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THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT
IN LUTHER'S TRAINING OF YOUTH
AND IN THE INTERMEDIATE MATERIALS OF THE
UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA TODAY

by

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A THESIS

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DEDICATED
TO MY YOUNGER BROTHERS
JOHN HENRY WOOD
AND
BILLY WARNER
WITH THE PRAYER THAT
HAVING BEEN CONFIRMED IN THE CHURCH
THEY MAY BE SOLIDLY CONFIRMED IN FAITH
TOWARD ITS HEAD--
THE LORD JESUS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

G. F. of the Author

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
INTRODUCTION.....	iii
A. A Statement of the Problem.....	iii
B. A Vindication of the Problem.....	v
C. The Sources of Data.....	vii
D. The Method of Procedure.....	viii
 I. AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT IN LUTHER'S TEACHINGS.....	 1
A. Introduction.....	1
B. The Place of Commitment in Luther's Personal Faith.....	1
1. His Decision to Enter the Religious Life.....	2
2. His Later Realization of His Relation to Christ.....	4
C. An Analysis of Luther's Teachings on Training for the Christian Life.....	8
1. Through Catechetical Instruction.....	8
a. On the Ten Commandments.....	12
b. On the Apostles' Creed.....	15
c. On the Lord's Prayer.....	18
d. On the Sacraments.....	21
2. Through Preaching.....	24
3. Through Direct Appeals to Commitment to Christ.....	26
D. Summary.....	28
 II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERMEDIATE SUNDAY SCHOOL MATERIALS OF THE U.L.C.A. TODAY TO DISCOVER THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT.....	 30
A. Introduction.....	30
B. Aims of the Christian Growth Series.....	31
C. Basic Features of the Christian Growth Series.....	32
1. As a Whole.....	32
2. The Intermediate Materials.....	34
D. Teachings on the Work of Christ.....	38
1. The First Year.....	38
2. The Second Year.....	43
3. The Third Year.....	45
4. Possibilities for Commitment.....	50

Chapter	Page
E. Teachings on the Individual's Relation to Christ.....	52
1. The First Year.....	52
2. The Second Year.....	53
3. The Third Year.....	60
4. Possibilities for Commitment.....	64
F. Summary.....	65
III. AN ANALYSIS OF THE CATECHETICAL MATERIALS OF THE U.L.C.A. TO FIND THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT IN CONFIRMATION.....	69
A. Introduction.....	69
B. The Service of Confirmation.....	70
C. General Content of Catechetical Books.....	76
D. Specific Emphases of Catechetical Books.....	78
1. Dr. Joseph Stump's Explanation to the Catechism.....	79
2. A Guide Book by Dr. Nolde.....	80
3. A Catechetical Manual by Mary E. Brimmer.....	82
4. The Junior Class Manual by G. J. Muller.....	83
E. Place of Commitment.....	84
F. Summary.....	86
IV. GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.....	88
A. Restatement of the Problem.....	88
B. Summary.....	88
C. Conclusion.....	91
APPENDIX.....	96
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	99

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT
IN LUTHER'S TRAINING OF YOUTH AND IN
THE INTERMEDIATE MATERIALS OF THE U.I.C.A. TODAY

INTRODUCTION

A. A Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to determine the place of commitment to Christ in the lives of early adolescents who receive their Christian training in the United Lutheran Church in America.

By commitment to Christ is meant the whole-hearted yielding of self to Christ or, as Dr. Elmer G. Homrighausen states it in his book, Choose Ye This Day, the giving over of one's self to the keeping of Christ. Commitment is a trust, a pledge, a surrender, an actual¹ personal trust.

There is a division in the field of Christian Education today between two extremes of thought on this matter of decision or commitment to Christ. There is that group which holds to the plan that carries through the entire childhood--a system of Christian nurture. This group insists that the Christian experience is one of

1. Cf. Elmer G. Homrighausen: Choose Ye This Day, p. 59

gradual growth and does not, in general, concede the need for a special decision or commitment of personal trust and surrender to Christ. At the other extreme is the group which places almost the entire emphasis on a sudden conversion or crisis experience in the life of a young person. The Christian nurture groups, in many cases, neglect the need of young people to come to a time of decision when they should dethrone their personal desires and ambitions and make Christ the Lord of their lives. On the other hand, the groups that stress the need for a decision neglect, in many cases, the need for thorough training over a period of years in the Christian life and faith. The groups with the Christian nurture emphasis have not realized that "persons do not ooze into the life of fellowship with God,"¹ but rather they must choose God.

In the Lutheran Church with its view of baptism as the means of regeneration and with its consequent emphasis upon nurture, the question of the place of commitment is no academic one. It is therefore the task of this study to investigate the historical background out of which the Lutheran Church gains most of its teaching and practices and to examine at first hand the place of commitment in Luther's system of Christian training. Since the problem is a current one, the

1. Ibid., p. 63

materials used in the teaching of the catechetical and intermediate Sunday School classes will be examined to see what emphasis is being given to this important aspect of the Church's work today.

B. A Vindication of the Problem

When the apostles went out to preach Christ they called for the people to repent of their sins and to make a decision for Christ in their lives. Then these early believers received the blessing of the Holy Spirit. Experiences like this are recorded in the book of Acts. But tradition has it in many churches--this study is primarily concerned with the Lutheran--that children who are born of believing parents and are reared in the fellowship of the Church automatically become Christians. An elaborate system of services in a highly organized church takes much of the responsibility off the individual. Modern psychiatrists maintain that people love crowds and action because in them they are not required to face themselves and their God in their loneliness. A complete trust in the church, in its local pastor, and in the Bible--which adorns the book case from year to year without being moved--is not a real commitment to God in Christ and can never take the place of it.

It would seem that the natural place for

commitment to Christ in the Lutheran system is at confirmation. But, to the contrary, it is stated in the explanation to Luther's Catechism that in confirmation the catechumen does not take any new vows or make any new commitment. Rather the catechumen confirms what was done for him by his sponsors at Baptism.¹ A definition of confirmation as given in the explanation to the Catechism is:

"Confirmation is the Church's testimony that the catechumens have received the necessary instruction to fit them for intelligent and earnest participation in the full privileges of Church membership. This instruction is the principal thing, and without it confirmation would lose its meaning."²

Some ministers in the Lutheran Church, when interviewed about this matter, stated that they do require a commitment to Christ from a catechumen at confirmation. Yet a case in point (which, it is to be feared, is typical of Lutheran young people) is that of a high-school senior who was reared in a Lutheran home, attended regularly a Lutheran church, and was confirmed in church membership, yet who, when asked if she had ever accepted Christ as her personal Saviour, answered, "I never have, don't know how, but I'd like to if you would tell me how."

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1. Joseph Stump: An Explanation of Luther's Small Catechism, p. 154
 2. Ibid., p. 153

This problem of the place of commitment to Christ is vital and must be faced in the Christian church if the church will continue to be the fellowship of the Holy Spirit filled with sanctified believers.¹

C. Sources of Data

Reliable works in the field of church history are to be consulted in the investigation of the life and personal faith of Martin Luther. In seeking to understand his emphasis in Christian education of youth, his own personal writing of the Large and Small Catechisms and other writings on education and the training of the young will be consulted along with William Hazlitt's The Table Talk of Martin Luther.

As far as can be discerned from Luther's writings and available materials by his contemporaries and scholars after him, his two catechisms and their prefaces are his main works on the training of the young. There are various references to the need of training young people and to their place in the future church from which can be gleaned something of his system, but they are so scanty that this study must be based almost completely on present knowledge of his attitude toward the catechism.

1. Cf. Martin Luther: Large Catechism, p. 121

To investigate the place of commitment to Christ in the teaching of the United Lutheran Church today, the catechetical materials and Christian Growth Series Sunday School materials for intermediates will be studied. It is at the intermediate level that youth are prepared for their stand at confirmation in church membership.

D. The Method of Procedure

To understand the place of commitment to Christ in the teachings of Martin Luther it is proper first to study his personal religious experience for the element of commitment found there. Since his theology and entire thinking has influenced all the Lutheran Churches almost beyond estimation, his pedagogical writings will be examined to see what emphasis is given to commitment in his educational system.

Because the problem is faced in a modern setting with a modern educational plant already organized in the United Lutheran church, the material that is prepared for the intermediate age group will be thoroughly examined to find the place of commitment to Christ. There is a three-year cycle of materials prepared on the intermediate level and the entire course will be examined for the purpose of this study.

Confirmation is the time for adult membership

in the church with all the privileges of adult membership concomitant. The youth are prepared for this ceremony of church membership by a period of instruction in the cardinal doctrines of the church. This course of study as it is prepared for the teacher and the students will also be examined for its emphasis on commitment.

CHAPTER I

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT
IN LUTHER'S TEACHINGS FOR YOUTH

CHAPTER I

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT IN LUTHER'S TEACHINGS FOR YOUTH

A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to show the place which commitment to Christ had in the personal religious experience of Martin Luther. This is the background study for an examination of commitment in the church today. Here will be investigated the motivation which led him to the walls of the monastery at Erfurt when he renounced the secular life for the religious life. Here will be noted how his understanding of the faith grew until he knew the meaning of the saving grace of God in Christ.

The second part of this chapter is an investigation of the teachings for young people that Martin Luther prepared. This will include the consideration of the place of Christian nurture in his system, of the amount of the training of youth left to the preaching ministry, and of the place, if any, which direct appeals for commitment to Christ had in his ministry.

B. The Place of Commitment in Luther's Personal Faith

1. An Account of His Decision to Enter the Religious Life.

Luther cannot properly be understood aside from the historical background from which he comes. The psychology of religion was different then in that there was not the freedom of choice on the part of young people as there is today. It should also be remembered that he was beginning anew in setting up his system of training in an effort to do away with the evils of the Roman Church from which he had just come, while still retaining the spiritual truths which he felt he held in his possession.

Born into the medieval Roman Church Luther "was taught at home to pray to God and the saints, to revere the church and the priests, and was told frightful stories about the devil and witches which haunted his imagination¹ all his life."

At the University of Erfurt, Luther made a remarkable name for himself, for Melanchthon writes of him that the whole University admired his genius.² But just when he had received high honor from the University, the degree of Master of Arts which is equivalent to the degree of doctor of philosophy given in Germany in the

1. Philip Schaff: History of the Christian Church, Vol. 6, p. 108
2. Cf. Junius B. Remensnyder: What the World Owes Luther, p. 9

twentieth century,¹ he turned on this earthly life and retired to the monastery. The experience of his decision is commonly told as quoted here:

"This experience took place one time during his student days, as he was going for a tramp. He was overtaken by a heavy thunderstorm, during which a bolt of lightning struck very near him. Luther fell on his knees and cried: 'Holy Saint Anna, help me; I promise to become a monk!' Shortly afterwards he took leave of his friends, sang with them once more to the music of the lute, and said, 'You see me today for the last time; you will never see me again.' And on the next morning he knocked on the gate of the strictest of the eight monasteries of Erfurt, with the intention of departing from the world."²

Luther's father had cherished hopes for his promising son in the profession of law. These hopes were dashed to the ground. He disowned his son³ but no protest would move the young monk. The thing that had moved this young man so strongly that he would listen to neither family nor friends was a face to face experience with death.⁴ Fear of death then, had its import in causing Martin Luther to say, "What must I do to be saved?"

This sudden change of Luther from the University to the monastery had nothing to do directly with his Protestantism but was simply a rejection of the secular life and a taking up of the religious life.⁵ His

1. Ibid. cit.

2. Karl Heim: The Church of Christ and the Problems of Today, p. 50

3. Cf. Remensnyder, op. cit., p. 9

4. Cf. Heim, op. cit., p. 50

5. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., p. 113

experience has sometimes been compared to the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus, but this seems contrary to fact. As Schaff states it:

"He was a pious Catholic from early youth; but he now became overwhelmed with a sense of the vanity of this world and the absorbing importance of saving his soul which, according to the prevailing notion of his age, he could best secure in the quiet retreat of a cloister."¹

2. His Later Realization of His Relation to Christ.

Martin Luther was searching for something that he thought he could find only inside the walls of a monastery. To this purpose he dedicated himself. Assiduous in fastings, in the doing of penances, and in ascetical practices, he was a pious, sincere, earnest and conscientious monk.² His motive and chief concern was salvation.³

The monk himself writes:

"So strictly did I observe the duties of the order, that if ever any monk has entered heaven by way of a monastery, then would I have. I tormented myself to death to procure for my troubled heart and agitated conscience peace before God, but encompassed with thick darkness, I nowhere found peace."⁴

From this testimony of the pious monk himself, it is seen that monasticism can be properly compared to the law of Israel, a school of discipline and a preparation

1. Ibid. cit.

2. Cf. Remensnyder, op. cit., p. 10

3. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., p. 113

4. Remensnyder, loc. cit.

¹
for gospel freedom.

