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Church Union

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CHURCH UNION

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C H U R C H U N I O N

Part I

IN THE LIGHT

OF

HISTORY

I N T R O D U C T I O N

Ours is an age of unionism. Most professing Christians are altogether indifferent to matters of faith and doctrine. Most of them are willing to forget all the differences of doctrine and faith and to have fellowship with anyone who leads a moral life, even with such who deny the very fundamentals of Christianity. Those who seek to maintain the Scriptural principle of separation from all that is ungodly and anti-Scriptural are looked upon as fanatics, self-righteous, and bigoted. Those who insist on doctrinal purity are looked upon as out-moded, unprogressive, and out of harmony with the spirit of this generation.

In such an atmosphere it is difficult for the defenders of orthodoxy to continue the battle for the Word of Christ. The world seems to be arrayed against them. The flesh of the best Christian is unionistic. This adds to his problems. Many who love the Word of Christ dearly are ignorant of the principles involved in the heresy of unionism. Some are beginning to wonder whether it is really necessary to hold to every Word of Scripture. Others are becoming weary in their fight for pure doctrine. The defense of truth often appears so hopeless and useless. This factor alone easily leads one to become subject to unionistic tendencies.

Hence, for him who loves Christ's Word and

desires to remain true to His Savior, it is heartening to see both from History and from Scripture that strict confessionalism and abhorrence of untruth is not incompatible with Christian life and faith. It is, in fact, Christianity's bulwark in a world of error and falsehood. Both History and Scripture show that compromising the truth is fatal to the truth. Truth will not be mixed with error. The cause of Christianity was furthered when men believed in and practiced humble submission and loyalty to God's Word. It is the purpose of our paper to show from History and from Scripture that we have no reason to become disheartened in our position of strict confessionalism and determined separation from such unions which are based on compromise instead of complete doctrinal unity. History shows that this position serves the best interests of Christ and His Church. The Bible demands that this be our position.

I.

In The Early Church

Church Union was not a problem with the first converts to Christianity. We read of them in the Scriptures that "they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers". Thru His atoning suffering and death the Lord Jesus Christ had established the Holy Christian Church. He promised His disciples that the gates of hell would not prevail against it. He charged the disciples to go out into the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature, and that they should teach the converts "all things whatsoever I have commanded you#. The disciples believed His promise and carried out His instructions. Having this clear promise and following these simple instructions it is not strange that we should read of them, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul". Acts 2,32a. Such Christian fellowship is always the result when men accept and bew before the Word of the Savior. Nor is it strange that we should find this unity of faith expressing itself in practical life. The Holy Record informs us, "Neither was there any among them that lacked; for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold,and laid them down at the apostles' feet; and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need". Acts 2, 34-35. There is apparently a very definite and close relation between doctrine and deeds; between faith and life. Let all those who decry doctrine and creeds, who exalt with mistaken emphasis life and deeds, study the example

of these early converts before casting stones at those today who attempt to maintain the principle that God gave His revelation for doctrine first, and then for instruction in righteousness.

The early Church was in all respects a faithful prototype of the Christian Church of later generations. Had the Church of later periods followed the early Church in reverence for and humble submisssion to the clear Word of Christ, had she continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, there would never have been any schisms or divisions.

There were not many things to disturb the inward and outward peace of the first Christian Church, so long as she was confined to Jerusalem, and received only Jewish converts into her midst. But a factor which proved to be of exceedingly great importance for the Christian Church was the first missionery journey of the man whom the Lord had called to be the missionary or Apostle among the Gentiles. Starting out from Jerusalem Paul and Barnabas selected the cities of Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe as favorable fields for their missionary endeavors. Both Jews and Gentiles were converted to Christ. The Apostles soon discovered that their message was more favorably received by the Gentiles than by the Jews. The Jews who refused to accept the Gospel proved to be the worst enemies of the Apostles, stiring up persecution wherever they could. Even for those Jews who were convinced of the truth which the Apostles preached the universality of the Christian Gospel soon became a stumbling block. Many

believed that the terms of entrance for Gentile Christians into the membership of the Church ought to be no less than circumcision and the observance of a number of other ceremonial rules and regulations. They could not see how faith in Christ alone could be sufficient qualification for church membership. They soon organized themselves into a group, and began to disturb other congregations with the question, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved", Acts.15,1. No doubt many sincere Jews, and even Gentiles wondered whether or not they were right.

What threatened to split the Church which had been founded only about twenty years before was averted by the Apostolic Council in Jerusalem (50 or 51 A.D.), the proceedings of which are fully described in Acts.15. The record may well be used by those who desire to deal with ruptures of Christian unity. It is to be noted that the meeting was public, that the conference was attended by apostles, elders, and brethren, that the speakers did not beat around the bush, but went to the heart of the matter, always, however, speaking the truth in love, and that the standard of judgment was the revealed Word of God. The result of the conference at which James, the pastor of the congregation at Jerusalem presided, was a verdict in favor of Gentile Christianity, a verdict based upon the written Word of God and not the shifting opinions of men. Very clearly James pointed out, "And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written". Acts. 15,15. Christianity was emancipated from circumcision and the bondage of the Jewish cere-

monial requirements. The doctrine of justification by faith alone was recognized as a universal law in God's Kingdom. Concerning other matters, in themselves indifferent, all were exhorted to guard against giving offense. Christians are to be careful in the use of their Christian liberty. In regard to such matters in which it is impossible to avoid giving offense, we are to abstain.

The peace and harmony of the Church at Jerusalem was not a characteristic mark of the Church at Corinth. The dissensions in this congregation evoked the sharp rebuke of the Apostle Paul in his first letter to them. Writing to them he pleaded, "Now, I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Choloe, that there are contentions among you". 1 Cor.1,10-11. There are indications that thru the pleading of the Apostle peace and harmony were restored in the factious Corinthian congregation, but as the Epistle of Clement shows, these factions later revived again. Clement reveals that "the shameful and detestable sedition, utterly abhorrent to the elect of God, which a few rash and self-confident persons were kindled to such a pitch of frenzy that your venerable and illustrious name, worthy to be universally loved, has suffered grievous injury".

In his letter Clement implies that the solution of their disunity lay in the correct emphasis on the

episcopate which he believed was established by the Lord for the purpose of preserving the unity of the Church. Ignatius of Antioch, who wrote a number of letters to the various churches of his time while on the way to martyrdom at Rome, pointed out the desperate need of unity, and clearly stated that the episcopacy was the means whereby order and unity were to be preserved. He said, "Be zealous to do all things in harmony with God, with the bishop presiding in the place of God and the presbyters in the place of the council of the apostles and deacons, who are most dear to me, entrusted with the services of Jesus Christ. Be united with the bishop and with those who preside over you as an example and lesson of immortality. As, then, the Lord Jesus was united with the Father and did nothing without Him, neither by Himself nor thru the apostles, so do you nothing without the bishop and the presbyters". According to Ignatius the unity of the Church depended on loyalty and obedience to the bishops and presbyters, who stood in the place of Christ and the Apostles. The same idea was taught by Irenaeus, and especially by Cyprian, who went so far as to attribute sacerdotal functions to the bishops. His "De Unitate Ecclesiae" definitely makes the episcopate the center of unity. To him the unity of the Church depended on the unity of the episcopate. "Where the bishop is not, the Church is not". His views were far-reaching in their influence.

These erroneous opinions soon developed into the theory that the unity of the Church had to manifest itself in organic union. It was generally the opinion of

the early Christians even during the time of Ignatius and Cyprian that the Church was a spiritual union of all those who believed in Jesus Christ. But the conception of the Church gradually changed, so that by the third century the emphasis began to be placed almost altogether on the visible organization with the bishops at the head. "Before long the conception of the Church as a visible organization governed by the episcopate led to the separation of the clergy from the laity; the clergy became a hierarchical corporation. The desire for visible unity of the church organization required centralization in one head; that fell to the bishop who seemed most prominent; and by tradition (Peter and Paul in Rome) and location (Rome in history, situation, and importance) that was the bishop of Rome; and so we have the Papacy". Proceed.Synod. Conf.1936, p.18.

Now this constant desire for outward unity in the Church was prompted among other things by heathen opposition to Christianity, and by fale teaching within the Church. The political opposition of heathendom to the Church manifested itself especially in the form of persecution. Christians had no standing in the Empire; they were regarded as underming the political and social foundations of the world. To the Romans nationalism was the great thing. Christianity was an international religion. To the Roman the state was super lex; to the Christian God was super lex. And so it happened that the mere fact that a person was a Christian made him apprehensible to persecution. A number of Christian apologists, whose writings have been preserved, appealed to the rulers to discontinue

this inconsistent thing,-punishing those who were the best citizens of the state. We must not forget,however, that not all the persecutions were ordered by officials of the government. Some were the result of mob violence. Nor was every persecution universal; most of them were local.

Heathen opposition to Christianity manifested itself also in the literary field. Neo-Pythagoreanism, a revival of the Pythagorean philosophy, mixed with certain oriental ideas, with Appollonius of Tyana as leader, was proclaimed in opposition to the religion of Jesus. Besides this the sarcasm of Lucian and Celsus was directed against the Christians. Lucian in his work, "De Morto Pengrenus" ridiculed the Christians as dupes. Celsus attempted to show the followers of Christ that their religion was based on a false doctrine, that Christ was of illigitimate birth, that His miracles were Eastern magic, and that His resurrection was an impossiblity. He pleaded with them to give up their "superstition".

