

PREFACE

"The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." I Cor. 2:14. So it has been since sin beclouded man's reason, so our Lord experienced while He walked this earth, and so we today find it. God's thoughts jar man; man reacts by rebelling in one way or another against God's thoughts--unless the Spirit of God takes man's thinking captive under the Word of God.

Think but of the rebellion against the "Bread of Life" sermon that Jesus once preached in Capernaum. St. John reports the reaction of even His disciples: "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an *hard saying*; who can hear it?" John 6:60. What made those gracious words such an *hard saying*? This--that Jesus spoke of Himself as more than they were ready to concede Him to be: the heaven-sent, life-creating and sustaining BREAD for their sin-starved souls. This also--that Jesus spoke of them as less than they believed themselves to be: spiritually impotent. That really was an offence to their natural pride, as it remains to this day.

A child of God has gained a measure of maturity when he has come to understand that the Word of God on any given subject is a *hard saying* for natural man. During the past five years the undersigned has witnessed to both hostile and friendly audiences in West Columbia, SC, Savannah, GA, and Hendersonville and Salisbury, NC in regard to some very unpopular words of the Lord that affect the everyday life of modern church members. The first of these was regarding the position of women in the church. One of the most modern of our present-day revolutionary currents is the Women's Liberation Movement. We are not concerned with every facet of that movement, but only with the relationship of man and woman in marriage and the role of woman in the church. What the Word of the Lord has to say on these subjects is, indeed, a *hard saying* for many modern women. The church of today is caught up in the ecumenical movement, whose common doxology could very well be "Oh, he's a jolly good fellow!" For the basic functional plank in the movement's platform is "agreeing to disagree agreeably" in matters long decided by the Word of God. Quite naturally all "separation passages" in Scriptures are *hard sayings* for the ecumaniacs, and consequently the practice of "Close Communion" is *hard* indeed! Our Lord once said, "No man can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). But many a person, who confesses himself to be and believes himself to be a "Christian" imagines that he can serve both Christ and this world, or paganism, at the same time. The modern church, for the most part, condones this illusion by approving the membership of its members in semi-religious organizations whose religious philosophy is unadulterated paganism. Thus the church has created a generation of "confessor-deniers," those who make themselves believe that they can confess Christ with their lips but at the same time deny Him with their membership in organizations that make Christ optional at best, unnecessary in fact.

After testifying for five years on these issues, three series of essays were prepared and printed in serial form in the Sunday bulletins of Holy Trinity Independent Evangelical Lutheran Church of West Columbia, SC from November of 1971 to July of 1972. These are herewith, reproduced as *HARD SAYINGS* for our modern age--a testimony against current evils that afflict our generation of church members and a word of instruction for any and all who would be edified in Christ.

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THE CHRISTIAN WOMAN

THE ORIGIN OF WOMAN Where did she come from? Before we can understand the purpose, function in society, relationship to man, or destiny of woman, we must know her origin. There are but two possibilities: Either woman is the product of an evolutionary process that after billions of years by chance and happenstance developed a living cell from inorganic matter and then woman from that initial amoeba on some primeval sea OR woman was created by God. The first is evolutionary mythology--man's great effort to escape from the reality of God as witnessed in nature and in his own conscience. The second is truth, as revealed by God in His inspired Word.

Genesis 1-2 The Bible introduces God working as Creator. The creation of man and woman is distinguished from the creation of all other living things by five factors: 1) the inter-Trinitarian counsel that preceded their creation, 2) their being created "in the image of God," 3) the personal method of their creation, 4) their receiving the "breath of life" directly from God, and 5) their position of dominion over all of creation.

Here are the pertinent word:

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Gen. 1:26-27.

Woman It is of utmost importance to mark well the order of creation. God did not create male and female simultaneously. Neither did He create woman first, and then man. No, He created man first, and then woman. Thus the unity of the race was assured and the relationship of woman to man established.*

And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet (fit or suitable) for him. Gen. 2:18.

First God created a conscious realization in man that he was without a mate. God did this by bringing all living creatures to Adam "to see what he would call them." Created with an intelligence that was a reflection of His Creator, Adam possessed insight into the nature and being of every creature which he expressed by giving each a name that described the character of the creature. But not a creature in all creation fitted Adam. And so -

. . . the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. Gen. 2:21-23.

*The writer believes the Bible to be the verbally inspired Word of God, also that Moses wrote the Pentateuch. We are not dealing with "two creation accounts," but with the account that the Spirit of God moved Moses to record. Thus chapter one give the general account of the creation of man and woman, and chapter two supplements with details and thus forms a transition to chapter three. We reject the multiple authorship theory which makes chapter one the creation account of "P" and chapter two a variant account of "J"--both supposedly incorporated into the Torah by an unknown editor.

It is to be carefully observed that God took neither from the head nor from the foot of man, but a rib from his side. It was the divine intention that woman should be at the side of man. The position of man relative to woman was one of leadership, authority, and responsibility. The position of woman relative to man was one of subordination, auxiliary in design and function. Woman was to be a "help--meet," that is, fit or suitable for man.

Before sin destroyed this God-created and God-ordained relationship of man to woman and woman to man, there was no question as to superiority and inferiority, equality or inequality, man's rights or woman's rights. After the Lord God had inspected His creation, He found it all to be "very good." All of creation fitted together with no friction whatever between any of the parts. Thus Adam stood as the foremost of God's creatures, and Eve stood proudly at his side--as the helper specially created for him.

Basic to any understanding of the relationship of man and woman in marriage, the proper role of woman in society, and the position of woman in the church is this understanding of the order of creation. We can see evidence of this order in the social structures of all societies. The New Testament has not abrogated it. The supposedly learned insight of modern man and the historical-critical method of modern Bible interpretation cannot disannul it. It stands--never to be revoked.

THE ROLE OF WOMAN God gave the command not to eat of the forbidden fruit to
IN THE FALL Adam. Adam transmitted it to Eve. Satan, who had previously attempted to cast off the yoke of subordination to God by rebelling (Isaiah 14:12-15), approached not Adam, but Eve, who had received the command second-hand and who had been created in a position subordinate to man.

By suggestion, by insinuation, by falsehood Satan succeeded in causing Eve to doubt the goodness and good will of her Creator. The fact that her Creator had imposed restraints upon her by limiting her freedom to eat whatever fruit she desired began to gall on her and laid the seed of rebellion. Satan suggested a way to redress her grievances. His suggestion seemed so reasonable, so simple, and so sure of success. The thought gave birth to the deed. Possibly without consciously realizing it, Eve usurped the leadership of the family. She was no longer content to be at his side, a help "meet" or fit for him. She made a decision affecting the welfare of the family and the whole human race, as though she had been created the responsible head of the family. She was confident that through her decision their eyes would be "opened" and they would be "as gods." St. Paul says that she was "thoroughly deceived," as the Greek verb indicates, I Timothy 2:14.

THE PUNISHMENT God has a way of meeting out punishment that reflects the nature of the sin committed. So it was with Eve. Instead of the anticipated joy she received sorrow, instead of independence dependence, and instead of leadership subordination. Here is the judgment of God:

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. Gen. 3:16.

Eve looked forward to joy and blessing from eating the forbidden fruit. It was so appealing to the eye and taste buds. What intellectual thrills and what an emotional experience it would be to know from actual experience both good

and evil and so to be as gods! The immediate consequence was shame, fear, and the first family quarrel. The long range judgment was sorrow and pain in the very sphere of woman's inmost being and purpose in life. Child bearing and child rearing would bring sorrow and pain. So it is and ever shall be!

Eva acted independently. She failed to consult with Adam. She grasped the initiative. She is the mother of all women's "liberation" movements. But woman was not created to exist independently of man. What Eve failed to perceive from God's creation and to live by of her own free will now became an innate part of her very being. "Thy desire shall be to thy husband." The Revised Standard Version translates, "Thy desire shall be for your husband." A more literal translation of the Hebrew would be "unto thy husband thou shalt be attracted." The mother instinct, displayed so early in girls playing with dolls and caring for younger brothers and sisters, the bride-playing by girls and the natural desire for emotional fulfillment through marriage is to be traced back to this Word of the Lord. Because of sin this desire sometimes becomes morbid--the nymphomaniacs. In other cases it may lead to frustration--the radical women's liberationists groups. So it is--unchangeable!

Eve usurped leadership in the family. She was not content to stand at Adam's side. She wanted to be the head of the family. And so the punishment came in the form of the direct opposite of what she desired: "and he shall rule over thee." Because of this judgment and wherever the Gospel has not curbed the sinful nature of man, women have been exploited, degraded, and enslaved. It is not man's wisdom in the form of insights from psychiatry or psychology or sociology, nor is it the efforts of women's liberation groups that have eased woman's position in society, but rather the power of the Gospel working in the hearts of men and so creating changes in society. But the Gospel does not overthrow the order of creation, nor does it revoke the judgment of God upon woman after the fall. Woman's basic position of subordination to man remains.

HUSBAND AND WIFE The most intimate of all human interrelationships is that of man and woman in marriage. In giving exhortations to both husbands and wives the Spirit of God neither disannuls nor makes void the order of creation or the judgment after the fall, but instructs within that framework. Consider the words of St. Paul to the Ephesians:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church. Eph. 5:22-29.

More briefly St. Paul wrote to the Colossians:

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Col. 3:18-19.

St. Peter wrote as follows:

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation (behavior) of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands: Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement (and let nothing terrify you). Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. I Peter 3:1-7.

The Spirit of God always deals in a very practical manner with the problem of sin in man. So in His exhortations to husbands and wives. Scripture nowhere urges the man to assert his headship over the woman. That would have the effect of encouraging the natural tendency of man's flesh to abuse that headship--as has been done down through the ages. Husbands are to love their wives with a *self-sacrificing love*, as Christ loved the Church. Blessed is the woman who is so loved! Christian husbands are exhorted to check all "bitterness" against their wives, to remember at all times that they are the "weaker vessel," to honor them, but above all to expend themselves in a self-sacrificing manner for the welfare of their wives. So the Christian husband is to curb his flesh and stimulate his new man.

Christian wives are to be affectionate towards their husbands (Titus 2:4), but above all are to exercise themselves in *self-submitting love*. Without even using the word "love," St. Paul indicates the direction such "love" is to take--that of self-submission and obedience towards their husbands. But observe that this "submitting" and "obeying" is to be an exercise of self-discipline, and so a genuine fruit of faith, for the wife is to "submit" herself "as unto the Lord." Obviously such self-submission to her husband dare never violate the wife's submission to her Lord. In living contentedly in her God-ordained role of helper to her husband, the Christian woman is manifesting her faith. St. Peter assures Christian wives that such behavior may well be instrumental in winning an unbelieving husband and that it is, in fact, the real beauty of a woman. Both husband, as head of the family, and wife, in her supporting role, are to exercise self-discipline and so are to show forth the fruits of their common faith in the Savior.

