the Concordia Lutheran

"The Scripture cannot be broken." John 10:35.

"Thy Word is a Lamp unto my feet, and a Light unto my path." Ps. 119:105.

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Beware of False Prophets !

Matthew 7:15

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STATEMENT of PURPOSE

To set forth in simple and plain language the pure doctrine of God's Word as taught by the true Lutheran Church in full accordance with the **Book of Concord of 1580** and the **Brief Statment of 1932.**

To show, **on the basis of Scripture,** what true Christians are to believe and how, out of love for their Savior Jesus Christ, they are to lead godly lives.

To furnish aids for Bible study and articles for Scriptural devotion and meditation.

To demonstrate, by our Scriptural stand, that our **Concordia Lutheran Conference** is not a sect or a false church body but that the congregations which form it confess, teach, and practice the Word of God in its full truth and purity and use the Sacraments according to Christ's institution. All who do this are the true visible Church on earth.

To seek out all who truly share our Scriptural position in doctrine and practice, and to urge the mutual public acknowledgment of such God-given unity. Thus we shall be able thereafter to practice a God-pleasing Church fellowship with them.

To show that we do not have among us a mixture of divergent teachings but that we are, by God's grace, "perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment."

To set forth pertinent historical information which has a bearing upon the Church and to expose modern philosophical thought and the so-called scientific theories which contradict the Word of God.

To expose particularly the false teaching and practice of the various so-called "Lutheran" church bodies by comparing their teachings and practices with what is plainly recorded in the Word of God, in the Lutheran Confessions, and in the old orthodox Lutheran writings.

To expose false teaching and practice wherever it makes its appearance and to keep abreast of the current happenings in the church and among the nations as signs of the times.

To be truthful and factual in our reporting and freely to correct any misinformation of which we are not aware and which has been called to our attention. Also to clarify any information or statement of doctrine or practice which may be unclear to our readers or which may create a wrong impression.

The President's Column

"WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE WELS?"

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." -- I John 4:1

For years the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod has fostered for itself an appearance of being the last bastion of orthodoxy among the larger Lutheran synods. We know, of course, that they are not orthodox, that their doctrine of Church and Ministry is contrary to God's Word. But we, too, were deceived somewhat by this "fostered appearance" of orthodoxy which WELS has made down through the years. We believed that it was **primarily** in their doctrine of Church and Ministry in which the WELS was in error. However, we were fully aware and have taught on the basis of God's Word that an error in any doctrine, including the doctrine of Church and Ministry, causes serious errors in other doctrines as well. (**See,** "How The False Doctrine On The Church and Ministry (as it is taught by the WELS, CoLC, and in the ELS) Endangers Other Plain Teachings Of The Bible," in the May and June, 1980, issue of the Concordia Lutheran, Vol. 25, Nos. 5 & 6). Such errors are inevitable when a church body espouses false doctrine, for in so doing, it abandons the sole source and norm of Christian doctrine and life, the inerrant Word of God, and substitutes for it the sinful reason of man, or tradition, or simply accommodates itself to the times. And so it has happened. The fruit of the Wisconsin Synod's doctrine on Church and Ministry is now manifesting itself in other very serious errors.

This past Fall, in reviewing a catechism written by David P. Kuske and officially endorsed by the WELS Parish Board of Education, we found areas besides the obvious false doctrine on Church and Ministry in which this Catechism, if not in error, is extremely weak. For example, it neglects properly to define the relationship of God's Law and original sin to the Christian's conscience (cf. Question 20 and diagram on page

44). Remarkably, the only mention of the **result** of sin is in the Conclusion of the Commandments (cf. Question 135), while in the commandments themselves the salve of the Gospel is applied without ever mentioning what we deserve because of our sins (eg. See this omission between Questions 38 & 39 in the First Commandment, 50 & 51 in the Second Commandment and so on throughout the Ten Commandments), thus diluting the threat of the Law. There is **no clear definition of original sin** in that section of the Catechism which deals with the Law and **it is only partially expounded** in the Second Article under Christ's Work of Redemption (cf. Question 214). There is also no definition of the doctrine of the Personal Union of the two natures in Christ (cf. Question 176), a doctrine fundamental to a proper understanding of Christ's redemptive work. The problem is not so much in what is stated, but in what is left out of this Catechism--that makes this Catechism not just weak, but dangerous. It appears that the attempt has been made by Kuske to simplify the doctrines of Holy Scripture, to make them more understandable, especially to the young. While that is a noble and praise-worthy goal, in the case of the Kuske Catechism, things have been "simplified" to the point where the doctrinal "meat" or meaning of clear doctrines of Scripture, doctrines which children can easily understand, have been removed in many cases.