But the greatest danger to the unity of the Church, then as now, was the false teaching and rationalistic tendency within the Church itself. Gnosticism (The Modernism of the Early Church) was more dangerous than anything else. The gnostics wanted to be known as Christians, as the Modernists do also today. They also drew on the Scriptures; they claimed apostolic tradition, and taught that their teachers were inspired. Actually the beginnings of Gnosticism are to be found in Simon Magnus, Cerinthus, and Nicolas. Some say that the root ideas of the gnostic

system may be traced far back into pre-Christian times. The exhortation found in Eccleasiasticus, 21-22 is considered by many as a warning against gnostic speculations. At any rate, the system was a mixture of heathen religions and Christianity, and its influence on the Church, tho denounced as heresy by the Church as a whole, was great. It forced the Church to set up certain standards of faith; it led to the formation of dogmas, and to a wider interest in the question of the Canon. Although condemned by the Church, the gnostic movement has survived to the present day, and its counterpart may be found particularly in Christian Science, and in general in all modernistic churches.

In the face of all these enemies of the Church it seemed but natural that steps should be taken to unify and concentrate the forces of the Church. The mistake was that the Church placed its trust in its own outward union, instead of the Word and Promise of Christ. "The confliet with heresy made it expedient to transfer the responsiblity to a single office. False teachers claimed to possess the truth delivered to the Church by the Apostles. The Church answered by investing the office of the bishop, the only direct succession from the apostles, with the power to determine and to interpret true doctrine and saving faith". Qualben, History of the Christian Church, p.87. The Church forgot that its power and influence lay in Christ the Head of the Church. It forgot that God's Word, not a bishop's opinion, determines true doctrine and saving faith. Forgetting the promises of Jesus, "Lo, I am with

always", and, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it", promises which guaranteed to them the perpetuity of the Church, they placed their hopes in a strong, outward, visible church organization, the unity of which was shown by the acceptance of a ruling head. No wonder schisms and divisions played such an important role in the history of Church of later generations. It would not have been so had men showed more loyalty to the Word of God. God and His Word never change. Men and human opinions constantly change.

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II.
The Age of Constantine

For unity in the Church its members had depended strongly upon the episcopacy more than upon Christ. These props were hardly strong enough, and when the opportunity presented itself men took advantage of the politics they considered of benefit to the Church. In the interest of union they succumbed to the unscriptural principle of the union of Church and State.

Constantine the Great, basing his actions on the experience of the emperors before him, saw that it was a futile task to attempt to destroy Christianity by means of persecution. Instead of becoming weaker, the Church was becoming stronger. In 303 the last supreme effort of the State to destroy Christianity was made. Diocletain's three great edicts failed to annihilate Christianity as they were indended to do. Constantine, whose father was a subordinate Caesar under Diocletian saw the failure of the whole move, and when his opportunity came, he took a course directly opposite to Diocletian's, and favored Christianity instead of opposing

it. His predecessors had persecuted Christianity in the interest of the State; their attempts were futile. Constantine decided to favor Christianity, and do it in the interest of the State. His plan was to unite Chruch and State. The first great act toward this end was the Edict of Milan in 312 or 313, signed by Constantine and Licinius, which recognized Christianity as a lawful religion. "We granty it said, "to the Christians and to all others full liberty of following that religion which each may choose". This edict has been called the "Magna Charta of Christianity". Constantine was not only nettral as these words of the edict would imply, but he actually favored the Christian religion. The privileges which had belonged to the religious institutions of old Rome were now given to the Church, and new ones were added. The clergy were exempted from military duty and from taxes; customs offensive to Christians were abolished; the Church was given the right to receive legacies; civil observance of Sunday was enjoined; Christian building was encouraged. Constantine himself contributed liberally toward these buiddings. He appointed Christians to his chief offices, surrounded himself with Christian councilors, and gave his sons a Christian education. And what is interesting to note is that many of these things were done before Constantine actually became a Christian. He was not yet baptized, nor even a Christian catechumen in 325, twelve years after the Edict of Milan. "We are not doing Constantine an injustice when we say that, no matter what his motives were later on, it was at first chiefly the politician Constantine who saw the great value

of Christianity for the accomplishment of his pet scheme, unffication of the empire". Proceed.Synod. Conf.1936,p.20.

But what Constantine regarded as a strong, united religious organization, on whose support he relied for the unification of the empire, he soon found to his dismay, was itself, tho outwardly united, inwardly disunited, split up into factions. The Church had had troubles not only with regard to the Eastern question, but also with the question of how to discipline the lapsed. The trouble,however, which finally led to the Arian controversy, in which Constantine played such an important role, began with the Monarchians, whose controversies were the real forerunners of the Arian controversy. All along the Church had been stressing monotheistic teaching. When the heathen became converts to Christianity they found that there were three persons but only one God. The Trinity in Unity did not make sense to them. Many attempts were made by Christian teachers to explain it to them. As usual when men attempt to make the mysteries of God comprehensible to human reason, they fell into error and heresy. Some, limiting the God-head of Christ, taught that Jesus was a power drawn from God. Jesus, they said, was endowed with divine power and finally elevated to divine Sonship. A man became God. Others limited the humanity of the Savior and taught that the Redeemer was a mode or a role in which God appeared to man. The Father Himself, they taught, became man and suffered. The debate finally reached its climax in the heresy of Arius, and a schism in the Church was the result.

Arius, presbyter of Alexandria, taught that the Son had a beginning, that He was not worthy of the title, "Son of God", that His divinity was to be limited, that in the incarnation the Logos took the place of the soul in the man Jesus. He denied the coessentiality and the coeternity of Christ with the Father and the Holy Ghost. He referred to Christ as the Redeemer, but only in the sense that He showed by His own example how all men, as free moral agents, might choose the good and become the sons of God. Thus at the cost of the truth Arius attempted to simplify the doctrine of the Holy Trinity to the heathen mind. It may not be out of place to state here that Lucian of Antioch, who was the teacher of Arius, was the "Arius before Arius" as we learn from his writings, many of which have been preserved by Arius.

Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, took the orthodox view and opposed the false teacher. At first the controversy was local, but discussion became so heated that a provincial council had to be called in 320. The council deposed and excommunicated Arius for his denial of the deity of Christ. But this did not stop the heretic. He continued to proclaim his unscriptural views, and because of his own great piety, his asceticism, and attractive personality, he gained many followers, especially among the common people, and won even the powerful church historian Eusebius of Caesarea and Eusebius of Nicomedia, besides many Lucianists. As yet Athanasius had not taken an important part in the controversy, but his interest

was keen.

When Constantine saw that the Church was split up into two opposing factions he felt that something must be done, and that it was his duty to do it, tho he himself was not much interested in the theological side of the question. His first move was to send a diplomatic letter to Alexander in which he advised the disputants to stop quarreling about small things. Afterall, so far as he was concerned, they were agreed on the fundamentals. To make sure that his letter would have the desired effect he sent Hosius, his court bishop along. The letter failed in the desired effect, and Hosius returned to tell the emperor that the trouble could not be settled by compromise, like political disputes. Hosius felt that the time for mediation was past and that a general council would have to be held. And Constantine who wanted peace at almost any price, called a general council in 325. The emperor himself stated its object in these words, "Discord in the Church I consider more fearful and painful than any other war. When I heard of your division, I was convinced that this matter should by no means be neglected, and in the desire to assist by my service I have summoned you without delay. I shall, however, feel my desire fulfilled only when I see the minds of all united in that peaceful harmony which you, as the annointed of God, must preach to others. Delay not therefore, my friends, delay not, servants of God; put away all causes of strife and loose all knots of discord by

the laws of peace. Thus shall you accomplish the work most pleasing to God and confer upon me, your fellow-servant, an exceeding great joy".

According to tradition the council was attended by 318 bishops, most of whom were from the East where the controversy raged the worst. There were three parties present with three types of doctrine: Arianism, Sem-Arianism, and Orthodoxy. Arius presented his creed first. This was rejected with indignation. Then Eusebius of Caesarea presented a creed. It was a creed so general in its terms that it could be signed by anyone without violating his conscience. Eusebius the historian also presented a creed more orthodox than the former, but a creed which did not employ the word "homoousios", so that it could be interpreted in either the Arian or Semi-Arian sense. This was a compromise. This was the creed which Constantine favored for it served his purpose,-outward union in the Church,-stronger union in the State. But this would be a peace purchased at the price of truth in the opinion of Alexander and his young deacon, Athanasius. They too were interested in union, true union, union which is based on oneness in faith, and so they could not accept a creed which could be interpreted in favor of Arianism. They wanted a creed which clearly stated the false doctrine, a creed "which no Arian could sign". Such a creed would preserve, in their opinion, the essential unity of the Church. They wanted a creed which could not be misunderstood. Thru the

efforts of young Athanasius the case for Homo-ousianism was won, and a creed was accepted, writt-en upø in orthodox terms, which asserted the con-substantiality and coeternity of the Son with the Father. It is called the Nicene Creed. All but Arius and a few Egyptian bishops subscribed to the creed.

