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## Luther the Reformer

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The reference to the Lutheran Confessions reminds one that 1946 brings an important Luther anniversary, the quadricentennial of his entrance into true life. It is the intention of the Editorial Committee of the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY to utilize the occasion for the publication of articles taking cognizance of the anniversary, evaluating the significance of the great Reformer, and refuting some ugly slanders and misrepresentations of this chosen instrument of God. May all of us in this period of anxiety, of spiritual blindness and confusion, be loyal followers of our father Luther and honor his memory by faithfully proclaiming the message of God's grace and the redemption of Jesus Christ.

W. ARNDT

## Luther the Reformer

By TH. ENGELDER

Luther would say: I did not reform the Church. He said: "It was God's Word which, while I slept or made merry, accomplished this great thing." (XX:20.) The gracious and almighty God accomplished this great thing. "What is now going on in the world is not my doing. It is not possible that a mere man should begin and carry forward such a movement. . . . Another man is at the wheel [Ein anderer Mann ist's, der das Raedlein treibt]." (X:368.)

Still we shall call Luther the Reformer. God called Luther to reform His Church. God raised him up to restore to the Church His all-but-forgotten Word. And knowing the condition and dire need of the Church today, we shall find it profitable to inquire once again into the nature of the divine message through which the Reformer revived the dying Church.

Luther restored to the Church, first, the all-but-forgotten Gospel of the grace of God. Preaching the *sola gratia*, Luther delivered the Church from the incubus which was smothering her to death. "The power of Antichrist was broken chiefly through the preaching of the Gospel of the free grace of God in Christ." (Walther, *Evangelien-Postille*, p. 388.)

The Christian lives by the Gospel of grace. "That is the very nature of the Christian faith, that it looks to grace alone, 'auf lauter Gnade baut,' as the Lutheran Confession declares,

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*Triglotta*, p. 136." (F. Pieper, in *Lehre und Wehre*, 1926, p. 298.) The teaching that the Christians must earn the grace of God, the forgiveness of their sins, by their works was killing the Christian Church. And Luther restored its spiritual life when he proclaimed: "The first and chief article is this, that Jesus Christ, our God and Lord, died for our sins, Rom. 4:25. . . . Likewise: All have sinned and are justified without merit by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, Rom. 3:23 f. . . . It is clear and certain that this faith alone justifies us, as St. Paul says, Rom. 3:28: 'For we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the Law.'" (Smalcald Articles, *Trigl.*, p. 461.) To the poor souls who were trying to placate God with their good works and were despairing, there came the voice from heaven: "Da hoerst du gar nichts von deinen Kraeften, guten Werken und Verdiensten" (Luther V:266), and they were rid of the popish incubus of work-righteousness. They learned the meaning of those sweet words "gospel," "grace." "In the New Testament the Gospel is preached; which is nothing else than the word by which are offered unto us the Spirit, grace, and the remission of sins obtained for us by Christ crucified; and all entirely free, through the mere mercy of God the Father, thus favoring us unworthy creatures, who deserve damnation rather than anything else." (XVIII:1806.) "Grace brings about this great thing that we are accounted wholly and fully just before God," grace without the help of the least work, for "grace will not be halved nor quartered, but receives us wholly and completely into favor for the sake of Christ, our Intercessor and Mediator." (XIV:98.) And when the Pope's men warned the people against this doctrine as being a new and unchristian teaching, Luther was in a position to tell them that "this article is the chief doctrine of the entire Scriptures; and the faith that we have forgiveness of sins solely for Christ's sake by faith has been the faith of the fathers and Prophets and all saints from the beginning of the world, has been the doctrine and teaching of Christ and the Apostles, and is to this day and to the end the unanimous sense and voice of the whole Christian Church, which has always in one mind and with one accord believed, confessed, and fought for, this article, that in the name of Jesus alone forgiveness of sins is obtained and received and in this faith they have been justified before God and saved." (XII:494.)



"My tongue shall joyously proclaim and praise Thy righteousness, that is, the grace whereby Thou forgivest sin and hast mercy on me"; so sang Luther (V: 594), and he spent his ministry in praising the wonderful method by which God's wisdom and grace has procured the sinner's justification. He taught the despairing sinner, who knew that he could not expiate for his sins, to sing the wonders hidden in the words "being justified freely by His grace *through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,*" hidden in the words "substitution" and "imputation." He said: "Grace is indeed given to us freely, and it costs us nothing. But it cost another one very much. It was gained at the cost of an infinite treasure, gained by the Son of God Himself." (XII: 262 f.) But how can God let His Son die for sins He did not commit, and how can God impute to us a righteousness which we have not gained through good works of our own? Do not try to explain God's method, but rejoice over it! "That is certainly a strange and blessed righteousness that we should be accounted just or the possessors of a righteousness which consists not in any works, any endeavor, anything in us, but exists outside of us, in Christ, and still truly becomes ours through His grace and gift, is so truly our own as though we ourselves had gained and acquired it." (VIII: 659.) The heathen scoff at this; the Pope's men deride it; our flesh is offended at it; but the Christian faith lives on it. "The Psalmist calls the righteousness which is preached in his temple 'a strange and blessed righteousness,' that is, not such a righteousness as the world knows and glorifies, but one at which all the world is offended. For that is a ridiculous thing to reason, particularly to those who would be holy, that we should be holy solely because of another one and we ourselves have done nothing towards it! Oh, how the heathen scoffed when they first heard this, that the Christians believe that they become just solely on this account, that Christ died and that thereby He had satisfied for their sins and they needed not to add the least to it. . . . But that is what the Gospel teaches. We must go to Christ in this faith: Thou art He who redeems me from sin, death, and the power of the devil and obtains grace for me with God. That is the true doctrine or the righteousness before God." (V: 640, 642.) Will the heathen scoff at this? Let them heed Luther's warning: "Sin has two places where it can remain. Either



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sin is with you, lying on your shoulders, or it lies upon Christ, the Lamb of God. If it lies on your back, you are lost; but if it lies on Christ, you are free of it and shall be saved. Now choose what you will have." (VII:1725.) And when the sinner was crushed under the weight of his sin, he thanked God for the wonderful counsel Luther gave him: "Therefore, dear brother, learn Christ crucified for you; learn to sing His praise and to despair of yourself; learn to say to Him: Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, but I am Thy sin; Thou hast taken upon Thyself what is mine and hast given me what is Thine." (XXIa:20.)

