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## Testimonials for the Lutheran Position in Education

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objectively, freed from the prejudice which modern German theologians have injected into the matter, he will find that Lutheranism has always had "a dogma on the subject" and that this dogma is thoroughly Scriptural, so that no Lutheran theologian ought to depart from it, even by a hair's breadth. This dogma is presented by Dr. A. L. Graebner in his *Outlines of Doctrinal Theology* as follows: "The Bible was written by divine inspiration, inasmuch as the inspired penmen performed their work as the personal organs of God, especially of the Holy Spirit, who not only prompted and actuated them toward writing what they wrote, but also suggested to them both the thoughts and the words they uttered as they wrote." This nicely formulated proposition agrees with what orthodox Lutheran theologians have at all times believed concerning the inspiration of Holy Scripture.

JOHN THEODORE MUELLER.

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### Testimonials for the Lutheran Position in Education.

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We Lutherans of the Synodical Conference are sometimes inclined to be somewhat apologetic with regard to our whole system of religious instruction. This is true even of our catechetical training in preparation for the rite of confirmation and the admission to adult or communicant membership in the Church. How else shall we explain the lowering of standards of indoctrination, particularly in adult classes? And yet, apart from Scripture precept and example, we have the support of some of the staunchest champions of the Bible, as when J. Gresham Machen writes, in his book *What Is Faith?* (p. 156 f.): "It should, I think, be made much harder than it is now to enter the Church; the confession of faith that is required should be a *credible confession*; and if it becomes evident upon examination that a candidate has no notion of what he is doing, he should be advised to enter upon a course of instruction before he becomes a member of the Church. Such a course of instruction, moreover, should be conducted, not by comparatively untrained laymen, but *ordinarily by the ministers*; the excellent institution of the *catechetical class* should be *generally revived*. Those churches, like the *Lutheran bodies* in America, which have maintained that institution *have profited enormously* by its employment; and their example deserves to be generally followed." 1)

But just as little as we have reason to be ashamed of our traditional thorough course of instruction preceding the admission to adult

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1) Cp. the present author's *The Religion of the Child, and Other Essays*, pp. 54—62, *passim*. — The italics throughout this article are ours.

membership in the Lutheran Church, so little is there need of an apologetic air when the question concerns the full-time instruction given in our week-day church schools, our so-called day-schools or Lutheran parish-schools. The Biblical principles which have caused us to maintain this institution, as received from our fathers, are well known in our circles and have been set forth time and again in books, articles in our various church publications, and essays read at synodical conventions.<sup>2)</sup>

But it seems not to be generally known in our circles that some of the outstanding educators in America, especially in various Reformed denominations, have emphasized the same principles of education and training that have impelled us to establish our parish-school system. In looking over his files, the present writer was struck by the number of testimonies from such sources setting forth the same truths which we have so consistently presented to our own congregations. The following selections are chosen almost at random, but they will amply demonstrate our contention that educators who have made a careful study of the entire field are bound to reach the same conclusions concerning religion as the one sound basis of true education.

Our first quotation is from a book by H. F. Cope, General Secretary of the Religious Education Association, who for a number of years was very active in the field of general and religious education. He writes:—<sup>3)</sup>

*“Religious instruction is the peculiar responsibility of religious agencies. Under the system of government in the United States the State assumes no responsibility for the content of religious instruction. The State can make no specific provision to ensure to children their heritage of knowledge of religion. That is because the content and character of this knowledge is recognized to be a ‘matter of conscience’; because it is impossible to teach religion without teaching a particular kind of religion. The State refuses to particularize in religion. It will in no way, either positively or negatively, either by provision or prohibition, interfere with freedom of conscience. The separation of Church and State has resulted in the separation of religious knowledge from general knowledge. This is a very essential and vital part of our theory of freedom in the State, one in which every lover of truth and religion ought to rejoice, because it forever renders impossible the suppression of truth; it prevents oppression by any majority in secular power, and it is the basis of our whole life of freedom.*

2) Cp. the very recent essays by Rudnick, A. Brunn, Dannenfeldt, and others.

3) *The Week-day Church School*, pp. 28. 29. 38. 39. (Publ. by Doran.)

"This theory applied, results in a definite situation: public education is curtailed as to its curriculum. It is forced to omit an essential subject. Public education in the United States is thoroughly secularized.

"Now, this does not involve secularization in any reprehensible sense; it need not and ought not to mean that public education is destructive of spiritual idealism. School people do not have to be materialists. The fact that the school cannot teach religion does not set it in opposition to religion. So far as the theory of freedom is concerned, it only means that religion as a definite subject of study is excluded from the curriculum of public schools.

"But it must be evident to any one that *a system of education that omits religion in its training for life tends to train for life that omits religion*. But this is only the negative side; the churches must teach religion, not only because the schools must not, but because they cannot. Only a religious agency can engage in religious education. No other social agency, as conditions now are, either will or can discharge this responsibility.

"Still considering types of week-day instruction which originate in, and are conducted by, the individual church, we come to the group which approaches much nearer to a system of religious instruction. These are found:—

"1. In parochial schools. One is content with only slight reference to the well-known parochial schools conducted by Lutheran and certain other churches because here *religious instruction is integral in the general program of each school*. So far as concerns our problem, that of providing with religious instruction children attending state schools, the significant lesson of the parochial school is that *thorough general education is possible even where definite time is taken daily for specifically religious instruction*. Using daily from thirty to sixty minutes for this purpose and still carrying full-grade studies does not seem to injure the health or derange the social programs of children in parochial schools. Where the parochial schools are required to carry the exact schedules of the public schools, an additional period is prefixed to the morning studies; pupils often arrive at such schools at eight or at eight-fifteen A. M. daily. Where parochial-school work compares unfavorably with public school work, the inferiority is due not to the fact of religious instruction, but to the fact that the teachers, the 'sisters,' often come from training seriously inadequate and quite inferior to that of grade-school teachers.

"While the parochial school is not the American solution of our problem [?], it ought constantly to rebuke Protestant indifference with the picture of a people who take children seriously, who are willing to be doubly taxed for education in order that their children might be trained for their Church.

"The subject of parochial schools, in the sense of schools supported by churches and designed to give children their entire schooling, is too large for discussion here. But it is well to remember that the enterprise of week-day schools of religion is not a new one, that many churches through centuries have held the religious instruction of children so important that they have made the very large sacrifices necessary to maintain duplicate school systems. Whatever we may think of parochial schools, and much as we may lament the separation of children in sectarian groups [?], these schools are a testimony to the earnestness and consistency of the Roman Catholic and Lutheran communions, to the sincerity of religious purpose with which they regard their children, and to their willingness to put into practise their convictions of spiritual responsibility for the young."

Our next selection is from a recent book by H. S. Tuttle, Professor of Educational Sociology at the University of Oregon. His book is entitled *Character Education by State and Church*,<sup>4</sup>) and the following paragraphs are of particular interest to us:—

"Every experience of life which comes to be felt in its relation to the total system of unified value — to God's will — becomes religious. Religion cannot be added to the program. It can only be organized into it. *The more intimately the experiences of life can be associated with conscious religious experiences, the more religious will all life become.*

"In varying degrees this principle is recognized in the efforts of religious educators to relate a richer program of religious training to the high business of secular education.

"The objective of religious education is complete Christian living, the Christian motive in the making of all life choices."

"The educational experience of the learner should be a unified consistent whole, resulting in the highest integration of personality."

"As a result of these newer trends in education there is a growing consciousness that education is a continuous process in the experience of the child and that some sort of articulation must be worked out between religious education and public education. Religion cannot be taught apart from the rest of the child's experience and be effective as religion."

"In the presence of the emergence of this new sense of the fundamental importance of religious education there is a growing consciousness of a need of complete reconstruction of the traditional methods of religious education. There is a refreshing spread of the conviction that *religious education, if it is to be vital, must permeate and affect all life* and not remain a departmentalized system of dogma or one wholly identified with a specialized institution."

4) *Character Education by State and Church*, pp. 89—91. (The Abingdon Press.)

*"If religion is to be vital, it should be correlated both with life and the week-day school. It must be taught, and it must be practiced, every day in the week."*

*"Moral and religious training is most efficacious when it is joined with instruction in other kinds of knowledge. It should so permeate these that its influence will be felt in every circumstance of life."*

"The three current plans of cooperation between Church and State treated in succeeding chapters permit the inclusion of religion as such and with it a definite effort at motivating conduct. It is this element that accounts for the demand for one or more of these plans in addition to the character-education program of the public school."

A third quotation is taken from a book edited by Walter M. Howlet, Secretary of Religious Education of the Greater New York Federation of Churches.<sup>5)</sup> The paragraphs quoted are from essays by J. Valdemar Moldenhauer and John W. Suter. They read:—

"Some principles are now accepted as imperative. First, every Church that has given any serious thought to the question of religious education insists that the Church is responsible for the expense incurred in carrying on this work among the children and young people. It is hardly necessary to argue that the Church should properly maintain its institutions of religious education rather than have it supported by the old, simple system of making the children themselves bring their pennies and nickels and pay for their own religious education. We have put the support of the church-school in the church budget. Some churches say that their expenses are such that it is out of the question to adopt such a plan, but they admit that it is the proper way.

*"The right way for us as Christians would be to have the Church teach our children secular knowledge; but there are many reasons why we cannot do this at the present time. [?] It would be ideal for the Church to teach its boys and girls everything they have to learn—arithmetic, reading, writing, etc.—and mix it all in with religion, helping the children to see that there is only one universe and one God and that no two truths can ever contradict each other.*

"What I am advocating now is putting God in the center. It is the only thing that matters. We must think of each boy and girl and ask ourselves this question, 'What effect is my school having on this boy or girl with respect to his or her relation to God? We have been saying, 'What effect has this school on this boy?' But I want to rivet attention on what effect this school has on the boy in respect to this boy's relation to God. It is all right to teach him how to draw neat maps and see how he improves from September to June; but

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5) *Religion the Dynamic of Education*, pp. 63. 64. 99. 102. 103. (Harper & Bros.)

our school does not exist to make him an expert cartographer. What I want to know is, *What influence has God upon that boy's life?* If that boy is influenced more by God in June than in September, I want that increasing influence to be what my school has helped to do for the boy. The whole point of the religious life is to put people into a position where their hearts and souls are open to the play of the Spirit upon them, so that God will be helping them make their choices and thus leading them into acts of purity and honesty and kindness, and so on. That is what it is all about, and nothing but God should be in the center of our curriculum and efforts in religious education.

"Now, that is why the old-timers were really right. When they put the Bible in the center, they meant God. I am making a collection of the points at which modern religious education is very like the old, and here is one of the points. Some of us have been rather poking fun at the Bible-school. But these people meant God and had the right idea." Add to these statements the need of knowledge of Jesus Christ as the Savior of mankind, and you have a very fine plea indeed.

Our next quotation is from a book by G. J. Jordan, a writer who has been doing extensive work in the field of religious psychology.<sup>6)</sup> He writes:—

"Imitation is a powerful instinctive tendency in the religious life of a child. A parent affirms this fact when he tells his friends, 'We must go to church now; you see the children are beginning to notice things.' However powerful the inner urge towards religion may be, it can find no outlet except through the use of this instinctive process. In this sense it is like language; ideas are fundamental, but their expression depends on the child's power to imitate the words of those around it. A small boy of four years, brought up on the prairie, came to England and was present when two little girls were saying their evening prayer. He asked what they were doing, why they were putting their hands together and closing their eyes, who God was, and why they spoke to one whom they could not see. This little fellow had not heard prayers or grace throughout his short life, and his imitative powers had not been utilized. The Roman Church owes much of its success among the children to its knowledge of the psychology of imitation. It is an inspiring sight to see hundreds of Roman Catholic children recite the Creed with the reverent bowing and genuflection at the appropriate words. The children are quite uncritical; but the battle for their souls is half won. The secret is that *imitation produces habit in the child because he has no inhibitions* and no previous experience and is by his feeling mass very suggestible; and imitation

6) *A Short Psychology of Religion*, pp. 46. 47. (Harper & Bros.)

of a bodily state means the incipient sharing of the mental attitude behind it. *The psychology of religion might have a good deal to say in favor of the resumption of the old customs of family prayers and saying of grace at meal-times* and other modes of religious expressions which our fathers practised and which so many of us have outgrown."

A fifth selection of statements advocating full religious training is taken from a book by H. J. Sheridan, in the *Standard Training Series* edited by E. B. Chappel.<sup>7)</sup> He writes on the responsibility of the Church:—

"In the complexity of the influences going into the making of the life of the day the Church finds its opportunity and responsibility. It must guide, create, repress, inspire, and steady. The task is important and attractive.

"First of all, the question should be asked of the Church, as it has been asked of other social institutions, Is it possible that this institution is in some respect creating problems instead of solving them, making things worse instead of better?

"To those who are inclined to regard this question as unnecessary it may be well to point out that the criticism is occasionally made that the Church is responsible for the development of undesirable character traits. A prominent educator, a man interested in religion and all that the Church stands for, once said that he thought it probable that children learned more harm than good at Sunday-school. In support of his position he cited cases of boys and girls who had developed habits of irreverence and inattentiveness during prayer and the singing of hymns, who had learned to abuse the property of the church, who had become jealous of others as a result of participating in various Sunday-school contests.

"Probably few of us would join in a wholesale condemnation of the Sunday-school, but we must admit that there is something of truth in this criticism. We have all known cases where something quite different from the thing which the teachers professed to teach was learned.

"Nor do we find it hard to understand how this has happened. Our study of the learning process helps us to realize that it is possible for the total church-school situation to develop undesirable habits and attitudes at the same time that the teaching is definitely intended to result in the development of quite different ones.

"The first task of *the church-school*, then, is to *examine its own total program in order to see if it is all of such a nature as to secure good results*. Nothing should be overlooked. The building, its equipment, its up-keep, text-books, other educational materials, the school

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7) *Growth in Religion*, pp. 79. 80. (The Cokesbury Press.)



program and spirit, the attitudes and outlook of the teachers — *all these must be in harmony with the best standards.*"

Let us next take a book edited by H. H. Sherman, General Secretary of the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, in a published symposium of a Conference on Religion and Education held in 1929.<sup>8</sup>) In an article furnished by Paul B. Kern the following passage occurs: —

*"All programs in religious education lead at last to the local church. It is here that they fail or succeed, and by this test they must at last be judged. The General Motors, manufacturers of automobiles for the public, have in connection with their plant a proving-ground. Here every condition of road is encountered, and before any car is offered to the public it must meet the rigid test imposed upon it on the proving-ground. Here are steep grades and rough roads and dangerous curves and mud-holes, and no car is worthy of the public's dollar which cannot successfully encounter every one of these difficulties. The local church is the proving-ground of educational theory. Here a negative pragmatism at least operates. If the plan will not work there, it is not sound. The local church offers every kind of test for our educational theories. Here is the steep hill of indifference, the rough road of lack of equipment, and the bogs of untrained leadership and dulness of vision. Hence we are at the center of the problem when we think of 'The Congregation in Action in the Field of Christian Education.'*

*"There are two words in the title of this address that arrest my attention immediately, and I ask you to pause a moment at the beginning to look at these words. First, 'the congregation.' It is an abstract term, broad and general; but back of its generality is at last a group of individual persons, and we shall not feel the thrill of this task if we forget that at last the local church is simply a group of God's individual children united and personally struggling and living in the communion of saints. The church is a living thing."*

We finally quote from two books by Walter Albion Squires, Director of Week-day Religious Instruction of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>9</sup>) He writes: —

*"Mechanistic psychology would destroy all thought of this centrality of Jesus in the religious life of the individual. It denies to consciousness all power to modify conduct, and it discredits the*

8) *Education and Religion*, pp. 63. 64. (The Cokesbury Press.)

9) *Psychological Foundations of Religious Education*, pp. 134—136; *The Pedagogy of Jesus in the Twilight of To-day*, pp. 30. 31. 275. 276. 291. 292. (Both books published by Doran.) Another book by the same author, *Educational Movements of To-day*, published by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., presents the same arguments.

mystical reality of religion. If Jesus cannot affect the life of an individual through His teachings and through the influence of His matchless life, if He cannot come into soul contact with the souls that believe in Him, He is altogether excluded as a factor in the determination of human conduct and the building of human character.

*“Religious Education which Is No Longer Christ-centered.—*The customary educational program of the Protestant Church has been woefully defective. The time set apart for this great task has been so inadequate as to make effective teaching well-nigh impossible. *Teachers have been for the most part well-meaning, but inefficient amateurs.* Supervision has been almost wholly lacking. Lesson materials have been unattractive in form and sometimes unsuited in subject-matter to the age groups for which they were intended. Church-schools have failed to reach any large proportion of the children of the land and have offered such a poor program that the pupils enrolled have usually gone away without forming any lasting relationships with the Church. And yet this sadly defective program has produced some remarkable results. Eighty-seven per cent. of all the additions to the Protestant churches of our country comes out of the Sunday-school. *There must be something tremendously vital in religious education to enable it to function at all under so many handicaps.*

*“What we need is adequate time for religious nurture, a program pedagogically complete, trained and conscientious teachers, skilled supervision, and lesson materials suited to the different periods of life.* We do not need a new theology, in which the God revealed in Jesus Christ is lost to view and a dim problematical Deity builded out of human social relationships set up in His stead. I am fully persuaded that all improvements in teaching methods and in lesson materials will count for naught if we build our hopes upon a program in which the world's Savior is not central.

*“A type of religious education which is no longer Christ-centered is already manifest in America, and it can be traced to the type of psychology which is taught in many of our colleges and universities. We have lesson courses that are almost wholly extra-Biblical in their content and which make only incidental references to the life and teachings of Jesus. We have text-books for the religious instruction of high-school pupils in which the life of Jesus is presented with hardly a suggestion concerning His unique character and His professed relationships to God. We have project-teaching which aims at social service and a sense of universal brotherhood and which is falling flat because an adequate incentive is lacking. It was Jesus who first set the hearts of people aflame for service and brotherhood. Any program of religious education which does not center in Him, which does not provide adequate information concerning Him and*

lead to a personal choice of Him as Savior and Lord, may run along for a little while on borrowed power, but it must fail in the end because of unreliable incentives." —

*"An Enlarging Conception as to the Importance of Religious Education.* — That there is a growing conception as to the importance of religious education is evident to all who have given careful heed to the matter. Such a conception is by no means universal, nor is it even general, but it is growing here and there, sometimes in places most unexpected. Even the nation-wide conspiracy of the freethinkers to destroy the week-day church-school movement is an evidence that these opponents of religion realize the far-reaching consequences which arise when religion is adequately taught to children. The efforts of mechanistic psychology and materialistic philosophy to capture the schools of the Church indicate that even in the greatest universities of the land the church-schools are seen to be of weighty importance.

"Our ablest public-school leaders have discovered a grave defect in American education which they realize *only religious teaching can fill*. Public-school people who are idealists, and most of them are, have come to understand that under our system of government the most vital elements of education cannot be secured in tax-supported schools. Through first-hand contact with the childhood and youth of the nation these *teachers are learning to appreciate the importance of religious education*. Judges of juvenile courts have seen the tide of delinquency among children and youth mounting higher and higher, and they have been compelled to conclude that the only basic remedy lies in the religious nurture of the young.

"'Telling' is the pedagogy of Jesus. *It is quite impossible to bring the teaching methods of Jesus into line with the theories of those who would eliminate the informational phases of education*. He was continually giving His pupils information. He gave them such information as was needed when they were face to face with a situation demanding a choice, but He also gave them information under other circumstances. He evidently gave much religious information, confidently expecting that it would become a part of the intellectual background of His pupils, manifesting itself as attitudes and ideals and capable of helping the pupil to make right choices in a wide range of situations. He seems to have taken the common-sense view that a well-informed mind is capable of thinking clearly and accurately on matters of conduct and is therefore more likely to make right choices than is the case with an unformed and confused mind. The Great Teacher sometimes told His pupils things which they could comprehend in only the dimmest sort of way and which they were not yet capable of applying to their own conduct. He did things that puzzled them greatly. He once said to one of them, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.' *True teachers of*

*the Christian religion must be like their Leader. They must not be too much bound by that which is immediately practicable. They must take a long look ahead and think of their pupils as they will be, not merely of them as they are.*

“Jesus made much use of ‘telling’ because it had to do with thought. He knew that in touching the thinking of His pupils, He was touching their lives. He put great emphasis on thinking. He believed that ‘out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.’ He taught His disciples to believe that evil acts were the expression of evil thoughts, that good acts were the result of right thoughts. His pedagogy cannot be reconciled with any theory which holds that thinking always follows action as a result and never precedes it as a cause.

*“The Centrality of Jesus in the Christian Religion.*—Perhaps the solution of our problem is suggested by the inherent nature of the Christian religion. Christianity is unique among all the religions of the world with regard to the place it assigns to its Founder in its system of doctrine and in the life which it enables its adherents to attain. *Jesus is central in the Christian religion.* He is central in the Sacred Writings, which have such an important place in the Christian religion. If we make Jesus central in the educational program, the Scriptures will be central in the way that they ought to be central.

“To make Jesus central in the program is to make the pupil central also. *To make Jesus central is to make the pupil's needs central.* Every need that religious education is commissioned to supply is found in Him who said, ‘I am the Vine, and ye are the branches. Without Me ye can do nothing.’ There is no character trait that is desirable which He does not possess in perfection. He is the perfect ideal, and if He is so central in the teaching of the Church that children and youth are enabled to see Him as He is, the foundations of their religious development are thereby laid. It is well enough to emphasize the fact that the religious teacher ought to know the pupil; but the thing of transcending importance is that *the pupil should be taught to know Jesus.* To know Him is the first step in the process of becoming like Him.

“To make Jesus central in the program is to make the program truly life-centered. He is the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Him. To make Him central in the religious educational program is to make life in its totality central in the program. He was perfect in His physical, intellectual, and spiritual development. His was the ideal life. His life, and not the imperfect life of the pupil, is fitted to establish the governing principles of the educative process.

“By making Jesus central in our teaching, we make the pupil

more truly central than we do when we make the program center in our own imperfect notions as to what the pupil is. We can analyze the nature of the pupil and guess at some of his needs, but the Great Teacher knows His needs." \_\_\_\_\_

Many more quotations from various writers in the field of Christian education could be added; for men like Athearn, Shaver, Stout, and others have expressed themselves time and again on the principles involved, and though their solution is often inadequate and incorrect, we may well rejoice that our position finds such excellent support in the educational literature of the present day. P. E. KRETZMANN.

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## Study on the Eisenach Epistle-Lesson for the Third Sunday in Lent.

1 PET. 1, 13—16.

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In glowing language the apostle had pointed out to his troubled and sorrowing fellow-pilgrims through a dark and dreary world the bright and shining star of Christian hope, every word throbbing with intense longing for the realization of his glorious vision. He had spoken of a hope which is not content with the fleeting joys and pleasures of this world, with the passing honors and glories of this time. No, Christian hope raises its eye to the world to come and expectantly looks forward to eternity for the realization of its desires. It looks forward to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that fadeth not away," v. 4. It is a hope for a salvation so great that prophets have inquired and diligently searched into its nature, v. 10; yea, so glorious that even angels, though they always behold the face of the Father, desire to look into the things, v. 12, to be revealed on that day of praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ, v. 7. It is, moreover, a hope not based on human reflections and conclusions, but on the abundant mercy of God and the resurrection of Christ from the dead; a hope implanted in the hearts of the believers by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, v. 3; a sure hope of an inheritance of which even hell cannot rob them, for it is reserved in heaven for them, v. 4, while their faith, which grasps this gracious gift, and their hope, which confidently looks forward to final salvation, is kept and preserved in their hearts by the selfsame almighty power of God that engendered it, v. 5. From every viewpoint Christian hope is perfect hope, a hope so flawless, so immaculate, so complete, as God alone can conceive and create and grant. This is the hope begotten in the heart of every Christian.

Having described the perfection of Christian hope, the apostle at once draws the conclusion, v. 13: "*Therefore, being girt up as to*