For the time being it seemed tha not only the truth of God's Word had been preserved, but that even outward union in the Church had been obtained. But it was not long before the contro-versy broke out again, and continued for some decades. This shows that many had subscribed to the creed reluctantly, for the sake of the emper-or, or they did it not knowing the meaning of the document to which they ascribed their names. Thus the Semi-Arian reaction set in, and councils cont-inued to be called, and new creeds, and counter-creeds set up. The orthodox party constantly gained ground, and there were divisions among the Arians themselves. Constantius, the son of Constantine attempted to force a creed upon the entire Church when he insisted upon the use of the term "homoios", avoiding "ousia". The twenty years following the death of Constantine saw the decline of Arianism. The three great Cappodocians, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazzianzum, and Gregory of Nyssa, including Athanasius repeatedly emphacised the deity of Christ in opposit-ion to the Arians. The death-blow to Arianism was finally administered by Theodosius who summoned the Council of Constantinople in 381, which reaffirmed

the Nicene Creed and forbade the public worship of heretics.

It will be observed from the history of the Arian controversy that attempts to compromise the truth must be fatal to the truth. Error mixed with truth does not suffer. Truth mixed with error always suffers. Error will tolerate truth. Truth cannot tolerate error. The truth of God's Word was upheld because staunch defenders of the faith did not hesitate to express their opinion in unmistakble, understandable language. "They always kept in mind this end, to wit, of preserving, and working toward the restoration of, the true unity of the spirit in the Church. Hence we never find them seeking for, or consenting to, a phrase which might be acceptable to both parties, but they always used such words or statements as most exactly and plainly expressed the Bible truth. They never passed over contested truths in silence; they gave no ear to the argument: This or that statement may cause trouble, may arouse controversy, endanger the union movement; if it was the truth, they said it, and as plainly as possible. They even went out of their way, if you will, to the extent of coining new words, as far as Christian usage was concerned, to express the truth in opposition to a falsehood which had been expressed". Proceed. Synod. Conf.1936, p.24.

It is interesting to speculate on what the Church would have become doctrinally had Athanasius and his followers not stook up in the defense of biblical truth. Suppose they had agreed, for the sake of

outward union, to a compromise? It is evident that God's hand was a controlling factor in this controversy, and that He was on the side of the defenders of orthodoxy. Let all staunch defenders of the truth today take courage from the example of Athanasius, and remain firm in their position of insisting upon clear-cut expression when drafting articles of union. Only in this way can truth become victorious over error, and hold the field.

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III
The Pelagian Controversy

The Pelagian controversy shows that even outward union cannot be forced upon the Church when it refuses to bow before the clear Word of God. In spite of the clear testimony given by the defenders of the truth, in spite of the numerous councils which condemned the error, Pelagianism is still with us today. Church leaders will not give it up because they are not willing to let Scripture determine articles of faith.

Like no one before him, Pelagius insisted on the existence of natural powers in fallen man. He did not believe in inherited sin, infant baptism, and salvation by grace thru faith in Christ Jesus. He believed that every man was created with perfect freedom to do good or evil. He first taught these errors in his commentary on the Pauline Epistles. At Rome he spread them personally.

Augustine was his opponent. Basing his teachings upon God's Word he taught original sin, the necessity

of infant baptism, the loss of free will, and salvation by grace. He taught that even faith was a work of grace.

While the debate went on the errors of Pelagius were condemned from time to time. The African bishops at the synods of Mileve and Carthage in 416 condemned Pelagianism and induced Bishop Innocent I of Rome to agree in this condemnation. Emperor Honorius even took a stand against the false doctrine. At the ecumenical synod at Ephesus in 431 the Orient condemned Pelagianism because of its similarity to Nestorianism. Later when the Semi-Pelagians entered the field of conflict, and taught a cooperation of grace and free will in the salvation of man, even these were condemned. At the Synod of Orange in 529 the Augustinian doctrine was restated, and both Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism were condemned. The Synod of Valence in 530 ratified this condemnation, and even the Roman Bishop Boniface II agreed to it.

In spite of all this condemnation, however, the false doctrine soon arose again, and became the recognized doctrine of the Church during the Middle Ages. With the coming of the Reformation and Luther the doctrine was again clearly exposed as false teaching on the basis of the Word of God. Still, the Church of Rome clings to it yet today. It anathametizes the doctrine of salvation by grace thru faith in Christ Jesus. Many so-called Protestants proclaim the same error, altho they clothe it in different language.

All this demonstrates that unity of faith cannot

be attained by force and condemnation. It is a hopeless task to attempt to attain it when men refuse to bow before the Word of God. So long as men insist upon clinging to their human opinions in opposition to God's Revelation, there can be no true unity of faith, and where external, outward unions are effected without this unity of faith, this unity in the spirit, such unions are mere pretenses. It is pretending a union which actually does not exist. And that is hypocrisy.

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IV

The Reformation Period

The outstanding example of a Church Union attempt during the Reformation period was the Marburg Colloquy in 1529. This was the first great effort to unite the Lutheran and Reformed Churches. Then as today we find that the one party was ready to unite without doctrinal agreement, while the other insisted on doctrinal purity and submission to the Word of God.

Zwingli and Philip of Hesse were behind this movement. They were actuated by political motives. Zwingli himself was as much a politician as a theologian. "Luther centered his whole interest on the religious aspect of the Reformation and would not permit its association with political issues. Zwingli felt that his mission had as much to do with politics as with religion so he aimed at a political as well as a spiritual regeneration. ..Luther maintained that the Church and the State were independent of each other and that religion should not be

mixed with politics, while Zwingli effected the closest union of politics and religion and subordinated state to Church". Qualben, History of the Christian Church, p.244. Philip of Hesse was interested in obtaining a strong, united front against Charles ~~the~~ V and the Catholic princes of Germany. At the Diet of Spire in 1529, completely controlled by the Catholics, the work of the Lutherans was condemned, further reformation was forbidden, all toleration was taken from the Zwinglians, and the Anabaptists were to be put to death. Under such circumstances the political leaders and Zwingli felt that something had to be done. Philip wrote to both Zwingli and Luther and arranged for a meeting of the opposing Protestant factions. Zwingli the politician readily agreed. Melanchton who probably had not fully considered the political angle of the affair at once gave his consent. But Luther did not show much willingness. He had never been interested in politics. His business was to preach the Word of God. His attitude at this time may be fairly determined from a letter which he wrote to a friend, the pastor Brismann at Riga. "Philip (Melanchthon) and myself after many refusals and much vain resistance, have been at length compelled to give our consent, because of the Landgrave's importunity; but I know not yet whether our going will come to anything. We have no hopes of any good result, but suspect artifice on all sides, that our enemies may be able to boast of having gained the victory". Life of Luther, by Julius Koestlin, p.390.

Before the meeting at Marburg the two parties had been debating the question of the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the Lord's Supper. They had not come to any agreement. There was agreement in regard to other points of doctrine. But on the Lord's Supper the Lutherans stood uncompromisingly for the plain and simple understanding of the words,"This is my body", while the Zwinglians insisted upon a metaphorical understanding. The debate at Marburg also included the question of the ubiquity of Christ. Zwingli rejected it as being contrary to human reason.

The courteousness displayed at the debate is worth noting. It was not uncommon at that time for opponents to use invective that would be out of place today. Koestlin says, p.396, "If we compare the manner in which this disputation at Marburg was conducted with the previous character of the contest, in which the one party had denounced their opponents as diabolical fanatics, and the other as reactionary papists and worshippers of a 'god made of bread', it will be evident that some results of importance at least had been attained by the discussion itself and the mode in which it had been held. The tone here, from first to last, was more courteous, nay, even friendly in comparison".

Now it is noteworthy that, tho the opposing parties had not come to an agreement in regard to the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Zwingli and his party were willing to forget the differences which still separated them, and to receive one another at Holy

Communion. This brought the Lutherans to the conclusion: The Zwinglians must not think much of their doctrine. So far were they willing to go in the interest of an outward alliance. But no agreement was reached, for the Lutherans considered a union at the expense of truth worse than dissension. However, they did agree to stop the literary controversy, and to treat each other with Christian charity, so far as each one's conscience would permit. Neither was any kind of political alliance attained. Luther stuck firm to his principle that the Gospel is not to be defended by force. His defense was God, not the power and might of men. He said, "It is sheer want of faith not to trust to God to protect us, without any wit or power of man....In quietness and confidence shall be your strength".

"The man who tried to save something from the wreckage of Marburg was Martin Bucer. He had always abhorred strife, and his life's purpose now became the adjustment of this strife between Lutherans and Zwinglians. For a while now, he claimed, it had been dawning on him that there really was no cause for strife; fundamentally Luther and Zwingli were in accord; they only used different words because their object was different, viz., to controvert different errors. Zwingli set himself chiefly in opposition to transubstantiation; Luther's object was to prove that the Lord's Supper was more than a mere memorial feast; these different objects would naturally influence their choice of words. In this opinion, he said, he was confirmed at Marburg. So he set out to find a formula which would express

the fundamental agreement and clear away the misunderstanding. So he became the 'great compromise theologian' as Seeberg calls him". Proceed.Synod. Conf.,1936,p.35. His persistent efforts finally led to the signing of the Wittenberg Concord in 1536. Bucer was a unionist, and he aimed at a union based on compromise which would embrace both Lutherans and Zwinglians. But the Concord failed to establish union. The Swiss would not accept an offer of peace, and they even charged Bucer with trying to smuggle Lutheranism into their country. They had always been under the impression that this was to be a 50-50 proposition. They felt that they had gone half way, and now expected the Lutherans to go the other half. When this did not take place, all connections were broken off. To make his position clear, Luther finally wrote his "Brief Confession of the Lord's Supper" in 1544, and this definitely ended the union movement. The Zwinglians were never able to understand, and the sectarians are not able to understand today, why a man will insist on sticking so close to the revealed Word of God, and implicity submit to its authority. Compromise, and indifference to the Word; that was characteristic of the Reformed then, and it is still characteristic of them today.

