

Being Made All Things to All Men—I Corinthians 9:19-22

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“I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some”—these words have always held a strong appeal for those who love the Lord Jesus and the task of bringing others to know His only-saving name. For Paul’s statement of the spirit governing him in his missionary labors is a perfect expression of that which fills the heart of the truly missionary Christian and a genuinely missionary church. They find in these words a source of guidance and correction, a key to effective mission-methods, an incentive to redoubled efforts. However, in studying these words, we must reckon with another factor. Sad to say, they have been employed to set the pattern and to afford justification for procedures and methods of so-called witness-bearing that run counter to God’s directions and prohibitions. We shall, therefore, consider Paul’s words under these three heads:

- I. The greatest missionary’s expression of self-denying love.
- II. An inspiring model and a sure guide for us in bearing witness to Christ.
- III. Not a warrant for every form of so-called witness bearing.

I. The Greatest Missionary’s Expression of Self-denying Love

To get the full force of Paul’s statement, we must study the verses for which it serves as a summing-up. The first words are familiar to us from Luther’s classic exposition of them in his *“Die Freiheit eines Christenmenschen.”* “For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more.” Luther, however, went beyond the missionary setting of the passage to establish from it the principles governing the entire conduct of the believer, as he exercises his Christian freedom over against his fellow-believer.

If we reach back to the preceding section of the chapter, as the “for” urges us to do, we become sure that the primary reference here is to the Gospel-labor of a missionary. There Paul had developed the thought: I have the right to ask the recipients of the Gospel to provide me with a living, on the principle that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel (verse 14). Yet I have consistently refrained from exercising this privilege that I might not put an obstacle in the path of the Gospel. This is my glory and reward, not that I preach the Gospel at all, but that I refrain from using my freedom and in self-denying love preach it without charge to my hearers. Thus the “free” is illuminated for us.

Yet here Paul gives it much wider scope. For now his interest is to show that his course in regard to support from the Gospel beneficiaries is merely one instance of a general pattern. He habitually strives to lead a life of self-denying love that gives first place to the Gospel-work of God and the salvation of men. So here his words, “Though I be free from all men,” reach out to embrace the entire freedom of every Christian. The Christian is truly free; he only is free. When a man has been assured by faith that God is his God by virtue of Christ’s atoning sacrifice; that a gracious God is constantly at work, with infinite wisdom, power, and love, to guard him and make him a blessing to many—then the dependence on the power, the threats, the desires, the whims, the favor and the disfavor of men is at an end. As Luther has put it: “A Christian is a free lord over all things and subject to nobody.” Paul’s life is the best exemplification of that.

Though nobody’s slave in this sense, yet, says Paul, “I have made myself a slave to all men.” To the world, to her most humanitarian philosophers, to her religionists (they *are* in the world!) advocating a life dedicated to one’s fellows, Paul’s view of his relationship to his fellow men remains unintelligible. For they are truly slaves to their fellow-men in this that they *must* render service to their fellow-men, in order to feed their

vanity in their own righteousness and in their philanthropy, to stifle an outraged conscience, to gain “peace of mind,” to use their favored phrase.

But to the Christian the meaning of the paradox is obvious. He recognizes Paul’s words as echoes of those spoken by Paul’s Lord and theirs: “But whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister. And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:43–45). He understands that the reborn man *voluntarily* becomes a servant to all men. For “the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead, and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them and rose again” (II Corinthians 5:14, 15). And living to our Redeemer means living to our fellow men. Accordingly, when we behold our neighbor’s need, we become his ready servant to meet that need.

His need? Our minds leap at once to his deepest need, and so we are not far behind Paul when he states his purpose in freely becoming a slave to all men: “that I might gain the more.” The same Greek word for “gain” is used in Matthew 18:15: “If he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” But here the word denotes the primary missionary activity, the winning of the unconverted to Christ. Commentators disagree about its meaning in its fifth occurrence (v. 22); we shall discuss that when we come to it. All, however, agree that in the other instances it has the missionary connotation. The context so demands. Now, Paul tells us that, in order to win the more, more men than he would gain by following another course, he willingly became a servant to all.

How he did this he shows by means of four terse statements. The first is: “And (meaning: that is, for example) to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the (more) Jews.” Paul is speaking of the Jews as a race with distinctive ways of life. In his missionary work among them Paul accommodated himself to their customs and practices. In Perga, for instance, Paul did not go into the synagogue with a request to be heard at once, but “he sat down and listened to the reading” of the Old Testament Scriptures. Only upon the customary invitation by the eiders did he rise to speak. His sermon further displays how Paul became a Jew to the Jews. He began with a brief review of their history, something dear to their hearts. He addressed them by a title to which they were very partial, “children of the stock of Abraham” (Acts 13:14–26).

