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REGISTER OF ATTENDANCEPASTORAL

Bloedel, P. R.
 Cordes, A. J.
 Mehlberg, E. L.
 Mensing, H. D.
 Natterer, M. L.
 Schaefer, O. W.

REGISTER OF LAY DELEGATES

<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Delegates</u>
Peace Lutheran Church Tinley Park, Illinois	Lloyd Martin David T. Mensing
Christ Lutheran Church Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Kenneth Ahlmann Victor Bloedel
St. Stephen's Lutheran Church Wilmot, South Dakota	delegates excused
St. Luke's Lutheran Church Seattle, Washington	Paul F. Luedtke delegate excused
St. John's Lutheran Church Lebanon, Oregon	delegates excused
St. Paul's Lutheran Church Empire, Oregon	Ted D. Fischer delegate excused

VISITORS IN ATTENDANCE: 29

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE OPENING SERVICE

2.

By the Rev. H. David Mensing
Tinley Park, Illinois

1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."

In Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior, dearly beloved fellow Christians especially the pastors and delegates assembled for this Convention:

Christians, in one respect, are to be very peaceful individuals. Their Savior is called "the Prince of Peace" because He gives them peace with God through the forgiveness of their sins. They, too, are to show forth the fruit of that peace with in their hearts by being peace-makers among men. Concerning their brethren, with whom they Holy Spirit has united them in the one true faith, the admonition is given: "Endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." And concerning all their fellow men the Lord admonishes them: "If it be possible, as much as in you, lieth, live peaceably with all men." He has also commissioned them to preach peace to the children of men; for the crucified and risen Savior told them plainly: "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." "Preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

Yes, Christians are to be very peaceful and peace-loving people. Yet on the other hand, at the same time, they are to be fighters. This is very important also for us to bear in mind; for we have chosen as our convention motto or by-word: "Peace be unto you." And we are not to get an improper balance on account of that. We are not to become one-sided, or fanatic. That is, we are not just to pay attention to certain passages of Holy Scripture and ignore the others. We are not to cry "Peace! Peace! Where there is no peace." But, while we are indeed to be peaceful, peace-loving, and peace-makers; yet we are to remember that it is also our duty to fight. For no Godly peace was ever attained by giving in and surrendering to evil; it was attained only as the result of courageous and victorious fighting. Our Savior Himself had to fight and conquer the devil vicariously for us in order to give us His peace with God. And we, too, must fight against sin and error to establish true peace among men. We, too, must fight all our life long if we are not to lose the supreme prize of everlasting peace and joy in heaven which our Savior has given us.

Therefore the Lord Jesus, the Captain of our Salvation, also calls out to us today and tells us through His Apostle:

Fight the Good Fight of Faith!

I.

Notice, first of all, that this is not the kind of fight which characterizes the wicked and ungodly. It is not a fight occasioned by the evil within us, by anger, hatred, or a spirit of revenge. But this is a good fight, the fight of faith. Faith, the Christian faith, is a very good and important thing. It is the personal trust and confidence in Jesus Christ by which a sinner accepts the forgiveness of sins which He has merited and which is offered to all men in the Gospel. It is by faith in Christ that we "lay hold on eternal life." This faith is, moreover, a living and powerful thing, which, like a living and fruitful tree, brings forth the fruit of Christian virtues and good works in our lives. It is, furthermore, not something of our own making; it is not a work of sinful man, but it is the work of God's Holy Spirit; even as it is written: "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." Faith is therefore all in all a good and holy thing, and likewise also the fight of faith.

Fight the good fight of faith! Fight, by the very power of your faith 3. which God Himself gives you, so that you may not fall away but in the end still have hold on eternal life!

II.

Notice, secondly, why the fight of faith is so necessary that it calls forth this special admonition and command.

Have you not already laid hold on eternal life by faith in Jesus? Surely you have. Indeed, many of us, perhaps even most of us did so already in our infancy, in Holy Baptism. And particularly the people of our conference have already for many years been giving proof of their faith in Jesus by professing a good profession before many witnesses, striving under the weight of many tribulations and in the face of many temptations to the contrary still to hold fast to God's Word in its truth and purity. Yes, we Christians have already, by faith, laid hold on eternal life. But then why fight?

Ah, because the enemies of God are and will be, throughout our lives, all about us, trying to destroy our saving faith. There is, first of all, the devil himself, who "like a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." He is especially anxious to catch and claim the true Christians, because he already has the professed unbelievers and the hypocrites in his power. Then there is the wicked world, the godless, Christless world. It will try to destroy our faith by ridiculing us for being sincere Christians, conservative and orthodox Christians. It will tempt us to give much time and interest to material things but only little to our soul's salvation. Its enticing amusements will try to charm us. Its many false prophets will try to turn our hearts away from the True God and His Word. This is indeed the world's worst temptation of all. For, since it is God's Word by which the Holy Spirit keeps Christians in the faith, he who rejects that Word is already doubly the devil's. And the third enemy of our soul is our own sinful heart, the flesh, the Old Adam, the wicked nature within us, which the Apostle warns us is constantly warring against the spirit.

These three, beloved fellow Christians, are fighting with all their might to destroy our Christian faith and to break our hold on eternal life. That is why we cannot, no dare not, take our ease as Christians and go spiritually to sleep. We must fight the devil, the world, and our flesh.

Fight the good fight of faith! Lay hold, and keep hold, on eternal life!

III.

And, since we are to fight this good fight of faith, what is the weapon we are to use? Our dear Lord tells us: "Take unto you the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God."

That is the weapon which our Lord and Savior Himself victoriously used when He was tempted of the devil. When Satan came to tempt Him with the troubles of this life, Jesus answered him: "It is written," and quoted to him the appropriate passage of Scripture. When, in his cunning and craftiness, the devil, the King of False Prophets, quoted to Him a passage of Scripture but left out several words to change its meaning, Jesus answered him again: "It is written," and quoted to him another fitting word of God. And then, when Satan came to the Savior with the third temptation, offering Him all the glories of the world if He would but fall down and worship him, Jesus again wounded him, conquered him, and drove him away, as He again took up the Sword of the Spirit and countered him: "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written: Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Then the devil

leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him. (And may we remember, in the face of the seductive claims of neo-Lutheranism today, that Jesus included in His quotations against the devil passages on the so-called "non-fundamental doctrines" of the Bible.)