The Christian lives by the Gospel of grace, by the Gospel alone. That is another strange and wondrous thing—the faith which in spite of the curse pronounced by God's holy Law against the sinner, trusts in the Gospel's promise of forgiveness. It is of the very nature of faith to do that. And God raised up Luther to teach Christendom anew the high art of appealing from the Law, which condemns, to the Gospel, which absolves. This Christian art—without which no man can be a Christian—had been all but lost in Christendom. In popedom there was nothing but Law. But Luther told the poor sinner, whom the Law was killing, that there is a higher word. Appeal to the Gospel, and thou art saved! As a voice from heaven Luther's words came to the culprit on his way to the gallows: "There is a much higher word than the Law, the dear Gospel of Christ. . . . The Law, as the lesser word, must give place to the Gospel. They are both God's Word, but they are not equal. One is lower, the other higher; the one weaker, the other stronger; the one less, the other greater. When they clash, I follow the Gospel and say: *Ade, Gesetz!* . . . I am truly a poor, damned sinner, but I appeal from the Law to the Gospel." (IX:806, 808, on Gal. 3:23, 24.) Again: "The true knowledge of Christ, or faith, disputeth not whether thou hast done good works to righteousness or evil works to condemnation, but simply concludeth after this sort: If thou hast done good works, thou art not therefore justified; or if thou hast done evil works, thou art not therefore condemned. . . . It is Christ alone that justifieth me, both against my evil deeds and without my good deeds." (IX:619, on Gal. 5:4.) That is the logic of faith. "Theoretically this distinction" (between the Law and the Gospel) "is easily



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made, but at the point of death and in perils we find that we are but poor dialecticians. A good dialectician distinguishes between the Law and the Gospel and admits indeed that he has not kept the Law, but he declares: From this premise the conclusion does not follow that I should therefore despair and be lost. For the Gospel commands me to believe in Christ and stand on the works and righteousness of Christ." (IV:2078.) Again: "Kommt nun der Teufel und spricht: O Geselle, was hast du Gutes getan? Wenn du fromm gewesen waerest, so moechtest du in den Himmel kommen; dieweil du aber uebel gelebt und bist boese gewesen, so musst du nun in die Hoelle. Aber antworte du darauf: Der Papst, Teufel und Tuerke lehren also. Nein, ich weiss (es) viel anders. . . . Weil denn unsere guten Werke nicht Stich halten, so haelt doch das Fleisch und Blut Christi alle Zuege." (VII:2349.) Luther makes the heroic statement: "Wir wollen den Gott nicht haben, der nicht mehr kann denn Gesetze geben; das wisse gar eben." (IX:805.) We do not want the God of the Papacy, who can only command and condemn. We want to know God as He has revealed Himself, who condemns the sinner by His Law and absolves the terrified sinner by His Gospel. It was this teaching which reformed the Church; it restored the Gospel, by which the Church lives. "The birth of the Reformation," says Walther, "dates from the moment when Luther understood this distinction. By his new knowledge Luther liberated the poor people from the misery into which they had been driven by the Law preaching of their priests." (*Law and Gospel*, p. 63.)

The Christian lives on the forgiveness of sins, and that means that he has the assurance that his sins are forgiven. Where that assurance is lacking, there is fear, despair, death. "This doubt is more bitter than death." (*Apology, Trigl.*, p. 291.) And this certainty of salvation, this assurance of God's grace, Luther restored to Christendom. Luther proclaimed these truths: There is not one soul in all the world which is not redeemed by the blood of Christ. "The Gospel proclaims to all the world that in Christ the sin of all the world is taken away." (XI:693.) "This is the basis of all Christian doctrine. . . . It is said here, plainly enough: This is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."



(VII:1720.) "God has commanded that His Gospel, which is necessary to all, should be confined to no place, no time, but that it should be preached unto all, at all times, and in all places." (XVIII:1710.) Again, there is not a soul in all the world which God has not already absolved from all its sin. "The Gospel is the good news and proclamation, brought to all the world, that Christ has redeemed, justified, and saved all who have been the captives of sin and Satan, and has reconciled them with God." (XIV:86.) "The treasure is opened and placed at every man's door." (Large Catechism, *Trigl.*, p. 761.) "The sins are already forgiven before we confess them." (*Exposition of Hebrews*, of 1517.) And again, there is not a soul in all the world which is excluded from the benefits of God's grace in Christ because of the lack of good works and the guilt of enormous sins. "We should not lean on our own strength . . . our own person, and our own works." (IX:508.) "It is stated here plainly enough: This is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, and this text is God's Word. . . . Aye, but you might say: I believe that He has borne the sins of St. Peter and St. Paul and other holy sinners. Do you not hear what St. John is saying: 'the sins of the world?'" (VII:1724.) And is there a soul on earth which will say that these declarations of God are not reliable, that these promises are not trustworthy? The Christian soul will not say it. The Christian faith is assured of God's grace and repudiates the doubts assailing it as damnable wickedness. "Faith is a living, daring confidence in the grace of God, of such assurance that it would risk a thousand deaths." (XIV:99.)

The Pope condemns such assurance as damnable wickedness. The *Tridentinum* pronounces the anathema against the man who asks the Christian "to believe for certain that his sins are forgiven him" (Session VI, Canon XIII). The Catholic Joseph Clayton writes: According to Luther "the only doctrine that really mattered was consciousness of personal salvation by faith in Christ crucified . . . the assurance of personal salvation." "Among Catholics Luther is held in abhorrence as an apostate monk, who drew countless souls into heresy." (*Luther and His Work*, pp. XXIII, 109, 205:) We thank God for Luther, who slew the monster that was devouring the vitals of Christianity and taught the Christians



to rejoice in the certainty of their salvation. We thank God for these words: "The Pope taught that a man ought to be uncertain and to stand in doubt of the grace and favor of God towards him. If this opinion be received, then Christ profiteth nothing; for he that doubteth of God's favor towards him must needs doubt also of the promises of God, and so, consequently, of the will of God and of the benefits of Christ. But there can be no greater blasphemy against God than to deny His promises. . . . This monstrous doctrine of doubting God's grace and favor passeth all understanding. . . . Let us therefore give thanks unto God that we are delivered from this monstrous doctrine of doubting. The Gospel commandeth us to behold not our own good works, our own perfection, but God, the Promiser, and Christ, the Mediator. In this case I cannot doubt, unless I will utterly deny God. And this is the reason that our doctrine is most sure and certain, because it carrieth us out of ourselves, that we should not lean to our own strength, our own conscience, our own feeling, our own person, and our own works, but to that which is without us, that is to say, the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive us." (IX: 507 ff.)