In the walls of the monastery, Martin Luther hoped to escape sin and thereby escape the wrath of God. It can be said with certainty that at this point in his life, he did not know the joy of St. Paul as he writes in his Epistle to the Romans of his inability to escape sin in his own strength but of his confidence in the saving grace of Jesus Christ and His atoning power. The actual words of Paul as they are written in Romans 7:18 will clarify Luther's position: "For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do..." And 7:24: "Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"²

This is a true parallel of the experience of Luther as he tried in agony of soul to justify himself before God by his life. This he could not do. The more he seemed to advance externally, the more he felt the burden of sin within. He could not trust in God as a reconciled Father, as a God of love and mercy, but trem-³bled before Him as a God of wrath, as a consuming fire. He was somewhat comforted by an older monk who reminded

1. Cf. Schaff, loc. cit.
2. The Revised Standard Version
3. Cf. Schaff, op. cit., p. 116

him of the statement of the forgiveness of sins in the Apostle's Creed, and of Paul's word that the sinner is justified by grace through faith.

But Luther had not yet learned to say for himself, "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."¹

One of the most important of the influences exerted on Martin Luther was that of John von Staupitz, his spiritual father and a Roman Catholic leader of the day. Staupitz was a mystic or pietist² and cared more for inner spiritualism than for outward forms and observances. He trusted in the merits of Christ rather than in good works of man and led Luther, according to Luther's testimony: "He first caused the light of the gospel to shine in the darkness."³ Staupitz directed Luther from his sins to Christ's merits; from the law to the cross; from works to faith; and from scholasticism to the Scriptures. It was through Staupitz also that Luther learned that true repentance consists in a change of heart and must proceed from the contemplation of Christ's sacrifice rather than in self imposed penances and punishments.⁴

The victory of justifying faith came to Luther

1. Revised Standard Version, Romans 8:1

2. Schaff, op. cit., p. 118

3. Ibid., p. 119

4. Cf. Ibid, p. 119

not only through the aid of Staupitz and the old monk but especially through his continued study of the Pauline Epistles. He was gradually brought to the conviction that the sinner is justified by faith alone, without works of the law.¹ When Luther realized that it was through faith alone that he had peace with God he says that all those passages of Scripture that once alarmed him seemed now to "run to him from all sides, to smile, to spring up, to dance and play around him."²

And again in Luther's own words the difference in his relationship with God can be seen:

"God could not have given me better security of my salvation, and of the gospel, than by the death and passion of His only Son: when I believe that he overcame death, and died for me, and therewith behold the promise of the Father, then I have the bond complete."³

The contrast in the two pictures of Luther, first as the terrified monk in the thunderstorm shouting aloud to Saint Anna his vow to become a monk, and secondly as a man redeemed by the love of God in the merits of Christ, is almost too great to be depicting the same man. This in fact evidences that Luther had a real experience in understanding his relation to Christ. And this understanding involved a personal realization of the work of

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 123

2. Remensnyder, loc. cit.

3. William Hazlitt; The Table Talk of Martin Luther, p. 160

Christ for him as an individual. His was no vague faith that Christ died for the sins of the world, but as he says in the words already quoted: "When I believe that he overcame death and died for me ... then I have the bond complete."

C. An Analysis of Luther's Teachings
on Training for the Christian Life

1. Through Catechetical Instruction.

The Catechism holds a paramount place in the training of the young in Luther's system.

The Catechism is an exact, direct, and short way to an understanding of the whole of the Christian religion. For God Himself gave the ten commandments, Christ Himself taught the Lord's prayer, and the Holy Spirit guided the articles of faith.¹

Luther's was a system of Christian nurture. The teaching of the children in the basic tenets of the Christian faith at an early age and the continual enlarging of this with years is the Lutheran system according to Martin Luther. In his pedagogical writings he set forth a comprehensive system of education which began with the primary schools and went through the secondary

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 125

schools and the universities. "In schools of all kinds, the chief and most common lesson should be in the Scriptures."¹

Luther's Catechism is the oldest school textbook on the Christian religion and at the beginning of the twentieth century was still the book most universally used by Protestants, with an approximation of seventy-five million users.² The type of Christianity that this volume represents is well-balanced and inclusive of God's commandments, the Gospel, prayer, and the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. The design is that the people should study these parts of the faith in this order because the commandments serve to call the people to a knowledge of their sins and to consequent repentance; the Creed teaches the great doctrines inherent in the Gospel, of the Saviour and calls for faith in Him; prayer follows as the perpetual exercise of faith. The concluding study sets forth the sacraments: the significance of Baptism is taught first in the catechetical system, for as Luther sees it, it is through Baptism that the Christian life is imparted to the believer. Then the meaning of the Lord's Supper is presented, for it is through this sacrament

1. John Nicholas Lenker: Luther's Catechetical Writings, Vol. 1, p. 6
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 8

that the faith is nourished.¹

Luther daily discoursed with his children on a part of the Catechism for in his mind it was clearly designed to teach the plan of salvation. He rated the Catechism a high place in the church as he says:

"The Catechism must govern the church, and remain lord and ruler; that is, the ten commandments, the creed, the Lord's prayer, the sacraments ... It shall stand fast and keep pre-eminence, through him of whom it is written, 'Thou art a priest forever.'"²

In these words it is clearly seen that the Catechism is set up as a basis of authority in Luther's system, yet Luther states that it shall stand in first importance only through Christ.

Thus it is evident that Luther considered the Catechism a text-book to teach the child religion. And he often stated that his Catechism was God's word in that it was taken directly from the Holy Scriptures. Not that he thought it good only for children, for actually it was written because of the need of the peasants for religious instruction. In 1529 he wrote to George Spalatin of the burden of his heart:

"The Church everywhere presents a very sad picture. The peasants know nothing and learn nothing; they never pray, and they simply abuse their liberty by wholly neglecting confession and the Lord's Supper.

1. Cf. loc. cit.

2. Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 124

They have cast off the Papal religion and disgraced ours."¹

Again in his preface to the Small Catechism Luther testifies that among the pastors, teachers, and people, he discovered the greatest blindness and ignorance² concerning faith and the plan of salvation. Thus the ignorance of the faith on the part of the people caused Luther to bring forth the Catechism. It was and is a device to combat ignorance--an educational device.

This was an excellent device especially when it is viewed through the eyes of the planning of Luther's brilliant assistant in the Reformation, Philip Melancthon. Melancthon began in his planning with primary pupils and in their first learning to read in the primer. This, he said, should include the alphabet, the Lord's prayer, the Creed and other prayers. He planned that in the second grade the teacher should hear the whole grade one after another repeat the Lord's prayer, the Creed, and the Ten Commandments. It was further planned that afterwards the teacher should explain these bits of memory work in a simple and proper manner to aid the children to understand the fear of God, faith, and good works. Then they should memorize a few easy Psalms in which are³ involved the principles of a holy life. It can be

1. Lenker, op. cit. pp. 6, 7.

2. Cf. Luther; Preface to Small Catechism, p. xi

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 6

deduced from an over all view of this plan that a child would be thoroughly trained in the basic teachings of the Christian Church.

a. On the Ten Commandments

It has already been said that Luther organized the Catechism with the study of the Ten Commandments placed first because it serves to bring the people to a knowledge of their sins and consequently calls them to repentance.

In the Small Catechism Luther has each commandment stated, then followed by the question, "What is meant by this Commandment?" The answer which is written in the Catechism is short and gives in simple language an explanation of the meaning of the commandment.

In the Large Catechism the commandments are stated and followed by a lengthy discussion of the meaning of each and the duties and benefits derived from the rightful observing of this law of God. Also, in the large volume, the decalogue is divided into two parts. The first part includes the first three laws and is called by Luther the "First table of the Law--Love to God," and the second part includes the last seven laws and is called "Second table of the Law--Love to Our Neighbor."

There is much of teaching value for young people in the explanations that Luther has written in the Large Catechism. For example, he takes the first

commandment and writes nine pages in which he treats the meaning of the commandment and possible ways of breaking it. The meaning of the first commandment is God saying to man, "You shall worship me alone as your God." Of this particular commandment he treats what it means to have a god. Mammon in the form of money and riches is god to many. In the blindness of the people under the papacy, he says that a man with a toothache would fast to the honor of Saint Apollonia; a man who feared the perils of fire would fast and pray to Saint Lawrence as his patron saint; fearing pestilence a man might turn to Saint Sebastian or Saint Roch. These he calls abominations of seeking the aid of men long dead rather than invoking the help of the One True Living God.¹ After enumerating many ways through which the first commandment is broken and admitting that there are many others which he has not enumerated, he gives the positive side of how God wishes man to obey His Holy Law. The true honor and service of God is that the heart should show Him that it seeks no consolation or refuge other than in Him and man is enjoined to keep this commandment under penalty of eternal wrath.

For the young person studying this commandment Luther leaves this admonition:

1. Cf. Luther: Large Catechism, p. 45

"We are to trust in God alone and look to Him, expecting from him only good; for it is He who gives us body and life, food and drink, nourishment, health, protection, peace, and all temporal and eternal blessings. It is He who protects us from misfortune and saves and helps when calamities befall."¹

Surely all these aspects that Luther brings into the teaching of this commandment are necessary to a real understanding of God and of His work in the world and all these things are involved in the meaning of these words of God to man.

This way of teaching the law of God is much fuller than to require rote memory without an intelligent authority on the meaning of the law of God.

In the second commandment Luther teaches the positive approach rather than the negative "thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain" as his primary emphasis. He advocates the training of youth by appropriate methods to fear and honor God and thereby to eliminate much of the need for the "thou shalt not."

In the third and last of the commandments dealing with our relationship directly to God, he says that to keep the sabbath day holy means to be occupied with holy words, holy works, and holy life by studying God's Word and by putting it into practice. The real keeping of the day according to the commandment consists not in the resting, but in the sanctifying.

1. Ibid., p. 47

Because of the availability of the commandments and their familiarity it is not necessary here to go into the context of each commandment to get Luther's approach in the training of youth through the teaching of the commandments. It is through the commandments that he would have the training of youth in their relationship to God begin. It calls them to a knowledge of their inability to keep the law of God and brings them into the reality of their helplessness before His Infinity.

b. On the Creed

The Apostles' Faith, or Creed, is designed to teach the Gospel of the Saviour and to call youth and others to a faith in Him. Luther states in his explanation of the Apostles' Creed that catechetical instruction on the content and meaning of this profession of faith is to teach man what he is to expect from God and to receive¹ aid from Him in the attempt to keep the commandments.

The Creed previous to and after Luther was divided into 12 articles or more; but as the easiest method for the young, he divided it into its three main divisions. The first article, concerning the Father, explains creation; the second, concerning the Son, explains redemption; and the third, concerning the Holy

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 112

Spirit, explains sanctification.¹ Hence, Luther says that the Creed could briefly be comprised in these words:

"I believe in God the Father, who created me; I believe in God the Son, who redeemed me; I believe in the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies me."²

The Creed, Luther says, was written by the Holy Spirit. Just as it is the center of the Catechism, the article on the redemption by Christ is the center of the Creed. And in that central article is taught that knowledge of Christ's work does not lead to salvation but faith in His redemptive work brings salvation. From this, it is clear to see that the teaching of the Catechism is Christo-centric.

As the children have been taught that they should have no other gods before the One True God, they may naturally ask, "What kind of a God is God?" The Creed would give them the answer first of all, God is Maker of the heavens and earth. In the Catechism is emphasized the fact that if the words of that first article were really believed it would humble terrifically. The first article teaches that all temporal goods have been received from the hand of God and makes man responsible to God for every act.

In the second article Luther explains for the benefit of the young that God gives us besides the

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 113

2. loc. cit.

temporal goods with which man is surrounded, His great love in the outpouring of Himself upon us, giving all and withholding nothing.

Although the second article of the Creed has been the basis for the greatest and most numerous of theological controversies, and although it contains much of deep theological import, yet Luther says that to gain the importance of the nature of the second Person of the Trinity, it is necessary to take just one phrase and understand its meaning clearly. That phrase as Luther himself puts it is "in Jesus Christ our Lord." In the study of this phrase, a young person learns how he is redeemed. He tells the student of the Catechism to say briefly, when asked what he believes of the second article, "I believe that Jesus Christ, the true Son of God, has become my Lord." And to know what it means that Christ has become "my lord", according to Luther's explanation, is that He has delivered "me from sin and the devil, from death and all misery." The other points in this article of faith show how this redemption takes place and in what manner and by what means it is accomplished.

It is significant to note that Luther considered this article of the Creed the basis of the entire Gospel that he preached. For he said that on the proper understanding of this article rests all our

¹
salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the subject of the third and last article of the Creed and it is the office of the Holy Spirit to reveal to men all that they must know of the will and work of God. In explaining this article of the Creed, Luther says that he must hold to the word "Holy" in explanation because no word but the "Holy" describes this Spirit for it is the Spirit of God. He is the sanctifier, the Person in the Trinity that makes us holy.

