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Sermon Study on Eph. 2:19-22

Eisenach Epistle for Pentecost Sunday

In order fully to understand this passage, we must take a brief look at the context. Paul had spoken of the time when the members of the congregation at Ephesus had been Gentiles, without Christ, the time before their conversion. At that time they were enemies of the Jews. Before the advent of the Gospel and the foundation of the Christian Church, Jew and Gentile were like two hostile forces encamped against each other. The Jew, proud of the fact that he was a member of the people of God, looked with contempt upon all non-Jews, the uncircumcised, the *Goyim*, the outcasts. Cp. John 4:9; 18:28; Acts 10:28; 11:3; Gal. 2:12. Says the Talmud: The proselyte is unto the Israelite like scabies. (Babylonian, *Niddah*, fol. 13, 2.) Milk drawn from a cow by heathen hands, bread and oil prepared by them, might indeed be sold to strangers but not used by Israelites. If cooking-utensils were bought of heathen, they had to be purified by fire or water. Any article connected with heathenism was to be destroyed. Cp. Edersheim, *Sketches of Jewish Social Life*, p. 27 f., who also quotes the Mishnic tract *Abodah Zarah* (Idol-worship) as stating that a Jewess was forbidden to give help to her heathen neighbor about to become a mother. On the other hand the heathen despised, hated, ridiculed, the Jews and their religion. Horace and Juvenal refer to them as *curti*, shortened, maimed, mutilated, evidently a common contemptuous nickname for the Jew. On the cruel form which this hatred of the Jewish religious rites at times took compare 1 Macc. 1:41-64; 2 Macc. 6 and 7.

This enmity was blotted out by the atoning sacrifice of Christ, which served not only to reconcile Jews and Gentiles alike unto God but to make both one in Christ. Both were one body considering their need of reconciliation with God; both are one body as far as the reality and blessing of this reconciliation is concerned. Thus every reason for enmity between these two camps has been removed by Christ, their Peace, who established peace between the two warring factions, Jew and Gentile, had this peace proclaimed to those near and those afar off, thus making peace, making in Himself of twain one new man, the Christian Church. 2:13-18.

This is not a peace established between two nations, meaning little more than the cessation of actual warfare; not an armed peace, each party jealously watching the other, ready to resent the slightest offense, preparing in time of peace for the next war and perhaps anxiously hoping for the slightest affront as an excuse for renewing hostilities and destroying the enemy. No; it is an actual peace, uniting heart and mind and soul; for through Christ.

they have access by one Spirit unto the one Father, and this knowledge makes enmity impossible; this knowledge indeed unites them into one body.

Now, therefore; the apostle draws the conclusion. Since all enmity has been abolished, since you both have been reconciled in one body unto God, *ye are no more strangers and foreigners.* The relation in which they formerly stood to the commonwealth of Israel, v. 12, to the Church of God, has been done away with. They were no more strangers, ξένοι. The term ξένος denotes one who lives in a house or country for only a short time, who does not belong to the household, to the commonwealth, and therefore is shut out from the rights and privileges enjoyed by the citizens. Such they had been. Nor are they foreigners, πάροικοι. This is a term quite frequently used in the LXX in translation of the Hebrew, תושב. It denotes a person who, while not a citizen, dwelt in the land, occasionally became rich, Lev. 25:47; he was to be treated kindly, Lev. 25:6, 35, 40, had certain privileges, Num. 35:11, yet was excluded from others, Ex. 12:43; Lev. 22:10; 25:45, 46; cp. 39-44. There was a well-defined line of distinction between the "foreigner" and a citizen. Even this line of distinction is completely wiped out in the New Testament Church. They are no more guests, no more foreigners, but an honor far greater than merely dwelling near the citizens of God's commonwealth and enjoying at least a few of the privileges of God's people has been granted them. This is an honor so great, and withal so utterly incomprehensible to the Jews, that a special revelation of this mystery was needed, Acts 10; Eph. 3:1-9.