The Christian Church lives by the grace of God, the grace that not only justifies the sinner freely but carries through the work of our salvation from beginning to end. Our conversion is solely God's work. When the miracle occurs that a sinner comes to faith, God alone performed the miracle. "When God creates faith in man, He performs as great a work as if He again created heaven and earth." (IX: 942.) Man, dead in sins, contributed nothing towards it. "Grace is therefore needed, and the assistance of grace is therefore given because 'free will' can of itself do nothing," "cannot will anything but evil." May it "be given us to understand both truths: that we can do nothing of ourselves and that if we do anything, God works that in us." (XVIII: 1805, 1853, 1911.) "'Es kann niemand zu mir kommen, der Vater ziehe ihn denn' (John 6:44). Wie gefaellt dir das? Schreibe diese Worte mit roter Dinte und mit gueldenen Buchstaben in dein Herz; denn tue was du willst, es kommt niemand zu mir, denn der, so mein Vater ziehet." (VII: 2285.) And now mark well, says Luther, that God converted you not because you were better than others and deserved it, but



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from pure grace. "Grace is given freely to the most undeserving and unworthy and is not attained unto by any devoted efforts, endeavors, or works, either small or great, of any men, be they the best and most meritorious, or even of those who have sought and followed after righteousness with all the ardor of zeal. . . . Grace comes so free that no thought concerning it or attempt and desire after it precedes." (XVIII: 1948.) "Grace is the favor of God which gives faith to those who have not merited it." (XIX: 1590.) Christ merited it for you. "Such faith comes not, he says (1 Pet. 1:21), from human power, but God creates it in us, because *Christ has merited it* by His blood, to whom He hath given glory and whom He has seated at His right hand that He by God's power should create such faith in us." (IX: 1158.)

Faith is the life of the Church, and faith can come into being only where Luther's teaching is applied. Where the Pelagian — Semi-Pelagian — synergistic teaching has captured the heart, faith is impossible. "A man cannot be thoroughly humbled until he comes to know that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, endeavors, will, and works and absolutely depending on the will, counsel, pleasure, and work of another, that is, God only. For as long as he has any persuasion that he can do even the least thing towards his own salvation, he retains a confidence in himself, he does not humble himself before God, but proposes to himself some place, some time, or some work whereby he may at length attain unto salvation. But he who does not doubt that all depends on the will of God, he totally despairs in himself, chooses nothing for himself, but waits for God to work in him; and such alone is the nearest unto grace, that he might be saved." (XVIII: 1715.)

J. Clayton writes: "Luther taught: Man could do nothing; God's grace did everything. God alone is the cause of man's salvation." (*Op. cit.*, p. 35.) That is exactly what Luther taught, but while "among Catholics, Luther is held in abhorrence" for teaching such a soul-destroying heresy, we know that Luther restored the life of the dying Church by teaching the glorious truth: "Our salvation is apart from our own strength and counsel and depends on the working of God alone."

The liberal and semiliberal Protestants are saying today



with Goethe in *Conversations with Eckermann*: "We have no idea how much we are indebted to Luther and to the Reformation in general. . . . We have the courage again to be conscious of our divinely endowed human nature. . . . Man has become aware of his greatness and freedom." These Protestants have returned to the papal fold, and Luther tells them: "You madly trifle to the perdition of souls innumerable." (XVIII:1754.) Luther puts them in their place: "This error concerning 'free will' is Antichrist's own article; therefore it is not surprising that it had spread throughout the world, as Scripture has foretold, and but a few shall escape him. *Vae illi!*" (XV:1562.) Luther refuses to be made the patron saint of the Semi-Pelagians and synergists: "Herewith I reject and condemn as erroneous throughout every doctrine which praises our free will, as being in direct opposition to such help and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ." (XX:1096.) It is a matter of life or death for the Church to know that "our salvation depends on the working of God alone."

It is the grace and power of God that gave us faith and that keeps us in the faith. "Christ prays: 'O dear Father, keep them from all false doctrine that they might persevere in Thy holy Word and in the pure Gospel. . . . For unless Thou preserve them, all is over with their salvation! . . . The guardian of our soul sitteth above, who, mindful of this prayer, saith: 'My Christ once prayed for them, and for this cause they are kept and defended by Me.'" (VII:802, 817, on John 17.) The *monstrum incertitudinis*, spawned by the idea that perseverance in faith depends in part on the power of man, was driven out of the Church. The knowledge that their final salvation rests securely in the mighty, gracious hand of Christ revived the dying faith of the Christians, and they rejoiced with Luther: "As to myself, I openly confess that I should not wish 'free will' to be granted me, even if it could be so, nor anything else to be left in my own hands whereby I might endeavor something towards my own salvation. . . . But now, since God has put my salvation out of the way of *my* will and has taken it under *His own* and has promised to save me not according to my working or manner of life but according to His own grace and mercy, I rest fully assured and persuaded that He is faithful and will not lie and, moreover, great and powerful, so that no



devils, no adversities, can destroy Him or pluck me out of His hand. 'No one' (saith He) 'shall pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all.'" (XVIII:1961 f.) "I would not at all want to be the guardian of my soul. If I were to have the care of it, Satan would long ago, in one moment, have taken it away, as the hawk pounces upon the small chick, but out of the hand of God neither the devil nor anyone else can tear it away." (Weimar Ed., *Tischreden* I, p. 568.) The Church lives by the glorious truth: "Perseverance is not brought about by the will of man but by the preservation of God." (IV:1009.)

