

## Exercising Patience and Longsuffering

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Crisis and the Church are never strangers. Wherever the Church moves in, crisis pitches tent alongside. Wherever the Gospel is heard, tension appears in the life of the individual, of the community, of the religious organization. God and Satan, the Lord Jesus Christ and the world, the flesh and the spirit can never be at peace. True, in the history of the Church there run fluctuations in crisis, where tensions build up to the point of explosion. We think there of the issue of law in the time of the first general council of the Church at Jerusalem; of the issue of Arianism; of the politico-religious issue of the Papacy and national churches in the Middle Ages; of the Reformation; of the division between Lutheranism and the Reformed theologies; of the *Gnadenwahlstreit* here in America.

Even in times of peace—Scripture mentions such a time immediately following the conversion of the man who so relentlessly headed the persecution of the Church, Saul of Tarsus: “So the Church throughout all Judaea and Galilee and Samaria had peace, being edified”—crisis is building up. For the adversaries never rest. The roaring lion is always going about seeking who he may devour.

We have passed through a time of comparative peace in the Church. There have indeed been issues: we have had modernism to contend with; the echo of sword on shield can still be heard, though the strokes have become feeble by reason of the tired combatants. Tiredness generates a climate conducive to the growth of harmless-looking, but poisonous mushrooms: unionism; mergers in the Lutheran Church in the dew of ‘love’ without root in doctrinal soil; broadening umbrella-like toadstools of ecumenicity; rapidly spreading three-leafed ivy of Romanistic high church ecclesiasticism. Many, misled by these developments, rejoice that peace and brotherhood, love and understanding have come into the church as never before. They cry, “Peace, peace, when there is no peace.” For agreement is lacking in Word, doctrine, breaking of bread and prayers.

The most critical times in Church history are two in number. The one is that of early growth and organization; the other that of disintegration. In the first instance enthusiastic mistakes, compromises, concessions may blight a new organization throughout its history. Think what a mess the Apostles would have made if left to their own devices. Law and Gospel would have been confused; Jewish concepts of the kingdom of God would have held sway; traditionalism would have taken the reins. What a blessing the gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost proved to be!

We hear about Luther’s wonderful stand against the Catholic world. Few accord his Reformation credit for the difficult fencing off of enthusiasts, the Reformed, and the political dangers his Reformation was set out to.

The other critically dangerous time for the Church lurks in a period of disintegration, when doctrine, practice, and discipline are falling apart. Luther observes that the Gospel has never remained in its purity in one place “*Ueber eines Mannes Gedenken.*” A century is a long time in church history. When disintegration sets in the chief question becomes that of proper use of Law and Gospel. A double danger appears. One party attempts to settle issues by reducing the Gospel to legalistic regulations; the other departs by mistaking concessions away from the

Gospel to opportunity as being ‘Gospel approach’. These cover their maneuvering with a moldy mantle of ‘love’. But note that both will have sold the Gospel short.

We live in what is patently a time of disintegration. Look at the Lutheran Church in America. Never in the past eighty years has there been so loose a practice, so great a decline in respect for God’s Word. What is needed in our day is a return by the guidance of the Holy Spirit to Scripture, to a balanced knowledge and application of the whole counsel of God. So then in this present controversy, to be right blunt, our theology dare not become a one-sided “avoid them”, but must be tempered and balanced by the Scriptural admonition to exercise patience and longsuffering. And that is what we wish to think on in this paper.

We shall certainly not go amiss if we first of all discuss those passages that are being argued for an immediate break of relations. Chief of these are Rom. 16, 17; I. Cor. 1, 10; I Cor. 11, 17f.; Titus 3, 10; II Thess. 3, 10; II Thess. 3, 6; II Thess. 3,14.15; I Tim. 6,3ff; II John 9-11, we take up the last passage first. It has actually been cited as applicable to doctrinal disagreements within the Lutheran Church here in America. Its application would mean that we accuse, say in this present situation, the Missouri Synod of departing from the teaching of Christ, and not having God. The trouble is that too many are still in the habit of citing certain verses in Scripture torn out of their context, so that a little reading before and behind the text could show that it has a specific, not a general sense; and that it is being misapplied. One does hear some say, however: “True, in its context the passage has a specific application; but it also contains a general truth and principle that has universal application.” Let us beware of cavalier liberty in our use of the Word of God!

The same thing has been done with II Thess. 3, 6. In a lengthy article in one of our theological journals of years back it was rightly shown that the passage has a specific application: that the disorderly therein mentioned were those who, having come to the conclusion that, the second coming of Christ was right at hand, exhibited what they called their faith, but in fact was disorderly laziness, in this that they no longer did any work to support themselves. They had become ‘Christian’ hoboos. St. Paul sharply rebukes this as being out of trim with the faith in the forgiveness of sins in Christ, a faith that demonstrates itself in principled attention to duty to the very last moment. St. Paul counsels, “how we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition that they received of us. ...If any man obeyeth not our word by this epistle, note that man, that ye have no company with him, to the end he may be ashamed. And yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.” Despite the fact that the writer clearly saw the specific application, he nonetheless lifted out the term ‘disorderly’ and broadened it out to a general principle having universal application. But in doing so he did not underscore Paul’s command to “admonish him as a brother.”

(Story of the man at Fond du Lac: “*Es war aber hoechste Zeit, John; sonst waeren wir Dir auf’s Dach gestiegen!*”)

I Tim. 6, 3ff. is also brought to bear on our present controversy, a more pertinent passage. St. Paul here indicates that “teaching a different doctrine” represents “consenting not to sound words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ”. And here the practice tolerated within the Missouri Synod comes into focus. The pseudo-learnedness, false piety, and ostentation of the high church movement with its reintroduction of Romish ritual and with it the teaching of Romanistic coloring—I draw attention to the advocacy of prayers for the dead, the teaching that the body and blood of our Lord are present on the altar with the speaking of the words of consecration by the minister, the invocation of the saints, the shift from the Lutheran stand on

Lord's Supper of its being a vehicle for the grace and forgiveness of God to its being a eucharistic in character, a definite trend toward the Roman Catholic; the silly desire to be called "Father"; do not these indeed fall under the condemnation of St. Paul when he continues to say of such, "He is puffed up, knowing nothing, but doting about questionings and disputes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, wranglings of men corrupted in mind and bereft of the truth, supposing that godliness is a way of gain?"