EQUALITY UNDER GRACE Neither the order of creation nor the judgment of God upon the woman after the fall affect the relative position of man and woman beneath the cross. In I Corinthians 11 St. Paul discusses how the order of creation may be manifested by the custom of a woman's covering her head, but there is one instance where any evidence of subordination would be completely out of place. That is "in the Lord":

Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. I Cor. 11:11-12.

There is no such thing as subordinate or lesser grace. Rather there is perfect equality beneath the cross. When the Gospel is preached, the Good News

of the Father's love for sinners is proclaimed to all and is meant for all equally--men, women, and children. Men and women pray the Lord's prayer and receive the same forgiveness. Women and men eat and drink at the Lord's Table, and both receive the same Body and Blood of the Lord as a seal for the forgiveness of sins. In the hour of death women are received into Abraham's bosom by grace through faith in Christ Jesus--the same as men and also children. For "in the Lord" there is complete and perfect equality. Even this was already indicated by the Lord in the arrangement made for the continuance of the human race, for after the special creation of Adam and Eve, all men just like all women are "born of women" (Matt. 11:11), including also the Savior of all mankind. In proclaiming the universality of grace in his letter to the Galatians Paul wrote:

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.
Gal. 3:28.

RULING IN THE CHURCH How is ruling done in the church? If "one is your Master, even Christ" (Matt. 23:10), then Christ is to rule in His Church through His Word. The Church is the spiritual Body of Christ. He rules through His Word, which--He has shown by example and direct command--is to be proclaimed in the public assembly alone by men. In giving instructions to Timothy, his representative in Ephesus, Paul wrote:

Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety. I Tim. 2:11-15.

Since ruling in the church is done through the Word, women are not to teach or preach in the public assembly, for that would constitute usurping authority over man. Thereby the aggressive act of Eve in the garden would be permanently perpetuated in the very House of God. Women are to be learners, not teachers in the public meetings of the church. In that way their proper relationship to men is to be preserved. St. Paul cites two reasons: the order of creation and the role of woman in the fall, together with the subsequent judgment of the Lord.

These factors forever deny to woman the position of leadership in the church, but they in no way jeopardize woman's personal salvation. "Saved she shall be!" The verb is the first word in the sentence, emphatically stating equality under grace. "Through childbearing!" Obviously, childbearing is not a means of grace. Such a thought would conflict with the analogy of Scripture and the immediate context, "if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." But rather, childbearing and childrearing are to be the special sphere of woman's activity. There is a God-given and God-willed dignity, importance, and worth for the church and society in this activity, which is seemingly so despised by many feminists. In the church ruling through the Word is the sphere of the man; bearing and rearing the future generation of church members are the sphere of the woman. Both men and women are to assume the responsibility that God has laid upon them and be content therewith.

RULING IN THE CHURCH Are Paul's words written to the Corinthians (I, 14:
"LET YOUR WOMEN 34-35) an escalation of restrictions upon the activ-
KEEP SILENCE . . ." ity of women in the public meetings of the church or
 are his words parallel to his instruction given to
his representative, young Timothy (I Tim. 2:11-15)?

A study of the immediate context will help us arrive at the answer. Going back to the eleventh chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, we find him discussing how the God-ordained relationship of woman to man is manifested by the custom of a woman's covering her head when praying or prophesying--the latter, of course, in private. Then in the seventeenth verse of that chapter Paul begins discussing a series of abuses that had crept into the public worship and life of the congregation. He speaks of their "coming together," that is, for public worship. This section continues until the end of chapter fourteen.

The first abuse was in connection with the celebrating of the Lord's Supper and the *Agape*, or common meal that preceded the eating and drinking at the Lord's Table. Chapter twelve begins a discussion of "spiritual gifts" and their proper use among Christians. Chapter thirteen presents the "more excellent way"--the way of love, which is to be the guiding principle in all interacting among Christians and in all ruling in the church in matters not settled by the Word of God. In chapter fourteen Paul discusses the misuse of a gift that had been given to the Corinthians in such rich measure--the gift of speaking in tongues, or glossolalia, as it is called today. As amazing as this gift is, it is always overshadowed by the gift of prophesying, which corresponds to our preaching. He who prophesies in the church proclaims, interprets, and applies the Word of the Lord. There is no higher gift.

It was in connection with prophesying, that is, public preaching and teaching in the church that St. Paul adds a few remarks that appear to have been directed towards certain women of the congregation, possibly Greek women, who were guilty of misusing their Christian liberty and so were forgetting basic truths and principles that their Jewish sisters had learned from earliest childhood. Paul wrote:

Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church. I Cor. 11:34-35.

The "speaking" that is prohibited is "prophesying" or preaching and teaching in the public assembly. When some of the women broke that silence by participating in the public preaching and teaching, they were, as Paul wrote to Timothy, "usurping authority over the man." Here Paul says they are "to be under obedience," according to the order of creation and the judgment after the fall. Remembering the informality of those apostolic worship services as compared to our formal liturgical services, women were forbidden even to ask questions, for it is and ever remains "a shame for women to speak in the church."

What about the proper application of these injunctions to our way of doing things today? Let us remember that we have no detailed description of how public worship was conducted in apostolic times. In places where the Jewish element was strong, no doubt the order of the synagog would be followed with

portions of the Scripture read and expounded by duly appointed men. But Corinth was a predominantly Greek congregation. Public worship seemed to have been much more informal. It was this very informality that led to abuses. The misuse of the gift of tongues and the misuse of Christian liberty on the part of some of the women had jeopardized the edifying of all, had caused disorder, and had led some of the women to violate the established order of God in His House--that the congregation of believers be ruled through His Word, as proclaimed and taught by duly called men. In correcting these abuses St. Paul applied to the situation the principle that he had laid down in his more general instruction to Timothy.

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE This term means the right of women to vote, which also includes the right to speak in public assemblies. The right to vote = the right to rule under any system of government that honors the vote as an expression of individual political power. This right was granted to women when the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution, sometimes known as the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, was adopted by the thirty-sixth state, Tennessee, on August 26, 1920. The question is whether the same principles of rule apply in the church as in the state.

We have already observed that the Lord Jesus is the Head of the Church. He rules His Church through the Gospel, as publicly proclaimed and taught by men. This, in itself, makes the terms pastor and woman contradictory. But what of the so-called business matters of the congregation--budgetary and property matters, governing principles and policies? May women serve on the governing boards of the church body or on church councils in local congregations? May they serve as delegates to conventions and as voters in the business meetings of the congregations? Do they have the right to speak in public meetings of the congregations and the church body? The answer to these questions does not lie in the area of relative intellectual abilities, superiority or inferiority, inequality or equality, but in God's established order. Do such activities involve woman in usurping authority over the man? Since they obviously do, they violate the "headship" of the man that is not binding in the political sphere, but that the Lord wants observed in the church.

Matters of Doctrine Confession Men are to exercise the rule in the House of God, but if men violate the Word of God with their rule, then women, and even children, must challenge, protest, and disobey such rule. The basic principle is crystal clear: *"We ought to obey God rather than men"*--whether they be government officials or false prophets. (Acts 5:29) The modern church has become accustomed to settling matters of doctrine by majority vote at conventions instead of by the Word of God. Many women and also children have protested such votes that enthrone error in the confession of the church by withdrawing from the erring body and following a preacher who proclaims the whole of God's truth. Thus women "vote" in these most important matters by their choice of their spiritual leader, by the support they give to the preaching of the pure Word of God, and by their prayers. The priceless treasure of the Church is the Gospel, which is not subject to vote, but which is to be confessed by men, women, and children.

Earthly Affairs As to the earthly affairs of a congregation or church body--such as the election of leaders, fiscal matters, governing principles and policies--the principle of love is to govern all. Even majorities dare not violate that principle. In the verse immediately preceding his exhortation to wives to submit themselves to their own husbands Paul wrote, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Eph. 5:21. The exhortation to the wife to submit herself to her husband does not give the hus-

band license to exercise arbitrary authority over his wife. If he does, he violates the law of love, and thus is guilty of sinning against his wife. For men in the church to exercise their rule in an arbitrary, loveless manner --that is, without consideration for the well-being, feelings, and concerns of the women is a misuse of the "headship" entrusted to them. To avoid this congregational and synodic affairs should be handled publicly, not behind locked doors--except in the preliminary stages of church discipline. The agendas for meetings should be published so that they can be discussed in every household. Any woman or child has a right to express an opinion through a husband, brother, councilman, or pastor. All subsequent decisions are also to be published.

Thus the "headship" principle, that is, the principle of the man's responsibility for leadership, is preserved inviolate in the church, decency and good order are maintained, and constant care is observed that the law of love is not violated. Men rule well in their own households and in the church when they "submit themselves one to another in the fear of God. Eph. 5:21.

PRINCIPLE Briefly stated the principle is this: God rules His people individually and collectively through His Word. In the public assembly of the congregation that Word is to be proclaimed and taught only by called men--not by women.

During the patriarchal times we read of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob building altars, sacrificing, and calling upon the Name of the Lord. When the Levitic priesthood was instituted in Israel at Mt. Sinai, the male members of the tribe were entrusted with all the duties of public worship. In later years when God raised up prophets, He communicated His Word through men whom He called immediately. When the Lord Jesus chose the Twelve, He called twelve men. When the Holy Supper was instituted, Peter and John were instructed to make the preparations, and no women were even present at that first Supper. When the Spirit of God prepared the written Word by which the Lord was to rule in and among His people to the end of time, He moved men to write. "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." II Peter 1:21. The Church is "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." Eph. 2:20. In contrast--a distinctive feature of heathenism is the prominence of high priestesses and their beavies of priestesses.

PROPHETESSES Miriam was the sister of Moses and Aaron. She is called a Miriam "prophetess" (Ex. 15:20). After God had delivered His people from the Egyptians through the Red Sea, Miriam led the women of Israel in a worship of thanksgiving for this so great deliverance. Notice that she led the women, not the men. Later, in a moment of spiritual pride, Miriam--supported by Aaron--challenged the spiritual leadership of Moses in Israel. As punishment for her rebellion against the Lord's rule of Israel through Moses, Miriam was stricken with leprosy and was compelled to dwell in shame outside of the camp for seven days after Moses had interceded for her and the Lord had healed her (Numbers 12).

Deborah The period of the Judges was a time of apostasy and anarchy, judgment and punishment at the hands of Israel's enemies, and then repentance and deliverance when the Lord raised up a judge. During this time when the men of Israel again and again failed to carry out their God-given responsibilities, the Lord on one occasion raised up a woman--Deborah, a prophetess. Barak was the Lord's man at that time, but Barak was weak and

needed the spiritual and moral support of Deborah. Because of Barak's weakness, the Lord delivered Sisera, captain of the enemy host, into the hands of a second woman, Jael (Judges 4). Thus it was that the Lord delivered His people through the hands of two women--heroes of faith in the midst of faint-hearted men.