In understanding how it is that men are sanctified it should be remembered that as the Son obtained His lordship by His redemptive act, the Holy Spirit effects our sanctification through the communion of saints--the Christian Church--and it is in this communion also that he effects the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life eternal. From this it is seen that Luther teaches that none can come to God except they be led by the Holy Spirit to the Church wherein the work of grace is wrought.

c. On the Lord's Prayer

The logic and order of Luther in the preparation of the Catechism for the training and instruction of

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 119

the young in the Christian faith gives a study of the Lord's prayer following the Creed. Inasmuch as the Commandments have shown that man cannot perfectly keep the law of God, and the Creed has given a basis for faith, it is necessary constantly to ask God to give faith and to keep man in communion with Him. That men might know how to pray, God gave a pattern when the Lord Christ taught His disciples the Lord's prayer.

In Luther's introductory words on prayer in the Large Catechism, he lays a firm foundation for the blessings and benefits of prayer by quoting from the Psalms and the Gospels on the rewards of earnest prayer.

In the detailed study of the Prayer, he divides it into its seven petitions and discusses at length the meaning of each one. His discussion of these petitions gives new vitality to the use of these petitions.

In the first petition, men pray that God's name be made holy. If it is asked, "Is not God's name always holy?", Luther would answer that "it is, but not always the use of it." The name of God can be profaned in word and deed so it is actually prayed here that God will help men to keep the second commandment.

When it is prayed, "Thy Kingdom come", Luther explains this as a petition for God's help in keeping the believers steadfast so that He may establish His spiritual kingdom.

Having prayed that God's name be hallowed and that His kingdom flourish, it should be prayed that God will fortify His spiritual kingdom. If men are to remain in possession of the gifts of God, they must pray that they will be able to withstand the blows and attacks of the opposing spiritual force in the world.

"Give us this day our daily bread" seems to be paltry says Luther, but in praying this petition one's thinking must be expanded to see beyond the oven and the flour barrel and see the broad fields of grain, and showers of rain and all that God in His providence has provided to meet the necessities of man.

In the petition for the forgiveness of trespasses, man realizes that even though he has all these spiritual and temporal blessings already mentioned in the Lord's prayer, still he finds that there are daily disobediences of God's will which call for God's continual forgiveness.

Although man has prayed for the blessings of God and received fully, yet such is the nature of life that the Saviour exhorts to pray "lead us not into temptation." Luther says that though men may be wholly absolved, yet life is such that one may stand today and fall tomorrow. He says that temptations are of three

1
kinds. They come from the flesh, the world, and the devil. Temptations of the flesh result from the old Adam astir in man inciting him to all manner of sin of the flesh. The world presents its temptation, according to Luther, with word and deed to offend and drive us to anger and impatience. The devil is the third form of temptation as he worries and harasses man from all sides but especially in matters of the conscience and things which are spiritual.

In the final petition, "deliver us from evil", Luther says that the Greek has it, "deliver, or preserve us from the evil one, or the malicious one." The devil being the sum of evil, should have the entire substance of prayer directed against him who is the Christian's arch-enemy.

The "Amen" to prayer is said to signify firm belief that it will be heard and fulfilled.

d. On the Sacraments

The spiritual blessings which are spoken of in the Creed and asked for in the Lord's prayer are brought, in the system expounded by Martin Luther, through the means of grace. The means of grace are: 1. the Word of God (from which the entire Catechism is taken), 2. the

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 153

sacrament of Baptism, 3. the sacrament of the Altar or¹
the Lord's Supper.

The Word of God is the chief means of grace for it is through this Word that the Holy Spirit works to enlighten, sanctify, and preserve the believer in the true faith.

He discusses the sacrament of Baptism first. He says that Baptism consists in applying water to a person in the "name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" as Christ commanded in the last chapter of Matthew. But Baptism is not simply water but water comprehended in God's command and connected with His Word.

Quite apart from the stand on Baptism taken in many of the Protestant communions, Luther aligns the sacrament with the mysterious act of regeneration. Many Protestants claim that Baptism is merely an act of profession of faith in Christ, but Luther says:

"Baptism is necessary for all, because Christ has commanded that all should be baptised, and has connected the blessing of salvation with this sacrament."²

Luther teaches that children are to be baptized and lists five reasons in his Small Catechism why children are to be brought into the fellowship of the church through Baptism. He does not teach that any

1. Cf. Luther: Small Catechism, p. 142

2. Ibid., p. 145

particular mode is necessary in Baptism but any one of three ways is acceptable: sprinkling, pouring, or immersion.

The benefits of Baptism are set forth in the Catechism as the forgiveness of sins, deliverance from death and the devil, and everlasting salvation.¹ To substantiate this statement, Luther refers to Acts 2:38, Acts 22:16 and Ephesians 5:25,26.

The sacrament of the Altar, commonly called the Lord's Supper, is next treated in his Catechism. The benefits of the Lord's Supper are pointed out in the words of the institution. These words are: "given and shed for you, for the remission of sins." The benefits then are remission of sins, life, and salvation. While only the remission of sins is mentioned, life and salvation follow the washing of our sins in Christ. Indeed, Luther says that the mere eating and drinking do not produce such great effects, but the Word of Christ at the institution gives the sacrament its power in the heart and life of the believer. The Lord's Supper is to be received by all believers in both elements--the bread and the wine--and is to come after the believers have made public and earnest confession of their sins.

In investigating the main tenets of the

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 149

Catechism, the theology of Martin Luther has been seen at a glance. All that he considers essential is written in the catechism. But in the last analysis all of the Catechism reverts to the central article of the Creed which makes all of Luther's system Christo-centric.

Although this study of the Catechism has clearly revealed that the doctrines are essentially Christo-centric, there is a lack of any necessity of personal appropriation except the one reference as written under the second article of the Creed: "I believe that Jesus Christ has become my Lord." ¹ The catechumen, according to Luther's explanation, has made a statement of belief. But to what extent this statement of belief is made a commitment to this One who has become my Lord is not clear. The element of an overt act of commitment to Christ is not present. Nowhere is emphasis given to the awakening of the individual to his need to confess that he belongs to Christ and dwells in Christ and Christ in him.

2. Through Preaching.

In thinking of commitment to Christ on the part of young people by the influence brought to bear upon them through the pulpit, the modern mind finds it hard

1. Ante p. 15

to separate this from the type of emphasis used at the "Youth for Christ" rallies, in many evangelistic communions, and through evangelistic organizations of students in the high schools and colleges. But this type of commitment is not a part of the Lutheran system.

If Luther advocated such an emphasis, it has not been found by this writer in his writings nor in works dealing with those writings, and it is hard to believe that he ever gave much thought to that type of appeal to youth. It has already been seen that his is a system of Christian nurture which involves the training of children and young people over a period of years and is designed to bring them to an understanding of and loyalty to Christ and His church.

Luther's school and pulpit did not conflict; the one strengthened the other and both were Christocentric.¹ After four hundred years of test and service his homiletical and pedagogical writings are still in daily service as Protestant classics. In Germany, Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, in Finland, Austria, and wherever the Germans and Scandinavians have settled, Luther's pedagogy is still being used.

Luther laid much stress on the preaching of the Word. He held that where God's Word is preached,

1. Cf. Lenker, op, cit., p. 5

there are Christians no matter how few or how frail they
may be.¹

But in the training of the young it is not a part of Luther's system to give sermons a paramount part. He says:

"Sermons very little edify children, who learn little thereby; it is more needful that they be taught and well instructed in schools, and at home that they be heard and examined what they have learned; this way profits much; 'tis very wearisome, but very necessary."²

3. Through Direct Appeals to Commitment to Christ.

The importance of the Catechism in Luther's system has already been established in that it was written by him to combat the ignorance of the peasants and as a device to train the young in the faith.

Because of the Lutheran doctrine of Baptism which maintains that the work of faith is begun in the child, the catechetical writings of later Lutheran leaders say, as previously indicated, that in confirmation the young person is not called on to make any new vows or promises but to establish what was already begun³ by the sponsors in Baptism.

Confirmation is the logical time for a young person to be confronted with the Person and Work of

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 73

2. Hazlitt, op. cit., p. 124

3. Cf. Luther: Small Catechism, p. 154

Christ and to be called on to make a decision in his life for or against Christ. But rather, it is assumed that a child who has automatically become of age is to be confirmed and after a period of instruction is confirmed in church membership.

Confirmation is defined by Dr. Stump¹ as the Church's testimony that the catechumens have received instruction. Another contemporary scholar defines confirmation:

"Confirmation, which takes place at about fourteen or fifteen, is a churchly rite at which the catechumens, after having given proof of their Christian knowledge, make public confession of their faith, promise faithfully to keep and employ the grace of Baptism, and to fulfill their duties as church members...This is the regular and proper preparation for communicant membership in the Lutheran Church."²

However much may be assumed for youth at confirmation, this assumption is dangerous because it affects the entire church and its program. In the light of certain manifest lacks, one cannot help questioning whether a large proportion of the church's membership is in fact part of the body of Christ and self-dedicated to Him.

There is no reference to anything comparable to a commitment on the part of a young person in the writings of Luther that have been examined for this

1. Ante p. iii

2. Victor Spong, in Earl Kernahan's Training for Church Membership, p. 43

study. As has already been said, Martin Luther himself, as a Roman Catholic caught in the throes of superstition, committed himself to become a monk and later, through study and direction in the Scriptures, came to realize the true nature of his relation to Christ. It then can be drawn from the absence of any place for commitment to Christ, and from an understanding of Luther's own experience, that the Lutheran system, from the time of Luther himself, places no emphasis on the commitment of one's life and energies to Christ, but understands and takes for granted that through the services and ordinances of the church--Baptism and confirmation--most members will automatically live a Christ-centered life.

D. Summary

It has been discovered in this study that Martin Luther's religious experience was one of gradual growth from a superstitious fear of death which caused him to enter a monastery to the dawn of the light of Gospel freedom that filled his mind and heart with a great message for which to live.

In the catechetical writings, which are the main sources on his method of Christian training of the young, it has been seen that through a study of the Decalogue, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the

Sacraments, Luther has outlined an excellent method of teaching to young people the major tenets of the Christian faith. This study calls them to repentance, to a knowledge of the Saviour, and to the perpetuation of the faith through prayer and the sacraments. It can definitely be said that his training is Christo-centric. Yet it must also be said that nowhere in this study has there been found a definite appeal for young people personally to commit their lives and energies to the Christ.

CHAPTER II
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A. Introduction

It is the purpose of this chapter to record the results of a study of the current intermediate materials in the Christian Growth Series. This study is made to determine the place commitment to Christ has in the Sunday School materials of the United Lutheran Church in America.

The Christian Growth Series is the material to be investigated because it is the latest and most widely used Church School literature in the United Lutheran Church, the first issues being ready for use in October, 1944. This series has been prepared and printed in a co-operative effort of three of the large Lutheran bodies in this country. They are the United Lutheran Church in America, the Evangelical Lutheran Augustana Synod, and the American Lutheran Church. A committee of editors composed of one editor from each of the three boards of parish education has been the control board in the

preparation of these materials.¹

The material is prepared according to the group-graded plan with a cycle of three years' teacher's guides and student study books on the intermediate level. The third year materials are still in process of preparation, with the fourth quarter not yet published. For the purposes of this study, the intermediate materials are under investigation because it is a matter of general practice that a youth is confirmed during his intermediate years, at the chronological age of 12, 13, or 14.

The procedure in this chapter is to discover the aims and basic features of the Christian Growth Series, the teachings found in the intermediate materials of this series on the work of Christ and on the individual's relation to Christ. In the process of investigation a rough chart was made on the above mentioned teachings.

B. Aims of the Series

Before beginning a discussion of the intermediate materials in particular, the general aims and objectives of the entire series should be considered. It should first be said that the series is aimed at the development and growth of the pupils who use it. Its name denotes its

1. Cf. Pamphlet, The Christian Growth Series, p. 1

general emphasis--it is a series to cultivate growth:¹

"This means that humbly, but with eager devotion, the pupil will strive to attain the fulness and stature of Christ. Each pupil will therefore be guided in continually building up and developing, under the power of the Holy Ghost--

1. Fellowship with God. A sense of fellowship with God: the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit.
2. Christian Faith. An understanding and personal acceptance of the Christian faith.
3. Christian Living. The expression of Christian faith in Christian living, both personal and social.
4. Christian Adjustment. Christian poise or adjustment in a continuously changing world.
5. Church Membership. Intelligent and wholehearted participation in the life and work of the church.
6. Use of the Bible. Regular, intelligent, and fruitful use of the Bible.
7. Use of Christian Resources. Regular, intelligent, and fruitful use of such Christian resources as prayer, the Catechism, church history, hymns, devotional literature, and religious art."²

Under the second of the above aims, that each pupil will be guided to an understanding and personal acceptance of the Christian faith, the possibility of commitment is included.

C. Basic Features of the Series

1. As a Whole.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 2
2. Ibid., pp. 2, 3.

The scope of the series when completed will cover the departments of the Church school from the beginners through the seniors.

Being built on the group-graded plan, the lessons for a given Sunday, quarter, or year are prepared on the level of the department rather than by age or grades in school.