Grace carries through the work of salvation from beginning to end, and the beginning goes back to eternity, to the election of grace. "That you are chosen you have not obtained through your powers, work, or merit, for the treasure is so great that the holiness and righteousness of all men is too little to obtain it. . . . You have obtained this ineffably glorious estate not through any collaboration of yours, but by pure grace, through this, that God the Father has from eternity predestinated you unto it." (IX:1114.) The Christian owes his conversion entirely to God's eternal gracious purpose to give him faith. "They could neither hear Me nor keep My Word, unless Thou Thyself hadst given it unto them and hadst chosen them unto it." (VIII:787.) "You are chosen by God . . . that you should obey and believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ." (IX:1116.) And now hear this glorious truth as the Christians heard it in the days of the Reformation and rejoiced in the certainty of their salvation: "God's predestination is certain and cannot fail." (IX:1115); it will carry through the work of salvation to its blessed end: "Our salvation is taken completely out of our hands and placed in the hands of God. And this is most necessary. For we are so weak and full of uncertainty that if it depended on ourselves, none would ever be saved, the devil would overpower everyone. But God is reliable, so that His predestination does not fail nor can anyone defeat His purpose, and so we have hope in spite of sin." (XIV:107.) The Church revived when it again heard the glorious Gospel that salvation is, from beginning to end, by grace, by grace alone.

There was joy and gladness in Christendom when men grasped the full import of the *sola gratia*. When Luther him-



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self grasped it, his soul revived. For long years he had sought to obtain salvation through his own works. "I would have given anything I possessed, yea, my very life, in order to find a work (performed by me) which would induce God to give me His grace and eternal life." (VIII:326.) He found none and was brought to the very portals of death. "If I had not been saved through the consolation of the Gospel, I could not have lived through two more years; I tortured myself and was driven about by the wrath of God. . . . But our tears and fear accomplished nothing." (II:318.) He was brought to the very portals of hell. "We lived in death, in hell." (II:321.) Then God in His grace revealed to him that a man is justified by faith without works and that salvation in every respect is by grace. "Then the whole Scripture was opened to me and also heaven itself. Immediately I felt as if born anew, as if I had found the open gate of paradise." (XIV:446; II:321.) And there was joy and rejoicing throughout Christendom. The children learned the Gospel in the schools, and these boys and girls are living, Luther wrote to his Elector, in a veritable paradise. (XVI:692.) And the aged, living in the Gospel of peace, were ready to die in peace. Hearing one of Luther's sermons, a sermon on the wonders of the election of grace, a lady at the court of Duke George exclaimed: "If I could hear such a sermon once more before I die, I could die in peace and joy." When men learn that God pronounces the condemned sinner just, their joy knows no bounds. "Yea, a man that could perfectly believe this would not long remain alive but would be swallowed up incontinent with excessive joy (vor grosser Freude sofort aufgelöst werden)." (IX:516.)

The Gospel of the *sola gratia* supplies the deepest need of the Christian. "Experienced consciences would not, for a thousand worlds, have our salvation depend upon ourselves." (Apology, *Trigl.*, p.145.) And when people heard that God had taken this matter into His own hands, their souls were satisfied. "The soul can do without everything except the Word of God, the Gospel concerning His Son, incarnate, suffering, risen, and glorified." (XIX:990.) "The Church," says H. Sasse, "does not live by morals, by the knowledge and observance of God's Law. It lives solely by the forgiveness of sins. Hence reformation does not consist, as the late Middle



Agnes believed, and has even been believed in wide circles of the Protestant world, in an ethico-religious correction, in a moral quickening and a spiritual deepening throughout the Church. It consists rather, according to its own peculiar nature, in the revival of the Gospel of the forgiveness of sins for Christ's sake." (*Here We Stand*, p. 59.) And this life-giving, life-sustaining Gospel, Luther restored to the dying Church.

Shall we call Luther the Reformer? "Luther, on one occasion, formulated the religious problem, in solving which he spent his early life, as follows: 'O wenn willst tu einmal fromm werden und genug thun, dass du einen gnaedigen Gott kriegest?' (Oh, when will you become devout and do enough that you may get a gracious God?) The medieval Church answered in one way, but that did not satisfy Luther. Luther answered in another way, but that did not satisfy the medieval Church. A break was bound to come, for the two ways of salvation were irreconcilable. The way of Luther required a new conception of the Church, *a new interpretation of Christianity*, a new age in the history of humanity." (*The Lutheran Church Quarterly*, 1945, p. 5.) Luther's interpretation of Christianity, that the very nature of faith is this, that it looks to grace alone, restored to the Church its Christian character and brought Christ back to the world. "Durch die lutherische Kirchenreformation ist mit dem Wort des Evangeliums Christus der Welt wieder aufs neue geboren worden." (Walther, *Casualpredigten*, p. 36.)

The Pope's men cannot see it that way. They deplore the coming of Luther. They denounce his teaching as a perversion of Christianity. The Church needed to be reformed, they say, but "are not good works the basis of all reformation? How can one be a reformer if he denies the utility of all good works?" Thus the Rev. John A. O'Brien in *The Reformation, Causes and Consequences*, p. 30 (1943). J. Clayton too insists that the *Counter Reformation* healed the ills of the Church by improving the morals of the Church. He believes, of course, that the Church lives by its good works and says in the closing paragraph of his book: "Assured as of old that its creed is true, that the morality it teaches is God's natural law sublimated to the ethic of Christ, the Catholic Church remains. . . . And it will endure until the



end of the world." It is a mystery of iniquity that even after the Reformation men still hold that their teaching of the Law, under which the Church dies, can revive the Church.

And what about the charge that Luther "denied the utility of all good works"? J. Clayton raises the same charge: "In 1516 Luther was already preaching the new theology of justification by faith alone and *the discouragement of good works.*" (*Op. cit.*, p. 37.) Oh, the mystery of iniquity! These men are utterly blind to what was going on in the Reformation. Luther demanded good works. "Cursed and condemned is every kind of life lived and sought for selfish profit and good." (X:407.) Luther gave good works a large place in his theology and in his life. "Paul in this place [Gal. 5:6] setteth forth the whole life of a Christian man, namely, that inwardly it consisteth in faith towards God and outwardly in charity and good works toward our neighbor. So that man is a real Christian inwardly through faith before God, who hath no need of our works; and outwardly before men whom our faith profiteth nothing, but our works or charity do profit." (IX:636.) Luther gloried in his good works. "I would not give one of my sermons . . . nay, whatever small work I have done or am doing, for all the riches of the world; yea, I prize them higher than my life. . . . For if it is a good work, God has done it through me and in me. . . . Though it does not make me holy—that must be done through Christ's blood and grace without works—still it is done for God's honor and the neighbor's welfare, both of which cannot be paid for with all the world's goods." (XIV:310 ff.) And, best of all, Luther's teaching—Paul's teaching, Christ's teaching—filled the Christians with the desire, and equipped them with the strength, to perform good works. Have the Pope's men never read Luther's *Treatise on Christian Liberty*? (XIX:986 ff.) When the Christian realizes what great things God has done for him, freely forgiving him his sins and, in addition, making him a king and priest before God—"a Christian man, a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none" (*loc. cit.*, p. 988); "through his kingly power the Christian rules over all things, and through his priestly glory he is all-powerful with God" (*loc. cit.*, p. 998)—he says at once: "Now then, since God has bestowed upon me, the unworthy and condemned sinner, without any merit,