God has entrusted men with the responsibility of leading His people in the light and by the power of His Word. This is God's regular order, but when men fail to respond to their God-given responsibilities, there results a leadership vacuum which the Lord, at times, fills with women. So it was that Deborah, the prophetess, judged Israel, and Jael smote Sisera, and so it has been time and again in the history of God's people.

Another such instance occurred during the reign of one of the later kings of ~~Huldah~~ Judah. The high priests and priests had become so careless and indifferent that the very book of the Law had been lost. During the reformation, instituted by Josiah, the book of the Law was again found and taken to the King. King Josiah instructed Hilkiah, the high priest, to inquire of the Lord. That he did by going to see Huldah, the prophetess, who brought the King the Word of the Lord (II Kings 22). Again, it was during a period of national apostasy that the Lord chose to communicate His Word to His people through a woman.

The wife of Isaiah is called "a prophetess" (Is. 8:3)--no doubt because she was his wife. Noadiah is named as a false prophetess in Nehemiah 6:14. In the New Testament the four daughters of Philip possessed the gift of prophecy, but are not called "prophetesses" (Acts 21:9). The church at Thyatira was troubled by a false prophetess (Rev. 2:20). The Lord followed His own principle--except in cases of extreme necessity.

PRINCIPLE The rule is: Principles remain constant; customs vary. Christian
AND liberty demands that customs remain flexible; absolute truth that
CUSTOM changes not demands that principles remain inflexible.

I COR. 11:1-16 Popularly considered, this section deals with the wearing of hats by women in church. What principle is involved? It is the relationship that God established between man and woman in creation. God created man as the "head" of the woman and woman as the "help," meet or fit for man. St. Paul refers to the facts of creation:

For the man is not of the woman; but the woman is of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. (vv. 8-9)

Feminists of all ages have rebelled against this arrangement; effeminate men of all ages have yielded the principle. Sin has enslaved man without curbing his passion for independence: the woman from the man (and so from God) and the man from God. In brief, natural man and woman are in a state of constant rebellion against the order that God has established for society. The Christian should know and behave better. Paul wrote:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. (v. 3)

How is this principle of "headship"--the woman to the man, and the man to Christ--to be manifested? In part by nature and in part by the customs of societies. Among the Greeks the covering of the head was a badge of servitude, the uncovered head a symbol of freedom. Among the Romans the custom was the reverse. Yet the Romans and the Jews and also the Germans were ac-

customed to pray with head covered. Notice that customs vary! And so when discussing the appropriateness of some custom for modern usage on the basis of Paul's inspired words, it is necessary to keep clearly in mind just whom Paul was addressing. To fail to do this is to violate the principle of Christian liberty.

The Corinthian congregation was predominantly Greek. Among the Greeks covering the head was a sign of slavery, the uncovered head a sign of freedom. So for the Greek woman a covered head, while praying or prophesying, was a symbol of her recognizing and accepting--not reluctantly or with resignation, but obediently--the order that God had established in creation, that order being not one of slavery but of subordination to man. This custom is a reflection of nature, for God bestowed hair upon woman as a natural, but distinctive, covering for her head. In characteristic thoroughness Paul shows the logical end of the "independence" movement on the part of some of the women of the congregation. If they no longer wanted to wear a covering on their heads, they should go all the way and shave their heads.

If, however, a Greek man covered his head while praying--and remember that as a Jew Paul was accustomed to men covering their heads while praying--he would publicly be assuming the stance of the proverbial "henpecked" husband, that is, one who abdicated his God-given "headship" and the responsibility connected therewith, and acknowledge that not only Christ but also his wife as his "head."

We are living some nineteen centuries later. Some customs have persisted, some have been lost, and some have changed. The women of our choir still wear a simple black beanie--although the significance of it has been forgotten in many circles. Customs frequently persist long after their meaning has been lost. But the wearing of hats by women in church has become optional--entirely a matter of personal taste, even as our men no longer wear a skullcap when praying, as the Jews did and still do.

In this connection questions have been raised as to that which Peter and Paul have to say about a woman's grooming (I Peter 3:3; II Tim. 2:9) Here the principle is that a woman's beauty does not consist in hair styles or the use of cosmetics and jewelry, but in her inner, spiritual personality. In this area and other areas the apostles consistently warn against both curtailing and abusing Christian liberty. The basic truth to keep ever in mind is simple: Principles remain constant; customs vary.

THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN
Prophecy In Old Testament times when the nation became apostate--chiefly because the responsible heads of the nation, both spiritual and civil, and the heads of the households failed to defend, confess, and teach the Name of the Lord, the Lord would, on occasion, raise up a woman to show the way back to the Lord. We think of Deborah during the period of the Judges and of a Huldah during the latter days of the monarchy. The Lord God is never at a loss to have His Word proclaimed. If the men whom He has charged with the responsibility of ruling by His Word fail, He can and He does raise up a woman or even children, as on Palm Sunday.

The New Testament times were to see an enlargement or a broadening of the exercise of the gift of prophecy among women. The Prophet Joel foretold, 2:28-29:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.

So it was that Elisabeth "was filled with the Holy Ghost" and praised the Lord when Mary came to visit her (Luke 1:41-45). And Mary responded with an outburst of lofty praise that we know as "The Magnificat." By moving St. Luke to include this prophetic utterance in his account of the Gospel, the Spirit of God has made Mary a teacher of the Church till the end of time. In Acts Luke reports that the four daughters of Philip the Evangelist possessed the gift of prophecy. The Church cannot impose guidelines nor restraints upon the Spirit of God. He moves to prophesy whom He will and whenever He so wills.

But God always remains a God of order. The Holy Spirit does not overthrow the order of creation or the judgment after the fall which has for all time established the relative position of man to woman. The Spirit remains consistent by forbidding women to rule in the public assembly of the congregation by preaching. But this does not deny to woman the right, duty, privilege, and responsibility of teaching according to divine order. An instructive example is that of a remarkable woman who played such a key role in the missionary work of St. Paul. She was Priscilla, the wife of a tentmaker named Aquila. Priscilla Paul met this couple in Athens, lived and worked with them, and took them along to Ephesus. We can but imagine the hours of private instruction and of holy insight that this couple received from St. Paul. What they learned, they taught when the opportunity presented itself. Apollos had come from Alexandria to Ephesus. He was "an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures," but his knowledge was incomplete. Aquila and Priscilla spotted this lack immediately. They didn't embarrass Apollos publicly but took him to their home "and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Act 18). It appears as though Priscilla may have been, by natural disposition and spiritual endowment, better equipped to teach Apollos than her husband. On occasion, when mentioning both of them, St. Luke names Priscilla first. In sending his greetings to friends in Rome St. Paul wrote, "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 16:3). So it was that the Spirit of God used Priscilla to round out the instruction of Apollos who, in turn, may well have been the author of the letter to the Hebrews and so a teacher of the entire Church.

So it is that a woman prophesies most naturally and most effectively in the privacy of a home, in a small group, or in a one to one situation. Fathers are admonished to bring up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4), but fathers generally delegate the religious instruction of their children to their wives because they are endowed by God with special gifts for training the young. Many women are better theologians than their husbands, and many a man has profited from the instruction and guidance of a woman of the Lord. There are many women, sitting on church pews on Sunday mornings, who are more learned in the Scriptures than renowned preachers of the day. They function quietly, but efficiently and effectually, as agents of the Spirit in the sphere where the Lord has placed them.

Ordination of Women The matter of ordaining women for the public ministry has become one of the burning issues in the churches of today. It is the ecclesiastical issue of the modern feminist movement. In 1956 both The Methodist Church and the United Presbyterian Church U.S.A. (Northern) gave full ordination to women. In 1970, both the Lutheran Church in American and the American Lutheran Church voted to ordain women. The issue has come up in The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod. By many these changes are heralded as long overdue triumphs for the Gospel, whereas they are but further manifestations of the general apostasy which characterizes our times and which is causing the widespread loss of the Gospel. The continuing approval given by major church bodies to the ordination of women is nothing less than rebellion

against the "headship" structure that God has established for society in general, but specifically for the church. St. Paul expressed it briefly in his first letter to the Corinthians:

But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. 11:3.

By ordaining women churches publicly give them the right "to usurp authority over the man" (I Tim. 2:12), thus violating the "headship" structure. God does not contradict Himself in His Word!

Priesthood of Believers Women and children, as well as men, are priests unto the Lord and as such should exercise their spiritual priesthood as the occasion offers opportunity. Such witnessing may and should be done within the family circle, among friends, within the social circle, and among fellow employees or business associates. In times of spiritual crisis women are frequently more ready to let their lights shine, while men are content to put theirs under a bushel.

General Ministry St. Luke reports that while Jesus "went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, . . . the twelve were with him, And certain women . . . which ministered unto him of their substance." Luke 8:1-3. There are many services that women by natural endowment and training are more fit to do than men. Godly women have always seized upon these opportunities to serve. The first convert in Europe was Lydia, a business woman of Thyatira, whom Paul met in Philippi. After the Lord had opened her heart, she "constrained" Paul and his companions to accept the hospitality of her home. So the congregation at Philippi found its church home in the home of Lydia. Phoebe was a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea. She appears to have been entrusted with the responsibility of carrying Paul's letter to Rome. What a courageous and spirited woman she must have been, for traveling was more hazardous for a woman in those days than it is now. In Romans 16 St. Paul greets twenty-eight individuals personally, nine of them being women. This certainly testifies to the value that the Spirit of God placed upon the efforts and works of these women of God.

Christian women of today certainly have no lack of opportunity for service. In times of sickness and death women care for the physical needs of the families involved, supplying along with that spiritual comfort and strength. The home is still the basic unit of society. It is the Christian wife and mother who are chiefly responsible for creating a genuinely Christian atmosphere in the home. To carry on the work of testifying there are so many tedious and unglamorous jobs that have to be done--by both men and women. "Let none hear you idly saying, 'There is nothing I can do.'" Faith begets love, and love begets service. And such service is done unto the Lord.

Let each Christian man faithfully discharge the responsibilities of leadership that the Lord has placed upon him. And let each Christian woman support and assist her husband or brother in the Lord in the work the Lord has given His Church to do.

FELLOWSHIP
(Close Communion)

FELLOWSHIP DEFINITION What is meant by fellowship or more specifically church fellowship? We can define such fellowship as every joint or mutual expression of a common faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Thus fellowship is a discernible horizontal expression of an invisible vertical relationship with our Savior-God. We can't see faith itself, but faith cannot but manifest itself. St. Paul expressed it this way in his letter to the Romans:

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. Rom. 10:10.

St. John spoke of fellowship in just this way as a horizontal manifestation of a vertical relationship in the opening verses of his first letter:

That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. I John 1:3.

Fellowship with the Father and the Son is a matter of faith,

For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Gal. 3:26.

Fellowship with others manifests itself in many different ways.