"Though devils all the world should fill,
All eager to devour us,
We tremble not, we fear no ill;
They shall not overpower us.
This world's Prince may still
Scowl fierce as he will;
He can harm us none;
He's judged, the deed is done,
One little word can fell him."

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be present for and give earnest heed to all the Divine services and devotions and the essay at this convention. And when you are home again, be untiringly faithful in your attendance at the House of God, also daily and diligently searching in the Scriptures, so that you may grow and be strengthened in grace, that you may well know your weapon against the devil and become ever more skillful in using it against his wicked attacks. "Take unto you the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God," your Lord and Savior pleads with you. "Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life!"

Amen.

And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.

SERMON DELIVERED AT THE SUNDAY SERVICE

5.

By the Rev. A. J. Cordes
 Empire, Oregon

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. The Text which has been chosen for this Sunday morning message is the twenty seventh verse of the fourteenth chapter of John where we read: "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU. LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID."

In Christ, dear Christian friends; On the pages of history, there are two scenes to which I would draw your attention. In the city of Jerusalem about 500 years before Christ, God's prophets were warning the people of God's impending wrath which was to come upon them from the north--from Babylon--for their disobedience. In other places in the city, false prophets went about the streets "slightly" patting every one on the backs saying, "Peace, peace." Jeremiah 6:14. The other scene takes place in the same city. Eleven men are hiding in a room. The door is bolted tight. They are afraid for their lives. Suddenly Jesus stands before them and says, "Peace be unto you." And this is the theme of our message this morning:

PEACE BE UNTO YOU

What does this mean? In the first place our text shows us that:

I. Jesus wants to spare us from the "peace" of this world.

A. Jesus says in our text, PEACE, I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU. It was the night before His crucifixion, when Jesus was with His twelve disciples in the upper room of a home in Jerusalem. Jesus had eaten the Passover Lamb with the disciples according to the Law of Moses. Luke 22:15,16. But very sadly, Jesus told them, "One of you which eateth with me shall betray me." Mark 14:18. Very plainly Jesus told the disciples, "Yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, you cannot come; so now I say to you." John 13:33.

This made them very sad. They were about to lose their leader and their friend. Peter, Thomas, and Philip could not understand where Jesus was going and why. Why were these disciples so confused after three years of teaching by the Son of God?

We see here how strong and powerful the flesh of man is. These disciples still had the hopes of the restoration of the Kingdom of David. Not even the Son of God through miracles and teaching overcame in them this spirit of nationalism. These disciples were materialists. They were still plainly looking for the peace of this WORLD. They were looking for the PEACE which THE WORLD GIVETH.

A week or so earlier before this night, James and John and their mother came to Jesus asking Jesus if they could have the two highest positions in His kingdom. Matthew 20:20ff. They could see that Jesus was becoming more and more popular with the people, and with the Passover approaching, they thought this would be a perfect time to take over the nation and drive out the Romans. The other disciples were angry at James and John but not for the right reason.

A month and a half later, while Jesus is leading the disciples to the Mount of Olives where He would ascend into the heavens, all the disciples asked Jesus, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" Acts 1:6.

See why these disciples were so unhappy when Jesus told them before His crucifixion that He would be taken from them? Their earthly, worldly hopes and aspirations of the Kingdom of David being restored to them, were crumbling around them

like the walls of Jericho.

6.

The worldly Jews and their own sinful hearts offered worldly peace, and material peace. Peace of this earth, they were learning (though it was hard for them to learn this lesson), is nothing but a fake and a fraud and will fade away.

The world gives PEACE in a certain deceptive way. It gives the promises of peace but it never keeps that promise. Even if the Kingdom of David had been restored and the Romans were chased back to Rome; would there be peace, that is, real peace and quiet, no injustices to the poor, prosperity for all? They forgot the many troubles which the nation suffered even through David, the revolt of Absalom, the deaths of their loved ones because David in pride and self reliance wanted to count his armies. 1 Chronicles 21:1ff. They forgot that there was little peace and justice for all even under Solomon. They forgot how he taxed them to build not only the temple, but his own house and palaces for his many wives. 1 Kings 12.

B. 1. The world today still offers the same economically peaceful utopia. Most every politician and every corrupt government offers peace and equality to everyone, as we now hear over and over again in this election year. And there is the promise of peace not only in this land, but world leaders offer peace between all nations. They say that if everyone just lets them have the reins of the government, they will steer all nations down the road to peace. They want all nations to give up their freedom so that they can rule as rulers. Look at the map of Europe and of Asia, where the offer of peace has been given to many nations who offered them material and earthly peace. They gave up their rights and their duties and obligations, and now almost two-thirds of the world has little or no peace of any material value.

Sometimes even we Christians think that worldly peace is possible and that we should accept the promises of those who say they can give us perfect peace and prosperity on this earth. When you and I or any person falls for the promise of complete earthly peace, no matter whether it comes from the most trusted, seemingly wise individual; we are plainly putting human reason above the Word of God.

Our Lord plainly tells us, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth; I came not to send peace, but a sword." Matthew 10:34. Jesus promised us, not earthly peace and worldly riches and great fame and fortune, but "Ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars. ... For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." Matthew 24:6,7. Does this sound as though we should look for earthly peace on earth?

2. The world also offers us peace if we will be indifferent to false doctrine. Just think of what happens when anyone of us accepts the offer of peace if we permit a little false doctrine to be taught. Then we lose the love of Jesus. We lose the pure Word of God. And we lose the eternal peace in eternal life. We Christians especially who have the truth now must be careful that we do not accept the offer of worldly peace in our homes and in our Conference. We Christians will always be tempted to say nothing against false doctrine in our Conference because we do not want to stir up trouble.

Friends in Christ, compromising peace is precisely the peace of the world which Jesus does not offer us, and from which Jesus would spare us.

3. Every Christian--and we all have experienced this and will experience this until our dying day--every Christian who leaves a heterodox Church body and joins another church body is tempted to do so for the sake of personal worldly peace. We all probably expected to find peace on this earth for ourselves and our families if we could only get out of a heterodox church body and start over again. And naturally, as happens with all earthly peace, it also for us crumbles like the walls of Jericho.