While there are indeed many things that are praise-worthy in this Catechism, there is also much which presents serious questions, questions which not we, but WELS pastors should be addressing, for their congregations which, so to speak, are being "led down the garden path" of a watered-down theology in the name of simplicity. We are told there are many pastors in WELS parishes concerned about this Catechism. If so, it makes us wonder why there is such a din of silence in the WELS regarding this new Catechism in their official publications. Is there no concern regarding the weaknesses of this Catechism or is it that the WELS pastors themselves are unable to discern the problems involved? When there is weakness in the basic teaching tool used by any church body and that weakness is not identified and corrected, if not in the printing, then at least officially amongst the congregations, that weakness is sure to manifest itself elsewhere and be continued down through the generations to come.

The errors of the Wisconsin Synod in the doctrine of the Church and its Ministry has caused more aberrations in this doctrine as well, specifically in the area of fellowship and the sin of unionism. Again, here is clear proof that one error leads to another. This particular error is expounded (and not refuted at this writing) in the November issue of their official periodical, **The Northwestern Lutheran.** Under a "question box" entitled "I Would Like To Know," the WELS takes a position that is contrary not only to God's Word, but also clearly is contrary to what they always have claimed to be their public doctrine. The questioner asks Paul E. Kelm, the author of the column, whether or not it is sinful unionism to participate in a community chorus when that chorus is performing such works as Handel's "Messiah" or Bach's "Mass in B Minor."

Scripture's answer to that question is clear and unequivocal: "**Can two walk together, except they be agreed,**" Amos 3:3. Paul states the case even more clearly when he says: "**Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them,**" Romans 16:17. Indeed, Paul urges, "**by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ**" that we as Christians "**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 the same judgment,**" I Cor. 1:10. The Lord's will is that those who bring another Gospel, another doctrine, other than that taught in clear Scripture passages, be avoided, that is, that we do not participate in any religious work or worship with those who are not united with us in doctrine and practice. This is what God's Word teaches regarding this question. It is the Scriptural position, one to which we still hold, by God's grace, and one which the WELS used to espouse on paper, if not in practice.

But what do we learn from this column regarding WELS attitude **now** towards such religious work and worship? According to Kelm, much of the art and music which preceded and followed the Reformation has lost its nature and origin in modern Western culture. "With the secularizing of American society that Christian intent to glorify God with the arts has been lost. Typically, the community chorus is not religious in essence or intent. Its purpose is neither to proclaim the Christian gospel nor to express religious unity. It merely

performs the great works of choral heritage." He then goes on to explain that participation under these circumstances is **not** religious unionism, which he calls "the false fellowship of disparate faiths."

In defense of this position, Kelm quotes I Corinthians 10:31: "**Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God,**" arguing that the Christian does indeed sing the "Messiah" or "God Bless America" to the glory of God, but the fact that he is singing with unbelievers or the heterodox has no bearing whatsoever on whether or not it is unionism. Now, tell me: How can a person sing all of the wonderful Scripture passages in Handel's "Messiah" and **not** sing it to the glory of God and then claim that such activity is **not** sinful? It certainly can happen that a person may sing it without thinking, but, if he does, is not such a person guilty of using God's Name in vain, yes, even blaspheming God's Name by singing the plain Scripture passages from God's Word, as in the "Messiah," without associating any meaning to them? Is he or she not guilty also of sinful unionism if such words of Scripture are sung together with others who are of a different faith or even with professed heathen? According to Kelm, the answer is, "No!" Kelm asserts that those of us who maintain on the basis of God's Word that such participation is unionistic, yes, even syncretistic, are simply "weak brothers," "overly sensitive," and even are guilty of a "tyranny of conscience" by forbidding our members to sing such hymns with those of different faiths. Tell me, Mr. (Rev.) Kelm, is it unionism to pray or offer an invocation at a ball game? Is it unionism to join in prayer or offer an invocation at the opening of some civil meeting or at public school graduation ceremonies where a mixture of people of differing faiths are assembled? After all, such activities are not generally associated with religion and the purpose is certainly neither to proclaim the Gospel nor express unity in doctrine. Doesn't such religious activity mean little or nothing to most people? Why not, then, participate? Since when are hymns not prayers and the Word of God set to music not praise? Since when is the Word of God and prayer not religious by their very nature? By your definition, Mr. Kelm, a Wisconsin Synod member could join with a Catholic, a Baptist, a Methodist, yes, even with a Muslim or Buddhist and others in singing "The Lord's Prayer"