But let us observe at once that this accommodation was in no way a compromise. He used the Jewish history, not merely to flatter his hearers, but to show how their whole history had moved forward to the seed of Jesse, the Savior (13:23). He did not leave them smug in their belief that they were keeping the Law of Moses (v. 39). When he saw their self-righteous exclusiveness that begrudged salvation to the Gentiles, he proclaimed God’s judgment on them by word (v. 43) and act (v. 51). Yet wherever there was no danger of compromise, Paul unhesitatingly adapted himself to the Jews. He did so with the high purpose, “that I might gain the Jews.”

Next Paul tells us how he conducted himself toward the same people in respect to their religion: “To them that are under the law, (I became) as under the law, yet not myself being under the law.” The Jews were under the outward rule of the Mosaic Law, moral, ceremonial, civil. Furthermore, they were a people extremely conscious of legal regulations and were zealous for them to the point of fanaticism. Paul tempered his bearing by that knowledge. While among them, he observed the regulations regarding food and drink, for instance. He had his helper Timothy circumcised. He did not foolishly and unnecessarily fly into the face of very strong Jewish feelings on this point. To do so would have been almost to nullify Timothy’s effectiveness as his assistant, at least among the Jews (Acts 16:3).

Yet Paul was free from that law by virtue of his relationship to Christ. Like all believers, he was not under the law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). Therefore, through this addition, Paul tells the Corinthians and us: Let no one mistake my actions. I freely subject myself to the law. But that does not mean that I yield any of my liberty in Christ.

His actions bear him out. He refused to circumcise Titus because a subjection to the law on the insistence of Judaizers would have meant loss of “our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus,” a renewed bondage, and a “Gospel” that was half works and half grace (Galatians 2:3–5). Paul’s public rebuke of Peter for his Yes-and-No course in the matter of foods is also a strong buttress for this point (Galatians 2:11–14). Still, whenever there was no danger of losing some of the very Gospel, which he would bring to others, he did not

hesitate to identify himself with those who “rested in the law” (Romans 2:17). In their case, too, his was the noblest of all earthly aims: “that I might gain them under the law.”

Adducing another example of love reaching out for the sinner’s salvation, he mentions an accommodation to those who are under no code of revealed law. Thus “them without law” must be understood. It cannot be taken absolutely, for these, the Gentiles, in a certain sense have the law. In what sense is demonstrated by Romans 2:14,15: “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.” We can most readily visualize Paul’s behavior among the Gentiles by picturing him as one who did not observe any requirements of the ceremonial law as he did among the Jews, and who consciously adapted himself to their ways, their outlook on life, their culture. His sermon on Mars Hill at Athens is an excellent illustration of such adaptation. The extent of this adaptation comes out more fully still when we contrast this and other addresses to non-Jews with sermons delivered to purely Jewish audiences.

Just as he did in describing his conduct among the Jews, Paul again adds a caution not to misunderstand him. “I do not lead a lawless, godless life,” he says in effect, “so that it cannot be told apart from that of the Gentiles.” But let us hear him speak directly: “being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ.” He did not act like one heedless and defiant of God’s will for man. Not only at his conversion, but also all through life he was asking: “Lord, what wilt thou have me do?”

Yet he was not under the law in the way that Jew and Gentile alike are under it. He was free of its binding, goading, damning, killing power. Therefore he is careful to say: “*Within* the law of Christ.” (We take Χριστοῦ as the preferred reading and analyze it as a possessive genitive.) To Paul, as to every other Christian, there is no law given as a yoke and burden imposed from without (I Timothy 1:9). Rather, he senses only the inner compulsion, the constraining of a faith in Christ, which seeks and finds its outlet in works of love. The law of Christ, then, is the law of love (Galatians 6:2; 5:13) or the law of the Spirit of life (Romans 8:2). So intent is Paul on underscoring and commending the only worthy—and, we might add, the only safe—motive in accommodating himself to various men that he does not hesitate to make it his refrain: “that I might gain them that are without law.” The student of the Greek will notice a different verb form here. κερδήσω becomes κερδάνω. But there is no difference in meaning, for they are merely variant forms. Both are aorist subjunctives. While we are at it, let us note the force of this form. The present subjunctive would mean: “that I may be winning.” The aorist is more definite. Paul aims at the actual conversion of the sinner to Christ. We shall have occasion to refer to this later on.