We become delusioned and remain delusioned until we recall the words of our text 7 which Jesus spoke to these worldly-minded disciples. Jesus says to you and to me always, "MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU: NOT AS THE WORLD GIVETH, GIVE I UNTO YOU."

All worldly peace fades away. The world promises peace, but it actually takes away peace. Our flesh promises peace and looks for a time on this earth when we will have no problems, but our earthly hopes are not and never can be really satisfied in this world.

Just as Jesus wanted to spare and correct these disciples' delusions of earthly peace and false hopes of worldly tranquillity, so Jesus does not, on this Sunday morning, offer you and me bliss upon this earth. Jesus neither offers nor gives us promises of peace which will last but for a moment. Jesus is not that cruel at all. Rather, secondly:

II. Jesus offers to us His peace.

A. Jesus says to His disciples, "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU." What is Jesus' peace which He offers to us and His disciples?

First, Jesus' PEACE comes from God. God is called the "God of peace." Romans 15:33. And again we are told, "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace." 1 Corinthians 14:33. Without God or His Word, there could be no peace upon this earth. Ignore God's Word, reject His truth, despise His commandments, and you and I have no peace. Look around you and see what little peace is in the worldly hearts of any human being.

Why is it that if we ignore God's Word, we have no peace? Why is there no peace on this earth except that which comes from God? It is because of our wicked hearts which by nature are estranged from God. Without God's Word, our hearts mutter as they wish. We have no hope of controlling them. Wickedness of all sorts, adulteries, fornications, stealing, murders, hatred, quarreling proceed from even our own hearts. And without God's peace, we would be as the worldlings of this world. The truth is: There is no peace without God, because we are sinful and prone only to sin and shame. As Paul also says, "I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing." Romans 7:18.

B. Now how can Jesus give the peace of God to us? Somehow, if we are to have the PEACE of Jesus, the peace of God must be given or offered to us. We know by nature, that God should punish us for each and every sin. How does God give us peace and turn His just wrath from us?

The Scriptures say, "And, having made peace through the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself." Colossians 1:20. God took the initiative. God, on His own, took the first step. We could not make friends with God, so God tries to make us His friends. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." 2 Corinthians 5:19.

How did God make friends with us so that He no longer needed to charge our sins to us? The Scriptures said before, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross." Friends in Christ, it took the bloody crucifixion of the innocent Son of God upon the cross of Calvary to make it possible for God to be at peace with us.

Jesus was saying to these disciples, when He said, PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU, "I am about to die for your sins and make it possible for you to enter eternal life. I am about to make it possible for you to experience the eternal peace which God has promised you throughout the Scriptures."

Jesus told His disciples, even though they were now weak in this faith, "Now

ye are clean through the Word which I have spoken unto you." John 15:3. Jesus 8. told them, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing." John 15:5.

C. Jesus offers you and me the same peace. "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU, MY PEACE I GIVE UNTO YOU." I give you forgiveness of sins. I give you eternal life. You need look for no peace in your earthly life. My peace does not pass away with the world. My peace will last forever and ever." Jesus says, "Thou art mine. You are bought with a price." 1 Corinthians 6:20.

Jesus says, "Peace be unto you." What will we do with Jesus' peace? What will we do with the peace of God, which Jesus offers to you and me?

III. Jesus wants us to profit by His peace.

A. We read, "LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED, NEITHER LET IT BE AFRAID." Jesus did not like to see His dear disciples worried and confused. He did not want to see them hiding for their lives as they did after He was crucified. He did not want to see them running away like sheep without a shepherd when He was captured in the garden. He tried to warn them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night." Matthew 26:31. But these disciples did not listen to Jesus' warning and they did not accept Jesus' offer of peace until after Easter Sunday morning. Each time Jesus showed Himself to them, His first words that came from His lips were, "Peace be unto you." Still they were frightened. He had to eat before them before they would calm down and relax with Him in their presence. So they did not have peace, not because Jesus did not offer it to them, but because they did not accept Jesus' peace.

B. How do we get this peace of God which Jesus offers to us? How do we get forgiveness of sins and eternal life? The Scriptures answer, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God." Romans 5:1. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:31. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." Mark 16:16.

Do you believe on Jesus as your Savior, then you are profiting from the peace which Jesus offers to you. You have peace with God. You know that Jesus will take you to heaven.

How will you keep this peace which Jesus gives us through faith? Scripture answers, "But to be spiritually minded is life and peace." Romans 8:6. Do not look for peace on earth, but be satisfied with the peace that Jesus gives you. Look forward to perfect peace in heaven. Do not try to lay up for yourselves treasures here on earth where moth and rust doth corrupt. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Keep your eyes on Jesus and the goal of eternal life.

C. But you ask, "What about the trials and troubles of this earth? Is there no peace, no help in these trials? Oh, yes. When Jesus says, "PEACE I LEAVE WITH YOU," Jesus is also talking about a type of earthly peace which makes it possible for us to accept all trials and tribulations and troubles of this life as loving chastenings of the Lord. When you and I accept the peace of eternal life, Jesus also gives us the power to accept and face our troubles in this life. Jesus' peace makes it possible for us Christians to die like Stephen, who prayed for those who stoned him to death. Acts 7:60. In every trial and in every trouble, Jesus is with us. He promises that He will let no suffering or trial be too great for us to bear. 1 Cor. 10:13.

What will Jesus use to keep your heart peaceful? The Psalmist says, "Great peace have they which love Thy law: and nothing shall offend them." Psalm 119: 165. And Jesus says no less when He says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His right-

eousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33. Hear the 9. Word of God faithfully from your faithful pastor. Study Jesus' Word faithfully in your homes. Obey God's Word while trusting in your Savior who died for you, and you will always have the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and God will keep your hearts and minds in faith in Christ Jesus. God cannot ~~fail~~ a single promise to which you and I hold him.

D. Now friends, there is one other thing you and I are to do with this peace. The peace which Jesus has left for us, He offers to the whole world. For He died for all. Jesus wants the whole world to profit by His Peace. That is where Jesus wanted His disciples to come in.

But how could they give Jesus' peace to anyone else, when they did not accept Jesus' peace themselves? After Pentecost, they used the boldness which the Holy Spirit gave them. And they and the lay-Christians shared the PEACE of Jesus with others. It cost them money, it cost them their property in many cases, and in many cases it cost them their lives. Jesus expected this of them. Jesus expected them to share their PEACE with others until and through death if necessary.