and still not be guilty of unionism. After all, it's just a work of art! Since when do faithful Christians justify calling upon the Name of God in vain as a "work of art?" Has the Word of God against unionism and against using the Lord's name in vain suddenly become of none effect?

It is not the author alone of this column in the **Northwestern Lutheran** who is guilty before God, for, while he wrote the column, **others**, supposedly there to "edit" and make sure that there are no mistakes, doctrinal or otherwise, **are just as responsible and just as guilty.** Indeed, where is the outcry from WELS pastors? Why aren't they standing in their pulpits and writing the **Northwestern Lutheran** and denouncing this article in their official periodical as false doctrine as well as pointing out the serious weaknesses in the Kuske Catechism? They, too, are guilty by their silence. They, too, have fallen into the snare of Satan and are thereby espousing even more false doctrine than they have in the past.

I've been told that there are many in WELS who would not agree with this article which appeared in the **Northwestern Lutheran** and who also take exception to the Kuske Catechism; who have a real desire for a "new" Synodical Conference, a conference where true conservatives would join together once again under one umbrella of Christian doctrine. The congregations and pastors of our Conference would also rejoice to see such an organization come about, but not at the cost of God's precious Word. On the basis of the evidence here presented, it is obvious that the WELS is following the same road as did the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod some 40 years ago. The so-called "conservatives" are doing a lot of talking among themselves, but little else. That road leads to articles such as the one by Kelm in their official organ of November, 1990.

While the article in the November **Northwestern Lutheran** urges us not to pass "judgment on those whose mature faith distinguish(es) false fellowship from social interaction," the Scriptures demand otherwise! Make a judgment we must--a judgment based upon the clear passages of God's Word! By God's grace, may each member of every congregation in our Conference continue to "**try the spirits, whether they are of**

God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Certainly, the WELS can no longer lay claim even to the **appearance** of being the "bastion of orthodoxy," but continues to manifest itself as a heterodox church body--one that every faithful Christian must mark and avoid. It is sad, indeed tragic, to make such a judgment, but make it we must on the basis of God's Word. May God keep us faithful, that we may continue to mark and avoid those who would rationalize away the precious truths of God's Word for the sake of convenience or in the name of simplicity.

Your servant in Christ,

Mark W. Dierking, President

+ + + +

PESSIMISM

The dictionary defines pessimism as "an inclination to emphasize adverse aspects, conditions, and possibilities or to expect the worst possible outcome." A pessimist always looks on the dark side of things and cannot rightly appreciate and be thankful for the unmerited blessings which the Lord daily and richly bestows upon us. Pessimism sours a person's disposition and makes the individual bitter, morbid and filled with self-pity. It certainly is not pleasant to be in the company of one who knows nothing but gloom and doom!

A Christian dare not allow himself to yield to the spirit of pessimism! The devil, together with the world and our sinful flesh, are the source from which all sadness comes and seek to bring us Christians down into the pit of despair. The Lord, on the other hand, wants us to be happy and to rejoice (Phil. 4:4).

We Christians have NO reason to be pessimistic! When we lay bound in the fetters of sin and had nothing more to look forward to than everlasting destruction, for the "**wages of sin is death**" (Rom. 6:23), our heavenly Father gave us the gift of "**eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord**" (Rom. 6:23). It was His mercy, no worthiness on our part, which prompted Him to send His only-begotten Son who offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sins and to deliver us from the fear of death (Heb. 2:14,15). Through the Gospel the Holy Ghost has made us the children of God through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3:26), so that now we have been filled "**with all joy and peace in believing**" (Rom. 15:13), being assured from the Word of our faithful and almighty God that "**there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus**" (Rom. 8:1). Heaven is now our home (John 3:16). And no matter what takes place in our lives, we Christians have the wonderful assurance that God loves us and "**that all things work together for good to them that love God**" (Rom. 8:28) even though, by nature, we are full of sin in our thoughts, desires, words, and deeds, and deserve nothing by God's everlasting punishment in hell. Our cries to the Throne of Grace are never in vain! For Jesus' sake, our dear heavenly Father **hears** our petitions, **answers** them according to His good and gracious will (John 16:23; I John 5:14) and **grants** whatever we need for our spiri-

tual and eternal welfare (Rom. 8:28).