altogether freely and from pure mercy, the full wealth of all godliness and blessedness, certainly I will, on my part, do for such a Father, who has thus poured out upon me His rich blessings, gladly and freely what pleases Him and be unto my neighbor a Christian as Christ has been to me." (*Loc. cit.*, p. 1008.) "I will run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou shalt enlarge my heart," said the Psalmist (Ps. 119: 32), and Luther said: "My soul is too glad and too great to be at heart the enemy of any man." Therefore "what Luther has correctly said remains true: Faith and good works agree and are inseparably connected; it is faith alone, without works, which lays hold of the blessing, and yet it is never and at no time alone." (*Formula of Concord, Trigl.*, p. 929.)

Luther brought about this state of affairs in Christendom: "The *gratuitus favor Dei propter Christum*, declared in the Gospel, is the immovable heaven of grace, spread over the Christian Church, beneath which the Christians live and work by faith. By gazing on this heaven faith comes into being and is preserved, and is a living, energetic, active, mighty thing." (Pieper, *Christliche Dogmatik*, II, p. 13.)

The Christian lives by the *sola gratia*. But his knowledge of God's grace in Christ is derived solely from the word of Holy Scripture. And so we say, in the second place, that the Christian lives by the Word of God. And Luther revived the Church by re-establishing Scripture as the sole source of the saving doctrine, as the sole authority in the Church.

Antichrist had been ruling over the conscience of the Church. The poor deluded souls were basing their faith and hope on the pronouncements of men. Then God raised up Luther to re-establish the great truth that "the Word of God shall establish articles of faith, and no one else, not even an angel." (*Smalcald Articles, Trigl.*, p. 467.) Luther reseatd Holy Scripture upon the throne. "Paul subjecteth both himself and angels from heaven and doctors upon earth and all other teachers and masters to the authority of Scripture. This queen must rule and all must obey her and be subject to her. They ought not to be masters, judges, or arbiters, but only witnesses, disciples, and confessors, whether it be the Pope, Luther, Augustine, Paul, or an angel from heaven. Neither ought any doctrine to be taught or heard in the Church



besides the pure Word of God, *hoc est, Sancta Scriptura*, that is to say, the Holy Scriptures; otherwise accursed be both the teachers and hearers together with their doctrine." (IX:87.) Let the wisest and mightiest men on earth say what they will — "one passage of Scripture has more authority than all the books of the world" (XIX:1734).

For Scripture is the Word of God! *Verbum Dei, hoc est, Sancta Scriptura.*" "Scripture, or God's Word" (VIII:1111). "Hoeret, ihr Herren, Papst und Kaiser, ist denn die Bibel Gottes Wort oder nicht?" (VII:1089.) Is there, then, a Christian who could for a moment question the authority of the Bible? Or set a human authority over it? Luther could not do it. "It is a settled determination with me, not to argue upon the authority of any teacher whatever, but upon that of Scripture alone." (XVIII:1824.) Luther is swayed solely by the authority of the Bible (XVIII:1724), the very Word of God. He declared at Worms: "My conscience is bound in God's Word," and he required every Christian teacher to submit unquestioningly to any declaration of Scripture. "When you have a decision of Scripture, you need not look for any further decision." (III:503.) "I will offer you proof enough from Scripture; if you will believe it, well and good; if not, I am not going to offer you anything else." (IX:1072.) And he uttered the solemn warning: "Theologians must not consider it a trifling matter when the sublime majesty forbids whatsoever does not proceed from the mouth of the Lord." (XIX:821.) Luther trained the Christians to expect this of their teachers: "If any man would preach, let him suppress his own words. . . . Here in the Church he must say nothing but the words of the rich head of the family; otherwise it is not the true Church. Therefore it must be thus: God speaks! It is thus in the world. If a prince is to rule, his voice must be heard in his land and house. How much more does this apply in the Church and eternal life! All subjects must be obedient to their Lord's Word." (XII:1413.)

J. Clayton thus describes Luther's position: "The sacred Scriptures became the supreme authority. 'What does Scripture say about it?' That was the test." (*The Protestant Reformation in Great Britain*, p. 29.) That describes Luther's teaching and work exactly; and while Clayton and the Pope



condemn this teaching as archheresy, we thank God for the blessing He wrought through Luther. He has given us again His Word. We know how much is at stake. We say with Luther: "If this be the attitude of Rome, then blessed be the land of Greece, blessed be the land of Bohemia, blessed be all those who have separated themselves and gone out from this Babel. . . . As matters now stand, faith has been extinguished in her midst, the Gospel proscribed, Christ is banished, and the morals are worse than barbarian. Still there remained one hope: the inviolable authority of Holy Scripture remained, men had at least the right view of the Bible, though not the right understanding of its sense. But now Satan is capturing this too, the stronghold of Zion and the tower of David, unconquered up till now." (XVIII: 42 f.) Thank God, Luther held the citadel of Christendom!

He held it, too, against the Pseudo-Protestants. Zwingli and the other rationalizers demanded that Scripture be interpreted by reason, thus putting reason, instead of Scripture, in the seat of supreme authority. Luther stood firm. "God is above all mathematics, and *God's words* must be received with adoring faith. . . . Jene Worte, 'das ist mein Leib,' halten mich gefangen. . . . Ich bitte um 'ein beständige Beweisung' aus Heiliger Schrift. . . . Meine allerliebsten Herren, dieweil der Text meines Herrn Jesu Christi alda stehet: *Hoc est corpus meum, so kan ich warlich nitt fueruber.*" (See Walther Koehler, *Das Marburger Religionsgesprach.*) When they insisted on the rights of reason, Luther put reason in its place: "Reason is Satan's paramour and can do naught but defame and defile all that God says or does. But before we answer this archwhore and Satan's bride, we shall first prove our faith with simple, clear Bible passages." (XX: 232.) And he cried out in holy wrath: "Das Wort, das Wort, das Wort, hoerst du, du Luegegeist, das Wort tut's." (XX: 274.) Dr. Walther on this point: "At Marburg Luther confirmed with his action, and regained for the Church of all times, the truth that not the Pope, not the councils, not the Church Fathers, not tradition, yea, and not human reason, should rule the Church, but that the Word, nothing but the Word, the whole Word, should rule and be and remain the sole judge." (*Lutherische Brosamen*, p. 243.) C. P. Krauth sums up: "It is a fundamental principle of the Reformation that



God's Word is the sole and absolute authority and rule of faith and of life, without accepting which no man can be truly Evangelical, Protestant, or Lutheran." (*The Conservative Reformation*, p. 14.)