If you really have the peace of Jesus in your hearts, you also have the will to speak of Jesus' peace which He offers to the whole world. If you have the peace of God in your heart through faith in Jesus the crucified, then you want to tell others who are in darkness and without peace, that Jesus offers them peace too. You will want to tell them, even if they might ridicule you, that lasting peace, eternal peace comes only from Jesus. You will want to tell them that only those who believe on Jesus have this peace. Will you not share your peace of Jesus with your neighbors?

May the God of all hope fill you completely with all joy and peace in believing. Peace be unto you. Amen.

And now may the peace of God which passeth all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

P R E S I D E N T I A L R E P O R T

10.

Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Concordia Lutheran Conference
Tinley Park, Illinois
June 19 - 21, 1964

"Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John 20,21) These are the words which were addressed to His disciples by our crucified and risen Lord, Jesus Christ, the Savior and Head of His Church. Let them be the keynote of this convention assembled here at Peace Evangelical Lutheran Church. For, without that peace which the Savior established between God and sinful mankind by His vicarious atonement and which He freely offers to all the world through the Holy Spirit by the Gospel and Sacraments, we could not have endured the burdens and trials of our work during the past conference year; no, we could not have been busy with His work at all, for His work is all centered about the preaching and teaching of His peace; nor could we have continued to strive more and more for peaceful and harmonious relations of the proper kind in our dealings with one another and still others outside of our own midst; for His peace and the Word by which that peace is preached is the only source of God-pleasing peace among men.

It is therefore most important that we bear these facts in mind throughout our convention and also when we return to our various homes and congregations, so that we may be comforted and strengthened for our labors, that we may truly know and understand what the work of Christ's Kingdom is here on earth, and that we may strive ever better to reflect the Savior's peace in our dealings with each other and all our fellow men. "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Since the last annual convention of our Conference, four meetings were held by the Board of Directors, upon whom are incumbent the general management and supervision of all the business affairs of the Conference in accordance with the Constitution, By-Laws, and other resolutions of the Conference. Your president, who planned and presided over these meetings, sincerely appreciates all the cooperation and support extended him by the Vice-President, the other officers, and the members of the Board generally. By the gracious help of God all of the matters resolved upon at the last convention were either executed in full or, having been studied and worked on, will be presented anew to this convention with recommendations for appropriate action.

It is especially praiseworthy to God that, during the past year, the congregations of our Conference were enabled to continue the establishment and support of our Seminary and to continue both in their willingness and ability to grant the needed financial subsidy to the congregation at Seattle, Washington. These two will also be among the most important projects requiring our earnest and prayerful attention at this present convention.

The detailed work of the past conference year as well as those matters incumbent upon us at this convention will be laid before us by the various officers, committee chairmen, and recommendations of the Board of Directors. It is therefore not the purpose of your president to take time now to overlap upon these various matters. As the agenda indicates, there is very much work to be done in these three convention days. We would therefore first of all earnestly request our various officers and others reporting to have their reports carefully prepared and ready for presentation, so that the agenda schedule can be adhered to as closely as possible. And, to this end, let us in all our discussions express ourselves sufficiently on the one hand, but on the other, let us carefully weigh our thoughts and words and guard against any unnecessary repetition. Let us, as far as possible and feasible, speak only to the question at hand, thus helping to expedite the efficient progress of our business. And may the Lord of the Church graciously grant His blessing to all that we do, say, and think!

The Lord's blessings are, of course, given to us in and through the 11. Means of Grace—God's Word and Sacrament. It is therefore the Godly practice among us that the convention sessions be interspersed with divine services, devotions, a doctrinal essay, and the Sunday service with the preaching of the Gospel and the administration of Holy Communion. We therefore solemnly urge everyone at this convention to be present for, to pay close attention to, and in every way fully to partake of these Means of Grace, comfort, and strength.

It is also of necessity that, this year, there be a note of sadness incorporated into your president's report. This is of necessity because, while, personally, he would rather dispense with such things entirely, it is nevertheless required of him constitutionally that he report at the annual conventions the administration of his office. He could therefore not conceivably dispense with the most brief, objective, and charitably intended mention of matters which occupied very much of his time, energy, and brotherly concern during the greater part of this conference year. Moreover, in the faithful administration of his office, which requires him constitutionally "to see to it, within the limitations of Article VI, that the Constitution and subsequent resolutions of the Conference are carried out, and, in particular, personally to lead the Conference in guarding its confessional position and in stemming public offense," he dare not fail to warn most solemnly against certain attitudes and actions contrary to the clear Word of God and good order which, with but a few brief times of exception, have continued throughout the years of our Conference's existence to rise up ever and again in one or more individuals at a time, and which have been an unquestionable hindrance to the free course of the Gospel and the progress of our conference work generally. During the past winter this condition retarded the work of your Board particularly in the matter of Lutheran union, the expediting of memorials from last year's convention, and the planning of this present convention.

This trouble, which is also mentioned in the Minutes of the Board, to which our congregations have access, may be described very simply as non-cooperation; more analytically, as the failure to distinguish between positive, conscientious leadership and synodical tyranny; and the failure to distinguish between the free use of Christian liberty and the loving restraint of it in corporate cooperation. It is in essence, though not in degree, the same trouble that, reaching a climax, disrupted the peace and seriously threatened the very existence of our body at the convention in 1961 during the presidency of another brother. The Scriptural and constitutional principles involved in it were set forth in the February issue of our Conference periodical in "Our President's Column", so that all of us might have timely warning against what has continued to be a grave besetting fault among us.

What the devil injected into our midst as a note of sadness has, however, under the gracious hand of God, been turned into a note of gladness; even as the Apostle James writes: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience." We thank our God that this latest trouble was finally brought to a settlement at the time of our spring Board Meeting. And, because of this, it is not our intention now to go further into any details of it nor to mention any person or persons connected therewith. We would indeed beseech all our brethren not to delve or pry into such details.

On the other hand, however, we must all be most concerned about the principles; we must study them more carefully as they are set forth in Scripture and our Constitution, grow strong in them, and strive with the Lord's help to follow them not permitting the same trouble to arise among us again. For, should this repeat itself further in time to come, it could surely put an end to the unity with which the Lord has blessed us and harm the cause of God's Truth for which we are bonded together in cooperative work in this organization; even as our Savior warns: "Every kingdom

divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a 12. house falleth." Luke 11,17.