The content of the literature, in keeping with its aims, consists of selected Scripture passages, with emphasis on the understanding and appreciation of their message and with suggestions that would lead to an intelligent, regular and fruitful use of the Bible. The materials also present, sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly, a study of the life, teachings, and work of the Church with the end in view of cultivating intelligent and enthusiastic membership. Much use of the Catechism, hymns, devotional material, religious art,¹ and memory work is made.

According to the board of editors The Christian Growth Series has ten basic features:

"It is:

1. Biblical--based on and true to the teachings and spirit of the Bible, giving a thorough-going study of the Bible.
2. Evangelical--presents clearly and consistently the good news of salvation through Christ Jesus.

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 7

3. Lutheran--true to the teachings, principles, and practices of the Lutheran Church, giving a thorough study of the catechism and supplementary to the pastor's instruction.
4. Vital--deals with the actual life of the pupil, meeting his present needs and preparing him for more mature Christian life.
5. Educational--employs accepted principles and procedures of present-day education, such as adequate motivation, functional use of content material, meaningful pupil participation, and purposeful activities. It regards the teacher as a sharer with his pupils of the Christian heritage and of his experience, and as a leader and guide of their faith and living.
6. Comprehensive--includes within its scope the areas of understanding, attitudes, and activities essential to the full-orbed development of the pupil's faith and life.
7. Social--recognizes that the pupil is a member of society and, using the integrating influence of the Gospel, joins with the home and other social institutions in equipping him to be a worthy member of society.
8. Graded--it is adapted to the abilities, needs, and experiences of the various age groups.
9. Usable--is adaptable to effective use in the varying situations that prevail in our church schools, such as those pertaining to enrollment, building and equipment, time schedules, and abilities of teachers and other leaders.
10. Attractive--is made up, illustrated, and printed so as to be attractive in appearance."¹

2. The Intermediate Material.

At the beginning of each quarter for a three-year period the intermediate in the Church school receives a new Study Book and his teacher receives a new Teacher's Guide. The pupil's quarterly is designed to be just what it's name implies--a Study Book. It is prepared to be of use in the class and is planned for homework, too, but

1. Ibid., p. 3

the homework is to follow the class session and not to precede the lesson. The books are well illustrated with many two-color drawings to make the lesson vivid, and each quarter there are two four-color full-page paintings in the pupil's books.

The teacher's books are not nearly so colorful, but are filled with material helpful to the leaders of intermediates.

The three-year plan for the content to be taught to the intermediates covers a wide scope of catechetical material, Bible background and content, the meaning of confirmation, Christian adjustment, church organization, and the meaning of God's way for man.

The outline of a specific lesson will aid in the understanding of the general plan followed throughout. The subject of the first quarter's study is, "We Obey and We Believe" or "What's in the Catechism?" This book, written by Donald F. Irvin, is a preparatory course on the Catechism. It is designed to give "the Biblical background, general understanding, and memorization of the Catechism. This quarter includes Parts I and II on the Ten Commandments and the Creed."¹

The title of the first lesson is "Have We Made Our Choice?" It is a study of the first commandment made

1. Ibid., p. 10

vivid and interesting. A colored illustration of a robot staring blankly at two pieces of paper--one a beautiful painting, the other a child's scribbled drawing--opens the study of the first commandment. The robot does not have the power to choose. After this illustration, the child is sent to the Bible to read of the story of Joshua's important choice.¹ Questions correlated with the Bible reading awaken in the intermediate the importance of what Joshua did. Another vivid Bible illustration of Elijah and the priests of Baal², with colored pictures of the priests wailing and cutting themselves and of Elijah kneeling before the burning sacrifice, bring life to the words, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." After clarifying questions about Elijah's activities, the pupil is again referred to the Bible. This time he is sent to the words of Jesus which tell him to seek first the Kingdom of God³, and again the Bible reference is followed by questions provocative of discussion and clarification.

Then from the subheading, "Turn to the Bible", the student's attention is called to the division of the lesson called, "Think of Your Life." Then follow three illustrations pertinent to the life of an intermediate.

The memory work is encouraged by pictorializing

1. Joshua 24:15
2. Cf. I Kings 18:17-40
3. Cf. Matthew 6:19-34

the item that is to be memorized. In this case, the words, "Memorize the First Commandment" are set off in bold black type on a pale blue "parchment" with "torn" edges.¹

Under the last division of this lesson called, "Can You Do This?", there is pencil work for the student to do in his Study Book either at the last of the class or at home following the session. This activity is designed to have the pupil translate into his daily activity the teaching of the first commandment.

At the very end of the printed material under Lesson One, the words of the first commandment and its explanation are printed so that the memory work is aided by having it written out in the same book.

The general procedure of this lesson is followed throughout the entire three years of intermediate materials.

The Study Books and Teacher's Guide for the intermediate level come by quarters under these titles:

Intermediate I, First Quarter, "We Obey and We Believe."
Second Quarter, "We Have Fellowship with God"
Third Quarter, "Before and After Confirmation"
Fourth Quarter, "This Bible of Mine"
Intermediate II, First Quarter, "Adam to Samuel"
Second Quarter, "Saul to Malachi"
Third Quarter, "How Old am I?"
Fourth Quarter, "Our Church Working"
Intermediate III, First Quarter, "This Testament of Mine"

1. Christian Growth Series, Intermediate I Study Book, First Quarter, p. 9

Second Quarter, "God's Way for Man"
Third Quarter, "God's Way Through the Church"
Fourth Quarter, (Not printed at the time of this study)

D. Teachings on the Work of Christ

1. The First Year.

The Study Book for the first quarter contains ten lessons on the Decalogue and three lessons on the Apostles' Creed. Lesson 12, entitled "God the Son and His Work", is a thorough study of the second article of the Creed which closes with the assignment to memorize the article and its explanation as taken from Luther's Catechism. The Teacher's Guide contains three aims for this lesson:

- "1. To help the intermediates to appreciate the biblical background of the Second Article of the Creed and Christ's work of redemption.
2. To lead the group to the determination that they will help to make Christmas a truly Christian festival.
3. To encourage the intermediates to memorize the Second Article of the Creed and its explanation."

This lesson on the Son and His work falls on the Sunday nearest Christmas, hence the teacher has the job of teaching the Christmas message with the second article of the Creed. Their message being related, the two are interwoven into the one lesson, worked out as

1. Teacher's Guide, Intermediate I, First Quarter, p. 55

follows:

An illustration which draws a contrast between family "A" and family "B" and their methods of celebrating Christmas opens the lesson. Family "A's" method of celebrating Christmas followed this order: Two weeks before Christmas Mrs. A. started to make cookies; several days before Christmas Mrs. A. with Tom and Mary decorated the house with holly, poinsettias, and a fancy decoration for the door. Mr. A. and Tom put up the electric train and electric lights for the outside of the house. The home was quite a show place and they had worked hard. On Christmas morning, the children quarreled about their presents, Mr. A. stayed in bed too long, and Mrs. A. complained about being tired all day, and that afternoon the family went to a movie. They passed by a Christmas seal booth with the remark, "I don't see why all these charities have to bother us at Christmas time."¹

Mrs. B. was a worker in the children's division of the Church school and at the beginning of Advent season she and her co-workers began to plan for Christmas. There was the Christmas "family night", the service when the children might bring their "white gifts" for the less fortunate, the offering on the Sunday before Christmas for the orphan's home. All these events which crowded

1. Ibid., p. 56

the Christmas season in the Church had to be planned and Mrs. B. was active at this work. John, who came home from college for the holidays, helped decorate the home and on Christmas morning before the family exchanged gifts they walked to the early church service together and were very happy about it.

After this illustration the pupil is asked, "Which family most fully received the gift that God gives at Christmas in Jesus?"

The second section of the lesson is "Turn to the Bible" and there are five references which the student is asked to read. Each reference is followed by good questions such as Luke 2:1-20, "Can you find in this passage a name given to Jesus which shows the work he was sent to do?" The other references are John 3:16, John 6:66-69, Romans 3:21-26, and I Timothy 1:15.¹ Questions follow this Bible material which, if answered correctly, would bring out God's great love for man, the purpose of Jesus' coming into the world, why some people in Jesus' time forsook Him, what His disciples believed about Him, the necessity of all men for salvation, and the how of being saved.

The next section of the lesson guides the pupil in thinking what this world would be like if Jesus had

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 56, 57

never come to bring peace, brotherhood, and good will. They are reminded that there is still much wrong doing in the world, but that there would be much more evil, selfishness and sin if there had never been a Christmas.

The important lesson is then taught that Jesus "redeemed us not with silver and gold, but with his holy and precious blood." They are told that God could have given riches like a fairy tale prince but He gave something far better--His love, His friendship, and His Son. At the end of the lesson, beside the memory work of the Creed and its explanation, the pupils are challenged to become "home missionaries" to make Christmas a more Christian festival in the home.

The review of the lesson on "God the Son and His Work" above gives the general plan and the main truths taught in this particular Sunday's class session.

The second quarter's Study Book contains a climaxing study of what is in the Catechism, with lessons on the Lord's Prayer and the two Sacraments.

The work of Christ is mentioned in many of these lessons especially in relation to His teaching of His disciples to pray the Lord's Prayer and to a Bible reference which brings the pupil in contact with the prayer of the Lord in the gospel of John.¹ The

1. Cf. John 17

teachings of Christ on the meaning of the coming of God's kingdom under the study of the petition, "Thy Kingdom Come," is referred to. The pupil is taught of the healing of the leper¹ in teaching the fact that God is interested in all of our needs under the petition, "Give us this day our daily bread." The forgiveness of Christ toward His enemies and especially toward His murderers as He hung on the cross is used as illustrative material in teaching the fifth petition.

In the lesson on the Lord's Supper called, "Our Saviour's Nearest Presence" the truth is taught that in this sacrament Christ gives Himself to the believer.²

The third quarter, "Before and After Confirmation" makes reference to the life of Christ but the chief emphasis throughout is on the individual's relation to Christ and to the Church.³ Therefore this quarter will be treated under the division of this chapter especially assigned to this topic.

The fourth quarter, "This Bible of Mine" is chiefly a study of the Bible background; the origin of the Bible; how the Hebrews lived, learned, worshipped; Bible geography; and the last four lessons are given over to a study of the poetry of the Bible.

1. Cf. Luke 17:11-19

2. Cf. Intermediate I, Second Quarter, Study Book, p. 60

3. Cf. Post., pp. 53, 54, 55, 56

2. The Second Year.

In the first quarter of the second year a study is made of Old Testament characters from Adam to Samuel. In the first three lessons Christ is not mentioned. But in referring to the sacrifice of Isaac in Lesson four it is taught that he was a type of Christ. As the study of Old Testament characters progresses, the pupil is asked to keep a record of the line of promise as it begins in Abraham and is renewed in other Israelite leaders. In lesson five there is a reference to the Saviour who came from the Israelite nation. In the study of the Exodus from Egypt, Christ is referred to again and again as the type of the Passover Lamb and the second article of the Creed is again the memory work assigned to bring to the pupils' attention that the second article¹ refers to the Passover and its fulfillment in Christ. As the intermediates study the giving of the law to the people of Israel, they are taught a summary of the law² as given by Jesus.