And every *Christian* accepts it, at heart. He became a Christian by learning of the grace of God which Holy Scripture, and Scripture alone, revealed to him. "The evangelical knowledge of God does not grow in our garden; reason does not know a particle of it. . . . It must be proclaimed from above." (VII:1707.) Surely, the Christian lives by the Word of God! He needs it every hour of his life. Holy Scripture is "the best and sublimest book of God, full of comfort in every affliction, because it teaches us faith, hope, and love." (XXII:5.) And it is because of the firm promises of Holy Scripture that we are sure of the grace of God. Faith based on Scripture is so sure of it "that it would risk a thousand deaths" (XIV:99). "The soul of man is an eternal thing, above everything that is temporal. Therefore it must be ruled and grasped only with the eternal Word. . . . Therefore our actions must be guided by Scripture and God's Word. For when God's Word and human teaching are to rule the soul together, they always come into conflict." (X:1540.) The Christian lives by the Word of God. The Pope and the rationalists are keeping the Church away from the life-giving fountain. Luther has led us back to the "pure, clear fountain of Israel."

How much of Scripture does the Christian Church need? How much can safely be given up? Not one jot or tittle of it, says Luther. "The doctrine is not ours but God's. Therefore we may not change or diminish one tittle thereof. . . . We are bound to keep all the articles of Christian doctrine, great and small ones (we do not, in fact, consider any of them small), pure and certain." (IX:644, 649.) "One little point of doctrine is of more value than heaven and earth, and therefore we cannot abide to have the least jot thereof to be corrupted." (IX:650.) When men approach the Christian with the proposal to discard or disregard certain portions of Holy Scripture, Luther wants the Christian to reply: "As for me, every single Bible passage makes the world too narrow for me" (XX:788), to say what he himself said shortly before his death, in his last sermon preached at Wittenberg: "I will



not depart one finger's breadth from the mouth of Him who says: 'Hear ye Him.'" (XII:1174.)

Why would Luther, why would the Church, insist on keeping the whole of Scripture inviolate? Because all of it is God's Word, not ours. And because all of it is bound up with saving grace. We live by grace—we live by God's Word. "Scripture," says Luther, "forms a harmonious whole, and all examples and histories, yea, the entire Scripture in all its parts, aims at this, that one should learn Christ." (III:18.) If you give up any part of Scripture, there will be something lacking in your knowledge of Christ. And more specifically, "no heresy can bear the teaching of divine grace" (III:169). Walther on this "axiomatic statement" of Luther: "Every heresy that has sprung up was caused by the heretic's inability to believe that man becomes righteous in the sight of God, and is saved, by grace alone." (*Law and Gospel*, p. 163.) Any false teaching will, sooner or later, affect the *sola gratia*. It was for this reason that Luther hated all and any false teaching and instilled this hatred into the Church. "There is nothing under the sun more evil and harmful than the venom of false doctrine. It works deadly, unspeakable harm; it leads men farther and farther away from God unto all kinds of abominations." (III:1873.) The suppression of any Scripture truth weakens the life of the Church. For its full life the Church needs all of Scripture. "Wherefore," said Luther to Erasmus, "let me tell you this: God's Word must be maintained with a mind incorrupt and invincible" (XVIII:1703), and to Duke Henry of Brunswick: "Darum kann und mag die heilige Kirche keine Luegen noch falsche Lehre leiden, sondern muss eitel heilig wahrhaftiges, das ist, allein Gottes Wort, lehren." (XVII:1341.)

God's Word must be maintained, every jot and tittle of it—the modern Protestants do not like this Reformation principle. Bishop C. Gore deplores the fact that "Luther in some respects fastened the letter of the Bible on those who followed him, more bindingly than had been done before" (*The Doctrine of the Infallible Book*, p. 58). And A. Harnack wants to save Luther's reputation as the Reformer by insisting that "Luther protested against the authority of the letter of the Scripture. . . . At the highest levels to which he attained in his life he was free from every sort of bondage



to the letter." (*What Is Christianity?* pp. 298, 312.) The facts of the case are that Luther wanted to be a bondsman of Holy Scripture and that he gloried in this bondage. "Ich bin gefangen [I am bound]; I cannot escape it. The text stands there too mightily." (XV:2050.) He could not help himself. "The Word is all-powerful; it takes the hearts captive." (XX:60.) Scripture took him captive because its message — *sola gratia* — had taken him captive. For this he loved Scripture, every letter, every statement, of it — "the dear Holy Scripture" — and treasured it as the most holy thing on earth. "Halte von dieser Schrift als von dem allerhoechsten, edelsten Heiligtum." (XIV:4.) "The Word of God is the sanctuary above all sanctuaries." (The Large Catechism, *Trigl.*, p. 607.) Luther did not consider it disgraceful slavery to submit to every word of Scripture but held it to be the most glorious privilege to fight the battle of Scripture against all false teachers. He "vowed to his most dear Holy Scripture and made oath to it, to preach and to teach it most faithfully and purely (XVI:1700). He found his greatest happiness in carrying out the behest of Scripture. The life of the Christian is joyful obedience to God's Word.