Paul’s final example causes the interpreter the most trouble. It reads: “To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak.” The verb, κερδαίνω, has been used four times as a set term for converting men to Christ. We should hardly expect Paul to shift to the meaning of Matthew 18:15, “gaining a sinning brother,” or of 8:7 and 8:10 of I Corinthians, “gaining (winning) a Christian weak in knowledge and understanding,” especially since it occurs in the refrain-like statement of purpose. Furthermore, Paul has, at the end of chapter 8, really left the topic of the way in which such weak brethren are to be borne and won. It is not impossible for him, of course, to go back to it here (such gaining of the weak is also a vital part of the missionary’s work), yet it strikes one as a jarring note in his eloquent cadences extolling the self-denying love that would “save the more.”

No doubt it is the difficulty of identifying “the weak” that makes commentators unwilling to refer the “gain” to work among the unconverted, though that has been the obvious reference in the four previous occurrences of the refrain. But *is* it a hopeless task to find the “weak” among the unconverted? We may think of the weak in health. Surely a feeling for and with such is most desirable in the soul-winner. Paul, with his thorn in the flesh, would not have had undue difficulty there. Think also of those who are weaker intellectually than others. Then, as now, the missionary would have to vary his approach from that made to the highly intelligent. Again, there would be those who were weaker in their outward morality. To become as weak to such would be to follow closely the example of the Master, who ate with publicans and sinners. Also falling into the classification of the “weak” would be the emotionally unstable, the high-strung, and the neurotic. The

forthright, even blunt opening that might be in place with more rugged people would surely serve as a roadblock for the Gospel in the case of these. Sympathy and a special tact would be required for another class of weak men also, those disturbed in their minds by some shocking, horrifying experience. (Cf. Paul's words to the terrified jailor at Philippi: "Do thyself no harm.") To each one Paul would accommodate himself in the special way required.¹

"That I might gain the weak"—again Paul commends the sublime aim of Gospel-work to the Corinthians and to us.

He has brought enough examples to explain his opening paradox. Therefore he rounds off the treatment of this point with the memorable summary: "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some." Paul has not given a complete listing of examples. Whatever he has omitted is comprehended in his "all things to all men." The double "all" brings out with great force Paul's wholehearted devotion to the Savior's work. A third "all" heightens the effect: "that I might by *all* means save some." The substitution of "save" for "gain" also makes for a very effective conclusion. It leaves with the reader the magnitude of the blessing brought about through the Gospel-bearer. He can hope to gain only some, yet the full salvation of Christ is the sure, abiding possession of everyone thus gained.

II. An Inspiring Model and a Sure Guide for Us in Bearing Witness to Christ

Certainly, the church is always in need of the mighty incentive and the sure guidance that is supplied by the model we have studied.

Here is a word for all of us. It summons us to become more self-forgetting, self-denying witnesses for Christ. As we strive to bring Christ crucified to those with whom our daily life brings us in contact, we often fail to "make ourselves servants to all men." That is, our approach is too general. Too often we are bearing witness to sinners as a class. We do not shape our soul-winning effort to the individual.

At this point let us realize that, when we call Paul's being-made-all-things-to-all-men a model, we say more than that it is one model among many. As we pointed out in passing, Paul got this from his Lord. The Gospel record reveals how Jesus constantly was making Himself the servant of all solely to "gain the more." Then, as surely as this aim is ours, so surely will the missionary method of Jesus and Paul appear to us as the one worthy model and sure guide.

Therefore let us state more concretely what is involved in "being made all things to all men." It requires that we study the particular sinner with whom we would share our Christ; that we become well acquainted with his way of thinking, his viewpoints, his mental quirks, his emotional state; that we listen with infinite patience to his troubles, fears, and doubts; that we know his background and his level of intelligence. But this is no cold, clinical study. The method of our Lord and of Paul means more: that we put ourselves in his place, get on his level, learn to talk his language, feel with him, identify ourselves with him. To be sure, this is no art easily come by. What then? Shall we lean on psychology or sociology as our main props? Shall we make ourselves over into extroverts, good mixers, or engaging personalities? It is neither that simple nor that complicated.

