



THE LUTHERAN AMBASSADOR

October 9, 1984

So teach us to number our days,
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.

Ps. 90:12

Photo by Roger D. Huebner, D.D.S.

AT THE MASTER'S FEET



Lay Pastor Gustav Nordvall

A new Reformation?

Reformation Then

It was evening and suddenly the sound of a hammer could be heard in the streets of Wittenberg. A crowd gathered around to see what was posted on the door of the Castle Church. Little did they know how life would change.

It was common custom in those days to celebrate a festival day with a theological debate. These were announced by posting the time and subject of the disputation on the church door. Martin Luther nailed his Ninety-five Theses to the door, making clear his intentions to defend his objections to the practice of selling indulgences.

What Luther had intended to be a debate turned out to be the beginning of the Reformation.

Before we move on it is well to

recall also the many years of struggle, work and dedication that went before in the life of the great Reformer.

A year ago we celebrated the 500th Anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther, born November 10, 1483, to Hans and Margarethe Luther.

The story of Luther's life is a dramatic one which cannot be told here. However, we can now see how God prepared a man to a task so greatly needed in his time. His parents were poor, God-fearing people who taught him to love and fear God. He particularly learned the seriousness of sin. It was this, his feelings of guilt over sin, that tormented him a great part of his life.

His early years were spent in a school of strict discipline. Later, when his father became more prosperous, Luther was able to realize his boyhood dream of attending the University.

It was there that Luther discovered a great and wonderful book in the library. He had never known before how much the Bible contained.

Through Luther, years later, this Book of Life became a living stream of life, teaching and refreshing many thirsting souls in this world. In our day the Bible remains a best seller.

Luther earned the degree of Master of Arts, or Professor. His dream was fully realized. Yet he did not have peace of soul. The story is told that Luther, caught in a fearful electrical storm, cried for help and vowed to become a monk.

At the monastery he prayed, fasted, and even punished himself, because the distress in his soul was very great.

When Luther was led to believe the passage, "The righteous shall live

by faith," all doubt left him. He realized there was no need to struggle trying to accomplish something that Christ already had done for Him.

After two years in the Monastery, he was ordained a priest, later becoming a university professor.

It is well for us to think of Luther's great struggles, his years of work, hard work, before he became the man God would entrust with the message, "The just shall live by faith."

Reformation Now

Do we need the sound of a hammer again? Surely we need to be reminded that we may have departed from truths in God's Word. We do not need new philosophies of teaching, but we need to remind ourselves that the Word of God is unchanging, yesterday, today and forever the same.

The very same word that spoke to the heart of the Reformer speaks to us today: "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).

Modern man is especially encouraged to believe that he need not feel any remorse or guilt of sin, only to find that God shall search this out, for He knoweth the secrets of the heart (Ps.44:21). Man cannot create a better, easier or different way than the way of the cross.

May the Word of God cause us to see how helpless we are in ourselves, that we may constantly turn to Him, as did the writer of Psalms. "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps.139:23,24).

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STAND FIRM

on the WORD

by Rev. Kerwin Sletto,
Buxton, N. Dak.

There is a great deal of talk today about church mergers and the benefits of a united church body. The problem with many mergers is that they result in doctrinal compromise and a lack of unity in spirit and mind. Too often, in these situations, human reason replaces Biblical truth. It's during these times that we as Christians need to take a firm stand on the Scriptures as the only source and guide for life and truth.

Martin Luther said, "In spiritual matters, human reasoning certainly is *not* in order; other intelligence, other skill and power are requisite here — something to be granted by God Himself and revealed through His Word." It's obvious that Luther believed we must let Scripture interpret Scripture. The only way our reasoning and intellect can be used is by staying within the guideline of letting Scripture interpret itself and by not carrying Scripture beyond what God intended. When our human reason and intellect are the controlling factors in determining truth, then we are lost.

The fact that God saves us through baptism isn't logical. God becoming the man Jesus is not logical but Scripture clearly states these truths. Romans 6:3 declares this truth about baptism. John 1:1-2, 14 reveal this truth about Jesus. Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts."

In his letter to the papacy in Rome, Luther says, "for Isaiah 7

Leave no room for Satan

makes reason subject to faith, when it says: 'Except ye believe, ye shall not have understanding or reason.' It does not say, 'except ye have reason, ye shall not believe.' It is most deplorable we should attempt with our reason to defend God's Word, whereas the Word of God is rather our defense against all enemies. Ephesians 6:10-17 calls us to put on the full armor of God and to stand firm. Notice in these verses the place the Word possesses in this armor of God.

We need to stand firm on the Word alone just as Martin Luther did so many years ago. When people doubt the fact that the entire Bible is without error, they are leaving wide open doors for Satan and the enemies of the Scripture to get a foothold and destroy God's Word, which is our only source of life and truth.

The Bible gives the way of salvation and some people are trying to improve God's perfect plan of salvation in an imperfect way. How ridiculous can a person be? The common response made by these doubters is that they are not tampering with the way of salvation, only the "unimportant parts of the Bible." God put every word in the Bible for a reason and it is not up to man to decide what should and should not be in the Bible and what is and is not the truth. God, who knows all things, decided that a long time ago. I again quote Luther when he says, "Every word of the Scriptures must be precious to us because it comes from the mouth of God, it is written for us, preserved by us, and will be proclaimed to the end of days." II Timothy 3:16-17 declares that "All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work." The total truth of God's Word is further emphasized by John 10:35 which declares, "The Scripture cannot be broken."

Luther, in his letter to the papacy in Rome, wrote, "The teachings of human experience and reason are far

"When our human reason and intellect are the controlling factors in determining truth, then we are lost."

below the Divine Law." "Every thought and imagination of man's heart is evil continually." Therefore an attempt to establish or defend divine order with human reason, unless that reason has previously been established and enlightened by faith, is just as futile as if I would throw light upon the sun with a lightless lantern or rest a rock upon a reed." Too many people rely upon man to explain truth without also searching the Word for the clear direction of truth. We get to the point that we rely upon a person we respect and ignore the need to study Scripture on our own. Search the Scriptures and permit God to reveal the total truth to you. God uses people to reveal His truth but He also wants us to rely upon the Word as our main source of truth. Luther says, "To hear or to read the Scriptures is nothing else than to hear God."