"But now, thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior." (Is. 43, 1-3.) How wonderful, that amidst all our trials and tribulations, our work and duty in the Kingdom of God on earth, we have such comforting and strengthening words of our God! How perfectly wonderful that, at this very time of our convention, as the Lord challenges us through His Apostle: "Fight the good fight of faith!", He at the same time comforts and also strengthens and rejoices our Hearts with His most precious Gospel assurance: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14, 26. 27) With such promises, let us launch out now upon the work of this Convention, under the banner of our Lord and Savior, the Captain of our Salvation, and the Prince of Peace: "Peace be unto you; as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." (John 20, 21)

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. H. David Mensing, President

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE TO REVIEW THE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

We have found the Presidential Report to be factual and edifying. We also express our deep appreciation to President Mensing for his labors and the burdens he had to carry as the President of our Conference.

In grateful recognition of his services this committee recommends that we offer our thanks to the Lord of the Church by rising and singing the Common Doxology.

Rev. M. L. Natterer

Mr. Paul F. Luedtke

Mr. E. P. Bloedel

THE SCRIPTURAL RELATION BETWEEN JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

13.

Essay by Rev. P. R. Bloedel
Seattle, Washington

Dear brethren:

Inasmuch as I was asked to prepare this essay only a few weeks prior to our convention and inasmuch as the topic itself is one of such tremendous magnitude I must appeal to you in all humility to give charitable consideration and a lenient Christian judgment to the inadequacies of this presentation. This essay has to do with a subject the perversion of which has caused numerous sects to arise in external Christendom and has brought about divisions and offenses even in the so-called Lutheran camp. Yet it is a subject which is so plainly and so thoroughly set forth in the sacred Scriptures that it requires no intensive exegetical study on the basis of the original languages to make its consideration profitable and edifying. In order, however, properly to present the Scriptural Relation Between Justification and Sanctification a good understanding of the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is imperative.

Every Lutheran communicant member should be able to identify the Law as those passages of Scripture which tell us how we are to be, what we are to do and not do; which show us our sins and the wrath of God over against sin. And every Lutheran communicant should be able to identify the Gospel as those portions of Scripture which tell us the good news of our salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, which teach what our God has done and is still doing for our salvation; which show us our Savior and God's grace. Every Lutheran communicant member should recognize the fact that the Law must be preached to all people especially to the impenitent sinners and that the Gospel must be preached to those who are troubled in their minds because of their sins. This is what is set forth in our Small Catechism, pages 42 and 43.

Dr. Walther points out that Law and Gospel differ: 1) with regard to the manner in which they are revealed to men, the Law having been originally written into man's heart and consequently not altogether unfamiliar to man, and the Gospel being made known to man only through an act of the Holy Spirit who inspired its message and who revealed to man that which it would have been impossible for man to discover; 2) with regard to their respective contents, the Law speaks about our works and the Gospel about the works of God; the Law issues commands and demands and the Gospel makes offers, and bestows gifts; 3) with regard to their respective promises, the Law promises salvation only on the basis of certain conditions, namely, that we fulfill the Law perfectly, and the Gospel promises grace and salvation freely, completely and unconditionally; 4) with regard to threats, the Law contains nothing but threats while the Gospel contains no threats at all but only comfort and consolation; 5) with regard to the respective effects of these two doctrines, the Law increases the desire to sin, hurls man into despair, uncovers sin and produces contrition but offers no comfort while the Gospel actually produces saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, removes terror, fear and anguish and fills the heart with peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, requires and demands nothing but gives all, plants love into man's heart and gives him the power to perform works pleasing to God; 6) with regard to the persons to whom either the one doctrine or the other must be preached, the Law is to be preached to secure sinners and the Gospel to alarmed sinners.

It is important to remember that every passage in the Bible is either Law or Gospel or may contain both Law and Gospel or serves the Law or serves the Gospel or may serve both. Both Law and Gospel are necessary for man's salvation for without the Law there can be no Gospel and without the Gospel the Law cannot benefit us. Therefore, although the Law and Gospel are direct opposites they nevertheless work together in the most perfect harmony for the eternal salvation of man.

It will become increasingly evident, as we continue on in this essay, 14. how the proper distinction between Law and Gospel is vitally important for the purpose of establishing and applying the Scriptural relation between Justification and Sanctification.

I will proceed in the treatment of this subject by briefly presenting

- I. What the Bible teaches about Justification;
- II. What the Bible teaches about Sanctification;
- III. The Relation between Justification and Sanctification by means of comparison, contrast and application.

May God the Holy Ghost bless the consideration of His Word . . .

I.

A clear understanding of the Scriptural doctrine of Justification cannot be attained without first having a knowledge of our Savior's Redemptive Work. A study of what the Bible teaches about Justification will naturally lead a person into the study of what the Bible teaches about our redemption.

We are taught by God from Holy Writ that since the fall of Adam the whole human race was subject to the wrath of God and eternal damnation and that no man could reconcile God (i.e., no man could bring about a peaceful relationship between God and man) by making amends for his sins, by avoiding sin in thought, word and deed, and by performing the works required of mankind in God's Law. It was, still is, and always will be impossible for man to bring about his salvation. The guilt of our first parents' deliberate transgression of God's command was charged to all people. St. Paul writes: "By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom. 5:17, and again: "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," Rom. 5:19. All people as they are born into this world are not able to perform anything pleasing to God, they are capable only of doing that which is evil and wicked in God's sight, they are enemies of God, unable to earn salvation for themselves or to merit the grace and mercy of God. Scripture teaches that "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not," Eccl. 7:20, and "there is none that doeth good, no not one," Ps. 14:3.

All people, then, by nature are under the bondage of sin! All people, because of sin, are by nature hopelessly indebted to God; they are infected with guilt; deserving of eternal punishment from their mother's womb; permeated and saturated with sin and unrighteousness. With man redemption is impossible!

But with God the redemption of mankind was not an impossibility. Already in the Garden of Eden God promised a Redeemer Gen. 3:15, and "when the fulness of the time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law to redeem them that were under the Law," Gal. 4:4,5; to "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," 1 Cor. 15:57; to "abolish death," 2 Tim. 1:10; to "destroy the works of the devil," 1 John 3:8; to "bear our sins," 1 Pet. 2:24, and to "redeem us from the curse of the Law," Gal. 3:13.