True, we know from Scripture that, it will be a recurring thing in the Church that there will be factions. To the Corinthians 11, 17ff. Paul writes that he hears that there are divisions existing among them. But he looks upon this as something to be expected, for he says, "There must be factions among you, that they that are approved may be made manifest among you." These factions are not necessarily just doctrinal in character, but also schisms, that is, separations that have been brought about on grounds other than doctrinal aberrations, but for external things, like dislike of the pastor, quarreling over a new church site, Synod affiliations, and the like more. For divisions—the word 'divisions' in the original is 'schisms'—occur among us more often on the score of schisms than on heresies. But these divisions show who are the approved—and usually they are the losing parties in numbers and in legal proceedings. For they obey God's Word, both in doctrine and in self-discipline.

The same word, 'divisions' as a translation of 'schisms' in the Greek appears in I Cor. 1, 10. We are not left in the dark as to what these schisms consisted in. They were divisions on the purely personal basis. Some were partisans of Paul, others of Apollos, some of Peter, and some in a party spirit, not on the basis of faith, were for Christ. St. Paul condemns this schismatic trend unreservedly. He points up a Christ-centered *faith*; he deprecates the personal and exalts the atonement of Jesus. Any externalizing or personalizing—and we may add synodizing and organizational emphasis on the pure basis of synod affiliation—is to Paul and to Christ an abomination. And that, by the way, is said to us Wisconsinites as well as to those of other synodical organization, lest we also fall under the condemnation of Paul. And if we be true followers of Christ, we shall not bridle up at this warning, but take it to heart.

We turn to another passage that is constantly quoted as calling for drastic and immediate separative action. It is Titus 3, 10. (The Scripture quotations throughout follow the American Standard Version; having used it more than forty years and compared it with the original Greek and the Authorized Version, it has been found much the more accurate translation, besides being more intelligible to the modern reader because of its contemporary English. I may state at the same time that in citing these passages and giving a short resume of their meaning this essay is by no means the place to go into an exhaustive exegesis.)

To Titus 3, 10. We quote, "A factious man after a first and second admonition refuse; knowing that such a one is perverted and sinneth, being self-condemned." If one take the context into consideration—and must we not do so?—we find that Paul is speaking here of the Judaizers. They wasted valuable time with foolish questionings, and genealogies, and strifes, and fightings about the Law. These were all unprofitable, vain, empty, foolish; and they led away from the spirit and understanding of the Gospel. Of such St. Paul tells Titus that they are factious men. If after a first and second admonition such an one still sticks by his old picayunish ways, waste no more time on him, but refuse to enter in to any further discussion. Just as you and I would waste no time on an Adventist lecturer after having talked with him an evening or two and we see that we haven't made a dent on his convictions. The Lord Jesus says the same thing about the Pharisees who were offended at His teaching. He remarked, "Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit." So then St. Paul says of the

factionous fellow, “You know that such a one is perverted, and sinneth, being self-condemned.” Which? The stubborn Judaizer, trying to shoulder out the Gospel by mixing in not only the law, the ceremonials, but the senseless genealogies and foolish questionings of rabbinical opinions, deadly and deadening. Too often in this verse we have simply hung up on the King James word ‘heretic’; and we have forgotten altogether to consult the enlightening context.

Finally we come to the famous Rom. 16, 17. But why just verse 17? Is it because we shrink back at the implications of the 18<sup>th</sup> verse? But it most certainly belongs to 17. To cut off with 17 rather exposes our position to questioning, if not to rejection of its use as proper.

Let us quote the whole passage. “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them that are the divisions and occasions of stumbling contrary to the doctrine that ye have learned; and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent.” That little word “for” binds the 18<sup>th</sup> verse in closest manner to the foregoing v. 17. But because of this gross word ‘belly’ in 18 we shy away from quoting it. And therewith we expose ourselves to a body blow. How often just that verse has been quoted against us as proving that v. 17 is inapplicable to Lutheran preachers of the general run here in America, and Lutheran synods as well. And there we lie with a solid punch to the midriff. And so it is we fail to quote v. 18, sometimes not having seen it ourselves; sometimes holing the adversary will not have seen it and use it against us; sometimes just too lethargic to give the time and energy to a problem that, when solved, makes the 18<sup>th</sup> verse applicable to every aberration from the Word of God, bluntly calling all those who err from the truth belly-servers.

Now to the exegesis of the whole passage. The matter is so important, yea, so dangerous, that Paul ‘beseeches’ the brethren to ‘mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling’.

The crucial points are ‘divisions’, ‘occasions of stumbling’, the ‘turning away from them’, and the ‘serving of their own belly’. The divisions—*dichostasia*—is an attempt to have a double stand appear as being *gleichberechtigt*. One might cite here a thing like the infamous Opgjör in the Norwegian Lutheran merger of years ago. It means introducing a false teaching alongside the true. But we know that God is One and that like God the truth also is one. Where error is permitted to stand alongside of truth, error in the course of time will succeed in working itself toward the top. Hence St. Paul’s “beseeching”.

The ‘occasions of stumbling’ are the second element in Rom. 16, 17.18 drawing our particular attention. The Greek is “*skandalon*”, a trap, gin, snare, stumbling block. Anything that causes one to veer away in any degree from the faith and the proper understanding of the Gospel is rightly called an occasion of stumbling. That is not only aberration from doctrine itself, nor is it only evil example, but even where one uses one’s liberty over against the weak Christian and leads him to do what in his own conscience he believes to be evil. Anything therefore that in doctrine or practice or example inclines to make others *aerger*, that is, worse, comes under the head of offence.

The third element in this passage is the command to “turn away from them”. The Greek reads *ekklinete*. It means to lean away from, to bend away. It indicates a process, not a sudden action like a clap of thunder.

Note that this turning away is to take place only after the divisions and occasions of stumbling have become clear not only to an individual, but to an organization involved as well. For Paul is speaking to the “brethren”. This is akin to Matth. 18, “If thy brother sin”; in which case also the sin must clearly be sin, recognized by all to be sin. If there has to ensue a long

discussion and debate whether a certain thing be sin, be an aberration from the truth, and the matter cannot be clearly demonstrated from the Word of God and the facts to be sin, then any action on the basis of Matth. 18 can bring but confusion rather than clear-cut witness. The same thing remains true with Rom. 16, 17: any application of this passage and a turning away where the division and the occasion of stumbling is not clearly demonstrable on the basis of the Word of God and the facts, such turning away, avoiding, will only confuse and confound the situation and becloud the witness. Please not to misunderstand me: if the issue is clearly defined on the ground of the Word of God and the facts as being division and an occasion of stumbling, and admonition has not brought conviction to the opposing party, then the turning away in itself becomes the sharpest sort of witness and must not be refrained from, certainly not in the interest of a false peace. We shall come back to this point later on in the essay when we make our application.