MANIFESTATIONS OF FELLOWSHIP We speak most commonly of pulpit, altar, and prayer fellowship. Children of God reveal their common faith in the Lord Jesus by the mutual activity of preaching and teaching on the one hand and listening and learning on the other. When two or three or more unite in prayer petitioning their Savior-God for some blessing or for giving thanks for blessings received, they are manifesting a common faith in the Lord Jesus. So also when communicants stand together at a common altar to receive the Body and Blood of their Lord in the Holy Supper, they are manifesting a common faith in the Lord Jesus. St. Luke describes the manifestation of such a common faith in the early Christian Church in these words:

And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and prayers. Acts 2:42.

One common manifestation of fellowship is the response of one group of believers to the needs of another group. The "collection" (I Cor. 16:1) that was gathered from among Gentile Christians for the benefit of their Jewish brethren is such an example. When one considers the previous social and religious gulf between Jews and Gentiles, such fellowship is all the more amazing. Jewish Christians in Jerusalem were suffering from the lack of bare necessities. Paul gathered funds in their behalf among the Greek congregations. The churches in Macedonia were especially responsive. They gave "till it hurt" (II Cor. 8:3). And they insisted that Paul take their offering and also assume responsibility for "the fellowship of the ministering to the saints" (II Cor. 8:4). Macedonian Christians were digging into their own pockets to give to Jerusalem Jews whom they didn't even know personally. But they had something in common or rather Someone --the Lord Jesus. They were all part of His Body. When some members, even

though personally unknown to them and living far away, suffered, they responded with a love-offering. This is fellowship, in this case a manifestation of a common faith in an extremely practical way.

In the opening verses of his letter to the Philippians Paul thanked God for their "fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now. Phil. 1:5. In his letter to the Galatians he speaks of the time when Barnabas and he gave "the right hand of fellowship" to the leaders of the Jewish Church at Jerusalem. Gal. 2:9. Paul urged the Romans to "salute one another with an holy kiss" (16:16)--a physical manner of expressing fellowship that has fallen into disuse. All joint worship and joint church work, such as Christian education, mission work, and charitable work, is fellowship. It is always a manifestation in some form, either publicly or privately, of a common faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

BASIS FOR FELLOWSHIP The basis for fellowship is simply confessional oneness. First children of God are to agree as to what they believe and confess, both in words and deeds, and then they are to manifest that unity by the exercise of fellowship. The formula is not: Fellowship first, unity hopefully thereafter; but unity first, then fellowship as an expression of such unity.

That this is the will of the Lord is obvious from His final command to His disciples:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you . . . Matt. 28:19-20 (RSV)

That command does not give any disciple leeway to add to or subtract from the doctrine of the Lord or to adjust the message by conditioning it either to the spirit of the times or his own spirit. The church is to teach ALL THINGS, and all who hear are to believe and confess ALL THINGS. The assumption is that there can be and should be a unity of confession among those who profess the Name of the Lord.

The congregation at Corinth was not living up to this divine standard. They had divisive "fan clubs" for the various pastors that had served them, an un-reproved case of incest, disorders in connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and even denials of the physical resurrection of the Lord. Was this lack of discipline, disunity of faith and confession, and general disorder the way it was supposed to be in a congregation? The Corinthian congregation reflects the situation in most churches and church bodies today--no doctrinal or moral discipline, agreeing to disagree agreeably in matters of doctrine. Is this the way the Lord wants His children to confess His Name and worship Him? St. Paul wrote in the opening words of His letter:

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. I Cor. 1:10.

Notice: no divisions . . . speaking the same thing . . . same mind and same judgment! This is a call for oneness, for agreement in what one confesses and practices. There is no permission granted here for driving a wedge between Christ and His Word or for converting unity into a babel of conflicting and contradictory opinions.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans:

Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Rom. 15:5-6.

Congregations and church bodies that despise confessional agreement or think that attaining such agreement is either impossible or unnecessary simply cannot glorify God with one mind and one mouth. Their worship is a continuing violation of this word of St. Paul. Anyone who worships with those with whom he is not in confessional agreement is trampling this word of God under foot. Joint worship without confessional agreement is hypocrisy. It gives the appearance of agreement where there is, in fact, no agreement.

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul describes the glory of Christ's Body, His Church. A distinctive feature of Christ's Church is UNITY. All who profess the Name of the Lord should strive for unity--not resent or despise it or consider such unity unnecessary or impractical. The Lord of the Church has promised to supply His Church with preachers and teachers. For what purpose?

. . . for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . Eph. 4:12-13.

Confessional agreement is the basis for all fellowship. All Christians should be desiring such unity and should be striving for it--unceasingly.

NO FELLOWSHIP Since Scripture makes confessional agreement the basis for fellowship, it should be evident that where there is no such agreement, there should be no fellowship. Those who confess the whole of God's Truth in word and deed are not to fellowship those who teach or tolerate error in doctrine or practice. Those who make themselves guilty of joint worship and church work with adherents of false doctrine are guilty of *unionism*--the church term for this sin. If error infiltrates into an orthodox (true confessing) church body, those guilty of causing "divisions and offences" are to be "avoided." Rom. 16:17. If a person in a heterodox (false confessing) church is brought by the Spirit of God to the confession of the whole Truth, such a person is to separate himself from those with whom he once worshipped and did church work. In any of these three situations, the Word of the Lord is loud and clear: Separate and keep separate!

PRINCIPLE OF SEPARATION The modern ecumenical movement is nothing less than continuing disobedience to one of the most clearly defined principles of all Scripture--separation for preservation and propagation. Error pollutes the Truth and destroys faith. In loving concern for His children our God has always warned them to keep themselves separate from all who teach and worship according to error. Failure to heed these warnings may well result in the loss of the Truth and the loss of one's personal salvation.

The Lord God laid the principle of separation upon the hearts of the men of Israel when they entered Canaan:

. . . ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land; ye shall throw down their altars: but ye have not obeyed my voice: why have ye done this? Judges 2:2.

Anyone who is but vaguely acquainted with the history of God's Old Testament

people knows that the cause of their repeated national distress was their failure to remain faithful to the Lord God. They didn't want to reject Him outrightly. They wanted to worship Him along with the baals of the heathen. In brief, they refused to remain separate.

The separation principle continues in the New Testament--not on a national basis, but on an individual and group basis. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus said:

Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Matt. 7:15.

Jesus warns against the false prophet because He knows the infiltrating and destructive power of the religious lie and half-truth. But modern man imagines himself to be much wiser than the Lord. He sits and listens to the false prophet, supports him with his offerings, and exposes his children to his gross heresies and subtle errors. Parents who take every precaution to guard against germs which threaten the physical health of their children are completely unconcerned about the spiritual germ warfare that is carried on by false prophets and teachers. Jesus says, "Beware!" The modern church member, all too often, shrugs his shoulders in indifference or apathy.

St. Paul wrote to the Romans:

Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. Rom. 16:17-18.

Paul pleads. Watch out! Look carefully! Examine the merchandise of all teachers. If they come along with teachings or practices that are out of line with the apostolic Word, they are causing divisions by teaching otherwise than God's Word teaches and they are thereby setting traps to destroy faith. Avoid them!--not socially, politically, or economically, but in spiritual matters. Take care! Such appear to serve Jesus, but they are in fact serving themselves--their own interests. They sound so good and may be so sincere. Watch out, for that is how they deceive the common man.

One of the strongest of the separation passages occurs in Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. By quoting from the Old Testament Paul reveals that the separation principle of the Old Testament has binding force for the New Testament believer.

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. II Cor. 6: 14-18.

Does this powerful passage apply to heterodox (false confessing) church bodies and members of the same? Yes, indeed! For to the extent that a person or group believes and confesses error to that extent he or they are guilty of "unrighteousness," "darkness," and casting their lot with "Belial." The Holy Spirit works faith in and confession of the Truth; the devil is master of the lie, the half-truth, the wrong emphasis, and the error in doctrine. Anyone who permits the power of darkness to determine or influence what he believes and confesses is to be avoided, for "what communion hath light with darkness?"

This passage obviously makes impossible membership in any semi-religious organization that confesses a vague, undefined "god" that makes acceptance of Jesus Christ and His salvation optional, for "what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" This passage also condemns the modern ecumenical movement which seeks unity in disunity, light in darkness, and Christ at the altar of Belial.

What does the Word of the Lord have to say of those who preach and teach error? St. Paul wrote to Titus:

A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject.
Titus 3:10.

The Bible knows of no patient, longsuffering, long-drawn-out process of dealing with false teachers and preachers. Admonish once, admonish twice; then reject! Why such urgency? Why such haste? Because error is like leaven (Gal. 5:9) which naturally permeates the whole lump, the entire body of doctrine, seeking to destroy salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Because error works like gangrene (II Tim. 2:17) in the spiritual life of a believer, striving to corrupt and destroy saving faith in Christ Jesus.

Yet what do we find? Thousands and hundreds of thousands of church people know the professors of their theological seminaries, the pastors in their pulpits, and the teachers in their classrooms are peddling error. Yet they continue to sit in the pew, expose their children to soul-destroying error in Sunday School classes, and support the training and maintaining of false teachers and heretics with their offerings. No wonder there is confusion, apostasy, and spiritual anemia amongst church people today. Instead of rejecting the heretic, they coddle, flatter, support, and then pension off the very people who are robbing them and their children of the Bread of Life and the Living Waters.

St. John has a word of advice for all Christians:

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed. II John 10.

John isn't forbidding civil amenities, but anything that even gives the appearance of fellowship. Give no support to the peddler of error--neither material nor spiritual. Avoid him like the plague. If children of God would do this, the false teacher would soon be isolated and would wither away, for where there is no market, there will be no merchants. So it is that the Spirit of God consistently, and without exception, urges separation from all who in any way pollute the Word.

APPLICATION Communing at the Lord's Table is an exercise of fellowship,
 OF that is, an expression of a common faith in the Lord Jesus.
PRINCIPLE According to the scriptural principle that confessional agree-
 ment is the basis for fellowship it follows that only those who
are in complete agreement regarding the teachings of our Lord may commune to-
gether. This practice is called "close communion," that is, attendance at
the Lord's Table restricted to those who meet this spiritual qualification.

Accordingly we admit to the Lord's Table only those who have confessed their oneness with us in matters of doctrine and practice. But we do welcome any and all to our public worship services and instructional classes. How can this be since joint prayer, singing praises, preaching and teaching are also expressions of fellowship?

The answer becomes clear when we learn to understand the distinctive charac-
Distinctive Characertistic teristic of one of the Means of Grace, namely,
of Communion Holy Communion. Before our Lord ascended to
 heaven, He gave His final instructions to His
Church. Until He comes again, all disciples are to occupy themselves with
the work of making disciples of all nations. They are to work towards this
goal by baptizing and teaching (Matt. 28:19-20). Notice that the Gospel in
the form of the Word and Baptism is for all nations. All are invited to hear
the preaching and teaching of the Word. Baptism is to be granted to all who
ask for it for themselves and their children. In the public ministry of our
Lord we see Him instructing individuals like Nicodemus by night and the woman
of Samaria at Jacob's well. We also see Him preaching to the multitudes on
the shore of the Sea of Galilee, on a mountain-side, and in the courts of the
temple at Jerusalem. No one was turned away; all were invited to come and
hear. So also John the Baptist baptized the multitudes that came to him.
Our Lord did not baptize personally, but instituted Baptism for all.