The high point in the teachings on the work of Christ in the second quarter of the second year is reached in the twelfth lesson when Christ is referred to as the expression of the New Covenant bringing divine

1. Cf. Intermediate II, First Quarter, p. 38

2. Cf. Matthew 22: 37-39

mercy and forgiveness to men from God.¹ The subject of this quarter's lessons is "Saul to Malachi." In the sixth Sunday's lesson, the missionary command of Jesus is given for them to memorize. On the seventh Sunday Micah's prophecy is taught, with more emphasis on the second article of the Creed, and on the ninth Sunday the prophecy of the Saviour by Isaiah is taught and the memory work is Isaiah 9:6-7. The last lesson in this quarterly is a summary or climax to the six months' study of the Bible and is called "The World's Need." The entire story of the Bible is here taught in a few brief questions beginning with the creation of the world, the fall of man into sin, and God's answer to the needs of sinful man and a sinsick world in the person of the Saviour Jesus Christ.²

The third quarter of the second year's materials for intermediates in the Christian Growth Series is called "How Old Am I?" and is aimed to help the intermediate face in a Christian way the problems of adjustment and change that come to him in the process of growing up. It is also aimed to guide him in the type of growth that will enable him to live the Christian life in a constantly changing world.³ Because of the emphasis in this quarter on the youth's own actions and

1. Cf. Intermediate II, Second Quarter, p. 58

2. Cf. Ibid., pp. 64, 65

3. Cf. Intermediate II, Third Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 5

activities, these lessons will be treated thoroughly under a later division of this chapter. But there is one direct reference to the work of Jesus that should be mentioned here. After the resurrection of Christ, He still leads those who follow Him:

"Jesus rose to lead them through life, even through death. And he arose to lead us in the same way."¹

Because of the nature of the material for the fourth quarter of the second year, consideration of this series of lessons belongs under the section on the individual's relation to Christ.² This quarter is the particular series that is devoted to a specific church body of the three Lutheran Churches that prepared this material. For the purposes of this study, the one prepared by the United Lutheran Church in America is the one under investigation. As a background for the entire study of the work of the Church, it is important to note that the leader who prepared this quarterly gives credit for the power of the Church to Jesus who puts the water of life--the means of grace--into the hands of His Church.³

3. The Third Year.

The first quarter of the third year is a series

1. Intermediate II, Third Quarter, Study Book, p. 9
2. Cf. Post, pp. 59, 60
3. Intermediate II, Fourth Quarter, Study Book, p. 15

of lessons on the New Testament. In the opening message to the pupils they are told that the "New Testament is the assignment of heavenly riches by our Lord Jesus to the children of God...a new agreement between God and man, that 'whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'¹"

In the second lesson of the first quarter on how the New Testament was collected, there is a comparison between the Old and New Testaments. There are two questions asked of the pupil which bring out clearly the work of Christ:

- "1. Why is the witness of Jesus greater than that of the Old Testament? (John 5:36-37)
4. Did Jesus want his work to destroy the Old Testament? (Matthew 5:17-18)"²

In learning that a record of the early Church is also found in the New Testament, the pupils are told this great central truth in relation to the work of Christ: the message of salvation that Jesus taught by His life, words, suffering, death,³ and finally His resurrection was God's New Testament that gave life to the early Church and the Church in this day. The seventh lesson describes the action of Jesus in cleansing the temple and the question is raised as to whether or not Jesus

1. Intermediate III, First Quarter, Study Book, p. 5
2. Ibid., p. 12
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 13

came to destroy the Jewish religion. For the answer to this question, the intermediate is given the reference Matthew 5:17-20 and finds there the statement by Christ that He came to fulfill the Old Testament faith.

The prayer at the end of the eighth lesson makes clear reference to Christ as Saviour and Lord of mankind. On the tenth Sunday of this quarter there is a reference made to the teaching of Luke that Jesus came to save all men.¹ On the twelfth Sunday the question "What connection is there between the Old and New Testaments? (Hebrews 1:1-2)²" is presented. In this instance, if the teacher takes the opportunity, the real and complete mission of Christ can be presented to these pupils from this scripture reference. The cross of Christ as the heart of the New Testament message is the central teaching of this final lesson. The apostles had seen the prophecies of the Messiah fulfilled in Christ and they knew that their Saviour was eternal. He was the heart of their message.³

In the second quarter of the third year, the work of Christ and the relation of the individual to Him is interwoven under the topic "God's Way for Man." In the first lesson on why John the Baptist announced Jesus the answer is taught through Bible references and

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 50
2. Ibid., p. 60
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 65

illustrations that Jesus is THE Way. The pupil is taught in another lesson that Jesus was made ready for the work He was to do through temptation.¹ The point is made here that Jesus used the Bible references from the Old Testament to withstand temptation. Jesus began His work, after His temptations, by preaching redemption by repentance and belief in the gospel.² In the fourth lesson which is called, "What is the Kingdom of God?", the pupil is taught of Jesus as the architect for God who showed man the blueprint for the Kingdom of God. On the seventh Sunday the healing work of Christ which He did for men while He was on earth is emphasized. In the next session the pupil finds, in his Study Book, part of the hymn "Shepherd of Tender Youth" by Clement of Alexandria which teaches of Christ as Shepherd, the Christ, King, and Guide.

"Other people spoke of Jesus as Rabbi, Prophet, Teacher, Master, Son of Joseph. But Jesus called himself the Bread of Life, the Light of the World, the Good Shepherd."³

The ninth Sunday's lesson raises the question, "Why Was Jesus' Death Desired?". There are two types of reasons for actions--given reasons and real reasons. The given reasons for Jesus' death were that He perverted the nation, forbade paying taxes to Caesar, and called

1. Cf. Intermediate III, Second Quarter, Study Book, p. 12
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 17
3. Ibid., p. 42

Himself a King. But the real reason for His death was that He attacked wrong and sin.¹ A session on the meaning of the Lord's Supper is taught next and Jesus is pictured as the Passover Lamb, as He was previously in the teaching on the Exodus from Egypt. Jesus was convicted and finally crucified, not for any reasons controlled by His environment but simply because this was God's way of showing His love for man and of reconciling man to Himself.² The last two lessons of this quarter are on the cross and the victory over the grave. The pupil is taught that the meaning of the cross is that Christ was God's sacrifice for man's sin. In His work on the cross, Christ pours out God's redemptive love to man. God could not let the Saviour stay in the grave, but brought Him out to victorious resurrection and ascension.

The third quarter's material is a study of "God's Way through the Church" and is a New Testament survey, with most emphasis given to early church history in the book of Acts. Time is also given to a study of the epistles and the book of Revelation although these studies are of necessity brief.

The victory of Christ over sin and death is

1. Cf. Ibid., pp. 45, 46

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 56

mentioned in the Easter lesson and Easter is referred to as the Christian's V-E Day. The power of the resurrection of Jesus and the power of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers are the two most important powers in the beginning of the church.¹ Another aspect of the work of Christ is discussed in relation to Paul's call to go to Macedonia. "The Lord Jesus had called them to go to this new territory."² In the suggested prayer for worship the victory of Christ over death and the grave is again mentioned.³

4. Possibilities for Commitment.

In the above lessons dealing with the work of Christ certain possibilities for emphasis on commitment are evident. With the teaching of the first commandment is the opportunity to have the pupils make a choice for God as Joshua did.⁴ With the lesson on the redemption through the blood of Christ and the giving of this great gift to man, could come the necessity of man's response by committing one's life to God.⁵ In the third quarter of the second year, Christ is pictured as the living Lord

1. Cf. Intermediate III, Third Quarter, Study Book, p. 14
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 37
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 68
4. Cf. Ante, p. 36
5. Cf. Ante, p. 41

who leads and is willing to "lead us".¹ Here is the possibility of stressing the giving over of their lives to Christ to be led of Him. Again Christ is presented as the giver of the New Covenant,² with the promise that whosoever believes in him has great reward. Certainly more is meant here than mere belief in Christ or mental assent; this, then, could also be used as a place of opportunity to lead the youth to commit themselves completely to this One who gives everlasting life. In the first quarter of the third year the pupil is taught that Jesus came to save all men.³ Here is a time when the pupils might be led to a deeper understanding of what it means to be saved by Christ. And again in the second quarter of the third year the redemptive work of Christ on the cross and His complete victory over the grave⁴ is an opportune time to call for complete loyalty to and trust in Christ. The third quarter's materials add two important teachings with inherent possibilities for commitment: The power of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer as one of the great powers at work in the church; and the fact that the Lord Jesus had called Paul to Macedonia.

1. Cf. Ante, p. 45
2. Cf. Ante, p. 46
3. Cf. Ante, p. 47
4. Cf. Ante, p. 50

E. Teachings on the Individual's Relation
to Christ

The teachings on the work of Christ in the intermediate years of the Christian Growth Series has been covered. There remains the final question for investigation: What is the intermediate taught of his personal relation to Christ?

1. The First Year.

At the very outset in this three-year series for intermediates, the teacher is told of the importance of making choices in the child's life.

"During this period in the lives of boys and girls they generally decide to be received into the confirmed membership of the church. Here they make the most important choice of their lives. They need to recognize it as a real choice."¹

And one of the aims of the first lesson is to lead the group to fear, love, and trust God above all else, and to choose to confess Him as their Heavenly Father. This is done in teaching the first commandment. In teaching the second article of the Creed, the teacher is admonished in the Teacher's Guide to teach that salvation rests not on the imitation of Jesus, or in having the spirit of Jesus, but in the faith in redemption through the blood of Christ.² The prayer that follows the above statement

1. Intermediate I, First Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 8
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 58

is a prayer of commitment:

"Grant, O Lord, that we may give ourselves this day to Thee and Thy way of life, so that we may receive the innocence and the blessedness of the Christ child as the greatest gift of righteousness for our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen."¹

Following this prayer, there is a list of things that the teacher might suggest for the group to do. Among these things is the possibility of "consecrating ourselves anew to Christ", bringing others to worship services, sharing with the poor, singing Christmas carols for the shut-ins, and others.

In the second quarter, the last lesson is a review lesson on the entire Catechism in which the pupil is asked to think whether or not he has grown in his spiritual life.

There is much in the third quarter which gives opportunity for discussion of the individual's relation to Christ and the Church. The subject of the study is "Before and after Confirmation." However, in the teacher's aims for the series of lessons on this subject, there seems to be a lack. The aim as stated is to

"guide intermediates in Christian growth and to prepare them for their new experiences in the church following their confirmation...The prepared teacher can be one of God's agents to guide these young people in their Christian growth and development."²

1. Ibid., p. 59

2. Intermediate I, Third Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 6

In this third quarter there is a lesson called, "My Personal Decision." The pupils are taught first what it means to do things by proxy, and then told that their faith in the beginning was by proxy. Their sponsors in Baptism made certain vows and promises for them, but now that they have come of age they must say for themselves whether or not they accept the Christian faith and whether or not they are Christians. Reaching the decision that they want to belong to God's Kingdom, they are taught that an obligation to serve Jesus goes with it. They are given two word studies at the end of this lesson: contrition and conversion. Conversion is defined for them in these words:

"turning away from a life of sin and turning in trust to Jesus Christ as Saviour and Guide."¹

This definition of conversion is listed here under a title, "words to keep in mind."

On the day of confirmation, the pupil is taught in the fifth lesson, he will be standing before the altar to make vows that he will be faithful to God until life's end. "On confirmation day we take a vow to become a follower of God and a servant of Christ for life."² The crowds shouting "Hosanna to the Son of David" on Palm Sunday and "Crucify Him" on Thursday are

1. Intermediate I, Third Quarter, Study Book, p. 24

2. Ibid., p. 26

set up as a warning to the confirmand and he is urged to be faithful in his vows. In the sixth lesson there is a statement that confirmation day can best be kept by prayer and consecration.

The pupil is told to check himself and is asked some questions as to the nature of his experience. There are 20 questions listed,¹ two of them having pertinent relation to their decision or commitment to Christ. One is, "Why must I make my own decision to serve Jesus?" and the other, "What does it mean to be a Christian?"

In the ninth lesson the youth is admonished to enter the youth work of the congregation after his confirmation. The young people's leagues, week-day religious instruction, and Pocket Testament leagues are suggested.

The stewardship teaching has this emphasis: "Until I can go and do God's work myself, then I will give so others can go."

In the thirteenth session of this quarter there are three suggestions made for the pupil to further his growth: "I plan to grow as a Christian in my home, in my work and fun, in my church."² And another suggestion for the pupil's own volition is the statement following

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 36

2. Ibid., p. 64

the above that on the day of confirmation he takes his baptismal vows on his own shoulders.

In the first year of this Series, the topic of the fourth quarter is "This Bible of Mine." It has been stated earlier in this study that this is an attempt to teach Bible background, the early life of the Hebrews, and the poetry of the Bible. In reference to the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, there is a statement that explains his dark and gloomy outlook on the basis of the fact that, although he believes in God, he does not know God as his Saviour and Friend. This, in an indirect way, would admonish the pupils to seek to know God as their Saviour and Friend.

2. The Second Year.

In the first quarter of the second year, the study in Old Testament characters begins with Adam and goes through the study of Samuel.

The teacher is told at the outset of this quarter¹ that it is not enough for him to talk about faith, but that he should live in a faith-inspiring manner. The emphasis throughout this study is on God's love and man's sin. This emphasis begins with the sin of Adam and Eve, carries on through the Exodus and the

1. Cf. Intermediate II, First Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 6

murmurings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, the idol worship in the time of the judges, and the leadership of Samuel.

The Old Testament history is continued in the second quarter with studies from "Saul to Malachi." As the aims of this quarter are explained to the teacher, they are twofold. The first aim is in the realm of content or knowledge. The second aim:

"To lead the intermediate to appreciate God's love for sinning man, to prepare his own life as the dwelling place for God's Son, and to practice his faith in coping with the problems of life."¹

The entire plan of the quarter is full of the promise of the Saviour and consists largely in a study of the line of promise, but in the last lesson there is material which would awaken in the student a sense of his relation to the Christ. Justification by faith in Christ is taught through the use of Romans 1:17 and the second article of the Creed is reviewed. But the impact of the purpose of this study is to convince the student why it is that the world needs a Saviour.² In the theme prayer in the proposed worship service, the idea of Christ³ setting men free from sin is expressed.

