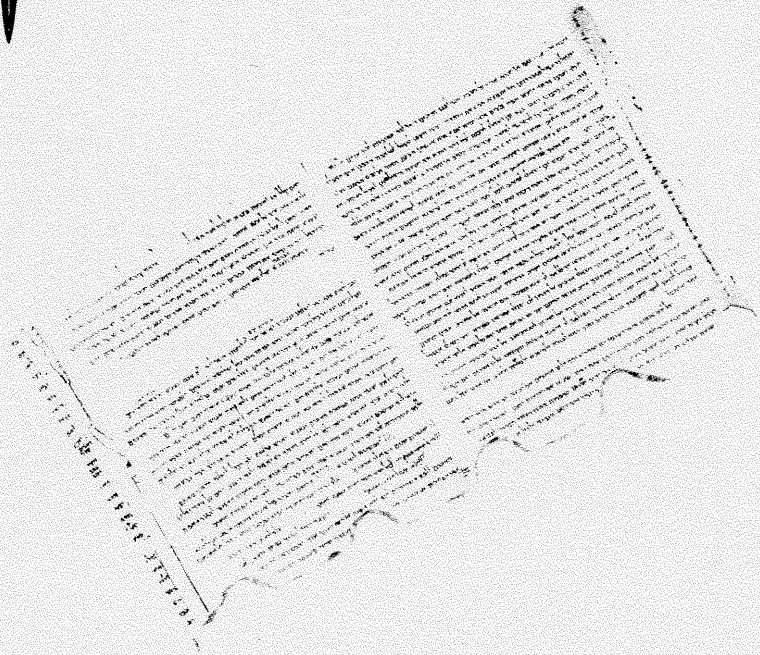


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FOR THE UPCOMING CATECHISM JUBILEE *

by

The Reverend Markus Fredrik Wiese

One of the greatest and most important days to remember in our Lutheran Church is October 31st. Whenever that day rolls around, it should remind especially us Lutherans to recall that it was on that day in 1517 that the poor, insignificant monk, Dr. Martin Luther, nailed his Ninety Five Theses against the papal sale of indulgences to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg and offered to debate them with whoever wished to do so. This was actually nothing new, nor was this action of Luther anything big in itself, but it was an event which had far-reaching consequences.

God had decided that He would visit His poor people with great grace and mercy. For a long time prophetic voices had forecast it. When John Hus was burned alive by the papists for the sake of the Gospel 100 years earlier, or in 1415, he said: "Today you roast a goose ('hus' means 'goose' in the Bohemian language), but in a hundred years there will come a swan (Luther) whom you will not be able to roast." Likewise, when his friend, Jerome of Prague, was burned alive a year later, he said to the papists: "Go ahead! but after my death you will suffer a wound in your heart and a gnawing worm in your conscience; I also summon you before the judgment seat of Jesus Christ the righteous, where you shall be answerable to me for one hundred years."

*In 1879, translated by The Rev. J. H. Larson, 1979. See brief biography of Pastor Wiese at the end of this article.

When that great witness to the truth, Girolamo Savonarola, was burned in the year 1498, he testified boldly: "Soon the Roman Pope's prayer-abominations and idolatry shall be punished, and such a teacher shall arise, whom no one can withstand." When the newly established university in Wittenberg was dedicated in 1502, Dr. Johan Fleck spoke the following noteworthy words in his dedication address: "All the world shall come to accept wisdom from this white hill" (that is, Wittenberg). And when in 1517 he took Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in his hand (Luther had already worked with great blessing at Wittenberg University since 1508) and had read some of them, he leaped for joy and exclaimed: "Ho, ho, he will do it; now, now, he is come who will stand up to you monks and mass-priests and reform you as you deserve; oh, that we had such a monk, so that we could rightly sing the pope's praise. We have waited long for the deliverance of Israel."

Luther's Theses were distributed everywhere with remarkable haste. "Before fourteen days were past," writes Myconius, "the Theses had spread throughout Germany, and within four weeks they were known all over Christendom, as though the angels had been messengers and borne them forth to the eyes of all men." They created an incredible sensation and gave rise to varying reactions. Sylvester Prierias tried to induce the Pope to deal with Luther as a heretic; but the Pope at the time, Leo X, answered: "I consider Brother Martin to have a remarkable head on his shoulders and declare that he is only a quarrelsome monk." Albert Kranz exclaimed when he had read the Theses: "Dear brother, crawl into your cell and begin to sing 'God be merciful to me!'" And an aged priest said: "My dear brother Martin, if you can attack and explain away purgatory and the Pope's trade, then you are truly a great Lord." Finally, Emperor Maximilian declared: "Truly, Luther's Theses are nothing to scorn; he will give the mass-priests

a good run for their money." And he was right. Because however insignificant this action of Luther was in itself, it became one of the most momentous events that has happened anywhere, because it became, without Luther at the time having had the slightest intention of it, the beginning of the blessed Reformation of the church, which Luther, in the following years of his life, according to the Lord's will and with the Lord's guidance and strengthening, both proceeded with and completed so well in the face of the devil, the pope, bishops, monks, emperors, the world, and so forth, all of whom conspired against him.

"Let it then be considered a great miracle," says Johan Mathesius (died 1568), "a divine, unheard of act, that a lone man has pitted himself against Christendom's supposed head (the pope), under whose feet all potentates, bishops, schools and teachers lay, and whose bans all feared, so that they were terrified by a single monk when he came running with a letter from Rome. It is surely true that formerly all kings and princes were obliged to stoop, bow, and humble themselves before a little papal letter. But then God awakened our Doctor (Luther), who attacked the mighty Goliath (the Anti-Christ and his kingdom), solely with his pen and sling (mouth, with the Word), and so terrified him that he (the pope) stirred up the whole world, as far as the name of Christ is named, against this one Doctor; he also did what he could himself: he banned, condemned, burned his books and pictures and consigned to his god to torture everyone who accepted this man's doctrine and gave it shelter. But Luther allowed whoever wanted to to rage, ban, and condemn, and wrote freely against the Pope: people will follow to the grave, clapping their hands, whoever dies from threats. However, he never slays him; the great dragon, or bold whore of Babylon (the Anti-Christ), who as the true Circe charmed all the world, could not with his

hellish cup revive him; and those who fornicated with her and kissed her feet, together with her helpers and helpers-helpers, always ruined one after the other with terror. Now consider, dear friends, that this is a great and unheard of miracle that a little David attacks such a great Goliath, fights and comes out of it again unvanquished. Thus, therefore, Dr. Martin's doctrine is tested and confirmed by a miracle."¹

The pious Philip Jacob Spener (died 1705) says in one place about Luther's Reformation activity (and no one will maintain that he here makes himself guilty of an overstatement): "God has, in these last times, through His chosen instrument, Martin Luther, shown the church of the western world such a matchless blessing, for which neither I nor anyone else will be able to praise Him as He deserves."² And thus, we also, now, in our own far away church of the so-called "western world," still today, God be praised! benefit so richly from this "matchless blessing," which every Lutheran must recognize, so that it is nothing less than our duty to thank, honor, and praise God, diligently and joyfully remember this blessing with festival services in our congregations everywhere. Because, consider: as reasonable as it was that the children of Israel in the old covenant kept their feast of the Passover annually, with heartfelt joy and thanks to God, in remembrance of God, who through His servant, Moses, once led them out of their burdensome temporal bondage in Egypt, so it is also reasonable that in a similar way we remember annually with heartfelt joy and thanks to God that through His servant, Dr. Martin Luther, our merciful God once again led our fathers, and us with them, out of the burdensome spiritual bondage of the papacy; and besides, this should be done faithfully, so that, to use the words of Magister Johannes Aurifaber (died 1575), we "never forget that we are

freed from the Anti-Christ's, the Roman Pope's, dominion, and from his human, yes, devilish, sentences and commandments, which truly were an Egyptian, yes, Babylonian captivity, in which our forefathers and elders were plagued more than the children of Israel in Egypt."³ In remembrance of this undeserved freedom our Lutheran Church thus holds such a memorial festival in its annual Reformation festival. And surely it is entirely fitting that this festival be held on October 31st; because on that day in 1517 the Reformation began through which our merciful God, through His faithful servant, Martin Luther, so nobly took to Himself His poor, afflicted church, freed it from the tyrannical captivity and oppression of the Anti-Christ, and sent it the saving light and freedom of the Gospel.

I

In this current year a rare opportunity is also bound up with the next Reformation festival, which ought to fill every Lutheran's heart with thankful joy, the young as well as the old. This year (1879) is a Catechism Jubilee year. This year, it is exactly seven times fifty years since Dr. Martin Luther wrote both his Catechisms, the Large and the Small, in 1529.

But -- many a person who reads this perhaps asks or thinks -- is this anything important? Is it something to celebrate, even hold a Jubilee festival over? Yes, certainly, it is, and it pertains to everything to which the Small Catechism, which God has allowed Luther to give to the church, pertains, something of the greatest importance and of the greatest significance to individual Lutheran Christians. Think a little further about this and answer if you can: where, really, is there a human voice which can explain the importance these two little books have had, not only for the Reformation, but also for all the years since, and -- for the individual members of our churches from that time

up until the present? As we said, this goes for the Small Catechism especially, and it is this which we have in mind in the following.

