrath of God, that we serve God in righteousness and holiness. Our sanctification is designated as aim and purpose of our redemption. The entire sixth

and eighth chapters of Romans have the purpose to impress upon us that Christ has redeemed us from guilt and punishment of sin to the end that we become new men, that the image of God, lost through sin, might be restored in us, here in time imperfectly, but increasingly; there in eternity perfectly. 2 Cor. 5:15: "He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again": Christ died to earn for all men grace, forgiveness of sin, the righteousness that avails before God. But that is not the final aim. The final aim is our salvation; and that embraces above all things this, that we get rid of that sin which separates us from God, that the divine image be restored in us and we again become like God. This is what Christ designed when He died for us. Eph. 2:10: "We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works." That is the purpose for which God has newly created us. Note that in this doctrine of grace good works occupy a more prominent place than in the doctrine of salvation by works; there they are only a means of exchange; here they are an end and purpose in themselves, for which Christ has redeemed us and God has made us new creatures. 1 Pet. 2:9: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." That's what the Church is for: to show forth, to reveal to men, the excellencies of the God whom we serve; by words, of course, but chiefly by our whole life. — Luther says (XVI:2241): "Christ is therefore Christ or has earned redemption from sin and death that the Holy Spirit should make us new men out of the Old Adam, that we should die to sin and live unto righteousness, as St. Paul teaches Rom. 6, this to begin and continue here on earth and reach perfection there. For Christ has earned for us not only *gratiam*, grace, but also *donum*, the gift of the Holy Ghost, that we should have not only forgiveness of sins but also ceasing from sin." Cp. XII:559.

So we close the circle. God made man perfect, in His own image. In His benevolence He prepared heaven and provided that man, after spending his appointed time on earth, should there live with Him in perfect bliss. Man crossed that design of God; he sinned. Then God in His grace resolved to redeem lost mankind. He laid their sins on His own Son, who atoned for them; and God said to man: Your sin is cancelled; here is the perfect righteousness acquired for you; take it. He who accepts it in faith is justified in God's sight; God is his reconciled Father; heaven is his home. Together with the kindling of that justifying faith, and at the same time, the Holy Spirit restores to man that spiritual life lost in the Fall; and at once the Christian begins to live the

life that Adam and Eve lived in Paradise; and while it is an up-hill struggle, in the end the new man prevails; the divine image restored, he enters the kingdom prepared for him from the foundation of the world.

Let us close with a few conclusions. Luther by the grace of God recognized what all previous reformers had overlooked or had passed by with a casual glance, that the real mystery of iniquity, the real abomination of desolation in the Church at that time, was the false doctrine of justification. When Erasmus, in selfish fear of losing his pensions, looked for a teaching of the Roman Church which he could defend with least violation of his conscience, picking free will and setting forth the Roman Pelagianism, Luther wrote: "Du bist mir an die Gurgel gefahren" — you have seized me by the throat. To this day the really vicious falsehood in the Roman Church is their false doctrine of justification, their condemnation of the Scripture doctrine of justification. That's the real mark of Antichrist. The reason why sectarian churches refuse to call the Pope the Antichrist is that they, too, have lost the pure doctrine of justification, teaching synergism, man's participation in justification, and so have become more or less close relatives of the Papacy. And the reason why even among Lutherans today there is some hesitation about calling the Pope the Antichrist is this, that they have lost the full appreciation of this cardinal doctrine of Christian truth. It is significant that today practically every history puts the so-called Catholic Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, on the same level with the Lutheran Reformation, that not a few of them echo the Roman plea: Too bad that Luther lost his temper and separated from the Roman Church; if he had only given them time, they would have worked out a reformation, as they did in the Council of Trent, without this sad split in the Church — when, as a matter of fact, the Council of Trent put its stamp of approval on every false doctrine of the Middle Ages and adopted only some mild resolutions for moral reform.