It is to be noted from this history also that then as today it is the Reformed who take the initiative in taking steps toward union in the Church. Their weapon then as today is compromise of the Word. The conserfative Lutherans then as now do not refuse to discuss doctrinal differences, but they will remain unflinchingly true to God's holy Word.

V

Post-Reformation Period

Like Henry VIII of England and Zwingli, Charles V was a politician. He was interested in religious union for the sake of the State. A unified empire necessitated, in his opinion, a unified religion. So Charles V set out to unite the Protestants and Roman Catholics. He wanted to do it, of course, by agreement and compromise. It was not his desire to resort to force. His aim was first to abolish abuses in the Roman Catholic Church, and then coax the Protestants back into the "mother church". But the Catholics themselves were opposed to this. To further the cause of a united Christendom a number of conferences were held. The first of them was the Hagenau conference in 1540. Nothing was accomplished. Then came the Conference af Worms in the same year. Nothing came of this. Then the Diet of Regensburg (Ratisbon) in 1541. This conference also came to naught. The matter was to be taken up later at a general council, to be called in 18 months. This the Catholics did not want, and they succeeded in postponing the council for some time. Finally, after long delay, the leaders of the Romish Church were ready, and with the council under their complete control, the Protestants had no rights whatsoever. This resulted in the Smalcaldic War and after that the Augsburg and the Leipzig Interim. Later Charles V met defeat at the hands of Maurice and the result was the Peace or Truce of Passau in 1552, and later the Religious Peace of Augsburg in 1555, which made the "cuius regio euius religio" law in Germany. All this

shows that union with Rome is possible only on one coddition: complete surrender and submission to the Pope.

While all this was going on the Lutherams themselves were hopelessly split into factions. They had won a political victory in 1555, but doctrinally they were in a mess. Three conflicting parties were present. The Intermists, the Synergists, and the Cypto-Calvinists constituted the first party. They were all followers of Melanchthon, and called Philippists. The second party consisted of Gnesio-Lutherans, and embraced such staunch and loyal men as Amsdorf, Flacius, Matthias, etc. The third party were the loyal Lutherans who took no special part in the controversies, but came to the front when the work of pacification began. Chief among them were Brenz, Andreae, Chemnitz, etc. These men were opposed to controversies which involved no doctrinal differences, but they did commend all controversies which were necessary in the interest of truth. They rejected and endemned all forms of indifferentism and unionism, and strenuously opposed all compromising of any doctrine for the sake of external peace.

Melanchthon was the prime mover in all these controversies. Schaff says of him, "Melanchthon represented the unionistic and liberal type of Lutheranism". Up until about 1530 he had remained loyal to Luther, but from his writings and publications it can be seen that from that time on he began to strike out on pathways of his own, and to spread doctrines which were incompatible with the Lutheranism of Luther. "Melanchthon

lacked the simple faith in, and the firm adherence and implicit submission to the Word of God which made Luther the undaunted and invincible hero of the Reformation. Standing four-square on the Bible and deriving from this source of divine power alone all his theological thoughts and convictions, Luther was a rock, firm and immovable. With him every theological question was decided and settled conclusively by quoting a clear passage from the Holy Scriptures, while Melanchthon, devoid of Luther's single-minded and whole-hearted devotion to the Word of God, endeavored to satisfy his reason as well....The Spirit of Melanchthon was the spirit of religious indifference and of unionism". Triglotta, p.106-107.

In 1557 the Diet of Regensburg resolved that another attempt be made to unite the Protestant and Roman factions of the empire. The Lutherans felt that they had to prepare for this. They met and made an attempt at it at Frankfurt in 1558, and again at Naumburg in 1561. Unionistic formulas were presented to break the factions. Then the great defenders of the truth came to the foreground, Andreae and Chemnitz. The former had made attempts to unite the factions of Lutherans as early as 1567. With the encouragement of Chemnitz, Andreae wrote the Suabian Concordia in 1573. This was the first draft of the great confession, the Formula of Concord. In 1575 the Suabian-Saxon Concordia evolved, and in 1576 the Torgau Book. This was revised and the Bergic Book or, as it is better-known, the Formula of Concord was completed on May 28, 1577, and signed by a great number of political and theological leaders.

This confession was a clear confession of the truth, and an unequivocal rejection of error. It eliminated from the Torgau Book all the known misunderstandings and replaced the ambiguous terms with clear ones. There was at first some criticism of the confession. Some hesitated to sign it because of political reasons; others because they did not want a new confession in the Church. In reality, however, it was not a new confession at all, but simply a repetition and explanation of the old Lutheran Confessions. "The Formula of Concord purified the Lutheran Church from Romanism, Calvanism, indifferentism, unionism, synergism, and other errors and unsound tendencies. It did so not by proclaiming new exclusive laws and doctrines, but by showing that these corruptions were already excluded by the spirit and letter of the already existing Lutheran symbols". Triglotta, p.250.

Significant is this remark: "Wherever and whenever, in the course of time, the Formula of Concord was ignored, despised, or rejected, the Lutheran Church fell an easy prey to unionism and sectarianism; but wherever and whenever the Formula was held in high esteem, Lutheranism flourished, and its enemies were confounded". Triglotta, p.254.

The course of events in this period clearly show that adherence to definite creeds and loyal submission to God's Word fortified the cause of Protestantism, and preserved the Lutheran heritage which is ours today. Had it not been for the staunch defenders of the truth of God's Word, Andreae and Chemnitz, the Lutheran Church would not be what it is today. Had they bowed before the compromising of their enemies, and become filled with

the indifferentism that characterized the opponents of sound Lutheranism, Lutheranism would have been submerged with Calvinism, and we would be just another Reformed sect today.

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VI
Calixtus (17th Century)

With the coming of the Counter-Reformation new endeavors were begun to unite the Protestants. The prupose again was political. When Wallenstein defeated Christian the emperor issued the Edict of Restitution. This made it plain that not only Calvinism, but Protestantism was to be eradicated. The Protestants made every attempt to get the emperor to rescind the Edict. When this failed they decided on a political union of all Protestants. The differences among the Protestants in doctrine were discussed at the Leipzig Colloguy in 1630. It soon became clear that union could be accomplished only by one side giving up what it had taught before, or by agreeing to disagree in spite of the differences in doctrine.

The man who became the chief exponent of the principle to agree to disagree was Calixtus. He was born in 1586. He was professor at the University of Helmstedt from 1614 to 1656. He made it his life's work to unite the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. As a basis for such a union he proposed to use the Scriptures and the tradition of the first five centuries. He argued that if that was good enough for the early Christians it ought to be good enough for them. It wasn't long until he narrowed the basis for union down to the Apostle's Creed. He

made a distinction between fundamental and non-fundamental doctrines. He is the author of the slogan, "Not creeds, but deeds". He held that the correct answer to the question, Who is a Christian? was sufficient for church-fellowship. His ideas had a strong appeal among many people. The people had become weary of the long-continued controversies, and some felt that the unionism of Calixtus was the answer to their problem.

Among the opponents of Calixtus were Calov, Hueselmann, Dannhauer, and Musaeus. They held that the early Church indeed had enough creeds for their particular needs. But when heretics arose it became necessary to enlarge these creeds so that the heresies might be properly exposed and the truths which these heresies denied might be specially stressed. They held that a creed might be sufficient at the time when adopted, but that it can be no longer sufficient when it becomes evident that such a creed is misunderstood or misinterpreted. Calov pointed out that, if adoption of the Apostle's Creed were sufficient proof of the orthodoxy of an individual, then Arians, Socinians, Arminians, and Anabaptists and others could not be charged with heresy.

The first conference held under the influence of Calixtus was at Thorn in 1645. Its purpose was to settle the differences between Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed. Nothing came of it. In 1661 a conference was held at Cassel. A unionistic agreement was reached. It was agreed to disagree on various important doctrines, such as the Real Presence, and Predestination,

since, as they said, the difference "did not affect man's salvation". In 1662 a conference was held at Berlin. Nothing came of this.

The union movements of the Seventeenth Century finally led to the Prussian Union of 1817. As the Hoehnzollerns became politically strong they used their influence to unite the churches. With the crowning of Frederick I as king of Prussia the trend became very strong. Pietism, the country's reaction to dead orthodoxy, helped the situation along. When Frederich William III came to the throne a new agenda was forced upon the churches. Opposition to the union came from Claus Harms, whose activites finally resulted in liberating the dissatisfied Lutheran elements from the Prussian state-church. In 1841 the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Prussia was organized. Under Grabau a number of Lutherans left for America, und under Fritzsche, a number of Lutherans went to Australia.

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VII
TODAY

Union movements are characteristic of our times. Mergers are the order of the day. This is true not only of the business world but also of the Christian Church. Some feel that the business of the Church now is to realize a union which would embrace the numberless divisions in the Church. Attempts have been made to unite all religious organization in one; others have sought to unite all Christian denominations; and still others have tried to reunite factions of the same denominations. The first has met with no success at all. The World

Conference of Faith and Order was a failure. The second has enjoyed more success. The Evangelical Alliance in England in 1846 resulted in an Evangelical Alliance for the United States in 1867. The basis of this union was a confession in nine articles worded in such general terms that they could be accepted by almost all denominations. The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America owes its orgin to this alliance. The Federal Council, organized in 1908, has no doctrinal basis. Its object is cooperation of the various denominations for service irrespective of doctrinal differences. The ministerial alliances organized in the various cities of our land are feeders for such organizations.