All that Jesus did in His active obedience and all that He suffered in His passive obedience; His perfect righteousness and His bitter suffering and death; His perfect fulfilment of the Law and His bearing of the Law's curse, was for us and for all people that He might stand before God as our Substitute, having rendered full and complete satisfaction to God's justice for all mankind. This is REDEMPTION! It is described by Luther in the words: "I believe that Jesus Christ.....has redeemed me a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and from the power of the devil, not with gold or silver but with His holy precious blood, and by His innocent suffering and death."

JUSTIFICATION, on the other hand, is spoken of by Luther in his explanation

to the third article of the Apostles' Creed where we read that "God daily and richly forgives all sins." Justification naturally follows redemption. As naturally as the cancellation of a debt follows the payment of the bill. Justification is the result of redemption just as in court an acquittal and freedom is the result of an establishment of innocence. Thus, in Redemption Jesus has bought us back; in Justification God gives us the credit, In Redemption Jesus has born our guilt; in Justification God declares us free from guilt. In Redemption Jesus has suffered our punishment; in Justification God declares us free from punishment. In Redemption Jesus overcame Satan for us; in Justification God declares us free from the devil's accusations. In Redemption Jesus took upon Himself our sins; in Justification God declares us holy. In Redemption Jesus kept the Law perfectly for us and in our stead; in Justification God declares us righteous. Our justification is therefore brought about in and through and because of our Savior's work of Redemption.

Modernistic theology insists that the righteousness of one cannot be transferred to another but that which the modernists insist cannot be done is plainly taught in the Bible as having been done, namely, that God ascribes Christ's righteousness to us and to all people; that He does not charge our sins against us but forgives them for Christ's sake and declares the whole world righteous as the result of our Savior's redemption of all lost and condemned mankind. We call this general or objective justification and such an objective justification of all people is plainly set forth in such passages as 2 Cor. 5:19 which reads: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them," Rom. 5:18, 19 where we read: "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so 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 (oi polloi) be made righteous," and again in Rom. 3:23,24 we read: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," and in the 30th verse of this third chapter of Romans God is spoken of as one who "justifieth the ungodly." Justification is therefore a judicial or forensic act of God through which He pronounces the forgiveness of sins upon all people and declares the whole world righteous through Christ.

And as our Savior's work of redemption was an act of God's grace alone so also the justification of the sinner is brought about only by the unmerited or undeserved grace and favor of God through the sacrifice of His Son. And so only by God's grace for Christ's sake is the justification of all people.

But the objective justification of the whole world does not mean that now every individual person will be taken to heaven because God has declared the whole world righteous and has forgiven the sins of the whole world in Christ. In fact the very opposite is the case according to the Word of God! Comparatively few, a "little flock" (Luke 12:32) will rejoice in the blissful presence of God into all eternity. The vast majority of mankind will writhe with the devil and his angels in everlasting misery and torment. In the light of objective or general justification it is therefore correct to say that even the damned in hell enter that place of eternal anguish with their sins forgiven but which fact they did not accept and consequently fall under the condemnation of that Word of God which says: "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark 16:16.

Personal, individual or subjective justification by which a person is saved requires acceptance of the fact that in Christ God has declared all people righteous. If there were no objective justification an individual would forever be in doubt as to whether or not his sins are actually forgiven. But since God assures us that He has forgiven the sins of the whole world in Christ every person has that upon which he can firmly base his faith and be certain of the fact that also are his sins forgiven, that the righteousness of Christ is imputed or accredited also to him and that in Christ God has also declared him free from sin, death, the power of the devil and

eternal condemnation. "Therefore we conclude," writes the Apostle Paul, "that 16. a man is justified by faith," Rom. 3:28. and such justifying faith is an act which is humanly impossible, which is not a work of the Law, but a creation of God in the human heart through the power of the Gospel.

We are then justified alone by God's grace, for Christ's sake, through faith without any works, merits, or conditions of our own. In Ephesians 2:8,9, we read: "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast." Commenting on this passage, Dr. Walther says: "This sounds as if the apostle felt that he was not saying enough to keep men from being led astray into self-righteousness. First he says: 'By grace are ye saved'; next, he adds 'through faith' lest some one think he had achieved this feat by his faith, the apostle continues: 'and that not of yourselves.' Whence, then is it? 'It is the gift of God'; and to head off any thought of a person's own merit, he adds: 'not of works,' such as a person's love, or charity, would be. He winds up with the statement: 'Lest any man should boast.' . . . Whoever imagines that there is a little glory that he may claim as his own is still without faith that justifies, is still blind, and is not walking in the way of salvation, but is headed straight for perdition." (Walther, Law and Gospel, pp.224 and 225.) We have no righteousness of our own but we do have that righteousness which God credits to us by faith in Jesus as our Savior. How plainly the Apostle Paul teaches this when he says: "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 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," Phil. 3:8,9. Again in Romans 4:5 the Apostle Paul discounts works altogether and establishes personal justification by faith, for there we read: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." And we must be careful not to regard faith as a work because of which we are justified, as though some good quality in our faith merits righteousness and salvation. The Bible simply speaks of faith as that which receives the grace of God and the merits of Christ. To be saved by faith means to be saved without works, by God's grace alone, for Christ's sake. Personal justification by grace is justification by faith, and justification by faith is justification by grace. The one must necessarily include the other as St. Paul writes in Romans 4:16, "Therefore it is of faith that it might be by grace." On the other hand works are always excluded and are set in opposition to faith and grace, for example, "by faith, without the deeds of the Law" (Rom. 3:28); "by grace...through faith; ... not of yourselves,...not of works," (Eph. 2:8,9); "knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ," (Gal. 2:16). "If by grace, then it is no more of works," St. Paul writes, "otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace; otherwise work is no more work," (Rom. 11:6).