Johannes Wigand (died 1587) testifies: "Next to the Holy Bible Luther's Catechism is the most precious gem and the noblest gift of Christ, which has been delivered to the world."⁴ Also, Cyriak Spangenberg (died 1604) says of it: "Among all the gifts through which the eternal, unchangeable and merciful God has borne in mind and blessed His dear church in these last dangerous and perilous times, is not this the smallest, but really it should be considered the greatest, most necessary and useful, that in the Catechism, briefly and well, with plain, clear and understandable words, He has assembled and laid out for us the entire contents of His divine Word and will, for which we are not able to thank Him sufficiently throughout all eternity. Because here we have assembled: in the Ten Commandments, the highest teaching of all teachings; in the Creed, or the three articles, the richest and most pleasant history of all histories; in the Lord's Prayer, the most excellent and trustworthy prayer of all prayers; in the Sacraments, the most useful and most efficacious ceremonies of all church rituals. Therefore we should love the holy Catechism, esteem it highly and teach it effectively; because in it is gathered the true, ancient, sound, pure, divine doctrine of the holy Christian Church; consequently, everything which contradicts our Catechism should be considered false doctrine and error and be condemned without further ado."⁵

With respect to its content and form, our Catechism is an unsurpassed masterpiece. It is, as Dr. Luther says in his Large Catechism. (and our church has made his word our own), "a brief summary and explanation of the entire Holy Scriptures"; and our old confessors testify in the Formula of Concord

that the Catechism is "a layman's Bible, in which everything is briefly assembled, which are more extensively treated in the Holy Scriptures, and which a Christian needs to know for his salvation." Joh. Aurifaber, whom I mentioned before, wrote in 1566: "In the Catechism all the chief parts and articles of Christian doctrine are so plainly and clearly assembled, expounded and explained, as has not been done in 1500 years, since the time of the Lord Christ and the apostles."⁶ And Joh. Wigand says: "In this little book of Luther one finds everything which a summary introduction for the unlearned can reasonably have, and that which can recommend and adorn it, namely, a sanctified and excellent master, great and divine instruction, pure truth, plain words, good and rich words, though it is short, yet it is complete, together with being sorely needed and necessary, just as also all righteous Christians have harmonious testimony for it."⁷

Besides, this little book has been and will continue to be of such innumerable and inexpressible blessings for countless souls, both children and adults, as finally only eternity will be able to reveal and make clear to us. "It is obvious," says Joh. Wigand, "that whoever knows this Catechism has become a Christian, and therefore a great miracle has occurred. Because not only grown-ups, but also children, have received from this book such a knowledge of God, of sin, of grace and the forgiveness of sins, of prayer and the service of God, of Baptism, of absolution, of the Holy Supper, of comfort in trial and death, of the resurrection and eternal life, of which before this time many learned Masters of the arts, learned doctors and bishops in the papacy have not had the slightest knowledge. And what more pleasing thing can there be on earth, than when in towns and in the country, in the homes

of poor and rich, one sees children standing with folded hands at the table, or even in church in front of the whole congregation, and with their child-like voices speaking to one another not only the Ten Commandments, the Christian Creed, Christ's Prayer, about Baptism and the institution of Christ our Savior's Testament, but also the correct and true meaning of these things? I have known many old people who have praised this blessing of God very highly because they have learned the entire Catechism from their children, which they had not formerly known."⁸ And we make no mistake when we believe and confess that no man's book thus far has done so much good in the world and for the kingdom of God, as the Catechism has done and is still in a position to do under God's blessing. You see, it is such a book which God has given His church through His chosen instrument in Luther's Small Catechism. Should we not then be anxious to rejoice over it and to thank God for it?

II

Concerning the importance of the Catechism, Joh. Aurifaber, for example, has shown that the deep decay of the church under the papacy necessarily stems from the decline of the Catechism (that also applies to the decline of the rest of the church at any time), and that Luther's Reformation of the church really consisted in this, that he again restored the Catechism to its proper respect and esteem.⁹ So it is clear that if we and others want to build up the church among us, we should see to it that we are solidly grounded in the Catechism and use it faithfully. And if there is any point in which we, especially in our time and circumstances, have so much to learn from our dear church-father and generally from our old fathers in the faith who followed in his footsteps,

it is especially this: the proper use and application of the Catechism in church, school, and home. And if we are going to talk about what is lacking there, we must, above all, begin here.

Now let us hear some short excerpts from Dr. Luther about the Catechism (it will surely be easy to multiply such testimonies many times over, but we will just introduce a few here). He says: "It is an especially great gift of God and His grace that the Catechism is now again taught purely in the church, namely the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer. Because in them everyone has the whole of theology and can learn to know which is the correct, best, highest, and true service of God, what God's will and command are, what He demands of us, likewise, how everyone should conduct the affairs of their own estate in life and their whole life toward their neighbor and so live as to please God. And concerning Lutheran doctrine (which the devil so bitterly opposes), nothing else has benefited the people more than that they have again become acquainted with the Catechism and the Ten Commandments, which under the papacy were considered less important than pilgrimages, monkish doctrine, hearing of masses, etc., thus it has built up more in the Christian church than the university in Paris and all universities as long as they have existed."¹⁰ "The Decalogue, or the Ten Commandments, is a teaching above all teaching. The Creed, or the apostolic symbol, is a virtue above all virtues. The Lord's Prayer is a better prayer than all prayers and litanies, yes, a delight above all delights. Because just as the Ten Commandments, in the freest and richest way, instruct and advise us about everything which we should do, so faith accomplishes and completes what is most necessary of all, and the Lord's Prayer prays for and attains to things which are most Christian and most wise. Therefore, if these three things enter fully into a person's thoughts,

words, and deeds, their mind or understanding, tongue and body are molded to the highest degree of perfection."¹¹ "If a Christian were diligent, he could, even if he had nothing more than the Catechism: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Lord's word concerning Baptism and the Sacrament of the Altar, defend himself well and protect himself against all heresies. A better word, or better instruction, will not appear than that which is summarized in the Catechism from the Holy Scriptures. Therefore, if a person remains with it, then whenever a heretic or an enthusiast steps up and teaches something else, he can say: It is not correct doctrine because it does not agree with my Catechism."¹² An important testimony as to how effectively the Small Catechism aided the Reformation's success is found in a letter of Luther to the Margrave of Brandenburg in 1531, in which he encourages him to make preparations for a faithful use of the Catechism and says about it: "This very Catechism will accomplish much good, just as it already has and continues to accomplish all that is good which is now in our people; and there is really no more effective and better means for preserving people in meditation and with the church than the Catechism, as we experience daily."¹³

"Therefore," Luther says, "it would be good for every Christian to be thoroughly acquainted with the Catechism, in which the chief articles of Christian doctrine are assembled in the briefest form; with it he will best be able to comfort himself throughout his entire life, in every fear and distress, especially in his last hour, and thus be saved." "Oh, why should I use many words; if a person will ponder the necessary things, he will be able to preach no better than about Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, about the estates which God

has instituted and commanded; because, is it not a great comfort when everyone, housewife, servant girl, magistrates, etc., knows how they should conduct themselves in the estates in which God has placed them?" "The Catechism is the most perfect and the best doctrine; therefore it should be preached again and again and by no means set aside; just as also all common preachers should go to the Catechism and teach it. I would ask that it be preached daily and simply read from the book. But our preachers and hearers think that they have it on their fingertips and already know it; they are ashamed of this simple and common teaching, as they consider it to be. Instead they want to make an impression and speak of lofty things. Noblemen and peasants say: Oh, our pastor constantly sings the same tune; he preaches only the Catechism: the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and Lord's Prayer, along with Baptism and the Lord's Supper; we've already learned all that before. Because of this, preachers have to talk about 'higher' things and comply with the wishes of their hearers; setting aside the fundamental and basic things on which they should build and preaching instead something new, so that the people may marvel." "Whoever is not satisfied with having the Catechism preached, will have the devil for a preacher." "I want the Catechism preached to the people; they will benefit by it; and I will concern myself with it in all my sermons; because it is the highest and best instruction. And I teach it as simply as I can, so that the common man, children and servants, may understand it." "I would be ready to make whoever would follow my example a preacher; because I would ask him to take the Small Catechism in his hands and read it from the pulpit word for word together with reading a portion of the postil on Sundays and then repeat what he has read. But people are ashamed of this; while I, however, who am now an old doctor, still take the book with me into the pulpit and read from

it there." "Oh, the usual public sermons in church build up the youth but little; the children do not learn or keep much from them. What should be done is this, in the schools and especially at home people should instruct them from the Catechism faithfully, correctly, and systematically, together with listening to them and examining them in what they have learned; this would help a great deal. True, it is tedious and laborious work, but it is sorely needed."¹⁴

And old Superintendent Kristofer Fischer, who served God in the ministry for 56 years before he died in 1600, says: "Yes, many a poor, simple and unlearned layman could think, I am no expert in the Bible, neither can I read or write, and now everyone is appealing to the Word of God, everyone is quoting it for his own advantage, how can I understand and determine who is right or wrong, who is quoting the Word of God in a Christian or unchristian way; the learned certainly have their hands full with defending themselves against the false prophets and their foolishness; how much more difficult isn't it then for me to arm and defend myself against their soul-murdering doctrine, when it is so difficult for you? For such spiritually impoverished souls who are hungry for grace, the living God has, of His uttermost mercy, allowed a summary of the entire Holy Scriptures to be made, whose marrow and kernel, sap and strength, the true, most experienced master has set forth in the precious Catechism, in which, with clear, plain, and easily understood words, briefly and systematically, he has written everything which every Christian needs to know and believe in order to be saved. Now every Christian should and can accept the doctrine which agrees with the Catechism and does not need to fear there is any soul-poison in it; and it should not trouble him if he can or cannot answer all their sophistry, such apparently reasonable questions and objections, which the enthusiasts and 'enlightened spirits' can ask.