The attempts to unite factions within certain Christian Church denominations has met with the greatest success. Not only have many groups come to an agreement, but prospects for more and greater unions are in the air. However, even here, as in the case of the United Church of Canada, there have been lamentable failures. (C.T.M. Vol.IV, p.148).

The Reformed Churches, in most cases disregarding the doctrinal issues involved, have made the greatest strides forward in uniting factions within their denominations. The Methodists and Presbyterians especially have gone all out for unionism.

In the Lutheran Church the progress has been somewhat slower. The formation of the United Lutheran Church in 1918, and the organization of the American Lutheran Church in 1930, are the most prominent ex-

amples of union in the Lutheran Church in recent times. At present discussions are under way to bring about a closer relation between the American Lutheran Church and the Synodical Conference, and between the United Lutheran Church and the American Lutheran Church. The difficulties involved in the whole problem are expertly set forth in Dr. Graebner's "The Problem of Lutheran Union".

C H U R C H U N I O N

Part II

IN THE LIGHT

OF

SCRIPTURE

I

Church Union and the Church

The problem of church union must finally be settled by the Word of God. Hence it is necessary to set down the principles which the Word of God applies to our problem. Before doing that, however, it is necessary for us to know what God in His infallible Word has to say about the Church, what it is, what He expects of it, etc.

Much complaining is done in our day about the divided state of Christendom. Many are bending every effort to establish a church which is united. These people forget that there is a united Church, one body, with one Head, who is Christ. "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine". "They shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE FOLD, and one shepherd". John 10,14.16. There IS ONE Church. This is what we call the "invisible Church". It is the body of all true believers. It is the Communion of Saints. It is that united Church of which we confess in the Third Article, "I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints". This is the body of Christ.

This Church is united in spirit. It is a spiritual union. It is a union of all true believers. All believers belong to it, believers of every race, color, and social standing. Paul says, "Now, ye are the body of Christ and members in particular". 1 Cor. 12,27. "And (God) gave him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body". The distinquishing mark of the members of this invisible Church is saving faith in Christ in the heart. "Ye

are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus". Gal.3,26. In this Church there are no unbelievers, no hypocrites, no false Christians. Only believers belong to it.

"The Saints on earth and those above
But one communion make;
Joined to their Lord in bonds of love,
All of His grace partake".

Dr. Stoeckhardt in his commentary on Ephesians, p.180 says, "The believing Christians are in reality and in truth one and united. The one spirit and faith joins them and unites them. Christian faith, if I may use the expression, is the chief social principle. Christian faith, which, of course, not all men have, but which in no case is ever limited to one soul, and there is, eo ipso, the communion of believers".

This unity of spirit is a work of the Holy Ghost. For this unity of spirit the Savior prayed in His high-priestly prayer, John 17,20-23. Saving faith in Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior from sin is the mark which distinquishes the members of the invisible Church. This is a work of the Holy Ghost, John 14,26; John 16,13.

The members of this Church accept God's Word as His final revelation to man. This Word forms the basis of the Christian's convictions. This does not mean that all the believers understand every Word of Scripture in the same way. It does not exclude the possibility of errors in regard to certain teachings

of the Bible. It is possible for saving faith to exist in spite of these things. "Der seligmachende Glaube kann wohl bei Unkenntnis und falschem Verstaendnis von Fundamentallehren und ganzen Teilen der Schrift bestehen". Proceed. Synod.Conf.1931,p.11. "Although among these (in the body which is built upon the true foundation, i.e., upon Christ and faith) there are also many weak persons, who build upon the foundation stubble that will perish,i.e., certain unprofitable opinions (some human thoughts and opinions), which, nevertheless, because they do not overthrow the foundation, are both forgiven them and also corrected. And the writings of the holy Fathers testify that sometimes even they built stubble upon the foundation, but that this did not overthrow their faith". Triglotta, p.232.

Now, it is the will of God that the inward union of all true believers manifest itself in outward agreement. Stoeckhardt says in his commentary on Ephesians, p.181, "When Christians convene and unite for common prayer and divine worship and then associate in love, humility, and patience, they thereby only manifest that unity which existed before". This does not mean that the Lord of the Church demands that the spiritual union of all true believers must express itself in organic union. Many in their zeal for a united Christian front have advanced the false theory that the Lord requires this and that this was the practice of the early Christian Church. It was not. The apostles always spoke of the Church as a spiritual house, 1 Pet.2,5; Eph.2,22. Jesus

said that the Kingdom of God comes without observation,-there is no external sign by which the spiritual union may be recognized. God has demanded only that where men profess to be the followers of Christ they establish local Christian congregations and the ministry of the Word. While He has not ordered the formation of external unions, such as synods, denominations,etc, still it is His will that Christians who profess the same faith cooperate, worship together, work together, commune together. As members of one body they should work in harmony. 1 Cor.12,10ff; 1 Cor.1,10-13. The confessions of our church agree to this, and many other passages of the Bible inculcate it. John 8,32; Matt.28,19-20; Luke 16,17; Acts 2,42; 1 Tim. 4,16; Heb.10,23.

Those who countenance division in the Church run squarely into the face of Scripture. While competition may be a good thing in secular business, it is not a profitable thing or God-pleasing in the King's business. We must call that denominational pride. On the other hand, we must not think that an external union of the Church would necessarily promote its best interests. "We believe that the Church was not organized by our Lord to solve social and economic problems. The Church is in the world for the one purpose of preaching the Gospel. True, the Church exercises an influence for good in the world. It does this, however, not because of its numbers, neither because of an imposing organization which by public pronouncements on such questions as war

and peace, labor and capital, marriage and divorce, and similar problems, it can influence legislation. The Church exercises an influence for good in the world by the pious lives of its members. When the individual members of the Church put into practice what they preach and confess, then the Church is strong in the world. There was no great church organization, no Synod or any such thing in the days of the apostles and yet the apostolic church wielded an influence over the lives of men which is truly astonishing. This was done because the Christians of those days put into practice the principle, that though they were in the world, yet they were not of the world". A. Brunn, American Lutheran, Dec.1941,p.8.

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II
Unionism

The ecclesiastical term "Unionism" has but one meaning. It is always used by us to condemn the thing for which it stands, the uniting in religious worship or work on the part of those who are not united in doctrine. Some would call this "union". Thus the Standard Dictionary states concerning unionism, "the principle of combination for unity of purpose and action". Negatively stated, unionism is not an attempt to unite on the basis of doctrine. Its essence is to agree to disagree. Hence "unionism is church union without unity of doctrine". Or,"Unionism is the answer of our modern age to the unanswerable question of the prophet Amos (3,3), "How can two walk together except they be agreed?".Proceed.EasteDist.1931, p.63. "The joining in religious worship or in religious work

or in both by such as are not in doctrinal agreement is religious unionism". Tract, "Religious Unionism", by J.H.C.Fritz,p.2.

The various arguments advanced by unionists in defence of unionism may be outlined as follows:

1. The churches need to share each other's treasures. The World Conference of Christian Youth issued this manifesto in 1939: "We believe that the different churches need each other. A great responsibility rests, therefore, on us to seek opportunity in our own countries and in the places where we live for closer cooperation in work and for larger sharing in worship with our fellow-Christians. The world needs a united church. We must be one, that the world may believe. The world will not wait while we argue, neither will God have us ask Him to achieve by miracle what we are unwilling to work for ourselves". This may be called a give-and-take plan. It would mean that no particular deonmination would have to give up its peculiar beliefs. It would share them with others. Thus the Lutherans would share the doctrine of justification alone by faith with Roman Catholics, and Roman Catholics would share with Lutherans the doctrine of salvation by works. According to the argument, both would be enriched. Thus also the Reformed would share with the Lutherans the Reformed teaching on the Lord's Supper, and Lutherans would share with the Reformed in the doctrine of the real presence of the Lord's body and blood in the Sacrament. All this does not make sense. No one can accept the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone without taking

along all that goes with it. No Lutheran can take over the distinctive doctrines of the Reformed or Roman Catholic churches and still retain its own particular teachings. The unionist, however, believes it can be done. Two doctrines diametrically opposed to each other cannot be defended simultaneously. For that matter false doctrine can never be defended. And all the big, broad, and flexible views about such doctrines will not alter the situation.

2. For the sake of the world the churches must unite. The substance of this argument is that a united Christendom can wield a more powerful influence in the world than a divided Christendom. As it stands the statement is true. A Christendom united in faith and practice would exercise a tremendous influence for good in the world. But the unionist does not think of having that kind of a united Christendom. What he has in mind is actually nothing more than a pretended union, a union which actually does not exist. And to parade a thing before the world as something that it is not is hypocrisy. Such a Christendom would not only exert little influence for good in the world, but it would be fatal to itself. The denial of clearly revealed doctrines of the Bible would soon lead to a rejection of the whole. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump". It should be remembered too that the Bible nowhere demands that the inward, spiritual union of all true believers show itself in elaborate external organizations. The Bible does not demand that we have synods, federations, denominations, etc. The early Christ-

ians were not bound together by such unions. Nevertheless, they exercised more influence in the world than any other class of people in the history of men. Within three centuries after the Ascension of the Savior they had successfully penetrated into every stratrum of society, and about 325 A.D. Christianity virtually became the religion of the State. Not outward drganization, but purity of life and teaching influence the world. There is nothing that makes a church so strong as the godly life of its members, and their insistence upon adherence to definite doctrines of faith.