But fellow-citizens with the saints. Ἀλλὰ ἐστέ. Note the emphasis on the word "ye are," quashing every indictment, overruling every objection, silencing every doubt, making assurance doubly sure. Let no man, no devil, no, not your own conscience, your own heart, tell you otherwise. I, the apostle of God, to whom God has made known this mystery by revelation, 3:1-11, I assure you that you are not strangers and sojourners; on the contrary, you are fellow-citizens with the saints, συμπολίται. In the Old Testament there was but one πολιτεία, one commonwealth, of saints. Ex. 19:6; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; etc. One had to become a Jew, adopt the prescribed rites and customs of the Jews, their circumcision, their Sabbaths and festivals, their burdensome rules and regulations, governing practically every one of their activities, before one had the right to call himself a fellow-citizen with the saints. Even then one was not a Jew in the sense in which only physical descendants of Abraham were Jews and citizens in the commonwealth of Israel. And even in this holy nation there were well-marked lines of distinction, which separated one class of holy people from other holy people, and neglect of this distinction was

punishable by death. When Korah and his company dared to usurp certain rights of a certain class of holy people on the argument that the whole people were holy, they were visited by a special judgment of God, Num. 16. Cp. Num. 3:10, 38; 16:40; 18:1-7.

All this has been changed since the middle wall or partition has been broken down, 2:14, 15. You who formerly were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise are now fellow-citizens with the saints. One fact of course cannot be changed. The Jews were the first whom God chose, Rom. 9:3-5. Salvation is of the Jews, John 4:22. Yet no longer have the Jews on that account any special rights or privileges in the Church of God in the New Testament. The heathen are *συνπολίται*, citizens *together*, with the Jews, enjoying the same rights, possessing and exercising the same privileges. They are fellow-citizens with the saints. Whatever right any New Testament saint possesses, all others possess in like degree. There is no longer any such distinction as in the Old Covenant between higher and lower sainthood, between people and Levites and priests and high-priest, all having some rights in common, yet each ascending class having special privileges not enjoyed by any of the lower classes. All believers are fellow-citizens. In our text the apostle has in mind particularly the distinction between Jew and Gentile. Yet what the apostle says applies to all Christians with reference to any distinction of race and culture or any other distinction which outwardly may still be as marked among Christians of today as the outer distinction between Jew and Gentile, between circumcised and uncircumcised, remained even after their becoming one in Christ's commonwealth. Yet as far as their relation to God is concerned, and as far as their rights and privileges as saints come into consideration, they are all fellow-citizens, none more, none less, than the other. All serve one King, all alike are under His protection, participants in like measure of His royal grace as dispensed in Word and Sacrament, none endowed with greater power, none enjoying special privileges, all having but one Master, Ruler, but all kings, all priests, and all servants of one another. Fellow-citizens! Question: If all members of the Church are fellow-citizens, ought not all members make diligent use of their rights? Ought they not, with that in mind, take every opportunity to learn more about these privileges, more about the work of the Church, that commonwealth of which they are citizens, for whose welfare they are held responsible? Ought they not read and study their Bible, the church periodicals, and gratefully make use of every opportunity to seek the welfare of their church?

Not only are the Gentiles fellow-citizens with the saints; the relationship between Gentiles and Jews is still closer, the honor conferred upon converted heathen still greater. Together with the

Jews the Gentiles are of *the household of God*. The term in classical Greek denotes also adherents of a school, a science, an art, a political leader, etc. In our passage there can be no doubt as to its meaning. They are of the household of God, and not only of a household in the wider sense, including all the slaves, so that the Jews perhaps would be members of the immediate family, while the Gentiles would have to be content with the position of slaves. Throughout this passage the apostle stresses the full equality of Jew and Gentile in the New Testament Church, and in v. 18 he specifically stated that both Jew and Gentile have access to the Father in like manner. Hence the term "household" is here, as in 1 Tim. 5:8, restricted to the immediate family, the sons and daughters of the heavenly Father. They formerly did not know God; now they are in closest relation to Him. He is not only their Ruler in the commonwealth of the Church; this Ruler and King is at the same time their Father in the fullest sense of the term, as it is applicable to human beings. What God called the Jews in distinction from all other people, Ex. 4:22; Jer. 31:9, is now the name of the Gentiles also, given them by God Himself. Isaiah had already foretold this, Is. 43:6; compare Paul's application of all the Old Testament passages in which the Israelites are called God's children to the Christians of the New Testament, 2 Cor. 6:18. Jews have no longer the exclusive privilege to call themselves the sons of God. All Gentiles have been given the same right by the Father in heaven. And this naturally applies to all Gentiles, irrespective of race, color, culture. God's black and yellow and red children are just as dear to Him as His white children. All alike are born of the same Father; all without exception share alike in that grace of God manifested in the unsearchable riches of Christ, Eph. 3:8; all in one accord bow their knees, 3:14, 15, and address Him, "Our Father who art in heaven." All know that He who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think will gladly hear their prayers; all are assured that their Father, with whom there is no respecting of persons, will give no preference to any one child because of his color or race or any other natural or acquired external distinction. For all Gentiles, like all Jews, having come to faith in Christ, are of the one household of God, are one family, brethren and sisters all, all in like manner children of the Father which is in heaven.