But our Lord did not institute His Supper in some public place amidst the multitudes! No, He instituted it in the privacy of the Upper Room on the night of His betrayal. Only The Twelve were present--apparently as representatives of the New Testament Church. No other disciples, male or female, were present. No servants were on duty, for there was no one to wash the feet of the disciples. All preparations had been made by Peter and John. Whether Judas was still there when our Lord interrupted the Passover service by taking bread, breaking it, and distributing it to His disciples or whether he had previously left is difficult to determine from the accounts of the Evangelists.

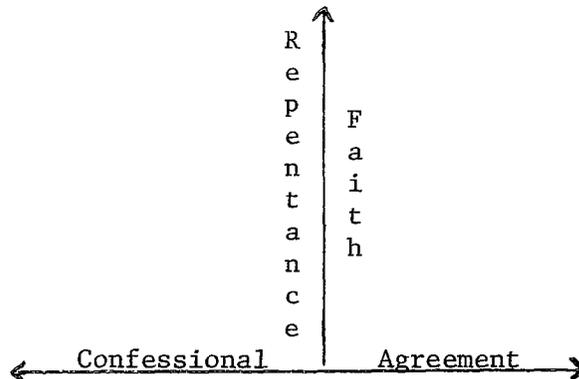
From the circumstances surrounding the institution of the Lord's Supper, from our Lord's method of conducting His public ministry, and from His final command it is obvious that the Gospel in the forms of Word and Baptism was intended for all nations, whereas the Gospel in the form of the Lord's Supper was intended only for those who are already Christians. So it is that Baptism is spoken of as the sacrament of *initiation*, while the Lord's Supper is spoken of as the sacrament of *confirmation*. Baptism creates or confirms faith; the Lord's Supper was not given to create faith, but alone to confirm or strengthen it. No person who has not been baptized is to be admitted to the Lord's Table.

Our church practice reflects the example, practice, and command of our Lord. Anyone, even an excommunicated person, is welcome to come to the House of the Lord to hear the Gospel, but only qualified persons can approach the Lord's

Table. Whether a person wants to participate in the worship is strictly his own personal decision, but a congregation must deny to any person who has not yet reached the point of confessional agreement the privilege of serving as a minister of the Word, organist, soloist, choir member, or sponsor at a Baptism. In brief--anyone may attend public worship services and participate according to his own desires, but only those who have been led by the Spirit of God to a confession of the whole Truth can join in ministering the Word or commune at the Lord's Table. This practice thus upholds genuine ecumenicity or universal grace while faithfully heeding the separation principle.

Fellowship in Communion
Vertical--Horizontal

It is obvious that attending Holy Communion is an exercise of fellowship. What is not so obvious to many is that this fellowship extends in two directions--heavenward towards our Savior-God and also towards all fellow communicants, the minister at the altar, the congregation in whose midst the Communion Service is being held, and the synod or church body with which the congregation is affiliated. In brief, fellowship in communion is both vertical and horizontal. We can diagram it thus:



Vertical Fellowship Holy Communion is for Christians, that is, for people who confess themselves to be lost and condemned sinners saved alone by the grace of God in Christ Jesus. To help each communicant approach the Lord's Table as a worthy communicant, that is, as a penitent sinner clinging to the Savior, the church has developed a preparatory service which consists of an exhortation, the confession of sins, and the absolution. The aim is to help each communicant approach the Lord's Table in repentance and faith.

HOW and HOW NOT
Luke 18:10-14

The parable of the two men who went to the temple to pray illustrates most clearly HOW and HOW NOT to approach the Lord's Table. The Pharisee, smug and self-satisfied, stood before his God--unconscious of his sin, but extremely conscious of his merits. He thanked his God for his sinlessness and, lest his God forget, he reminded Him of his special merits. He did not go down to his house justified. By way of contrast the publican stood afar off, was so overwhelmed by his own unworthiness that he could not bring himself to gaze heavenward, but smote upon his breast and flung himself wholly upon the sacrifice of Christ for forgiveness. Anyone who approaches the Lord's Table with the attitude and frame of mind of the Pharisee would better refrain from eating and drinking, for he would thereby be bringing the judgment of God upon himself. Only those who come as the publican, humbly confessing their utter unworthiness in the sight of God but nonetheless clinging firmly to His mercy as revealed in the sacrifice of His Son, receive the blessing of assured forgiveness. Each communicant is to examine himself before eating and drinking. That is a private and ex-

tremely personal matter--between the individual and his God.

But the case of the manifestly impenitent sinner is completely different.

Manifestly If a person is living in public sin, the congregation, through
Impenitent its pastor, must bar such a one from the Lord's Table and this
for two reasons--to guard against making itself a partaker of
the manifestly impenitent sinner's sin and to protect that same person from
adding to his sin by misusing the sacrament. To admit a manifest sinner to
the Lord's Table is publicly to approve his sin. St. Paul warns, "Be not ye
therefore partakers with them"--manifest sinners. Eph. 5:7. Impenitence
and faith cannot coexist in the same human heart. They exclude each other.
For a Christian congregation to admit a manifest sinner to the Lord's Table
would be casting the Gospel pearl before swine. Matt. 7:6. It would also
be a display of extreme lovelessness. Such a person should not be falsely
consoled with the Gospel, but rather frankly reprov'd with the Law. If ver-
bal reproof fails, the congregation must reprove with action. That action
takes the form of suspension from Holy Communion. Thus "open communion"
which admits the manifestly impenitent sinner is extreme lovelessness and
indifference to the sinner's need, while "close communion" which bars him
from communion manifests loving concern for his spiritual welfare.

One case of impenitence, whether it be manifest or unknown to the public, is
specially noted in Scripture as creating a spiritual block
The that effectively prevents the flow of forgiveness to an in-
Unreconciled dividual. That is the case of two who have quarreled and have
not become reconciled. Jesus treated just such a case in the Sermon on the
Mount, using--for His hearers--the familiar picture of an Old Testament wor-
shiper bringing his sacrificial gift to the altar:

If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy
brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar,
and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and
offer thy gift. Matt. 5:23-24.

For one who has sinned against his brother to think that he can hide his un-
repented sin from his God by bringing his gift to the altar--that is, by par-
ticipating in the public services, by making some special offering to the
Lord, or by receiving the Body and Blood of the Lord at His Table--is folly!
The brethren may be fooled by such a show of piety, but not the Lord, who
"looketh on the heart." I Sam. 16:7.

On the other hand the person who refuses to forgive one who has sinned against
him but who humbly desires forgiveness likewise creates a spiritual barrier
that will prevent him from receiving forgiveness. The Lord made this abun-
dantly clear in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant. Matt. 18:23-35. The
King forgave the great debt that was utterly beyond the ability of His ser-
vant to repay, but that same servant refused to forgive a mere pittance of a
debt to his fellow servant. For his unwillingness to forgive he was delivered
to the tormentors. Jesus summed up the point thus:

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your
hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses. Matt. 18:35.

So neither the one who has sinned against his brother nor the one who re-
fuses to forgive his brother who has sinned against him is spiritually eli-
gible for Holy Communion. Both imagine that the mere partaking of the Lord's
Body and Blood will assure divine favor. But neither is right with his God.

Both harbor unrepented sin in their hearts. Our God wants repentance and faith that manifests itself in pleading for forgiveness from a wronged brother and in forgiving a brother who has wronged us.

Self-Examination Repentance and faith on the part of a communicant presupposes that the communicant is able to examine himself in regard to his own spiritual state. St. Paul urged the Corinthians:

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. I Cor. 11:28.

Such self-examination presupposes instruction in the Word and Will of the Lord. A communicant must know and understand that his God in His Law demands of him the impossible--perfection in thought and word and deed. He must also understand that God in His Law shows no mercy whatever. Each communicant must realize that, if left to his own devices, he can but be crushed under the weight of his God's condemnation. If that were all there is to know, each one of us could do nothing more than despair. But the Lord HATH HAD MERCY, as we proclaim in the absolution. Jesus Christ saved us by becoming our Substitute. His suffering is our suffering, even as His righteousness is our righteousness. His death is our death, and His resurrection is the proclamation in fact of our forgiveness and the assurance of life for us. The call for self-examination is a call for each communicant to examine his spiritual life in the light of these facts. This presupposes that the communicant knows the facts and is in a mental condition that enables him to apply them to himself.

The person who clings in faith to the Savior must also believe his Savior when He assures each communicant that He is giving His Body and His Blood--in, with, and under the bread and wine--as a personal and individual seal and pledge of the forgiveness of sin.

Horizontal Fellowship We never commune alone, even when we commune privately. In the House of the Lord we approach the Lord's Table with other communicants. We receive the elements from a minister and hear the words spoken by him. When a person receives private communion, he receives it from a minister, who has been called by a group of professing Christians. So it is that horizontal fellowship in Holy Communion is both natural and inescapable. Communion is always an expression of fellowship with others.

Many--One Body After pointing out the "communion" between the wine and the Blood of Christ and the bread and the Body of Christ, St. Paul draws to the attention of the Corinthians their oneness in eating and drinking at the Lord's Table. The communicants that eat the bread, and so the Lord's Body, are many. But no matter how "many" they are, no matter how large the group, they all still eat of one and the same bread and so receive the one and same Body of Christ. There is an analogy here between the process by which the bread, which mediates the Lord's Body, is made and the eating of the bread by the communicants. Many grains of wheat are crushed, ground into flour, to produce a loaf of bread. Their individuality is lost in the process. They are no longer individual grains of wheat, but they have become one loaf of bread. That one consecrated loaf is the means by which the Lord gives His Body. All communicants, though not losing their identity and individuality, partake of that one bread, receive the one Body of the Lord, and so are made one spiritual body. St. Paul puts it thus:

The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread. I Cor. 10:16-17.

Tracing Paul's thought again: the consecrated bread is the "communion" of the Body of Christ--partaking thereof makes many one spiritual body. Every believer who partakes of the Lord's Body is thereby identifying himself with the Body of Christ. This is a spiritual reality. It is an expression of the unity of the Holy Christian Church. But it is a matter of faith, not of sight. We may commune with hypocrites; the minister who distributes the elements and speaks the holy words may be a hypocrite. All such are not members of the Body of Christ. They are pretending to be what they are not--believers. How are we to judge?

Confession Our God does not require of us what He has reserved unto Himself--searching and knowing human hearts.

Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. II Tim. 2:19.

The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. Luke 17:20-21.

Only God can see who is ruling in a human heart--whether it be sin in the form of the lusts of the flesh, self-righteousness, pride, or error or whether the Savior is ruling and controlling that heart.