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1. Intermediate II, Second Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 5
 2. Cf. Intermediate II, Second Quarter, Study Book, p. 67
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 68

In the quarter's materials entitled, "How Old Am I?", the pupils are to be led in the adjustments of life so that they will see the relation of the Christian way to every aspect of their living. The teacher is told in this third quarter that she is to help them capture the spirit of the Day of Resurrection, and to inspire them with a love for others that will motivate them to tell others the message of the Christ.¹ The pupil is told to ask himself the question, "How can I make Easter count?", and "What can I do for my church and my church school to show that I follow Jesus faithfully?"² Here again the second article of the Creed is reviewed. In the second lesson of this quarter, the intermediate is told to question himself about his growth. He asks himself the question, "Do I know Jesus better now than I used to?"³ One of the lessons is devoted to Jesus as a member of the family, and the pupils are taught what a good friend He is to every member of the family.⁴ In a study of what amusements are fitting for Christian youth, the quarterly here teaches that the best check is the question, "What would Jesus have us do?" In a lesson on guidance for choosing schools and for study in school,

1. Cf. Intermediate II, Third Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 7
2. Intermediate II, Third Quarter, Study Book, p. 10
3. Ibid., p. 13
4. Cf. Ibid., p. 24

these words are written in the Study Book:

"I am a Christian. A Christian is responsible to God. A Christian is to be an example to others. A follower of Jesus will want to do the best work he can."¹

Here is a statement put into the mouth of the intermediate that he is a Christian. It is left with the teacher what meaning this statement will take on. And there is a danger that some students who have never actually taken their stand as Christians of their own choice will go away with the idea that they are Christians. But this is counteracted, if the intermediate is in the Sunday School two Sundays later, by the teachings in the last lesson of the quarter. Here he is taught that God's helping him to grow depends upon whether or not he accepts Jesus' help.² The theme prayer that is suggested at the worship time is a prayer that asks the help of Christ for spiritual growth.³

The fourth quarter of the second year, as stated above, is the period given over to a special study of the separate Church body of the Lutheran groups preparing this Series. It is called, "Our Church Working." In launching the work of the quarter, the plan is explained to the intermediate. He is told that a Christian is like an invader in enemy-occupied territory; his job is to

1. Ibid., p. 55, 56
2. Cf. Ibid., p. 67
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 68

take orders from his leader and not to follow everything¹ that the enemy is doing. This quarter contains such pertinent teachings as that Jesus is the head of the Church and every member is bound to Him; that the intermediate is a helper for Jesus and thus must trust his Leader and keep His commands in his heart. The climax of the lesson on consecration is the exclamation, "Pastor, I give MYSELF to God!"² Here is the lesson that the largest and best offering anyone can give to God is himself. In the session on the influence of the Church, the writer of the quarterly states this important concept: the United Lutheran Church is not just a large group of people, but is made up of individuals who have been called by God, and who (especially in confirmation) have promised God their lives. The theme prayer suggested for worship has commitment possibilities in it.³

3. The Third Year.

Since at the time of this writing, in the third year of the materials for the intermediates, the fourth quarter's Teacher's Guide and Study Book are not yet available because they have not yet been printed, this report of necessity will be limited to the first three

1. Cf. Intermediate II, Fourth Quarter, Study Book, p. 5
2. Ibid., p. 25
3. Cf. Ibid., p. 68

quarters.

The first quarter of this year is given over to a study of the background of the New Testament. At the close of the third lesson there is a prayer to be prayed by the pupil which asks of Jesus power to put faith into action.¹ In the planned worship service for this quarter is printed the stanza of a hymn as an offering prayer which might well be used as a prayer of commitment:

"Take my love; my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasured store.
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee."²

In the second quarter which is the study of "God's Way for Man", there is much teaching on the work of Jesus. This has been treated in an earlier part of this chapter. In the lesson on the early preaching of Jesus on redemption and repentance, the student is asked if he is helping to carry on the telling of this good news. The work that Jesus began is to be carried on by the people in the Church. When Jesus is referred to as the Architect of God who gave the blueprint of the Kingdom of God, the lesson is that growth in the Kingdom is a two way affair--God needs man's cooperation. Then follow suggestions as to the meaning of being in the Kingdom. Two of these suggestions are related here:

1. Cf. Intermediate III, First Quarter, Study Book, p. 20
2. Ibid., p. 68

"To be in the Kingdom means: To pray daily, 'Thy Kingdom come.' To make the goodness of Jesus the 'first' in our lives."¹

Another list of suggested statements for doing the will of the Father comes at the end of the fifth lesson. They include such thoughts as putting Jesus first, praying daily, obeying parents, standing up for the right, trying to get others to be "for" Jesus and His Kingdom. In the session on how Jesus responded to opposition, the teaching is that those who follow Jesus may have to deny themselves some things that others consider important but their "soul life is safe with Jesus."² The pupil is taught in the eighth lesson that he is to witness to others about this faith that he has. In the lesson, "How Did Jesus Prepare For the End," the pupils are taught that Jesus went through agony on the cross. Then they are asked what they are doing to prepare to live a life worthy of Him. In the final lesson of the second quarter the intermediates learn of the great triumph of Christ in His resurrection and ascension. The great commission is reviewed with the statement that Jesus speaks this commission "to you." And here the pupil should feel the burden of his relationship to Christ.

1. Intermediate III, Second Quarter, Study Book, p. 25
2. Ibid., p. 34

In the material for the third quarter which is a study of "God's Way through the Church," through the example of the early disciples in the book of Acts the pupils are taught that they are today's witnesses and today's messengers.¹ In the lesson on the Jerusalem council the truth is taught that faith in Jesus as Lord is what made the early disciples Christians; whether or not they were circumcised or underwent some other external act did not determine their faith. The question, "What does Paul mean by 'newness of life' in verse 4?" of Romans 6 is raised in the tenth lesson. No answer is offered in the Study Book but the meaning of the Scripture is discussed in the Teacher's Guide:

"When we are Christ's we share in his resurrection and in all that he has obtained for us. We ought to live then as a true part of the church, the body of Christ--to serve acceptably and humbly with the gifts or talents that have been given to us."²

In the same lesson another discussion is given to the subject, "The just shall live by faith." Here it is pointed out that prophet, apostle, and reformer championed this truth. Reference is made to Habbakuk, Paul, and Luther. The fact that Paul wrote some of his most powerful letters while a prisoner is used to point up the truth that whether Paul was a prisoner or a free man

1. Cf. Intermediate III, Third Quarter, Study Book, p. 14
2. Intermediate III, Third Quarter, Teacher's Guide, p. 51

"he belonged to the Lord Jesus."¹ The continual use by Paul in his writings of the phrase "in Christ Jesus" is referred to as the highest spiritual relationship. But in the closing prayer suggested for use in worship is the thought expressed of loyalty to the Church:

"Then, from the church receiving Thy blessing, let us give to it our faith and love and service; through the same Jesus Christ, our risen Lord."²

4. Possibilities for Commitment.

In the above lessons which deal with the individual's relation to God in Christ there are certain possibilities for an emphasis on commitment. In the stated aims for the quarter dealing with the subject "Before and After Confirmation,"³ there is the admonition to the teachers to be well prepared so that they may be God's agents in guiding these young people in their Christian growth and development. The way the aim is stated, it seems that preparation on the part of the teacher will result in the new spiritual experiences and growth on the part of the student. In this same quarter⁴ there is the word study of contrition and conversion. The definition for conversion given expresses the idea of turning away from a life of sin and turning in a life of

1. Cf. Study Book, p. 53
2. Ibid., p. 68
3. Cf. Ante, p. 53
4. Cf. Ante, p. 54

trust to Christ as Saviour and Guide. This definition is listed under "words to keep in mind." The pupils are taught to take their own stand in the Christian faith and to seek God as their Saviour and Friend. They are taught that Jesus will help them in coming to God. Here is a possibility to encourage them to make real in their lives this act of coming to God through Jesus. There is much opportunity afforded the teacher of this material, by the nature of the subjects treated, to lead these youths to a place in their spiritual growth where they will commit themselves, their lives, and their energies to the Christ. What opportunity there is in the materials, is present in the implied form. However, they should have, after a study of these materials, the concept of Christ as their Saviour and Friend and of themselves as His helpers.

F. Summary

In this examination of the intermediate materials to determine the place of commitment to Christ, much material on the work of Christ and the individual's relation to Christ has been discovered.

The aims of the Christian Growth Series were found to include fellowship with God, an understanding and personal acceptance of the faith, the expression of

the faith in living, adjustment in a Christian way to the changing world, and intelligent Church membership, use of the Bible, and other Christian resources.

The basic features of this Series were set up by the board of editors as being that it is primarily Biblical, Evangelical, Lutheran, and vital to the life of the intermediate.

Further examination revealed that the work of Christ, as it would be taught to youth in the Church from these materials, consists largely of His death on the cross as the Passover Lamb love offering of God the Father to propitiate for the sins of Christ's people. Other emphases include His resurrection, His ascension, His commission to go preach and teach, and His life of healing and teaching.

In teaching the intermediate of his relation to Christ, it was discovered, the authors of this material have made different types of approaches. The youths are to be taught that their salvation rests not in their imitation of Jesus but in their faith in redemption through the shedding of His blood.¹ They are reminded that their sponsors made certain vows for them in Baptism but now that they are of age they must take a stand for themselves as to whether or not they believe

1. Cf. Ante, pp. 52, 57

the Christian faith.¹ They are warned not to be like the multitude during Holy Week that shouted "Hosannas" on Sunday and "Crucify Him" on Thursday.² They are taught to seek God as their Saviour and Friend.³ They are told that God will help them to grow spiritually only if they willingly accept Jesus' help in coming to God.⁴ Jesus is pictured to them as the head of the Church and they, as members, as His helpers.⁵ Prayer to Christ for power to put their faith into action is also a part of their training in this Series.⁶ Other emphases in their relation to Christ are: To pray daily for His Kingdom to come and to attempt to make Jesus first in their lives;⁷ to prepare to live a life worthy of their Christ;⁸ and to remember that the great commission that Jesus gave was spoken to them.⁹

As these teachings on the work of Christ and the individual's relation to Christ are brought together, it is evident that the essential teachings of the Church are present in these materials. As the teachings on the individual's relation to Christ are reviewed, it is clear

1. Cf. Ante, p. 54
2. Cf. Ante, p. 54
3. Cf. Ante, p. 56
4. Cf. Ante, p. 59
5. Cf. Ante, p. 60
6. Cf. Ante, p. 61
7. Cf. Ante, p. 62
8. Cf. Ante, p. 62
9. Cf. Ante, p. 62

that from these materials the intermediates should get the concept of Christ as their Eternal Saviour and Friend and of the necessity of giving themselves to Him as His helpers in building His Kingdom.

CHAPTER III
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U.L.C.A. TO FIND THE PLACE OF COMMITMENT
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A. Introduction

In this chapter the books most used in the catechetical classes of the United Lutheran Church in America will be examined to discover the place of commitment to Christ in preparation for and the rite of confirmation.

The catechetical books to be examined were selected from the many possibilities on the basis of their popularity and the extent of their use in the Church. Dr. Joseph Stump's Explanation to Luther's Catechism¹ is first in popularity and usage. Near fifty percent of the pastors are using the Catechism with the explanation by Dr. Stump. According to the latest figures from the Parish and Church School Board, Dr. O. Fred Nolde's A Guide Book in Catechetical Instruction is second in popularity. With the book by Dr. Nolde, Study Helps in the Catechism Series A and Series B are

1. Cf. Appendix, p.96, letter dated January 3, 1947 from the Parish and Church School Board

used. Two of the other more prominent texts that are used are In the Days of Thy Youth by Mary E. Brimmer, and the Junior Class Manual by G. J. Muller.¹ These four texts, then, constitute the materials examined.

Since confirmation is the time when youths are received into the full membership of the Church and take the baptismal vows upon their own shoulders, it will be helpful to examine the confirmation service and its place in the full development of the Christian experience of the intermediates. When it is discovered what takes place at confirmation, it will be necessary to examine the general content of the catechetical textbooks that are used in preparation for confirmation. Since these books are in general built around the Catechism, as set forth in the first chapter, the discussion of the content of the Catechism will not be repeated here. Instead the books will be examined for their specific emphases and for the approach that is made through them to the catechumen. The purpose of all of this is to discover the place of commitment to Christ in the period of catechetical instruction and in confirmation.

B. The Service of Confirmation

1. Cf. Ibid., p. 96

Confirmation is not a sacrament but is a solemn rite of the Church in which the catechumen is confirmed, established, and strengthened in grace.¹ At this time the catechumen takes upon his own shoulders the vows that his sponsors made for him in baptism.² This rite of confirmation is closely connected with the sacrament of baptism. After the child has been baptized, he has been taught to observe the things that Christ has commanded and when he reaches the age when he is able to examine himself he should be instructed and confirmed.³

Besides the instruction in the home and Sunday School, confirmation should be preceded by intensive training in the catechetical class which is usually taught by the Pastor.

"Confirmation is the Church's testimony that the catechumens have received the necessary instruction to fit them for intelligent and earnest participation in the full privileges of Church membership. This instruction is the principal thing, and without it confirmation would lose its meaning."⁴

Unfortunately, in actual practice, some look on confirmation as "graduation day" when they think they are done with learning and instruction and the coming to Sunday School. There is also a tendency, in some instances, to

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1. Cf. G. H. Gerberding: The Lutheran Catechist, p. 128
 2. Cf. Joseph Stump: Explanation to Luther's Catechism, p. 154
 3. Cf. Ibid., p. 153
 4. Ibid., p. 153

give up church attendance after confirmation.¹

But to the contrary, this is the time in the Church membership of the individual when he can and should enter vigorously into the full life and privileges of the church.