We proceed to the generally misunderstood 18<sup>th</sup> verse with its “serving of the belly”. A year or two ago the *Quartalschrift* brought the explanation of this phrase. But it is not enough to state but once a correct understanding of a moot passage, especially one that is thrust forward continually as in the present controversy, but to underscore it again and again. Though no objection was ever raised to the exegesis—it will be given directly—only once has it been alluded to in the course of these two years.

We back away from v. 18 because we carry our own definition of ‘belly’ into the passage. We fail to ask, “How did Paul and his time understand and use the word?” For with us the word has a bad odor; it represents what the man in the street says of all the gross passions as being “below the belt”. But with Paul, the Greek tongue, and the Hebrew way of thinking the bowels, belly, if you will, were the seat of compassion, pity, joy, sorrow, and the good emotions, as well as of anger, fear, shame, and the like. All these he felt in his midriff. Consequently he also made that region the seat of that which seemed to him to be high and right in thought. Like as with us the heart, so with him it was the belly. I refer you to the aforementioned article in the *Quartalschrift* for the passages cited to substantiate this use. So when St. Paul in v. 18 speaks of those who create divisions as serving their bellies and not Christ, he tells us that in whatsoever degree they create these divisions it is that they have departed from Christ and His Word and have put forward their own thinking, whose seat for them is the belly, as being eternal truth. This interpretation is supported by the next clause, when Paul says, “And by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent”; that is, the product of their belly—heart to us—is conveyed in fine phrase and teaching and leads many astray. We see that constantly and on every hand. It has been a constant phenomenon in the history of the Church. According to God’s Word it will be on the increase to the very end. So let us quote the whole passage and take care to make clear time and again what St. Paul means in the use of the phrase “serve their own belly”. It will have its effect on those who truly love the Word of God; and those who reject it and continue to inject the modern sense of ‘belly’ in order to brush off the use of Rom. 16, 17: let them alone; they are self-condemned; and God will take care of their stubbornness; in that case it falls under Samuel’s dictum: “Stubbornness is as idolatry and teraphim”.

Judging by what one hears, sometimes it would seem that the Word of God pinnacled in the words, “Avoid them.” St. Paul, however, lays great weight upon declaring the whole counsel of God. True theology is never one-sided: it is comprehensive and inclusive, balanced and filled out, centering on Jesus Christ, glorying in forgiveness, insistent upon repentance, marveling at the love of God, believing, hoping, loving the Lord and fellowman; showing patience, forbearance, longsuffering. And this brings us to look at those many, many places in Scripture

that warn us against haste in dealing with men and issues and that call for longsuffering and patience.

Let us begin with the great commandment in the law, which our Master called the chief commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength.” Jesus then added, “And like unto this commandment is, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.” Supreme over all things is the law of love. Supreme in the Church and in the Kingdom of heaven reigns love. Love to our fellow-man, to fellow-Christians is a reflection of the love of God to us and to our love to Him. “Let all be done in love.” Which also applies to the matter before us. May we say—and I include myself in the question—that we have approached the controversy with Missouri in a warm love for our brethren in that body? Let those of us who have been at close grips in formal debate with our Missouri brethren review what was said, in what spirit it was said, and some of the bitter remarks that have fallen in private. Again, think of the more cordial spirit and the far greater degree of agreement that prevailed when we visited man to man with them in recess or at the dinner table.

But now what does Scripture say about the character of true love? Should we not take to heart and try to trim our course to the compass of I Cor. 13? The passage is well-known. We read it often, yet fail so often earnestly to set our course by it. Let us once more think on the controversy and then lift out of the passage a few pertinent words. “Love suffereth long and is kind. Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil;...beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Love never faileth.” Now I should like to see which of us can rise and declare that he has observed all these things and done all in love? Or did not you and I often enough engage in these things with the thought of coming out victorious, of winning in the debate? Where then was the love that sought only to convince and gain the brother, the spirit that was concerned for him and his beloved Synod? Probably the nearest approach to this spirit of love is to be found in the eleven pamphlets, as well as in the resolutions of 1939 of our Synod. But now have we borne all things, have we believed all things, have we hoped all things, have we endured all things in this controversy? Or have we approached it with the thought, “What’s the use? Let’s break off! The quicker the better!” Are we in some degree using Rom. 16, 17 as an excuse to cover our impatience with the way things have been going in the Synodical Conference? To make an end of the matter? And do we rightly consider what the consequences of any premature action may be to the kingdom of God, to our own Synod and our own people, to many brethren in the ministry of our sister Synod who deplore the lack of discipline in their own body and the aberrations of some in high place in doctrine, but especially in practice? Do we think of the layman in the sister Synod who is pretty well ignorant of what is going on and would be bewildered by our action if we summarily broke off? To return to a few of the many passages that urge love on us, particularly to the brethren. Think of that very weighty and important one Eph. 4, 1-4 and 31. Once more it is so important a matter that St. Paul goes about beseeching. We are to walk worthy of our calling “with all lowliness, and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.” Note the counsel to forbear one another in love. Let us be sure that forbearing calls for love, patience, to excuse, yes, to spare. That calls for a degree of effort, of overcoming a natural bent to cut loose from an aggravating situation. But the Word tells us to give diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, a bond that has been knit by the Holy Spirit Himself. And that was certainly the case in the formation of the Synodical Conference. Need we point out that it was brought about largely against the inclination of both the Missouri and Wisconsin Synods by the Spirit-inducted knowledge that

they were at unity in doctrine? And how diligent have we been in preserving this unity? What has been our inner relation to the brethren of the Missouri Synod? Have we in any degree permitted bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and railing to enter in?

Again, when we read I Thess. 4,9ff. we hear Paul in the Holy Spirit say, “But concerning the love of the brethren ye have no need that one write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another; for indeed ye do it toward all the brethren that are in Macedonia. But we exhort you, brethren, that ye abound more and more.” And hear what the same Paul says to the Philippians in the 2nd chapter, vs. 1-4: “If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; doing nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.” But it will be said, “There you have it: ‘Be of the same mind;’ ‘being of one accord, of one mind’ . That is the very nub of the matter: we are not of the same mind and of one accord.” But is it not true that both we and they still adhere to the Brief Statement? Does not the disagreement—and that is a grave thing—lie in a difference of spirit and difference in the field of practice more than in doctrine?

We have but cited a few of the multitude of places in Scripture where love is enjoined upon us, a love manifesting itself in longsuffering and patience, particularly where brethren are concerned. We adduce one more to wind up, that of Rom. 12, 10: “In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another, in honor preferring one another.” Then let us be sure that the course we take is dictated by a love for God and our brethren. Are we sure of where we are going? Do we know positively that our course is in accord with God’s Word and to the welfare of His Kingdom? One wonders at times where we are heading for. Let it also be said that it is easy to reduce a certain word of God to the character of a rule and regulation, then mechanically adhere to it and pride one’s self on being orthodox, conservative and truly Lutheran, only in fact to have departed from the spirit of Christ and to have returned to Moses, nay, worse than Moses: for Moses gave the law at God’s command, but this is reducing the blessed Gospel to the niveau of the law.