The Lord has given us a standard by which we may recognize and acknowledge one another as believers and so commune together and fellowship with one another. That standard is a person's confession in word and life.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. . . . Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Matt. 7:16-20.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God . . . Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God . . . I John 4:1-3.

Not There is especially one group that the Lord pointedly
Discerning warns not to partake of His Supper. They are all those
The Lord's Body who fail to perceive and so do not believe that Christ's
Body and Blood are truly present in the sacrament and received orally by the communicant. The sacrament is no spiritual plaything! Participation in the celebration of Holy Communion is an extremely serious matter. How so? Because of the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood--in, with, and under the bread and wine. The use of three prepositions in this connection reminds us that we are dealing with a spiritual reality that is beyond our comprehension. To deny the presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the sacrament is to reduce Paul's solemn warning to a dishonest exaggeration.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation (judgment) to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. I Cor. 11:27-29.

Why does the unworthy communicant bring judgment down upon himself? (Note that the KJV translation "damnation" is inaccurate--being too strong. The unworthy communicant sins, but does not commit an unpardonable sin--as the KJV translation would indicate.) Because he does not discern, make the spiritual judgment, and so believe that he is receiving Christ's Body and Blood when he eats the bread and drinks the wine.

It is common knowledge that the Reformed churches (Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc.) understand the words of institution symbolically or metaphorically. They believe that Jesus meant to say that the bread is but a symbol of the absent Body of Christ and the wine is but a symbol of the absent Blood of Christ. But neither the Body nor the Blood of Christ are actually present in the sacrament and so neither is received by the communicant. He receives only bread and wine--in most instances, grape juice. The Body and Blood of the Lord are in heaven. The faith of the communicant is exhorted to ascend to heaven and nourish itself spiritually on the Body and Blood of the Lord.

The reason for the Reformed rejection of the clear words of our Lord, "This is my body . . . This is my blood," is the obvious conflict of these words with human reason. It is alleged that if Christ's body is a true human body, it can be in one place only at one time--not in heaven and also on earth in the sacrament. This objection would be valid if Christ were but true man, but He is both true man and true God. By virtue of the personal union of the Godhead and manhood in the Person of Jesus Christ, our Lord can be present invisibly and without occupying space--as He is in the sacrament. This we can neither explain nor understand. The Lord requires neither. He simply asks us to believe--as we sing in one of our communion hymns:

Though reason cannot understand,
Yet faith this truth embraces;
Thy body, Lord, is everywhere
At once in many places.
How this can be I leave to Thee,
Thy word alone sufficeth me,
I trust its truth unfailing. SC Hymnal, #306:5.

Now consider the spiritual consequences of "open communion." The Lutheran pastor, who is officiating, is inviting any Reformed people present or any who are wholly un instructed as to the nature of the Lord's Supper to come forward and eat and drink the Lord's Body and Blood as a judgment against themselves. Thus pastor and congregation are inviting people to sin and are making themselves partakers of those sins. What a loveless thing to do! Only eternity will reveal what spiritual damage the practice of "open communion" has done to unsuspecting souls. The individual is to examine himself, and the congregation, through its pastor, is to examine those coming to the Lord's Table to make sure that they "discern" the Lord's Body and Blood in the eating and drinking and so receive both as a blessed assurance of forgiveness.

What About Communing
Other Lutherans?

St. Paul specifically states that anyone not "discerning the Lord's Body and Blood in the sacrament will, nonetheless, receive that Body and Blood orally--but

as a judgment against him. For that reason the Reformed are not to be admitted to the Lord's Table. But what about other Lutherans who confess the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the sacrament? Is "open communion" or "inter-communion" among Lutherans permissible?

This question has been an issue among Lutherans in America for more than a century. The General Council was founded in 1867 because the General Synod (1820) was too liberal. One of the issues was that of Altar Fellowship, that is, with whom may one commune? The General Council, in turn, was too liberal for some of the synods of the Midwest. In answer to questions from these synods Dr. Krauth replied with the so-called "Galesburg Rule" (1875): "Lutheran altars for Lutheran communicants only." Since there were violations of the rule and since the General Council was either unable or unwilling to discipline the offenders, the more conservative midwestern synods either withdrew from the General Council or refused to join it. The conservative synods of the Synodical Conference put into practice the principle: Altar fellowship on the basis of confessional agreement in all doctrines of Scripture.

Lutherans That Are Not "Lutheran" The sad fact today is that most Lutherans in the United States are no longer "Lutheran" in confession. There is no agreement on the source of all teachings--the Bible. The doctrine of verbal inspiration has long been disregarded by the LCA and the ALC and has been successfully challenged in the Missouri Synod. How can Lutherans agree when they cannot agree as to what the Word of God really is? The principle of confessional agreement as the basis for fellowship has never been a part of LCA history. The ALC has consistently operated with the principle that "latitude in theological opinion" is "wholesome." The Missouri Synod began to abandon the principle of confessional agreement as the basis for fellowship in 1938 and has become a unionistic body. The more conservative synods and the groups, both those still within and those withdrawing from Missouri, have violated the fellowship principle by failing to distinguish between the "weak brother" and the "errorist." When "errorists" are treated as "weak brethren," they are admonished within the framework of fellowship instead of being admonished by the termination of fellowship. The result of all this is that not everyone who goes by the name Lutheran is, in fact, "Lutheran," that is, one who confesses the whole of God's Word to man--the Bible.

"Can Two Walk Together, Except They Be Agreed?" Amos posed that question centuries ago (3:3). We can apply it by restating it thus: "Can two commune together at the Lord's Altar except they be agreed?" We are well aware that communing together at the same altar without as much as a common understanding of the very words of institution and without even a pretense of agreement on the teachings of our Lord is common practice in this country, but common usage never makes anything right in the sight of God. The Lord's Altar is no place for charades. It is no place for play-acting--for feigning agreement where disagreement lies on the surface. The Lord's Altar is not the place for exhibiting one's rejection of the Word of the Lord--although this is common practice today.

Every passage--and there are many--which urges children of God to "continue in My Word," every passage--and they run through all of Scripture--which exhorts children of God to "avoid" those who in any way or manner mutilate a Word of the Lord, and the very sacrament itself which offers the communicants the One Body of the Lord call for agreement on the part of those who eat and drink at the altar. That agreement can only be one of confession, for the altar is also not the place for judging hearts.

If one is to understand the difference between the only two religions in the world, the one originating in the mind of man and the other revealed by God to man, one must understand that grace and works are irreconcilable opposites. They cannot be mixed without destroying the essential nature of each. St. Paul made this very clear in his letter to the Romans when he wrote:

. . . if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. Rom. 11:6.

As fire and water, light and darkness, life and death are opposites in nature and essence, so are God's grace and man's works. They cancel each other out; they are mutually exclusive. One of the best known verse of Scripture teaches this truth--Paul's words to the Ephesians:

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. Eph. 2:8-9.

Grace is from above, works from this earth; grace flows from God, works originate in man; grace gives all glory to God, works give glory to man; grace alone saves, works cannot but damn; grace gives life, works work death. It's always one or the other. It cannot be both. Any attempt to combine the two destroys grace and plunges man into darkness.

FAITH-- "By grace through faith"--this is the divinely revealed formula for
WORKS salvation. Faith is the complement of grace. As the antithesis or opposite of grace is works, so works are also the antithesis of faith. Paul made that clear in the Ephesians passage (2:8-9), previously cited, for he spoke of salvation by grace through faith as being a "gift of God, not of works." St. Paul consistently made faith the antithesis of works, for example in his letter to the Romans:

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. Rom. 3:28.

The very concept of faith excludes any works or deeds of the law. Scripture does not picture faith as a moral achievement on the part of man or as a decision that man arrives at with the use of natural spiritual powers. Faith itself is a "gift of God." Eph. 2:8-9. When Paul wrote to the Philippians:

For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake (Phil. 1:29)--

he was but reechoing the word of the Lord:

. . . no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father. John 6:65.

FUNCTION If faith is not a moral achievement on the part of man and if
OF faith is not man's response to God's efforts to save him on the
FAITH cross, the question is: What is the function of faith? In asking that question we must keep in mind that we are speaking of the function of faith in justification, not sanctification. For whereas faith is passive in justification, it is active--yea, the motivating force--in sanctification. Theologians of the church have spoken of the function of faith in justification as "the receiving organ." Just as the eye is the organ of the body that receives the light waves and the ear is that organ of the body that receives the sound waves, so faith is the spiritual organ of the soul that receives all spiritual blessings. When the Good News of for-

givenness, life, and salvation is proclaimed or offered in the sacraments, there are but two possible reactions. Either man rejects the forgiveness offered in unbelief, or he is moved by the Spirit of God to accept that forgiveness and appropriate it unto himself by faith. Thus faith functions as the receiving organ

OBJECT One of the popular phrases of modern theology, whether it be neo-
OF orthodoxy or existentialism, is "the leap of faith." That phrase
FAITH reveals the tragic emptiness of most modern religion, for it tells modern man that he has neither an objective historical basis for his faith nor an objective revelation of God's Word. Man is simply to believe in the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus--or anything else--whether or not it actually happened. Faith is supposed to make whatever it believes in real. And so modern man is taught by his religious leaders to place his faith in faith. So "the leap of faith" is, in fact, a leap into nothingness and so a leap into despair.

Faith saves, but the faith that saves rests on and so embraces Jesus Christ, "who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead," as we confess in the Apostolic Creed. The Jesus Christ, whom we confess in the Creed, is the real Jesus, the historic Christ. What we confess happened! All the events in His life, especially His death and resurrection, are fully attested by reliable witnesses. We have the inspired record of their witness, not in a fallible human book, but in a book inspired by God Himself. The Christian faith is no leap in the dark, no grasping at hallucination. No, the Christian faith rests on and embraces Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior--revealed to us in the divinely inspired Bible. So it is that the difference between Christianity and paganism is the difference between faith in Christ and faith in faith or faith in man.

HE FOR US The Christian faith is not a leap into the dark, but it is rather a faith that rests upon and embraces Jesus Christ. However, such a faith in Christ can also be a blind faith, if one does not know what Christ has done for us to work out our salvation. What He did He did FOR US, in our stead, as our substitute. The teachers of the church speak of Christ's doing and suffering for us as the "vicarious atonement." He made us at one with our God by serving as our substitute.

In chapter fifty-three of his book of prophecy Isaiah describes the Suffering Servant of the Lord, the Messiah, our Savior. If you observe carefully Isaiah's use of pronouns, you can see how forcefully he teaches the vicarious atonement, the HE FOR US:

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
Is. 53:4-5.

His suffering was for us! He took our place; thus the atonement was vicarious. Why He had to suffer so--He, the holy, innocent Son of God--becomes clear from the words of St. Paul:

For he (God the Father) hath made him (His Son) to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.
II Cor. 5:21.