Knowing this, ought not all Christians to be bound together in mutual brotherly love? Ought there to be found any envy, jealousy, malice, ill will, strife, quarrel, among the members of God's Church, the children of the one Father? Cp. Eph. 5:1-21.

Not only are the former Gentiles citizens together with the saints; not only are they members of God's intimate family; their

dignity rises still higher. They lack absolutely nothing of whatever honor has been granted to the Jews. Together with those believers who are descendants of Abraham according to the flesh, all Gentiles are part of the living temple of God, living stones, built up to form a sanctuary, a dwelling of the Most High. *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone,*" v. 20. The apostle uses the aorist participle. Their having been placed into this building is an accomplished fact. They are built up; they have been inserted into the sanctuary walls; they have become members of the Church of God. "Upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets." The article placed before *apostles* combines the two classes of men into one unit so far as their relation to the foundation is concerned. Who are the prophets mentioned here? A number of interpreters think of the New Testament prophets, such as are mentioned Eph. 4:11; 1 Cor. 12:28, 29; 14:29, 37; etc. We see no reason to refer this passage to these prophets. Why should these men be singled out and called the foundation, or foundation-layers, as some would understand the phrase? There is no record of their message. They did not lay the foundation of the *Una Sancta*, the Church Universal, of which the apostle here speaks, but at best of local congregations; that only because, and in so far as, their message was a repetition of that of the apostles and of the prophets of the Old Testament. We have no record that the activity of these New Testament prophets consisted chiefly in founding new congregations. That seems to have been the work of the evangelists, Eph. 4:11; cp. Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5, rather than that of the prophets, whose primary duty seems to have been the edifying of existing congregations. In fact, we have, as far as the Biblical records go, more instances of congregations founded by the common Christians than by either prophets or evangelists. The "prophets" here are undoubtedly the Old Testament prophets. That will become still clearer as we understand in what respect apostles and prophets are called the foundation. The foundation of the Church is laid by God Himself, 1 Cor. 3:11. Yet He does that not immediately but by His Word, the Gospel of Christ Crucified, Eph. 3:6; 1 Pet. 1:23; and this Word is found in the writings of the apostles and prophets, given by inspiration of God. The apostles are named first because the Ephesians were built primarily on the word of the apostles, preached to them by Paul and other servants of God. This word of the apostles was not, as that of the prophets, the proclamation of a future event, but that of an accomplished fact, the suffering and resurrection of Jesus Christ, of which they were eye- and ear-witnesses, Acts 1:21, 22; 1 Cor. 9:1; 1 John 1:1-3. Yet their message was in full agreement with, and was based upon, the word of the prophets, Acts 26:22, 23. On

this word of the apostles and prophets not only the Ephesians, not only the Gentiles, but the Jews as well, in fact, the Church Universal, is founded as on an immovable foundation. Where this Word is not preached, there is no foundation, there is no Church. For this reason we prefer to take the genitive as the genitive of apposition. Paul does not merely say that the apostles and prophets laid the foundation; he stresses the fact that they are the foundation, inasmuch as their word, their writings, through which they still live and work, are the very foundation on which the building is erected and through faith in which they themselves, like all other believers, are built on this foundation as living stones.

Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner-stone. The chief ἀκρογωνιαίον, corner-stone, something lying at the extreme corner, "at the tip of the angle," as Lenski puts it. What is the function of a corner-stone, and why is Christ called the Corner-stone? Many interpretations have been offered, more or less in conflict with facts. The *Standard Dictionary* defines *corner-stone*: 1) a stone uniting two walls at the corner of a building, 2) something fundamental or of primary importance. Many commentators have adopted the first meaning and have seen here a reference to Christ uniting the two factions of Jews and Gentiles into one building. Yet any stone placed at the corner will help to unite two walls, and here the apostle evidently has in mind a stone with a special function. Others say that the corner-stone contributes to sustain the edifice, but, again, every stone does that. Still others speak of the corner-stone as supporting the entire building, yet no corner-stone actually does that. A corner-stone may be removed like any other stone without interfering with the stability of the building. The function of the corner-stone is primarily symbolical; it is laid to denote the character, the purpose, the nature, of the building, and it is laid at the corner in order to attract attention and proclaim the character of the building to all passers-by. In this respect the second definition of the *Standard* is well suited to actual facts: the corner-stone stands for that which is fundamental and of prime importance in the building. This is true of Christ. Christ is the fundamental, most important Factor in the spiritual building, the Church. Yet Christ as the Corner-stone of the Church does more than a common corner-stone can do. He does not only indicate the character, the nature, of the building; He does actually what some interpreters ascribe to every corner-stone, yet what no corner-stone really can do: He supports, He carries, He permeates, the entire building. Without Him there would not be, and could not be, a Church of God on earth. Paul says very clearly, In Him all the building groweth unto a holy temple. That is possible only because He is not only part of the foundation; He is a corner-stone which is in reality the founda-

tion itself. Stoeckhardt very aptly writes: "In this spiritual building, foundation and corner-stone do not lie next to each other but within each other. Christ Jesus is the very center, the very essence, of the prophetic and apostolic word. Christ is in and with His Word and is to be found only in His Word, in no other place. Whosoever has, accepts, holds, the Word has, accepts, holds, Christ." (*Epheser*, p. 152.) Paul's intention, as Stoeckhardt further remarks, was to name both the invisible foundation, Christ Jesus, and the visible, audible means, the connecting link between Christ and the Church, the word of the apostles and prophets. We must not interpret the facts according to the figure but remember that in spiritual matters the fact invariably far surpasses what the figure expresses.

In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord, v. 21. In the original the words Jesus Christ do not stand at the head of the clause, but at its close. "Corner-stone being Himself Christ Jesus," the anointed Savior. Therefore it is better to refer the following "in whom" to Christ Jesus rather than to "the corner-stone" or to the even more distant "foundation." In Christ Jesus "all the building groweth." Is this translation correct? Does not the absence of the article in connection with $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$ demand the translation "every building?" It would of course be impossible to understand "every building" of every individual local congregation, since the apostle here speaks of the *Una Sancta*. And to think of various buildings which make up this *Church Universal* lacks Scriptural authority. Hence interpreters have pointed out that $\pi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\alpha$ without the article is often used in the sense of all, so in connection with proper and abstract nouns, also in such passages as Acts 2:36; 17:26; Col. 1:15; 2 Tim. 3:16. There is, as we shall see, no reason why we should change the Authorized Version or Luther's translation. This word occurs 17 times in the New Testament. Its original meaning is, the act of building, as a wall, a house, etc. In this sense the word is used in the New Testament only metaphorically, of the building up, the edification, of the Christian Church, Rom. 14:19; 15:2; 1 Cor. 13:3, 5, 12, 26; 2 Cor. 10:8; 12:19; 13:10; Eph. 4:16, 29; in Eph. 4:12 it is evidently used of building the Church outwardly by adding new members. The word also denotes that which is being built, of a building in process of erection. So 1 Cor. 3:9: "Ye are God's building," on which God is still building, working; 2 Cor. 5:1, where the apostle compares our earthly existence to a tent-house. When this earthly existence is ended, we do not cease to exist; we have another existence, a heavenly life, which the apostle calls $\sigma\epsilon\kappa\delta\omicron\mu\eta$, in process of building in this world, to be finished in the world to come; cp. Col. 4:3, 4. In Matt. 24:1; Mark 13:1, 2 the word is used in the plural of the buildings of the Temple, which

were still unfinished, completed only 64 A. D. Hence, with the possible exception of Matt. 24:1 and Mark 13:1, 2, the word means either an act of building still in progression or that which is in process of being built. In the latter sense we take it here. In Christ Jesus everything that is being built grows, everything that is in process of construction, the context restricting that which is being built to the construction of the Church, hence all that is being built or, as the Authorized Version translates, "all the building," Luther, "*der ganze Bau.*"