We have been made members of Christ's glorious Kingdom **not** to surrender ourselves to a spirit of self-pity and pessimism but "**to show forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of darkness into His marvelous light**" (I Pet. 2:9). When we, as Christians, ponder the undeserved temporal and spiritual blessings which the Father has bestowed upon us for Jesus' sake, should not every living breath be a glorious hymn of praise and thanksgiving for His boundless love and grace? And when this brief life is over we shall, by God's grace alone, join the heavenly choirs to thank and praise Him through all eternity for His love and mercy in Christ Jesus, our Savior!

--MLN

UPON THE CROSS EXTENDED

Upon the cross extended,
See, world, thy Lord suspended,
Thy Savior yields His breath.
The Prince of Life from heaven
Himself hath freely given
To shame and blows and bitter death.

I caused Thy grief and sighing
By evils multiplying
As countless as the sands.
I caused the woes unnumbered
With which Thy soul is cumbered,
Thy sorrows raised by wicked hands.

Thy cross I'll place before me,
Its saving power be o'er me,
Wherever I may be;
Thine innocence revealing,
Thy love and mercy sealing,
The pledge of truth and constancy.

--Paul Gerhardt
L.H. 171:1,4,9.

Now we proceed to the **third part** of our essay, which concerns how we Christians should **regard** the crosses laid upon us, and how we are to muster the **strength** necessary to bear them after our Lord Jesus.

If we Christians, since our regeneration, were completely rid of the Old Adam of sin, chastisements would not be necessary at all; for we would be perfect in every respect and in need of no improvement whatsoever. But we must confess in all humility with the Apostle Paul: "**I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.**" (Romans 7:18) It is our **flesh** that **NEEDS** the cross to convict it, rebuke it, curb it and chastise it; yet it is our **flesh** that **RESISTS** the cross, chafing under its weight, and would have us despise it, escape it, and, if forced to bear it, murmur against it.

Therefore, Solomon writes in the Proverbs, chapter three, verse eleven: "**My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither be weary of His correction.**" The Christian dare not let his flesh **rule** over him in its **DESPISAL** of the heavenly Father's heavy hand, the flesh which rebels at the very thought of cross-bearing, whining, "What did I do to deserve **this**?" The answer to that tempting question of Satan through our flesh should be obvious from the proverb cited: **We NEED** correction, **LOTS** of it, because of our many sins; and we should be **HAPPY** to **receive** it at the hand of Him that loves us, our dear heavenly Father, who wants to treat us like "**sons.**"

Moreover, that same flesh, when faced with chastisements, rears up within us like a horse refusing bit and bridle, and tries to **ESCAPE** the cross, to run away like Jonah of old, like the disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane, like many in our own day and time who would sacrifice the truth of God's Word rather than suffer any inconvenience, endure any trial, bear any persecution, or make any sacrifice for the sake of the Gospel! They would rather be "**bastards**" than "**sons,**" the writer to the Hebrews tells us in verse 8 of chapter 12! To them the Lord Jesus speaks an urgent warning concerning the magnitude of the **consequences** of their evasion: "**Whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after Me, cannot be my disciple.**" (Luke 14:27) **Escape** the cross? At what **COST**?!

Convention Essay, concluded. . .

The Crosses that the Christian Bears Are Evidence of God's Love for Him

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III.