We hear St. Paul, the prisoner of the Lord, intensifying his beseeching toward love. He describes to us the timbre and fiber of true Christian love when he draws in longsuffering and forbearance as its elements. Hear what he says, “I therefore beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love, giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace.” It is being said publicly, “Well, we have been longsuffering and forbearing. We have been admonishing the Missouri Synod for 20 years.” Let us take care what we say. Our first public monition to the Missouri Synod is dated August 1939, just sixteen years ago. And what are 16 years in the economy of God? Or in the gravest controversies of Church History? Take the Trinitarian question, or the Christological: both took centuries to settle. Our resolution of 1939 was a mild, but factual and excellent statement: probably the best that has appeared in the whole controversy. Its soundness was demonstrated in that the Missouri Synod and the American Lutheran Church both acted on its advice to adopt a single document of agreement. That proved, however, to be the ill-fated attempt to solder the Brief Statement and the ALC Declaration together into what was called “The Doctrinal Affirmation”.

The tirade of Dr. Theo. Graebner against this resolution of the Wisconsin Synod published in the American Lutheran was one of the most in the history of the Missouri-ALC

merger movement. He described the action of our Synod as being wanton and vicious. Yet we let that pass without reply. That was neither longsuffering, patience, nor forbearance on our part. It was plain neglect to correct a false report. We laid ourselves open to the proverb that says, "*Quis tacet consentire videtur*": "He who is silent seems to consent."

It happens so that I was witness in 1939 publicly and privately to the deep concern of the committee that brought in the report. I heard how these men feared to say too much; how they reigned the matter; how they discussed it with friends outside the committee room; and how they were truly thinking of the truth, of the proper settlement of the controversy between ALC and the Synodical Conference, and how the Synodical Conference and the Missouri Synod came into brotherly consideration with them. I repeat that we fell down, as we have fallen down repeatedly since then, because we did not take sharp exception to Dr. Graebner's article and to the American Lutherans printing it without so much as inquiring into its truth.

In connection with this 1939 committee report we might just as well take cognizance of another mistaken statement. Prof. Koehneke of Concordia College in Milwaukee recently made public a brochure in which he declares and seeks to prove that it is not the Missouri Synod that has cut loose from old moorings and has changed, but that it is the Wisconsin Synod. He cites as his premises our statement of 1939. He asserts that Wisconsin departed from the avowed principles and precepts of the constitution of the Synodical Conference to discuss with any Lutheran body the differences that divide them. He states that the 1939 resolutions require of the Missouri Synod to break off all negotiation looking toward agreement in doctrine. He totally misunderstands the resolutions. In them we beg the Missouri Synod not to proceed with establishing pulpit and altar fellowship indicated in their own resolutions of 1938, seeing that it was evident that the Brief Statement and Declaration had not settled the differences in doctrine as between ALC and the Synodical Conference. For the ALC was clearly reading the Brief Statement in the light of their own Declaration. If nothing else, then the coming merger of the American Lutheran Church with the Evangelical Lutheran Church on the basis of the broad "United Testimony" and the unrepudiated Opgjör has again proved the Wisconsin Synod resolutions of 1939 correct. The change is not in Wisconsin, save that we must guard against a rigid legalism, in the guise of conservative orthodoxy; but the change is in Missouri, as the more liberal synods in American Lutheranism clearly see and rejoice in, and as any one not deaf, garrulous, and blind may well perceive. Bring back Dr. Walther and Dr. Pieper and Dr. Stoeckhardt and ask them. But to return to Koehneke: No one has yet answered his false allegations. *Quis tacet consentire videtur*.

Permit another remark along these lines. It has been pointed out a number of times in open meeting that Pastor Nickel's defense of the Common Confession is very vulnerable and that it must be answered in detail. In our meetings, both in Milwaukee and Detroit, Pastor Nickel's rapid delivery and his holding the floor gave us little or no chance to weigh his arguments, having no copy in our hands. But when we read his printed "Another Fraternal Reply" it came clear that it could be shot as full of holes as a Swiss cheese. Yet to this day there has been no answer come up on our part. The result? In late editions of the Lutheran Witness Dr. Behnken points out that no argument has ever been brought forward proving Nickel in error, therefore it must be the truth. Indeed, several Wisconsin Synod men had told him the Nickel article had been a masterpiece. I am going to add a judgment to this remark. To look at our Quartalschrift and our Northwestern Lutheran in these past 16 years one would have thought it was Sunday in the church; and if there was a little smoke, it was only a "bonfire in the backyard", as an article in the American Lutheran frivolously put it. I say again, we of the Wisconsin Synod are greatly at

fault in that we have not publicly and energetically engaged in proper polemics, warning, exhorting, bearing with the weak, instructing. Should not in the past two years at least a third of the space in our periodicals have been used to point out and warn? It is a fact that we have not done our duty, be it because we did not see the danger, be it because we were indifferent, or too busy, or just plain too tired, or too lazy to do anything about it.

It behooves us therefore to be very careful as to our next step. Since we ourselves bear a large part of the blame in not having gone to bat in these matters, ought we not to lend an ear to the Scriptural admonition to exercise patience? Shall we be able to answer to God for presently breaking up an organization that the Holy Spirit set up more than eighty years ago after much labor, and which He preserved throughout those years?

True enough, to desire to save an organization purely for the sake of the organization is stark and vain externalism. To do so in the Church borders on idolatry. It is a historical fact that synods and church organizations tend to drift away from God and His truth, from respect for God's authority and His Word. Eternal vigilance, a continuing return to God's Word, cordial prayer for guidance are called for; and the larger the organization the more necessary. Remember the history of the temple at Jerusalem. Because the worship of Israel had degenerated from worship of God to that of the temple in the cry, "The temple, the temple, the temple!", God had to destroy it. Several years ago the Methodist bishop of Atlanta remarked that it would be wholesome, if God wiped out every church organization once each century and made each start again from scratch. But that also is externalism.

(In view of what has just been said in the last paragraphs, we need in the present circumstances to use patience. Our modern word patience has, like so many another, lost much of its original meaning. Borrowed from the Latin '*patior*', 'I suffer,' it has sloughed off much of this sense and in modern use has degenerated into a pale opposite of 'impatience'. Irritably and impatiently we now cry, "I lost patience with him." Suffer with him? *Ih, bewahre!* "Let him cut the cloth to our pattern and meet our time-table; what does he think?" Is not this too often the extent of our 'patience'?