Paul further describes that which is being built, as being "fitly framed together." A building is not a heap of stones loosely thrown together, there is in every building, purpose and planning and fitting together, joining the individual stones into a harmonious entity. Watch the skilled mason take up a stone that seems altogether unsuitable for the purpose of building a beautiful wall. Apparently it would only serve to spoil the harmony, to mar the beauty of the building. With a few deft touches of trowel or hammer the rough edges are trimmed, the unshapely contours changed, its protruding corners removed, and, lo, it fits in. Far from marring, it rather enhances the beauty of the wall, which would not have reached its ultimate symmetry and perfection without this stone so carefully fitted in. That is exactly what the Master Builder, God, is constantly doing while at work on His building. Note the present participle. The building of the Church, as long as it is in progress, is a constant fitting in of material which by its nature, in itself, is altogether unsuitable for so noble an edifice. It is a work which only omnipotent grace can accomplish. A skilful mason will succeed in fitting almost any stone into a building in a comparatively short time. Yet only God can make a human being a stone suitable to adorn His temple, and even He does not do it in a short time. He began the work of preparation of His stones in eternity, and it takes Him the entire lifetime of every Christian until He is finished with His work with the individual. His eternal counsel of election, Eph. 1:4-6; his sending of Christ to be our Redemption, v. 6; the revelation and preaching of His plan of salvation, v. 8 ff.; the regeneration of such as had formerly been dead in trespasses and sins, both Jews and Gentiles, chap. 2:1 ff. — each item impossible to any one but to the eternal, almighty God, and His omnipotent grace, 1:18 ff. And what a slow work is the fitting of every individual stone into that marvelous temple, this honor for which we are altogether unsuited! How unlike saints do we often behave! How many protruding corners must be slowly, patiently, removed before we begin to approach perfection! A stone, as a rule, retains the form into which it has been shaped by the trowel of the mason. How often do we Christians lapse back into sin, into a conduct closely

resembling that of our former conversation! Chap. 4:22 ff. How often do we, instead of thanking Him for His unspeakable grace, resent the efforts of God to beautify and sanctify and glorify us, and voice our resentment in words of bitter lamentation! What riches of divine grace, power, and patience are required to complete the building of the Church!

And yet this building groweth, is constantly growing. In spite of all attacks on the part of Satan and the world, who are continually bending every effort toward the destruction of this marvelous edifice, in spite of all the sluggishness of the Christians themselves, the Church of God grows, is constantly growing. The gates of hell shall never prevail against it, shall never succeed in stopping its growth. Though at times it may seem as if the Church were doomed, the Word is adding daily unto the Church such as should be saved, justified, sanctified, glorified.

So all the building groweth unto an holy temple. *Naós* is never used of the entire enclosure but only of the sanctuary itself, consisting of the Holy Place and the Most Holy. Thus the term implies holiness; yet the apostle deliberately adds the word "holy," separating and distinguishing this sanctuary from those of the Old Testament, the Tabernacle and the Temple at Jerusalem. It is a sanctuary that is holy indeed, far surpassing in point of holiness both Temple and Tabernacle. The Old Testament sanctuaries were constructed of wood and stones, of splendid curtains and precious metals and gems, costly materials, yet not holy in themselves; the Tabernacle was holy only because God had chosen it as His earthly dwelling-place. The New Testament sanctuary is holy not only because of the indwelling of the holy God, but because the stones of which it is built themselves are holy, living stones, saints made holy by the blood of the Lamb, Eph. 1:1, 4; 2:19; etc. The fulness of the glory of this sanctuary is not yet seen, as little as the full beauty of any building can be seen while it is under construction. But in spite of its imperfection the ultimate glory can be recognized at least in part; the true character of the people constituting the Church of God is being manifested in their lives, 2:10. So all the building groweth daily both intensively, qualitatively, and extensively, quantitatively, numerically. Daily the individual Christian grows, as daily the Lord shapes and forms him into the semblance of perfection, as daily he grows unto a perfect man, 4:13-15. Daily more are being added by being brought to faith, by being built up on the foundation of the apostles and prophets and gradually fitted into integral, beautiful parts of the building. Daily through death more join the congregation of saints made perfect. When finally the last stone has been fitted into the edifice, when the process of building ceases, when the Church shall no longer

be a building under construction but a building completed and perfected, then every last vestige of imperfection will be a thing of the past. Then the Church will stand holy and without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, a holy temple, a glorious Church, a sanctuary unparalleled. "In the Lord" the apostle adds. The Lord is Christ Jesus. The apostle ascribes whatever of glory there is in and about the Church to the Lord. He is the Corner-stone of the Church, its Savior, its King on earth, and the sole reason for its existence in eternity. Its planning in the ages before the creation of the world, its founding in time, its growth during the course of centuries, its glory in the ages to come, all, everything, in Christ. He is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the Author and Finisher of our faith and of our glory.