One fool can ask more questions than ten wise men can answer. ... The precious Catechism is the accurate scale, standard, measuring stick, and level, yes, the unerring, true compass, according to which we can correctly judge all teaching. Our Catechism's six chief parts, which no heretic can deny, refute or explain as false, are our prima principia (basic principles); whoever speaks or teaches otherwise, we will not listen to and even less, have anything to do with him either for a short or for a long time, but immediately consider and regard him as an enemy of God. And we should flee and avoid as pure poison for the soul and in no way whatever have any use for teaching which contradicts it, no matter how great a name it has for itself. So mark this well: we should diligently guard against doctrine which does not agree with or follow the Catechism exactly and is not based on it; but we should accept as a blessed doctrine and heartily applaud doctrine which agrees with the Catechism. And especially should we do this in these last troublesome and perilous times, according to Christ (Matthew 24), St. Paul (2 Thessalonians 2; 1 Timothy 1) and St. Peter (2 Peter 2). There are many prophecies of dreadful heresy engulfing us like a flood, and wherever he goes the devil, disguised with a good appearance, wants to inject his deadly and fast-working poison into the mind so cunningly, -- in these times it is indescribable what benefit it is that we guide ourselves in all our teaching according to the Catechism. Because just as the magnetic needle of the compass always points to the north and the sun-dial always turns to the sun, so the Catechism points us and leads us to Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness. And doctrine which is not up to the standard of the precious Catechism is certainly, certainly, certainly false, even though an angel from heaven taught and preached it to us (Galatians 1)."¹⁵

Therefore Dr. Luther also correctly says:
"The Catechism must necessarily be and remain the standard in the Christian Church and remain the Lord there."¹⁶ If we now know the Catechism to be of such an extraordinarily great importance, then surely we will not only rejoice over it wholeheartedly and thank God both for our dear "Catechism father" and for his Small Catechism, but also agree with the old Danish bishop, Dr. Hans Poulsen Resen (died 1638), that zealous friend of the Catechism, in the words which he was always accustomed to saying: "If I forget you, my dear Luther, and your Small Catechism, then let my right hand forget!" (Ps. 137:5).¹⁷

So that we can better appreciate this we ought not forget here to ask ourselves: Have we even deserved that God should give us so great a gift as the Small Catechism, "the true laymen's Bible" (as Luther already called it) really is? and have we now also used the Catechism in such a way that we could expect that God will continue to preserve it for us and our children? What else could we answer than: Ah, no, I am sorry to say, ah, me! But consider this -- and who dares deny it? -- and we must certainly all agree that when God just the same, in spite of our manifold thanklessness and faithlessness, in His long-suffering, 'til now has let us keep this great gift, and now for 350 years has preserved the Catechism in our church, so that still today we also have this glistening, priceless gem, "the true laymen's Bible," pure and unfalsified among us (and this is something we should value much more highly, when we realize that in our particular situation and in our reform-minded times, we have not lacked and still do not lack severe temptations to abandon our name, our church-father and the incomparable children's instruction he has given us), -- then it truly is an undeserved, an invaluable great

blessing to us from God's boundless grace, such a blessing for which every Lutheran Christian is obliged always to praise and thank the merciful God in Jesus' name, with heart, word, and deed. Considering all this, it must therefore also be recognized to be in order that our church remembers the seventh Catechism-Jubilee year with an appropriate celebration.

And when the church does this, it undertakes nothing new, but on the contrary, only follows an old and honorable custom and practice, which God Himself has hallowed. God Himself has specifically ordered in the Old Covenant that every 50th year was to be a Jubilee year of rejoicing in Israel (Leviticus 25). In keeping with this ordinance of God, the Lutheran Church has also been accustomed to holding Jubilee years or Jubilee celebrations (and as everyone knows, frequently people are used to holding such Jubilees not only every 50th year, but also every 25th year) in thankful remembrance of the Lord's special demonstrations of grace. Thus, in line with what is stated above, no one among us can really be in doubt that there is someone who deserves to be remembered by us and among us with a Jubilee celebration, so much more when we especially consider that for three and one-half centuries now our merciful God has preserved the Lutheran Catechism among us pure and unfalsified and through it has given and preserved for us "the keys to the entire Holy Scriptures,"¹⁸ "the whole marrow and kernel, sap and strength of the entire Holy Scriptures," for blessed instruction, comfort and joy for our souls throughout our whole life, in affliction and in death. Because "the Catechism is a little Bible, or short summary of God's Word, concerning our faith and life," says Dr. Erik Pontoppidan, presented in questions and answers, so simply, that a child can understand it for his salvation, and so rich and inexhaustible,

that the most learned theologian cannot fathom it. Truly, this "little Bible" must fill our hearts with the greatest wonder; we cannot value it highly enough; and we can never sufficiently laud, praise, and thank our heavenly Father for it, either here or in the hereafter.

It may well be that not many people consider such a Catechism-Jubilee to be of some value, because none of us has experienced such a thing; and except for a few people, there is probably no one among us who had heard anything earlier in the year about such a festival having been held anywhere in the church. Actually, such a festival should have been held every 50th year; but it is now already 150 years since such a thing occurred (we are not speaking here about what has been done in this regard in this or that individual place). The last two times when a 50th Catechism-Jubilee should have been held, namely, 1779 and 1829, nothing happened. The simple explanation for people failing then is very simple and really ought to be an earnest warning and reminder for us, lest we now go and do the same thing.

In the Catechism's 5th Jubilee year, 1779, Rationalism had ascended the throne and unfurled its banner of death far and wide in the church. And in the horrible times which prevail now, Christ and Christendom are even more openly shattered, scorned and ridiculed both in the classroom and pulpit, and the teachers of the youth (people called them "teachers of the people," just as the prophets were called "speakers to the people"), whose task first of all should be to teach the youth the Catechism, have become Scholastic-seminarians, who now propound and ardently teach, purposely, the injection of the poison of unbelief into the children's hearts for the purpose of "enlightening" the common people, and besides, they do it persistently; in

that horrible time (people called it the age of "enlightenment" in order to flatter themselves and not admit they were treating an honorable thing disgracefully) in which the devil with his hellish host held a Jubilee-festival over the ruins of Christianity, we certainly must not expect to hear jubilation for Dr. Luther's Small Catechism, unless they would be rejoicing that they had altered it, which is to say, falsified its essential contents, or even "fortunately" abolished it.

And in the 6th Jubilee year, 1829, Rationalism's autocracy had not only spread over a large portion of the classrooms and pulpits, but now it also had struck roots among the people and borne fruit there. The systematic demolition and havoc which the previous fifty years had accomplished, when the boar of the forest trampled down the Lord's planting, and the wild beast of the field devoured it (Ps. 80:13) made shipwreck of the church as a result; and only bits of the wreckage were saved. Certainly at that time no one thought of arranging a Catechism-Jubilee; and if one or another friend of the church (and, God be praised! there was a person here and there who not only grieved deeply over Joseph's disturbance, but also bore strong witness to the Lord, whom the people had forsaken) had proposed such a Jubilee-festival people would certainly have considered him ridiculous; because it was a time when hardly anyone in the whole world occupied himself with the Small Catechism, or thought much about it

III

It is unbelievable what terrible harm Rationalism did to the church, what horrible commotion and confusion it caused, especially with regard to the Catechism's importance, use and application in church and home; and now even today we hardly understand it rightly or have a real appreciation for it, such are the sorrowful effects which

Rationalism is still producing around us. We should also be reminded that just this knowledge of the past gives us a clue to a better understanding of the fragmented scene which is apparent on the religious scene in our times.

Rationalism purposely called itself "Enlightenment," but progress is supposed to follow enlightenment and people in our times have understood this to apply to them in that way, because they whole-heartedly call this the age of "progress." But unfortunately the "progress" of our times necessarily compares in many ways to the "enlightenment," which preceded it. This applies especially to the church. The old, blessed Catechism-theology of Lutheran metallic ring has left us and grates on refined ears when one occasionally hears it. It is obliged to find itself being called poor and of a weak mind, dry and ineffective, and in whatever the situation, it is not considered "relevant." It appears, though, to have been good enough for our simple fathers in the faith: Luther, Bugenhagen, Brenz, Chemnitz, Johan Arndt, Johan Gerhard, Scriver, and so on and so forth, who did not participate in the "enlightenment"; though in our age of "progress" and "liberation," which does not let itself be bound by the Word of God, and less, to be reminded of the church's confession, it is a "vanquished point of view." It is truly significant, and let us take note of it, that just after the rationalistic "enlightenment," which, however, was just sheer darkening confusion of everything pertaining to the church and a departure from the Lord's Word and way, people have made such "progress" that they excel the old, great and pious fathers of the faith and the fathers of doctrine so far, that they hardly have any use for them. And so it is. People are soon finished with the Catechism, the old Christianity is destroyed, "progress" and "freedom" are unleashed and most contemporary theologians regard it as their task to find

no use, not only for the form, but also for the content of the work, by which they want to serve "the people."