It is as necessary today to stress justification by faith alone in our preaching and writing as ever before. Let no preacher think it is easy and beneath his dignity and not doing justice to his learning ever again to reiterate these elementary truths; if you look closely, perhaps it is not so easy at all; and easy or not, it is essential. Let no hearer think that he knows it so well that he need not hear it again, that there is no need of his going to church if his pastor does not preach something more advanced. Perhaps not all people in the church are as wise as you; and perhaps, if you only look closely, you are not as wise as you imagine.

✠ We must continue to make justification the center of our

preaching. That alone can give us certainty of our salvation; only if you know that God justifies without any work, by faith alone in the merits of Christ, can you be sure that God is gracious to *you*. And only such preaching can produce true sanctification. Do not let it disturb you when people say, The Lutheran Reformation was a reformation of doctrine but not of life; in the Protestant sects there is more preaching on sanctification and good works; people are urged to act more than in the Lutheran Church, where there is more preaching about what God has done for man than what man should now do in obedience to God's will. Unless it is done rightly, it is taffy for your self-righteous Old Adam. And there is some one else behind it. Luther said: "Primarily, before all works, you hear the Word of God, wherein the Holy Spirit reproves the world of sin, John 16:9. After sin is recognized, you hear of God's grace in Christ. In the same Word comes the Spirit and gives faith wherever and whomever He will. Then begins the slaying (of Old Adam) and the cross and the works of love. Whoever proposes another order to you, do not doubt, it is the devil."

☛ Surely, we must preach sanctification. Because of the unending battle between the old and the new man in us we need the constant reminder that this fight is necessary, and we need instruction how this fight must be carried on and what it must produce. We must apply this personally to the individual and his life, exercise brotherly admonition and Christian discipline in the congregation. But above all we must see to it that sanctification proceeds from the right source. To produce good fruit, it will not do to dig around an old bad tree, to fertilize it and water it; you must plant a new tree. All the aim of our Lutheran preaching is to produce people who alone can bring forth good works, and this can be done only by the preaching of faith. No law can make people pious; you can't turn thieves into respectable men by putting them behind iron bars. Good works must be motivated by love and gratitude; and that is the result of the preaching of grace. That will open the fountain which without command will gush forth Christian virtues. Such preaching will not make people secure; on the contrary, this alone will lead them to be "careful to maintain good works," Titus 3:8, will lead them to do the will of God gladly and joyfully.

We close with Luther's eulogy on faith (Holman, VI, 451): "Faith is not that human notion and dream that some hold for faith. Because they see that no betterment of life and no good works follow it and yet they can hear and say much about faith, they fall into error and say, 'Faith is not enough; one must do works in order to be righteous and be saved.' This is the reason

that, when they hear the Gospel, they fall to . . . and make for themselves, by their own powers, an idea in their hearts which says, 'I believe.' This they hold for true faith. But it is a human imagination and idea that never reaches the depth of the heart, and so nothing comes of it and no betterment follows it. Faith, however, is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1); it kills the Old Adam and makes altogether different men in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Ghost. Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith; and so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them and is always at the doing of them. He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works, and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are though he talks and talks with many words about faith and good works. Faith is a living, daring confidence in God's grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God's grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and with all His creatures; and this is the work of the Holy Ghost in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to every one, to serve every one, to suffer everything, in love and praise of God, who has shown him this grace; and thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate heat and light from fire."

Through justification unto sanctification.—When the Lord today asks us, "Will ye also go away?" may He give us grace to answer with Peter, "Lord, whither shall we go? Thou hast words of eternal life."

THEO. HOYER

Luther: A Blessing to the English

I. "The Lutheran Invasion"

In the eighth century the English monk Winfrid came over to preach his Gospel to the Thuringians, was martyred for his pains, and became known to fame as St. Boniface, the Apostle of the Germans.

Eight hundred years later a German monk of that same Thuringia had a special love for the English for their work and made a return gift of his Gospel. The Catholic Joseph Clayton, an Oxford man, writes: "Luther, by his writings and through his disciples, brought the Protestant teaching to Great Britain, and from England and Scotland this Protestant teaching spread to North