Inasmuch as faith does not justify because of its quality, it goes without saying that a weak faith obtains the same righteousness, the same justification, the same forgiveness of sins as does a strong faith. Everything, however, depends on the OBJECT of faith; everything depends on what faith receives or apprehends. The only true faith, the only saving faith, the only justifying faith has but ONE object and this one object which such faith receives is designated in Scripture by various expressions, such as, faith in Jesus Christ, faith in God, faith in Christ's righteousness, faith in Christ's blood and death, faith in the resurrection of Christ, faith in the Gospel, and the like. But no matter by what terms the object of faith is described in Scripture, it always remains the same, namely, justification or the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake. And it is this faith alone which makes a person a Christian, not his orthodoxy or heterodoxy, not the strength or the weakness of his faith, not his excellent or deficient knowledge of the Bible and its teachings, not his virtues or his vices. All true Christians believe that God forgives their sins by His grace, for Christ's sake, without any merit of their own. Thus Luther writes: "The faith that we obtain the forgiveness of sins solely for Christ's sake by

faith has been the faith of the Fathers and prophets and all saints from the beginning of the world; and it has been the doctrine and teaching of Christ and the Apostles, who were commissioned to spread it in all the world. And it is to this day, and will be to the end, the unanimous understanding and voice of the whole Christian Church, which always in one mind and with one accord has confessed and fought for this article, that only in the name of the Lord Jesus forgiveness of sins is obtained and received. And in this faith they have been justified before God and saved." (St. L. XII:495f.) (Quoted in Pieper, Vol. II, p. 518.)

II.

As the doctrine of justification treats of the Christian's faith so the doctrine of sanctification (in the narrower sense) treats of the Christian life.

In the wider sense the word, sanctification, is used in the Bible with reference to the entire work of the Holy Ghost which includes calling us by the Gospel; bringing us to faith (conversion or regeneration), renewing our hearts and lives, keeping us in the true faith, renewing the image of God in us completely and perfectly on Judgment Day. Sanctification in the wider sense, therefore, also includes justification. The word "sanctification" is used or referred to in the wider sense in the following passages: 2 Thess. 2:13, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth"; 1 Pet. 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ"; 1 Cor. 6:11 "But ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God"; Ephesians 5:25,26. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word"; Heb. 10:10, "We are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." Thus it is clear that the word sanctification is at times used in Scripture in a wide sense which included everything that the Holy Ghost works in us.

At other times, however, and perhaps more frequently the word sanctification or a synonymous expression is used in the Bible to designate the new spiritual nature (the new man) which is created in the believer and the good works which flow from this new spiritual nature. As a direct result of justifying faith the heart of an individual (out of which, by nature, proceeds evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornication, thefts, false witness, blasphemies, Matt. 15:19) is renewed, and because of such renewal the Christian begins to avoid sin and perform works pleasing to God. This we refer to as sanctification in the narrow sense. It is spoken of in such passages as 1 Thess. 4:3-7 where we read: "This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication . . . that no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter . . . for God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness"; 1 Thess. 5:23, "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly"; 1 Thess. 3:12, 13, "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end He may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God"; 2 Cor. 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"; Eph. 4:24, "Put on the new man which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." In this manner the Bible speaks of a sanctification which refers specifically to the renewed spiritual nature of the Christian and the good works which flow forth from this new man. This is sanctification in the narrower sense and it is this sanctification which our topic treats when we consider the Scriptural relation between justification and sanctification. We will then proceed to discuss more thoroughly sanctification in the narrow sense.

When the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel, causes a person to believe that his sins are forgiven by grace alone, for Christ's sake, through faith, a new spiritual

nature is created. This new spiritual nature is spoken of in the Bible as the 18. "new man", the "spirit" or the "inward man" as distinguished from the old sinful nature which is spoken of in the Bible as the "old man", the "old Adam," the "outward man," the "body of sin," or the "flesh." According to the new man a Christian's will agrees perfectly with the will of God. St. Paul writes: "I delight in the Law of God after the inward man," Rom. 7:22. As far as the new man is concerned a Christian is perfectly holy. St. Paul writes in Romans 6:11, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God." In his life here on earth a Christian, however, still has his sinful nature, the old Adam, which is corrupt, under the rule of sin, in whom dwelleth no good thing, and which engages in a constant struggle against the new man. In Gal. 5:17 we read: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit." Sanctification is then brought about in this way that a Christian, according to his new spiritual nature, prevails over the sinful wishes and conduct of his old Adam. In sanctification there is a putting off of the old man and a putting on of the new man, as St. Paul describes it in Eph. 4:22-24; there is a conquering of the temptations of the devil, the world and the flesh; there is an overcoming of the works of the flesh, of the sins which so easily beset us, of our pet sins and vices.

In sanctification there is constant development and growth, but this growth in holiness will continue to remain imperfect for the Christian in this life. There will remain with the Christian until the end of his life here on earth his sinful flesh with its evil desires and lusts. Only in heaven will perfect holiness be attained. But until then a Christian must grow in sanctification for if a Christian refuses to go forward in his personal battle against sin, if he refuses to increase his efforts in the performance of those things which are pleasing to God, he denies his Christianity. Dr. Walther writes: "As in nature, so in the Kingdom of Grace there is no standing still. The Christian who refuses to go forward does not only not stand still, as he supposes, but in reality is going backward. As a child when it stops growing is sick and a tree when it stops sprouting is nearing death, so a Christian is spiritually sick and on the verge of spiritual death if he does not grow in divine knowledge, in newness of life, and in zeal unto good works." (Sermon Illustrations, p. 373) It is correct then to say: "If I am not a better Christian today than I was yesterday, and tomorrow than I am today, then I must take heed lest I have fallen from grace and am no longer a child of God." As it is natural for a child to take nourishment and to grow, so it is natural that we "as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby," (1 Peter 2:2).

In order that we might not boast of our progress or growth in sanctification as though we ourselves must deserve the credit for our Christian life of obedience to the will of the Lord, we must never lose sight of the fact that it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, Phil. 2:13. God must give us the willingness and the power to conquer sin and to persevere in good works. In the Thorough Declaration of the Formula of Concord we read that "the converted man does good to such an extent and so long as God by His Holy Spirit rules, guides, and leads him, and that as soon as God would withdraw His gracious hand from him, he could not for a moment persevere in obedience to God." (Triglotta, p. 907) Even every good thought which enters a Christian's mind must be traced to God as its Author, for the Apostle Paul writes: "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Cor. 3:5) Therefore when the Christian fights against the devil, the world and his flesh; when he confesses his sins with heartfelt contrition; when he joyfully praises and glorifies the name of his precious Redeemer; when he pours out his heart in prayer before the Lord; when he is given to hospitality and is eager to help his neighbor; when he is filled with zeal for the work of the Lord; when he exercises loving patience with his fellowmen; when he gives liberally and cheerfully for the extension of Christ's Kingdom; when he gathers his children around him for family devotion; when he gladly hears and learns God's Word-- All of these and innumerable other beautiful virtues are created in us, strengthened in us and developed in us by the Holy Ghost.