"There can be no right understanding and no worship of God without His Word." The Bible is God's way of reaching down to you personally to communicate both His love and His will. Take time to be with God in a personal way through His Word.

There's power in the Word of God. Because Holy Scripture is the inspired Word of God, it possesses not only divine authority, but it also includes the power to produce the desired effect that God wants. This isn't simply a bunch of words written

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"Luther says, 'To hear or to read the Scriptures is nothing else than to hear God.' "

STAND FIRM

on paper but it possesses the power to change man, who is by nature spiritually dead. Faith comes from the hearing of God's Word (Romans 10:17). Regeneration comes through the Word (I Peter 1:23). The Word of God does not merely teach man the way of salvation but it also shows man the means by which he may possess. Furthermore, God's power through the Word actually converts, regenerates and renews man. There's the power of God working through the Word to save our souls.

This power changes mankind from being dead in sin to becoming living, active members of the family of God, who, by faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, are ready to meet God. Luther writes in the *Large Catechism*, "Such is the efficacy of the Word, whenever it is seriously contemplated, heard, and used that it is bound never to be without fruit, but always awakens new understanding, pleasure, and devoutness, and produces a pure heart and pure thoughts." "For these words are not inoperative or dead, but creative, living words." Isaiah 55:10-11 says, "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there without watering the earth, and making it bear and sprout, and furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall My Word be which goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

Hebrews 4:12 declares, "For the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." The Word of God is not something to edit or take lightly for in it is the power to save the soul (James 1:21).

The Word gives power in the sacrament of Baptism. Water by itself is just water but with the Word God gives us the gift of life as His adopted child (Titus 3:5). The Word of God gives the power to the bread and wine whereby we claim the body

Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol Him, all peoples!

For great is His steadfast

love toward us;

and the faithfulness of the

Lord endures for ever.

Praise the Lord!

The shortest Psalm
Psalm 117
(RSV)

and blood of Christ for the entire forgiveness of all our sins. These gracious gifts of God are received by faith. Where do we receive faith? Romans 10:17 says, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of Christ."

We don't always understand how God works or why but we can rest assured that He is working for our very best welfare. "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." God's Word has passed the test of time and has clearly shown that it is the truth and it possesses the power to save men's souls. Rest in God's arms and receive the blessings of his Word. Amen.

a father of pietism

by Gerhard Maier

(Translated by Pastor Edward A. Johnson,
Lincoln, Nebr.)

Johann Albrecht Bengel's life was shaped outwardly and inwardly by severe trials. Born on June 24, 1687, in Winnenden as the son of a Wuertemberg pastor, he lost his father when he was only six. All his life he was plagued with sickness.

His mother was forced to entrust Johann Albrecht to a foster family with whom he moved eventually to Stuttgart. It was the time of the French invasions which reduced many towns to fire and ashes, forcing many to flee while others lost their lives. (The building in Worms where Luther made his famous stand of 1521 – "Here I stand" – before the imperial diet was destroyed at this time by the invaders. Only the steps remain – Tr. note.)

In 1703 Bengel came to Tuebingen as a student. He had to repeat several courses but eventually became a student vicar. In 1713 he became a traveling student, going first to the separatist Tennhardt in Nuremberg, to Francke in Halle, and to Giessen, where Johann Heinrich May was causing Pietism to bloom. Finally, beginning that year and for 28 years afterward, Bengel became preceptor or director of a spiritual community in Denkendorf. During his final years he served in Herbrechtingen, in Alpirsbach, and as a member of the provincial legislature and the consistory of his church. He died in Stuttgart on November 2, 1752, and lies in an unknown grave. Three times (1728, 1736, and 1747) the University of Tuebingen and the duke of that realm denied Bengel a professorship which already had been provided for him. For the people in Tuebingen Bengel was dismissed as a "visionary."

His inner trials went still deeper. One arose from the various interpretations of the Biblical texts. Could it be that the Bible is unreliable? A second trial arose from his considerations of eternity. Bengel was convinced that our condition in eternity

Johann Albrecht Bengel

is determined by decisions which we have to make in this life. Yet out of such trials arose his life's work, which focused around three major areas: (1) the unity of faith and thinking, (2) the Bible as the dependable Word of God, (3) the "history of salvation" as the horizon of Biblical theology.

Bengel's faith is marked by moderation. He built intentionally upon the insights of the church fathers and reformers. Sobriety is a second feature of his faith. He is more than skeptical about indefinite "inner impressions," the casting of lots, dreams and visions. His position is that as long as one can have the means of faith that are common, one does not need anything extraordinary. A third trait is his childlike faith, his "Yes" to God. God could set His children free to roam ten different ways as long as we only remain bound to our heavenly Father. On the other hand, this faith reaches far out toward the unity of God's creation. Under the leadership of Jesus the converted Christian can allow his thinking to unfold to its maximum.

How did Bengel overcome his trials with regard to the various Biblical manuscripts available and their textual variations? He pushed his way through to the certitude that the minor discrepancies in the text could in no way affect the substance of the message. The Bible can be interpreted by itself, on its own, fully and sufficiently. Bengel became one of the greatest textual scholars of the

New Testament, developing positions which still hold today. For Bengel the Bible became "unconditionally reliable; one can rest upon it in the surety of heaven itself." The "little sand grains" of occasional difficulties or variations do not change anything; the Bible is still good bread. For Bengel the Scripture became "a letter which my God has had written to me, by which I am to judge myself and by which my God will judge me."

The Reformation had had the motto "*Sola Scriptura!* — the Scripture alone!" Bengel said that a second motto belonged with this: "All the Scripture!" Otherwise criticism would yet triumph over the Scriptures. If one would only take up the Scriptures in all their fullness, one would have to look at the Bible with the eyes of salvation history. The Scriptures are a testimony and an expression of an enormous historical work of redemption, in the course of which God has overcome sin and all its forces. Jesus, the great Atoner on the cross, will come again. In the millennium.

Bengel pronounced theology as "the teaching of the glorification of God through the salvation of mankind." Could not this be a relevant agenda for us?