All the building, every one that is being built on this foundation and this Corner-stone, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. That naturally includes the Gentiles. Yet the apostle does not leave it to his readers to draw their own conclusion. In order to impress the truth of their full equality with the Jews indelibly upon their mind, he once more tells them, *In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, v. 22. The present tense, you are being built, points to the time in which the sanctuary is still in process of construction, the whole era of the gathering and building and fitting together of the individual stones until the end of days. Together with the Jews and all members of the Church they also are built "for," into, an habitation, κατοικητήριον, of God. This is a word used only once more in the New Testament, Rev. 18:2. The κατά stresses the solidity, the permanency, of the dwelling. In the LXX this term is used for מִשְׁכָּן, a dwelling, and also for סֹבֵן, that which is firm, a strong, stable, immovable dwelling, used of the abode of God on earth and in heaven, Ex. 15:17 and in Solomon's prayer, 1 Kings 8:39, 43, 49 and its parallel, 2 Chron. 6. Paul uses this term, a synonym of ναός, in order to designate the permanence, the eternity, of God's dwelling into which they are being built. "In the Spirit" God dwells in that temple which Christ has founded and is building and in which the Spirit, proceeding from the Father and the Son and with them the everlasting, all-powerful God, works, engendering through His Word faith and hope and charity, calling, gathering, enlightening, sanctifying, the whole Christian Church on earth and keeping it with Christ Jesus in the one true faith. The work of building the Church, from beginning to end, is a work of the Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Now, unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end! Amen.

The text speaks of the Holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, its membership, its foundation, its gradual growth, its final glory. These thoughts are of vital importance to Christian faith and life and may be presented to the congregation from a number of viewpoints. We may take the above-mentioned parts and speak of *The Glory of the Christian Church*. Its firm foundation, its exalted membership, its constant growth, its glorious consummation.—*Thank God that We Are Members of the Christian Church!* No more are we strangers but fellow-citizens with the saints. No more are we foreigners but of the household of God. No more are we without God but living stones of God's temple.—After referring to the founding of the New Testament Church on Pentecost Day, call attention to the fact that concerning the material used in building this Church, Rom. 3:23, 24 applies. Having all been justified, having all free access, *There is No Class Distinction among the Members of the Christian Church*. All are fellow-citizens; all are of the household of God; all are being built up into an holy temple.—To the unbeliever Christ and His Church is a stumbling-block and foolishness and the Christian a fool for spending time and energy and money for Christ and His Church. *Why Should We Glory in Being Members of the Christian Church?* Because of the high honors granted to all alike. (Negatively, v. 19 a; positively vv. 19 b, 20.) Because of its constant growth in spite of all obstacles. Because of its glorious consummation. (Already here a temple, fully revealed in yonder world.)—Paul extols the grace, power, and wisdom of God in building up the Church. Cp. 3, 1 ff. As living members, created unto good works, 2:10, we should aid God in this work. *We Are God's Coworkers in the Growth of the Church*. By growing into the nature of the Church (remaining on the foundation, becoming aware of our privileges and obligations, v. 19, permitting Him to fit us ever closer into the building). By adding others to the membership of the Church. (Many are still strangers, etc., vv. 19 a, 11, 12. Hence personal soul-winning, congregational efforts at missionary work within their territory, aiding Synod's work.)—*The Proper Celebration of the Centennial*. We thank God for His unspeakable grace, vv. 19, 20 (and ask Him to keep us steadfast in His Word and truth). We ask God to fitly frame us together (and confess our own shortcomings, acknowledge our need of His grace, and promise to grow in sanctification). We look forward with joy to the final consummation (and promise to work diligently for His glorious cause).

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