That was the divine plan--that God's Son should become man and take mankind's place, bearing the sin of the world. The alternative to God's plan of HE FOR US is every man on his own. This is the wisdom and religion of the world: Each one in his own way somehow tries to work out his own salvation. Thus the distinctive characteristic of Christianity is HE FOR US in contrast to the EACH ONE FOR HIMSELF of paganism. Every other contrast serves but to bring this contrast into sharper focus.

DOING What did the Lord Jesus do for us to make atonement for us and so
SUFFERING to restore us to God as His dear children? What He did was obey--
 to make atonement for our disobedience:

But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law . . . Gal. 4:4.

For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Rom. 5:19.

What we should be doing, according to the Ten Commandments, but fail to do, He did for us. What we should be leaving undone, but do, He left undone for us. This is called His active obedience, His gaining righteousness for us--to cover our lack of righteousness.

But we still have the problem of our sin and guilt. God's solution was again: He for us!

Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Gal. 3:10.

We deserve to die eternally; He suffered the God-forsakenness of hell for us in those dark hours upon the cross, and then poured out His life's blood for us. It was all HE FOR US--when spat upon, smitten, scourged, nailed to the cursed tree, mocked, thrust through, dying, and being buried--also rising again. So it is that we sing in one of our Lenten hymns:

'Tis I who should be smitten,
My doom should here be written:
Bound hand and foot in hell.
The fetters and the scourging,
The floods around Thee surging,
'Tis I who have deserved them well.

What is the object of a Christian's faith? Jesus Christ--what He has done and what He has suffered for us. The alternative is DO-IT-YOURSELF! That is man's way, the religion of this world. It is a way doomed to failure because no one has ever lived or will ever live who can do enough or suffer enough to atone for as much as a single sin. And so it is that the distinctive characteristic of Christianity can be reduced to but three words: HE FOR US!

OBJECTIVE If something is objective, it is there, real, a fact--re-
JUSTIFICATION gardless of man's attitude towards it. So it is that the
 justification of the whole world, the forgiveness of all
the sins of all people that have ever lived, are now living, and shall ever live is a fact. It stands completed, a finished gift--regardless of whether individuals accept that forgiveness by the power of the Spirit or reject it

in unbelief. Before He died, our Lord cried out, "It is finished!" That is one word in the Greek, a perfect tense, which indicates an action completed, but with ever enduring effect. The Father's response to His Son's cry was the mighty act of raising Him from the dead on the third day. That act was, in fact, a proclamation of forgiveness or an absolution for the sins of all mankind. This glorious truth, the very heart of the Gospel, St. Paul teaches so clearly in his letter to the Romans:

Jesus our Lord . . . was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification. 4:25.

Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. 5:18-19.

OBJECTIVE What has been finished for us and is therefore complete in
MEANS OF GRACE itself is to be proclaimed. This is the Gospel, the Good
 News. It is not a message that God has done His part, and
now man must respond by doing his part. It is not a message that God has made man's forgiveness possible if man completes the transaction by doing his part of accepting that forgiveness by faith. Quite the contrary: Forgiveness as a complete and finished gift for man is to be proclaimed. Before He ascended our Lord gave His final commission to His disciples:

. . . that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47.

SUBJECTIVE That the entire world of sinners has been forgiven or de-
JUSTIFICATION clared righteous through the death and resurrection of our
 Lord Jesus gives no support to the universalist's belief
that all will be finally saved. That is evident from the fact that our Lord commissioned His disciples to proclaim this message. It would appear as though the hearer now has the alternative of either believing or rejecting in unbelief. This would, in turn, make it appear as though the justification of the individual is not complete until he does his part by accepting that forgiveness in faith or by accepting Christ. But appearances are deceiving! Scripture sheds the only reliable light on these spiritual matters. Scripture tells us that man is "dead in trespasses and sin" (Eph. 2:1). As little as a physical corpse can respond to any stimulus, so little can a spiritual corpse respond to the Gospel. Conversion or regeneration is not a self-initiated spiritual activity on the part of man, but rather a Spirit-initiated and completed activity in man. The moment the Spirit creates faith in the heart of an individual by the Gospel he is justified, that is, he receives and appropriates unto himself the complete and finished forgiveness or justification worked out for him by Jesus Christ and proclaimed by the Father in the resurrection.

GOD ACTING--- It is always God acting. He planned our salvation from all
MAN RECEIVING eternity (Acts 2:23). He announced that salvation when the
 need first arose (Gen. 3:15). He kept on repeating that
promise in Old Testament times (Ex., Is. 53). In the fulness of time He sent His Son (Luke 2). Jesus worked out our salvation by keeping the law for us and by suffering and dying for us (Gal. 4:4;3:13). The Father accepted His perfect work of redemption by raising Him the third day (Rom. 4:25). The Son commanded this Good News to be preached in all the world (Luke 24:47). The Father and the Son sent the Holy Spirit to give that forgiveness

to the individual by working faith in each human heart (II Cor. 12:3). In each step of the way God is active and man is passive. God gives; man receives. This is a distinguishing feature of Christianity.

EXAMPLE-- The question of how a person becomes righteous so
 PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN that he can stand before God is inescapable in the human situation. Jesus presented the only two possible stances in a parable:

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. Luke 18:10-14.

The Pharisee believed himself to be righteous on the basis both of the sins he had avoided and the good works he had done. He carefully enumerated both --lest God forget! His righteousness consisted in his own works and merits. This is paganism, regardless of whether it appears in Christian garb! The publican exemplifies the Christian stance. He despaired of his own righteousness and appealed humbly for the righteousness of Another. This is clearly indicated by a literal translation of his prayer: "God, let thyself be propitiated in regard to me, the open sinner!" The verdict: rejection of all who attempt to stand before God on the basis of their own righteousness, but acceptance of all who plead for mercy, seeking the forgiveness and righteousness which is in Christ.

OUR HYMNS Many of our well-known and best-loved hymns express the Christian stance in contrast to the pagan stance of works and merits:

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
 My beauty are, my glorious dress;
 In these before my God I'll stand,
 When I shall reach the heav'nly land.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
 Simply to Thy cross I cling;
 Naked, come to Thee for dress;
 Helpless, look to Thee for grace;
 Foul, I to the fountain fly,
 Wash me, Savior, or I die!

SUMMARY Without keeping the basic difference between Christianity and paganism in sharp focus it is impossible to judge spiritually. Note the contrasts, and note that each one brings into sharper focus the distinguishing feature of Christianity, HE FOR US, in contrast to the distinguishing feature of paganism in all its many forms, EACH ONE FOR HIMSELF.

<u>Christianity</u>		<u>Paganism</u>
One	-	Many forms
Revealed	-	Man-made
God's Grace	-	Man's works
Faith	-	Works

Faith--receiving	-	Faith--contributing
Faith in Christ	-	Faith in self
Christ's doing	-	Man's doing
Christ's suffering	-	Man's suffering
God justifies man	-	Man justifies himself
God announces His Grace	-	Man informs God of his works
God acting	-	Man acting
Man receiving	-	Man demanding reward
The publican	-	The Pharisee
Triune God	-	Hand-made or mind-made gods
Christ essential	-	Christ optional

The last two contrasts have not been discussed separately, but are inseparable from the discussion. Christianity proclaims salvation as planned in eternity by the Father, worked out in time by the Son, and delivered to the individual by the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is the one true God; there is no other! Paganism has never reached a higher level than hand-made or mind-made gods created in the image of their makers. The essential characteristics of paganism are and always have been idolatry and work righteousness. The essential characteristics of Christianity are worship of God as He has revealed Himself in Christ and salvation planned, completed, and delivered by God and received by man by grace through faith in Christ.

APPLICATION TO ORGANIZATIONS Our society is honeycombed with organizations--civic, political, educational, recreational, cultural, fraternal, and so on and on.

In many of these organizations religion is an *incidental* feature. The most common religious exercise that is *incidental* to many organizations is prayer, usually in the form of an invocation. Such prayer is little more than a polite "tipping of the hat" to God--Whoever He may be, however He may be, and wherever He happens to be. This cultic exercise of promiscuous prayer--directed to a vague, undefined God, solemnly intoned by a clergyman who prides himself on his broadmindedness, and reverently approved by people who aren't quite sure what they believe or why they believe whatever they happen to believe--reveals the dominant characteristic of American religious life to be superficiality. Such public exercise of prayer seems to make the average American feel good and a bit more sure that all will turn out OK in the end. It is quite impossible in our society to avoid being prayed over by some ever-present and ever-ready clergyman, but no one can compel anyone to join in such a blasphemous prayer. The point is that *incidental* religious features of an organization, however objectional they may in themselves be, do not make the organization itself objectionable. One can simply refuse to participate in such *incidental* religious exercises.

There are, however, organizations in which religion is an *essential* characteristic--being part of the constitution, expressing the philosophy or creed of the organization, carrying out its aims and objectives, and being involved in its regular and routine functions. In such organizations removal of the religious features would cause the organization to change its very nature or even cause it to cease to exist. Such an organization is not a church or a religious group and does not want to be so classified. But it is a semi-religious organization--religion being an *essential* feature.

THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF SUCH ORGANIZATIONS The three characteristics of the organizations that we are calling semi-religious or organizations that

have religion as an *essential* characteristic are 1) belief in God, 2) belief in immortality, and 3) striving for morality.

These organizations are not atheistic--believing in no God, but rather deistic or theistic--believing in God on the basis of natural reason or revelation. But since the membership of the organization is drawn from people of differing and conflicting cultures and religious backgrounds, the concept of "god" is necessarily left undefined. The organization simply believes in God. Each member is required to profess his belief in God, but is granted the privilege and the right to conceive of God as he personally desires. The organization itself is neutral, purposely and proudly so. Each member's conception of God is considered equally valid and acceptable. Thus the organization places hand-made and mind-made gods on the same level with the one, true God who has revealed His name and nature in the Bible. The organization does not and can not acknowledge one, true God. So it is that acceptance or rejection of Jesus Christ as true God--without whom there is no God--is made optional. This means that the organization is sponsoring idolatry, and all members are unavoidably involved in the sin against the very first commandment.

These organizations are not openly materialistic, believing man to be but matter with all of life ending in death. They believe in a hereafter and look for some kind of happy or blessed existence after death.

The organization believes that it can help its members attain the goal of happiness in the world to come. The method is morality: Do good, be good, and you are good, according to the formula of the organization. This is work-righteousness, salvation by works. Wherever the concept of God is vague and undefined, thus placing Jesus Christ on an optional or "take Him or leave Him" basis, the philosophy of the organization cannot but be salvation by character. This is all the world knows. It is the diametric opposite of and unending foe of salvation by grace through faith in Christ Jesus.