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Kirchliches Monatsblatt,
Mrs. Irene Schlenker, Editor,
Huntingdon Valley, Pa.

the three gates

If you are tempted to reveal
A tale someone to you has
told
About another, make it pass
Before you speak, three gates
of gold:
Three narrow gates — first,
"Is it true?"
Then, "Is it needful?" In your
mind
Give truthful answer, and the
next
Is last and narrowest, "Is it
kind?"
And if to reach your lips at
last
It passes through these
gateways three,
Then you may tell, nor fear,
What the result of speech
may be.

—*Youth's Favorite Poems*

"For Bengel the Scripture became 'a letter which my God has had written to me, by which I am to judge myself and by which my God will judge me.' "

The sun is always shining even though
at times dark clouds hide its face; so God
is always good and gracious even though
He sometimes hides His face from the
children of men.

—selected

world missions

A visit to the Mexican brethren

The neat metal name plate on the fence reads,

"On this site will be constructed the parish of St. Andrew the Apostle Lutheran Church."

In the churchyard laughing teenagers (jovenes) toss a volleyball to each other; a shy little girl (chica) peeks out from behind her mother's skirt; old friends gather around Pastor Eugene Enderlein, telling him how much they missed him, showing him how their little ones have grown, and testing him good-naturedly on his *Español* (Spanish). Smiling men, women and young people extend their hands in a warmhearted Mexican handshake, (first a handclasp, then a grip on the thumb) as they introduce themselves to us, their visitors.

Christian music resounds throughout the neighborhood via speakers; soon the organist begins to play "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God" and all the people quietly slip into the worship room.

It is a happy occasion for the people of the Central Mexican Lutheran Church and the Enderlein family, for their Fifth Annual Conference has brought them all together. Pastor Eugene Enderlein has been sent by the AFLC World Missions Committee, and Mrs. Enderlein by the

Women's Missionary Federation to encourage brothers and sisters in Mexico, to be helpful in matters of mission policy, and to bring home an up-to-date report on our mission endeavors in Mexico. Joy (age 17) and Marybeth (age 12) are partners in this family effort to help cement the bond of love between the AFLC and her Mexican church.

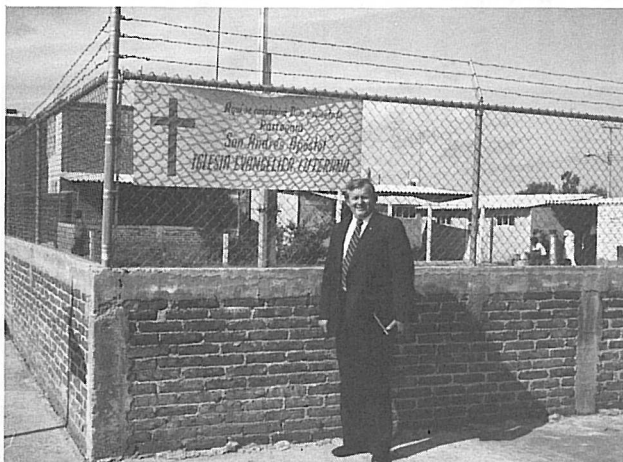
The Central Mexican Lutheran Church is ably led by Pastor Samuel Flores, whose faithful attendance at AFLC Annual Conferences has endeared him to all who have enjoyed his fellowship. His wife Esther is an energetic helper, gracious hostess and faithful Sunday School teacher. His oldest son Milton assists in preaching responsibilities while continuing his profession as a professor of both secondary students and teachers-in-training at a university. Daughters Magdalene, Leticia, Alba and Aglae are all teachers. These adult daughters, along with youngest daughter Arely (age 14) are all faithful workers in the church and assist in many areas, including teaching, music, cooking, serving and as encouragers to young people, visitors and members. Young son Heber likes to help his father in every way that he can.

The people of our churches in Mexico are wonderful, sincere Christians. Their ambition, neatness and



Raul, preparing to serve the Lord in full-time service.

graciousness stand out as clear lights in a dark land where the common religion is a strange blend of Roman Catholicism and superstition. You would enjoy meeting Raul, a smiling young man of 21 years. Raul has just finished his university studies and has sensed the hand of Christ upon him, leading him into the Gospel ministry. The members of St. Andrew the Apostle Church are delighted! Along with their sincere prayer support for Raul, they are pledging financial support for his Bible training. This is a sacrificial gift of love because the money in Mexico has been devaluated drastically in recent months and the people are eagerly saving toward the goal of constructing their church building.



Pastor Enderlein at the corner of the church property in León.



Some of those at the Annual Conference in Mexico.

Another wonderful Christian young man is Eduardo. Eduardo is happy to help in any way, from singing in the choir to washing the dishes. He has made a clear commitment to Christ, but has experienced the rejection of his father because of his conversion.

Senora Cecilia Betáncourt is a smiling, gracious, hard-working Christian. It is a joy to see her at every service with her sons, little daughter, and teenage brother and sister, Arcadio and Graciela.

There are so many additional Christian friends to tell you about . . . perhaps it would be best if you would join us at the next Annual Conference in León, Mexico. Come with us and see firsthand the lovely lot in a busy suburb of León. Come and see how proud the people are of

their brick structure which they have built: a meeting room for worship, which will become a Sunday School room when they are able to build their church; a kitchen with simple supplies but a nice refrigerator and stove; and a storage area. Come and meet these wonderful Christian friends!

But don't expect to go home unchanged! You'll be pricked in your heart as you see how little they have as contrasted with how much we are blessed with in the USA. You'll admire their enthusiastic love for their Savior and their courage to stand up for Him, even though "Evangelicals" are often ridiculed. You'll examine your priorities and take a good hard look at your giving as you ask yourself, "What more could I do to help

make their church building a reality, to assist them in reaching out to nearby cities and to make it possible for an AFLC missionary family to labor with them?"

Our visit to Mexico cannot justly be conveyed to you in mere words. But the response of all of our hearts can be the same, "Lord, you love a cheerful giver. You've commanded me to die to self and live for Christ. Show me, Lord, what I can do for Mexico."