The theologians of our time evidently repeat what Dr. Luther says about the old papists of his time in the following: "The doctors in the universities have nothing else to do than invent new opinions, one worse than the next. Neither can anyone be an honored doctor if he has not invented something new. But the best, so far as they are concerned, was that they despised the Holy Scriptures and let them lie on the shelf. 'What, Bible, Bible!' they said, 'the Bible is a heretic's book; one must read the doctors, there one finds it.' I know that I do not lie; because I was brought up among them and have seen and heard all this from them. . . . In short, it was pitiful and heart-rending both regarding preaching and teaching. Yet all the bishops stretched and saw nothing new, while, however, they are now so sharp-eyed that they see things which are not there. Thus everything was in such a desolate and wild state because of sheer disunity in doctrine and strange new opinions, that no one could know anymore what is sure or unsure, what Christian or unchristian. The old doctrines of faith in Christ, of charity, of prayer, of the cross, of comfort in affliction, and so forth, were completely buried in the dust; yes, there wasn't a doctor in the whole world who knew the whole Catechism, who could say the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, and the Creed, to say nothing of the fact that he could have understood it and taught it, then as now, God be praised! the people teach it and are taught by it, also small children. Because of this I appeal to all your books, both theological and juridical; if a person can rightly learn from them a portion of the Catechism, then I will let myself be broken on the wheel and be bled to death."¹⁹

With far too many contemporary theologians (and who doesn't want to keep up with the times?) it has happened with theology as it is happening. now with church bells: the old, pure brass bells are now being replaced with bells of potter's clay (or some such cheap material, as is recommended). They commend themselves only in this respect, that a person gets them cheap. The old Lutheran, that is, Biblical Catechism-theologians are replaced by others; it is not nice to say what they really are. But this also has to do with their having gotten it cheaply, because they make it up for themselves according to their taste or pleasure. But as the cook is, so is also the broth, and everything is according to the modern "believing" theologians' "viewpoint," "faith," "view," "light," etc., such is also their theology. One teaches this way, another that way, and so on endlessly; and all of them are supposed to be "entitled" to do so and their teaching considered "defensible" from a Christian point of view. In short, a person will have a hard time finding, among the "famous" leading theologians of our times, two men who are consistent with the simple instruction of the Catechism. Name them if you can! What they do not have and have not considered is "the sure word" and "the clear text"; "they just teach uncertain things" and "juggling," so that no one can know what is sure or unsure, who is a Christian and non-Christian, unless they use Luther's word -- so that there now are those who, without fearing Him who lives in heaven, oppose themselves to the Lord and Master concerning His divine revelation in Holy Scripture and get out of it what they please (and nothing is more common in our day than this), -- so that no one can possibly hold Luther's little Catechism in esteem and honor, as they themselves say. And even if there is someone who speaks sufficiently great and good-sounding words to Luther's credit and shouts about "the teaching of the

children! the teaching of the children!" it is only to adorn the prophets' graves, while they still scorn their spirit and teaching (Matthew 23: 29-33).

In the face of such a demolished scene, which we mentioned earlier, and which engulfs us like a flood in our times, no one can question how important it is that we all, whether we be lay or learned, faithfully hold ourselves to our little Catechism, be well at home in it and recognize its extraordinarily great importance for us, so that with sincere thanks to God, because after all He has preserved it for us and will preserve us through it, we can say with Dr. Luther: "The Catechism must of necessity become and remain and hold the rule in the Christian church and continue lord; that is, God's Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Sacraments, etc. And however many oppose it, still however it will become and retain the upper hand in the kingdom of the Lord and with Him of whom it is written: 'Thou art a priest forever' (Ps. 110:4)."²⁰

Yes, Luther! How many are there though of the great numbers who now bear Luther's name, who really esteem this chosen instrument of God highly and really want to learn something from him, really want to read his writings in order to be his pupils or his fellow Christians for profit and joy? Yes, how many are there who really are familiar with "the Bible of the laity," who have it close to their heart and apply it daily? Surely, they are only very few. Earlier we heard Spener say that "such an incomparable blessing" was given to us by Luther, which no one can praise as it deserves. But who now even knows this "incomparable blessing" or ever praises it? It is very sad. Blessings are soon forgotten and people become unthankful.

Joh. Wigand wrote already in 1571: "People whose eyes God has opened must know that since the time of the apostles, the doctrines of Christ have not been so clearly, plainly, correctly and excellently expressed and explained by any teacher's work and faithfulness as by this blessed man, Dr. Luther. What great and appalling darkness predominated and blinded the people in the many centuries of the papacy is known from history. But what happens now? The common man is blinded by carnal indifference and despises it. He does not hear the preaching of God's Word as faithfully and neither does he instruct his children as faithfully in the Catechism as he ought; in the next place, neither does he thank God nor pray that He will graciously preserve such light for posterity. The learned are beginning everywhere to scorn Dr. Luther's writings arrogantly, to belittle and to censure his work and to bury his excellent books. For a long time some of them have also wanted to bury the man's writings and excellent name with his body, if they had not been hindered by some of Luther's disciples who still laud and praise God's name and gifts with thankfulness. Thus one observes that hardly anyone even uses Luther's name in their sermons and writing, so that they should be considered to be completely fallen disciples or scorners of Luther, and they even teach contrary to Luther and aim and shoot their poisonous arrows against him without any fear or shame."²¹ Such was the situation then; and daily, sad experience teaches that it is not really better now, at the same time as people boast of "progress" and their great "enlightenment." And it is generally known that those who faithfully try to follow Dr. Luther and His Catechism are opposed everywhere (Acts 28:22). Who at the present time really thinks that it is actually a retrogression we have great need of making, namely, a retrogression to the Reformation and with it to the apostolic

and prophetic writings, in conformity to Dr. Martin Luther's doctrine, admonition and example? But who is there really now among the many who bear Luther's faith, doctrine and writings highly, more than just in name and with lip service? Yes, we must still insist that it is as if one just wants to let it rest with that and not as it generally happens, both far and near, use Luther's name and words in order to gloss over their errors and folly and their destructive work in the church, which they should build up and whose bread they eat!

It is precious truth which Joh. Wigand expresses in these words: "Because among Christian people many cannot read the whole Bible nor are they able to remember all the Scripture passages which are quoted in the usual sermon, therefore Dr. Luther's Catechism serves them as a little Bible, and with good conscience they retain this rule: Everything which does not agree with the Catechism is false and should be avoided. The reason is this: They know and are persuaded that Luther's Catechism was extracted from the Word of God with the help of the Holy Spirit and is a summary and the true heart of the Bible summarized for the unlearned."²² But it is also true what an expensive edition of the Catechism from the beginning of the 17th century lays on the heart of "Christian house-fathers and house-mothers" in the following words: "Catechism instruction in particular must be diligently urged with the children and the unlearned servants; because no one can really profitably and fruitfully hear a sermon if he has not yet learned his Catechism rightly. And because the elders, the house-fathers and the house-mothers, just as the teachers in the schools are so negligent and indifferent in this matter, it follows that unbelief and godless ways and lives predominate in Christendom."²³ It is as though this was written for our days when "unbelief and godless ways and lives have assumed

such a predominance in Christendom." What is at the bottom of the difference between conditions from a Christian viewpoint, as they exist between the masses ("the people," if you wish) all around and among us at the present time, and as they existed under the papacy when Luther began the Reformation? Well, among other things it consists in this, which Claus Harms in his characteristic manner published in the following influential words: "In the 16th century the forgiveness of sins still cost money; in the 19th, people have it entirely free of charge because they earn it themselves."²⁴ Talking big about "progress," "enlightenment," "freedom," "authority," etc., with which every Hans Wurst wants to bless "the people," does not save us. For this, it is required, briefly, above all, first and last, to teach and to use the little Catechism which our small children learn, with all diligence and faithfulness. "But" -- says Luther -- "they despise so simple and so cheap a thing because little children must learn it and recite it daily."²⁵ But if we despise or make light of the "keys to the whole of Holy Scripture," "the marrow and kernel, sap and strength of the entire Holy Scriptures," then we really do not consider it to be of the highest importance, and further, what can it profit us then?

Of His mercy God has given us the pure doctrine and to Him be eternal praise and thanks for it! Let everyone now consider how he accepts and uses it and thanks God for this great gift and does not neglect the responsibility he has because of it. "If a proper, stable church order is to be established," -- says Martin Chemnitz (died, 1586) -- "the chief thing, yes, the basis and foundation for it all must be that the doctrine is pure and harmonious."²⁶ And let each of us also in this time of apostasy examine himself and carefully consider these words of Dr. Luther: "The true Christian religion will be taken from us again. First, because

of our thanklessness, because we so soon forget the blessings of God which we have received through the Gospel. Next, because of the great security which now corrupts everyone, so that there is no more true fear of God and no one will let himself suffer for the Word any more. Thirdly, because of the worldly-wise wisdom which rules the church according to its own ideas, removes the cross from the Gospel, wants to compromise with sin, and contrary to God, preserve peace and unity."²⁷

In this age of apostasy in which we live, it is doubly necessary to know that the basic damage among us -- thanks to Rationalism -- essentially is to be sought in the Catechism's subordinate, regrettable, not to say degraded position and use in the church, school, and home. Because, who holds the simple Catechism, "the precious jewel and the highest gift of Christ, which next to the Bible is delivered to the world," in high esteem and honor? and who now living is really convinced of it that it is the Catechism which is and must continue to be the foundation for our entire Christianity, if it is going to continue, and if there is to be marrow and strength in it? and that consequently nothing is more necessary for us than a faithful use of the Catechism by teachers and hearers, by old as well as young? We lack something here and every Lutheran ought to be able to see it and ponder what can and ought to be done to remedy it.