Paul points the way. His example calls out to us: Let the love of Christ constrain you. Constantly the Spirit of Christ is at work to make a deeper impress on our hearts with the love that acted and endured and that bled and died for us. Let us not resist His working, but yield to it. As the love of Christ for us thus possesses us, a stronger love for souls redeemed by Him takes possession of us. This love takes us out of ourselves, makes us, if you will understand it correctly, spiritual extroverts. It endows us with "that mind which was also in Christ Jesus," enabling us to follow the injunction: "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Philippians 2:4). We learn to deny self. We learn to forget and forego personal comfort and convenience, pleasure and profit. We overcome pet likes and dislikes that keep us from making close contact

¹ It was pointed out from the floor that Paul uses the same Greek work for 'weak' in the same sense in another passage, namely, 1 Corinthians 1:27: "God hath chosen the weak things of the world."

with the soul to be won. We break through habitual patterns of thought and conquer ingrained aversion and reluctance.

Yes, we fight more successfully to keep our body under, as did Paul; to deal roughly with its unwillingness to be “put out” for anyone, its tendency to fritter away time and opportunity in self-pity, to substitute “socializing” for evangelizing, to develop an inordinate craving for leisure and recreation, to find excuses in the hot—or the cold—weather.²

All that we have said has a particular force for the public witness-bearer, the minister and the missionary. He has the full-time task of bringing the Gospel to people. How important it is that he avoids thinking of “people” as a mass, a rather abstract whole. If he does so think of them, his ministry may readily assume the character of one pursuing a professional career. Then, too, “a love, or passion, for souls” can become a cliché, a mere slogan.

Look at Paul. He had an intense love for souls, but from his words it is evident that this love was directed to the individual. Therefore let the ambassador of Christ consciously develop the high and difficult art of being all things to all men—one by one. Let him, at the same time, not think of this as some unattainable ideal. Paul commended his course to the Corinthians for the very purpose of stimulating and inciting them to exercise the same self-denying love.

To the particulars cited above let us add that of public preaching. All who have ever preached know that more than prayer, meditation, reading, and study are required for the effective sermon. The other vital ingredient is that prescribed by the Apostle, “getting next” to the individual hearer, “being made all things to all men.” Part of that can be done in the study. Through wide and critical reading the preacher can understand his hearer as a child of his times. But there must be added to it the knowledge gained only through personal contact. This will save the preacher from being too general and vague. It will give to his sermons the quality that makes his listener say: “That was a message from God to *me*,” or, in the words of the Emmaus disciples, “Did not our hearts burn within us?”

The preacher, consciously becoming a servant to all, will also devote much attention to the language he employs both in his missionary contacts and in the pulpit. Let us confine ourselves to the latter. Living close to people, he finds it necessary to redefine, paraphrase, and expound such common Scriptural terms as “grace,” “justification,” and “sin,” even to the long-time Lutheran. How much more will this be imperative in the case of the unchurched, quite ignorant of things Biblical?

But not only in this respect will he find a rigorous self-discipline necessary. It is easy to slip into a too-elegant, antiquated, or pompous speech that leaves the hearer, especially the mission prospect, “standing on the station platform.” On the other hand, it requires concentrated listening-in on the speech of others, a painful parting with many a favorite phrase, and a painstaking choice of words to take the hearer along on the train of divine thought.

A church body that has long been engaged in contending for the truth, as has ours, has a peculiar need of these words. Let us be honest to admit that at such a time and under such circumstances we can become pre-occupied with doctrinal controversies to the loss of missionary zeal and endeavor. The fight to preserve the Gospel makes heavy demands on us. We know that the cause is the Lord’s. Then we can readily become complacent; we may even say to ourselves, “God can hardly expect more of us than that we contend for His truth.” Or there may be an entirely unconscious lapsing into a purely defensive attitude, so that we let up in waging the unremitting offensive with the Gospel that God looks for in us.

This is no vague fear. Consider the case of the church at Ephesus. God’s message to her was: “I know thy works and thy labor, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil; and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars. And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name’s sake hast labored, and hast not fainted. Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou

² At this point the essayist added an extemporaneous remark. He pointed out that Paul’s words have an application to church attendance. In a sermon on “Thy Kingdom Come” Dr. Wm. Dallmann urges that the churchgoer regard every service he attends as a “mission institute.” He is there to be fortified in his own faith, yes. But it is also an opportunity to equip himself better for the task of witness-bearing. The preacher will, of course, bear this in mind and shape his sermons accordingly.

hast left thy first *love*. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent” (Revelation 2:2–5). Now, high among those first works of love, in God’s estimation, always will be that of seeking out the lost with His Gospel. That very work can be neglected in the course of a fight for the pure Gospel, as the case of the Ephesian Christians clearly shows.