—Pastor and Mrs. Eugene Enderlein

(Pastor Enderlein is World Missions Director of the AFLC.)



Some of the young children and young adults at Conference.



The Flores family. Front row, left to right, Arely, Pastor Flores, Mrs. Flores (Esther), and Heber; second row, Alba, Magdalene, Milton, Leticia, and Aglae.

Talk about money

It is no credit to a pastor to say, "I never talk about money." He is not following the example of his Master. Christ felt that the whole counsel of God could not be presented without showing man his proper relationship to possessions, and their relationship to the Father. Someone has said that Christ spoke more about giving than He did about praying. We cannot vouch for this statement, but we do know that sixteen of Christ's thirty-eight parables deal with money or man's relationship to earthly possessions, and that one out of every eight verses in the Gospels deals with possessions.

—Mars A. Dale, *Ten Studies in Stewardship*

home mission news

from Aberdeen, South Dakota

I have been asked to write an article concerning the Home Mission churches.

Why did I accept this responsibility? I do not believe I am a good writer. I have no knowledge of any Home Mission church other than Grace Lutheran in Aberdeen, S. Dak.. I am not a tremendously good Christian. In fact, I am not even a very good cheesemaker.

However, I have determined for myself and believe beyond any shadow of doubt that there is a God that created me, gave me His Son for the eternal saving of my soul, and has provided the Holy Spirit to enable me to see the directions He has provided for my life.

I cannot explain the fear of God other than, having known His presence, I fear His absence. I, by my choice, can stay in the greatness and peaceful contentment of His presence or I can choose to separate myself from it. I can do all things through Christ or I can do many things wrong on my own.

This, then, is why I am writing this article, because I was asked by Pastor (Roy) Warwick, a man of God. Like other unfamiliar actions in my life I was afraid to say yes. And like other actions in my life I was more afraid to say no. So having asked the Holy Spirit's guidance and help, I shall continue.

Why is there a Home Mission program? I know one reason, so a church could be established in Aberdeen. Why do we need a church in Aberdeen? One reason is that it provides a place for non-Christians to find the Lord. What a discovery. Not everyone who attends church has found what they are searching for. I assume everyone reading this article is a member of an AFLC church. Do you know there may be someone in your congregation who is not saved? Do you really care? Can you tell who they are? Do you know what to say if they ask you for help? Do you

know how to hear them ask? Sometimes when I have really listened I have heard these cries for help. Few will come right out and ask. Most will in one way or another express some doubt that close listening can discern.

What a privilege to sing, pray and worship together. What a responsibility to be ready always to give answer to anyone who asks. I know what this is that I have and I know that others are searching for the same thing. The book of Romans very quickly spells it out. Rom. 3:23 states that all of us have sinned and come short of the glory of God. In chapter 5:8, it says, "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 6:23). Rom. 10:9 states, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Once we are saved, what is the purpose of the church? I know in my case I have a little trouble some days. Other days I have a lot. I have been given eternal life as a free gift. I have accepted the Savior. Now I find myself struggling to accept Him fully as Lord and Master of my life. Some other people I have met have indicated that they, too, have trouble. The fellowship of worshipping together helps me to live the rest of my life closer to where I know I should. There are others in this area that deal with similar problems as I. I thank God for a place to come together to meet with them. There are others in this country who must share similar beliefs. I thank God for the Association of Free Lutheran Congregations.

I know two people who have accepted Christ because of the help and support given me by Grace Lutheran Church. I think there are others in

He that thinks LITTLE OF SIN
has never thought MUCH OF GOD.

The fruitful life results from
SHOWERS as well as SUNSHINE.

Country Style Devotions

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel (My people) doth not know!"

(Isaiah 1:3)

C'M BOSS!

The farmer's voice shatters the dark early morning stillness with his familiar "C'm boss!" This sound is like a bugle call to the milk cows and they move into line and head for the barn door. The cows know their own stalls. They also know their master's voice and when he calls "C'm boss!" they usually obey.

And sometimes livestock are smarter than people.

Dear Heavenly Father,

Throughout the whole Bible You cry . . . "Oh, that they might *know Me*". You want to be our place of refuge—our crib—where you can nourish us and where we can find rest. You are our Master.

We join Paul in his heart-cry . . . "Oh, that I might know Him and the power of His resurrection."

And it is through Your Son, Jesus Christ, that we can know You.

In His name we pray,
Amen.

—Doris Stensland
Canton, S. Dak.

this town and in this country that need Christ as their Savior and as their Lord. I thank God for all the people who helped through prayer and financial support to provide a church in Aberdeen.

I ask you to consider what God would have you do concerning this vital work in this and in other areas.

Thank You.

—Richard Wilson

editorials

500 PLUS 1

This fall we celebrate the quinquacentennial of Martin Luther's birth plus one year. Some of us put a lot into that year of special anniversary last year and maybe we don't feel like making any more effort on Luther and Reformation for a while.

But then again, Luther and the Reformation are so basic that they're a part of life year 'round, decade after decade and century after century. What they showed the world must remain in the forefront of man's thinking and experience, namely, the primacy of God's grace, man's faith and the Bible, God's Word. The very name that we bear, Lutheran, drives us back to the events of the 16th century, even as the title "Christian" speaks of the One who was in the beginning with God because He is God, and the One who at Calvary became the watershed of all human history through His sacrificial atonement and subsequent triumphant resurrection.

We have the tendency to make the man Luther bigger than life, a man who could do no wrong. Any impartial reading about Luther will reveal his blemishes. He was very human. Some of his speech and actions offend Christian sensibilities today. We have more light today (thanks also to him) and more is expected of us in piety and grace (the sense of what is right and proper).

Yet, having said that, nothing is taken away from what Luther did for our world, from what God was able to do through that vessel of clay. For the fact remains that Luther, overwhelmed by his sins, threw himself unreservedly on the grace and mercy of God and faith was given him to trust fully in what Jesus had done in taking those sins away. It was that experience which he shared with his world and shares with the ages, that, and the elemental conviction that the Bible is God's Word and is alone authoritative in matters of faith and life.

So it is soon 501 years since Luther was born in Eisleben, but we still do well to remember this man who wrought a mighty work for mankind by doing the work of God in his own time.