Would you have a picture in every respect true to the original meaning of the word? Look upon the cross. The Just suffered for the unjust. His patience on my behalf was immeasurable. The depths of hell, the full wrath of God poured out, anguish and agony beyond the keenest imagination the Christ of God suffered. The other aspect of patience is to bear *with* others, and to bear with longsuffering, sympathy, and understanding. Again we have the example of Jesus. How patient He was with the little faith, the earthiness, the slow understanding of His disciples. All of His apostles were millennialists to the day of Ascension; they had material conceptions of the kingdom of God; they did not perceive nor understand the plain talk of Jesus about His suffering and death, tho He repeatedly told them of it. Yet He did not cast them off, break off relations, but patiently bore with them, awaiting the day when that other Comforter, the Holy Spirit, would bring to their remembrance all He had taught them and give them enlightenment.

The Scripture is filled with patience and exhortation to be patient. To cite all the passages would lead us down a long and crowded street. But let us stop at a few of the main intersections. We are told that the true child of God out of a good and honest heart brings forth fruit with patience. That is for him an element of life. Our Lord says, "In your patience ye shall win your souls." Luke 8. It is named in the company of faith, love, godliness and meekness as one of the greatest of virtues. I Tim. 6, 11. Yea, if God is love, He is also called the God of patience. Rom. 15, 5. In Tit. 2, 2 we are exhorted to be sound in faith, in love, in patience. Give ear to what St. Peter says in his second Epistle. He admonishes us to "Add all diligence, in your faith supplying

virtue; in your virtue knowledge; and in your knowledge self-control; and in your self-control patience; and in your patience godliness; and in your godliness brotherly kindness; and in brotherly kindness love.” Count each of the links of this unbroken chain. Note how out of faith flows the patience that deals in godliness and brotherly kindness and love with those with whom we have to do. As ground for our patient dealing in brotherly kindness with others he later on in the same epistle writes, “The Lord...is longsuffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

St. James runs the scale on patience when he writes, “Be patient, therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient over it, until it receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Murmur not, brethren, one against another, that ye be not judged: behold, the Judge standeth before the doors. Take, brethren, for an example of suffering and patience the prophets who spake in the name of the Lord. Behold, we call them blessed who endured: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity and is merciful.” This comprehensive passage not only speaks of personal patience in enduring and bearing up under trial and sorrow, but it also enjoins upon us patience in bearing with others. We are not to murmur one against the other. We are, like the husbandman, to be patient with the Lord’s working. God does not go on a ten-second, ten-minute, ten-month, or even ten-year schedule. And He is not well pleased either, you may be sure, with such who reach out ahead of Him and do not permit the Holy Spirit to do His work in His own way and in His own time. He warns us to be so sure of our course as not to invite God’s judgment. “That ye be not judged; behold, the Judge standeth before the doors.” St. James, nay the Holy Spirit, tells us to look at the patience of the prophets. Take those great prophets who spoke to backsliding Israel. The great Elijah, at whose time God Himself found but 7,000 among the millions of Israel who had not bowed the knee to Baal; the great Elijah, who prayed against Israel and believed himself to be the only one left worshipping Jehovah; the great Elijah, who desired that God would judge backsliding Israel, was rebuked and told to go about his business as God might direct: to anoint Jehu to be king over Israel, to anoint Hazael to be king over Syria; and to anoint Elisha to be prophet in his room. God’s time had not yet come; and it was not for Elijah to get a century ahead of God. No wonder then that James concludes with the words, “Ye have seen the patience of the Lord, how that the Lord is full of pity, and merciful.” And again and again God states as a prime principle in the kingdom of heaven, in His kingdom: “Go and learn what that meaneth: I will have mercy and not sacrifice.” What was Elijah’s task? What the call of Elisha? Of Micaiah? Was it to destroy. To separate themselves from Israel? Or was it to witness? Was it not the latter? And did they not do it? And have we equaled them? Have we outdone them in our witness? Has not our witnessing just begun? Has it not been very mild, halting, piecemeal, *lueckenhaft*, mostly in the nature of a pillow-fight, rather than “wielding the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God; with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and catching thereto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints?” I challenge this Synod to rise as one man if it can honestly measure up to the Word of God concerning prayer for all the saints, whether to a man it has been the fervent prayer of every one of us, watching in all seasons in all perseverance for those saints who are our brethren in the Missouri Synod! Who is it of us that dare rise before the face of God and declare that everything has been done on our part in the way of love, patience, longsuffering, and perseverance to bring about agreement and tranquillity in the present disturbed atmosphere pressing upon the Synodical Conference?

Let us look again at God's patience with the Ten Tribes, and with Judah. For 212 years He bore with them. Not one king of Israel but was an idolatrous sinner. Most of them deserved the violent death they suffered. Not content with the abominable calves that Jeroboam set up at Bethel and Dan, they took up with the Baalim, letting God's temple fall into ruins at Jerusalem while Baal's temple flourished at Samaria; they introduced the obscene Ashtoreth, phallic in its worst aspects—no wonder then, since almost all heathen worship was connected with sex, that God calls idol worshippers adulterers, heading up their idolatry with what to human reason is the supreme sacrifice of babes, children, and adults in the glowing red arms of that abomination, Moloch. And yet God did not destroy Israel until 722. The final judgment, deferred so long, was an example set to Judah. But the prophets tell us that Judah paid no attention to God's warning, but that Obolibah's lewdness was worse than that of her sister, Obolah. But in Judah's case God waited an additional 136 years, a long time in the history of nations, but a short time in the economy of God.

Take the Master's patience with His disciples. Jesus employed plain talk; but He found poor comprehension. That He should, yea must, suffer and die was incomprehensible to them to the day of His crucifixion. That He should rise again the third day from the dead was a greater impossibility in their sight till they saw it happen. Jesus had to experience that two of His favorite disciples, John and James, in self-seeking baseness approached Him through their mother, asking for themselves the highest places of honor at Jesus' side in what they looked upon as His kingdom, a kingdom of this world. Yet Jesus did not cast them off. He did not separate Himself from them in disgust. He still exercised infinite patience with them.

Or take the case of the Master's patience with Jerusalem, the Sadducees, Pharisees, priests, and scribes: He gave them 40 years in which to repent. His own testimony to them was pointed and reiterative; His whole life in miracles and wonders a telling witness to His Messiahship; He foretold what would happen to the City if they repented not; in the sight of thousands He sobbed aloud over Jerusalem and its temple on Palm Sunday. Only after forty years of rejection, unbelief, persecution of His Church, of murder, and of stubborn refusal did the terrible judgment of destruction of both City and temple fall upon them. And we wish to break off with brethren because our testimony of a few years has seemingly not penetrated?