In the first part of our essay we examined the **nature** of our crosses, namely, those things which we are called upon to bear **because we are Christians.** Among these we recognized **perils** to brave, **trials** to endure, **temptations** to overcome, the **onslaughts of Satan** to resist and to survive, and **afflictions** to suffer--all of which are properly-speaking manifestations of God's holy **Law** by which He **disciplines** us--rebukes, corrects, chastises and instructs us. These crosses are "**grievous**" to the Old Adam and difficult to bear; but they are laid upon Christians, not because God **hates** them or is **angry** with them, but because He dearly **LOVES** them in Christ Jesus and wants to deal with them as with "**sons.**"

The second part of our essay dealt with the **purpose** of our crosses, namely, to "**yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.**" (Hebrews 12:11) We noted, however, that the Law--to which God's chastenings properly belong--cannot work anything in and of itself except grief, terror and death (Galatians 4:15; II Corinthians 3:6). Nevertheless, the Law **serves the Gospel** by driving us into God's Word, "**bringing us up to Christ**" (Galatians 3:24). And it is then the **Gospel** that comforts, consoles and reassures suffering Christians with the knowledge that they "**are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus**" (Galatians 3:26), the objects of His special love to the "**heirs of salvation.**" Thus the Gospel turns our grievous chastisements into the "**peaceable fruit of righteousness**": Patience in adversity, increase of faith, humility before God and one another, strength to do battle with the enemy, Christian resignation to the all-wise and gracious will of God, and joy in being counted worthy to suffer with our Savior.

Yet, even with such warnings in great abundance in the Holy Scriptures, the flesh continues to "**lust against the spirit**" (Galatians 5:17). If not permitted by our New Man of faith to **despise** chastenings, if not allowed to slough them off and **escape** them, our flesh then **WHINES AND COMPLAINS** "beneath the chastening rod," murmuring against the Lord like the Children of Israel in the wilderness, concerning whom the Apostle warns US in I Corinthians 10:10, "**Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer**!" Nevertheless the flesh, in the service of Satan, persists: "Why **ME**, Lord? Why do **I** always come out on the short end? Why do **I** have to suffer tribulation? **I** always seem to get more than my share!" Our New Man of faith **never** speaks like that! That's the Old Adam of sin talking out of our own mouths! "**Upon thy lips then lay thy hand,**" sings Paul Gerhardt in his hymn of Christian exhortation and admonition. Silence the murmuring flesh; and, walking in the spirit, "trust His guiding love." (L.H. 535, 9)

Sometimes the flesh "surprises" us, seeming to make a **positive step** in the **right** direction. But don't be fooled, brethren! Remember that in the flesh "**dwelleth NO good thing**!" As the willing tool of Satan, bent on "deceiving us and seducing us into misbelief, despair, and other great shame and vice," the flesh will sometimes actually **welcome** crosses--but for the **wrong reasons**! We noted before in Part One of our essay that **self-chosen crosses** are not really crosses at all, but represent the effort of a "work-saint" and a "devil's martyr" to gain favor with God through works of merit--an effort that leads straight to hell and damnation!! **God** chooses our crosses--**we don't**! Again Paul Gerhardt declares: "By anxious sighs and grieving and self-tormenting care, God is **not** moved to giving...." (L.H. 520:2) God cannot be "bought off" by efforts to **pay** for His favor, not when His blessings are **free for the taking**, offered to all in the precious Gospel "**without money and without price**!" (Isaiah 55:1

And a particularly sad self-deception is borne by a person whose flesh **pretends** willingly to accept crosses, chastisements and afflictions; yet, finding none of particular discomfort at the door, takes it into his mind that, because of his "superior character" as a Christian, the Lord doesn't deem

crosses a necessity for **HIM.** "**Be not Deceived**! **God is not mocked**!" For such a person suffers **already** from a severe affliction, namely, a **delusion** that can only increase his **carnal security** and make him into a proud Pharisee! The real tragedy, of course, is that he doesn't realize the danger to his immortal soul!

Before we leave the **negative** examples of how we should **NOT** approach our crosses, let us note yet one particularly **vicious** ploy of Satan which he uses to drive troubled Christians to hopelessness and despair: Sometimes a child of God is hounded by the idea that God somehow **overestimated** the weight of the cross for him and laid upon his back a chastisement much **greater than he can bear.** The devil perpetuates this myth by keeping the suffering Christian's eyes **away** from the Holy Scriptures; for he knows full well that the believer can find no comfort apart from the Gospel. Fortunately for us, by God's rich grace we have in His Holy Word a most wonderful **assurance,** of which the Apostle Paul writes, I Corinthians 10:15, "**God is faithful, who will NOT suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.**" Here the Lord links this gracious assurance with His ultimate purpose in sending the Christian crosses: If the heavenly Father did **not** truly **love** us in Christ Jesus our Savior, He would simply "hang us out to dry", as it were, and forget about us altogether! Instead He does just the **opposite**! He assures us **ahead of time** that He and He alone determines and measures the severity of our trials, tailor-makes them to fit our needs for our ultimate benefit, and provides an "end" or termination for them. What a gracious and loving Father we have by faith in Christ Jesus, our Savior!