NEW SCHEDULE

Beginning with this issue we are moving up our mailing deadline for sending copy to the printer by one day. We will now mail to Printing Arts, Inc., on Tuesdays instead of Wednesdays.

The change was made necessary by greater uncertainty about the promptness of mail deliveries of our copy material to Printing Arts. To try to insure that they get the copy in time to meet their schedules, we are moving ours up by that one day. We hope it will solve the problem.

Of course, there have been times we've mailed on Tuesdays before, usually if we were leaving our office before a deadline Wednesday and had to get our work done earlier. But for many years Wednesday has been the day. It is interesting to note that in the earlier days Thursday was the deadline, but that was in a day when we could be more certain of our mail deliveries.

We don't think our change in deadline will necessitate changing the deadlines we listed for material arriving on the editor's desk. Should any change need to be made, we'll let you know. But it does mean that we must ask you to always meet the deadline. The change in schedule for us means that we need your cooperation more than ever in being prompt.

A postscript. We appreciate the diligence of our printers in seeking to maintain a strict schedule concerning *The Lutheran Ambassador*. We are able to count on them and, as we say, we appreciate it.

SURVEY COMING

It has been a long time since a reader survey has been taken concerning the *Ambassador*. So long, in fact, that it has been decided another should be taken soon.

While we do get some reactions to the *Ambassador* now and then, a few written, perhaps more orally, the reader survey will focus your attention on evaluation of our church paper, give you an opportunity to react in an organized way, and help us to get a better feel on what's going on "out there" in regard to the *Ambassador*.

Particulars of the survey will be spelled out more fully in the issue which contains it. We can say this much now: it will be an anonymous survey and it will be tabulated in Minneapolis by some "human computers."

For now, we hope you will participate in the survey and will be watching for it in a future issue of the *Ambassador*.

a good rule

J. Wilbur Chapman has said, "Anything that dims my vision of Christ or takes away my taste for Bible study or cramps my prayer life or makes Christian work more difficult is wrong for me and I must as a Christian turn away

from it." I believe that is a good standard to follow in my attitude towards practices that are not definitely condemned by name in Scripture.

—Oscar C. Hanson, Live to Win,
Augsburg Publishing House.

Our hymn study

Concordia, No. 19

Tune: Dundee

Frederick William Faber, 1849

Englishman Faber was brought up in strict Calvinism. Bright and well-educated, he came under the powerful influence of John Henry Newman and the Oxford Movement while yet a student at Oxford. Twelve years after being ordained an Anglican deacon, he, like many others caught up in the Oxford Movement, joined the Roman Catholic Church. All of his 150 hymns were written after his conversion to Catholicism and heavily infused with Roman Catholic theology. But purged of their Mariolatry, many of his good hymns have earned their way into Protestant hymnals and extensive use.

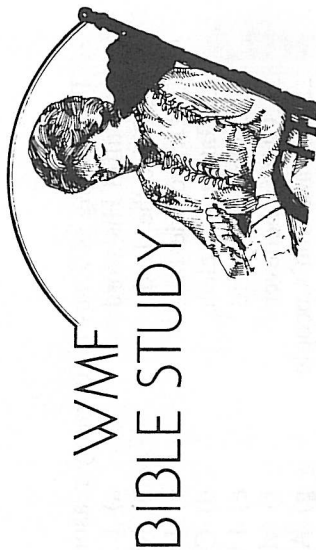
This hymn is a beautiful expression of worship. The first three stanzas describe the glories of God in exclamations of awesome wonder and address Him in a corresponding manner. The imagery is drawn largely from the Revelation to John. A transition occurs in stanza four where the relationship of the contrite heart to God is introduced, and with the remaining stanzas the sinner reflects God's love with his own, and the tender bond is established. This is the universal language of True Religion and it is understood by every race and creed.

the old laymen's principle

What was the old laymen's principle? (Det gamle laegmands princip.) It was to go out with the word of salvation in private and public without a human call, without invitation and without compensation — trusting in the Lord for it all, and following the guidance of Holy Spirit.

—The Hauge Movement in America.





Lesson XI The "I AMs" of Jesus

I AM COMING QUICKLY Revelation 22:20 NAS

Throughout these studies we have learned that Jesus has many different titles. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, the Bread from Heaven, the Way, the Truth and the Life, the True Vine, the Son of God, the Lord, and the Light of the world. Each one has something to say as to who He is and what He has done for all mankind.

What is your relationship to Him as you review these titles? What would be our response to Jesus if He were to ask: "Who do you say that I am?" It is His desire that we may believe that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we may have life in His Name.

I pray that our response would be positive and filled with great anticipation of the return of the Bright and Morning Star and His promise in Revelation 22:20 (NAS).

"I am coming quickly."

I. *THE PROMISE, PURPOSE AND TIME OF HIS COMING*

The return of Christ is mentioned by every New Testament writer. It is mentioned over 300 times in 20 different books.

1. The Lord is coming and we are to be ready. According to the following verses, who said this?

John 14:1-3 _____ Acts 1:11 _____ I Thes-salonians 4:16 _____

- b.) What will His coming mean for the unbelievers? II Thessalonians 1:8,9 _____

III. *THE BELIEVER IN RELATION TO HIS COMING*

14. a) What should be our attitude toward His coming?

I Corinthians 1:7 _____ Luke 19:13b _____

Titus 2:13 _____ Matthew 24:14 _____

II Timothy 4:8 _____ Revelation 22:20 _____

- b) Are you responding to these commands? _____ List specific ways in which we can put these admonitions into practice in our daily lives. _____

15. a) In Hebrews 9:15, we read that Jesus is coming for His saints.

What spiritual heritage is given to them? _____

- b) Where is this spiritual heritage? Colossians 1:5 _____

- c) What will it be like in His presence? Revelation 21:4 _____

- d) Who will be there? Revelation 5:9 _____

16. If you abide in Jesus and allow Him complete lordship in your life, what will be true of you when He comes? Fill in the blanks.

"And now, little children, _____ in Him; that when he shall _____, we may have _____, and not be _____ before Him at His coming." I John 2:28

The last promise in the Bible is, "Yes, I am coming quickly" (NAS).