Some years ago someone in our body said something to this effect: “It is the peculiar genius of the Wisconsin Synod to preserve the pure Gospel.” Who that someone was or how many shared that opinion does not interest us here. Perhaps it was not so intended originally, but as it stands and as it has sometimes been quoted, it certainly expresses a viewpoint to which we cannot subscribe. It introduces an emphasis that is not found in the New Testament picture of the Church’s work. There we find the task of defending the faith in balance with the task of extending the faith. Again, look at Paul. Love for the Savior made him battle unflinchingly against all subverters and deniers of the Gospel. The same love, we see here, led him to a whole-souled dedication to the work of “winning the more” with the Gospel. Let us imitate him in both.

Let us also remember that we fight to keep the message of grace inviolate not merely that we may conserve it for our children, and ourselves, but that we may transmit it to many others. If our fight for the unconditioned and unabridged Gospel is carried on in the fear and love of God, our love and zeal for missions will increase, not decrease.

The Lord has graciously given us much to do. Then let us do it in the spirit and the manner of the Apostle: with the utmost energy, with the full exploitation of all lawful means, and with complete devotion. Let us respond to the call our Lord makes upon our love these days: to give more of our sons and daughters for the Gospel work, to supply more adequate means to train those who, for us, will go out to become all things to all men, to enter all fields that open to us with all the means needed to work that field—that calls for a greatly increased Church Extension Fund—, and to bend our minds to the development of ever better mission methods. It has been said of us that we are “trying to put the Gospel into deep freeze.” May God give us grace so to conduct our mission program that such a statement cannot be made by any honest or informed man.

Thus we will ever have in Paul’s words an inspiring model and a sure guide, if we will only use them so. There remains for our consideration the frequent abuse made of Paul’s words. Both for our own warning and for a careful consideration by others who will hear us, we will show that Paul’s “being made all things to all men” affords.

III. No Warrant for Every Form of So-called Witness Bearing.

The passage has, for instance, been used to justify entry into negotiations with a Lutheran body of a decidedly unionist bent. Reference was had especially to the words: “To the weak I became as the weak.” But in all likelihood, as we have seen, Paul had the unconverted in mind here. If it were taken as a reference to weak Christians, we must let the Apostle’s own definition of the weak stand. They are the weak in conscience, in knowledge and understanding (8:7,10,11). They are not such as steadily resisted a better knowledge or even made efforts to win others over to false doctrines. Among these latter we must place the church body in question, the ALC. It had been living at close quarters with the Synodical Conference for many years and knew its doctrinal position well; it had been describing its role in the Lutheran world as that of “a bridge between the right and the left”; it was at the same time carrying on negotiations with an even more unionist body. Surely, all this does not give us the picture of “weak brethren.” Therefore the attempt to apply Paul’s words in this way must fail.

We have also heard the passage used to justify participation in a unionist service or membership in a ministerial association. One gives up his reluctance or even aversion to participate, and so he becomes “all things to all men.” He makes contact; he gets next to people from whom he must otherwise remain aloof. He gains an opportunity to witness for Christ. To all who would thus use the Apostle’s words—and they include men whom we have called brethren for many years—we say in the candor of love: In some of these instances the separation of church and state is involved. Do you really believe that Paul bids you be disobedient to the

Lord's word and will on this score? In practically all these cases you must engage in unionist prayer and worship. Do you honestly think that Paul exempts you from obedience to God's stern injunctions against such sinful practice?

You will agree that following Paul's example involves knowing your fellow men. Well, then, what do you find your modern man to be? You know that he is one who is being saturated with propaganda for "religion." It is fashionable to be religious; it is even un-American not to be religious. But the world's religion is ever the same. It preaches "another" Gospel; it urges to faith in a God who is not the God of Scripture, the Father who has reconciled the world to Himself by the death of His Son. It proclaims in a popular radio ditty:

You go to your church, and I'll go to mine!
Our heavenly Father is the same.

Don't you see what happens when you join in a unionist service? Among men so fed on unionist fare you are creating the general reaction: "These Lutherans aren't as narrow any more. They're getting more liberal. They're not condemning us any more. We must all be alike, with, perhaps, a few minor differences." It will not save you to bring a forthright testimony for Christ then and there. You have already undermined, weakened, and blunted your witness. What is more, you have done that to your subsequent testimony. Don't you recall that this Paul to whom you appeal exhorts you and us to be sober and circumspect, that is, carefully and prayerfully to appraise all that is involved in any step that we take? You say you do not want to be remiss in your Gospel-stewardship by failing to seize any opportunity to bear witness for Christ? You wish to be resourceful and aggressive like Paul? That's good. But will you insist on pursuing a course that works counter to the very cause you wish and profess to serve, bringing the witness for Christ?