EXAMPLES OF SUCH ORGANIZATIONS Many people would like to have a check list of "No, Nos" and "Yes, Yeses"--that is, organizations that have been given a clean bill of health and those that have objectionable religious features. We don't do this--for two reasons: It would make obedience extremely mechanical, just a matter of checking the name of the organization against the approved or disapproved list. We constantly strive to help the individual master the principles and develop the insight to apply them to specific cases. Secondly, the list of acceptable and objectionable organizations is constantly changing. We do intend, however, to name two organizations, one for the youth and the other for adults--Masonry and Scouting--that illustrate the principles involved. As soon as one even mentions these organizations one is touching an area that is almost sacred to the American mind, for who could have anything against the Scouts, and do not the Masons do many good things? We freely grant that both of these organizations do commendable work in the civic area--but at the expense of and in violation of biblical principles.

BELIEF IN GOD Neither Freemasonry nor Scouting is atheistic. Both organizations would object violently to any such suggestion, and properly so. The Masonic edition of the Holy Bible published by the A. J. Holman Company includes "The Masonic Belief" on one of its first pages. The first sentence of that "Belief" is "There is one God, the Father of all men." Certainly every Christian would subscribe to the first part of that sentence, but so would every Jew, Muslim, Unitarian, Jehovah's Witness,

and so on. The point is that the God that is professed is left unidentified! A study of Masonic literature quickly reveals that this is not by accident, but by design. This same "God, the Father of all men" is elsewhere described as "the Nameless One of a hundred name." Think of this description of God for a moment! If you aren't repulsed by the very blasphemy of that purposely vague and undefined description of God, then you have never learned to understand the very first commandment, "Thou shalt have no others gods!" God has not left Himself vague and undefined, but has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus. Where? In His own Book, the Bible. God has revealed Himself so clearly and definitely that we may know the God we are alone to confess and worship. What a contrast when we are told that "Freemasonry has taught each man can, by himself, work out his own conception of God and thereby achieve salvation." (Ward, "Freemasonry: Its Aims and Ideals," p. 187.) This one, true God has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus; Masonry teaches each man to develop his own conception of God--all being equally true and acceptable, as far as Masonry is concerned.

The Scout oath declares, "On my honor I will do my best: to do my duty to God . . ." The twelfth Scout law states: "A Scout is reverent. He is reverent toward God." For a Christian the question immediately arises, "What God?" The Scout organization says in effect: "Make your own choice." This automatically places the God who has revealed Himself in Christ Jesus and all hand-made and mind-made gods on the same level. Or to put it otherwise: Both Scouting and Freemasonry make Jesus Christ optional. This is idolatry--pure and simple! Jesus said:

. . . all men should honor the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.
John 5:23.

St. John reduced the principle to these few words:

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father. I John 2:23.

Remember: The question is not what the individual member of the organization believes, for he is free to believe what he wants to, but rather what the organization itself professes. If the "god" of the organization is vague and undefined, the organization is sponsoring and promoting idolatry. Identification with such an organization by membership, uniform, paying dues, and so on makes the individual a "partaker of other men's sins" (I Tim. 5:22). The simple exhortation of St. John applies:

Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen. I John 5:21.

IMMORTALITY The Scout organization is not sectarian. It does not teach specific religious doctrines. Scouts do not attend religious instruction classes conducted by Scout masters. This is all very true. But even as Scouting assumes the existence of God and insists that its members be not atheists but believers in God-Whoever and however He may be--so also Scouting simply assumes that there is a life after death. It takes for granted that there is a heaven for Scouts.

Freemasonry is more specific. "The Masonic Belief" states as an axiomatic truth: "Man is immortal." The Masons bury their own dead in the solemn hope of a life after death. Masonry without immortality would simply cease to be Masonry.

MORALITY Morality is a code for living or a standard for behavior. Morality is the heart of both Scouting and Masonry.

Scouting has "The Scout Oath" and "The Scout Law." These define the standard of behavior for all Scouts. Without them Scouting would not be Scouting. The core of Scout morality is summed up in the Scout Slogan, "Do a Good Turn Daily." Scouting is non-denominational and non-sectarian, but it is not non-religious. It has, in fact, reduced all religion to a single common denominator, "The Daily Good Turn." The "Handbook" assures all Scouts:

Color and religious beliefs are no basis for judging a man. All men were created by the same God, and all are equal before God. By living up to the Scout Oath and Scout Law, by doing good to your fellow man, you are doing your duty to God. (Handbook, 1948 Edition, p. 39.)

Notice that "religious belief" is no basis for judging a man. True--from a civic point of view, but Scouting is not content with but a civic view of man. The Twelfth Scout Law deals with man from a religious point of view. Scouting assures its members that it makes no difference what God you worship, whether or not you accept Jesus Christ as God, whether or not you believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior. All of this is a matter for the individual Scout; the organization doesn't concern itself with these things. But Scouting does say that these things are non-essential; the essential is "doing good," and that is "doing your duty to God." Scouting stands condemned by its own principles which are through and through salvation by character or good works, according to the old refrain: "Do good, be good, and you are good"--with the understanding that God, Whoever He happens to be, will surely accept you into heaven.

We need but quote the founder of Scouting to demonstrate that we are not reading something into its philosophy, but are merely expressing the spirit of the organization as set forth so clearly by Lord Baden-Powell in the British Handbook, "Scouting for Boys":

I often think that when the sun goes down the world is hidden by a big blanket from the light of heaven, but the stars are little holes pierced in that by those who have done good deeds in this world. The stars are not all the same size; some are big, some are little, and some men have done small deeds, but they have made their hole in the blanket by doing good before they went to heaven. Try and make your hole in the blanket by good work while you are on earth. It is something to be good, but it is far better to do good. (Handbook, 1948 Edition, p. 23.)

Now for a Christian contrast to this paganism read Luther's explanation of the Second Article of the Apostolic Creed:

I believe that Jesus Christ is true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary; and that He is my Lord, Who has redeemed me, a lost and condemned creature, purchased and won me from all sins, from death and the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood, and with His innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be His own, live under Him in His kingdom, and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence and blessedness; even as He is risen from the dead, lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.

It's one or the other: the paganism of Scouting or Bible-based Christianity. It can't be both!

Freemasonry is a system of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols. This is the classic definition of the Craft . . . Lewinski, "What is Freemasonry?", p. 7.

Freemasonry is an organization, membership in which is contingent upon a professed belief in God and immortality, subscribing to a moral philosophy founded on the principle of the Brotherhood of Man, taught by means of allegory and symbols. Ibid., p. 8-9.

It is quite obvious from these words of a Freemason that morality is the core of Freemasonry. That morality is considered to be the sure and certain pass to immortality is equally obvious from "The Masonic Belief," which states as another axiomatic truth that "Character determines destiny."

Morality is taught by symbols. One of the basic symbols is the Lambskin or White Leather Apron, which is given to the candidate in the First, or Entered Apprentice, Degree. The candidate is told:

You were presented with the Lambskin, or White Leather Apron, because the lamb has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence. He therefore, who wears the Lambskin, or White Leather Apron, as the badge of a Mason, is thereby continually reminded of that purity of conduct and life which is so essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the celestial lodge where the supreme Architect of the Universe presides.
"King Solomon and His Followers," p. 34.

When a Mason is buried, the ritual prescribes that -

The Marshal then presents the apron to the Master, who unfolds it and says:

The lambskin or white leather apron is an emblem of innocence and the badge of a Mason. The lamb has in all ages been deemed an emblem of innocence; by the lambskin the Mason is, therefore, reminded of that purity of life and conduct which is so essentially necessary to his gaining admission into the Celestial Lodge above, where the Supreme Architect of the Universe presides. This emblem I now deposit in the grave of our deceased brother.

The Master then throws the apron into the grave . . .
"Ahriman Rezon," SC Constitution and Code 1919, p. 280.

It is difficult to imagine a more diabolic misuse of a distinctive biblical symbol--converting the lamb, which is a symbol of "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29) into a symbol of the sinner's own righteousness, which Isaiah describes "as filthy rags" (Is. 64:6).

The Christian sings:

Jesus, Thy blood and righteousness
My beauty are, my glorious dress;
In these before my God I'll stand,
When I shall reach the heav'nly land.

The Masonic philosophy, ritual, and burial service declares:

O Nameless One of a hundred names,
In the beauty of my own righteousness,
Symbolized by my Lambskin,
I'll stand . . .

But no one ever has, can, or ever will be able to stand before the Lord God on that basis!

If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?
Ps. 130:3.

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. John 14:6.

By the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Gal. 2:16.

Again, it's one or the other: the paganism of Masonry or Bible-based Christianity. It can't be both!

CHARACTER With their great emphasis on morality both Scouting and Masonry
TRAINING pride themselves in their character training programs, the former for the youth and the latter for adults. Certainly in these days of permissiveness and moral decay in society any organization that stresses character training serves an extremely useful civic purpose. But we dare not forget that Christianity also has a character-training program that makes good and useful citizens. It is called sanctification. The chief difference between sanctification and all character training programs of this world, for example, those of Scouting and Freemasonry, is in the motivation.

The Scout Oath appeals to the honor of the Scout: "On my honor I will do my best . . ." Masonry appeals to its own moral code, symbolized, for example, by the "square and compasses." In both cases there is a direct appeal to innate spiritual powers and the moral code of the organization--always with the implied and expressed idea of divine approval and the certainty of the divine reward of heaven, immortality, or bliss after death. This is all that the world can produce. It is paganism, not at the depth of its depravity, but at its best: an appeal to the honor of the individual, supported by the moral code of some social grouping, and sustained by the hope of divine approval and reward in the life to come. The highest result can be but civic righteousness, which indeed brings with it temporal blessings but falls short of heavenly blessings.

The motivating force of sanctification is not some innate spiritual power in man, but rather a power placed in man by the Spirit of God, that is, faith in Christ Jesus. The appeal is to live up to what you have been made--a child of God. The ultimate motivation is not the hope of reward in the form of salvation but rather gratitude for salvation, fully and freely given in Christ Jesus. Note carefully the contrast between pagan character training and sanctification as brought out by these passages:

Ye are the salt of the earth . . . Ye are the light of the world . . . Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Matt. 5:13-16.

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. John 15:5.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Rom. 12:1.

Without faith it is impossible to please God. Heb. 11:6.

The character training of the world and all the organizations that it produces can produce nothing higher than "Pharisees," that is, reward-motivated, work-righteous children and adults, of whom our Lord said: "They have their reward" (Matt. 6:2). The Gospel produces children and adults who are to reflect the love of God towards them in their love towards others, who are to live at peace with all and in service to all--as responsible citizens. The motivation for such a life is gratitude for their personal salvation which was planned in eternity by the Father, worked out in time by the Son, and delivered individually by the Holy Spirit when and as He works faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior in a human heart.

So it is also when it comes to character training that the choice is either the pagan character training program of Scouting and Masonry or sanctification, the character training program of Bible-based Christianity. It can't be both!

We have not exhausted the biblical objections to Scouting and Masonry but have emphasized those features which conflict with the very essentials of Christianity. One need but consider the oaths which both organizations require and their fostering of unionism--that is, worship and spiritual work without the necessary basis, which is agreement in the teachings of the Lord --to see additional conflicts with Holy Scripture.

"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear!"