What **God** ordains is always good!
Though I the cup am drinking
  which savors now of bitterness,
I take it without shrinking.
For after grief God grants relief,
  my heart with comfort filling
  and all my sorrow stilling.
(L.H. 521,5)

Now, to conclude our discussion regarding our approach to the

cross and our regard for it, we move to the **positive** exhortations of the Lord's Word to see in them just how we Christians **should** view our crosses, shoulder them confidently at the bidding of our heavenly Father, and bear them after our dear Savior.

Though the flesh is weak, the spirit indeed is willing. What the Old Adam in us, in the service of Satan, abhors, despises and rejects, the **New Man** of faith is **ready, willing,** yea, **eager** to do, prompted by the Holy Spirit by means of the Gospel. Thus, the Christian's **NEW Man** says with the Psalmist: "**It is good that I have been afflicted,**" an acknowledgement worked in him by the testimony of the Spirit of God that he is indeed a child of God, his heavenly Father, by faith in Christ Jesus, and that he earnestly desires to be dealt with as such, as a "**son,**" as a legitimate heir of God through Christ.

Our **New Man rejoices** in the cross, knowing both its divine Source and gracious purpose, as in Job we read: "**Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth,**" and then also a word of admonition because of the flesh and its melancholy under the cross: "**Therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty**!" Thus it was the **New Man** in the Apostle Paul who said: "**I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake.**" (II Corinthians 12:10) And yet Paul was not without the same flesh that constantly plagues you and me; for he readily admits: "**The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not that I do... for I delight in the Law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.**" That constant battle between the spirit and the flesh makes **US TOO** cry out in utter frustration: "**O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death**?" (Romans 7:19-24) Fortunately for Paul and for us as well, this cry of anguish is not without its answer, the answer of **God's grace,** proclaimed to us in the Gospel to which our crosses drive us: "**I thank GOD, through Jesus Christ our Lord**!" (v. 25a) God, our dear heavenly Father for Jesus' sake, has already delivered us from **eternal** death and from the sting of **temporal** death as well; and He will surely deliver us at length also from the wretchedness of this battle with the flesh when He calls

us to His heavenly home. Then we shall forever be rid of the Old Adam, the corrupt and plaguing "albatross" which we now still must carry about with us, and yet, at the same time, mortify by daily contrition and repentance.

In the meantime, however, we must **endure chastenings, "now for a season"** as God sees fit in His perfect wisdom and according to His **loving purpose,** being **"in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of (our) faith, being much more precious than of gold which perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."** (I Peter 1:6-7) The purpose is **good,** because it flows from God's **love** for us as His children; and it is that **good** and **salutary purpose** upon which we must keep our eyes of faith focused, though they be clouded over at times by tears of weakness, that according to our New Man we may be **"always rejoicing".**(II Corinthians 6:10)

> Be patient and await His leisure
> in **cheerful hope,** with heart content
> **to take whate'er thy Father's pleasure**
> and His discerning **LOVE** hath sent,
> nor doubt our inmost wants are known
> to Him who chose us for His own.
> (L.H. 518, 3)

This is a "tall order" indeed, and an impossibility for us without the comfort and assurance of the Gospel. Therefore we go to our dear heavenly Father in prayer, and ask Him (as dear children here in this world ask their dear father) with all boldness and confidence: **"'Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief!'** (Mark 9:24) Give me, according to Thy great love and mercy to me in Christ my Savior, a rich measure of **Thy grace,** which is sufficient for me; **"for Thy strength is made perfect in weakness."** (II Corinthians 121:9)