We do not know from personal knowledge that this passage has been expressly referred to in connection with the negotiations that the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has been carrying on with various lodges. However, the same plea, "an opportunity to bear witness" is advanced for it, and the same method of making close contact, of sitting down and talking with men of differing views is envisioned. Here is the defense offered by Dr. Arnold Grumm before the Synodical Conference in Chicago, November 16–19, 1954:

"What is this so-called negotiating? It is witnessing for Christ against the lodges' spiritual fellowship based on worship of a composite God that does not exist, a worship that offers a hope of heaven by man's merits, and prayers without Christ. When we told leaders of these groups, by whatever names they went, that God in II Corinthians 6 had told us we dared not enter into such a spiritual fellowship, because it would be a denial of Christ and endanger our souls, but must come out, they wanted to know what needed to be done to remove our objections. God wants us to be 'ready always to give an answer to everyone that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us' (I Peter 3:15). We answered: 'Get rid of that kind of Christ-less spiritual fellowship and worship.' ... Brethren, you might well improve upon the manner and method used by us and make suggestions, but you cannot deny that instead of unionism there was witnessing." (Proceedings of the Synodical Conference, 1954, page 94.)

It is a vigorous defense; it is impressive on the first reading. But let us examine the term "witnessing for Christ" as used here. We showed that the form used by Paul for "win" or "gain" denotes the aim of actually winning them for Christ. Surely, Dr. Grumm will agree that all witnessing for Christ, worthy of the name, has that same definite aim. Now there is a hint in his own words that such is not the primary aim in dealing with lodges: "they wanted to know what needed to be done to remove our objections." If we had only this to go on, we might be accused of proceeding from "distrust and suspicion." But at Chicago we received direct information as to the main purpose of negotiations with the lodges. We had it from the chairman of the committee conducting such meetings. He informed us that the committee, in talks with the Order of the Moose, had arrived at the point where the leaders of that lodge were willing to make the use of the Moose ritual optional.

Here there was no "getting rid" of objectionable features under the conviction that they were Christ-less. No, the committee simply worked out a method of co-existence with that lodge—a co-existence that spells

compromise. For the Missouri Synod Lutheran may continue, with the blessing of his body, to bear the name of Moose with all the “Christless spiritual fellowship and worship” (Dr. Grumm’s own words) that it stands for. We might add that Dr. Grumm entered no disclaimer to the committee chairman’s report.

Surely, Paul, with his “being made all things to all men,” cannot be made to provide cover for that. Not the Paul who also wrote the words—words to which Dr. Grumm alludes: “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? What communion hath light with darkness? ... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty” (II Corinthians 6:14,17,18).

In its defense of the military chaplaincy, spokesmen for the Missouri Synod have laid great stress on the church’s opportunity. A very recent official pamphlet has that in its title. The chaplaincy is presented as the only adequate way to serve the spiritual needs of our Lutheran men in the service. But it is also pictured as a missionary agency of the church. Statistics are cited to show the number of those gained for the faith. Again the thought is: The chaplain is able to live close to the men, be one of them. It is an application of “being made all things to all men.”

We cannot here enter in upon the issues involved in the military chaplaincy. Suffice it to say that we still hold that to make use of the chaplaincy as now constituted would be to make us disobedient to the Word of our God on three counts. Now, in the pamphlet we referred to, “The Church’s Opportunities in the Military Chaplaincy,” we are being told that “absolute and instant obedience to Christ our Lord” with His “command to shepherd his sheep and make disciples of all others” requires us to go into the chaplaincy program (p. 27). This reminds us of the advice given to Judge Portia at Antonio’s trial: “To do a great right, do a little wrong.” Her answer is ours: “It must not be.” It is not a door opened by the Lord of the Church when it invites to disobedience of any kind.

We have adduced enough examples to demonstrate that God Himself has placed boundaries on our witness bearing. Therefore we dare not, in a misdirected zeal for missions, so apply Paul’s words as to wipe out those boundaries. Let us be on guard ourselves and faithfully warn others. On the other hand, let us not fail to use Paul’s words in a positive way. We shall need them constantly as we in our missionary work endeavor to reflect the Savior’s love reaching out to sinners everywhere.