3. It is impossible for churches to be united in doctrine or faith. It is the very nature of the unionist to say that no one can be sure that his system of doctrine is the truth. That is why the unionist is so willing to give up peculiar doctrines of his own for the sake of outward unity. That is why he boasts of his flexibility of doctrine. For the good of the cause, he argues, difference in teaching should be ignored; it should be admitted that in the church there are various trends of thought with respect to doctrines of faith. But this argument in the final analysis amounts to a denial of the fact that the Bible is the unerring, revealed Word of God, and that its doctrines are clearly taught. If the argument of the unionists is based on a solid foundation, that no one can be sure that he possesses the truth of God in all its purity, then the Savior made a mistake when He told His disciples, "If ye continue in my Word, then you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you

free". But the Bible knows of no flexibility of doctrine. It does not admit that there may be God-pleasing, various trends of thought with respect to doctrine in the Church. God wants only one thing taught,-His Word. There are no double doctrines of sin in the Bible. The Bible teaches only one article of justification by faith. It does not teach opposing viewpoints about Jesus' return to judgment. Christians may differ about adiaphora, things which Christ has neither commanded nor forbidden. But Christians are not to differ in articles of faith and doctrine. Luther rightly says, (XIX,345) "The Holy Spirit alone teaches men to believe the same, judge the same, know the same, teach the same, confess the same, and follow after the same things". All the various passages of the Bible inculcating unity of faith and spirit apply here. This Word of God cannot be set aside. The whole difficulty with the unionist is this: He denies both the authority and clarity of the Bible.

4. Charity demands that we be uncritical of doctrinal error and that we treat an erring Christian as a brother. The unionist holds that it is contrary to Christian love to deny church-fellowship to people who err in doctrine. According to the Word of God it is just the other way around. Dale Carnegie's book, "How to Win Friends and Influence People" cannot be the standard of judgment here. In human relations it may help one to maintain friendships if a person overlooks the glaring faults of his acquaintances. Nevertheless, even in human relationships it is often a wise policy and a token of love to point out to our

neighbor, in the spirit of meekness, the faults of which he is guilty, and the inconsistencies of which he is perhaps unaware. If the neighbor's welfare demands it we must tell him. Not to do so would be gross negligence on our part. But human notions do not determine out position when it comes to matters involving the welfare of human souls and the glory of God. God's Word teaches very clearly that both the love of God and the love of one's neighbor involves the keeping ofGod's Word in toto. Not one Word of it are we to disregard, neglect, despise, or reject. Jesus says, "If a man love me, He will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings". John 14,23-24. Christ here plainly states that our love to Him manifests itself by our keeping His Words. If we, for the sake of outward unifromity in the church, surrender a part of the Word of Christ, thus making His Word doubtful, we make the way to salvation uncertain and doubtful. Such a person offends both against love to God and love to his fellowman. It is an abuse of the word "love" when people on the grounds of so-called charity to the neighbor surrender any part or portion of God's Word. Luther says, "Do not talk to me about any love or friendship when the purpose is to take away aught of the Word of God or of faith; for we are taught that not love but the Word brings eternal life, the grace of God, and all the treasures of heaven. This we will gladly do, we will live in external peace with them, as we must do with all men in this world". (IX,831). Again he says,

"Christian love cannot be silent and suffer the neighbor to err and to sin, it must reprove and amend wherever it can". (III,228). In agreement with Luther's opinion the Pastor's Monthly, July, 1934, p.400 states, "This recognition of the Christian character of other denominations does not prevent Lutheranism from testifying against the errors in such denominations. On the contrary, it is precisely the catholic spirit of Lutheranism that prompts it to stand firmly for the whole body of truth as God has revealed it in His holy Word; for just as the one holy Christian Church is one in the personal faith of her individual members in their Savior Jesus Christ, so it should strive also to be one in her confession of that faith before men. It is not charity therefore to ignore any departures from God's Word on the part of our erring brethren in Christ; but it is true Christian charity to speak the truth in love and to continue with all patience and sincerity to point out any deviations from that truth with a view to correcting the errors. Never will the divisions in the Church of Christ on earth be healed by indifference toward these things....In a time of general confusion such as this, what the Church of Jesus Christ needs is a strong and firm confession of the truth. This is Lutheranism's gift to the Church Universal".

Luther: "But there are people in our day who believe that the Gospel should be preached, but that no voice must be raised against the wolves and the high churchmen. But even though I preach correctly and shepherd the flock with sound doctrine, I neg-

lect a duty if I do not warn the sheep against the wolves. For what kind of builder would I be if I were to pile up masonry and then stand by while others tear it down?" Quoted in Proceed.East.Dist. 1931,p.73.

Walther: "Suppose a scoundrel had poisoned the well in a neighborhood and people came from afar and sounded the alarm, would we say, What matters a little arsenic? Why these men are our best friends. They saved us from death. We do not separate from the errorists because we consider ourselves better than they. But we consider God's Word as worth more than heaven and earth and would rather lose the friendship of all than this". Quoted in Proceed.Iowa Dist. (1), p.38.

Arndt: "Love does not dictate indifference toward error; on the contrary, it demands that errors and imperfections be pointed out. The attitude which condones deviations from the truth and wrongdoing is not an evidence of love but of pseudolove. Whoever loves his neighbor wishes to see him lay aside the errors which are still afflicting him; and there is no more effective way of protesting against them than that of withholding the hand of fellowship". C.T.M. XII, No.1, p.9.

Clear and fearless testimony to the truth does not exclude the obligation that we be long-suffering with a weak brother. The brother who is weak in doctrine must be taught the correct doctrine. In this work we must be patient. But when a weak Christian becomes a bold, false prophet, and makes propaganda for his false teachings, then he

must be treated as a heretic in accordance with Titus 3,10.

5. Since it is impossible for individuals, even for whole church bodies to have full possession of the truth, therefore we should have fellowship with one another and ignore the small differences which separate us. Let the principle be: "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity". But the unionist refuses to define the essentials. In the final analysis the essentials to a unionist are those matters on which you are agreed. All else is non-essential. That takes in a lot of territory, and leaves room for all kinds of compromising. Even so, it is not impossible for an individual or a church body to possess the truth of God in all its purity. With regard to God's Word there can be no non-essentials. While we are being accused of pride, arrogance, haughtiness, aloofness, etc, it is nevertheless true that our position is not contrary to God's Word. A mortal, human being can be sure that he is in possession of God's whole truth. The Savior Himself promised, "If ye continue in my Word then are ye my disciples indeed and ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free". John 8,31. God has so clearly revealed His Word and Will to us that we need not err in doctrines of faith. We err whenever we set aside any part of His Word. He who keeps his eyes fastened on the Word of God and refuses to permit human opinions and human reason alter his perception, cannot err. It is for this reason that Christian laymen are exhorted to beware of false pro-

phets, to try the spirits, etc.. Error creeps into the Church only when the naked Words of God are set aside in favor of human interpretations which agree with fallible human reason. It is for this very reason that there is a difference between the Lutheran and Reformed doctrine of the Lord's Supper. We stick to God's clear Word. Our reason objects. We put our reason into subjection under the Word of Christ. The Reformed set aside God's clear Word, and substitute their own interpretation in agreement with human reason. The principle used here by the Reformed was used in the early days of Christianity when the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was under fire. The attempt to make that doctrine acceptable to human reason led to a denial of God's Word, and a denial of the Trinity. In the final analysis all false doctrine in the Church may be traced to this sad principle,-judging doctrine not by God's Word but by human opinion.

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III
Unionism and the Bible

The leaders of our church have consistently maintained that "Unionism is forbidden by all those Scripture passages which warn against false doctrine and false teachers and in those which encourage us to preserve and cherish purity of doctrine". We shall present a list of the proof texts commonly used by us, and examine two of the texts in detail. Also in our circles there have been those who have had doubts that some of these texts refer to such as err in regard to the so-called "non-fundamentals". Thus Dr. A. Brux in his "Re-Appeal to Synod", p.64, in reference to

Rom.16,17-18 says, "These words, Dr. Arndt holds, apply not only to teachers of false doctrines but also to any 'adherent of such principles' inasmuch as such 'help to continue the divisions which thhse teachings have caused'....V.18 he does not adduce. And yet it is this verse, the context of v.17, which clearly indicates that Paul is speaking of such as may no longer be regarded as Christians..... a contextual and fair interpretation of these verses will not warrant their application to such erring persons or teachers as must still be regarded as holding to the fundamentals of Christianity and hence as Christians". Many hold the same view of Matt.7, 15.16a.

A close examination of Rom.16,17-18 will reveal that this passage is a warning which includes every false teacher, no matter in what degree he teaches false doctrine. The following is a literal translation of the passage: "I admonish you brethren, look out for those who cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and stay away from them, for such as these do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own belly and thru smooth speech and artful language they decieve the hearts of the guileless".

παρακαλῶ from παράκλησις literally means "call to one's side". In some cases it means "to teach or instruct". In the sense of "admonish or exhort" it is used in many passages.

διχοστασία from δίχα "in two" and ἵστημι "to stand". It is rightly translated "divisions" or "dissensions".

