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Suggestive Material for Song Service Address

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faith even before kings, when dangers beset them on all sides, how much more should we do so in our day of religious freedom! Ps. 66, 16; Acts 4, 20; 2 Cor. 4, 13; Matt. 10, 32. As we owe a debt of gratitude to our forebears for having brought us up in this doctrine, we face the obligation of handing it down to our children and children's children—in our schools, colleges, and seminaries and in our mission-fields at home and abroad.

Let us all take this to heart—pastors, teachers, Sunday-school leaders, Bible-class instructors, parents, grandparents, young men and young women—and pray God daily for the grace to remain loyal to this faith and Church.

God's Word and Luther's doctrine pure
Shall now and evermore endure! W. G. POLACK.

Suggestive Material for Song Service Address.

For National Lutheran Music Sunday, May 4,
or for Cantate Sunday.

The Lutheran Church possesses in its beautiful hymns a priceless treasure. This fact is often attested to by non-Lutheran authorities on hymnology. On a recent lecture tour through the United States the greatest living authority on Bach, Dr. Terry, of Edinburgh, referred to the Lutheran hymnal as "that precious legacy of the Reformation." The man who gave the Church of the Reformation her first hymnal is the same who gave the Church the open Bible by putting the Word of God into the vernacular, the same who summed up the fundamental teachings of the Holy Book in that marvelous "Laymen's Bible," the Small Catechism, the great Reformer himself.

LUTHER IS THE FOUNDER OF CONGREGATIONAL SINGING.

Before the Reformation the singing in the public services was carried on by the clergy. Choristers and priests chanted Latin hymns, which the people did not understand. Hymns in the vernacular existed, but only on rare occasions were the people permitted to sing them in public worship. When the Reformation restored the doctrine of the universal priesthood of all believers, the Christian congregation was given its full rights again, also the right actively to take part in the services. To make such participation possible, Luther provided an order of worship in the language of the people. In this service congregational singing became an integral part of public worship. Instead of Latin hymns, Luther substituted German hymns. Thus the Reformer became of necessity the founder of congregational hymn-singing, an undertaking for which he was eminently fitted both as poet and as musician.

The first hymnal Luther published for the Church was the so-called *Achtliederbuch* of 1523. It contained four of the Reformer's own hymns. In the various hymnals which appeared during his lifetime, Luther is credited with thirty-seven hymns, most of which he wrote for the early editions. In producing a new hymnology for the Church, Luther first of all made use of the best hymns already in existence. One-third of his hymns are translations and reworkings of the choicest old Latin hymns. To these belong the magnificent *Te Deum Laudamus* (not in our English hymnal), the sturdy "We All Believe in One True God" (No. 394), the joyous "Savior of the Heathen, Come" (No. 141), and the ardent "Come, Holy Ghost, God and Lord" (No. 257).

Other pre-Reformation sacred songs Luther purged of heresies, revised, and adapted for use in the Church. Among these are: "God the Father be Our Stay" (No. 271), with its inspiring call to courage, and "Now Do We Pray God the Holy Ghost" (No. 260), with its fervent prayer for true faith. (Others in this group: Nos. 224, 431.)

Versions of psalms and paraphrases of other portions of Holy Writ constitute nearly one half of the great Reformer's hymns. In this group is found Luther's most famous hymn "A Mighty Fortress" (Ps. 46), that defiant battle-cry of the Reformation. A versification of his favorite psalm (130) is the expressive confessional hymn "Out of the Depths I Cry to Thee" (No. 415), the poetic utterance of a soul bowed under the weight of guilt, yet firmly reliant on divine grace and pardon. (Others in this group: Nos. 277 (Ps. 14), 278 (Ps. 12), 282 (Ps. 124), 446 (Ps. 128), and 480 (Ps. 67). The Christmas story as found in Luke's gospel was turned into one of the gems of Lutheran hymnology, "From Heaven Above to Earth I Come" (No. 150).

Of hymns entirely original perhaps the best is Luther's first congregational hymn "Dear Christians, One and All Rejoice" (No. 310), a magnificent hymn of exultant faith, which converted many souls to Lutheranism. (Others in this group: Nos. 162, 274.)

To render poetically the great truths of the Catechism, Luther wrote or revised hymns for each Chief Part: for the Law, Nos. 391, 392; for the Creed, No. 394; for Prayer, No. 396; for Baptism, No. 401; for Confession, No. 415; for the Lord's Supper, Nos. 431, 441. For the three main festivals of the church-year, Christmas, Easter, Pentecost, he also adequately supplied hymns to commemorate the great acts of God recounted on these days.

Luther realized that to make a hymn popular it must carry a tune easily sung, pleasing to the ear, and expressing the sentiment of the text. To this end he often chose for his hymns existing melodies, such as those of the Latin hymns and of sacred and secular folk-songs; he reworked and adapted them to suit the words of the text. Being a trained musician himself and a player of some ability on the

lute and flute, Luther also composed original tunes, some of which, such as the vigorous, fervid melody of "A Mighty Fortress," have become immortal.

The new, yet old faith which Luther preached, salvation through the mediation of Christ, the only Savior, was the source, the fountain-head, of the new hymnody. Luther's hymns are objective. They proclaim the free, unmerited grace of God. They are a spontaneous outpouring of praise for the newly found truths of Holy Writ, a joyous testimony of the restored favor of God. (Of Hymn 150, stanza 14: "My heart for very joy doth leap.") They are not couched in dry, didactic terms, but in choice words of childlike simplicity and dignified devotional earnestness. They possess a universal appeal. Luther was exceptionally felicitous in voicing the religious emotions of a people recently freed from the bondage of fear. As mouthpiece of the Church his hymns express the joyous certainty, the power of faith, the confidence of triumphant victory. (Of Hymn 162, stanza 4: "Let hell and Satan rage and chafe, God is our Brother.") They are lyrical supplications for succor, for strength, for perseverance.

Truly, a priceless treasure of Christian song! How fortunate for our Church that it had as its founder not only a great reformer, a mighty preacher of righteousness, an unexcelled translator of Holy Writ, but also a supreme writer of classic hymns, who by his own example and by inspiring hundreds to follow in his footsteps (47 Lutheran hymnals before Luther's death, thousands of hymns since Luther), has made our Lutheran Church in truth "the singing Church."

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Theological Observer. — Kirchlich-Zeitgeschichtliches.

I. Amerika.

Aus der Synode. Unser *Lutheran School Journal* teilt mit: „Schon lange war es Wunsch und Wille unserer Missionare in China, Luthers Meinen Statesjismus in chinesischer Sprache zu drucken, da er bis jetzt nur teilweise und auch nur in sogenanntem Mimeographdruck vorhanden war. Aber wegen der politischen Unruhen im Jahre 1927 wurde das Drucken verschoben. Jedoch, nun ist das Drucken der ersten 5,000 Exemplare am 25. November vorigen Jahres, Gott sei Dank, vollendet worden. „Das war für uns alle eine große Freude“, schreibt einer der Missionare, „und darum wurde hier in Hankow auch ein rechtes Freudenfest gefeiert. Sämtliche Christen aus allen unsern Kapellen waren eingeladen worden, zu der größten Kapelle zu kommen. Zwei unserer Evangelisten hielten die Festreden, Herr Wei Tien En und Herr Sen Sao Kai.“

Ist das nicht zu viel? Eine St. Louiser deutsche Zeitung meldet auf Grund eines Berichts der „Affoziierten Presse“, datiert Koburg, den 29. März: „Die im elften Jahrhundert erbaute Burg Koburg dürfte in der