The last prayer in the Bible is, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (KJV).

Jesus says: "Be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the son of man cometh" (Matthew 24:44).

Suggested Hymn in closing: "When Jesus Comes In Glory"

(#429 in the *Concordia*)

Mrs. Gerald Knudsvig, Buxton, N. Dak.

2. The coming of Jesus is for many reasons. Match the following.

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ Fulfill His word | a) I Thessalonians 4:16 |
| _____ Raise the dead | b) Matthew 16:27 |
| _____ Destroy death | c) John 14:3 |
| _____ Gather His elect | d) Colossians 3:4 |
| _____ Judge the world | e) I Corinthians 15:25,26 |
| _____ Glorify believers | f) Matthew 24:31 |
| _____ Reward God's people | g) Acts 17:31 |

3. In Matthew 24:27 and 36, we are told that the time of His coming is unknown to us. What do the following verses say concerning the time of His coming.

Matthew 24:14 _____
I John 2:18 _____
I Corinthians 15:51,52 _____

4. How should you respond if someone were to say: "Christ has returned"? Matthew 24:23 _____

II. *THE CONDITIONS BEFORE AND AT HIS COMING*

5. What signs will be seen in the skies? Matthew 24:29 _____

6. What will take place on earth before He comes again? Matthew 24:6,7 _____

7. What will people be doing at the coming of the Son of man? Luke 17:26,27 _____

8. What will true Christians be doing? Matthew 24:12-14 _____

9. a) Paul shares with us that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith and follow seducers and evil spirits. Read II Timothy 3:1-5 and list 19 characteristics of the people who will be living in the last days of perilous times. _____

b) Do you see any of these characteristics among people today? _____
c) How are we to respond to such people? II Timothy 3:5b _____

10. In what manner will He return? Match the following.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| _____ in the clouds | a) Matthew 25:31 |
| _____ in flaming fire | b) Matthew 24:30 |
| _____ with the angels | c) Luke 21:27 |
| _____ with power and great glory | d) II Thessalonians 1:7,8 |

11. How quickly will Jesus come? Fill in the blanks below.

"As a _____ in the night." I Thessalonians 5:2

"As the _____ cometh out of the east and shineth even unto the west." Matthew 24:27

"Lest _____ He find you asleep." Mark 13:36

"In a _____, in the _____ of an eye." I Corinthians 15:52

12. a) According to I Thessalonians 4:16,17 what three events will take place at His coming?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

b) How long will you be with Him? v. 17b _____

13. a) When He shall appear, what will happen to the believers? I John 3:2 _____

to old familiar places

By Raynard Huglen, Editor

Part II

From August 7 (not the 6th as I erroneously reported last time) to 13 I made a trip to northwestern North Dakota, northeastern Montana and the extreme south of Saskatchewan. Some of these areas were very familiar to me, I having lived in that area both as a lad and as a young pastor. When the first part on the account ended last time I had spent some time with Harold and Hulda Brensdal, brother and sister, north of Antelope, Mont.

A Town That is No More

I drove north past ripe wheat fields in an unusually dry year to where the town of Comertown used to be. It was never a large town, and I never saw it in its heyday, but even when I knew it it had a high school, a Lutheran Church, some business places and a city park which was fairly well known. Today all is gone. No one lives there any more. A few small houses sit in varying states of decay. The park is there, overgrown, delapidated. The grain elevator stands on the extreme edge of the

townsite and is not used regularly, at any rate. My memories of Comertown aren't many, but it gave me a strange feeling to see that scene of abandonment.

In my own acquaintance with Sheridan County, four towns have lost their high schools – Comertown, Dooley, Antelope and Redstone. A fifth town in the old District One, but in Daniel County, Whitetail, also has lost its high school. I'm not a rural sociologist, but that isn't necessary to know that a lot of change has taken place in rural areas. The empty farmsteads tell the same story.

From Comertown I went east and north to look at an area of which I had only the scantiest memory. I wanted to find the churches and/or churchyards of two Lutheran churches, for one thing. I found the Lonetree basement, built in 1929, atop a high hill with a commanding view to the south and west. Inside the church was a scene of desolation. Unused, abandoned church buildings tug at the heartstrings in a special way. One can imagine the old days, of congregations gathered for worship, of Christmas programs, ladies aid meetings and suppers. Now when windows break out and concrete decays the buildings become the habitation, not of jackals, but of rodents and birds.

At the Pleasant Valley churchyard (later Our Saviour's), the church is gone. In the cemetery I saw the graves of a neighbor of ours in town

and the teenage son of a childhood friend. On my trip I visited a dozen cemeteries, reading almost all the gravestones. It is most touching to see the graves of children and there were even a few of those small boxed wooden frames that we used to see so often.

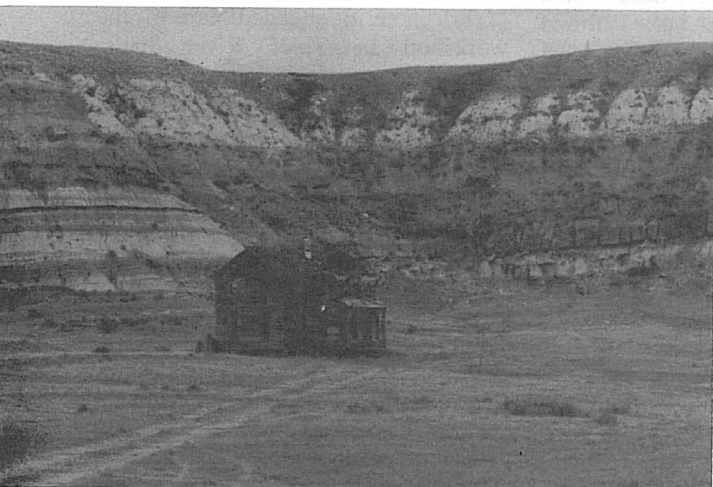
Westby

On to Westby, the town where I lived for three years as a boy. Most of the town is in Montana, the rest in North Dakota. I stopped at the second house we lived in in that town but no one was home. But I did get into our first home, the old LFC parsonage. The house has been remodeled so drastically that it seems quite a different place. The very large yard is somewhat the same but the trees on the north side are so much taller.