σκάνδαλον This is a purely biblical word, occurring no less than 25 times in the Greek O.T. and 15 times in the N.T. Literally translated "the stick of a trap".- any impediment placed in the way and causing one not only to stumble, but to fall and to be harmed. In the moral sense it is used for offence, Matt.18,7. This may be applied to false teaching which causes men to lose the truth, and to be lost.

διδαχή from διδάσκω -to teach, and so διδαχή is the thing taught,-doctrine, comprehending a whole set of teachings and sometimes referring to a specific doctrine. Here used as in Titus 2,10,-"doctrine of God", indicating the whole body of Christian truth.

The παρά in this verse is immensely important. It means "along side of"--"beside"--"beyond"-and hence "contrary to". The idea brought out is that the false teachers besides teaching wholesome words teach also unwholesome words. Besides the doctrines of Christ they teach also their own doctrine, not even realizing perhaps that their own opinions finally subvert the doctrine of Christ.

ἐκκλίνετε to turn aside or away from. "Shun". The word may be rendered "keep aloof from", and in reference to the object here its meaning may be clarified by the paraphrase, "do not keep company with false teachers,- give no indication to the outsider that you are brethren in faith". It is a sharp word,-"have nothing to do with them".

χρηστολογία and εὐλογία Thayer: "fair speaking, the smooth and plausible address which simulates goodness". Exp.Gr. Test.: "It refers to the insinuating tone".

εὐλογία language artfully adapted to captivate the hearer. When used with χρηστολογία the latter refers to the substance, while εὐλογία refers to the manner of expression.

ἀκάκων without guile,-used of people who have no fear of evil from others, who distrust no one,-hence are all the more liable to be deceived thru the artful wiles of the errorists.

Dr. T. Graebner (class-room notes) says, "Two kinds of people come under the condemnation of the text. First those who cause division and offense, the heresiearchs who introduce error into the church. Of these we may not meet more than two or three in a lifetime. The others are those who disobey the command "avoid them", all those who adhere to errorists, the general clergy and laity of heterodox churches. It is to be noted that what follows v.17 does not refer to the latter, but to those who are the oject of the warning, those who bring in devisive error". V.18: "It is possible to take this verse as a simple description of the originators of heresy. Even in that case the words need not mean that the teachers in question were epicurean devotees of pleasure".

The passage is an earnest warning from God against false teaching. It show us how earnestly God is concerned about the diffusion of pure doctrine. Every departure from His Word and Will is an abomination in His sight. Every false teaching, no matter how small in importance, is to be regarded as a sinful thing which cannot be tolerated. This applies especially to those who teach God's Word, and also to those who are instructed in

God's Word. Both have a duty over against every false teaching, that is, to avoid it, have nothing to do with it, do not help to propagate it. Do everything in your power to correct it. 1 Tim.6,3-5; 2 John 10.11; Eph.4,3; 1 Tim.5,22; Tit.1,9; Gal. 5,19.

Every false teacher, inasmuch as he teaches false doctrine is the object of the warning in this passage. Inasmuch as he teaches false doctrine he is serving his own belly. In no way can false teaching serve the interests of Christ.

"The apostle does not mean only those who deny fundamental truths of Scripture. They that cause such division may not realize that they are doing it, but as long as they do, we must avoid them, not treat them as brethren in the faith". Proceed.Mich.Dist. 1940, p.56.

Speaking of a number of Scripture passages, including Rom.16,17-18 Dr. Arndt says, C.T.M. Vol. XII, No.1, p.7: "These passages, so it is asserted, do not speak of errorists/ who can still be regarded as Christians, but of people that have abandoned the Christian faith, if they ever did believe; and hence these words do not bear on the question whether Christians of churches opposing each other can practice fellowship. In reply we say that it is a pity when a matter which is simple is made complicated. The passages under discussion speak of people that are division-makers, of persons not 'bringing' or proclaiming the apostolic doctrine, 'teaching otherwise and not consenting to wholeseome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus

Christ'. The injunction, expressed or implied, is that people of this kind must be avoided, which certainly means that we must not have religious fellowship with them".

And then there is Matt.7,15.16a. "Look out for pseudo-prophets, such as come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. By their fruits you shall recognize them". προσέχετε with ἀπό means, literally, "keep holding your mind from", i.e. "watch out for". ψευδοπροφῆται -"pseudo-prophts", "sham-prophets". They come to you. They are never sent of God. ἅρπαξ from ἁρπάζω -to seize, snatch at,-shows destructive effect of all false teaching. It rends and tears the spiritual life like the fangs of a wolf. Deviations from God's Word are never harmless. ἐπιγνώσεσθε -"you shall recognize them"-as what they actually are. The fruits are the doctrines. Their works may deceive us, Matt. 24,24.

This passage is taken from the Savior's sermon on the Mount. He is speaking to believers. He gives them a most necessary warning. There will be those who in dealing with divine Revelation will ignore the Word in their teaching or twist it until it is hardly discernable as truth. They will add and substract from Scripture and substitute for God's Word their own human opinions. Such men are deceivers. Christ does not say to what degree they teach false doctrine. Inasmuch as they deny or reject any part of Scripture they are wolves, and we must beware of them. Frequently their doctrines lie hid behind the smoke-screen of a sheep-

skin. Therefore it is doubly necessary for us to be on guard, and to place these doctrines under the miscroscope of God's inspired Revelation, and scrutinize them carefully in the laboratory of our studies.

Other passages which come into consideration are: 1 Pet.4,11. As preachers of the Word we must neither add to nor substract from the Word of God. Rev.22,18.19; Josh. 1,7; Deut.4,2; 12,32. God is sorely displeased when men in His Church proclaim their own thoughts together with God's Words, and mix tmuth and error. Jer.23,31-32. Note also 2 Tim. 4,1-4; Gal.1,6; 1 Tim.4,16; Tit.1,9; 1 Tim.6,3-5; 2 Pet.2,1.2; Tit.2,1.7.

All these passages show that God will have no unionism in His Church. He will tolerate no indifference toward HisWord. He insists that His Word be preached in its truth and purity. The language in these texts is strong language. There is always a sweeping denunciation of false doctrine. Thus God speaks because His Word is our greatest treasure. To tamper with that Word is a gross sin, and God places it in the same category with the sin of adultery or idolatry.

The same thing is evident also from those texts which apply to all Christians in which God commands them to listen only to such who bring the Wond of God to them unadulterated, and to sever connections with such who do not bring to them His pure Word. Here apply: Rom.16,17-18; 2 John 9.10.11; Matt.7,15.16a; 1 John 4,2; 1 Time.6,2-4; Heb.13,9; 2 Thess.3,6; 2 Tim.3,5; Tit.3,9-11; 1 John 4,1.6;1 Cor.10,32.

IV

The Unionistic Cancer

The most characteristic mark of the unionist is indifference toward the Word ofGod. He is willing to give up doctrines which the Bible teaches for the sake of outward unity in the Church. "It is this wrong attitude toward Scripture that has caused, and is still causing much disturbance and harm in the churches. This wrong attitude, either consciously or unconsciously held, is at the bottom of that wrong tendency and movement in the Church which shall be the special topic of discussion at these synodical meetings: Unionism". Proceed. Texas Dist,,1940, p.10.

The Lord wants us to love His Word, His whole Word. He wants us to believe and to teach everything that He has revealed. He does not say that there are some things which need not be accepted by us. The true Christian does love Christ's Word. He agrees with Jesus, "If a man love me, he will keep my words...He that loveth me not keepth not my sayings". John 14,23-24. The Christian's prayer is, "Sanctify me thru thy truth, thy Word is truth". The Psalmist says, "How sweet are thy Words to my taste, yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth".Ps.119,103. The Christian may talk about fundamental, and non-fundamental doctrines, but he does not make a difference between doctrines which he loves and doctrines which he does not love. He loves the whole Word of God. But the unionist, by his willingness to reject part of God's Word for the sake of outward unity in the Church, shows that he does not cherish the Word

of God as the Lord would have him cherish it. He shows that God's Word in many points is an indifferent thing to him. There are other things more important. Therefore he is willing to surrender certain truths. And he calls himself tolerant when he does this. He is tolerant with error, but intolerant to the truth. He accords equal rights to error and to truth. He is willing to give as much right to the doctrine of salvation by works as he is willing to give to the doctrine of salvation by grace. This is pure indifference to the Word of God.

This indifference has wrought havoc. It has made men uncertain of the truth. When men begin to tolerate an untruth it shows that they themselves are no longer sure of the truth. Zwingli was willing to give in to Luther because he was not certain of the truth of his own teaching. Only those can tolerate error and heresy who have no truth of their own to defend. "The foremost reason why unionism is such a prevalent plague in the Church of today is that skepticism with respect to revealed truths is so wide spread. People lack the assurance that the teachings which they profess in their creeds are eternally true; hence they are lukewarm in their adherence to these teachings and not earnest and zealous in defending them...Oh, for the fire of a deep, honest conviction which burned in the hearts of our fathers and made them love and cherish the doctrines of the Bible as the unmovable and everlasting foundation! Their firm conviction amounted to a consuming passion for the sacred teachings,

which would not entertain the thought of a compromise with the gainsayer. When we have such staunch convictions, unionism does not find a fertile soil". Proceed. Mich.Dist.1940,p.59.