Note also that Paul did not separate himself from the synagogue at Corinth until the group against him had hardened themselves to the point where "they opposed themselves and blasphemed", Act. 18, 6. No common ground remained; the opposition was radical. The same thing occurred at Ephesus. There Paul preached for three months in the synagogue and only separated from them "when some were hardened and disobedient, *speaking evil* of the Way before the multitude." Must we say that we have arrived at that point in the Synodical Conference?

I hear the objection, "*Exemplum illustrat, non obligat.*" Quite true. But do we mean therewith to brush off examples as being of no significance or instruction to us? Much as we heard a telling Word of God turned off by the remark at Chicago: "That passage does not apply here", though indeed it did.

But it is being said, "After all, Rom. 16, 17 stands there; it is the Word of God. It is not a matter of judgment on our part as to its application; it is but for us to obey, since it is the commandment of God." If it indeed proves to be a matter of judgment, that may vary according to circumstances prevailing, to the facts in the case, to time and especially to the general conviction gained from the facts. But if it is a matter of stark obedience, hour can time then be an element; and when must obedience begin? The answer has been given, "Right now! It is not our

province to judge at all; it is but for us to obey.” If that be the interpretation, was it not the Word and commandment of God yesterday, last year, in 1953, in 1951, yea already in 1939 and 1938? Those who castigate the delay of Synod in breaking with Missouri on the grounds that it is disobedience to Rom. 16, 17 must meet the issue that Synod has sinned all these years by reason of what they deem disregard of God’s commandment. Logic would argue that they who stand thus have also sinned all these years, because they have gone along with Synod’s stand to date and have not applied the command “Avoid them!” to their own Wisconsin Synod because of its being tardy in breaking with Missouri. But probably the Holy Spirit is permitting it to be sensed where this course leads to: we have an example in the case of the Orthodox Conference; for finally it leads into well-nigh absolute isolationism.

For who is it that in every point agrees whole-heartedly with as much as one other man in all things religious? There is, for instance, not a single man in this audience that agrees in every point with Luther. I repeat, not one. And if there be one who will dare to stand up and declare he does, he will soon find himself in a very embarrassing position. Are we therefore under compulsion to apply Rom. 16, 17 and avoid Luther?

Do we think it impossible for us to fall under the judgment of the Word which says, “I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge”? Let us beware lest we think that where controversy rises over the horizon the spirit of the Gospel blooms out in but one flower: “Avoid them.” Let us take care lest our theology degenerate into a cracked record that repeats endlessly, “Avoid them; avoid them; avoid them.” Let it be asked, “How long have we suffered? How much have we suffered? How much have we prayed for our brethren? How much of our reaction has been indignation on our part? How much has been plain impatience?”

But now let us select a few of the many Scripture passages that speak to us of longsuffering. While the original Greek for patience is *upomonee*, ‘steadfastness’, *Ausdauer*, especially in bearing and forbearance, the Greek word translated ‘longsuffering’ is *makrothymia*, German *Langmut*, especially in bearing with the mistakes and insults and shortcomings of others, patience in bearing up under evils and under every strenuous effort; manifesting endurance. In its comprehensiveness it seems to transcend patience; we might call it a transcendent patience. Again, we cannot investigate all the passages in which the word occurs.

In the telling opening verses of Eph. 4 (which we might do well to read each day and to quote to ourselves as often as we hear Rom. 16,17 quoted) St. Paul writes in the Holy Spirit: “I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, *beseech* you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Note you that these verses speak of exercising longsuffering where danger of division on the grounds of doctrine threatens. There is no urging of the Holy Spirit to break things up, but to diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. In our controversy with Missouri emphasis seems to have been laid on the differences as represented in various manifestations of unionism. Where has the diligence been to point out and rejoice in the vast area of agreement in doctrine and practice existing between Wisconsin and Norwegians on one hand, and Missouri on the other? We have indeed on occasion pointed up our stand on the Brief Statement. Again, the writers of the pamphlets must be put forward as having exhibited a spirit tending toward that end. In our debate with the Missouri Synod group of presidents, yes, in our conferring with the American Lutheran church leaders, let it be recorded how that a wholesome warmth stole through the gatherings when a leading speaker on our side several times expressed his joy at the fact that we were agreed in

major points of discussion. Yet it remains true that the heavy emphasis lay on our differences, away from the unity of the Spirit. Now St. Paul supports his beseeching to longsuffering, forbearance, and diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace with the general truth, a fundamental truth of the kingdom of God that “there is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye also were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, Who is over all, and in all.” We are to emphasize and rejoice in this high degree of unity in the grace given each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Let us be assured that this also is a Word of God; and let us ask ourselves how well we have met the beseeching of the Holy Spirit in brotherly spirit, in love, in diligent prayer.

Or have we not rather inclined to what one of our teachers warned against: that we cry *“Ihr habt Unrecht, Ihr habt Unrecht, wir dagegen haben Recht; wo dieses Strafen im Vordergrund steht, und das Betonen dess, das uns im Glauben verbindet im Hintergrund steht, da liegt bei aller Rechtgläubigkeit in Sachen des Evangeliums Vermischen von Gesetz und Evangelium vor, gesetzliches Wesen.”* In an Exposition of the Epistle to the Galatians the same teacher says, *“Wenn die Christen im Streite gerade um das Reich Christi, um die Lehre stehen, dann fordern sie sich gegenseitig heraus, oder sie beneiden sich. Die, welche im Kampf voranstehen auf beiden Seiten, fuhren denselben oft nicht als ein Kampf um die Sachen, sondern es mischt sich ein persoenliches Moment mit hinein, dass es Kampf um persoenliche Interessen wird. So ist’s auch bei denen, die nicht mitmachen koennen, oder die gar im Kampf unterliegen. Statt dass man sich beiderseits freut, dass die Lehre geklaert, eine Gefahr des Lebens abgewendet ist, beneiden die Schwachen den Starken um den Sieg; oder auch der Sieger tut seine Freude in persoenlicher, oft haesslicher Weise kund. Das ist nicht aus dem Geist Gottes. Das ist aus dem Fleische, und zwar ist es in jedem Falle eitle Ruhmsucht, ein Achten auf persoenliche Interessen. Das ist auch der Fall dann, wenn man sich dieser Gesinnung nicht bewusst ist, wenn die Ausbrueche ganz unmittelbar herauskommen ohne Absicht. Man eifert um Gott, aber mit Unverstand; und das ist immer eigentlich ein Eifern um sich selbst.”*

Must I make a personal confession at this point? In our debate with the Missouri brethren at Milwaukee, at Detroit, at Chicago, when one of us succeeded in landing a heavy punch to the solar plexus with a left upper-cut and a right to the jaw, I rejoiced. Sinful? Well, brethren, was it in accord with Eph. 4, 1ff.?

Phil 4, 5 admonishes, “Let your forbearance be known to all men.” A wide field for forbearance, is it not? If we are to judge by what has appeared in the Lutheran press in America, not to mention the secular newspapers, our forbearance toward Missouri has not made itself known to all men. We know, of course, that the father of lies has his dirty hand in the deal as far as the secular press is concerned; we know also that magazines bearing the Lutheran name have not been nearly as careful as they should be in view of the eighth commandment to check on the truth of reports before they published them. I think there not only of the false reports published in a periodical like the Lutheran Companion of the Augustana Synod, whose editor failed to publish any correction even after he was personally apprised of the undeniable mistakes in his reports but the report that one of our own brethren in the Missouri Synod, a man in high office as executive secretary of the Walther League, Pastor Alfred Klausler, published in the extremely modernistic *Christian Century*. Besides being published in that sheet, it also contained many inaccuracies, the worst of which was that the Norwegians and the Wisconsin Synod men were guilty of political maneuvering at the Chicago convention. In view of the vehicle he used for his report, soiling our clean wash in the muddy tubs of the *Century*, the question rises, “Is Klausler still our brother? If so, how can he report as he does of us?” Had we made our forbearance known to all men, could

he have thus reported? And now that he has thus reported, have we corrected the false report personally and publicly? I Tim. 5, 20.

How high patience and longsuffering rank in the list of Christian virtues is indicated to us in Col. 1. 9ff. where St. Paul prays that we may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, increasing in the knowledge of God, strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory unto all patience and longsuffering with joy." What a heaping up of the wisdom, all power, understanding, will of God, might and glory: to what end: To support us forsooth in "all patience and longsuffering with joy". In all walks and exigencies of life—except in the case of a controversy inside the Lutheran Church and among brethren?

Paul returns in this same letter to the same virtues in the 3rd chapter, verses 12-17. Underline for yourselves the words of exhortation and apply them in your own personal case to the present situation as between us and our Missouri brethren, "Put on therefore as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have any complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye; and above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which ye were also called in one body; and be ye thankful...And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." The chief thing here is the description of the spirit in which we are to go about a matter that is agitating our circles at this juncture.

Along these very same lines Paul in what is doubtless his earliest epistle writes to the Thessalonians, 5, 13b-15: "Be at peace among yourselves. And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all." Note the general applicability not only to those who are called brethren, but to all. Recall that it is the word of God that is being quoted. Ask yourself if we have lived up to it. Ask yourself if there is not room for genuine repentance.

We ask again, have we measured up to the admonition contained in II Tim. 4, 1.2: "I charge thee in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, Who shall judge the living and the dead, and by His kingdom: preach the Word, be urgent in season out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching." What solemn and weighty grounds for admonition are here laid down. For what: For testifying, for reproof, exhorting. Only, to individuals? It is not so stated. Nay, for groups of people also; for synods, for a Missouri Synod. It is true that in the last several Synod sessions we have spoken out. But where is the urgent testifying in season and out of season? Whole seasons went by and nothing was said, where the air should have echoed and reechoed with facts, cases, the Word of God, admonition. What facts? Well, the false Klausler report; the assertion of Dr. Harms that even when representatives of church bodies get together in their official capacity, representing their Synods, when they have joint prayer it is but a meeting of private persons; the mistaken argumentation of a Nickels in "Another Fraternal Endeavor", a brochure issued by the Missouri Synod; the denial of objective justification by Gockel; the tirade of Coyner against the "descent into hell" of the Apostles' Creed; the Romanism of Dr. Piepkorn in suggesting prayers for the dead, teaching the presence of the body and the blood of Christ on the Altar before distribution, and claiming that it is the stand of the better teachers of the Lutheran Church; and many a thing more.

We have adduced but a few of the Scriptures that speak of longsuffering. If we were to weigh the matter on a purely mathematical basis the much, much larger percentage of passages

urging love, patience, forbearance, and longsuffering over the very few instructing us in certain grave circumstances to turn away would indicate two things: 1. that patience and longsuffering are exceedingly important in the sight of God; and 2. that it is much more difficult to exercise patience and longsuffering than it is to turn away from those causing divisions contrary to the doctrine. For our Old Adam is a complete stranger to patience and longsuffering; but he likes to walk into the assembly with a big legalistic club and clean up, parading as a zealous advocate of the will of God.

One wonders if some of the zeal to break up the Synodical Conference does not stem from our apparent zeal for model congregations and clean practice. The question arises, "Are we called primarily to save souls, or to create model congregations?" All should agree that the latter should be the by-product of the former. As model congregations go, how model was that at Corinth? Too often in our desire for clean practice the weak soul is lost sight of. Men pride themselves on making short shrift, on cleaning house, and the clean practice may become the dirtiest practice of all, a legalistic wielding of the big stick.

No one indeed wishes to condone slipshod practice; but we do look for conscientious concern for the soul to be saved or rescued. Are we not to carry the weak? Seek the lost sheep of the hundred? The lost coin of the ten? Over whom do the angels in heaven rejoice? Over those who in false zeal for clean practice have been thrust over the next precipice? Has our approach to the question with Missouri contributed to Missouri's continuance on its way to disintegration?

And now to some concluding remarks. It has been my personal lot partly to stand on sidelines, partly to possess a bird's-eye view, partly to be engaged in the midst of the fray. It is my conviction that the Missouri Synod did not exhibit as careful an attitude as was called for by our mild, and sometimes hesitant, remonstrances through the years. It is my belief that they woke up to the seriousness of the situation only when the Wisconsin Synod took resolute action in calling a special session in October 1953. Because our remonstrances were few and rather consistently on the mild side, spiced occasionally with pepper that was taken as a personal rather than as a synodical condiment, we also bear some blame. Suddenly now to decree the break-up of the Synodical Conference might seem to shoot up from mildness to the heights of vehemence.

From what has been adduced it should be clear that not the Missouri Synod, but we also have reason to be repentant. It seems to be a cardinal sin among Lutherans to be unable to join David in frankly confessing, "I have sinned." Who has heard it among us in the last quarter century? What prevents? Is it not the sin of pride? "Ye shall be as gods and know what is good and evil." A soil from which all other sins grow. But repentance is an essential of the Christian life.

True repentance, as our Augsburg Confession rightly defines, consists of both sorrow for sin and faith in forgiveness. St. John Baptist cried, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." When Jesus began His ministry He preached, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." On the first Pentecost, when the multitudes asked, "Brethren, what shall we do?" St. Peter replied, "Repent ye and be baptized, every one of you." And the very first of Luther's 95 Theses proclaimed, "When our Lord Jesus Christ said, Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand, He meant that the whole life of the Christian should be repentance." That same Luther avers that impenitence is the sin against the Holy Ghost. It was for their sin of impenitence that Jesus pronounced the curse upon Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.

There is room in our present controversy for frank confession on our part. Not our Sunday routine confession at the beginning of the morning service, but confession of specific sin. Where there is no repentance the kingdom of heaven passes by. Or are we like the clergyman I

once heard declare to his Conference when an essayist spoke of sins in the pastoral office, “Please count me out. I know that I am a sinner. *Aber ich bin mir keiner Amtssuende bewusst!*” When I related the story to an old retired pastor friend, he remarked, “That man knew neither himself, nor what sin is.”

Another important consideration calls for patience and love where our own people are concerned. Let us remember that our Synod consists not only of pastors and teachers, but that the organization includes congregations as well. Any action taken toward separation from the Synodical Conference should therefore be taken only with the clear understanding and consent of our congregations. Our ministerium does not reflect unanimity in respect to conviction in this matter: how much less will then our laymen clearly be at one? Often we ministers wrestle with a question for years; yet we seem to expect our people at once to share our conclusions. But they also should act only from well-founded conviction.

Have we fully informed and *convinced* our people, i.e., our congregations, of any present necessity of separation? Ought any attempt be made to press them, or persuade them into a course of action for which they are not ready? They must have more than just persuasion as a platform; their’s must be a conviction founded on the rock of God’s Word and based on the clear facts in the case. It may be asked, “Well, why haven’t the ministers informed their people?” That is not as easy as it might seem, if the minister is busy preaching the Gospel and following the cure of souls. Or must the pastor lay aside every other duty to inform on this controversy?

For a quick, and what seems to be a binding, settlement not a few seem to have gone over to the positions of the Reformed Confessions. These post as their chief article the inspiration of Holy Writ. They make this their first confessional principle, hoping in logical approach thereby to bind everyone in hard fetters. Your Lutheran, on the other hand, takes the inspiration of Scripture for granted as a matter of faith—he doesn’t even have an article on it in his Confessions—and centers on the forgiveness of sins in Christ. But wherever there appears this legalistic binding of the Reformed, there will also be rebellion against the bonds. In the present controversy that approach has been made among us also. It is felt, once having accepted the principle of inspiration as supreme, then the application of any verse of Scripture *must* settle the matter. Already it has brought about a degree of rebellion in that the cry is heard, “This passage does not apply.”

We draw toward the close with what may seem some random remarks. Unionism is the great issue, although it does not cover the whole fissure. Unionism operates less in the field of doctrine than in that of practice, though unionism indeed roots in a loosening relationship to the Word of God. For where unionistic practice gains a foothold, there will follow in its wake an increasing disregard of doctrine. Discipline crumbles.

None can deny that a growing lack of proper discipline has exposed itself in the Missouri Synod. J.H. Gockel continues to be a minister in that Synod, though he denies the Lutheran doctrines of objective justification and that the Pope is the Anti-Christ. A certain Pastor Coyner has circulated a thesis in which he asserts that the clause in the Apostles’ Creed confessing Christ’s descent into hell must be cast out as having no Biblical basis. We have already mentioned a prominent professor at Concordia, St. Louis, whose ventures into Roman Catholic ritualism have tarred him with some of the very Romanisms from which “Blessed Martin Luther”, as he calls him (also an empty Romanistic pedantry), set us free. It is a singular lack of historical judgment that has encouraged a high church trend in the Missouri Synod. Is it just happenstance that two young Missouri Synod ministers and their families have joined the Roman Catholic Church, and two others are reported to have joined the Episcopal Communion? We

have more than our hands full to keep the Gospel pure among us without running down any ecclesiastical alleys.

This same professor, when he was still a chaplain in the US Army, delivered the baccalaureate sermon at the University of Arizona in Tucson. A Congregational minister delivered the benediction. When asked beforehand not to do this, he defended his intention on the grounds that a baccalaureate was not a religious service, but “a secular service”. The report published in the Lutheran Witness, however, discreetly left out any mention of the Congregational minister’s participation!

The Seminarian, a publication of the St. Louis Concordia students not yet dry behind the theological ears, carried an article recently that asserted that we could not know what true doctrine is—as though we had no sure word of prophecy.

How is it no public action is taken in accord with I Tim. 5, 20? Does not the lack of public corrective manifest a casual attitude toward that word of God? The verse reads, “Them that sin reprove *in the sight of all*, that the rest also may be in fear.” Public rebuke is the very essence of this verse; its very purpose: “That the rest may be in fear.” If in obedience to this word of God some of the careless, bold, and pseudo-learned were brought to bar, it would be a wholesome sign and might give pause to others. If plunging professors were brought up sharply by blunt and public reproof, at least the small fry in the Seminary classes might begin to fear and write less confidently about things on which they are uninformed. Yet no public action is taken and all the world concludes that what is going on before their very eyes is all right with the Missouri Synod.

We close with two quotations appropos to the whole situation confronting us. The one is from Prof. August Pieper, the other from Scripture. Prof., Pieper wrote in the *Quartalschrift* of 1906: “*Die Kirche darf auch nicht den geringsten Irrtum gleichgueltig bei sich einschleichen, oder auch nur das geringste Stueck der geoffenbarten Wahrheit sich nehmen lassen, wenn sie nicht zur Verraeterin an Christo und zur Verderberin ihrer selbst werden will. Es kommt der Zeitpunkt, wo das Wort in Aktion treten muss: “Einen ketzerischen Menschen meide!” Ja, wo man mit Luther sagen muss: “Darum muessen wir hie nicht seine Fuesse kuessen und sagen: Ihr seid mein gnaediger Herr! sondern wie in Zacharia der Engel sum Teufel sprach: Strafe dich Gott, Satan!” Aber wehe dem, der so straft, so verketzert, so schilt, ohne seiner Sache gewiss zu seine d.h. ohne genuegenden/Grund sachlichen! Wer sich in der Sache, die er vertritt, nicht auskennt, hat keinen Beruf zur Polemik! Und wehe dem, der Irrlehre und Suended beim Gegner sucht und ohne Not Streit heraufbeschwuert. Im Frieden hat uns Gott berufen. Wer den Tempel Gottes verderbet, den wird Gott verderben.*”

Eph. 6, 14-18: “Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the Gospel of peace; withal taking up the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God: with all prayer and supplication praying at all seasons in the Spirit, and watching thereunto in all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.”