Concerning this matter, we have a chance to establish a connection between our times and the days of our Lutheran fathers back in the middle of the previous century. Then we will very soon notice a difference which must fill our hearts with both wonder and sorrow. This is not the place to pursue it further. We will merely introduce a couple of testimonies (which can also serve in place

of many), from which readers can draw their own conclusions of how things were in this regard in the old days. J. C. Koecher writes this (1752): "After Luther had allowed both his Catechisms to be published, the fervent zeal of the Lutherans thus doubled for the spread of evangelical truth to further catechetical instruction in every way. Eventually, they took Luther's Small Catechism into many countries, into innumerable places and villages as a basis and a standard for this instruction. People used it in churches, schools, and homes. They set aside certain days and hours in which young and old were to be instructed from it in the most necessary articles of faith and duties of life. In some places they appointed especially spiritual persons who were supposed to occupy themselves with teaching the Catechism. They also devised many other means and gave directions for the requirements of catechetical instruction, especially in the electoral and princely Saxon territories, so that a person could write a book about Lutheran methods for diligent and effective teaching of the Catechism."²⁸

And Martin Chemnitz (the "second Martin Luther") says: "Here in the Brunswick church we are in the Christian practice of first having a Catechism-sermon, which is delivered in the church every Sunday during Matins for the dear children's and servants' sake, at which one part after another of the Christian instruction of children, just as though the Lord Himself were doing it, is presented from the Catechism and is explained as the occasion requires. Besides, there is also a special day in the week ordered for the children's school, on which the teachers and the students of all the schools come together at an appointed time for Catechism preaching. At these times, the parts of the Catechism are explained in the simplest way and then the children are listened to and examined

publicly in the church on what they have gotten and retained of the sermon. Besides that, we also have the custom that every fourth year the entire congregation hears a summary of the five chief parts of the Catechism in eight sermons, so that in that way every pious Christian can get a basic summary of the entire Christian doctrine and its chief points and in that way arm themselves against all seductions and sects."²⁹

Where can anything comparable be found among us? Not only do we lack something here, but -- in Luther's words -- "here comes also a shameful mistake, a heathen, wicked vermin, namely, security and satiety so that many think that the Catechism is a simple, paltry teacher, which they read over once and as soon as they are able throw the book into the corner and never bother themselves to read it again."³⁰ With most people it is as though they were completely indifferent whether there have been Christians before us or not, especially that they should consider that they could also learn something from them. And the ignorance of the practices of our old, pious fathers in the faith is so great that it is not rare (yes, very common among certain so-called "Lutherans") to hear that the old, respected Lutherans, together with useful and edifying practices in the church must allow themselves to be scorned and mocked as papistical. How has this happened? and where are we going?

But if our most recent fore-fathers, the Rationalists, were, as we have heard, so far from wanting to be disciples of the Catechism in Luther's sense, that they vehemently scorned and mocked Luther's faith and doctrine, then we have a heartfelt need for our old Lutheran fathers in the faith and as often as we have the opportunity, to gather in the Lord's house and congregation to learn, apply, praise and thank God for "the laymen's Bible"

which He has given to the church through Luther. That they also hold Jubilee celebrations for that purpose is obvious. We see this clearly enough from the following short testimony. Because the learned Johan Albert Fabricius wrote in this way 150 years ago in the 4th Jubilee year of our Catechism: "Properly, we celebrate in this year, 1729, a Jubilee in remembrance of the Catechism which was given to the church 200 years ago, just as such a Jubilee was celebrated with great festivities 100 years ago in 1629."³¹ All Lutherans ought to follow this example of our old fathers in the faith with heartfelt joy, partly in this was to thank God for the unspeakably great gift He has given us in Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism, and partly to encourage everyone to an ever more faithful and diligent use of it. It was never more obvious, or more than right and fair, that our Synod in all its districts' last annual conventions unanimously resolves to celebrate this Jubilee year's next Reformation festival as a Catechism Jubilee festival.³²

We ask permission now to add just the following. Luther's intimate friend, the evangelical Bishop Georg of Anhalt (died, 1553) writes: "The Catechism is the true Bible of the laity in which the entire contents of Christian doctrine which every Christian needs to know to be saved are contained. It is also a summary and kernel of all Holy Scripture and the same Scriptures are nothing else than the explanation and exposition of the Catechism. I am reminded here of the eloquent words and testimony of the same, venerable, blessed Dr. Martin as to how highly he regarded the Catechism and every part of it, as I myself heard in Wittenberg from his mouth in an edifying conversation with me and others, and which it is well to remember. He spoke about it in this way: 'Just as Solomon's Canticles is called canticum canticorum, The Song of Songs, so is the first

decalogue, the Ten Commandments, doctrina doctrinarum, doctrine of doctrines, the highest doctrine, by which one knows God's will, what God demands of us, and what ails us, etc. Secondly, so are the symbolum, or the historia historianum of our holy Christian faith, a history above all histories and the highest of all histories, in which are presented to us the unspeakable miracles of the divine majesty from the beginning on to eternity, how we and all creatures are created by God, how we were redeemed by the unfathomable love of the Son of God (through His incarnation, suffering, death and resurrection), how we are also renewed by the Holy Spirit, sanctified, become new creatures, and are gathered into one people of God, receive the forgiveness of sins and are eternally saved. Thirdly, so the oratio dominica, the Lord's Prayer, is oratio orationum, the prayer of prayers and the highest prayer which the Most High Master has taught us and in which are contained all spiritual and bodily needs and mighty comfort in all temptations and afflictions and at the last hour. Fourthly, so are the most worthy Sacraments ceremoniae ceremoniarum, the highest ceremonies, which God himself has prepared and instituted and with which He strengthens us with His grace. Therefore we should certainly love the Catechism and hold it in honor and diligently impress it upon the young. Because in it the Christian church's correct, old, true, pure, divine doctrine is summarized, and whatever is contrary to it should be considered worthless, false and erroneous doctrine, even if it has stood ever so long, for which we should be watchful."33

Finally, we will conclude with the Introduction which Peter Palladius (the first evangelical bishop in the Sjoelland diocese, died, 1560) wrote to an edition of the Catechism "for Norwegian pastors." It goes like this: "Petrus Palladius wishes the honorable lords and brothers in Christ, pastors in

Norway, eternal salvation! The Catechism alone, dear lords and brothers in Christ, works miracles in these times in which we live and moves great mountains from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. Because it teaches briefly and clearly both the Law and the Gospel. By the Law is the knowledge of sin, through the Gospel is forgiveness of sins; which two parts men are lacking for salvation: because they bear the two parts of repentance: repentance and faith; because a broken and contrite heart comes from the knowledge of sin; and by the hearing of the Gospel, faith is nurtured, which alone justifies before God, because it clings to the mercy of God for the sake of Christ. Further, the decalogue in the Catechism summarizes the Law, that is, the Ten Commandments, in which a person can see himself and his sins as in a mirror, so that he can be terrified in his conscience and be humble under the mighty hand of God. The Creed teaches the Gospel and faith in Jesus Christ, because of which a terrified mind is raised up again and can receive the forgiveness of sins, righteousness and eternal life. These things are truly obvious miracles, because they cannot happen by the power of any man. But the Holy Ghost creates such stirring in men's hearts by the hearing of the Law and Gospel. I will not say anything here about the Lord's Prayer, which seeks from God what is lacking in our bodies and souls; nor about the Sacraments, which are certain, external signs of God's favor and the forgiveness of sins. Therefore now the Catechism alone works miracles in these times and transfers men from the sentences of men and teachings of the devil to the teaching of the pure Gospel, which brings salvation to those who believe in Christ. Therefore, to you, dear lords and brothers in particular, I commend this little Catechism booklet and beseech you for the sake of Christ that you teach it (that is, thoroughly and completely), commit to memory the passages which it teaches, and faithfully

and diligently in all things teach the same to your people; and so that you can easily be able to accomplish this, I give to each and every one of you this little book, in which I briefly and clearly explain the Catechism. The which, if you will approve, I will within a short time, if God wills, send you more; as your God bids. Written in Copenhagen, the 26th day of July, the year of our Lord, 1542."³⁴

God bless the Catechism Jubilee festival in our congregation for Jesus' sake! Amen.

Fjeldberg Parsonage, 3rd October 1879

This article appeared in the Evangelisk Luthersk Kirketidende (the official organ of the old Norwegian Synod) in October, 1879.

FOOTNOTES

1. Mathesius, The Life of the Precious Man of God, Dr. Martin Luther.
2. Spener's Preface to Luther's Church-Postil, p. 47.
3. Aurifaber's Preface to Luther's Table-Talk (1566).
4. Unanimous Testimony of Many Learned Theologians and Prominent Churches in Several Princedoms, Duchies, Universities and Cities of the Old Augsburg Confession, published by Caspar Mellissander, Jena, 1572.
5. Spangenberg, Cithara Lutheri, III.
6. Aurifaber's Preface to Luther's Table-Talk.

7. Unanimous Testimony, etc.
8. Ibid.
9. Aurifaber's Preface to Luther's Table-Talk.
10. Altenburg Edition of Mr. Luther's Writings, IV, 787.
11. Luther's Table-Talk, Dresden and Leipzig, 1723.
12. Luther's House-Postil (Walch Edition, 1738), II.
13. Introduction of the sainted Pastor E.C.W. Keyl in his translation: Daily Catechism Use According to Dr. Luther's Advice and Example, in "Der Lutheraner," III, 95-97; reprinted in the current annual edition (1879) of "Ev.-Luth. Schulblatt."
14. Luther's Table-Talk, Folio 53-55.
15. Explanation of the Five Chief Parts of the Holy Catechism, dedication and the second sermon.
16. Luther's Table-Talk, Folio 53.
17. D. C. Zwergius, The Clergy of Sjoelland.
18. This noteworthy edition was used by the old Bohemian Brethren" in a public confessional writing from the year 1535, of which a part is included in J.C. Köcher's Catechetical History of the Waldensians, Bohemian Brethren, etc.
19. Luther, Altenburg Edition, V. 208.