Living by the Word, the Church is endowed with the divine strength that inheres in the Word. In carrying on her work and fighting her battles by means of the Word, she knows that she will not fail and declares with Luther: "I place over against all sentences of the Fathers, men, angels, devils, solely the Word of the eternal Majesty, the Gospel. . . . That is God's Word, not ours. Here I stand; here I stay; here I make my boast; here I triumph; here I defy the papists, the Thomists, the Heinzists, the Sophists, and all the gates of hell. God's Word is above all, the divine Majesty is on my side." (XIX:337.) Divinely assured that what he was preaching was the eternal truth — "*Haec dixit Dominus, God Himself hath said this*" (XVII:1343) — obeying the command of God's Word — "Gott hat mich an euch gehetzt" (XIV:982) — he defied the power of the emperor, the authority of the Pope, and the artfulness of Satan; and standing alone, with nothing but the Word on his side, he said, and taught the Church to say: "Ob mir schon die ganze Welt anhinge und wiederum abfiele, das ist mir eben gleich und denke: Ist sie mir doch zuvor auch nicht angehangen, da ich allein war. . . .



## LUTHER THE REFORMER

Mein Leib is bald aufgerieben, aber meine Lehre wird euch aufreiben und auffressen." (XIV:422 f.) For "I am sure that my word is not my word, but Christ's Word; my mouth therefore must be the mouth of Him whose Word it speaks" (X:368). Therefore: "Ein Woertlein kann ihn faellen."

John A. O'Brien says: "Luther formed an alliance with Hutten, an anticlerical Humanist, and with Sickingen, a sort of Jesse James of that day, the leader of a large mercenary army of freebooters and thieves. . . . With the backing of Sickingen, Luther's defiance of Rome became more pronounced." (*Op. cit.*, p. 26.) And J. Clayton writes: "Luther relied upon the protection of the Elector Frederick for safety in Wittenberg." (*Luther and His Work*, p. 80.) Luther asking Hutten for help? "I have written to this man Hutten: By the Word this world has been conquered, by the Word the Church has been saved, and by the Word she shall be revived; and Antichrist too . . . will be destroyed 'without hand' by the Word." (XV:2506.) Luther relying upon Elector Frederick for protection and help? Oh, yes, Luther was grateful to his prince for guarding his civil rights against a foreign foe, but he did not ask him to further the Gospel with his princely might. He told his good prince: "This matter the sword neither can nor ought to handle or cure; God must do His work alone, without human counsel and help." And he added these words: "Your Electoral Grace must know that I am coming to Wittenberg under a higher protection than that of the Elector. Nor am I minded to ask protection from Your Grace. Yea, I think that I can protect Your Grace more than Your Grace can protect me. . . . Therefore he who believes most strongly will here render the most assistance." (XV:1992.) And in another connection Luther wrote: "Even if the Elector of Saxony deserted me, I would do this: I would stay with Christ. If He is with us, the defection of the Elector will mean as little as the loss of one little hair of my head." (VIII:854.) And so the Church of the Reformation confidently proclaims: "Whether the whole world sides with me or turns against me, does not matter one bit." Nothing is lost as long as the Word is not lost.

Luther did not seek an alliance with knights, princes, and kings for the purpose of strengthening the Church; much



less would he ally himself with errorists. Men of carnal wisdom advised Luther to ally himself with Zwingli and the Reformed despite their false teaching, to tolerate their denial of a Scriptural truth, in order to present a united front against the Pope. Luther could not do it. "The doctrine is not ours, but God's. . . . We protest that we desire nothing more than to be at unity with all men, so that they leave unto us the doctrine of faith entire and uncorrupt. . . . We are bound to keep all the articles of the Christian doctrine pure and certain." (IX:644 ff.) Luther refused to betray the Word of God to which he had sworn allegiance. He was the sworn enemy of any compromise by which false doctrine was given entrance into the Church. "The world at the present time is sagaciously discussing how to quell the controversy and strife over doctrine and faith and how to effect a compromise. . . . Here is lack of understanding, for understanding proves by the Word that such patchwork is not according to God's will, but that doctrine, faith, and worship must be preserved pure and unadulterated." (XII:973.) And Luther did not feel at liberty to yield one single point of the Scripture doctrine, not the least important one. The unionist Zwingli pleaded with him: "Let us confess our union in all things in which we agree; and as for the rest, let us remember that we are brethren. There will never be peace in the churches if we cannot bear differences in secondary points." (See Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VI, p.645.) Luther answered: "They say that one should not contend so arduously about one article of faith, that even though somebody should hold an error in a minor matter, one might yield a little and tolerate it. No, dear sir; none of that peace and unity for me, through which God's Word is lost." (IX:831.)

"Through which God's Word is lost!" That would be too big a price to pay for the fictitious advantages of a false union. Luther's language is not too strong: "Cursed be the charity for the sake of which the doctrine of the Christian faith is sacrificed . . . wherefore let us learn to advance and extol the majesty and authority of God's Word. . . . Every tittle thereof is greater than heaven and earth. . . . In this respect we have no regard for Christian charity or concord. . . . We condemn all men who in the least point de-



face or corrupt the majesty of God's Word." (IX: 645, 655.) The Church needs every single tittle of the saving doctrine. The man who yields up one point of doctrine or declares it to be unimportant loses that much of his spiritual strength. And because of his indifference to one teaching of Scripture he may lose all of God's Word! In his last will and testament, *Kurzes Bekenntnis vom heiligen Sacrament*, which Luther wrote "*als der ich nun auf der Grube gehe*" (as I am now approaching the grave), he uttered this solemn warning: "Wer so kuehne ist, dass er darf Gott leugnen oder luegenstrafen in einem Wort und tut solches mutwilliglich wider und ueber das, so er eins oder zweimal vermahnet oder unterweiset ist, der darf auch (tut's auch gewisslich) Gott in allen seinen Worten leugnen oder luegenstrafen. Darum heisst's: rund und rein, ganz und alles geglaubt, oder nichts geglaubt. Der Heilige Geist laesst sich nicht trennen oder teilen." (XV: 1764, 1781.) Indifference to one doctrine may breed indifference to all doctrines and entail the loss of God's Word — the Word by which the Church lives.