The full service of confirmation as it is printed in the Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church is added here to set clearly before the reader the step taken by the Church and by the individual on the day of confirmation.

"Order for Confirmation

"A Hymn of Invocation of the Holy Ghost shall be sung. Then shall the Minister announce the names of those to be confirmed, and they shall come to the Altar. Then shall the Minister say:

Dearly Beloved: In Holy Baptism you were received by our Lord Jesus Christ and made members of His Holy Church; in accordance with our Lord's command, you have been instructed in the Word of God and led to the knowledge of His will and of His gracious Gospel; and you now desire to be confirmed.

I therefore ask each of you:

Dost thou renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his ways?

Answer: Yes, I renounce.

Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?

Answer: I believe in God the Father Almighty,

1. Cf. Gerberding, op. cit., p. 131

Maker of heaven and earth.

Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ?

Answer: I believe in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord; Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, Born of the Virgin Mary; Suffered under Pontius Pilate, Was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into hell; The third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, And sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost?

Answer: I believe in the Holy Ghost; The holy Christian Church, the Communion of Saints; The Forgiveness of sins; The Resurrection of the body; And the Life everlasting.

Dost thou promise to abide in this Faith?

Answer: Yes, by the help of God.

Dost thou promise, as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, to remain faithful to its teachings and to be diligent in the use of the Means of Grace?

Answer: Yes, by the help of God.

Then shall the Minister say:

Let us pray.

Almighty and Everlasting God, Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by water and the Spirit, and hast forgiven them all their sins: Strengthen them, we beseech Thee, with the Holy Ghost, the Comforter; and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace: the spirit of wisdom and understanding; the spirit of counsel and might; the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, now and forever; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord. Amen.

Then shall the candidates kneel, and the Minister shall lay his hand, or hands, on the head of each and say the Prayer of Blessing.

A Text of Holy Scripture for each candidate may be said before the Prayer of Blessing.

The Father in Heaven, for Jesus' sake, renew and increase in thee the gift of the Holy Ghost, to thy strengthening in faith, to thy growth in grace, to thy patience in suffering, and to the blessed hope of everlasting life.

Each one confirmed shall say: Amen.

Then shall they rise, and the Minister, giving his right hand to each, shall say:

In the Name of the Lord Jesus, Whom thou hast confessed and promised to serve, I hereby declare thee a member of this Congregation, and authorize thee to receive the Lord's Supper and to participate in all the spiritual privileges of the Church.

Then shall the Congregation rise and the Minister shall say:

And now, I admonish you, the members of this Congregation, to acknowledge and receive these your fellow-members as your brethren and heirs with you in Christ Jesus, and ever to pray that God may perfect the work which He hath begun in them by His Holy Spirit.

Then shall the Minister say:

The Lord be with you.

Response: And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

Almighty and Merciful God, Heavenly Father, Who only workest in us to will and to do the things that please Thee: Confirm, we beseech Thee, the work which Thou hast begun in these Thy servants; that, abiding in the communion of Thy Church and in the faith of Thy Gospel, no false doctrine, no lusts of the flesh, nor love of the world may lead them away from Thee, nor from the truth which they have confessed; but that, in joyful obedience to Thy Word, they may ever know Thee more perfectly, love Thee more fervently, and serve Thee in every good word and deed, to the blessing of their fellow-men, the edification of

of Thy people and the glory of Thy Name; through Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

Then shall all say:

Our Father, Who art in heaven; Hallowed be Thy Name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven; Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil; For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Then shall the Minister dismiss them, saying:

The blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be with you alway. Amen.

Then, if the Administration of the Holy Communion does not follow, Psalm 23 or a Hymn may be sung, and the Benediction shall be said."¹

The rite of confirmation thus involves the following: After the hymn of invocation has been sung and those to be confirmed have presented themselves before the altar, the minister reminds them of the Lord's command in baptism and of the way in which the instruction they have received has fulfilled that command. They are then asked to renounce the devil, his work and his ways. The minister asks three questions as to their belief in the three Persons of the God-head, and those to be confirmed answer in the words of the articles of the Apostles' Creed. Two questions relative to their

1. Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church, pp. 236-238.

· remaining faithful to this belief and taking full part in the Church are asked and they are told to answer: "Yes, by the help of God." Two prayers are offered for strength in the faith and for the gift of the Holy Ghost to which the confirmands are asked to say "Amen." Then the minister gives them the authority to receive the Lord's Supper and to participate in all the spiritual privileges of the Church. The congregation is admonished to receive these new members as heirs with them in Christ Jesus and to pray for them. Another prayer follows, the burden of which is to ask God to confirm the work He has begun in these youths, to keep them faithful, that they may ever grow deeper in their spiritual experience. Everyone then prays together the Lord's Prayer and the Benediction follows.

The confirmand, then, states his faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed and promises to remain faithful and to abide in the Christian Faith. This in substance is the stand taken by the individual on the day of his confirmation. But, obviously, what it actually means to the particular individual who states the words of the Creed depends to a large extent upon the type of instruction that has been given in preparation for this step.

C. General Content of Catechetical Books

Of the four books under consideration and examination the two by Dr. Stump and Dr. Nolde are of most concern and greater importance because of their widespread usage in the Church. Therefore, more time is given to them than to the other two.

In the first chapter of this work under the section which deals with Luther's teachings on training for the Christian life through the Catechism, Luther's catechetical instruction as outlined in his Small Catechism was studied in much detail to see the general plan of the Catechism and also the primary teaching on the commandments, the Creed, the Lord's prayer, and the sacraments. It is therefore not necessary to consider these here.

Dr. Stump's Explanation to Luther's Catechism is an enlargement of the explanations of Luther on the parts of the Catechism. He adds helpful Scripture passages and seeks to clarify the meaning and to teach the doctrinal truths found in the commandments, the Creed, the prayer, and the sacraments.

Dr. Nolde in A Guide Book to Catechetical Instruction has taken the same basic material found in Luther's Catechism and has sought to make the truths to be taught by the catechist experience-centered in the approach so that there might be transfer value in the

learning of these truths.¹

In the Days of Thy Youth is an attractive booklet which is also built completely around the teachings of Luther in the Small Catechism. Some prints of excellent religious art paintings have been included in Miss Brimmer's textbook with daily Bible readings and a brief section on the Church year and Church history.

The core of the Junior Class Manual also is the Catechism. However, this text has included in its contents a large section on Bible history. There are five other brief sections in this book on memory psalms, memory hymns, prayers, a brief story from Church history, and suggested schedules for other memory work and other study meetings.

D. Specific Emphases of the Catechetical Books

To say that the general content of these books is centered in the teachings of Luther's Catechism is to show that his Catechism is the textbook used in the training of youth for their full church membership which they take at the time of confirmation. No matter which catechetical textbook the pastor may choose to use, he inevitably teaches from the Small Catechism of Martin

1. Cf. O. Fred Nolde: A Guide Book in Catechetical Instruction, p. 8

Luther. Yet it is certainly true that no two textbooks, teachers, or pupils approach that little body of Christian doctrine in the same way. It has its message for every individual, for its teachings are from the Bible, but the manner of teaching it varies with every teacher. It is the purpose here to discover the specific emphases given to the teachings relative to commitment to Christ in each of these specific texts to be examined.

1. Dr. Joseph Stump's Explanation of the Catechism.

In this small volume of 162 pages, the first 32 contain the exact reprint of Martin Luther's Small Catechism. The rest of the book is the explanation by Dr. Stump. In the remainder of this book there are 38 short chapters, 37 of which are direct explanations of the teachings of Luther on the commandments, Creed, prayer, and the sacraments. The first of these chapters is on the Bible--its necessity, inspiration, object, books, and the meaning of the law and the gospel.

Under a study of the second article of the Creed, Dr. Stump has a section called "Why He has Redeemed Me." The teaching under this section is stated generally in the words of Luther:

"In order that I might be His, Live under Him in His Kingdom; and serve Him in Everlasting Righteousness, Innocence and Blessedness."¹

1. Stump, op. cit., p. 98

The teaching on the second article of the Creed that precedes this is on the redemptive work of Christ as a substitute sacrifice for man's sin. In the teaching "In order that I might be His," live under Him, and serve Him, is the emphasis on a life committed completely to Christ. But as this section is written for didactic purposes there is no mention of a direct appeal for commitment at this point in the teaching.

The object of this text by Dr. Stump is two-fold:

1. To furnish an outline of teaching which the pastor may use as a guide in his oral explanation and questioning;
2. To furnish a sufficiently complete summary by means of which the catechumens may review the lesson and fix its salient points in their minds."¹

2. A Guide Book by Dr. Nolde.

In his Guide Book to Catechetical Instruction, the author asserts that it is not only necessary for pupils to know or understand the essential teachings of Christianity as they are set forth in the Catechism, but they must be led to respond to these truths in such a way that their experience becomes Christian.² In this statement there is something besides the mere instruction indicated as being necessary in this period of training. Some pastors have taught their catechetical classes

1. Ibid., p. iii
2. Nolde, op. cit., p. 9

merely to memorize the Catechism. Others require not memorization but the ability to explain the statements made in the Catechism. But in this text-book there is a different approach:

"The teaching procedures suggested in the following course of study attempt an application of the experience-centered approach in education. In no respect do they disparage the objective reality of the facts presented. They do however, seek to arrange and present the essentials of Christianity in a manner most likely to result in Christian experience."¹

The primary purpose of catechetical instruction in the confirmation class, according to this text, is to awaken and to make intelligent, Christian experience in pupils.²

The aims of the second lesson are relative to this study for what they say about what the pupil does in confirmation. Here it is aimed to make the catechumen realize that in confirmation he personally assumes the responsibility of church membership.³ It is significant, however, that the person of Christ is not brought into this realization on the part of the pupil.

In teaching the second article of the Creed on the person of Christ there is the statement that pupils ought to believe and be willing to state their belief in Jesus as Saviour and Teacher. The emphasis again is on

1. Ibid., p. 8

2. Cf. Ibid., p. 11

3. Cf. Ibid., p. 27

belief in Him and not on commitment. They are taught that Jesus shows man the life God wants him to live, gives man the hope of eternal life, and that man should respond in a life of service.

Under the Nolde plan of catechetical instruction there are two work books that supplement the class teaching with diagrams and pages with questions to be worked on at home. These work books are Study Helps Series A and Series B prepared by the author of the text.

3. A Catechetical Manual by Mary E. Brimmer.

This manual was prepared by the director of religious education in a church in Indiana to be used in that church but is now used in other parishes. These lessons are built around the commandments, Creed, petitions to the Lord's prayer, and the sacraments, with lessons added at the close of the book on the church year, church history, and the meaning of confirmation.

The purpose of this text is to aid the children in understanding a statement of faith of the Church and God's rules for living; and to guide them in living a happy life of study, worship, and service in their church.¹

The Scripture verse that the author would have applied to each of the catechumens is 2 Timothy 3:15:

1. Cf. Mary E. Brimmer: In the Days of Thy Youth, p. 5

"That from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The faith or belief in Christ is present in the aims, but the element of personal trust, pledge of loyalty or commitment to Him does not seem to be. The author further states that to be a church member does not make a person a Christian, but one must show by his way of life that he is a true follower of Christ. In this statement, discipleship is emphasized.

In the manual each lesson contains a study of some part of the Catechism. There is memory work, a word study, a brief explanation of the portion of the Catechism and then a list of questions for class discussion. The overall emphasis is on learning, understanding, and knowing the basic teachings of the Catechism.

4. The Junior Class Manual by G. J. Muller

This manual is more a reference book than a text-book, for there is little creative work in it. But much is reprinted here that is of value in a Christian education.

The major portion of the work consists of Bible history. In each lesson the name of the story is included; the specific Bible reference where the story appears is given; an actual reprinting of the Scripture texts with helps in pronunciation is included; and a

list of questions on the story is set up. The Catechism is reprinted without any further explanation; memory work psalms and hymns are included, as is a devotional section with prayers. The way in which this book is taught would determine almost completely its emphasis for in it one simply has parts of the Bible and the entire Catechism before him.

E. Place of Commitment

Again to repeat, by commitment to Christ is meant the wholehearted yielding of one's self to Christ or the unconditional surrender to Him that one makes in giving one's self in a complete life of trust to Christ.¹

In the preceding pages many definitions of what takes place in confirmation have been either stated or implied. It has been said that in confirmation a youth takes upon his own shoulders the vows his sponsors made for him in baptism. At this stage in his Christian development, a youth is given authority to receive the Lord's Supper and to participate in the full spiritual privileges of the Church. A promise is made in the service of confirmation to abide in the faith and prayers are made that those being confirmed may be continually

1. Cf. Ante, p. i

strengthened and grow in grace. They confess that they believe in Christ and promise to serve Him. In one of the prayers offered for them the request is made that they might know God more perfectly, love Him more fervently, and serve Him in every good word and deed.¹ They have been taught that the reason why Christ redeemed them was that they might ever be His, live under Him, and serve Him.