I went to the cafe, Rainbow Shack (located in our old drug store building), for some supper. I had just sat down to chat with two men, one of whom I know well, when my 5th and 6th grade teacher, Mr. Elvin Reed, came in. He joined us and we had a very pleasant visit. He left teaching a long time ago and went into farming. I liked him very much as a teacher and it was good to meet him again.

Idor and Julia Ekness were good to take me in for the night. They were a young couple in my father's Oslo Church when we lived in Westby. I also got to say hello to Rev. and Mrs. Melvin Peterson and her

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A long abandoned prairie home.



The Soo depot at Daleview, removed to pasture.

OLD PLACES . . .

brother, Herman Nereson. The Neresons were neighbors of ours. I hadn't seen Ruth for, say, 44 years.

On to Saskatchewan

On Saturday it was to go back to Plentywood. There I looked up Keith and Julie Hodne, a young couple from Newfolden who live there now. He works for a cabinet-woodworking plant and she in a variety store. They have two children. The Hodnes were glad to see someone from home. There was dinner at the Bakken sisters' as I've mentioned before. They are long-time friends of the family, as is Marie Swanson, to whom I also got to say hello.

I had determined to take the long way to Lake Alma, Sask., where I was to preach the next day. I wanted to see some country I hadn't been in for over 25 years. And so I drove to Outlook, Daleview and Whitetail, some of the distance over roads were new to me. There is some badlands country near Daleview particularly.

North of Whitetail, the end of the branch line of the Soo Railroad from Flaxton, N. Dak., via Westby, I came to Big Beaver, Sask., a town I'd visited some years ago. Then eastward mostly to Lake Alma, where the AFLC has one of its newer congregations, a Home Mission work. There I was warmly greeted at the home of Pastor and Mrs. Philip (Marlene) Rokke and their children, Jason, Jessica and Benji. Marlene had prepared a delicious supper and later that evening Pastor Rokke showed me their town.

A Sunday in Lake Alma

Not a whole Sunday, mind you, but some hours, as I left shortly before 2 o'clock for the east.

The congregation, Faith Lutheran, worships at the community hall on the highway through town. It is a very adequate building for their needs, although they will want to have a building of their own when that becomes possible. The hall has plenty of room, a kitchen and rest rooms. For services an altar is set up. Other congregational activities are held in the homes, but that week Daily Vacation Bible School was to be held and it would be in the public school.

There was a good attendance that day, augmented by the Idor Eknesses and Elvin Lagerquists of Westby. If they could have crossed the border north of Westby, it wouldn't have been a long drive, but since they had to come around by Fortuna, N. Dak., it was approximately 50 miles one way.

I used the text for the day, Matt. 7:12-14, as the basis for my sermon. It is the text about the broad and narrow ways. It is the narrow road which leads to life.

The women served a potluck dinner, to all present. Folks lingered a long while afterward, in no hurry to go home. It was a pleasant time of fellowship on a hot but beautiful day.

It was interesting to learn that Pastor and Mrs. Ernest Langness of Faith, S. Dak., had been at Lake Alma the Sunday before and he had spoken there then.

Pastor and Mrs. Rokke and their fine family are doing good work in their new place. The congregation has a warm fellowship and members encourage one another. Let us remember this congregation and parsonage family in our prayers, also as they plan ahead.

And so to Home

It was pleasant travelling across southeastern Saskatchewan and southwestern Manitoba through the afternoon and early evening hours. In one area of Manitoba I saw a number of large brick farmhouses. After coming upon a couple of motels which were closed either for the day or vacation and a hotel whose rooms hadn't been made up yet, I found lodging at a nice motel in a town called Treherne. It is in what is called the Tiger Hills area.

The next day, Monday, I drove to Winnipeg and spent some hours there. It was very hot in the city. Then it was on to Newfolden, my point of origin.

This vacation wasn't the kind where one is at a lake, goes to the mountains or travels long distances to see a lot of scenic places. Rather, it was a trip to see familiar places and renew acquaintances, and to meet some new friends. In all, it was a pleasant time. I was blessed. I hope I brought some blessing, too.

Personalities

Rev. Paul Nash, formerly of Ishpeming, Mich., is presently serving as interim pastor at Zion Lutheran Church, Tioga, N. Dak. He began his service there on Sept. 30.

Preaching missions

Tioga, N. Dak.

Zion Lutheran Church

Paul, Nash, interim pastor

Nov. 4-8

Rev. David Molstre, Dickinson, N. Dak., speaker

Eden Prairie, Minn.

King of Glory Lutheran Church

Wayne Hjermstad, pastor

Nov. 4-7

Rev. Herbert Franz, Cloquet, Minn., speaker

Organ Workshop

The third and final organ workshop being held this fall and sponsored not only by the AFLC but also by Aid Association for Lutherans will be held at Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minn., on Oct. 27. Prof. Stephen Gabrielsen of Augsburg College, Minneapolis, will be the teacher. Mr. Donald Rodvold, director of music at the Association Schools, is the co-ordinator.

Organists, pastors and others interested in the subject are welcome to attend. There is no admission charge. Please check locally for the starting time for the workshop.

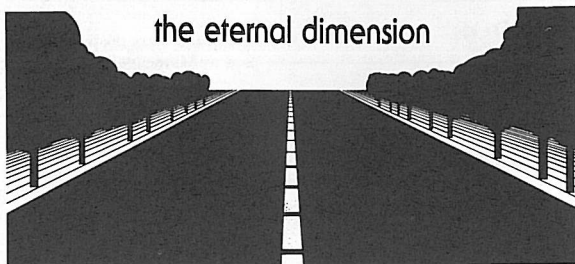
(Ed. note: I attended part of the workshop in Thief River Falls, Minn., in August and found it very stimulating. I enjoyed it. Prof. Gabrielsen is both competent and engaging as conductor of these workshops.)

Northern Minn. Laymen to meet

The Northern Minnesota Lutheran Laymen's Society will meet on Sunday, Oct. 28, at Oiland Lutheran Church at 2:30 p.m. Oiland is ten miles northeast of Greenbush and ten miles northwest of Badger.