Many Protestants find fault with Luther's firm stand against unionism. They say that he thereby lost his standing and influence as Reformer. Mackinnon quotes Luther (XX: 773): "Cursed be such charity and unity to the very bottom of hell, since such unity not only disrupts Christianity but makes sport and foolishness of it in devilish manner," and comments: "So fanatical and furious was he (Luther) that he was ready to stake the whole reform movement on the acceptance of the notion that the communicant actually eats the body and drinks the blood of Christ." (*Luther and the Reformation*, III, p. 319.) And Garvie complains: "It was lamentable that that movement [the Reformation] was weakened by division, for which Luther's intolerant dogmatism was largely responsible. Because Zwingli, the Swiss reformer, would not accept his too literal interpretation of the words of Christ, he refused any further fellowship with him." (*The Fatherly Rule of God*, p. 144.) There are other Protestants, however, who realize that the Reformation would have come to naught if Luther had weakened the authority of Scripture for the purpose of gaining the unionistic advantages. "Gesegnet sei daher unser Luther noch im Grabe," says Walther (*Lutherische Brosamen*, p. 242) for this, that he re-established



the authority of Scripture in his fight against the Pope and maintained it in his dealings with Zwingli. "We too are often tempted to surrender parts of the pure doctrine in order not to repulse those whom we want to win. We too are inclined to think that our Church would have a faster growth if we did not cling so stubbornly to every letter of the Word of God and our Lutheran Confession. But let us in these temptations look back to the work of the Reformation." "When men revile us because of our stand, let us remember that Luther and his co-workers were also reviled. But today millions are blessing them in their graves." (Walther, *Licht des Lebens*, p. 687; *Epistel-Postille*, p. 470.) Blessed be the name of Luther! He gained and preserved for the Church that which is her life and her strength. Hear the burning words of Dr. Pieper: "If we continue to follow the instructions of God's Word and maintain the 'exclusive' policy of our fathers, that will not submerge us, as little as it submerged our fathers. On the contrary, God would turn away from us as a Church and cast us out as salt that has lost its savor if we, who know what Church and church fellowship mean, would deny the truth of His Word by unionistic dealings. Let others seek strength through other means. We, by the grace of God, want the strength of God's Word. What made our fathers so strong and invincible and always gave them the victory, though the world and the faint-hearted union church constantly predicted their speedy debacle? This was the strength of our fathers, that, making no compromise of any kind, they stood squarely on God's Word." (*Proceedings of Delegate Synod*, 1899, pp. 35, 38.)

That is the spirit of the Reformation: Whether the multitudes side with us or turn away from us does not matter. What matters is that we keep the Word. The advantages gained by compromising the Word are losses. The only success that counts comes through the Word. The Word must do it.

And that exactly is the story of the Reformation: the Word did it! "The Word of Truth — that is our sword and strong hand; no man shall withstand it. . . . I have not raised a finger against them — Christ destroyed them with the sword of His mouth, 2 Thess. 2: 8." (XIX: 966.) "I did not do it; the Word alone, preached and spread by me, ac-



completed all this." (XX:20 f.) The Word of God, Holy Scripture, established itself as the sole authority in the heart of Luther and caused him to declare at Worms: "I aim at one thing only: to have the Church reformed on the basis of Scripture and through Scripture." (XV:1935.) The Word of Holy Scripture drove Luther and his associates and filled their hearts with courage. "If the Reformers knew the movements of their minds, it was God's Word, and it alone, which made them confessors of the truth." (Krauth, *op. cit.*, p. 17.) And the truth confessed by them, which "is all-powerful and takes the hearts captive," won a great host for the Bible, for Christ. — The Word, "*preached and spread by me,*" did it. That was Luther's part in the Reformation. He obeyed the call of God to give battle to the antichristian forces with nothing but the Bible in his hand. And he won the victory. — "The Reformation of the sixteenth century was founded upon the authority of the Bible; yet it set the world aflame." (Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, p. 78.)

The account of the affair at Worms, which quotes Luther's statement that only Scripture could bring about the Reformation of the Church, closes with the prayer: "Der ewige, barmherzige Gott wolle den gottseligen Mann, der von Gott erweckt ist, die christliche Lehre wiederum zu reinigen und die Ehre Christi zu erleuchten, bei langem Leben seiner Kirche zu gut, Trost und Besserung erhalten, neben ihm auch viel andere erwecken, die das Wort des Evangeliums mit grosser Kraft predigen. Amen." The Church needs men to carry on the Reformation. The greater part of the Protestant world has thrown its Protestant heritage away. Let them heed the words of Dr. C. E. Macartney: "Luther was a man sent of God, a world-shaker, such as makes his appearance only a few times in the history of the world. The two great doctrines which he rediscovered and loosed upon the world were, first of all, the Scriptures as the final authority for the Christians and, second, justification by faith alone. . . . Today the Protestant Church stands in sore need of a re-emphasis and rediscovery of these two great Reformation propositions. When Luther said, 'Here I stand. I cannot do otherwise. So help me God,' he was taking his stand upon the Scriptures. But where does the Protestant Church today stand as to the Scriptures? Does it stand anywhere? And



when the authority of the Scriptures is gone, all that we have is a vague 'I think so.' Human wisdom and speculation is a poor substitute for a "Thus saith the Lord." . . . The Luther commemoration will have done the Church good if it shall bring us back to a contemplation of that soul-stirring truth that the sinner is saved by his trust in the infinite mercy of God, vouchsafed unto us in the death of His eternal Son." (See CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY, 1934, p. 398 f.) The Lutheran Church, too, is in danger of losing its Lutheran heritage. Let us heed the words of Dr. C. C. Hein: "To the Lutheran Church the Bible as a whole as well as in all its parts is the pure, infallible Word of God. . . . May Lutheranism preserve to the Christian world its own precious Reformation heritage: The Word of God, the whole Word of God, and nothing but the Word of God." (*The Second Lutheran World Convention*, p. 74.) If we would restore the Church to health, we must maintain and apply "the twofold ruling principle of the Lutheran Church: the Word of God, nothing but the Word of God and the whole Word of God, and grace, nothing but grace and the whole grace." (Walther, *Casual-predigten*, p. 91.) We need it, and the whole Church needs it. "May God grant the whole Lutheran Church, in this land and throughout the world, the grace that she may stand before the world with her escutcheon unsullied, and fulfill, for the good of the whole world, her God-appointed mission: to confess the *sola gratia* on the basis of the *sola Scriptura*." (Pieper, *Lehre und Wehre*, 1927, p. 11.)

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## "Kenotic Ignorance or Accommodation"

By P. E. KRETZMANN

The term kenoticism fills the Lutheran theologian with apprehension, if not with horror. It is a term which has been used by our dogmaticians to designate the false teaching of the *kenosis* of Christ, one not in agreement with Phil. 2:7. From the days of Thomasius, who has been called the father of kenoticism, down through the writings of Luthardt, Gess, von Hofmann, Frank, and others, this insidious poison has been spread in modern theology until the point has been reached where errors concerning the person of Christ, and