20. Luther's Table-Talk, Folio 53; collected by Theodore Harnack, The Origins of Dr. Martin Luther's Small Catechism.
21. Unanimous Testimony, etc.
22. Ibid.
23. Small Catechism-School, Johan Schmidt's edition, Strassburg, 1632. Introduction.
24. The 21st of the 95 Theses with which he accompanied Luther's 95 Theses, in 1817: see his autobiography.
25. Luther's Table-Talk, Folio 53.
26. Corpus Doctrinae, July 1576, Folio I.
27. Johan Lapoeus, Genuine Prophecies of Dr. M. Luther, 1578. C.L. Knapp's edition; collected by A.G. Rudelbach, Christianity and Rationalism.
28. Introduction in A.G. Rudelbach's Official Opinions, etc., p. 1f. No Lutheran pastor should let this precious little book go unread.
29. Chemnitz' Postils, I.
30. Luther's Introduction to the Large Catechism.
31. Introduction in "Der Lutheraner," XXXV, 5.
32. At two of our district conventions this year (1879), the undersigned was commissioned to prepare a "Memorial on the Small Catechism" for the Jubilee Festival. I began on it, but because of many unforeseen circumstances I am obliged to give up this project. If God wills, I hope later to be able to put

before the readers what is in many respects a highly interesting first Danish translation of Luther's Small Catechism (the so-called Knud Gyldenstjernes Catechism), translated by Jørgen Jensen Sadolin, 1532, along with some historical enlightenment particularly about the editions of our Catechism since the Reformation. I will only mention here that the Catechism edition which we use stems from 1616 and was perhaps taken charge of by Bishop Hans Poulsen Resen. Before that time an edition from 1538 was used, translated by Bishop Peter Palladius; this edition held its place in many places to the end of the 17th century and was called the old edition, while that from 1616 (which we use) continues to be called the new.

33. The Revered . . . Lord Georg Sermons and Other Writings, 1561.
34. C.H.Kalkar, Voices from the Danish Church of the Time of the Reformation.

Markus Fredrik Wiese was born at Gjedesby, Falster, Denmark, May 11, 1842. "After having received private instruction and a year at Jellings Seminary, he came to America in 1863. For a brief period he remained in Chicago and then came to Madison, Wisconsin. Here he met and became closely associated with the sainted Rev. J. A. Otteson and the sainted Rev. H. A. Preus. Through them he learned to know the glory and peace of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and was persuaded to study Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis (1866-69). While a student he organized the Danish Lutheran Church in Indianapolis, Indiana, and upon his graduation served as its pastor from 1869 to 1870. From 1870

to 1873 he served at Muskego, Wisconsin; from 1873 to 1874, St. John's Danish Church, Chicago; and from 1874 to 1890 at Huxley, Iowa. Out of consideration for his wife's health he moved to Decorah, Iowa, in 1890 and served several congregations as supply pastor, while editing "Bud og Hilsen," published in the interest of missions. From 1892 to 1918 he was pastor of the Western Koshkonong congregation near Deerfield, Wisconsin. He resigned in 1918 and moved to Cambridge, Wisconsin, which had been his wife's early home." (From the Lutheran Sentinel, January 3, 1934)

Pastor Wiese was a frequent contributor to the periodicals of his church. He died on December 27, 1933. After his death, his valuable and extensive library became the property of Bethany Lutheran College, and when it was founded later, of Bethany Lutheran Theological Seminary, Mankato, Minnesota. Among the many valuable books in this library was a first edition copy of the Book of Concord.

OPENING SERVICE

BETHANY LUTHERAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

August 31, 1979

Text: I Timothy 1:5: "But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."
(NASB)

Dear Friends in Christ, but especially Seminary
Students!

Although our seminary classes have been meeting for several days, it is fitting that we observe the opening of our seminary. As we do so, it is good that we think about objectives, both for ourselves and for our school -- as students, as instructors, and as members of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod.

There are a number of ways in which a seminary can be viewed. To some it may be like an automobile assembly line. A person gets on the conveyor belt and is carried along. As he moves along, bits of information and skills are added. When the end is reached, the student is ready to go, just as a new car is when it comes off the assembly line in Detroit or in the Twin Cities.

To others, attending a seminary is similar to getting on an elevator. As the student continues his studies in the seminary, he rises higher and higher. He rises closer to God, higher above the common people, and closer to perfection. To still others attending a seminary -- it is like a track meet. The seminary with its many classes presents

series of hurdles between the student and his real objective, preaching the Gospel to real people in a real situation.

There may be something of an assembly line picture in attending a seminary. Students are carried along by time through a series of classes. Skills, knowledge, and experience are added. But there is much more than merely moving along toward a goal. It is looking forward to that moment which is almost as dramatic and as important as when Christ called St. Paul on the Damascus road to be His apostle. It is that time when a Christian congregation extends a divine call for a seminary graduate to serve in its midst and preach the Gospel there.

There should be an elevating effect in attending a seminary. There should be improvements in Christian knowledge and skills and, above all, in faith in Christ. You may know more, but you can never feel elevated before God, for you are in need of the Gospel which you study and will preach. Even the great apostle called by Christ Himself said, "I am chief of sinners." And he spoke those words, not in the past tense, but in the present tense.

As for the seminary consisting of a series of hurdles strung out over four years, such a view is wrong. Each class is rather a rung on a ladder moving the student higher and closer to his graduation. It is a milepost on the road toward a goal. One must be competent to serve in the ministry, and the seminary has a responsibility to prepare young men for the ultimate goal. Paul certainly warns against the novice in the ministry, but says that those who would be pastors must be apt to teach. Skills must be present.

Such misemphases really mean that the ultimate goals are not clearly seen. Hence mention of them

is a warning to you against a casual approach, a self-righteous approach, or a shallow approach to study in the seminary. We are not to project ourselves, our views, or our own personal goals and place them in conflict with what the Apostle Paul sets before us in our text. It is interesting to read what he sets before young Timothy, who was working in the Christian congregation in Ephesus. The goals which he set before Timothy are not sweeping and flowery commands. Rather, they are surprising in their simplicity. They are simple and direct. Hence there can be no misunderstanding, but they help us all to appreciate what we are doing in our seminary. They are for the benefit of all. Let us hear again the words of our text:

But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. (NASB)

This is not what men want. The Apostle Paul shows this by beginning the text with a "but." There were false teachers in Ephesus hard at work trying to disrupt the preaching of the Gospel. They stressed many ideas which were in conflict with the message of the apostle and with the Gospel itself. They confused people with their claims of superior knowledge. They argued about things which impressed people, but which did not edify. The Apostle Paul wanted no part of this, and he was telling Timothy to turn his back on it also.

Hence Paul issued his instructions to Timothy -- orders -- which also serve as the basis for our instruction in our seminary. There is one ultimate goal: love. This is a love for God especially and also for our fellow man. But this is not just an emotion hanging out in space. This love springs from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from a sincere faith. Each one of these elements makes for the right kind of love. They are the source and

are coordinated together. Yet faith is the basis, but an "unfeigned" faith. It is a faith that is unhypocritical, that rests in Christ, the Savior. He it is Who has kept the Law perfectly and so is its end. He it is Who perfectly suffered on the cross as the Son of God, the God-man, so that His blood could cleanse us from all our sins. And the empty tomb is the mark of His success. Death could not hold Him. From this assurance in Christ and His victory comes a good conscience. We stand before God forgiven through Christ. St. Paul tells us: "There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Romans 8:1. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the One Who justifies." Romans 8:33. Finally, there is the "pure heart." God is to rule in the heart of the Christian. It is dedicated to Him and to His service for the great service He did for us in Christ. We are dedicated to Him.

From these then will flow real love for God and for His Word, in which He speaks to us. He is the first object of our love for He loved us so richly in Christ. And we who have this Gospel of Christ will want to share it with others. Through our seminary studies we learn to know and appreciate for ourselves. Then we will also want to be well prepared to serve others, so that they too may know Christ and also share His blessings. May God then bless our work this year in the seminary -- teachers and students -- that we may achieve these goals. We ask this for Jesus' sake. Amen.

-- G. E. Reichwald
Acting President

ISRAELITE WORSHIP SITES IN PALESTINE

by T. G. Gullixson

The placement of Israelite worship sites in the Promised Land was not determined by the people, or geography, or by the political situation. The choice was completely God's. Moses told the Children of Israel before they entered Canaan: "But unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put his name there, even unto his habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come" (Deuteronomy 12:5). Yet God's choice was not unrelated to factors of geography, politics, and history. These factors become important for us to study when they reflect the wisdom of God and when they influence Israelite worship.

One of the most important factors was the ability of the worship centers to unify the people together as a nation, a religion, and an ethnic group. Few other countries and peoples had such unity for so long a time as did the Children of Abraham. For while Egypt had a long history of government under one ruler, their many gods and places of worship divided the people as much as the upper cataracts separated the valley-dwellers from the hill country. The situation in the rest of the fertile crescent was even more divided. Each state, each village, and even each individual had their own gods to worship and call on for protection. The words of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, to Hezekiah reflect this diversity: "Who was there among all the gods of those nations that my fathers utterly destroyed, that could deliver his people out of my hand"

II Chronicles 32:14). The peoples in the land of Canaan were also a part of this diversity of Worship. It was the political, religious, and ethnic divisions of the Canaanites which allowed the Children of Israel to fight them one at a time, instead of their invading a people unified in politics, religion, and culture.

The unity of the Israelites is indeed remarkable. Considering the political and geographical situation in Palestine from Joshua to King Saul, one could see how unity could easily be dissolved. The factors of disunity are evident during the times of the Judges. For the hills which protected the Israelites from the coastal plain Philistines also tended to isolate them from each other, as happened in ancient Greece. Thus we read about individuals getting away with having their own house-gods, doing whatever they desired, and engaging in immoral practices. Even tribes stole such idols from others and set up their gods to worship without punishment from others (Judges 17 and 18). Canaanite cities also show evidence of Israelite worship apart from the central God-given place. This was seen at Arad, Beersheba, Lachish, Megiddo, and Hazor where altars and even sanctuaries resembled the dimensions of the Tabernacle. Yet in spite of all this, the Children of Israel were able to preserve their identity and religion by coming together at the Tabernacle and Temple. During the very same time, the Philistines, who were also fellow-invaders of Canaan, lost their identity and culture for lack of such unifying factors held by the Israelites.

In the wilderness, the Children of Israel were continually in the presence of the Tabernacle. While it did not keep them from complaining, the Tabernacle and other signs of God's presence kept

them from worshipping other gods. With the conquest and settling of the Promised Land, the Tabernacle became stationary and separated from the people. They had to travel to it for their worship. That some Israelites turned towards Canaanite gods was due in part to the lack of such a constant reminder of God's presence.

The first mention which we have of the Tabernacle being set up in the land of Canaan is found in Joshua 18:1 "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the tabernacle of the congregation there." Since the book of Joshua does not say that the Lord appointed this place as the setting for the Tabernacle, we must assume that God had spoken to Joshua at some unrecorded time.

The area around the town of Shiloh was at the same time difficult to reach and yet accessible from many parts of the country. Getting to the town was difficult because of the barrier established by the hills of Ephraim which surround the village of Shiloh. Travel through the hills was not easy except on the main watershed road. This situation helped make Shiloh easy to defend, since a few passes could be held by a small army. The town has a large plain to the south and west of the town which was probably able to support it if armies cut Shiloh off from the trade routes. The security of Shiloh, which was provided by the hills and God's protection, is proven by the fact that this town remained the center of Israelite worship for four hundred years.

Another reason that Shiloh was not easy to reach was that it was not situated on the major north-south trade route that ran along the watershed divide. Its location four or five miles to the east of that route is described in the book of Judges 21:19

"There is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly in a place which is on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." Since Shiloh was off the main road, a special effort had to be made in order to visit the Tabernacle and to attend its ceremonies. One could say that the Lord designed it this way not only for defense, but also as a test for the Israelites.

Yet the town of Shiloh was not inaccessible. For while it was not on the main trade route, Shiloh was close enough to it so that the dispersed tribes could reach the Tabernacle without undo hardship. The people who came to worship there did not have to travel through enemy territory in the coastal plains or through the dry regions of the Jordan River as the Galileans did in Jesus' day. The trade route ran from Beersheba in the south to Bethshean in the north along the Jordan River.

Just as no tribe was cut off from worshipping at Shiloh because of geography or politics, so also Shiloh was relatively central to the country. The tribe of Simeon to the south had to travel no farther than the tribe of Dan in the north. Neither was the Tabernacle inaccessible to the tribes of the Trans-Jordan by being too far south for half-Manasseh or too far north for Reuben. The Jordan crossings near Bethshean and Jericho with the east-west routes leading to Shechem and Gilgal provided ready avenues of approach for pilgrims and worshipers. There were also good roads which descended to the coastal plains near Shechem and Jerusalem.

While Shiloh was the center of religious worship for the Israelites, it was not the center of tribal political life. Shiloh may have been the capital

city while Joshua lived,¹ but it definitely was not a capital under the Judges. The Judges usually ruled the people from their home towns. This separation of religious and political centers was both advantageous and detrimental for the nation. Advantages came from the fact that when the people went to Shiloh to worship the Lord, they were not distracted by matters of government. Nor could the inevitable corruption which accompanies years of government influence the priests and worshipers of Shiloh. This is illustrated by Gideon who made an ephod and turned the Israelites away from the worship of God. Because Ophrah was ten miles south of Shiloh, the worship at the Tabernacle remained unchanged. Eli, who was both High Priest and Judge, is another example. The corrupt conduct of his sons, with their adulteries and taking of the sacrifices, did influence worship at Shiloh. (I Samuel 2:22,29). Under Samuel the religious and political centers were again divided, but this time because of war.

While the separation and religious and political centers tended to be an advantage in the spiritual realm, it was detrimental during wartime. It could not but weaken their defense when they needed to protect two centers -- the Tabernacle and the home of the Judge. With the capture of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines and the death of Eli, there did not seem to be any will to defend Shiloh. So the Tabernacle was removed and the Philistines destroyed the city, according to the archeological evidence. The historical books of the Bible do not record this destruction of Shiloh, but Jeremiah

¹Under Joshua, the people gathered at Shiloh three times: The selection of tribal areas (Joshua 18:10), the request for cities by the Levites (Joshua 21:1-2), and the council of war against trans-Jordan (Joshua 22:12).

later calls attention to this devastation as an example of what will happen to Jerusalem: "But go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel" (Jeremiah 7:12, c.f. Jer. 26:6-9).

After the destruction of Shiloh we do not have a clear picture of what happened to the Tabernacle. The ark of the covenant remained at Kirjath-jearim for twenty years after it was recovered from the Philistines and was not used for worship. Ramah became the political center of the theocratic rule because Samuel lived there and went out on his tours of the country from that town. It seems that the Tabernacle was packed up and sent to the village of Nob, just north-east of Jerusalem. From the incident of David's visit to Nob (I Samuel 21), we know that Ahimelech served as High Priest at the Tabernacle. And since David was given shewbread from the Tabernacle, we can assume that the ceremonial laws continued to be observed at this place. But during this troubled time in Israelite history, we do not know if this was considered to be a permanent site or if the Tabernacle was moved around. It is recorded that in David's time the Tabernacle resided at Gibeon: "For the tabernacle of the Lord which Moses made in the wilderness, and the altar of the burnt offering, were at that season in the high place at Gibeon" (I Chronicles 21:29). One could suppose that after the terrible slaughter of priests at Nob by the hand of Saul, the Tabernacle was moved to Gibeon since the priests had to keep pure from touching anything dead (Numbers 19:11). In I Chronicles 16:37-39 it is written that Asah ministered before the ark of the covenant which David had brought to Jerusalem, and Zadok continued to serve "before the tabernacle of the Lord in the high place that was at Gibeon." This shows that David did not try to suppress the worship at the

old Tabernacle even though worship had begun at the new tent with the ark of the covenant in Jerusalem. The Bible records that Solomon worshiped at the Tabernacle in Gibeon soon after his coronation. "And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place."² It was during this visit at Gibeon that the Lord appeared to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask what I shall give thee."

The final historical reference to the Tabernacle is found in I Kings 8:3 when the work on the new Temple had been completed. "And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle." This 'Tent of Meeting (NIV)' refers to the Tabernacle built by Moses. By this action, the worship of the Children of Israel was again centered in one place, physically and spiritually.

While the worship and governorship of Israel was directed by God, the places of worship did have political significance. The Tabernacle at Shiloh in Ephraim and the Temple at Jerusalem in Judah-Benjamin gave these tribes leadership of a sense among the other tribes. The importance of politics concerning worship sites is best illustrated by the tribes of Trans-Jordan. The tribes of Reuben, Gad, and half-Manasseh built an altar on their side of the Jordan. Upon hearing of this deed, the other tribes in Canaan gathered for war, saying to them: "What trespass is this that ye have committed against the God of Israel? Rebel not against the LORD, nor rebel against us, in building you an altar

²I Kings 3:4. See II Chronicles 1:3-12 which tells of the large crowd that accompanied Solomon and the thousand burnt offerings he made on the altar at Gibeon.

beside the altar of the LORD our God" (Joshua 22: 16, 19). This act was taken to be a rebellion not only against God, but also against the political unity of the other tribes. Tribal, political, and religious relationships were thus viewed as one unit. A break in one meant a break in all relationships for these people.

It was perhaps for political reasons that Gideon made an ephod of gold and cloth captured from the Midianites. Refusing their offer to be made a king, he could have wanted to influence them in a more subtle way. Certainly it caused the Children of Israel to go worship at Gideon's home and to turn and worship Baal when he had died (Judges 8:27, 33).

The battle of Ebenezer provides another illustration of the influence of religion on politics. Because the word of God "was precious in those days" of Eli, when Samuel heard the voice of the Lord, the Bible says "all Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba recognized that Samuel was attested as a prophet of the Lord" (I Samuel 3:20 NIV). Certainly this awakened many from their spiritual sleep. Perhaps it also awakened them politically since they banded together to fight the Philistines. From this battle we see how politics and religion came together in their minds as they brought the ark of the covenant to the battlefield. By using the ark as an emblem and not putting their trust in God alone, they were defeated.

Later on, the altar became a political and religious symbol. One example of this is found at the beginning of the divided kingdoms when Jeroboam made Shechem his capitol and set up golden calves at Dan and Bethel. His reasons were chiefly political: "If this people go up to do

sacrifice in the house of the LORD at Jerusalem, then shall the heart of this people turn again unto their lord, even unto Rehoboam king of Judah" (I Kings 12:27). His choice of Dan and Bethel was two-fold: first to keep the people within his borders and secondly to consecrate those borders, in a pagan sense, by their presence. This is especially true of Bethel which lay close to the Judean Kingdom and the southern border.

It may have been a common practice in Canaan to set up places of worship along border lines. Perhaps this was the reason for the altar at the fortress of Arad, the southern-most outpost of the Judean Kingdom, at Lachish which bordered Philistia, and at Hazor which was the last Israelite city along the Via Mares trade route. If the cities became centers of worship, the people would be more inclined to remain settled there and protect these borders. The Moslem Temple at Jerusalem and the holy shrines along the Mediterranean coast also reflect this thinking.

More examples are not needed. Brief reference can be made to the Samaritans whose temple on Mt. Gerizim divided the Jews of Galilee from those of Judea. And the fact that many villages had their own high places also represented a wish to be separate from Jerusalem religiously and politically. It is interesting to note that the kingdom of Israel continued to maintain a separation between the religious and political centers even after forty years of their union under Solomon.

Indeed, the building of the Temple by King Solomon marked a change in policy. No longer were the religious and political centers divided in Judah. Jerusalem became the focal point of all future worship and, for Judeans, government. The Old Testament definitely records the fact that God chose

Jerusalem as the place of worship. The ancient song declares: "For the LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it."³

This choice also involved geographical and political factors which had some similarities as well as some basic differences with the Tabernacle at Shiloh. Jerusalem was like Shiloh in that it was difficult for armies to approach and to capture. The holy city was surrounded by hills which blocked travel except through the valleys. The steep valleys of Hinnom and Kidron prevented attack from three sides of the city. Only from the north could attack be made easily. Even from the north, the passes and roads which allowed travel into the hill country of Judah from the west were defensible and difficult for siege trains to accompany the army invading Jerusalem. In those days, without the worry of modern artillery, the hills which surrounded Jerusalem could indeed make one feel secure against the enemy, as one Psalm put it: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even forever."⁴

Jerusalem was also like Shiloh in that the Temple and Tabernacle did not rest upon the highest

³Psalm 132:13-14. Psalm 78:67-69 is more specific: "Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved. And he built his sanctuary like high palaces, like the earth which he hath established forever." See also I Chronicles 21:28 to 22:1 and II Chronicles 7:16.

⁴Psalm 125:2, see also Psalm 121:1.

hills of the country. They were not to be like the pagan high places or like the Samaritan temple on top of Mt. Gerizim. The hills surrounding Jerusalem and Shiloh were much higher and gave shelter to these cities.

The difficulty in getting to Jerusalem lay in the city being over twenty miles further south of Shiloh and thus not being centered in the kingdom. The bulk of the population was further north of Jerusalem in the fertile lands of Ephraim, Manasseh and what was later called Galilee. For those who lived in the far north, the trip was long and difficult, especially during those times when the Jews had to cross the Jordan twice. Perhaps this distance was another reason for Jeroboam's idols at Dan and Bethel being welcomed by some of the people.

Under the divided kingdom Jerusalem was not even central to the kingdom of Judah. The city was only a few miles from the border of Israel. This proximity made the people of the city feel constant danger and exposure to attack from the north. The measure of their feelings can be seen in I Kings 15:16-22, which tells about Baasha, King of Israel, who began to fortify the village of Ramah. The reaction of the Judean king Asa was to take money from the Temple treasury and send it to the Syrian Ben-Hadad, for which deed he was admonished by God. And when Ben-Hadad had defeated Israel, the people of Jerusalem tore down the stones of Ramah and used them to build up Geba and Mizpah against the northern kingdom.

The difficulty of coming up from the south to Jerusalem lay in having to climb the Hebron hills, which were of a higher elevation than the holy city. Water and endurance were needed to traverse the wilderness that separated Jerusalem

from Jericho and the Dead Sea area. In Jesus' day most of the people traveled through this wilderness because of Samaria. The robbers did not help either.

But neither was Jerusalem inaccessible to those who wished to worship there. Two trade routes passed through Jerusalem. The major north-south highway that followed the watershed and passed by Shiloh has already been mentioned. Jerusalem was a part of that route. The city was also a major center for east-west traffic which came from the western deserts and went on towards the port of Joppa on the coast. These well-traveled roads ensured that the road surfaces were kept up, that there were villages to lodge in for rest and for protection, and that there were places to acquire necessities along the way. Yet the rigors of the trip were perhaps a test from the Lord requiring a desire to worship and keep the commandments of God above that of other religions. Those who did not make the effort soon drifted off into idolatry.

Jerusalem was not totally similar to Shiloh. One difference was the climate, another the land. Shiloh was surrounded by fertile land and average rainfall. On the other hand Jerusalem had to depend upon the dew and the early and late rains in order to grow crops on the hills. Food had to come from greater distances because the desert to the west cut down the amount of arable land close by, and because much of the farming was done on rocky hills. Thus the people had to learn to rely and trust in the Lord to supply them with the moisture they needed to grow their crops. Perhaps this dependence upon the Lord was one reason why the kingdom of Judah remained faithful to God longer than that of Israel.

While there were some disadvantages to having the Temple and the capitol in the same city, this

situation did fix Jerusalem as the permanent center of worship in the minds of the people. This attitude is seen from the return of the Babylonian exiles whose first concern was to restore the Temple and rebuild the city. No longer did these returned exiles worship at altars and high places which their ancestors had used. Their attention was directed to Jerusalem and its worship.⁵ Until the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus in 70 A.D., pilgrims from all over the known world flocked to the Holy City to worship God in the Temple, especially on the Feast of the Passover. It was this focus of worship and devotion towards Jerusalem and what it stood for that enabled the ministry of Jesus and later of His apostles to be effective in reaching so much of the world's population, both Hebrew and Gentile.

Thus the Tabernacle at Shiloh and the Temple at Jerusalem had greater importance than just the geographical and political features discussed above. For these worship sites were a part of the preparation of God for the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of the world. Surely the Tabernacle and the Feast of Booths were a constant reminder of the grace and protection of the Lord during the wandering in the wilderness. It became a sign of blessing in the Promised Land, as God promised: "I will set my tabernacle among you: and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people."⁶

If the Tabernacle reminded the people of what God had done in the past, surely the Temple pointed

⁵Psalm 137 presents a poetic expression of the exiles' longing for Jerusalem.

⁶Leviticus 26:11-12.

forward to the glories which the Lord promised to bring them through the coming Messiah. The Lord had chosen Jerusalem, as He said to Solomon: "I have chosen and sanctified this house, that my name may be there forever: and my eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually" (I Chronicles 7:16). By this choice and promise, Jerusalem and the House of God were united as the place of worship for the Children of Israel. For a thousand years the Temple was the focus and attention of faithful worshipers all over the world. Under the rule and idolatry of Jeroboam, Israelites flocked to stay in Judah so that they could worship at the Temple. This happened again in the days of King Asa when he sought to return to the true worship.⁷ And though the returned Hebrew exiles did not have real political power under the Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires, the restored Jerusalem remained the religious capital to all the Children of Israel in the world. The desecrations of the Temple and the laws against Israelite worship made by Antiochus III caused the Maccabees to rebel and recapture the Holy City. And later the Gospel of Luke tells about people like Zacharias, Simeon, and Anna who faithfully worshiped in the Temple "waiting for the consolation of Israel." We are told that Joseph and Mary went to the Temple at least once a year for the Passover. Therefore, when the Temple was finally destroyed in 70 A.D., it marked a fundamental change in the way that non-Christian Jews worshiped.

There were many prophecies which God made concerning Jerusalem. The prophet Joel said that

⁷II Chronicles 11:13-17 tell of the priests and Levites who left everything to worship God; and 15:9 speaks of people coming to Judah from Ephraim, Manasseh, and Simeon "when they say that the Lord was with him."

"whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance" (Joel 2:32). This deliverance was a part of Israel's hope, which has often mistaken for worldly gain. But there were still true believers like Zacharias, who said: "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear" (Luke 1:74). The ancient prophets proclaimed that Jerusalem would be important when the Messiah came. There He would teach them the ways of the Lord and render judgments among the people (Micah 4:1-4). God caused the Prophet Zechariah to write: "I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem: and Jerusalem shall be called a city of truth. Behold, I will save my people from the east country, and from the west country; and I will bring them and they shall dwell in the midst of Jerusalem." Later the prophet specifically ties Jerusalem with the coming Messiah: "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."⁸

These prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled. John's Gospel speaks of Jesus' ministry in Judea and around Jerusalem. He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets, not to destroy them. Jesus often showed how the ceremonies and the rituals commanded by God pointed to Him like shadows. At the feast of Tabernacles, when the water was brought from the pool of Siloam to the Temple, Jesus stood up and cried out: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37). One evening, as the lights of the Temple cut the darkness, signifying the light of God going out to the Gentile

⁸Zechariah 8:3, 7-8; Zechariah 9:9 respectively.

world, Jesus declares: "I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).⁹ And within twenty-four hours after the Passover Lamb had been killed and eaten, Jesus gave up His own body on the cross to bear the sins of the world. All these shadows of the Temple pointed to Jesus who was crucified amid the symbolism of Old Testament worship during its greatest festival.

The word of Christ's death and resurrection went out from Jerusalem into the world -- from Spain to India, from Armenia to Ethiopia. Much of this spreading of the Gospel was done by those who had been in Jerusalem at Pentecost, had come to faith in Jesus, and had gone home to tell others about it. This was promised in the Psalms: "Because of they temple at Jerusalem shall kings bring presents unto thee" (Psalm 68:29). And while some Apostles remained in the city, others left for distant lands where fellow Jews lived. Furthermore, Christian worship began in the Temple at Jerusalem. Influenced by the ancient rites and ways of worship there, Christians continued those practices that still could have meaning for them. Our order of worship today also contains elements of Old Testament worship.

This paper has sought to explore some of the factors which had a bearing upon the two places of Old Testament worship in Palastine. Certainly God used the geographical and political advantages and disadvantages to bring blessings and tests to His chosen people at each site. Those who made the long and difficult trip at the appointed times to worship

⁹Edersheim, A., The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co. (1972), Part Two, pages 157-160, 165-167.

the Lord continued to hope for the promised Messiah and to receive the blessings of God. Those who failed soon relapsed into pagan worship and were lost. God does not require a similar test of His people today. Jesus told the woman at the well, under the shadow of Mount Gerizim where the Samaritans worshipped: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him" (John 4:21, 23). This is just one more of the freedoms which Christ has given to His believers as priests before God.

On a larger scale there is one further blessing which God gave His people by placing them in the land of Canaan. Shiloh and Jerusalem were situated in a land bridge between three continents -- Africa, Asia, and Europe. Considering how the Jews in Jesus' day were scattered, Jerusalem was the most central and accessible city in the Persian, Greek, and Roman Empires. Though Palestine often became a battleground for the great nations, many other peoples traveled through the land. This gave the Children of Abraham, and later the Christians, tremendous opportunities to witness and share the message of the Messiah with the world. Surely in all this we can see God's blessings and praise Him for His great and gracious wisdom, which is beyond all human understanding.