And the Holy Ghost does this not by means of the Law but by the Gospel, for only the Gospel, continuously, throughout the Christian's life, spells death for the old sinful nature and gives strength and power to the new man. (Rom. 8: 10; 2 Cor. 3:6) Only by means of the Gospel is the Christian enabled to do good works and avoid that which is evil. St. Paul writes: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, (by the Gospel), that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," Rom. 12: 1. The Christians are "created in Christ Jesus unto good works," Eph. 2:10. The only thing which is able to create the love of God in us is the fact that "He first loved us," 1 John 4:19, and this ought also to motivate us to "love one another," 1 John 4:11.

The Law, however, has its place in sanctification. Since the old Adam is always inclined to minimize sin, the Christian must constantly be reminded of his sinfulness and damnable nature by the Law, for where the knowledge of sin has ceased there also faith ceases to exist and the Gospel, which alone produces sanctification, ceases to be effective. Because of his old Adam the Christian is inclined to follow his own ideas as to what is pleasing or displeasing to God. He is, therefore, constantly in need of the Law to show him how God would have him to be, and what God would have him to do and not do. But the Law does not furnish the power or ability to obey its precepts. Only the Holy Ghost, who is given and received, not through the Law, but through the preaching of the Gospel renews the heart and sanctifies the life of the Christian.

We have stated before that it is impossible for a Christian to attain perfect righteousness of life here on earth. (Phil 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:15) In this respect however it is important to emphasize the fact that God nevertheless requires of the believers PERFECT sanctification. This is set forth so strongly in Scripture that there are those who teach that a complete and perfect sanctification is attainable in this life, but such a notion cannot be held in the heart of a Christian who must daily ask God for the forgiveness of his sins and is even taught so in the Lord's Prayer. The Roman Church even teaches that there are certain individuals who have more holiness than they need for themselves and that their surplus holiness which they call "works of supererogation" are included in the treasury of the church and may be sold or dispensed to others through the church. But the Bible denounces such perfectionism as deception and a gross lie. Scripture tells us: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us," 1 John 1:8, and in still stronger language, Scripture declares: "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us," 1 John 8:10.

But as perfectionism is an evil and wicked teaching so also just as evil and just as wicked is an attitude of indifference toward sanctification which is found in the hearts of many who call themselves Christians. They want to be known as followers of Jesus but do not want to walk in His ways. They want to follow Christ and at the same time they want to follow the world and its allurements. But God says to all such: "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 ye not therefore partakers with them," Eph. 5:5-7. "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," Math. 6:24. "So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple," Luke 14:33. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me," Matt. 16:24. O, may we then never excuse ourselves for our neglect of sanctification, for our indifference with regard to following the Word of the Lord. It is God's will and the will of every true Christian earnestly and persistently to strive after perfection. God wants us to be fruitful, not merely in some, but in ALL good works, "that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work," the Apostle writes in Col. 1:10. Again in Phil. 4:8 we read: "Whatsoever

things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, think on these things." Christians are therefore earnestly admonished in Scripture to abound in sanctification, in every good word and work, in the work of the Lord, in the knowledge of God, in all patience and longsuffering, in the love of the brethren and of all people, in doing those things which please the Lord. And in order to abound in sanctification a Christian must not take this matter lightly but must severely discipline himself, even as St. Paul writes: "I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," 1 Cor. 9:27.

The more earnestly a Christian strives for perfection, the more conscious he becomes of his sins, frailties and failings, and the more diligently he acknowledges his sins before God, and the more he rejoices in the grace of God which is not dependent upon the good works of the Christian. Here the proper separation between Law and Gospel is extremely vital for on the one hand the Christian must be fully assured of God's grace and salvation and on the other hand he must require of himself perfection in sanctification. And since the Christian's life is motivated by the Gospel and not by the Law he renews, every day, his struggle to attain perfect sanctification to rid himself of sin and to serve God alone in all his works, deploring his many failings, crying out with the Apostle Paul, "O wretched man that I am!" but at the same time being assured of a glorious victory through Christ, and again he is filled with the compelling desire to live unto Him who died for all. Let us, then, who love the Savior, not sit at home and wait to be pushed into the doing of those works which are pleasing to God but rather go out and seek opportunities to serve the Lord in our lives, being "zealous of good works," Titus 2:14, "not being weary in well doing," Galatians 6:9. Being a Christian is not a hobby, but it is a calling. Serving the Lord is not an avocation but a vocation for which the Christians should make the very most of their time here on earth. Happy should those Christians be whose pastors properly and without any fear or faltering urge them to become "rich in good works"; "by the mercies of God" to present their bodies "a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto God." Dr. Walther writes: "Sincere Christians, though weak in many respects, do not mean to reject the Word of God; they desire to live unto Him who died for them," (Pieper, vol. III, p. 49.)

The words of Zacharias should be in every Christian heart: "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," Luke 1:74-75. The Law is therefore the rule for the Christian's life; it is the path which the Christian follows and upon which the Christian walks in his life of sanctification, not in order that he might be saved thereby, but because through Christ he has been saved; not in order that his sins might be forgiven thereby, but because his sins have been forgiven. What a wonderful way for us to show our appreciation and to express our gratitude to the Lord! What an opportunity to show our love for Him who first loved us! What a privilege to speak to Him in prayer; to sit at His feet and hear His Word; to spread the message of salvation to others; to reach out to those who are still sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death; to labor for Him and for His Kingdom in the pulpit or in the parsonage, in the field or in the kitchen, in the factory or in the office, in our work or in our recreation, in the street or in the market; to serve one another by love and to delight ourselves in the Lord!

And although the Christian earns nothing from God by his life of sanctification, yet God rewards the Christians richly for their good works. St. Paul writes: "Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour," 1 Cor. 3: 8. Jesus says: "Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great," Luke 6:35. "When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense

