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Justification, Sanctification, and Stewardship in Their Aims and Relation to Each Other

Essay read before the Pastoral Conference of the Western District
of the Missouri Synod, October, 1935

"Three hackneyed terms," some one may say. "Why waste valuable time on them when there are greater subjects to discuss?" But are there? Is it not true that, if we really knew what these terms signify, if we knew not only their dictionary definition, but were thoroughly intimate with them by much contemplation, consideration, and cultivation, "tasting, touching, and handling them," gratefully and reverently, there would be a great change in our attitude and mode of life, a rejuvenation of our spiritual energies, the suppression of the spirit of pessimism and lethargy, and the beginning of a new era of accomplishments? The peril always exists that these great things, justification, sanctification, and stewardship, are little more to us than names and that, when we have learned something about the etymology of these terms and can give a definition of them gotten from some reliable dogmatics, we assume that we know them. The great French philosopher Pascal correctly said: "The world is satisfied with words; few care to dive beneath the surface." How we deceive ourselves! The man born blind may talk about colors, repeating what he hears people say about them, but their nature remains a mystery to him. What is needed with respect to the great Bible concepts is that we ponder them not only with the head, but with the heart; not only with keen concentration, but in fervent prayer; not from a distance, but in closest proximity; not merely as scientists and scholars, but in grateful, loving appreciation, realizing that our salvation rests on the realities which they represent. Walther says (*Brosamen*, p. 392): "Reine Lehre und reine Erkenntnis sind naemlich immer beisammen. . . . Reine Lehre fehlt da, wo man sich nur in knechtischem Gehorsam unter das Bekenntnis der rechtlgaeubigen Kirche beugt, und zwar aengstlich nachzusprechen sucht, was diese vorgesprochen hat, aber dabei ohne eigene lebendige Einsicht in den Grund und Zusammenhang der Lehre des Heils und ohne eigene Erfahrung ihrer goettlichen Wirkungen ist. Wahre reine Lehre ist keine Sache des blossen Gedaechnisses und Verstandes. Sie ist eine Frucht goettlicher Erleuchtung und mit einem wahren, lebendigen Glauben unzertrennlich verbunden. Sie geht erst dann recht im Schwange, wenn sie als eine selig- und heiligmachende Gotteskraft in den Herzen ihrer Verkuendiger vorerst selbst wirksam geworden ist, so dass diese mit dem heiligen Apostel ihren Zuhoerern bezeugen koennen: 'Unser Evangelium ist bei euch gewesen nicht allein im Wort, sondern beides in der

Kraft und in dem Heiligen Geist und in grosser Gewissheit,' 1 Thess. 1, 5." Let us hope that a new consideration of the terms forming our subject will help to deepen our understanding of them and give us a fresh sense of our blessed inheritance and our great responsibilities as Lutherans.

When the paper was assigned to me, and when I wrote it, it was not the intention that the three great terms of the subject should be discussed exhaustively, but rather that the salient truths pertaining to them and their relation to each other and important viewpoints be mentioned, which might then be discussed by the conference. This accounts for the fact that my remarks, as put down here, will appear abrupt and fragmentary.

I

We properly begin with the statement on *justification* given in the Augsburg Confession, whose Fourth Article says (*Triglotta*, p. 45): "Also they [that is, our churches] teach that men cannot be justified before God by their own strength, merits, or works, but are freely justified for Christ's sake, through faith, when they believe that they are received into favor and that their sins are forgiven for Christ's sake, who by His death has made satisfaction for our sins. This faith God imputes for righteousness in His sight, Rom. 3 and 4." It is a clear, forceful, comprehensive description of this great act, bringing before us everything that is essential in this doctrine. Note briefly that we are here told justification is an act of God, not of man; that it is an act pertaining to man, but not done in man, as conversion, that hence by implication it is a forensic act, an act of judgment, a man's situation with respect to God being changed, and not a reformatory act in man; that the sinner pays nothing for this judgment, that, on the contrary, it is rendered in his behalf free of charge as far as he is concerned; that payment has indeed been made for it, not by any man or angel, but by our Lord Jesus Christ when He made satisfaction for our sins; that this justification is apprehended by man through faith, faith being not the cause or basis, but merely the means of accepting it. These are the matters of which we sing: "I love to tell the story; 'Twill be my theme in glory To tell the old, old story Of Jesus and His love."

II

This Scriptural doctrine of justification must be anxiously guarded by us as the *articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*. The Apology of the Augsburg Confession says (*Trigl.*, p. 121): "In this controversy [that is, the controversy concerning justification] the chief topic of Christian doctrine is treated, which, understood

aright, illumines and amplifies the honor of Christ and brings insight and most abundant consolation to devout consciences." In the Smalcald Articles (*Trigl.*, p. 461), Luther says concerning this doctrine: "Of this article nothing can be yielded or surrendered, even though heaven and earth and whatever will not abide should sink to ruin." Much quoted is this expression of Luther, written in his preface to the treatise by Brenz on the Prophet Amos (XIV, 168): "This article is the chief thing and the corner-stone, which alone begets, strengthens, establishes, preserves, and protects the Church of God, and without it the Church cannot exist for one hour." And that all this is Scriptural we see, for instance, from Gal. 5, 4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you whosoever of you are justified by the Law; ye are fallen from grace." This very clearly states that whoever rejects the doctrine of justification ceases to be a disciple of Christ and child of God. With respect to some other teachings of the Holy Scriptures error is not so serious as to entail immediate loss of one's personal Christianity; but if anybody rejects this doctrine, he delivers a deadly blow to his status as a Christian. Hence it is not an exaggeration when Quenstedt calls this article the acropolis of the Christian religion. (Hase, *Hutterus Redivivus*, p. 287.)

There is another word of Luther's which may well be quoted in this connection. It brings out that loyal adherence to the doctrine of justification is a preservative against false teaching as well as a corrective if one has fallen into the snare of unscriptural doctrine. The great Reformer says in his comments on Is. 42, 21 f. (VI, 521): "If this article is lost, we shall not be able to resist any heresy, any false teaching, be it ever so ridiculous and futile, as was the case during the reign of Popery, when we believed things of which we now are ashamed and which we repent of. Again, if we remain true to this article, we are safe against heresy and retain the forgiveness of sins, which condones weakness in our conduct and faith."

III

Unfavorable conditions in the Church cannot justly be attributed to excessive preaching of the doctrine of justification. But it is possible that the manner in which this doctrine is presented is not always the proper one. We ought to ask whether we always preach it with due fervor, as a saving message and not merely as a syllogism, with due heed to the careful distinction between Law and Gospel. But what is chiefly to be stressed is the thought that we should not be afraid of too much Gospel in our sermons. Dr. Walther warns against the fear of making this doctrine the chief element in our proclamation and of preaching it too bountifully. He says, in *Law and Gospel*, as translated by

Dr. Dau (p. 406): "If you do not mingle Law with the Gospel, you will always mount your pulpit with joy. People will notice that you are filled with joy because you are bringing the blessed message of joy to your congregation. They will furthermore notice that wonderful things are happening among them. Alas! many ministers do not meet with these wonderful experiences; their hearers remain sleepy; their misers stay stingy. What is the reason? Not sufficient Gospel has been preached to them. The people who go to church in America really want to hear the Word of God. We are living in a free country, where it is nobody's concern whether one goes to church or not. In accordance with God's will it should be the preacher's aim to proclaim the Gospel to his hearers till their hearts are melted, till they give up their resistance and confess that the Lord has been too strong for them, and henceforth they wish to abide with Jesus. It is not sufficient for you to be conscious of your orthodoxy and your ability to present the pure doctrine correctly. These are indeed important matters; however, no one will be benefited by them if you confound Law and Gospel. The very finest form of confounding both occurs when the Gospel is preached *along with* the Law, but is not the predominating element in the sermon."

IV

As to the aim, or purpose, of justification, the dogmaticians mention the glory of God and the salvation of sinners. Baier, speaking of the *finis* of justification, says: "*Finis iustificationis ex parte hominum, qui iustificantur, est salus eterna eorum, ex parte Dei iustificantis est gloria eius.*" (III, p. 287.) Quenstedt's words are very similar: "Justification is an act of God for the praise of His glorious grace and justice and for the salvation of the justified." (Hase, *op. cit.*, p. 287.) In Rom. 3, 26 St. Paul forcefully places these two purposes of God in the act of justification before us, saying that God has entered upon the ever-to-be-praised work of redemption "that He might be just and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Note the two aims: to safeguard His justice and still to justify the sinner, to do something that would keep His holy, glorious name unsullied and still would bring salvation to fallen man. To accomplish this twofold purpose, His divine counsel decreed that which, in the words of the holy writer, "eye hath not seen and ear hath not heard and which hath never come into the heart of man," the reconciliation and justification of the sinner through the sacrifice of Christ. What a glorious, all-wise, everlastingly just, and, besides, infinitely loving and merciful God we have! must be our exclamation as we

view this doctrine. Should we not make the prayer of St. Paul, which he sent up in behalf of the Christians addressed in the Epistle to the Ephesians, our own, namely, "that we may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" of these unspeakably precious matters? (Eph. 3, 18.)

V

In saying that the salvation of the sinner is the aim, or purpose, of justification, we must not exclusively think of the enjoyment of the bliss of heaven. Do the Scriptures declare anywhere that, as far as man is concerned, nothing but attainment of the glories of the heavenly Jerusalem is the aim and purpose of justification? We are rapidly drawing to the center of our whole discussion. The this-worldly view, which says that the objectives of the Christian religion must be sought exclusively or chiefly in this life, is a great error; but so would be the view, if it were entertained anywhere, that the Christian religion has no aims whatever excepting such as pertain to the joys of heaven. The life which Jesus brings and bestows is not something that begins in the beyond; it has its inception here. Think of the great words of Jesus, John 11, 25 f.: "I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die." Such a person has life now and will have it forever. Another word of Jesus, reported in John's gospel, is likewise pertinent here. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life," John 6, 47. Note the present tense. The believer not only *will* have, he *has*, everlasting life right now. St. John here beautifully confirms the teaching of St. Paul, who describes the process of conversion as a "raising from the dead," a bringing to life, saying Eph. 2, 4 ff.: "But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace ye are saved) and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Observe that St. Paul is writing these words of himself and his contemporary fellow-Christians while they were still living here on earth. Yes, still here on earth and yet spiritually alive and having our true citizenship in heavenly places, that is the Christian's status. While with our body we are still in this mundane sphere, our spiritual life is centered in heaven, is clinging to Christ, the dear Savior, drawing strength and hope from Him. This may well furnish the bridge or transition to the thesis that one of the great aims of justification is the sanctification of the sinner.

VI

The Bible declares in unmistakable terms that the work of Christ for us and the work of the Holy Spirit in us has been and is performed that we might be new beings, servants of Jesus Christ. — When you in your sermons come to the question, For what purpose did God redeem and justify us? you are not shut up to conjectures, so that you have to make a notation in your sermon manuscript, "This is speculation; be sure to tell the audience!" On the contrary, you can speak with full assurance because the divine Word has opened to us the heart of God on this point and informs us about His aims. Listen to the Epistle-lesson for Christmas Day. All of us who have seen several decades of service in the Church have read it many a time to our congregations, Titus 2, 11—14. This passage administers quite a jolt to several classes of people sailing under the Christian flag; in the first place, to that group which holds that, since justification is a free gift of God, any sin which they wish to indulge in does not matter and can by anybody at will be neutralized through a mere mechanical pointing to the work of Christ; next, to the group which might be called that of the do-nothing folks and the lukewarm set, whose idol is a life of sweet ease and repose, who are too careful to become involved in crimes and too indolent to be diligent in good works; and finally, to that group which holds that in the matter of Christian life one may ride two horses, a white one and a black one, and quite well serve God and the world, Christ and Belial. All who have opinions of this nature receive a rebuke in these words of St. Paul, which teach us that Christ died that we might be zealous in good works. And listen to these words of St. Peter, 1 Pet. 1, 13—19. Note the words: "You were redeemed from your vain conversation," that is, from your evil, futile, sinful life. Evidently when Christ bore the sins of the world, and when He there reconciled God and mankind, bringing about what we call objective justification, His aim was to free us from the bondage of a worthless existence. And once more listen to these words of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 5, 15: "Christ died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." The purpose of the death of Christ is given, and hence the purpose of justification, which on its objective side was accomplished in the death of the God-man. It is a life dedicated to Christ. Ah! the chains have been smitten off our hands and feet that we may freely, gratefully, with energy and persistence, serve Him who loved us and gave Himself for us. Is the purpose of God realized in us? Let that be one of the great questions which we daily propound to ourselves. Some of the comments of Luther on

Titus 2, 11—14 as found in his sermon on this text are striking (XII, 122 f.): "Die Suende tut zwei Schaden: den ersten, dass sie uns gefangennimmt, dass wir nichts Gutes tun noch erkennen noch wollen moegen, beraubt uns also der Freiheit, des Lichtes und der Kraft. Daraus folgt sobald der andere Schaden, dass wir, vom Guten also verlassen, nichts denn eitel Suende und Unreines muessen wirken und dem hoellischen Pharao sein Land zu Aegypten muessen bauen mit saurer, schwerer Arbeit. Wenn nun Christus kommt durch den Glauben, so erloest er uns von dem Gefaengnis Aegypti, macht uns frei, gibt Kraft, Gutes zu tun. Das ist der erste Gewinn. Danach ist die ganze Uebung unsers Lebens, dass wir die Ungerechtigkeit des gnadlosen, weltlichen Wesens ausfegen aus Leib und Seele, dass dies ganze Leben bis an den Tod sei nichts anderes denn eine Reinigung; denn der Glaube, ob er wohl uns erloest auf einmal von aller Schuld des Gesetzes und macht uns frei, so bleiben doch noch uebrig boese Neigungen in Leib und Seele, gleich wie der Stank und Krankheit vom Gefaengnis. Damit erbietet sich der Glaube, alles ganz zu reinigen. Gleich wie im Evangelium Joh. 11, 44 Lazarus ward mit seiner Stimme vom Tode erweckt, aber das Totentuch und Binde musste man danach auch abtun, und der halbtote Mensch, den der Samariter verband und heimbrachte, musste im Stall eine Weile liegen und ganz gesund werden."

One of the most remarkable utterances in the Scriptures pertaining to this subject is Eph. 2, 10. After the apostle has said in the two preceding verses "For by grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast," depicting the work of conversion and justification, he continues: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." When the apostle speaks of our being created in Christ Jesus, he, of course, refers not to our physical, but to our spiritual birth, as the context abundantly proves. Now, why did God perform His work of grace in us? He has created us unto good works, is the reply. And now listen: these good works He has ordained, provided, prepared, long in advance. When He decided to convert and justify us, He thought of, and determined, the good deeds which we should do as His children. Could anything more powerfully preach the truth that God's aim in converting, justifying, us is a life of holy service on our part?

VII

The new life of a Christian springing up in him after he has become a believer, a life patterned after our holy God, we call *sanctification* (sanctification in the narrower sense). It is com-

prehensive, embracing every sphere of our being, our intellect, will, emotions, our thoughts, words, and deeds, what we are and what we do. This thesis is added chiefly to emphasize that sanctification must not be looked upon as consisting merely in outward conformity with accepted principles of righteousness or in the performance of certain heroic tasks like those undertaken by the crusaders or in that widely detested attitude which we call sanctimoniousness, the exhibition of pious airs and the utterance of religious platitudes, striking the observer as seventy per cent. affectation and only thirty per cent. sanctification. Sanctification is outward, but likewise inward; visible to our neighbor, but largely invisible even to keenly observing, searching eyes; a matter of deeds, but primarily of thoughts; requiring constant effort and prayerful struggle and yet flowing spontaneously from the fountain of faith in the Savior. And the proof for the all-comprehensiveness of sanctification? "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy," 1 Pet. 1, 15 f. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," Phil. 2, 4. "Put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness," Eph. 4, 24. How sweeping is this word of St. Paul, 2 Cor. 7, 1: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"! "Perfecting holiness"—nothing could be more inclusive.

VIII

While justification is an instantaneous act, sanctification is a process, extending through the whole life of a Christian, remaining incomplete here on earth, but reaching its consummation when in heaven we shall be before the throne of God and serve Him day and night in His temple, Rev. 7, 15, where we shall finally have attained and apprehended (cf. Phil. 3, 12 f.), because there we shall be like our Savior, for we shall see Him as He is, 1 John 3, 2. These are most important and blessed truths which deserve to be analyzed, substantiated from the Scriptures, and pondered. It must suffice here to have mentioned them.

IX

There can be no sanctification if justification has not taken place. It is entirely futile if we by exhortation and threatening, using all the thunder of Sinai, endeavor to make those walk the path of holiness who have not yet accepted Christ as their Savior and obtained forgiveness of sins. Some outward conformity with the rules of morality may result, but the hearts will not be changed, and there will be no gain for the Christian Church. Cf. John 15, 5: "Without Me ye can do nothing." Dr. Walther quotes, in addition,

such passages as Ps. 130, 4: "But there is forgiveness with Thee that Thou mayest be feared," and Acts 15, 9: "He put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith." (*Law and Gospel*, p. 90 f.)

X

Wherever there is true justification, true sanctification will inevitably follow. If faith is genuine, the fruits of faith will not be lacking. Not only do the Scriptures say, for instance, Rom. 6, that new life *should* spring up on the soil of justification, but they emphatically declare that it *will* spring up. "Every good tree bringeth forth good fruit," Matt. 7, 17, and v. 18: "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit." "He that abideth in Me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit," John 15, 5. It is inevitable that, where the new life has been awakened, as is done by the act simultaneous with justification, that is, conversion, new life should manifest itself, that there should be breathing and the circulation of blood and pulse-beats and other signs of life, that is (if we translate this into the spiritual realm), thoughts and acts pleasing to God.

XI

Conversely, the absence of sanctification is an unailing sign that subjective justification has not occurred or that the sinner has lapsed from the status of a justified person. One trembles when discussing this matter because of the seriousness of the truths involved and the great danger of our merely repeating mechanically what we learned long ago. That we are here voicing an unalterable truth is evident, for instance, from Gal. 5, 19—21 and 1 Cor. 6, 9—11. Observe here how the life of sin and the state of the Christian who has been justified and sanctified are placed in contrast with each other. Rom. 8, 13, 14 belongs here: "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live; for as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." So does Heb. 12, 14: "Follow peace with all men and holiness (*hagiasmos*), without which no man shall see the Lord." Goodspeed and Moffatt translate the respective Greek word "consecration," the *Twentieth-century N. T.*, "purity."

XII

One other fact pertaining to the relation between justification and sanctification might be pointed out, namely, that justification may be spoken of as the means and sanctification as the end. This is confirmed by Scripture-texts, some of which have been quoted, while others have not yet been mentioned by me. 2 Cor. 5, 14 f.: "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that, if One died for all, then were all dead and that He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto

themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." The work of Christ, including objective justification, is the means of giving existence to the life of service of the Christian. Cp. here especially Rom. 6, 1—6. Nothing should induce us ever to speak slightly or half-heartedly of the act of justification, as if it were of minor importance and therefore needed less stressing in our teaching; but we must not overlook that justification is bound to be accompanied by sanctification, just as sanctification would be impossible without justification. It is this relation between justification and sanctification which we so easily forget. Being concerned about our safety, we are anxious to be justified; the Old Adam in us, however, has no desire to be sanctified, but looks upon this state as insufferable boredom and slavery.

XIII

Sanctification is produced by the holy Spirit not through the Law, but through the Gospel. Through the Gospel the Holy Spirit is bestowed, faith is created, and we are made new creatures. Cp. Gal. 3, 2: "This only would I learn of you: Received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law or by the hearing of faith?" 2 Cor. 5, 17: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." The Spirit who enters us through the Gospel produces good works in us. Gal. 5, 22: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law." Whatever strengthens faith will strengthen and advance sanctification. This again points to the Gospel as the means to be employed for the cultivating of the sanctified life. Baptism and the Lord's Supper belong here, too. Much emphasis should be laid on the latter. Cf. Dr. Pieper's remarks on Baier's error, who held that the Law was one of the means of producing sanctification. (*Christliche Dogmatik*, III, 20.) How grievously we should err if we thought that we could produce true sanctification by the Law! That the New Testament uses the Gospel to induce Christians to perform good works can be seen from Rom. 12, 1 and 1 John 4, 11. 19.

XIV

Yet the Law has its function in sanctification inasmuch as the Christian is still sinful, troubled by his innate evil nature. We are not yet perfect beings, hundred-per-cent. children of God. As new creatures, it is true, we do not need the Law. Cf. 1 Tim. 1, 9: "Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners," etc. But to the extent that we still have the Old Adam

in us, we need the Law. The Law must always show our own sinful self what good works are; otherwise our evil nature may succeed in dictating to us and making us follow its own wicked likes and dislikes. Furthermore, it must always convince this our sinful nature of its abominable character and tendencies in order that we may never cease being aware of our sinfulness; for that would involve self-righteousness and falling away from faith.

XV

The aims of sanctification are: —

a) The glory of God. Cp. 1 Pet. 2, 11. 12: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by your good works which they shall behold glorify God in the day of visitation." Another passage proving our point is Phil. 1, 9—11. This passage shows that our manifestation of Christian love and our growing and abounding in love must have this aim, to glorify our great God. If what we do is done for our own exaltation, it is a disgusting weed, not a beautiful flower.

b) The eternal and temporal welfare of our neighbor, that is, the performance of good works for our neighbor's benefit. After showing his Christian readers in the first chapters of Ephesians how God has elected, redeemed, and converted them, the apostle tells them that their connection with Christ means the putting off of the old man and the putting on of the new man (chap. 4, 22. 24); and among the qualities which he enumerates as being implied are the following, given in v. 31 f.: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking be put away from you, with all malice. Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Cf. 2 Pet. 1, 5—7: "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness charity" (*zur Bruderliebe gemeine Liebe*, as Luther translates). What a list of fruits of faith! We observe especially that charity, love toward all men, is among them. Where this love is of the right kind, connected with knowledge, it will exert itself in the interest of that which is highest in our neighbor's needs, namely, his eternal welfare, the preaching of the Word to others that are without it. Dr. Pieper says (III, 76): "Gute Werke sind der Endzweck des Lebens der Christen in dieser Welt. Sobald ein Mensch zum Glauben an Christum gekommen ist, gehoert er nicht mehr in diese Welt; seine eigentliche Heimat ist im Himmel. Gott aber

laesst ihn noch in dieser Welt, damit er ihm in seinem Reich sonderlich zur Predigt des Evangeliums in der Welt diene."

c) Growth in knowledge and Christian understanding. The much-discussed words of Jesus, John 7, 17, I would place into this category: "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of Myself." We must remember that no man can reach the resolve to do God's will unless he is converted. But whoever is a truly converted person and as a sincere child of God decides to do God's will, will ever better understand the Gospel. Its mysteries, of course, will remain mysteries, not offensive ones, however, but divine heights to which he looks up in joyous gratitude and wonder. The grand things in the Scriptures that the finite mind of the Christian can grasp in this life will in an ever-increasing measure open up to him. The humble believer, doing the will of his heavenly Master, sees truths and beauties in the Scriptures that the shrewdest and most learned agnostic university professor does not see.

d) The assurance that we are children of God. St. Peter admonishes his readers, 2 Pet. 1, 11: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure." The context shows that it is the eager pursuit of godliness which he is inculcating. Sanctification makes our calling and election sure, testifying that we belong to the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints. That such is the function of good works is likewise evident from Luke 7, 47 and 1 John 3, 14. The dogmatists call good works *testimonia Spiritus Sancti externa* (Pieper, III, 75).

e) The obtaining of the reward of grace which God has promised His faithful children. Luke 16, 9 this is brought out with great clearness: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations." The forgiveness of sins, the adoption as children, the home in heaven — all that is given to us the minute we become believers. But our God is so rich in mercy and kindness that He has promised to reward every good deed which we perform. One of the aims of sanctification is to receive this heavenly reward. Luther (VII, 666, *Erklaerung der Bergpredigt*): "Wer am meisten arbeitet und leidet, soll auch desto herrlichere Vergeltung haben; denn obwohl, wie ich gesagt habe, in Christo alles gleich ist und die Gnade gar miteinander gibt und einem jeglichen die ganze Seligkeit bringt als das hoechste gemeinste Gut, dass der freilich alles hat, wer den Christum hat, doch wird ein Unterschied sein der Klarheit und Herrlichkeit, damit wir geschmueckt und leuchten werden." W. ARNDT.

(To be concluded)