And has He not already heard our plea, before we even called upon Him and before we were done speaking (Isaiah 65:24), all for the sake of His fatherly love for us in Christ Jesus? Has He not already assured us: **'Fear not, for I have redeemed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine! When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and**

through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Savior! (Isaiah 43:1-3a)

Indeed, "**whom the Lord LOVETH, He chasteneth!**" And that great, yea, immeasurable and unfathomable love for us moves Him to pour out abundantly of His enabling grace, that we, **by Him,** can bear the crosses that He in **love** has laid upon us! "**Hath He spoken, and shall He not make it good**?" (Numbers 23:19) Thus, when we in faith confidently assume the cross to mortify the Old Adam, to be disciplined, exercised and instructed by the heavenly Father for our ultimate good and blessing, our New Man boldly declares with Paul: "**I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me;**" (Philippians 4:13) "**for it is God which worketh in (me) both to will and to do of His good pleasure.**" (2:13)

What God ordains is always good;
His will abideth holy.
As He directs my life for me,
I follow meek and lowly.
My God indeed in every need
  doth well know how to shield me.
To Him then I will yield me.
(L.H. 521, 1)

Let this then be our **comfort,** our **joy,** our **hope,** our **confidence,** and our never failing **source of strength** to bear the crosses He has **laid upon us,** the crosses which are **evidence** of His fatherly LOVE to us, His dear children in Christ our Savior:

"**Who shall separate us from the love of Christ**? **Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword**? **As it is written, 'For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Nay, in all these things we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS through Him that LOVED us! For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from THE LOVE OF GOD which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!**" -- Romans 8:35-39

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
is laid for your faith in His excellent **Word**
What **more** can He say, than to you He hath said,
who unto the Savior for refuge have fled?

And then the beloved hymn-writer paraphrases our loving heavenly Father's blessed assurance to us, as we languish beneath the cross:

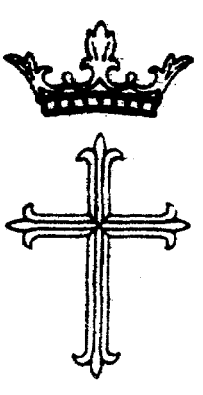
When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace all-sufficient shall be thy supply.
The flames shall not hurt thee; I only design
thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.

The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes!
That soul, tho' all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, **no** never, **no** NEVER FORSAKE!

(L.H. 427, 1,5,7)

May God grant to each of us, as He lays upon us His chastening hand, true confidence in His **fatherly love** for us, His adopted children by faith in Christ Jesus, that in our weakness, **His grace** shall be our **strength** to bear the cross after our Savior, yea rather, HIS strength made perfect in our weakness, until at length He removes our cup of suffering from us--"**the sufferings of this present time, (which) are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.**" (Romans 8:18) "This grant us, dear Father in heaven," for Jesus' sake! Amen.

SOLI DEO GLORIA!



Around the World

with editorial comment

by M. L. Natterer

Over the last 50 years the primary concerns in managing student behavior in public schools has changed drastically. Below are listed the specifics of this change:

Top Problems in 1940

1. Talking
2. Chewing gum
3. Making noise
4. Running in the halls
5. Getting out of line
6. Wearing improper clothing
7. Not putting paper in wastebaskets

Top Problems Today

1. Drug abuse
2. Alcohol abuse
3. Pregnancy
4. Suicide
5. Rape
6. Robbery
7. Assault

(Fullerton California Police Department and the California Department of Education)

The above release reveals to us the breakdown in the home and state. The Scriptural role of the man and woman has been spurned in favor of what they like to refer to as "self-fulfilment". In reality, "selfishness" would be a more appropriate term! The "self-fulfilling" woman ceases to be a real wife to her husband or a good mother to her children. Millions of American women make the tragic mistake of becoming career-minded instead of family-minded. Consequently, the children are raised by others or left to fend for themselves while the husband begins to look elsewhere for companionship. On the other hand, in many homes the "self-fulfilling" husband drinks excessively, is abusive to his wife and children and makes the home-life almost unbearable. With such terrible conditions existing in the home and the soaring divorce rate, is it any wonder, then, that the effects are felt in the state? How many of our government officials, from the highest down to the lowest, have lost the respect also of our young people by their wicked behavior! Such deplorable conditions should serve to remind us Christians that the Day of the Lord "**Is near, even at the doors**", Matt. 24:33.

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