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V

The Way to Union in the Church

God is certainly not pleased by divisions in the Church. His Word is clear on this. But is the unionist's way to union the correct one? Our investigation has shown that the unionist's toleration of untruth is contrary to God's Word. Union cannot be attained by agreeing to ignore the differences. God's Word does not tolerate indifference to His Word. "To endeavor to help the Church thru various human means, thru grand demonstrations, thru sensational speech-making, thru pacts and compromises with the enemies of pure doctrine, thru external federations against a common enemy while internal differences in articles of faith remain,-all this is an idolatrous exaltation of man". (Dr. Walther, quoted in the C.T.M., Vol.Xi, p.9.) The road to union is not strewed with roses. It is a difficult path. The Lutheran of March, 1930, states, "True church unity will not be brought about by an easy accomodation of our practices and usages to those of others. To bring about this desired consummation leads one once more rugged road than an agreement in outward practice which is of a piece with the shallowness of the age in which we live".

The way to union in the Church is to return to

the truth. This calls for strict confessionalism, fearless proclamation of the Word, constant study of the Bible, and willingness to discuss the differences openly and frankly with those who are not in agreement with us. These are the things which the unionists say have brought division into the Church. But it is just the other way around. "Nicht diejenigen, die festhalten an dem klaren Wort der Schrift und an den klar bewiesenen Lehren und Gebrauchen, sind Separatisten oder Schismatiker, sondern diejenigen, die ein Neues einfuehren, sonderlich wenn sie menschliche Philosophie und Spitzfindigkeit anwenden. Die Schuld an der Trennung in der Kirche tragen einzig und allein diejenigen, die die falsche Lehre aufbringen und verteidigen, nicht diejenigen, die sich weigern, eine solche Stellung gutzuheiszen. Hat ja ein Lehrer oder eine Gemeinschaft diese Schuld auf sich geladen, so sollte er, resp. sie, das Unrecht reumuetig abtun und nicht auf andere abzuwaelzen suchen". Proceed. Synod. Conf., 1930, p.39.

Walther: "All must see that loyalty to God's Word does not divide, but truly unites". The Word alone can united disunited church bodies. "The Lutheran plan for healing the breach among the churches is the only God-pleasing, the only effective one. She does not gloss over the error but denounces it for what it is and presents the powerful truth of Scripture in the "not uncertain hope that....good and well-disposed men would be attracted by this renewed and and repeated confession of ours". Book of Concord,

Preface. Lutheranism is not divisive but unifying. The straightforward profession of the truth has never yet caused a split in the Church. It heals the rupture that the denial of the truth causes. The Lutheran program, 'Union in the truth" is the only one that promises real success. It appeals to every Christian. The Lutheran plan does not require him to accept any man-made conditions and dogmas, such as submission to the authority of the Pope or the acceptance of the Apostolic Succession. NO Christian violates his conscience by accepting the Lutheran terms. The Lutheran Church, the Church of the pure doctrine, is thus the only body which is equipped to bring about a Christian union. The Lutheran Church is adapted for uniting all Christians because it summons them not to any man's side but to God's side". Pop.Symb.,pp.19-20.

The Word is the all important thing. Love for it is absolutely necessary. Love for it means love for Christ. And Christ unites. "There can be no true love where there is no true hatred; no love of truth without abhorrence of error....In Christ we can alone find true unity. Only when we meet in this center of all true unity, will we have peace. And we can be in Christ only in a faith which accepts His every Word in His own divine meaning and shrinks with horror from the thought that, in the prostituted name of peace and love, we shall put upon one level the pure and heavenly sense of His Word and the artful corruption of that sense by the tradition of Rome or the vanity of carnal reason". Dr. Krauth,quoted in Bente's American Lutheranism, Vol. 2, p.184.

"Let us also remember that all evangelical churches which in doctrine deviate from the faith once delivered to the saints are no longer firm, safe, and trustworthy pillars of the truth. The greater the deviation from the truth, the weaker is the pillar and the greater the danger that it will crumble and fall and no longer be of any value to those who in the midst of a changing world are longing for something on which they can rely and which will really bring peace and hope to the soul.... Let this be a warning to our own American Lutheran Church, to which God has entrusted His truth as contained in the Scripture and set forth in the glorious confessions of the Lutheran Reformation, never to deviate from this truth, but to hold fast our heritage. Let it be a warning to our Church never to attempt to enter into compromise with those who deny the truth, thus relinquishing certain truths for the purpose of gaining favor with the masses, especially at the present day, when the enemies of Christ within and without the organized Church have joined forces to put an end to Christianity. The danger of making coneessions to those who have a 'different spirit' for the purposes of self-protection seems to be greater than ever before". Dr. Hein, quoted in the C.T.M., Vol. VI, January, p.55.

To remain loyal to the truth which alone unites one must constantly study the truth. To be out of touch with the Bread of Life is as dangerous to the spiritual life as lack of food is to the physical life. A persistent negligence to play on the harps of God

will result in the inability to play on them at all. The unionist of today is quite willing to substitute a best seller for the Bible as his text-book in the pulpit. There is an urgent need of a back to the Bible movement among the leaders in the Church. Says the Presbyterian of May 23, 1940: "It would be impossible to have such a mighty discussion in the Church today as that which shook the Church in the days preceding the disruption of 1838. Such a mighty controversy would be impossible now for two reasons: first, the lamentalbe and deep ignorance of theology; and second, the lack of conviction...To many of us today, alas, these fervent debates on the Federal Headship of Adam, Original Sin, Imputation, Election, Limited Atonement, Inability, would seem to be like the old Princeton definition of philosophical preaching, 'One man telling what he doesn't know to another man who doesn't understand what he is talking about'. But those men knew and understood, and their congregations were as familiar with the names of the leaders in the great debates and the terms of theology as the congregations of tday are with the stars of the moving-picture theatre and the language of the popular columnist". Yes, a real, deep, thorough-going study of the Bible, and of the differences which exist between the churches on the basis of the Bible would go a long way in bringing the churches closer together. Of course, before this can be of any benefit, there must be a deep-seated conviction that God's Word is the unalterable truth

of heaven, that complete submission to it is the unchangeable will of God, and that it alone can guide us to true union. "The only way, however, to retain this conviction, or to regain it when it threatens to slip away, is by letting the Word of God dwell in us richly in church, school, and home. Especially must we pastors, in this day of multifarious activity, guard against the danger of neglecting our daily studies in the Christian doctrine. Now we have this Christian doctrine in the inspired Word of the Apostles and Prophets, in the infallible Word of Scripture. The Holy Spirit is in and with this Word and teaches us over and over to see in it the Word of God, to regard it as our highest treasure, to love it sincerely, and teach it without abridgment or altercation unto the salvation of men's souls...When we, by the grace of God, contend for the unadulterated doctrine of the Word of God and avoid all fellowship with false doctrine...this is not religious fanaticism but propaganda for the Christian Church on earth which is well-pleasing to the Master". Unionism, by F. Pieper, (1924), p.39.

Together with the study of God's Word there should be discussion of the differences among those who are not united. For this reason conferences should be arranged (as has been done in the Lutheran Church) at which the differences may be discussed. The discussions should be carried on openly and frankly, and in the spirit of love. Such frank and open discussions have gone a long way in the Lutheran Church to bring divided factions together. Even where only a little has been accomplished, the members of the opposing parties have

come to understand one another much better than before.

The way to union is not easy. It is not easy to abide by strict confessional standards. Because of it men have been hated, and even persecuted. It has never been popular to stick with the pure teachings of the Bible. "That strict confessionalism will never become popular we admit at once. If anybody thinks that the Church, in order to succeed, must have a message which will meet with universal acclaim, then the preaching which is based on strict confessionalism is not what he is looking for. But to spread a message which all will accept is not identical with promoting the true progress of the Church. What the world needs is the preaching of the Word ofGod, especially of the blessed Gospel of Jesus Christ. This message will always be a savor of death unto death to some, while-God be thanked fot it!-it will likewise be a savor of life unto life for many. Those people that think it is an infallible sign of genuine progress when large numbers are added to a church and declare themselves ready to carry its banner are very much mitaken". Dr. Arndt, C.T.M. Vol.XII, Jan.1941, p.11. Again, "In consequence of our firm stand we must expect to suffer ridicule, hatred, and persecution. We undoubtedly will not earn any more gratitude for our labors on behalf of sound Lutheranism than our fathers earned in their day. Our business is to remain loyal to the Word of God and humbly accept its teachings. It may cost us certain things which appeal

to our human pride-distinction, honor, prominence,. We may win such titles as 'self-righteous Pharisees', 'religious bigots', 'narrow sectarians', etc. We may be isolated from certain activities which the natural man would enjoy. What is part of the cross which we must take up and place upon our shoulders when we follow Christ". Proceed.East. Dist.,1931, p.78.

Finally, we must remember that it is not we but God Himself alone who unites and builds the Church. He alone preserves it. He alone guides it. We must beware lest we think that by our own shrewdness and good intentions we can build, preserve, and guide it. Our concern must always be not to hinder its growth and progress. We need not fear that we become guilty of this by remaining loyal to His Word thru which God builds the Church. In these days of materialism, laxity, and false liberty, we are often inclined to think that it would be a great help to the cause of Christianity if we surrendered certain truths, tolerated certain errors, and compromised on certain issue with those who profess to be fighting the same cause against the enemies of the Kingdom of Christ. Let history impress upon us its lessons. Let God's Word guide our actions. "May Almighty God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ grant the grace of His Holy Ghost that we all may be one in Him and constnatly abide in this Christian unity which is well pleasing to Him. Amen". (Formula of Concord, Epitome, Article XI).

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