The text for discussion is Romans 13.

Art Joppru, Chairman
Joe Jacobson, Secretary



will you
be on
time?

Have you ever been late for some very important event and found it cost you? Some people are late for almost everything. They put off doing what needs to be done until it's too late. Then they pay the consequences. There is the student who puts off studying until the night before the exam, and he fails. There is the husband who neglects his marriage until his wife announces that she's "had it," and she leaves him. Then he begins doing what he should have been doing all along, but it is too late. No doubt many a doctor has had a patient of serious ailment and has said to himself, "If only she would have come six months ago; I could have helped her." The patient has noticed the danger signals, but has put off a checkup until it is too late.

King Agrippa and his wife had the

Apostle Paul preach to them by special request. When Paul was finished preaching, Agrippa said he was almost persuaded to be Christian. When the Roman official Felix had heard Paul, he sent him away saying he would hear him again when he had time. Did Agrippa and Felix ever come to salvation? We don't know. No doubt some of the people of Noah's day intended to be prepared for the coming flood, but they put it off until it was too late. Do you remember how Jesus spoke of the many who will knock on His door after He has shut it? What horror must be the lot of those who intend to be saved, but put it off too long. They will be lost forever.

Dear reader, God's Word teaches you that He is the God Who wants to save you. He is a loving God and has pitied you in your sin and its

eternal misery. He has therefore moved to save you by coming to your world to live and die for you. Through these things He removes your sins to the Cross for full judgment in Himself, and gives you the righteousness which He lived here in this world. This is a complete salvation which is totally a gift. It must be received by you, through faith. The Bible declares that the just shall live by faith.

Speaking of this salvation, Paul said that now is the accepted time, and that now is the day of salvation. In another place the Bible says that when a person hears God's voice he should not harden his heart. God invites and urges you to come to Him that He might save you. He has made this completely possible, but you must come to Him for it. Will you be on time? You may put off some things without serious consequences, but it will not be so regarding your salvation. If you put that off one day too long, you will be eternally sorry. The Lord calls you now.

Why not respond now, and be fully prepared? The psalmist asked God to teach him to number his days that he might apply his heart to wisdom. The greatest wisdom you may

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Sessions will be held in conjunction with the LIFE IN CHRIST services sponsored by Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, with Pastor Allen Monson, St. Cloud, Minn., as evangelist.

October 21—6:30 p.m.

"Evangelism in the Book of Acts"

Rev. Philip Haugen

AFLC Schools Instructor

October 22—11:00 a.m.

"The History of Evangelism"

Dr. Milton Rudnick

Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn.

6:30 p.m.

"Creation Evangelism"

Rev. Paul Bartz

Bible-Science Association, Minneapolis

October 23—11:00 p.m.

"A Theology for Evangelism"

Dr. Robert Kolb

Concordia College, St. Paul, Minn.

6:30 p.m.

"Evangelism and the Local Congregation"

Pastor Laurel Udden

Medicine Lake Lutheran Church, Plymouth, Minn.

EVANGELISM SEMINAR

AFLC Schools, October 21-25

October 24—11:00 a.m.

"Evangelism Music"

Mr. Donald Rodvold

Director of Music, AFLC Schools

6:30 p.m.

"Baptism and Evangelism"

Rev. Francis Monseth

AFLC Schools

October 25—11:00 a.m.

"Discipleship Evangelism"

Pastor Donald Richman

Emmaus Lutheran Church, Bloomington, Minn.

6:30 p.m.

"Visitation Evangelism"

Pastor Walter Johnson

Faith Lutheran Church, Shakopee, Minn.

Friends of the AFLC Schools are invited to participate in any of these sessions, which are offered as part of a special elective Bible School course. For further information, please contact the Bible School office (612-544-9501).

DIMENSION . . .

have is the wisdom which receives the salvation of the Lord, now! Then you will be prepared for the meeting with Him which is sure to come. Now is your day of salvation. Be on time!

—Pastor Emerson Anderson
Cleveland, O.

(Ed. note: Today we are beginning a new series of meditations by Pastor Emerson Anderson. They were written for readers of a newspaper in the Cleveland area and will appear in the *Ambassador* every other time.)

LSS . . .

main Lutheran denominations, in four main areas:

- Counseling, where LSS was described as taking a non-directive approach with no clear emphasis on scriptural principles.
- The issue of abortion, where there was no clear affirmation of the synod's strong stance against it.
- Use of women chaplains in direct contradiction of the Missouri Synod's stance on women's ordination.
- The use of sexually explicit material in the agency's human sexuality program.

Raun disputed the allegation of non-directive counseling and said the other issues were a result of theological differences between the Missouri Synod and the other two Lutheran denominations, the Lutheran Church in America and the American Lutheran Church.

He said Lutheran Social Service will continue to maintain a relationship with Missouri Synod congregations that choose to do so.

—Grand Forks, N. Dak. Herald

Correction

In the story about the 100th anniversary of Bethania Lutheran Church, Newfolden, Minn., in our Sept. 11th issue, it should have been mentioned that among those sending written greetings to the congregation was Mrs. Anna Ronholm, widow of Pastor G. P. Ronholm, who served Bethania from 1927-1945. We are sorry for this omission. Mrs. Ronholm lives in Minneapolis, Minn.

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FAITH IS A DAILY COMMITMENT

"As therefore you received Christ
Jesus the Lord, so live in Him" (Col.
2:6)

Faith is trust not only in connection with the acceptance of Christ — faith is *daily commitment*.

Faith is commitment which must be renewed every day. Faith is not only a step once taken, but a daily walking with God.

There is always the danger that something may come between Christ and the believer. Just as in the case of two friends, whatever comes between then must be cleared up if the friendship is to be maintained, so also in the case of our personal relationship with Christ. It is sin that comes between Christ and us. Each day there are thoughts, words or deeds that come between Him and us. If we cherish these, and do not bring them to Him for forgiveness, they will block the upward channel to God.

Grant, O Christ, that we may daily commit ourselves to Thee, and daily come into the light with our sins and shortcomings, so that we may truly walk with Thee in the joy of forgiveness. Amen.

—Daniel Nystrom