The emphasis is so much on the knowing and the understanding of the faith and the work of redemption that Christ wrought for mankind on the cross, that it is refreshing to come to Dr. Nolde's emphasis on the translating of this knowledge and faith into Christian experience and yet even here direct commitment does not seem to be advocated, mentioned, or taught. It is implied in the teaching that man should respond in a life of service to Christ.

In this system the Lord Jesus Christ is the center of the work of the Church which is definitely in line with Biblical theology, but one is left to question how vital is the person of the Saviour in the every day life of the individual believer. It seems evident that the learning of the system of Biblical truth has the pre-eminence in the catechetical materials that have been

1. Cf. Ante, p. 74

examined for this study.

F. Summary

The service of confirmation as found in the Common Service Book of the Lutheran Church has been examined to determine the nature of the stand that the intermediate takes on his confirmation day. And the catechetical materials most widely used in the United Lutheran Church today have been studied to discover the place of commitment to Christ in the preparation for confirmation. Commitment to Christ, with the meaning understood earlier in these pages, it was found, is not explicitly stated in the service of confirmation. More prominence is given to the taking on of church membership.

The materials used in preparing the intermediates for confirmation are geared to train them well in the Catechism and to awaken them to the responsibility of "abiding in the Christian faith" in church membership, but little emphasis seems to be given to the person of the Saviour and loyalty to Him. Dr. Stump's book is written for the express twofold object of furnishing a guide for the pastor in the explanation of the Christian truths taught in the Catechism and to give the catechumens a complete summary with which they may review and

fix the main teachings in their minds.¹ Dr. Nolde has made a real attempt to present the truths of the Catechism in an approach which would most likely cause the teaching of these spiritual truths to result in consequent Christian experience.² In the teachings on the second article of the Creed the pupils are taught that they ought to believe and be willing to state their belief in Jesus as Saviour and Teacher, but again the emphasis is on belief rather than commitment. In the manual by Mary E. Brimmer the emphasis was found to be on an understanding of the faith so that they might be made "wise unto salvation" in Christ Jesus but the element of commitment of their lives and energies to Him does not seem to be present in the text. It was discovered that the emphasis in the manual by G. J. Muller must of necessity be determined by the teacher for the manual consists of reproductions of Scripture references, the Catechism, and memory work psalms and hymns.

1. Cf. Ante, p. 80
2. Cf. Ante, pp. 80-82

CHAPTER IV
GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

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A. Restatement of the Problem

The problem of this study has been to discover the place of commitment to Christ in the writings of Martin Luther on the training of youth and in the intermediate materials of the United Lutheran Church in America today.

B. Summary

As a background for the examination of Luther's writings his own religious experience has been investigated to determine the nature of his relationship to Christ. It was discovered that he had a vital religious experience which turned his mind from a superstitious fear of death to the understanding and personal acceptance of Jesus Christ as his Saviour. His courageous life as a reformer bears witness to his personal dedication. His writings have been examined to discover what place commitment to Christ had in his leadership in the training of young people in the Christian life. Because church people in his day were ignorant of the basic truths of the Christian faith, he wrote the Catechism

in which are found valuable studies on the ten commandments, the apostles' creed, the Lord's prayer, and the sacraments. But nowhere in the Catechism, in his sermons, or in other records of his writings that have been examined for this study, has there been found an emphasis on the need for youth to commit their lives to the keeping of Christ and to accept Him as their personal Saviour.

In the intermediate course of the Christian Growth Series much material on the work of Christ and the individual's relation to Christ were discovered. In with these were found some inherent opportunities for emphasis on commitment to Christ. For example, in the lesson on redemption through the blood of Christ the necessity of man's response to this act of God is pointed out. When Christ is pictured as the living Lord who leads men today there is the possibility of stressing commitment of their lives to Christ to be led of Him. In another place Christ is presented as the giver of the New Covenant with the promise that whosoever believes in Him has great reward. Certainly there is more implied here than mere belief or mental assent; this could be used as an opportunity to lead youths to commit themselves completely to this One who gives such great gifts. Again, the pupil is taught that Jesus came to save all

men. Opportunity is dormant here to lead the youths to know personally what it means to be saved by Jesus. In the third quarter of the third year of this material the apostle Paul's continual use of the phrase "in Christ Jesus" is referred to as the highest spiritual relationship yet the prayer in the worship service calls for loyalty to the Church in faith, love, and service. The call for loyalty to the Head of the Church--the Christ--is lost somewhat in the emphasis on loyalty to the Church. In a word study, conversion is defined as the turning away from a life of sin and turning in a life of trust to Christ as Saviour and Guide, yet this definition is given under the heading, "words to keep in mind."

The foregoing inherent possibilities for emphasis on commitment were found throughout the material; however, there was found no definite call to the youths to commit or surrender themselves wholeheartedly to Christ. There is, in this material, teaching to give an understanding that salvation depends on faith in the redemptive shedding of Christ's blood as a propitiatory sacrifice on Calvary. But the emphasis is on the understanding or belief that this is true rather than on a dependence upon the Person who made this salvation possible.

In the service of confirmation itself, and in the preparatory study for confirmation, investigation

revealed that the emphasis in the present day Church is on a knowledge of the Catechism and on an acceptance of the duties and privileges of Church membership. The Catechism is an educational device to teach the basic truths of the Christian faith. The Catechism is the center of the preparatory training for confirmation. The four most widely used texts for catechetical study are built around the Catechism. They are Dr. Joseph Stump's Explanation to Luther's Catechism; A Guide Book to Catechetical Instruction by Dr. O. Fred Nolde; In the Days of Thy Youth by Mary E. Brimmer; and the Junior Class Manual by G. J. Muller. Dr. Nolde has prepared his book with a special attempt to make the truths taught experience-centered. In the service of confirmation, commitment to Christ is not explicitly stated as descriptive of the action being taken by the confirmand. The prominence is given rather to the taking on of full Church membership.

C. Conclusion

This investigation of the place of commitment in Luther's training of youth and in the intermediate materials of the United Lutheran Church today has brought certain basic facts to the fore. Martin Luther was encompassed by the great historical events of his

day. Yet he saw the pitiful ignorance of the masses and their need of access to the truths of the Christian faith. He attempted to remedy this condition by the preparation of the Catechism, his purpose throughout the Catechism being to teach. That is still the purpose of the Catechism in its present form of usage. As a result of this emphasis there are many young people and adults in confirmed Church membership who know the ten commandments and attempt to keep them, who know the apostles' creed and recite it each Sunday in the morning worship service, who use the Lord's Prayer daily, and who partake of the sacraments of the Church, but who do not know what it means to have the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and to have fellowship with Him in their daily lives. This personal relation to Christ is not explicitly present in the aims of the teaching; therefore it is not hard to understand why it is not achieved.

Illustrations have been given in the previous chapters and in the Summary above of instances throughout the Sunday School literature where emphasis on commitment of lives to Christ has been subordinated to the emphasis on loyalty to the Church, where an opportunity for a direct appeal to commitment to Christ has been turned into a word study of conversion which is a "word to keep in mind."

The claim is made for these Sunday School

materials that they are Biblical, Evangelical, and vital to the life of all. The truths taught in them have borne out this claim. Yet conformity to the Bible teachings and the teachings of the Catechism is not enough to gain a powerful, aggressive, living faith in and commitment to Christ. The individual teacher could add this emphasis in her teaching and it would not be contrary to the spirit in which these materials were written, but too often, it is to be feared, the teacher, herself a product of the same system, lacks the dynamic of this aggressive faith in Christ. If this emphasis on commitment is in the materials prepared, it is present in the implied form. It needs to be stated clearly.

To know the work of the Saviour is vital, essential. But it is not enough to know of His redemptive purpose. To benefit individually from His sacrifice of Himself, a person must accept personally the Gift God proffers. Without the realization in the mind and heart that "Christ died for me!", the Gift of salvation in Christ has not been received. To gain this personal experience in the life of the Sunday School intermediate or at confirmation, it would seem, the teacher, the catechist, and the pastor ought to have clearly fixed in their minds that these young people at confirmation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit should make a commitment and decision to live for Christ. Furthermore,

in order to bring this to pass, these leaders should be praying toward that end and working toward it by supplementing group instruction with individual conferences in which the personal appeal is made.

The evidence seems to indicate that in its effort to be educational and intellectual in approach, and to keep the emotional element out of the religious experience, the Church has removed from its educational literature an emphasis which might well mean the difference between a vital relation to the Saviour on the one hand and a nominal or even an enthusiastic participation in Church membership on the other. The need therefore seems to lie in an appeal that will touch the feelings and the emotions as well as the intellect.

Would not the confirmation service itself be made more effectual if, to the promises to abide in the faith and to remain faithful to the Church's teachings, there were added a specific vow of allegiance to Christ as Saviour and Lord? This emphasis, provided it has been preceded by an actual decision on the part of the individual, would bring to its proper place of importance the commitment of self to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

There seems to be an increasing awareness on the part of the ministers of the Church that the vitality of the Christian experience has been missed by

a large portion of their confirmed youth and adult membership. To the writer it seems evident that explanation of this fact may be found in the conclusions just stated. It follows, then, that the solution to the problem might lie in substituting for mere emphasis on loyalty to the Church, an appeal to commitment which would issue in a vital experience with Christ.

APPENDIX

THE PARISH AND CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD
of the
United Lutheran Church in America

Muhlenberg Building
1228 Spruce Street
Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania

January 3, 1947.

Miss Mary E. Wood,
Biblical Seminary,
235 E. 49th Street,
New York 17, N. Y.

(COPY)

Dear Miss Wood:

As the secretary in charge of the youth division of our Board I am very happy to send you available information which I trust will be of some little aid in preparing your thesis. I gather from your letter that you have the intermediate material of the Christian Growth Series at hand. If you do not, such material would be available in almost any Lutheran congregation in your locality.

Your second question concerns the catechetical materials that are used in most of our congregations. The majority of our congregations today are using two texts. Many are using "The Small Catechism of Dr. Martin Luther" by Joseph Stump. I am sure that you are familiar with this text, since it has been used so widely and for such a long period of time. In my experience in the field, I find that pastors who use this catechism frequently add some work books or study helps of their own making. I believe almost 50% of our pastors are using Stump's Catechism.

According to latest figures, Dr. Nolde's catechetical book, "Guide Book in Catechetical Instruction," with the work books, "Study Helps, Series A," and "Study Helps, Series B," is next in popularity. You mentioned "Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" by Dr. Nolde. This is a precatechetical course intended for the junior catechetical group.

At random, I would like to mention some of the other texts that are being used by a smaller number of pastors and leaders. There are a few who use catechetical textbooks by G. J. Mueller. The text is quite Bible centered

and is written in a different form than the others mentioned. Another text that is used is "In the Days of Thy Youth" by Mary E. Brimmer. Miss Brimmer is director of religious education of Trinity English Lutheran Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. There are a few pastors who are using catechetical materials called "Forward with Christ" published by the Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn.

In addition there are other texts, not so widely used. I merely mention them: Gardner, Traver, Kurth, Dell, Baltsly, Mann-Krotel, and Richards.

I am sending you a copy of "Improving the Catechetical Program." In this manual you will see a proposed curriculum of materials for various age groups in catechetical study. Some of the units are from the Children of the Church Series. As far as I know, all of the materials that I have mentioned are in stock at the Publication House. You may be especially interested in page 2, page 4, and page 5.

I hope this information will be of some help. If you desire any further details on any of these materials kindly write me and I shall try to answer every request as carefully as possible.

Sincerely yours,

Lawrence M. Reese
(signed)

Lawrence M. Reese,
Associate Secretary.

LMR:EG

THE PARISH AND CHURCH SCHOOL BOARD
of the
United Lutheran Church in America

Muhlenberg Building
1228 Spruce Street
Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania

March 4, 1947.

Miss Mary E. Wood,
Biblical Seminary,
235 E. 49th Street,
New York 17, N. Y.

(COPY)

Dear Miss Wood:

In the absence of Pastor Reese from the office, please let me acknowledge receipt of your letter dated March 2, concerning the Christian Growth Series and catechetical materials.

I have asked the United Lutheran Publication House to send to you immediately the following materials:

Pupil and Teacher Book - Intermediate Christian Growth Series, Year III, Third Quarter

"Study Helps Series A" - O. Fred Nolde

"Study Helps Series B" - O. Fred Nolde

"The Junior Class Manual" - G. J. Muller

"In the Days of Thy Youth" - Mary E. Brimmer

However, we are unable to send you the Third Year, Fourth Quarter of the Christian Growth Series, since it has not come from the press as yet.

If our Board can be of any further help to you, please do not hesitate to call upon us.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Gerlach
(signed)

Secretary to Pastor Reese.

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